

HORÆ CATECHETICÆ;

OR,

AN EXPOSITION

OF THE

DUTY AND ADVANTAGES

OF

PUBLIC CATECHISING IN CHURCH.

IN A LETTER TO THE

LORD BISHOP OF LONDON.

“Sure I am, Catechising, in its original, true sense, implies something more than a bare running over an old form, though that consist of proper questions and answers, and contains whatsoever is needful either to belief or practice.”—BISHOP EDMUND LAW.

BY W. S. GILLY, M.A.

PREBENDARY OF DURHAM, AND PERPETUAL CURATE OF ST.
MARGARET'S, DURHAM.

AUTHOR OF “RESEARCHES AMONG THE WALDENSES,” &c.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR C. & J. RIVINGTON,
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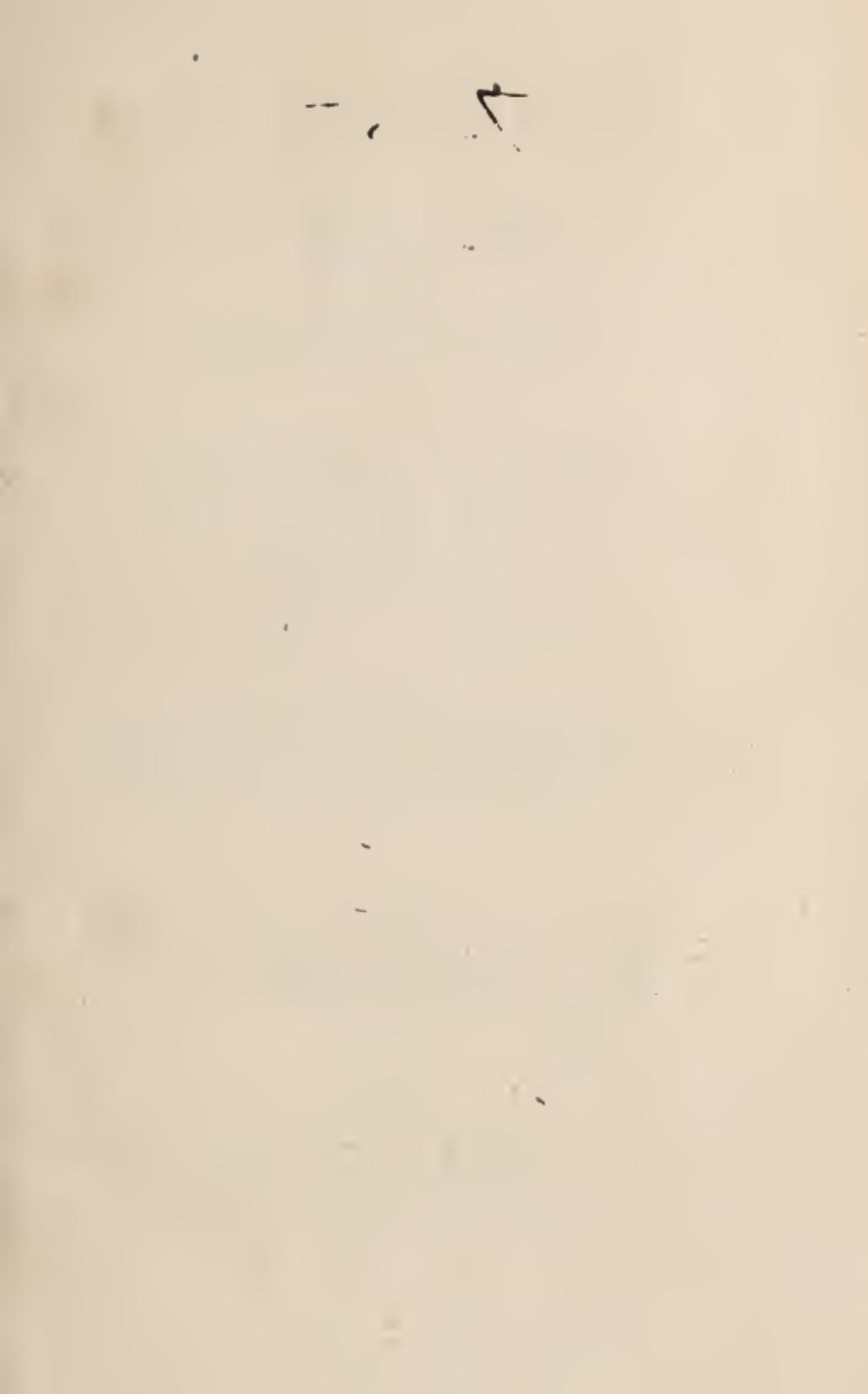
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INTRODUCTION.



THE terms *Catechise*, *Catechism*, and *Catechetical*, (from the Greek word Κατηχέω, to *sound aloud*, to *resound*) are applied to signify instruction conveyed, not by writing, or according to any regular and continued discourse, but by some familiar and brief method of *vivá voce* teaching.

Thus St. Luke, in his Gospel, chapter i. ver. 3, 4.

Ἔδοξε καὶ μοι, παρηκολουθηκότι ἄνωθεν πᾶσιν ἀκριβῶς, καθεξῆς σοι γράψαι, κράτιστε Θεόφιλε.

Ἴνα ἐπιγνῶς περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαν.

“ It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to *write unto thee in order*, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein

thou hast been instructed,”—i. e. I think it right to give you a written and succinct account of those things in which you have been initiated, or which you have been taught, *catechetically* *, or by *word of mouth*, or by having them *sounded in your ears.*”

St. Luke uses the same word in a similar sense.—*Acts* xviii. 25.

Οὗτος ἦν κατηχημένος τὴν ὁδὸν τῆς Κυρίας.

“This man was [catechetically] instructed in the Gospel.”—i. e. He had been initiated in the Gospel, or, he had acquired the *principles* of it, by hearing them delivered to him *vivâ voce.*”

That the instruction which Apollos had received was *elementary* only, is clear from the context, ver. 26. “Whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and *expounded* unto him the way of God more *perfectly.*”

St. Paul evidently applies the same term in the sense of oral instruction, 1 Cor. xiv.

* Stephens, Parkhurst, Hammond, Horsley.

19,—*ἵνα καὶ ἄλλοις κατηχήσω*, “ that by my voice I might teach others.”

After the Apostles had adopted the word, it was in very common use among the Fathers of the Primitive Church, to signify their peculiar mode of teaching the rudiments of Christianity by question and answer, and by impressing the lessons of the Gospel on the memories and hearts of their Neophytes by frequent repetition.

Hence the *Catechist* was said to instruct, by making the elements of Christian doctrine resound in the ears of his students; and the *Catechumen* was said to be taught by repeating the words addressed to him, and by answering questions.

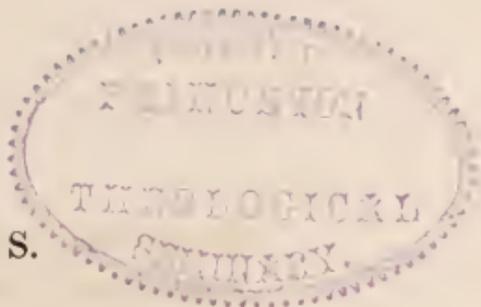
“ Catechism,” says Comber, “ according to the definition of an ancient author, is, *the knowledge of Religion first delivered to the ignorant by the Catechist, and then by them repeated over and over again.*

Κατήχησις ἔστιν ἐπιστήμη θεοσεβείας τοῖς ἀπείροις, ἢ δὲ παραδοθεῖσα ὑπὸ κατηγήτου, καὶ πάλιν ἀποδοθεῖσα ὑπ’ αὐτῶν.”—*Clemens Alexan-*

drinus. Which, continues Comber, appears farther from the very original of the word, being derived from ἠχώ, that is an echo, or a repeated sound, because the Catechist did first teach them, and then, by way of question, try if they had learnt what he had delivered to them, which gave good grounds to the authors of the Roman Catechism to say, “That the manner of the Apostles’ Catechising, which the Church yet imitates, in the mysteries of Baptism, consisted of Questions and Answers.”

Another Expositor of Catechetical instruction calls *Catechising* “A general instruction in the fundamental principles of the Christian Religion, by way of question and answer.”

I have merely to add to this statement, that the questioning and answering must be mutual, and that the Catechist does not do his duty by the Catechumen, unless he gives him an opportunity not only of repeating the lesson, but of asking for explanations, and of returning the sense as well as echoing back the sound of his instructor.



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HORÆ CATECHETICÆ.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

MY LORD,

As one of the Incumbents in your Lordship's diocese, I had the advantage of hearing that Charge, in which you dwelt with considerable earnestness upon the duty of CATECHISING, a duty which has been well defined * to be, "Instruction communicated by asking questions, and hearing and correcting the answers."

Your Lordship's directions upon this subject were preceded by some strong observations

* Bishop Mant, Notes on the Catechism.

upon the relation which ought to subsist between a parochial clergyman and his congregation,—and upon the means that should be adopted to bring the parishioner, from his earliest days, into immediate contact with his spiritual guide.

I have reason to be thankful for the impression, for the deep and lasting impression, which this part of your Lordship's Charge left on my mind. It led me to think more seriously, than I had ever done before, upon the practicability of establishing the relation which you recommended, and of having recourse to those primitive ordinances, and to the exercise of those endearing pastoral duties, which cannot fail of attaching the people to their constituted ministers. Having derived benefit from your Lordship's suggestions, and having been permitted, as I trust, to become an instrument of that good to others, which is likely to result from a regular system of catechetical instruction, I am anxious to give some publicity to the mode which I have pur-

sued, in conformity with your directions, and to its successful issue. It is for this reason that I now address your Lordship : and I am encouraged to do so, not only by the patient ear, which you have always lent to every personal communication, when I have reported from time to time the progress of my experiment,—but also by the desire expressed by your Lordship, that I should commit an account of it to print. But judging from one or two of the sentiments expressed in your Charge, that much as you wish and hope to see public catechising resumed, you entertain doubts as to the success, which may attend it equally in all places, I shall venture to follow your Lordship through your remarks, and to throw out a few reflections, as I proceed, upon the duty and expediency of a universal obedience to the instructions of the Church on this subject, before I enter upon an explanation of the system pursued by myself.

*EXTRACT FROM THE BISHOP OF LONDON'S
CHARGE.*

The following is the passage in your Lordship's Charge, to which I feel indebted for an impulse, which has given a new and more efficient character to my ministerial labours.

“ The general disuse into which this practice (CATECHISING) has fallen, I consider as calamitous to the interests of piety in the highest degree, not only by removing one of the strongest incitements to the parents to teach, and to the children to learn, the doctrines and laws of their Christian profession, but still more by its fatal effect in frustrating the purpose, which it was the principal object of the ordinances relating to these points to attain. If at the age when the mind is susceptible of the strongest impressions, the young are regularly brought into personal intercourse with their minister, and accustomed to receive their instructions from his lips, they will naturally imbibe a respect for

his person, and a reverence to the sacred character of his office, which will prove the strongest of barriers against immorality and vice, as well as dissent and infidelity. They will regard with deep veneration the truths which they have received upon his authority, and will feel, what reasoning can hardly make clear to the ignorant, the danger no less of guilt than of error, in deserting the appointed guide of their youth for intrusive and unknown teachers. The discontinuance of this salutary practice is imputable, neither to the neglect of the ecclesiastical governors,—for they have constantly remonstrated against it,—nor to the indolence of the parochial clergy; but was a concession most reluctantly yielded to the fastidious impatience of their congregations.

“ I am not so fondly attached to ancient usages, however beneficial in themselves, as to press the crude and hasty revival of a method of teaching, which, at least in its ordinary form, has proved on experience unsuitable to

the habits and feelings of modern times. To ensure success to the experiment, much judgment would be requisite in preparing the way by the previous removal of objections, and improving the practice itself by such modifications, as would render it popular as well as useful."



*CATECHISING, THE UNIFORM PRACTICE OF THE
ROMAN CATHOLIC CLERGY ABROAD.*

Very soon after hearing your Lordship deliver these sentiments, I visited the Continent; but the impression was not to be effaced by time or distance, nay, I may confidently affirm that the convictions of my mind were strengthened during this visit, and that my intercourse with strangers, and my personal observation of the practice of foreign clergy, made it more and more clear to me, that parochial discipline cannot be duly maintained, without the assistance of a regular Catechetical system.

The Roman Catholic priesthood are by far too prudent to lose the advantages, which are gained from an early and uninterrupted relation with the younger part of their flock. "Feed my lambs," is an injunction which they obey to the very letter, and they suffer none, no, not even parents themselves, to stand between them and their sacred duty in this department. It is from the priest's lips that the children of the Romish communion of every degree, receive religious instruction, as soon as they can well understand what religion is, and they naturally reverence the teacher, who first approaches them in the venerable character of God's minister, and love the instructor, who mingles words of kindness and encouragement with his solemn lessons of Christianity. I bear willing testimony to the zealous and affectionate manner in which the Romish clergy acquit themselves in this duty. The council of Trent*

* Concil. Trid. Sess. 24.

had the sagacity to make catechising one of the most binding of the sacerdotal services, and in the Preface of the Catechism which was first published by order of this council, a curious remark occurs, which shews how great an advantage is to be gained over our adversaries by strict attention to this duty. “The age is sadly sensible what mischief the Protestants have done the Catholic Church, not only by their tongues, but especially by their writings called Catechisms.”

The ministers of the Church of Rome have the good sense to obey the Canon, not as “by constraint, but willingly,” and in sincere admiration of their conduct in this respect, I cannot forbear applying to them the whole of that scriptural passage, towards which my thoughts have been led, and adding, that if, in taking the oversight of their flock, with a ready mind, they bear themselves towards their youthful charge, as the Apostle enjoined, so they may like-

wise be fairly held up to us, as "examples."

Nothing can be more kind or parental than their catechetical examinations. They do not leave it to parish clerks, or to teachers of an ordinary stamp, to drawl through the same form of words, day after day, and to secure rote without meaning, but they themselves are the judicious expounders. I have entered churches in France, in Italy, and in Switzerland, and have witnessed the same beautiful scene of a parish priest, surrounded by children of various ranks and ages, mildly questioning, patiently explaining, exhorting, reproofing, and instructing like "a man of God," rewarding with smiles of approbation, and rewarded in return by the happy and animated looks of the cheerful circle. In almost all the cases to which I allude, I myself, was the only spectator, and that too often-times, unseen by the priest, who therefore was manifestly discharging this interesting duty, not to be

heard or seen of men, but to obtain that influence over his juvenile audience, which the sanctity of his office may justly claim.



*THE PRACTICE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
CLERGY IN ENGLAND.*

My Lord, the same practice, and the same tender and watchful concern over the rising generation prevail among the clergy of the Roman Catholic Church in England. They begin to exert their influence during the earliest infancy ; they do not suffer catechising to fall into inefficient hands ; they do not conduct it as a mere formulary ; they do not confine it to seasons, but they make it to be of substantial, and lasting use, by obtaining through its instrumentality a fast hold upon the affections and respect of their flock. It will not be out of place to remark, that I am inclined to attribute a very great measure of the success which the papists have had of late, in effecting conversion, to the mode of

catechising which they have adopted. Their catechetical instructions are not given, as on the Continent, merely with a view to the benefit of young hearers, of their own communion, but to seduce such of our people as may chance to drop in, and listen to them. For this purpose all possible notoriety is extended to the proceeding, and the opportunity is embraced, of putting forth such apologetical, familiar, and attractive *, expositions of their

* The following extract from the form of Catechism, “recommended by authority, for the use of the faithful in the four districts in England,” under the signature of the four vicars apostolic, will give some idea of the manner in which catechising is conducted in this country by the Roman Catholics.—

The first Commandment.

Q. Say the first Commandment.

A. *I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage.*

Thou shalt not have strange gods before me. Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven thing, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth; thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them. I am the Lord thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting

doctrine and discipline, as may lead astray the unsettled and wavering professors of a purer faith.

the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands to them that love me, and keep my commandments. Exod. xx. 2. 6.

Q. Why put you all this in one commandment?

A. Because it all relates to one and the same thing.

Q. Does not the Scripture say that these words, *Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven thing*, are the second commandment?

A. No: the Scripture does not say which is the first, second, or third commandment.

Q. Do not those words, *Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven thing*, forbid the making of images?

A. No: they forbid the making only of idols; that is, they forbid making images to be adored, or honoured, as gods: as it is declared in these words, *Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them*. So that the words, *thou shalt not make to thyself any graven thing*, &c. are only an explanation of the foregoing words, *Thou shalt not have strange gods before me*. We, therefore, with Saint Augustine, make of them but one commandment.

Q. What is meant by these first words, *I am the Lord thy God*, &c.?

A. By these God declares to us, that he is our true

ITS SUCCESS.

This sort of effort answers the purpose better than all the controversy in the world ;

and supreme Lord, and therefore we are obliged to obey him with all diligence.

Q. What are we commanded by this first commandment ?

A. By the first commandment, we are commanded to love, serve, and worship one only true and living God, and no more.

Q. What is forbidden by the first commandment ?

A. The first commandment forbids us to worship idols, or give to any creature the honour due to God.

Q. What is the honour due to God ?

A. The honour due to God is a supreme and sovereign honour, which can be given to no other : we must worship him as our Creator, Redeemer, and last end.

Q. Is it lawful to honour the images of Christ and his saints ?

A. Yes : it is lawful to honour the images of Christ and his saints, with an inferior and relative honour, because the honour given them is referred to the things they represent : so that by kissing the cross, or the images of Christ, and by kneeling before them, we honour and adore Christ himself.

Q. Do Catholics pray to images ?

it is the argument of an active life which convinces common understandings: and if our own clergy would take similar pains to render their personal office a pattern of zeal, marked by affection, they would be rebuilding the Church upon a basis of moral strength, against which the storm raised by papists or separatists, would beat in vain.

A. No, by no means; we pray *before* them indeed, to keep us from distractions, but not *to* them; for we know they can neither see, nor hear, nor help us.

Q. What benefit have we then by them?

A. They movingly represent to us the mysteries of our Saviour's passion, and the martyrdom of his saints.

Q. What benefit have we by honouring and canonizing saints?

A. It strongly moves us to imitate their example, by shewing us their rewards.

Q. How do we honour saints and angels?

A. We honour saints and angels with an inferior honour, as the friends and creatures of God, not as gods, nor with God's honour.

Q. Is it lawful to honour the relics of saints?

A. Yes, with a relative honour, as above explained; for the *handkerchiefs* and *aprons* which had but touched the body of *St. Paul*, cast out devils, and cured all diseases. *Acts* xix. 12.

I would say with Archdeacon Bayley, in his admirable charge *, Let it not be a matter of offence, if I venture to declare my honest opinion, that in this labour of love, we, the Establishment, have yet somewhat to learn from other Protestant Societies, more especially from the Priesthood of the Roman Catholic communion. They are wise in their generation. And as we were long since, and truly told, “if we hope to be a match for them, we must imitate them †.”

* Delivered to the clergy of the Archdeaconry of Stowe, May, 1826.

† The observations which Bishop Burnet made upon this subject, more than 130 years ago, are so strictly applicable to the present times, that I cannot forbear recording them in this place. “Though there is still much ignorance among their mass-priests, their parish-priests are generally another sort of men. They are well instructed in their religion, lead regular lives, and perform their parochial duties with most wonderful diligence. They are almost perpetually employing themselves in the several parts of their cures:—*instructing the youth*—hearing confessions, and visiting the sick, &c. So that the reformation which popery hath

Instruction given in Sunday, Charity, or National Schools, is not an evidence of pastoral anxiety, equal to that of catechetical instruction in Church, it being conducted for the most part with closed doors ; and constant as a minister's attendance may be in those schools, his labours are unknown to his parishioners at large. Where is the wonder, then, that unreflecting persons, who try modes of faith by the zeal of its ministers, and who have had no opportunity of seeing their own clergy display anxious interest in the religious cultivation of the younger portion of his flock, should be half won over to the side of the Roman Catholic priest, when he beholds him devoting himself to the spiritual

been forced to make, has in a great measure stopped the progress of the reformation of the doctrinal worship, that did so long carry every thing before it."—*Preface to Pastoral Care.*

“ The argument,” said Burnet, in another place, “ in favour of the Church, how clearly so ever made out, will never have a full effect upon the world, till we can shew a primitive spirit in its administration.”

improvement of the youngest, and humblest, and dullest of his congregation, and hears him explaining the most beguiling of papal doctrines, in a voice and with a manner which seems to prove that his whole heart is in the cause?



AN INSTRUMENT OF PROSELYTISM.

My Lord, I do not speak unadvisedly, nor ill-naturedly, (for it is not in the shape of a charge against them that I adduce the fact,) when I touch upon the seductive intention, and the seductive effect, of the catechetical lectures held by Roman Catholic priests in England. There is, in the immediate vicinity of London, one of the most flourishing of their establishments for the education of poor children. Many of those admitted here are the children of Protestant *

* The following case has been communicated to me by the gentleman who took it down, as it was detailed by the mouth of his informant. The child to whom it re-

parents, girls especially, for it is an object to gain over females, the future mothers of

lates is now a well-behaved and intelligent scholar of the Sunday school of Somers-Town New Church.—

“ About two years and a half ago, soon after my being left by my husband, a tall person (a priest) called upon me, and having asked if my name was not Farnes, enquired if I had not a child, I replied, yes. He then asked how I provided for him, I told him by my own labour ; he then asked, did I not find it very difficult to do it? and, upon my replying that I did, he said, does he go to any school? I told him to Perry-street, a school conducted on the Lancastrian system, where the children’s friends pay 2d per week, for the instruction given. He then said, had I not better send him to some charity school? I replied, I should be glad if I could get him into one where he could be boarded ; upon this he told me he knew where there was such an one ;—I then asked where, and if he could inform me how I could get him into it? He told me to come at eight o’clock, (I think it was at eight o’clock) on the next Sunday morning, to the Roman Catholic chapel in Clarendon-square. Oh ! I said, you want to make a Catholic of him then? He said, no, he might come to the school, and not be a Catholic ; and if I would send him every morning by eight o’clock, that they would keep him ; they had a great number they did so by. I said they did not allow them to read the Bible ;—he replied they did, those

families. Their infatuated parents have been tempted to send them to this institution, not

parts which were fit for them, and that they taught children their duty to their parents, that the Catholic children were much better behaved than the Perry-street boys. Then I perceive you are a Catholic yourself, I observed. He replied "rather so." I then said, I could not agree to his going: he said I was very wrong, for if I did, that I might be sure I should have employment for myself, and my child provided for; he desired me to come on the following Sunday, and hear the children catechised, he was sure I should approve of it. I told him I would consider of it. He then left me; but came again in about a fortnight, and complained that I was not at the chapel. He then asked, where was your boy on the Sabbath-day, if you were out at work? He told me if I would come on the Sunday morning to the chapel, I should be relieved; that I need not work on the Sabbath-day: I stated I had been in a Roman Catholic chapel but twice, and in my present mind, I should not enter one again. He then left me, saying, he should call again; but did not;—Throughout these conversations he called me his child."

It is notorious that many Protestant children, drawn away thus, are brought up in this Roman Catholic establishment. One poor man has been persuaded to send two of his children there.

merely for the sake of the aid which it affords to persons of large families in an humble condition of life,—but by the effect which the priests' mode of catechising has had upon their own judgment or imagination.

A reference to “The Laity's Directory to the Church Service, for the year 1828,” published for Roman Catholics, with the authority of the Vicar Apostolic in England, will furnish some solid proofs of the importance which the Hierarchy of Rome attach to the duty of catechising young persons publicly, in the place of divine worship. The hour of catechising is regularly advertised among the services of the Church: and in the notices of twenty-five chapels in, or very near London, care is taken to announce that catechetical instruction forms part of the solemnities of eleven out of that number. For example,

“St. Mary's, Moorfields. A discourse after the gospel at high mass, and vespers on Sundays at three o'clock, and catechism immediately after.”

“ Sardinian chapel, Duke-street, Lincoln’s-inn-fields. After the gospel, at high mass on Sunday, a discourse in English : vespers at three o’clock, immediately after which catechism, and a catechetical discourse.”

“ Chelsea New Chapel. Catechism at half-past two, and vespers, with benediction, at half-past three.”

“ London Road. Vespers in summer at half-past three, in winter at three o’clock : after vespers the catechism explained.”

“ Somers Town. At six, catechism, followed by the benediction of the blessed Sacrament.”



*PRACTISED BY THE FOREIGN PROTESTANT
CLERGY.*

It would be needless to produce any further testimony of the exemplary anxiety displayed by the Romish clergy to bring themselves into regular intercourse with the young, I will therefore proceed to make a

few brief remarks upon the value, which the Protestant, as well as Roman Catholic, Churches on the Continent attach to public catechising, as an indispensable branch of the clerical office.

De Thou's account of the pains, which the ministers of the Reformed Churches of France took, in past times, to lay a good foundation, at an age, when the mind is susceptible of the strongest impressions, is literally applicable to the present period of their ecclesiastical history. "You can scarcely find a boy among them who cannot give you an intelligible account of the faith they profess." This was said of them two hundred and fifty years ago: and, at a still earlier date, a Popish theologian, who was sent to convert the Protestants of Dauphiné, came back ashamed of his errand, and avowed that it was a hopeless case to attempt to make proselytes, in a quarter where the youngest were so well grounded in the principles of their creed by their pastors. "I have learnt," exclaimed

he, "more of the doctrine of salvation from the answers of little children in their Catechism, than in all my previous studies."

It is well known, that the Protestant congregations in France and Switzerland, in their solicitude to remove as far as possible from the stumbling blocks of Popish error, tolerate but very few forms of prayer. Most of them have, however, strongly marked their sense of the expediency of public catechising, by admitting into their simple Liturgies, an order of service and form of prayer used for the preparation of Catechumens. But it is not in the sanctuary only, that our Protestant brethren on the Continent impress upon the minds of their juvenile congregations the awful responsibility of the Christian covenant. They follow them to their houses at stated intervals, and extending their pastoral care to old as well as to young, they ask for an account of their studies and meditations in the bosoms of their families. I have now an extract from

a traveller's letter before me, in which he writes thus of one of these interesting scenes.

“ The pastor of ————— was engaged in his district examination. The intention of this is to ascertain the religious and moral state of each hamlet. During the short time we witnessed his labours, he asked his people if any of them wished for an explanation of any particular passages of Scripture, which they had not clearly understood. After having addressed himself to almost every one in particular, he concluded by a most affectionate exhortation, and a solemn prayer.”

I myself had the satisfaction of being present at more than one of the Catechetical lectures, which constitute a regular division of the parochial minister's labours in the Protestant valleys of Piedmont. At stated periods, the Churches are opened on Mondays and Wednesdays for this mode of instruction expressly, and it is uniformly imparted by the pastors themselves, although

each village has its appointed schoolmaster. Happily, the parochial clergy in these secluded regions, are too sensibly alive to the interests of religion, to resign religious instruction entirely to lay-teachers.



ITS HAPPY EFFECTS.

The effect of this watchfulness over the spiritual progress of their youthful flock is exactly what your Lordship has so well expressed. “If the young are brought into regular intercourse with their ministers, and accustomed to receive their instructions from his lips, they will naturally imbibe a respect for his person, and a reverence to the sacred character of his office, which will prove the strongest of barriers against immorality and vice, as well as dissent and infidelity. They will regard with deep veneration the truths which they have received upon his authority, *and will feel what reasoning can hardly*

make clear to the ignorant, the danger no less of guilt than of error in deserting the appointed guide of their youth, for intrusive and unknown teachers." Should there ever be that general disuse of the practice of catechising in the little Church of the valleys, which your Lordship bewails in this country, as being "calamitous to the interests of piety in the highest degree," and which has been well pronounced by another authority to be "as unreasonable, as the effect is disastrous," I am persuaded that the light which has been permitted by Divine Providence, to shine so long in the midst of Papal darkness, will soon tremble in its lamp, and finally be extinguished by Papal violence or stratagem.

I began this letter by expressing my gratitude to your Lordship for directing my attention to a serious duty, which, I trust nothing will ever induce me to neglect; the mention of the Vaudois of Piemont, leads me to acknowledge another heavy debt, (and

the digression will be allowed,) under which they and I are bound to you.

It required the influence of exhortation and example to render successful those endeavours, which humbler advocates were making in behalf of this Protestant community. Had not their cause been espoused by some person in authority, it would have been hopeless. You, my Lord, were the first to extend that aid which the case required. Your influence, your advice, your time were freely given. In the midst of many other pressing occupations, you were always accessible. May you long have opportunities of exercising one of the most graceful privileges of high station, and continue to secure permanent sentiments of respect, by similar instances of kindness and consideration!

To return to the more immediate subject in view. Your Lordship has stated that the discontinuance of the salutary practice of catechising "is imputable neither to the neglect of the ecclesiastical governors, for

they have constantly remonstrated against it, nor to the indolence of the parochial clergy; but was a concession most reluctantly yielded to the fastidious impatience of their congregations.”



MEASURES WHICH HAVE BEEN ADOPTED IN ENGLAND TO ENFORCE CATECHISING ON THE PART OF THE ESTABLISHED CLERGY.

My Lord, you have done no more than justice to the heads of our Church, in saying that they have constantly remonstrated against the neglect of this duty. The charges of our most distinguished Prelates, for the last century and a half, abound in expostulations with their clergy on account of their dereliction of it. Indeed the Liturgy, the Canons, and the Rubric demand so strict an attention to the letter of the precept, that it is impossible for our ecclesiastical governors to pass over the violation of it in silence. But, my Lord, I cannot help entertaining an

opinion, that little as the custom of catechising seems to prevail at this time among the established clergy of England, as much attention is paid to the duty by the reflecting portion of the profession now, as at any former period of our ecclesiastical history. Yes, lamentably remiss as we are in this point, I think we can bear comparison with our ancestors, taken as a body. The theory of catechetical instruction has always been admitted to be beautiful ; but, with strange inconsistency, the practice has ever been slack and irregular. My judgment is formed upon the injunctions and canons which have been put forth from time to time, imposing penalties upon the non-performance of this service, and upon the complaints which have never ceased to issue from archbishops and bishops. So that it is really difficult to ascertain which was the golden period, when this “godly discipline, and laudable custom of the Church of England,” was in perfection.

Archbishop Cranmer spoke of its neglect,

in the Dedication of his Catechism* to king Edward the Sixth, in the year 1548, although a royal injunction for its strict observance had been promulgated in the former reign, twelve years before.

CANONS OF EDWARD VI.

Public authority twice interfered during the last Edward's brief sovereignty. But what great benefit could be expected from a limited order like the following?

“The curate of every parish, once in six weeks at the least, upon warning by him given, shall upon some Sunday, or holiday, half an hour before evensong, openly in the church, instruct, and examine so many children of his parish sent unto him, as the time will serve, and as he shall think convenient, in some part of this catechism †. And all

* See Burnet's History of the Reformation. Vol. II. 71.

† This catechism was nearly the same as that now in

fathers, mothers, masters, and dames, shall cause their children, servants, and apprentices (which are not yet confirmed), to come to the Church, at the time appointed, and obediently hear, and be ordered by the curate, until such time as they have learnt all that is here appointed for them to learn." 2. 5, Ed. VI.

An interval of six weeks * was permitted to elapse between each act of public instruction, and even then the time specified was *half an hour* only. Little, indeed, was likely to be gained, by such a process, on the part of an illiterate population, very few of

use, save that the part which relates to the sacraments, had not yet been added. It was introduced after the conference in the reign of king James I. between the Episcopalians and Puritans.

* The injunctions and articles to be enquired of at the king's visitation, in 1547, contained a query, put to "parsons, vicars, and curates," which was better calculated to secure the attention of the Clergy, "Have you, on Sundays and holidays, taught your parishioners, and especially the youth, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the ten commandments, and expounded the same?"

whom could read, and whose ignorance therefore required that the curate should recite the leading articles of our faith, little by little, till the learners could repeat them by heart.

PENAL INJUNCTIONS OF ELIZABETH.

It is manifest enough, that nothing very effectual could result from such an infrequent exercise of the duty, as that with which the framers of Edward's injunction would have been satisfied. And so it was found; for by a very early act of queen Elizabeth, the curate was required to perform this service every *second* Sunday. The *Constitutions* of 1571 improved upon this provision, and inserted a clause to the following effect:

“ On every Sunday, and holiday, at twelve o'clock, the clergy shall repair to their churches, and there spend two hours at least in reading and explaining the catechism; and they shall instruct therein all their parishioners, of every age and condition; and they

shall take especial care that none be permitted * to receive the Communion, or to *contract marriage*, &c. before they can well and sufficiently answer all the questions in the catechism †.

From thenceforward we might suppose, that the object of the Church was completely attained, and that clergy and people submitted equally to this peremptory law. But no! twenty years afterwards, Archbishop Whitgift felt himself constrained to notice the desuetude into which the practice had fallen, and to exhort his suffragans, “ In the fear of God, according to their pastoral care, and by the duty which they owed both to God and his Church, to give straight charge to the

* Another penalty proposed during this arbitrary reign, was, “ That he, whose child, at ten years old and upwards, was not able to say the catechism, should pay ten shillings to the poor’s box; the like penalty to be inflicted upon masters and mistresses, who had servants of fourteen years and upwards, who could not say the catechism by heart.”

† Wilk. iv. 265.

clergy and their parishioners, to see that the children, and other ignorant persons, were duly instructed, and examined in their catechism, as, by the orders of the Church, they ought to be *."

CANONS OF JAMES I.

The 59th of "the Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical," agreed on in 1603, departed, in some degree, from the severity of Elizabeth's enactments, but its penal character proves that the continued laxity of the clergy still demanded a coercive hand.

"Every parson, vicar, or curate, upon *every Sunday and holy day*, before evening prayer, shall, for half an hour and more, examine and instruct the youth, and ignorant persons of his parish, in the ten commandments, the Articles of the Belief, and in the Lord's Prayer : and shall diligently hear, in-

* "Anno. 1591. Reg. Whitgift, vol. i. 185."

struct, and teach them the catechism, set forth in the Book of the Common Prayer. And all fathers, mothers, masters, and mistresses, shall cause their children, servants, and apprentices, which have not learned the catechism, to come to the church, at the time appointed, obediently to hear, and to be ordered by the minister until they have learned the same. And if any minister neglect his duty herein, let him be sharply reprov'd upon the first complaint, and true notice thereof given to the Bishop or Ordinary of the place. If, after submitting himself, he shall wilfully offend again, let him be suspended. If so the third time, there being little hope he will be therein reformed, then excommunicated, and so remain, until he will be reformed. And likewise if any of the said fathers, masters, mistresses of the children, servants, or apprentices, shall neglect their duties, as the one sort in not causing them to come, and the other in refusing to learn, as aforesaid, let them be suspended

by their Ordinaries, (if they be not children,) and if they so persist by the space of a month, then let them be excommunicated."

It is manifest from the terms, "*examine and instruct,*" and "*shall diligently hear, instruct, and teach,*" that the canon exacts much more, than that the clergyman should merely hear the children say the form of church catechism by rote. A careful instruction in the principles therein set forth is the object of this canon : and in bishop Gibson's "*Codex Juris Ecclesiastici Anglicani,*" we find a note upon the words "examine and instruct the youth," to the following effect :—

"In the *Reformatio Legum* there is an excellent rule upon this head. One hour or more in the afternoon service, 'Let the parish priest take up the Catechism, and give great attention to the explanation of it ; for a frequent exposition of the Catechism is of the utmost use and benefit in the Church of God. And we wish this instruction to be given not only to the children, but to the

young persons who are growing up, that they also may be well informed in the principles of their religion, and that the assiduity of the children may be stimulated by their presence.’ ”

But whether it was, that the express mention of the *Ten Commandments, the Articles of the Belief, and the Lord's Prayer*, gave such a formal and limited construction to the canon, as to defeat the more substantial object regarded by the clause that immediately follows : viz. “ shall diligently hear, instruct, and teach them the Catechism,” &c. —or that the service was rendered obnoxious by its appearance of constraint, and by the penalties attached to the non-performance of the duty, menacing both the negligent minister, and the careless parents and masters, who would not send their children to be so taught,—certain it is, that the Church gained nothing in point of true allegiance by having her ordinance thus defined and enforced.

“ Your Majesty,” said a Right Reverend

preacher before King James, in 1624, “ can never be sufficiently commended, in taking order, that the chief heads of the Catechism should, in the ordinary ministry, be diligently propounded, and explained unto the people throughout the land ; *which I wish were as duly executed every where, as was piously by you intended.*”

About the same period, the archbishop of Canterbury, in a letter written to the archbishop of York, complained thus grievously of the neglect of catechising, by the English clergy : “ The which kind of teaching, (to our amendment be it spoken,) is more diligently observed in all the reformed Churches of Europe, than of late it hath been here in England. I find his majesty much moved with this neglect, and resolved, if we bishops do not see a reformation hereof, which I trust we shall, to recommend it to the care of the civil magistrate.”

RUBRIC OF 1661.

In pursuing the enquiry, we shall find that the rubrics, which were re-modelled in the reign of Charles II., have not been much more successful, although they are in their nature more obligatory than the canons, because they are made binding by statute, as well as ecclesiastical law. Within so short a period as ten years after their enactment, archbishop Sheldon, by the king's command, sent letters to the bishops, requiring them "to enforce the execution of such laws and constitutions, as enabled them to enjoin the use and exercise of our Church Catechism;" a pretty clear proof of the general carelessness. Cosins, bishop of Durham, must have understood the extent of this insufficiency, when he observed*, that the rubric is expressed in indefinite terms, and that a parochial Clergyman is not obliged by it to

* See Shepherd on the Common Prayer, vol. ii. p. 276.

catechise more frequently than he himself thinks necessary. In one respect, by changing the time from "half an hour before evening prayer," to an interval "after the second Lesson," it varies directly from the 59th canon, and so far the trumpet of the law gives an uncertain sound. "The curate of every parish shall diligently, upon Sundays and holy days, after the second Lesson at evening prayer, openly in the church instruct and examine so many children of his parish, sent unto him, as he shall think convenient, in some part of the Catechism."



*INSUFFICIENCY OF THE RUBRIC TO REVIVE
EFFECTIVE CATECHISING.*

The principal inconvenience of this rubric is found in the time it enjoins for the exercise of the duty, which seldom fails of exciting impatience in the congregation, and of producing results inconsistent with the spirit of the ordinance. To catechise during

an interval of Divine Service, is to lose the effect of that more familiar and personal examination of each child, according to the nature of his answers, which is the life and essence of the practice. Moreover, while the minister is in the midst of the evening prayer, and the congregation are silenced by the solemnity of the Liturgy, it may be thought ill-timed and injurious to the seriousness of their devotion, to interrupt them by a process of interrogation, which may, occasionally, sink into the ridiculous, by the replies of simple and ignorant childhood.

I should be sorry to put any wrong construction upon your Lordship's sentiments, but I consider, that the following passage in your Lordship's charge, has reference to the inutility of confining ourselves to the system proposed by the Rubric, and gives some warrant to the observations which I have just hazarded. "I am not so fondly attached to ancient usages, however beneficial in themselves, as to press the crude and hasty revival

of a method of teaching, which, at least in its ordinary form, has proved, on experience, unsuitable to the habits and feelings of modern times *."

What, indeed, is more likely to render a congregation impatient, than to make a break in their devotions, for the purpose of an exhibition, which has nothing in it either of an instructive or impressive nature? They can say the Catechism themselves, and they are aware, that the children who are commanded to stand up before them, can also repeat it. It is a congregational, and not a scholastic exercise that is required: a service which shall employ men's thoughts, remind them of that which they have forgotten, or explain that which they do not understand. A well known manual, equally familiar to all present, repeated over and over again, Sunday after Sunday, cannot by any possibility produce the effect contemplated by those who

* Charge of 1822, p. 24, 3d Edition.

enjoined the ordinance. It might answer some good when very few could read, and when the children, apprentices, and servants, had no other means of acquiring the form of words, contained in the leading articles of the Catechism, than from the mouth of the priest, as he distinctly recited them from the desk or pulpit. But now, when it may be taken for granted, that the form is well taught elsewhere, and that the attendant at church is desirous to leave the principles, or at all events, the mere enunciation of Christian doctrines, and to go on unto perfection, it is, really, nothing but disappointment and vexation, if he be detained to listen to the same elementary examination, without the chance of carrying away with him, a particle of additional knowledge.

Any unvaried monotonous process is unable to awaken interest either in the examinant or by-stander, and therefore, even the best exposition of the Catechism, if it be always drawn from the mouths of the children in the same

order of question and answer, would become so cold in its style, and stiff in its application, as to excite the same disrelish as the Catechism itself when taught by rote only. It is the lesson-like character of the mode, when adopted in literal obedience to the Rubric, and the dull task-work, which the querist, the respondent, and the congregation feel in an equal degree, which have rendered, and will continue to render, the old method uninviting, and therefore uninfluential.

Seeing then, that the verbal construction of the Injunctions, Canons, and Rubrics, have had some tendency to defeat the object proposed by them, in that they have prescribed times and seasons, and induced a neglect, or cold performance of duty, on the part of those who give themselves no trouble to enquire into the nature and duty of catechising, is the system to be abandoned altogether? Not so, but it becomes a question, whether it may not be improved, and whether a spirit of emulation may not be stirred up by other,

and higher motives than a legislative enactment. The letter of the law being dead, or considered so, by those who forget their subscriptions and declarations of conformity, is there not some ever living spirit of the rule by which we may be guided and governed?

Your Lordship has not overlooked this. You have reminded us, that we are to consult the tenor of the Liturgy and services of the Church, and there we shall find, how solemnly the attention of the pastor and his people, is drawn to the demands of their mutual relation as shepherd and fold, and to the conduct of both parties in the performance of their respective duties. "Whether we look to the dedication of the infant to God by the ministry of the priest, to the profession of faith and obedience which is made in his presence by the sponsors, or to the exhortation which designates their duties, and specifies the instruction to be given to the child, we discern the pervading

intention of placing the rising generation in the view of the minister, of giving them in the tenderest infancy the advantage of his paternal protection, and sending them to the Church, to be publicly instructed by him in faith and morals *.”

MOTIVES DERIVED FROM THE BAPTISMAL SERVICE.

In the baptismal service, the very first supplication which the priest addresses to the throne of Grace, publicly before the congregation †, is that “the child may be

* The Rubric directs that baptism should be administered upon Sundays and other holy days, “*When the most number of people come together*” for the express purpose that “every man present may be put in remembrance of his own profession made to God.” It adds “in his baptism,” but cau the reflecting priest forget that *his* professions, made when he was consecrated to God, as the minister of God’s word, demand something of him also, viz. that he shall “*teach, premonish, feed, and provide for the Lord’s family?*”

† Charge of 1822, p. 21, 3d Edition.

received into the *ark of Christ's Church.*" The next petition is, that the infant "being stedfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity, may so pass the waves of this troublesome world, that finally he may come to the land of everlasting life." What clergyman is so dull, or so fanatical, who would not shrink indignantly from the reproach, if he were asked, Do you presume then, that the prayers of the Church, without any of the efforts of the Church, through its ministers, are to go on accomplishing this blessed effect? When the child arrives at years of understading, if he shall live to a period of temptation, will he pass safely through the waves of this troublesome world, without any helping hand, without any spiritual guide to direct him?

Were the infant left here, it would be the veriest mockery, and therefore the service proceeds to speak of the rebuke which the disciples received from our Lord, when they would have kept little children from

him, and to remind us by implication, that we are to receive them, not only to formularies, but to instruction; not only at the baptismal font, but at the chair of the catechist, to acquaint them with the *nature* as well as with the words of Baptismal Regeneration.

How is the child, who “is dedicated to God by our office and ministry,” to “remain in the number of God’s faithful and elect children through Jesus Christ,” should length of days be extended to him, unless he be brought to a vital knowledge of Jesus Christ, through our office and ministry? It is mere lip service “to give thanks unto Almighty God, and to make our prayers unto him, that this child may *lead the rest of his life according to this beginning,*” unless we ourselves, to the utmost of our abilities, obey the further injunctions of the Church, and explain to him, what it is, “to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner, against sin, the

world, and the devil, and to *continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end.*" Again, how can we seriously proceed to exhort godfathers and godmothers to "remember that it is their parts and duties to see that the infant be taught what a solemn vow, promise, and profession he hath made, and to provide that he may learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and Ten commandments in the vulgar tongue, and all the things which a Christian ought to know to his soul's health," unless we ourselves are prepared to be at our posts, when the time shall come, and to teach them to understand the same? Who can conceive that the same Church, which propounds the form and "ministration of public baptism," and the form of "Catechism to be learnt of every person, &c." has greater claims upon the sponsors who are *to see* that infants be taught, than upon the ministers whose duty it is to explain the lesson in question?

*MOTIVES DERIVED FROM THE ORDINATION
SERVICE.*

But a more sacred appeal yet remains, and it can be shewn, that what a sponsor undertakes for his god-child, the parochial minister undertakes for "all such as are, or shall be committed to his charge," within the extent of a possible quantity of duty, i. e. as far as it is practicable. Yes, there is a solemn account which every Parish Priest has to render, in conformity with his Ordination vow, infinitely beyond all the obligation which Acts of Parliament, Constitutions, or Canons, can impose. He may evade the letter of these, and may persuade himself that he has catechised, and taught and initiated, according to Rubrick or Canon, if during certain seasons of the year, he have gathered together the school children, or others of his parish, about the rails of the altar, or reading-desk, and questioned them as to their

proficiency in saying by heart the form of the Church catechism. But a reference to the Ordination Service will lead to a bitter reprehension of himself, should he not have carried his instructions to a much greater extent, and questioned personally as many young people as he could induce to answer, concerning "the reason of the hope which is in them."

I conceive, therefore, that your Lordship, in common with the other Prelates of the realm, would be able to admonish and reprove a negligent catechist with irresistible authority, by censures resting solely on the solemn engagements made by Deacons and Priests under the imposition of hands, and the awful sponson at the altar. "The questions," says Burnet, "are put in the name of God and of his Church, which make the answers to them to be of the nature of vows and oaths, so that if men do make conscience of any thing, and if it is possible to strike terror into them, the forms of our Ordination

are the most effectually contrived for that end that could have been framed *."

"It appertaineth to the office of a Deacon—to instruct the youth in the catechism.—Will you do this *gladly* and *willingly*?" demands the Bishop.

"I will do so by the help of God!" is the answer.

That the Deacon may understand that it is no hasty and formal compliance with this and other duties of his profession, which is required, but an essential performance of them, he is further asked,—

"Will you apply all your diligence to frame and fashion your own life, and the lives of your families, according to the doctrine of Christ: and to make both yourselves and them, as much as in you lieth, wholesome examples of the flock of Christ?"

"I will do so, the Lord being my helper."

In the Ordination of Priests, the duty of

* Pastoral Care.

pastoral and catechetical instruction, as independent of that of public preaching, and in addition to it, is so distinctly marked, and seriously defined, that none could evade it, without the help of a supposed obedience to the letter of the Canons and Rubric.

“ And now again we exhort you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you have in remembrance into how high a dignity, and to how weighty an office and charge, ye are called : that is to say, to be *messengers*, *watchmen*, and *stewards*, of the Lord ; to *teach*, to *premonish*, to feed and provide for the Lord’s family, and *to seek for Christ’s sheep* that are scattered abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever. If it shall happen that any member thereof take any hurt or hindrance, *by reason of your negligence*, ye know the greatness of the fault, and also the horrible punishment that will ensue. Wherefore consider, within yourselves, the end of your

ministry towards the children of God, towards the spouse, and body of Christ; *and see that you never cease your labour, your care and diligence, until you have done all that lieth in you, according to your bounden duty, to bring all such as are, or shall be, committed to your charge, unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, that there be no place left among you, either for error in religion, or for viciousness in life,"* &c.

After this exhortation follow these questions:—

“Are you determined out of the said Scripture to instruct the people committed to your charge,” &c.?

Answer—“I am so determined by God’s grace.”

“Will you then give your faithful diligence, so that you may teach the people committed to your care and charge, to keep and observe the same?”

Answer—“ I will do so by the help of God.”

“ Will you be ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines, contrary to God’s word : and *to use both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick, as to the whole, within your cure, as need shall require,* and occasion shall be given ?”

Answer—“ I will, the Lord being my helper.”

Such are the duties of *Catechising* and of pastoral instruction, according to the ordination engagements. The Ordination Service defines them, and the bishop who ordains, imperatively exacts them, as an obligation binding on the souls of priests and deacons, not only according to the letter, but to the spirit, and the full meaning of the words in which it is conveyed. It is a stipulation entered upon at the altar : it is a covenant ratified before God, and in the pre-

sence of the congregation, that the person who is admitted into Holy Orders, “ *shall never cease his labour, care, or diligence, till he hath done all that lieth in him, both by public and private monitions and exhortations to bring those committed to his charge to the ripeness and perfectness of Christ.*”

“ My advice,” said Bishop Burnet in his Discourse on the Pastoral Care, “ is, that those who are already in Orders, will at least four times a year, on the Ordination Sundays, read over the offices of the degrees of the Church in which they are; and will particularly consider the charge that was given, and the answers that were made by them: and then ask themselves as before God, who will judge them at the great day, upon their religious performance of them, whether they had been true to them or not.”

*A MISTAKEN IDEA, THAT THE NECESSITY OF
CATECHISING IS SUPERSEDED BY THE NA-
TIONAL SCHOOL SYSTEM.*

Your Lordship has expressed yourself unwilling to impute the discontinuance of catechising to the "indolence of the parochial clergy." Indolence is not, I would hope, the fault of the clergy of the day; and if there be any disinclination to exercise the functions of catechists, it is more likely to arise from an erroneous persuasion, that their other labours have been such as to render it unnecessary, than from any unwillingness to encounter personal trouble. There is scarcely a parish, in your Lordship's diocese at least, where a school of some description, Sunday or weekly, has not been instituted, under the superintendence of the parochial minister, for the religious improvement of the children of the poor. To the internal management of such establishments the clergyman devotes much of his time and attention: he is pre-

sent at examinations,— he provides that scriptural lessons shall form the principal subjects of instruction ; and all being under his immediate care, he believes that he does enough, and obeys the Rubric and the Canon, while he thus “ causes the children, who have not learnt the catechism, to come to hear and be ordered, till they have learned the same.” I am confident there is so much good intention in these and other labours of the generality of my Clerical brethren, that there are but few of them, who could not be soon brought to admit, that in this superintendence of parish schools, they are performing only *half* of their catechetical duties, and that they are falling very far short of the good which they conscientiously propose to themselves. Parents, and parishioners at large, in their own persons, are not benefited by this substitution for the old practice ; young persons of a higher degree, who are not in the habit of receiving instruction in parochial schools,—servants, apprentices,—and all, at

that dangerous crisis, between childhood and maturity, lose the advantage of those practical and familiar illustrations of divine truth, which the interrogatory system affords, when it is transferred from the church to the school-room. Catechising should always be a congregational service; for well-ordered questions draw out the attention, and quicken the apprehension, not only of those who have to make a reply, but of those who are mere listeners, and take no further part in the service.

But this is not the only reason why the institution of parish schools should not be permitted to dispense with the primitive custom. The more general that education becomes, the more imperative is the duty of the parochial minister to ascertain its effects upon the minds of his young flock, beyond the period of their probation as eleemosynary scholars. If he have laid the foundation, he should carry up the building, or, at least, he should make himself acquainted with the

scriptural soundness of the superstructure. As he has been instrumental in giving his youthful parishioners new powers of acquiring good and evil,—he should continue to direct their application. He should provide wholesome food for the craving appetite which he has excited; and by examination in the face of the congregation, should prove that he is not indifferent to the spiritual wants and interests of ripening years.

As long as Sunday, parish, and national schools are used as helps to the parochial clergy, and the services of the schoolmasters therein engaged, are employed to prepare children for their appointed catechist, the incumbent or his curate, and to relieve him from the toilsome work of primary instruction, they will continue to be beneficial in no ordinary degree. But whenever they shall be regarded as sufficient for all the purposes of elementary training in religious knowledge,—and the ordained guide to Christian truth shall think himself justified in deputing

his catechetical duties to an incompetent lay-assistant, and in breaking the tie of connexion between himself and his flock, effects will follow, which may, in the end, direct the engine of national education against the hand that first applied it*.

* “Do the times then no longer require it?” asks Archdeacon Bayley, in his eloquent and animated Charge, “Far other is the case. Much of that ignorant impatience of discipline, that ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, that heartless indifference, which usurps the name of liberality, and that licentiousness of self-will, which marks the latter days, as it disgraced the worst period, perhaps, of our annals; much of all this, as well as of viciousness of life and error in religion, is owing to ‘ungroundedness in the points of Catechism.’ Equally fallacious is the notion, that Sunday Schools, and more especially the national system, preclude its use, or remove the minister’s responsibility. No; but one of the great objects, one of the prime merits of both, is to train and prepare the rising generation for the hands of the Clergyman, to facilitate thereby his labour, and to make the necessity of public exhibition less frequent. But still his constant supervisal and personal direction of the whole machinery are equally, or more than ever demanded—they are, I had nearly said, all in all. Through him, moreover, the

*ERRONEOUS ESTIMATE OF THE IMPORTANCE
OF CATECHISING.*

A late Prelate, Bishop Edmund Law, who published, in the last century, an excellent "Dissertation on the nature and necessity of Catechising," attributed the discontinuance of the service to two causes: First, a low estimate of its importance, on the part of some; and, secondly, a sense of its difficulties on the part of others. "At present this is a work which many, either discouraged by disuse, and the despicable notions which are apt to be entertained of it, or deterred by its difficulty, are extremely shy of undertaking. Some have not the desire, some not the resolution to set about it!"

With respect to the first cause assigned, I can easily understand that the younger clergy may learn to entertain a contemptible opi-

children are to profess in Church, what they have been taught in the school, and he is bound not merely to listen to a formal and cold repetition, but also in the fullest sense of the term, to 'examine, and to instruct.'

nion of that which their elders and superiors refuse to practise.

Where it is the custom to commit the sacred charge as a work of drudgery, to lay persons, whose habits, condition, and attainments, are unequal to it,—there it may be concluded, that inexperienced and unreflecting clergymen will be indisposed to enter upon a work, which has been rendered distasteful by neglect and abuse. But will the Church of England ever sink so low, as that the great body of her ministers shall openly hold in contempt a practice, which has been sanctified by the example of Evangelists and Apostles, and of men eminent for their rank in the Church, for their piety and attainments, from the first preaching of the Gospel to the present hour? To devote public and private attention to the young, and the ignorant, and the dull,—to explain to these the first principles of Christianity, by a slow and wearisome process,—to question, and to consent to be questioned in the face of the con-

gregation,—to have recourse to one expedient after another, for the purpose of touching the heart, or stirring up the conscience, or enlightening the understanding,—to aim every discourse at the same mark,—to adapt the system to different tempers and capacities,—and never to consider the work done, until every term used is thoroughly understood,—every vow and promise distinctly explained, and every condition of the covenant made plain,—this may be laborious, and trying, and oftentimes disheartening, but it never can be pronounced inconsistent with the dignity of the most elevated station.



*CATECHISING PRACTISED BY THE APOSTLES
AND THEIR SUCCESSORS.*

I have said that the Apostles and Evangelists themselves did not disdain that patient, simple, and interrogatory mode of instruction, which is called Catechising*.

* It was principally by catechising, that the religion

Added to the concurrent voice of antiquity * to this effect, we have the more unquestion-

of Jesus, as Hegesippus observes, was in a few years spread over the greater part of the known world."—*Bishop Mant.*

"By catechising, under heaven, was planted the Apostolical Church; by catechising, the sound of the Gospel was sent forth into all lands."—*Archdeacon Bayley.*

"St. Paul's converts had all been instructed in the faith, as the custom was, catechetically."—*Rev. J. B. Sumner.*

* The author of the Epistle called "*Clementis ad Jacobum Epistola*," (who, at all events, expressed the traditionary belief of the early Church, at whatever period he himself may have lived,) professes to give an account of St. Peter's last charge, in which the Apostle is made to speak of himself, as having catechised at Rome. "They who catechise, should be well rooted in the faith, for the salvation of men's souls is at stake. Wherefore it is important that he who administers, and teaches, shall accommodate himself to the various opinions and dispositions of such as he may have to teach. It is indispensable that a catechist be learned, blameless, practised and perspicuous in his mode of instruction. Such as you will find Clement to be, who, when I am gone, will succeed me."—*Clem. ad Jac. Epist. apud Cot. Pat.* P. 619.

able evidence of Scripture, gathered from the application of the Greek word, from whence the term now in use is derived.

Fortified with this etymological argument, it was the opinion of Cave and Grotius*, that St. Peter alluded to the catechetical system, when he spoke of the “answer of a good conscience towards God:” and it has been thought still more probable, that Philip’s conversation with the eunuch, before he baptized him, had some reference to the Apostolical practice of teaching by question and answer. Cyril distinctly relates, in terms, that St. Paul *catechised*. “Paul,” says he, “preached the Gospel from Jerusalem to Illyria, and taught at Rome *catecheticaly* †.” [κατηχησάντα.] *Cyril, Catechesis*, xvii. 16.

* Bingley’s Orig. Sacr. B. xi. ch. 7. 5. 3.

† St. Paul’s general style affords evidence to this effect. From the 2nd chapter to the end of the 12th chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, there appears a manner of putting his subject, which is peculiarly cha-

This statement receives strong confirmation from the two last verses of Acts xxviii. "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, [at Rome,] and received all that came unto him, *preaching* the kingdom of God, and *teaching* those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ." There is manifestly meant to be, in this passage, an account of two modes which the Apostle adopted of promulgating the Faith. Com-

characteristic of the Apostle, who, according to Cyril, *catechised* at Rome. For example—

Q. What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Rom. iii. 1.

A. Much every way—chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. V. 2.

Q. For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? V. 3.

A. God forbid. Yea let God be true, but every man a liar, as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged. V. 4.

Q. What, then, are we better than they? V. 9.

A. No, in no wise, for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin. V. 9. &c. &c.

paring it with Acts v. 42,—“ they ceased not to *teach*, and *preach* Jesus Christ,”—with Acts xv. 35,—“ Paul and Barnabas continued in Antioch, *teaching* and *preaching* the word of the Lord,”—and with 1 Tim. i. 11, “ Whereunto I am appointed a *preacher*, and an *apostle*, and a *teacher*,”—and finding that the term itself, CATECHISE *, is used three times by St. Paul himself, and four times by St. Luke †, the sacred historian of St. Paul,—I can have no doubt that the catechetical form of teaching was adopted by the Apostles as the most efficient, though the most humble and fatiguing method, of explaining the first principles of the Gospel. St. Paul’s charge to Timothy was, that he should be “ *apt to teach*,” [διδασκτικον] (twice this expression was repeated,) “ *in meekness instructing* ‡,” [παιδευοντα.]

* See the Introduction.

† Luke i. 4. Acts xviii. 25. xxi. 21, 24. Rom. ii. 18. 1 Cor. xiv. 19. Gal. vi. 6.

‡ 1 Tim. ii. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.

THE ATTENTION PAID TO IT BY THE EARLY
CHURCH.

In conformity with this precept, the highest officers in the primitive Church, and the most distinguished of her ornaments, exercised the functions of Catechists, with a spirit that took delight in teaching even the first elements,—with gentleness that could not be moved by the perverseness of their catechumens, and with patience which was proof against all fatigue or disgust.

“The chair of the catechist of old was filled by the highest authorities, the finest talents, and the deepest learning*,” and among the number of those whom I would bring to the recollection of such as undervalue the humble task of interrogatory instruction, was Pantænus †. His taste in elegant and classic literature was so refined, that he was called the “Sicilian bee” by his con-

* Archdeacon Bayley.

† Κατηχίσεως πρόεστη διδασκαλείου. Euseb.

temporaries ; and there is an incident in his life, which, connected with his literary acquirements, may induce not a few to take more than common interest in his history. Like our own lamented Heber, he made a sacrifice of his dearest interests, and went a voluntary missionary to India. Though Alexandria, the place of his abode, contained all that could gratify a mind ardent in the pursuit of science and letters, yet he cheerfully regarded an invitation by some Indian ambassadors, as a call of Providence, and journeyed to regions beyond the Indus, with that singleness of purpose, which proved his heart to be with the Author and Finisher of his faith, and chose a rugged path which nothing could smooth, but the strongest sense of Christian duty.

Clemens Alexandrinus, Heraclias, afterwards bishop of Alexandria, and Origen, were Catechists ; and the latter was so eminently successful in proceeding upon the golden rule, line upon line, and precept upon precept, that he not only achieved conversions among

the more ignorant and uninformed, but among accomplished scholars*. Heathen philosophers, and Christians by outward profession, who had departed from the purer doctrines of the Gospel, were brought to the obedience of the cross, by listening accidentally to the close questions which he put to his catechumens, and to the truth which he illustrated through their answers. This is one of the important advantages resulting from public catechising. The instructor reaches the hearts and consciences of by-standers, through queries and observations meant for young neophytes. The simplicity of the Gospel thus triumphs unexpectedly over the wisdom of the wise; and praise is perfected out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, for "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the

* Euseb. vi. 18.

world, and things that are despised hath God chosen, yea, and things, which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence.”

It will be enough to mention two other names, selected from the Fathers, of men, renowned in their generation, who thought it no condescension to labour in furtherance of that sacred Ordinance, which your Lordship has taken such pains to press upon the attention of your Clergy. Cyril of Jerusalem, and Augustine of Hippo, are no mean names in the annals of the Church. The first has left behind him proofs in his “Catechesis,” that a catechist’s duties are not the least important among the pastoral functions. The second assisted the labours of a young deacon by a treatise on Catechising, which none can read without feeling all the best energies of his nature invited to exercise themselves in the same department of the Lord’s vineyard.

*THE OPINIONS OF THE EARLY REFORMERS,
AND OTHER EMINENT MEN.*

As nothing extended the doctrines of the primitive Church more than diligent Catechising, so has the enlargement of the Protestant faith been effected by the same means. From the earliest dawn of the Reformation, there has never been a time, when its zealous advocates have entirely neglected it. The sixteenth century produced a host of catechists and catechisms. Luther wrote two, and declared that catechising afforded him more delight than any other duty *. I have already noticed what was done in England to promote this service, in the infancy of the Established Church; and however lax at different periods may have been the conduct of too great a portion of the Clergy of the land, yet the sentiments and the practice of our more distinguished divines have always been in this respect strictly Apostolical.

* See Mant's Notes on the Catechism.

“ There is no employment in the world,” said Bishop Hall, “ wherein God’s ministers can so profitably employ themselves, as in this of plain and familiar catechising. What is a building without a foundation? If this ground-work therefore be not surely laid, all their divine discourses (for such their sermons are) lie upon the loose sand, and are easily washed away by the insinulative suggestions of false teachers. As for matter of belief, where the foundation is surely laid of the doctrines of faith, contained in the *Apostolic, Nicene, Athanasian Creeds*; and of the doctrine of the Sacraments, briefly comprised in our publicly allowed catechism; I see no reason but to think our people so sufficiently defenced against the danger of error, that no heretical machinations could be able to batter or undermine them. And surely, if ever there were or can be a time, wherein this duty of catechising were fit to be enforced, it is this upon which we are fallen, when the souls of Christian people are so hard laid at, not

only by *Popery, Anabaptism, Antinomianism, Pelagianism*; but by the confounding and hellish heresies of *Socinianism, Antitrinitarianism*, prodigious mischiefs; tending not only to the disturbance of our peace, but to the utter destruction of Christianity.”—*From the Peace Maker.*—Sec. 23.

“ There is no one thing of which I repent so much,” said the same prelate, “ as not to have bestowed *more hours in this public exercise of catechising: in regard whereof I could quarrel with my very sermons*, and wish that a great part of them had been exchanged for this preaching conference.”

“ Great scholars,” said the celebrated Usher, in a Sermon preached before king James the First, “ possibly may think, that it stands not so well with their credit to stoop thus low, and to spend so much of their time in teaching these rudiments and first principles of the doctrine of Christ. But they should consider, that the laying the foundation skil-

fully, as it is the matter of greatest importance in the whole building, so it is the very masterpiece of the wisest builder. *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master-builder, I have laid the foundation*; saith the great Apostle, 1 Cor. iii. 10. And let the learnedest of all try it whenever we please, we shall find, that to lay the ground-work rightly (that is, to apply ourselves unto the capacity of the common auditory, and to make an ignorant man understand these mysteries in some good measure) will put us to the trial of our skill, and trouble us a great deal more, than if we were to discuss a controversy, or handle a subtle point of learning in the schools."

There is every reason to believe, that Herbert's character of "the Country Parson" was drawn from real life. His biographer, Isaac Walton, relates, that his own conduct was a practical comment upon the rules which he laid down in that delightful Treatise. "In his first sermon to his parishioners,

he made it his humble request, that they would be constant to the afternoon's service and catechising, and shewed them convincing reasons why he desired it; and his obliging example and persuasions, brought them to a conformity to his desires." With this evidence before us, we may conclude that his twenty-first chapter, entitled, "the Parson Catechising," is an exact description of the manner in which the most able and pious Clergy of that period, were in the habit of performing this duty.

"The country parson values catechising highly,—he useth and preferreth the ordinary Church Catechism, partly for obedience to authority, partly for uniformity sake, that the same common truths may be every where professed, especially since many remove from parish to parish, who like Christian soldiers, are to give the word, and to satisfy the congregation by their Catholic answers. He exacts of all the doctrines of the Catechism: of the younger sort the very words: of the elder,

the substance. Those he catechiseth publicly ; these privately, giving age honour, according to the apostle's rules. He requires all to be present at catechising : first for the authority of the work, secondly, that parents and masters, as they hear the answers prove, may, when they come home either command or reprove, either reward or punish : thirdly, that those of the elder sort, who are not well grounded, may then by an honourable way, take occasion to be better instructed : fourthly that those who are well grown in the knowledge of religion, may examine their grounds, review their errors, and by occasion of both enlarge their meditations. When once all have learnt the words of the Catechism, he thinks it the most useful way that a pastor can take, to go over the same, but in other words. How many say the catechism by rote, as parrots, without ever piercing into the sense of it. In this course the order of the catechism would be kept, but the rest varied, as thus : In the Creed,—How came this

world to be as it is? Was it made, or came it by chance? Who made it? Did you see God make it? Then there are some things to be believed that are not seen? Is this the nature of belief? Is not Christianity full of such things as are not to be seen, but believed? You said God made the world; Who is God? and so forward, requiring answers to all these, and helping and cherishing the answerer, by making the questions very plain by comparisons, and making much even of a word of truth from him."

Baxter, though a non-conformist, attributed much of his success at Kidderminster to his adherence to catechising, as a regular system. "When I set upon a personal conference with each family," said he, "and catechising them, there were very few families in all the town, that refused to come."

Bishop Burnet catechised three times a week, while he was the incumbent of Saltown in Scotland, and even after his consecration to the see of Salisbury, he examined the youth

of the two great schools of the town in the cathedral Church, every week during the season of Lent. To enumerate all the great names, Wake, Secker, &c. who have dedicated their labours to the same cause, would be to adduce a "cloud of witnesses" to its expediency.



THE SUPPOSED DIFFICULTIES OF CATECHISING.

Another cause, which the late Bishop Law, thought might have its effect in contributing to the neglect of catechising, is one, which in the present age cannot be fairly admitted. "Some deterred by its difficulties have not the resolution." There are so many helps in the shape of expositions and illustrations of the Catechism, and the parish minister is, in most places, so accustomed to address young persons, in the common examinations, during his superintendence of National or Sunday Schools, that it would be a reproach to the clergy, to allow any weight whatever

to such a plea. Timidity and hesitation there naturally will be on the part of many, whose duty calls them to stand forth in the face of a congregation, and to deliver such unpremeditated observations, as the nature of a child's answer may require: but very little practice, and a heart fairly enlisted in the service, will soon give both confidence to the mind, and utterance to the tongue. We are not to suppose that an audience, collected together to hear youth and ignorance instructed in the elements of Christianity, are nice and critical. If the tone and manner of the teacher, and the pains which he takes to make himself understood, render it manifest that he is thoroughly in earnest, any little particular deficiencies will be overlooked, and the general effect only will be noticed. A broken discourse, and remarks arising out of circumstances, and replies which occur at the moment, are not so likely to weary hearers, as a continued lecture: and for this reason a diffident clergy-

man may enter upon his catechetical work with much less apprehension of being tiresome, than when he has to deliver a sermon. He cannot express himself too plainly; he has no occasion whatever to study language or style. As long as he is unaffected, audible, and intelligible, he is sure to interest his listeners, who will not be dissatisfied even with that which is familiar and common place, because they are aware, that the instructor has to address himself principally to those, who require first principles, and come for milk, and not for strong meat.

My Lord, it is a remark, which has lately been put forth in print, in more than one form of publication, "that religious knowledge is more eagerly sought for, and more generally diffused,"—that "Religion has a much stronger hold on the affections of the English nation now," than in preceding times,—that we live in an age, when many jealous and observant eyes are upon us, that much is expected of us,—and that to

the ordinary obligations, religious and civil, which the ministers of our Church have always been expected to observe, are super-added, the obligations arising from the increased and increasing force of public opinion.

Such being the admitted fact, it would seem that any parochial Clergyman, who should undertake to restore the system of catechising, according to the plan which your Lordship has suggested, namely "by improving the practice by such modifications as would render it popular as well as useful," would have all the encouragement that a grateful flock could give him, in full attendance both of young and old, high and low, rich and poor, one with another, in manifestation of awakened hopes and fears, and in general improvement throughout the parish. There would be no unwillingness either in parent or child, master or apprentice, to wait upon the teaching of a Clergyman, whose kind and affectionate earnestness in

the cause, and efficient mode of explanation, should offer some pledge, that they would be the happier and better for it. To insure success to his experiment, He has only to treat his Catechumens as thinking and reflecting beings, and not as mere mechanical creatures, who are assembled around him to repeat for the hundredth time, what they have repeated ninety-nine times before. Children as well as grown persons, may be made to understand, that they have a personal interest in the Christian covenant: and as the preacher's first care should be to rouse each of his hearers to a sense of his own individual concern in that which is addressed to him, so should the Catechist's be, to lead his young charge to employ their thoughts about themselves, to tempt them to think, and to prevail on them to exercise their minds upon that which they have been reading or learning. Who shall limit the period of life, when a desire to obey the Gospel may become the active principle of

the soul? The highest authority has spoken of childhood as an age of docility. God has implanted even in infancy a natural curiosity about himself and the things of eternity: and we are encouraged by the brightest promises of success to try the experiment, which the Church invites and commands us to make.

*PRACTICAL ADOPTION OF THE PROPOSED
SYSTEM.*

The consecration of the new church, in Somer's Town, St. Pancras, to which I was appointed Minister in May, 1826, afforded me an ample opportunity of making the experiment of public catechising upon the scale, and with the modifications, which your Lordship's Charge had recommended. The scene of duty presented a view of all the disadvantages, and all the advantages, under which a parochial clergyman may be supposed to be placed. If there was much to encounter, there was a wide field for use-

ful exertion. Somer's Town forms one of the districts of a very extensive and populous parish, which is said to be seventeen miles in circuit, and to contain not less than eighty thousand souls. The population of St. Pancras has been increasing rapidly during the last forty years; and, until very lately, its provision for the due performance of Church Services was of the most limited kind. The small and ancient mother-church will not accommodate a congregation of three hundred. The new parochial chapel, in Kentish Town, is situated at a great distance from the body of the population. Yet such were the conflicting opinions, that tended to dis sever the people more and more from their constituted pastor, that the exemplary and indefatigable Dr. Middleton, late Bishop of Calcutta, was unable to realize the hope that lay nearest to his heart, and to accomplish the construction of a new edifice, capable of holding a congregation in any degree proportionable to the magnitude of the parish. His successor,

Dr. Moore, has been more fortunate, and his incumbency has been distinguished not only by the completion of one of the finest and largest parish churches in London, but by the erection of three additional churches, or parochial chapels, capable of receiving from fifteen hundred to two thousand persons each; viz. one at Camden Town, another in Regent Square, and a third in Somer's Town. The influence, the activity, and the zeal, which have enabled the present Vicar to achieve so much for the interests of the Church, and for the spiritual welfare of his parishioners, are such as entitle him to the highest consideration.

This brief sketch, of the state of the parish of St. Pancras, will sufficiently explain that a newly-appointed minister, to either of these churches, might have some reason to fear, that he was not entering upon an easy cure, where he would find all things made smooth for his career. Such was found to be the case at the opening of the new church

in Somer's Town ; and the statement, that I am now making, is necessary to a proper understanding of the course which I was impelled to adopt. A thin congregation, which became much more thin in the afternoon, and free seats not half occupied, constituted no bright prospect. Even those few sheep in the wilderness did not belong to one fold,—the scanty flock was made up of many who came out of curiosity, or from a distance, or with very unsettled notions of unity. It was evidently not entirely composed of persons in regular communion with the Establishment.

The want of school-children to assist in the singing, and responses, was another evil, of no small weight in the scale. The children of the well-conducted St. Pancras National School resorted in a body to the parish church ; and there were reasons, why even a small detachment could not conveniently be spared to assist at the Services in Somer's Town.

Upon casting about to ascertain the probable causes of the many empty seats, which continued, for the first two or three Sundays, to excite uneasiness, I discovered them in the condition and various denominations of the majority of the inhabitants of the district. There are several families of great respectability in Somer's Town, and its vicinity, and from these the clergyman may look to receive every attention, but for the most part the houses are of an inferior description, occupied in separate floors and apartments, by tenants, who often shift their abode, and become unaccustomed to hold any regular communication with parochial clergy. Very many of these occupants are dissenters, of all sects, and a large proportion of them are Roman Catholics. During the war, Somer's Town was the resort of French emigrants; and it is now the receptacle of Spanish and Italian refugees. There is no part of the metropolis, where the Roman Catholics have more prosperous establishments than here.

A chapel of old standing, and now undergoing considerable enlargement,—a corps of zealous, able, and well-educated priests, who leave no means untried to make proselytes *,

* At the same time that I put forth the following statements, I distinctly disavow any intention of charging the Roman Catholic Clergy of the neighbourhood of Somer's-Town, with having had any hand in the transactions alluded to. They may pass without their agency: the only acts of theirs, which have come to my knowledge, are in the fair course of professional zeal, and I heartily wish that all our own priesthood would take equal pains to *seek*, as well as to save.

The spirit of avowed hostility is so busy at work in Somer's-Town, on the part of Roman Catholics, that there have been circulated not less than eight thousand six hundred tracts within this district during the past year, of which the greatest proportion is calculated not so much to confirm the truth of their own tenets, as to turn ours into derision, and therefore evidently intended more for the perusal of loose Protestants, than of professed Papists. Of an inflammatory and ribald tract, in four pages, entitled, "Monkish Superstition and Modern Improvements," more than nine hundred have been distributed. This tract is headed by a wood-cut, representing men harnessed like horses, and compelled by an overscer, armed with an enormous whip, to draw carts

and "two numerous schools of gratuitous education for the poor," to quote their own

on the road. The text, illustrative of the print, asserts, that "women as well as men have been set to repair the roads in Sussex and Hampshire."

According to the statement of a printed schedule of distribution, 550 is the number circulated of "The modern method of converting Idolators, by Bible Saints," adorned by a plate, in which Protestant disputants are drawn in the act of assailing the Papists, sword and bayonet in hand—500 of "Protestant Inquisition," 400 of "Samples of the Blessings of the Reformation;" 150 of "Tolerance of the Law Church." Another notable treatise, which has found its way by hundreds into the district, is "a Review of Fox's Book of Martyrs:" this is decorated with a print, under which the publishers have been at the trouble to give the following description—"Explanation of the engraving. John Fox is seen writing his book, originally called Acts and Monuments, but now metamorphosed into a Book of Martyrs. The devil is looking over his shoulder prompting him, for under no other influence but that of an evil spirit could he write, since he has been convicted of falsehood by father Parsons, who charges him with telling directly and indirectly not less than ten thousand lies in this work. In the perspective is a printing press chained, to denote that it was shut to the Catholics by the operation of the

report,—these form an effective phalanx in the very centre of the position assigned to the district minister. A large academy for Roman Catholic children, whose parents can afford to pay for their education, adjoins the new parochial chapel.

Under such circumstances as these, it was manifest that there could be no chance of making a ministry as extensively useful as the place required, but by becoming personally, and accessibly known, to as many as would be willing to profit by such intercourse. But how was this to be done? by whom could the introduction be made? Unlike a country parish, the inhabitants of a London district are unknown to each other; they hold but little communication; they are not

Penal Code, as will be seen in the course of the present work."

It is well that the Clergy of the metropolis should know how busily Roman Catholic agents are employed in their parishes. 72,000 of similar tracts were circulated in London last year.

neighbours, to say to each other, Have you conversed with the clergyman? I will bring him to you. From one end to another of the district it was a land of strangers; and the common mode of getting at the well-disposed, and at those in error, would have demanded an interval of several months, before any apparent good could result. Preaching would not suffice, because there were comparatively but few hearers, and those few needed proofs of the clergyman's devotion to the sacred cause beyond his energy in the pulpit. An immediate lever was wanted to move the feelings and affections of the people. It was now that your Lordship's Charge recurred to my mind in all its force.

“The Liturgical formularies of the Church, —conceived on an accurate notion of the relation between the pastor and his flock, are designed to connect them by a regular intercourse, and to direct the conduct of both parties in the performance of their

respective duties. AS THE GROUND-WORK OF THIS PLAN, IT IS HER PECULIAR OBJECT TO BRING THE PARISHIONER, FROM HIS EARLIEST DAYS, INTO IMMEDIATE CONTACT WITH HIS SPIRITUAL TEACHER AND GUIDE*."

I saw that I must go back to first principles,—that I must tread in the humble, and almost forsaken path of the Catechist,—that I must yield substantial obedience to a rule, which, if duly observed, would help me to attain my object.

But fresh difficulties presented themselves : how was I to get at the children, when I was unknown to their parents, and unable to find my way to houses, where the voice of a Clergyman of the Church would be heard in preference to that of any other ? The National School of which I have previously spoken, offered me none of the facilities which I required.

The more I contemplated my position,

* See Charge of 1822, p. 21, Third Edition.

the more plainly did I perceive the necessity of making my way to notice and esteem, by being the immediate origin of some method, not yet in practice in this particular quarter : of opening a fountain of elementary religious instruction, which had not yet sprung up ; of training some children, who should be exclusively indebted to myself for some advantages : of forming a plan for which parents and families would have reason to be grateful ; and who, beginning to love me for the concern I had shewn in behalf of their little ones, would at length be led to ask themselves, May not we too become better by going to him for instruction ?

While I was in doubt as to the exact course to be pursued, it came to my knowledge that the master of an extensive Lancasterian school in Somer's Town, was a member of the Church of England, and sincerely disposed to promote my views. He had been one of the Catechists under the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign

Parts, in North America, and came home with strong recommendations to the National School Society. But not finding employment so soon as his circumstances required, he accepted an offer which placed him at the head of this Lancasterian institution. The number of boys and girls, instructed there, amounted at the time to more than five hundred, of whom it was represented to me, that many, being children of parents in communion with the Established Church, might be persuaded to come to Church, and to form a Sunday school. The master himself undertook to bring such as should be willing to attend, and to devote his Sundays to whatever mode of instruction I might choose to adopt.

With these elements my system began, and on the first Sunday after the arrangement, the master presented himself at the head of about seventy children, who were gathered together near the altar, after the afternoon sermon, and prepared by classification for future operations. They were not

then catechised, for scarcely one could say any part of the Church Catechism. It was explained to them, that their attendance would be required every Sunday morning, at nine o'clock, in the Church, that their first business would be to learn the catechism, and that prayer books would be given, or sold at very reduced prices, to such as should entitle themselves to the privilege by regular application and proficiency. On the following Sunday the number of voluntary scholars was increased, and several of them had learned enough of their lesson to undergo a respectable examination in the Chancel. The wheels of the machine were now in motion; but that they might not drag heavily, I began at once by infusing a little variety into the exercise, and instead of confining my enquiries to the Catechism, I put questions and made observations relating to the Morning and Evening Services, which interested the children, and removed every appearance of unpleasant task-work.

For some months the teacher of the Lancasterian school continued to act as the very efficient master of this my Sunday School ; but at the beginning of last year, he declined the office, partly from a desire of having the one only day in the week, which he could call his own, a day of perfect leisure, and partly from some apprehension lest he should excite disagreeable surmises in the minds of the persons connected with the management of the weekly school, his principal dependence. It is the regulation in that school, that no particular form of religion should be taught, and it is possible he had reason to fear, that some suspicions might be entertained of his preparing the Church of England boys for their Sunday examinations, by a process carried on in the course of the week, during school hours, inconsistent with the spirit of the Lancasterian system. Be this as it may, the Committee of that establishment, so far from manifesting any open jealousy, or from throwing obstacles in the

way of my Sunday School, do, to this day, promote it, by continuing to pay a young woman five pounds a year, for her services on the Sabbath, in superintending the conduct of such of their female children, as attend Church during the hours of instruction and of divine service. She is in no other way connected with them.

In a very short time, all the advantages which your Lordship has predicted as being likely to result from "an improved modification of the ancient and laudable practice of catechising children in Church," displayed themselves in the District committed to my charge. What these advantages were, I shall describe more fully in their proper place. But I may now briefly state, that from the day I commenced catechising, until the present time, it has been regularly pursued every Sunday, without any omission, either by myself, or by the assistant minister, Mr. Judkin, or by both of us in conjunction, at the conclusion of the afternoon sermon;

and that a full congregation,—an intercourse opened, and established with a great part of the inhabitants of the District,—and a Sunday school increased from 77 to 280, and still increasing, are the results.

Now for the modifications suggested and adopted.



*IN WHAT RESPECTS THE OLD PRACTICE MAY
BE MODIFIED AND IMPROVED.*

Your Lordship did not speak of modifications and improvement in the ancient practice, without giving us some further insight into your own ideas of a mode of catechising, suitable to the habits and feelings of modern times.

I. “ A short space *before* or *after* the Church Service, devoted to the examination of the children *.” And,

II. An “ examination judiciously inter-

* Charge of 1822, p. 27.

spersed with short explanations, which might be generally edifying to the congregation, leaving these matters to the judgment of individual Clergymen, and the suggestions of local circumstances*.”

These were the groundworks proposed in your Lordship's Charges, as substitutions for the half-hour prescribed by the rubric, after the second Lesson at Evening Prayer, and for the dry custom of confining the ordinance to a repetition of question and answer, as set down in the Catechism. Upon these I have acted.



I. THE TIME OF CATECHISING.

In regard to the first improvement; I have preferred a space immediately *after* the Evening Service, because there can then be no interruption whatever to the congregation, and the time employed may depend

* Charge of 1822, p. 27.

entirely upon circumstances, i. e. upon the nature of the examination, and upon the interest which is taken in it. If the children and by-standers shew no symptoms of weariness, it may be lengthened at pleasure; whereas a space before the Evening Prayers must necessarily terminate, when the hour for prayer shall arrive. Another consideration in favour of this choice, is, the better chance of having more hearers to derive benefit from the service. When the people observe that there is something going on, and that one and another stay behind, the inclination to remain becomes pretty general, and the catechist has the satisfaction of finding that he is surrounded by a numerous audience. I have found this to be the case invariably; a very large proportion of the congregation, of the superior orders, of servants, of young persons, and the parents of the children who are to be examined, remain in their places, or approach the chancel to listen to the questions and answers.

Again, there can be no appearance of fastidious impatience to dishearten the Clergyman, when he catechises after the prayers and sermon, because every person who stops to hear him does so by choice, and can go away at any moment he pleases. There is nothing indecorous, either in not staying to witness the examination, or in retiring from it before it is concluded; so that the perfect and unrestrained liberty, to go or to stop, renders it an attendance entirely optional.



II. *THE INTERSPERSED EXPLANATIONS, AND THE MIXED CHARACTER OF THE PRACTICE.*

As soon as I discovered that I had succeeded in divesting the examination of all irksomeness * to the young persons principally con-

* “ Your instructions should be given mildly and cheerfully. They should not be given with a magisterial air, or in the way of a *solemn lecture*, where the hearer is kept, as it were, at a distance, and not allowed to propose, or to answer questions. All angry or threatening

cerned, I began to draw more largely upon their time and industry, by expressing a desire that in the course of every week, and in addition to portions of the Catechism, and expositions of it, they would learn by heart, or at least read attentively, the Collect, the Lessons, and the Gospel of the next Sunday, so as to be prepared to answer questions relating to the sacred narrative, precepts, and doctrines therein contained. I have not made a practice of fixing their attention upon the Epistles, considering them to be beyond the understanding of children, nor have I selected the Lessons out of the Old Testament, so often as those which are taken from the Gospels. In short the latter, with the Gospel of the day, have constituted our principal exercise, and it has rarely happened,

expressions are to be carefully avoided. When instructions are given with a dogmatical air, an austere aspect, and attended with threats, children are discouraged from attempting to learn."—*Religious Instruction of Children,* by the Rev. Sir J. Stonehouse.

that I have asked the children to commit any Scriptural passage to memory, without having had the satisfaction of finding many of them able to repeat it at our next meeting. The willingness, the delight, the emulation, which is exhibited Sunday after Sunday, is as affecting, as it is encouraging; and I am quite sure that the majority of the children would be extremely grieved, if the system, after being adopted, should be abandoned.



*METHODS OF RENDERING CATECHISING
ATTRACTIVE.*

But how is the interest of the children so excited, and how is their attention so engaged, in the first instance, that they become willing learners? Public praise, and rewards given in the face of the congregation; and the reverse,—rebukes, mildly delivered, and expected privileges withheld, have wonderful effect. I have made it a rule to give no dis-

inction to displays of talent, unless they be accompanied by good behaviour. If a child answer ever so well, he is not noticed, unless he has behaved well; and none are permitted to purchase Bibles, Testaments, or Prayer-books, unless they can produce tickets of merit, and of regular attendance. Almost every Sabbath the master of the Sunday-School puts into my hand books, which certain of the children have qualified themselves to possess, partly by tickets of merit, of an assigned pecuniary value, and partly by purchase; and these are delivered to them at the end of the service, with a few words of commendation. No less than twenty-nine Bibles, five Testaments, and one hundred and twenty Prayer-books, have been earned by the youthful aspirants in this way during the past year; and no doubt they set a high value upon them after being thus obtained.

But there are two other more effective modes yet, which I know by experience tend

greatly to secure the attention of such as are capable of reflection. The first is to convince them, that we ourselves are in earnest, that we have their interest at heart,—that it is entirely for their sakes that we take the trouble of instructing them *. The second is to make them feel in earnest about themselves,—to awaken a serious inquisitiveness about their own present and eternal condition, and to shew them, that what we have to say on matters of religion concerns every one of them personally.

The congregation is edified by these means quite as much as the juvenile circle which is more immediately addressed. The home-

* “Let your children see that you take *pleasure* in *instructing* them. A mild speech and cheerful countenance are perfectly consistent with great seriousness of spirit, and with keeping up a proper authority. Let them see that all your advice proceeds from *love*. Let nothing rough and morose appear in your instructions: but shew all gentleness, which will give weight and influence to every thing you say.”—*Sir J. Stonehouse's Instructions*.

questions which are put to the children, the by-standers, in their turn, apply to their own hearts and consciences. For example; a child has been repeating the Collect for the fourth Sunday after Lent, "Grant we beseech thee, Almighty God, that we, who for our evil deeds do worthily deserve to be punished," &c. &c. The question naturally arises, and may be addressed to one of tender years, "Have *you* committed any evil deeds, for which *you* deserve punishment?" After a short pause, the Catechist himself may proceed to give the answer; "Yes, unhappily, young as you are, you have broken some of God's commandments. When you have irreverently pronounced his holy name,—when you have acted disobediently to your parents,—when you have wished for that which does not belong to you, you have done what is displeasing to Almighty God. Now you shall see how the language of the Collect, which adds, 'By the comfort of thy grace may be relieved,' agrees with the

Catechism, where it directs you to pray for divine help. ‘My good child, know this, that thou art not able to do these things of thyself, nor to walk in the commandments of God, and to serve him, without his special grace.’”

I have often noticed with considerable pleasure, how the attention of individuals, arrived at maturity, is riveted, when they discover, that the lessons of their earliest association contain notes which now strike to their heart; and which they feel would have responded there at a more tender age, had they been skilfully touched. Whether a congregation be listening to a preacher or a catechist, as long as the topics of a discourse are directed to that, in which all have the same personal concern, be they young or old, the speaker is sure to have willing hearers, whose consciences will not suffer their “taste to be fastidious.” Every excited hope or fear puts the mind on the alert—every new perception and acquirement gives pleasure,—and the by-stander and the catechumen are

equally attentive as soon as they discover that they can apply religious maxims to their own case; that they can draw from their own hearts or conduct proofs of the truth of the doctrines that are delivered to them.

Nothing can be more erroneous, than to limit catechetical lessons to the mere heartless business of ascertaining whether the formularies have been committed to memory, under the idea, that childhood being the season for the mechanical process only, we must wait for riper years, before the word engrafted on the memory can be expected to engage the heart and the understanding, in a salutary inquiry after truth. Why is memory to be considered the only active power of the youthful mind? Why is it to be supposed that the child can retain forms of words, but not impressions of hope, fear, love, desire, and longings after a heavenly state of things? Why may he not be supposed to feel and to digest, to compare, and to weigh eternity against the present?

An authority, [Bishop Wilson] whose opi-

nion has been permitted to carry great weight in all questions of this kind, declared that he would neither suspend, nor retard the important work of instructing a rational and immortal being in the concerns, that interest his soul: that he would make the understanding travel on with the mechanical process of learning by heart. He insisted that "*children being the most proper subjects of an education which regards another life,*" we should never cease to put people in mind, that the object of religious education is to "make children Christians in *deed* as well as in *name.*" His expressions are too strong to allow us to mistake his meaning: he adds, "*lest not knowing or not feeling the power of religion in their souls,* they become a scandal to their education. "My meaning," says he, "is this, children may be, and often have been, taught the general truths and duties of Christianity, without any great good following, for want of such previous knowledge and dispositions as we have been

speaking of, such as are necessary to fit them for RECEIVING THE TRUTH IN THE LOVE OF IT."

In another place he asks, "Should not this be our first and great concern? To plant the fear of God in their hearts betimes," namely:

"By giving them a just and distinct knowledge of God and his attributes.

"By making them sensible of the relation they bear to him, and that they are accountable to his justice for every thing they do.

"By explaining to them the condition they are brought into, by the fall of our first parents.

"By *shewing* THEM TO THEMSELVES, and *convincing them from* THEIR OWN REASON, and *experience, that* "things are wretchedly amiss to them*."

* See Bishop Wilson's "Sermon preached at the Anniversary Meeting of the Children Educated in the Charity Schools about the Cities of London and Westminster, May 28, 1724."

The Bishop's text to this Sermon stands thus:

Acts xiii. 48. "As many as were ordained to [*that is, disposed or prepared for,*] eternal life, believed."

Now it must be quite manifest, that if there be any reason and wisdom in these observations, a formal, forced, and artificial

I cannot withhold my expression of pleasure at seeing the Calvinistic rendering *ordained* met boldly, and effectually corrected, *in limine*, at the very outset of this Sermon. "For," as the Right Rev. Author well said, "if the opinion be true, which has sometimes been founded on this text, it would render all education, with regard to another world, useless." In many other instances, I could almost venture to say, in *all*, where the terms, *ordained*, *foreordained*, *predestinated*, *foreknew*, &c. occur in the Authorized Version, and are wrested to imply some doctrine of *necessity*, of personal election, or rejection, it will be found by reference to the Greek, that they admit of a very different construction. A philological investigation, with a sound knowledge of grammar and derivation, would do more to shake the authority of Calvinistic readings of Scripture, than any mode of reasoning whatever. One hint to the reader shall suffice. Let him trace the Greek preposition ΠΡΟ' through its different acceptations, and then let him search for the meaning of the Apostle, by interpreting *πρόθεσιν*, *προέγνω*, *προώρισε*, (see Romans viii.) according to grammatical and etymological rules; and I think he will not be likely to rise from the inquiry—a confirmed Predestinarian.

system of catechising, in which there is no departure from a set form of words, and no personal application of the maxims to the individual under examination, cannot exercise the mind of the respondent in a sufficiently profitable manner. Ask a child who has been for years repeating our Church summary of doctrine, to give you in his own language an answer to the simplest doctrinal question, and he will look confused and stupid, unless the same pains have been taken to make the sense reach his understanding, as to convey the sounds to his ears.

By following the rules laid down by all, who have seriously considered the subject, that is, by exercising the intellect and feelings, as well as the organs of hearing, the understandings of children will gradually open, their hearts will take part in the service, and their conduct and answers will become more and more natural, and more in conformity with the grand object to be attained. It must be so ; for when truths, in

unison with experience and nature, and the intelligible will of God, are again and again set before them, not solely by loading the memory with words and sentences, but by fixing their thoughts upon the subject-matter of their lessons, in short remarks and reflections suited to their comprehension, and growing out of the subjects of the catechetical or Scriptural passage, which they have been learning by heart, it is impossible that they can listen with indifference. They cannot fail of seeing the practical tendency of the knowledge imparted to them,—of being moved,—of hoping or fearing for themselves,—and of looking out for substantial grounds, on which they may rest their confidence of acceptance with God*.

* Bishop Wilson recommends an earnest “inculcation of the fear of God,” as the shortest and most effectual method of creating in young people a tenderness of conscience, and a desire to be thoroughly instructed in the doctrines of our Holy Faith. Rejecting the use of “arguments purely moral,” such as “virtue is its own reward,” he says, “we should utterly despair of giving

EXAMPLE OF THE SYSTEM PURSUED IN REFERENCE TO THE CATECHISM.

Keeping these considerations in view, and with the desire also of bringing the by-standers, as well as the children, to a recollection of the principal incidents connected with the promulgation of the Christian covenant, I have endeavoured to vary the examination: and to put intermediate questions between the several questions and answers of the Catechism, in the following manner, suggesting the replies, when not given by the

them a full sight and knowledge of their duty, if God had not himself directed us to this consideration." "But will not this method of dealing with children make them melancholy? By no means: it may make them serious, and that they ought to be; and they ought to be so by times, lest they never be so as long as they live. That which makes people melancholy is, when they have wrong apprehensions of God, as if he had *ordained* them for misery, or when they are shewn the danger they are in, without being shewn the *way* of escape."—*See same Sermon, preached May, 1724.*

children, in the language of Scripture, whenever it could be done appropriately.

Where were the servants of God first called Christians ?

“ The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”—*Acts xi. 25.*

Do you remember any other passage in the book of Acts, which shews that this name was commonly applied to them ?

“ Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.”—*Acts xxvi. 28.*

Is there any promise, or prophecy in Scripture, that the people of the Lord should have a new name given to them ?

“ The Lord shall call his servants by another name.”—*Isaiah lxxv.*

What is required to be a child of God, now that you are old enough to understand the promises made for you in your baptism ?

Faith in Jesus Christ. “ Ye are all children of God by faith in Jesus Christ.”—*Gal. iii. 26.*

How can you convince others, that you

have faith, that you believe truly in God and Jesus Christ ?

By keeping his commandments.

How can you keep the commandments ?

By God's help.

By what means do you hope to obtain God's help ?

By praying unto God to give me his grace, that I may continue in the same way unto my life's end.

Where were the commandments first delivered ?

To Moses, on Mount Sinai. *Exodus* xix.

Did any thing happen upon that occasion, to shew how much God is to be feared when he delivers his commandments ?

“ There were thunders, and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount,—and the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that were in the camp trembled.”—*Exodus* xix. 16.

When does a young person begin to commit wilful and actual sin ?

When he ceases to love God, or to fear God, or to think of God.

When Joseph was tempted to do wrong, what did he say ?

“How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God.”—*Gen.* xxxix. 9.

The Commandments and the Law came by Moses—what came by Jesus Christ ?

“Grace and truth.”—*John* i. 17.

But did Christ dispense with the Commandments ?

No : Christ said, “I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it.”—*Matt.* v. 17.



AN EXAMPLE IN REFERENCE TO A SCRIPTURAL
EXAMINATION.

In conducting the Sunday examination arising out of the Gospel, or Second Lesson of the day, I have endeavoured to make it attractive, as well as instructive, by a method which I will exemplify by means of the Gos-

pel for the third Sunday after Epiphany. One of the objects of interrogation being to ascertain, whether children give their attention to what they learn by heart, it is better to draw the Lesson out of their mouths, by leading questions, than by requiring a recital by rote.

MATTHEW VIII. 1—18.

1. “When Jesus was come down from the mountain,” what happened?

“Great multitudes followed him.”

From whence?

“From Galilee, from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan.”—*Matt.* iv. 25.

2. Who “came and worshipped him,” and what was said?

“A leper, saying, Lord if thou wilt thou canst make me clean.”

Do you remember any case of a person being smitten with leprosy for his offences?

Gehasi, the servant of Elisha.—*2 Kings* v. 27.

What was his sin ?

Falsehood and covetousness. [Remarks upon these two vices naturally follow.]

3. Did Jesus cure the leper ?

Yes. " Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean ; and *immediately* his leprosy was cleansed."

When Naaman's leprosy was cured by Elisha the prophet, was it done thus immediately, and by a word ?

No. Naaman was directed to wash in Jordan seven times.—2 *Kings* v.

[Remarks upon the superiority of Christ over the prophets, &c.]

4. What did Christ command the leper to do, after he had cured him ?

" See thou tell no man ; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded for a testimony unto them."

What did the priests do, according to the Mosaic law, when a leper was to be cleansed ?

" The priest commanded two birds to be

cleansed alive,—one to be killed, and the other to be dipped in the blood of the bird that was killed, and then let loose into the open field.”—*Levit.* xiv. 1—7.

Did this ceremony represent any thing in which Christians should believe ?

It represented or signified the shedding of Christ’s blood for sinners, by which they are cleansed from their sin*.

5. When Jesus entered into Capernaum, who came to him ?

6. “A Centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.”

What three virtues did this Centurion shew, in coming in this manner to Jesus ?

Faith, in that he believed in Christ’s divine mission,—Hope, in that he trusted in Christ’s mercy,—Charity, in that he left his home on

* At a Catechetical Examination in my parish church in Durham, a boy of about 14 years of age came so well prepared, that he answered these two last questions in nearly the same words that I have here used.

a work of kindness and love, not for his own, but for his servant's sake.

Do you remember any other example of a good and pious Centurion ?

“Cornelius, a devout man, and one that feared God, with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.”—*Acts* x. 2.

7. Was Jesus inclined to grant the Centurion's request ?

“Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.”

8. Did he go ?

“The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof ; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

9. “For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me : and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth ; and to another, Come, and he cometh ; and to my servant, do this, and he doeth it.”

What stranger, a great and honourable

man, went like this Centurion to a prophet, to ask for a miracle, but with less humility ?

Naaman, who was wroth when his request was not immediately granted, and turned and went away in a rage.—*2 Kings* v. 3, 4.

10. When Jesus heard the Centurion, what did he say ?

“ He marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.”

If the Centurion was not an Israelite, what do you suppose him to have been ?

A Roman,—and a “ proselyte,”—that is, one believing in the true God, but not conforming to the whole of the Mosaic law.

How did the Centurion’s answer shew his great faith ?

He did not require Christ’s presence at his house. “ Speak *the word* only, and my servant shall be healed.” For I am a man under authority ; at my bidding I am obeyed. How much more shalt thou be obeyed by thy

ministering spirits. If thou shalt but express thy will, it will be accomplished.

In what manner did Christ signify, that strangers and Gentiles should be admitted into the covenant of God ?

11. “ And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east, and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.”

Do you remember upon what occasion this truth was again announced to an Apostle, in reference to another Gentile ?

When Peter was commanded in a vision to baptize Cornelius. *Acts x.*

How did Christ signify that outward profession and privileges will not avail, unless the terms of the covenant be obeyed ?

12. “ But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out, into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

You call yourself a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven; for what must you pray, that

you may not be cast into this darkness, where there will be such anguish and tribulation ?

“ A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness.”

How will your conduct testify that you have this grace ?

By repentance for my past sins, and by forsaking sin in future, and by believing steadfastly the promises of God, made to me, by the Sacrament of Baptism *.

How did Jesus proclaim his divine power and mercy, in reference to the Centurion ?

13. “ And Jesus said, Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self same hour.”

Do you see any proofs of the Godhead of Christ, and of the doctrine of the Trinity in this miracle ?

Christ knew what was passing in the Cen-

* Upon all occasions it is my endeavour to lead the mind of the catechumen to compare the Catechism with Scripture.

turion's heart, "*as thou believest*;" he knew his wish, and his faith; he knew that he had perfect and stedfast faith. This was a proof of his Omniscience.

He healed with a *word*—"So be it done unto thee." As at the first creation, God said, "Let there be light, and there was light;" so "He commanded, and it was done." This was a proof of Christ's Omnipotence.

"The servant was healed in the self-same hour." This was a proof of Christ's Ubiquity. His spirit was searching the Centurion's soul, and restoring the servant at a distance to health, at the same time.

What similar proof was given of Christ's Divinity, as related in another place by St. Matthew?

When he cured the daughter of the woman of Canaan. "Be it unto thee as thou wilt: and her daughter was made whole from that very hour." *Matt.* xv. 28.

It is by such a method as this, by relieving the subject, and carrying on the exercise

with as much spirit and cheerfulness as possible, by putting questions out of the common course; by making one question lead to another; by sounding the child's state of mind, or depth of understanding; by putting searching interrogatories; by drawing attention to incidents and examples of Scripture that bear contrasting with some case before you; by permitting the catechumen to proceed with his simple, and if it should be so, with his erroneous answer, that out of error you may illustrate truth; by asking for the child's reasons, whether he makes a right or a wrong reply; by persuading him to speak out, and declare himself; by directing the examination judiciously to some point of doctrine, upon which it is apprehended there may be some misconstruction in the minds of any of the parishioners, who happen to be present; and by interspersing such remarks, admonitions, and illustrations, as the occasion may suggest or require;—it is thus, that powerful effects are produced.

Catechising conducted upon this principle is not a matter of parade or form, it is something infinitely more ; it is performed with the certainty that we are exercising, developing, and directing the spiritual energies of the young ; while we are rousing their elders to recollection, and provoking them to emulation.

Another extremely beneficial modification of the ordinance, is to put questions upon the leading articles of religion, and to require answers, in the literal words of Scripture. Very little practice, and a few scholars well taught will soon put the mode in train. Nothing can be more salutary, more instructive, and I may add, more deeply interesting to by-standers, than to witness an exercise of this description ; to see the young Christian led up to the very fountain-head, to the well-spring of truth ; and to find that every word which proceeds from, or is put into his mouth, in illustration of the doctrines of his Church, is derived from Revelation. It cannot fail of exciting a spirit of enquiry, and in

some instances of producing entire conviction. “The Catechist claims a right to be heard as soon as he begins, and carries with him every unprejudiced suffrage as he advances *.”



THE MODE OF INTERROGATORY ON THE PRINCIPAL ARTICLES OF RELIGION, AND GIVING ANSWERS FROM SCRIPTURE.

G O D.

How did God make himself known ?

“He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.”—*Psalms* ciii. 7.

Could God be known without Revelation ?

“The world by wisdom knew not God.”—*1 Cor.* i. 21.

What is God ?

* See the Bible Catechism, by W. F. Lloyd. A cheap and unpretending little volume, but well worthy of attention, which will greatly assist any Catechist who may feel inclined to adopt the system here recommended.

“God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”
—*John* iv. 24.

Where is God ?

“Do I not fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord.”—*Jer.* xxiii. 24.

Does God see all that we do ?

“Thou God seest me.”—*Gen.* xvi. 13.

Is God inclined to forgive our sins ?

“Thou art a God ready to pardon,—slow to anger.”—*Nehem.* ix. 17.

Must we always obey God in all cases ?

“We ought to obey God rather than men.”—*Acts* v. 29.

By what name did God announce himself ?

“I am that I am.”—*Exod.* iii. 14.

By what attributes does St. Paul designate God ?

“The King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the only wise God.”—1 *Tim.* i. 17.

JESUS CHRIST.

Why was the Messiah called Jesus ?

“Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.”—*Matt. i. 21.*

Why was he called Emmanuel?

“They shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us.”—*Matt. i. 23.*

What was Christ called in prophecy?

“His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”—*Isaiah ix.*

What did Christ call himself?

“Because I said, I am the Son of God.”—*John x. 36.*

What did the Apostles say of Christ?

“And the *Word* was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory,—the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of light and truth.”—*John i. 14.*

“He is the propitiation of our sins.”—*1 John ii. 2.*

“The Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.”—*1 Pet. ii. 25.*

“ He is the Mediator of a better covenant.”
—*Heb.* viii. 6.

“ He ever liveth to make intercession for them.”—*Heb.* vii. 25.

HOLY GHOST.

What promise did Christ give concerning the Holy Ghost ?

“ I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter ; that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth.”
—*John* xiv. 16, 17.

“ The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name.”
—*John* xxvi.

Will the Holy Ghost be given to those who pray for him ?

“ If ye being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Ghost to them that ask him.”—*Luke* xi. 13.

For what purpose is the Holy Ghost given ?

“ Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities.—*Rom.* viii. 26.

In what manner are the operations of the Holy Ghost described in Scripture ?

“ The Holy Ghost *said*, separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto thou called them.”—*Acts* xiii. 2.

“ They *were forbidden* by the Holy Ghost to preach in Asia.”—*Acts* xvi. 6.

“ The Holy Ghost *witnesseth* in every city.”—*Acts* xx. 23.

“ Take heed unto the flock, over which the Holy Ghost *hath made you* overseers.”—*Acts* xx. 28.

THE GODHEAD OF CHRIST.

What does St. John say of Christ's Divinity ?

“ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”—*John* i. 1.

What does St. Paul say ?

“ God was manifest in the flesh.”—1 *Tim.*
iii. 16.

Prove the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, by shewing that *eternity* is ascribed to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

“ The mystery made manifest according to the commandment of the *everlasting* GOD.”—*Rom.* xvi. 25, 26.

“ I (*Jesus*) am the *first* and the *last*.”
—*Rev.* xxii. 13.

“ Through the *everlasting Spirit*.”—*Heb.*
ix. 14.

Prove it by the application of the term Holy One?

“ I am the LORD, your HOLY ONE, the CREATOR.”—*Isaiah* xliii. 15.

“ But ye denied the HOLY ONE, and desired a murderer to be released unto you.”
—*Acts* iii. 14.

“ Ye have an unction from the HOLY ONE.”—1 *John* ii. 20.

MISCELLANEOUS DOCTRINES EXPLAINED IN
ANSWERS FROM SCRIPTURE.

What is original sin ?

“ By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”—*Rom.* v. 12.

What sacrifice or ransom has been offered for sin ?

“ Christ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.”—*Heb.* ix. 26.

What is the atonement of Christ ?

“ The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.”—*Isaiah* lv. 6.

“ He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.”—*2 Cor.* v. 19.

What is the efficacy of prayer ?

“ Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he shall give it you.”—*John* xvi. 23.

Why are we to keep the sabbath holy ?

“Hallow my sabbaths, they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God.”—*Ezekiel* xx. 20.

Why is the new birth necessary?

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Ye must be born again.”—*John* iii. 3. 7.

What is the promise that the prayers of the young shall be heard?

“Those that seek me early shall find me.”—*Prov.* viii. 17.

What examples have we of early piety?

“The child Samuel ministered unto the Lord.” And “Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him.”—*1 Sam.* iii. 1. 8.

“In the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, Josiah began to seek after the God of David his father.”—*2 Chr.* xxxiv. 3.

“From a child thou (Timothy) hast

known the Holy Scriptures.”—2 *Tim.* iii. 15.

Are disposition and true character manifested at an early age?

“Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.”—*Prov.* xx. 11.

There are not many Catechumens who could readily furnish answers to half these questions, but an important advantage is gained by proposing them, inasmuch as the instructor has the opportunity of directing attention to the passages referred to, and of proving that the basis of his doctrines is founded on the rock of truth.



EXPLANATIONS OF WORDS AND PHRASES.

A third branch of the interrogatory system, equally salutary, is to ask for explanations and definitions of the phrases and terms

which occur in the Catechism, or which are in common use in the Church. Such as Baptism, Sacrament, Vow, Salvation, Catholic Church, Communion of Saints, Forgiveness, Resurrection, Redeemed, Sanctified, Elect people, Idol, Sabbath day, Covet, Neighbour, Spiritual, Ghostly enemy, Kingdom of God, New birth, Righteousness, Death unto Sin, Grace, Repentance, Sacrifice, New life, &c. &c.

I do not recommend that these definitions should be required only as opportunities arise in the course of the examination, but that half an hour should be occasionally devoted to the express purpose of explaining the Christian vocabulary. Any thing which varies the service, and produces rapid transition from one idea to another, quickens attention, and is therefore usefully reduced to practice, where one of the first objects is to engage willing attention.

*THE PROGRESS OF CHILDREN, WHO HAVE BEEN
CATECHISED EXEMPLIFIED BY QUESTIONS
PROPOSED, AND ANSWERS LITERALLY RE-
TURNED BY THEM.*

Before I conclude this part of my subject, I wish to furnish your Lordship with a more distinct view of the real progress made by children under the system which has been adopted; and for this purpose, I will beg your attention to the ensuing questions and answers, which formed a leading feature of the examination on the Sunday before Easter, in the present year. The children drawn up in the chancel were of all ages from six to fifteen. Some of them had been in the Sunday School from its commencement, and had been trained weekly by myself, or by the assistant minister, Mr. Judkin, with the aid of Mr. Roberts the indefatigable superintendent master, and twelve or fifteen of the most respectable of the congregation of Somer's Town new Church, who volunteer their services every Sabbath before Morning Prayers. The Catechumens were not in any

respect prepared for the particular queries which were proposed to them, but as it was my wish on this occasion to obtain satisfactory answers, I must plainly acknowledge, that I addressed myself to those, who were most likely to give them. The replies were taken down at the time by a person whom I had previously requested to undertake this office, and they are now transcribed from his paper.

Why is Passion Week so called ?

Because Christ suffered and died in that week.

What were Christ's sufferings, which gave name to this week ?

His agony in the garden of Gethsemane, and death upon the cross.

What does God require in those, who hope to benefit by Christ's sufferings ?

Faith in his word.

Repentance of past sins.

Obedience to his precepts.

What are the means of Grace ?

God's word. }
 Prayer. }
 The Sacrament. }

In whose name are we to pray ?

In Christ's. He told his disciples, Ask in my name.

In what part of our Liturgy do you find this set forth ?

At the end of all the prayers, " Through Jesus Christ our Lord."

What do you learn from the sufferings and death of Christ ?

Not answered.

Why are you afraid of God's displeasure, more than man's ?

" Because he can destroy both body and soul in hell."

Do you remember any cases of God depriving men of life for their sins ?

The destruction of all but Noah's family at the flood. }

Korah's company, Dathan and Abiram. }

Ananias and Sapphira. }

Can you state the names of any transgressors recorded in Scripture, whose *souls*, you have reason to believe, have perished?

Dives mentioned in the parable. }

Judas Iscariot. }

Can you tell me of any sinners mentioned in Scripture, who repented, and of whom it is believed that they are receiving the benefit of Christ's sacrifice?

The penitent thief. }

St. Paul, who once persecuted Christians. }

What must you do, when you are conscious of having offended God?

I must pray for forgiveness, and repent, and mend my life.

Can you do this of yourself?

Not without the help of God's Spirit, the Holy Ghost.

How has Christ described the joys of heaven and the punishment of Hell?

Not answered.

Summing up the Gospel history, what

three great things did Christ do for mankind ?

Not answered.

How was Jesus received by the Jews ?
Answer if you can in the words of Scripture.

“ He was despised and rejected of men.”

How did he endure his insults and sufferings ? Answer again from Scripture.

“ When he was reviled, he reviled not again : when he suffered he threatened not.”

When Christ drew near the time of his death, and his agony increased, what did he do ?

Not answered.

What did his disciples do, when he was taken before Pilate ?

Forsook him and fled.

What did Pilate say of him ?

I find no fault in him.

How did Christ pray for his enemies ?

Father forgive them, they know not what they do.

What was Christ's last prayer ?

“Father into thy hands I commend my spirit.”

After such evidence that the mental powers of children are called into action, and improved by this system, and that they soon become emulous to prepare themselves by previous study and application for the weekly scrutiny, it will naturally be asked, what proof have you, that they are the better in their general conduct, and that the truths which they are learning, make an impression upon their hearts? I have many proofs to give, but I shall reserve them until I discuss the *utility of the plan*, under its own head.

The modifications proposed by your Lordship having been thus reduced to practice, it now becomes my very agreeable business to shew, that the success secured by them has amply justified your Lordship's prediction, and my own experiment.

“Catechising may be rendered POPULAR as well as USEFUL, and furnish an exhibition peculiarly interesting, and not uninteresting to the congregation.—It will give to the clergy, in populous places, an OPPORTUNITY OF BECOMING KNOWN TO THE RISING GENERATION, in the character of pastors invested by lawful authority with the charge of their spiritual interests, and having a right to their attention and obedience. It will act as a STIMULUS to DOMESTIC INSTRUCTION, and prove one of the strongest incitements to the parents to teach, and to the children to learn *.”

Such were your Lordship's anticipations, and I will notice the accomplishment of them in order.

* Charge of 1818. p. 27, 28. also 1822. p. 25. 3rd Edit.

POPULARITY OF CATECHISING.

There are very few human productions, upon which a Christian teacher can ground his instructions, with so much confidence as the Church Catechism. The Roman Catholic Catechisms run away into many points of faith and discipline, which have no support whatever from the plain word of Scripture. Several of the best Catechisms of reformed congregations are abstrusely doctrinal,—others are diffuse, and lengthened out into treatises; while our own is neither redundant nor dogmatical. It never wanders from Scripture, or runs into nice distinctions: it contains that alone in which all Christians are agreed. It raises no scruples,—it offends no prejudices, and its very brevity implies, that it leaves much to the judgment of the parish priest, and demands, that he does more than confine himself to its concise phraseology; that, taking its letter as his

guide, he makes a full and complete illustration of its Apostolical lessons.

Hence the clergyman, who commences his catechetical lectures with this manual in his hand, sets out in good humour with all Christian men : every body is with him,—no man is against him. Those, who think the Catechism too short, look to him for amplification : those, who fancy it requires some explanation, are glad to have him for an expounder.

His next advantage consists in the necessity, under which he lies, of adapting his style of instruction to the level of every age and capacity. He is not catechising, when he ceases to be perfectly intelligible, easy, and familiar. The advice which has been so judiciously given to the PREACHER, applies with tenfold force to the CATECHIST. “ He must descend from the high and lofty tone of language, to walk in the humble terms of Scripture. He must limit his rounded periods, to the extent of vulgar comprehen-

sion. He must abound in interrogations and addresses, which the rules of composition condemn, in writing, though the rules of nature sanction them in speaking*.”

For the lower orders especially, the system has “charms in its very homeliness;” and it is the more attractive, because it allows of many topics being intermixed, which a clergyman would be unwilling to discuss from the pulpit, but which he may beneficially, and without any compromise of the gravity of his office, introduce from the Catechetical chair. “Whereas in sermons there is a kind of state, in catechising there is an humbleness very suitable to Christian regeneration. †”

By-standers, of all degrees and attainments, take an interest in observing how the scroll of human nature is unfolded by this exercise, and how easily it is read on such occasions: they are pleased in seeing the effects which religious doctrine have upon youthful

* See Sumner's Apostolical Preaching, p. 11, Ed. 5.

† Herbert's Country Parson.

minds and spirits,—in listening to replies, which display the different dispositions and abilities of children ;—in witnessing the development of character and genius,—and in comparing their own religious advancement and acquirements with those of the juvenile circle before them. Many of my congregation have made no secret of confessing, that they could not answer questions proposed, as well as the children have done, and that they have been thankful for the opportunity of picking up information, without the shame or the trouble of asking for it. They have made a still more important acknowledgment,—viz. that they have taken hints and rebukes kindly, which were aimed at them through younger marks, when a direct reproof would have been intolerable. “ Admonitions directed to the young find their way, obliquely indeed, but often effectually, to the bosoms of the old.” *

* Archdeacon Bayley.

A parish priest, who resides among his people, and who is acquainted with their spiritual state, may indeed, with perfect fearlessness, take advantage of a Catechetical examination, to hazard remarks which would be thought indicative of a jealous and controversial spirit towards persons of a different persuasion, or personally offensive towards individuals, were they spoken solemnly and with premeditation from the pulpit. It is the informal, the extemporaneous, the natural character of the address ; it is the observation growing out of circumstances, and out of the unexpected turn, which is sometimes given to the discourse ; it is the word forced from the mouth, while the heart is full ; it is the genuine feeling, and honest opinion of the Pastor, which will have utterance, when all his concern is awakened in behalf of his young flock ; it is the tongue that speaks, when the fire of truth is kindled ; it is this, which makes indulgent and attentive hearers, and renders all that is said welcome and impressive.

For these reasons, the Catechist may make his instructions local, and adapt them to the particular state of thought, knowledge, opinion, errors or morals, which prevail in his neighbourhood, and yet give no disgust, because personality cannot be imputed when children are the parties immediately addressed *.

* Is there not reason to believe, that the doctrines of the Reformation would find their way more generally to the hearts and understandings of the people in Ireland, if the Clergy of the Established Church would practise Catechising upon a more extended scale? In India many prejudices have been removed by this means; and where the natives will not listen to a Sermon, or to a controversial discussion, professedly directed against their superstitions, they will gather round children, who are being examined in Scriptural exercises, and take pleasure in hearing their explanations.

The following is an extract from the Report of a Missionary :—

“ A relation of the Rajah of Tanjore, who sends his son to our school for instruction, sent me word, that if I would examine the school at his house, he should feel obliged, and would be present at the examination. I wished him to allow me to occupy his verandah instead of the house, which he got in readiness for the examina-

But even supposing that the parochial minister's voice may sound harshly in some ears, or touch chords that vibrate unpleasantly in some hearts, yet all will admit, that he has a right to address himself, as a reprover, a counsellor, or an expounder of doctrine, to the children of his own flock, and that it is nothing more than just deference to the parental authority in which he stands invested, to bear with him, as with a person privileged to use plainness, or sharpness.

It is not for me to say how many of the causes here recited have had their operation in the scene of my own labours ; but I may

tion. When I was examining the children, a crowd, and among them some very respectable heathens, came to the place to be present ; but, as I had anticipated, his servants were posted to keep the people at such a distance, that but very few could hear me : on my observing to him, that the Word of God should be made known to every one who has a desire for it, he ordered his servants to let the people come near the verandah. I had now an advantage, by having more hearers than usual."

affirm, without any fear of contradiction, that since Catechising has been regularly pursued in Somer's Town, there has been no other sentiment expressed, than that of satisfaction and approbation. Many come to Church regularly, who were not regular before ; some come who never entered Church doors before. The interest taken in the practice is so great, that no small inconvenience arises from the numbers, who crowd up to the place of examination, exhibiting an eagerness to catch every word ; and it is difficult to find space enough, near the chancel, to accommodate such as are anxious to see, as well as to hear, all that is going on.

The most respectable inhabitants of the parish are in the habit of bringing their children, and some of them have warmly expressed their thankfulness for the example, as well as for the instruction, which they find so profitable to the younger members of their families. Parents, and relatives of the children examined, take, as it may be ex-

pected, more than ordinary pleasure in the service, and tears of joy are often seen gushing from their eyes, when the objects of their more immediate concern are rewarded, or commended for the manner in which they may have acquitted themselves.

But perhaps nothing has contributed to prove the efficacy and popularity of the system more strongly, than the inducement it is found to hold out to young persons, beyond the usual age of scholars, to present themselves Sunday after Sunday for the acquirement of further knowledge, or for the purpose of instructing others. I shall have to speak elsewhere of such as come with the praiseworthy motive of offering their services as teachers; it is enough to state here in a few words, that there are many apprentices and servants of both sexes, who take their places regularly amidst the children, and shew an anxiety to be questioned with the rest. In fact, the catechumens of

all ages take so lively a concern in the endeavours that are made to improve them, and to inculcate salutary religious sentiments, that they are not only voluntary, but cheerful attendants. The time occupied is usually less than an hour, but when it is exceeded, there are few symptoms of impatience, and many indications that these exercises, and the preparation for them, are considered as among the happier hours of their life.

How can I doubt that even the youngest of my charge find entertainment as well as improvement, when I perceive that as the interrogations advance, their eyes lighten up, their imaginations outrun their power of utterance, their anxiety to reply gets the better of bashfulness, and their mental activity encreases, as long as I continue to propose questions, which exercise thought or ingenuity? In fact, they are pleased to find themselves taking part in a conversational exercise, and delighted at every fresh dis-

covery of the secret, that their own minds are capable of effort, and that they themselves can explain as well as repeat.

ITS USEFULNESS.

When a religious service finds so many persons of all ages and conditions, who are willingly disposed to wait upon it,—it cannot but lead to some results which are of the highest importance to the Christian cause.

A strong regard, and a strong reciprocity of confidence grow out of the *Clergyman's* attempt to train up his young flock in the way they should go, and out of the disposition evinced by the *congregation*, to stimulate the assiduity of the children by their presence. — He has our best interests at heart, he labours to build us up in our holy faith, to lead our thoughts, and to fix our attention on that which is necessary to salvation. He is not satisfied with our formal

and verbal acquiescence, he requires a sincere and a conscientious assent. He takes a parental interest in our children, and as though he were Parent, Sponsor, and Priest, he provides in all things for their 'soul's health.' He acts towards them as though he had the Scriptural portrait of the good shepherd ever before his eyes. He gathers the lambs with his arm, and carries them in his bosom. He brings back that which was driven away. He seeks that which was lost.—Such are the reflections of the parishioners in regard to their Pastor. The Parish Priest entertains corresponding sentiments. He loves his flock the more affectionately, because they follow him, and know his voice, because they will not follow a stranger. They are the more and more endeared to him, in that they place themselves under his guidance, and consent to be directed by his hand. It is the willingness of parents, children, masters of families and of their dependents, to be taught of him, and to give themselves

up to his supervisal, which animates his affection, and cements the union *.

But these are general reflections. I am bound to shew, not what the state of things is likely to be, but what it is, as actually resulting from the system under my own management.

Here then, in a district, situated between a dense population on one side, where there are numberless evil seductions: and the outskirts of London on the other, where young people are tempted to spend the Sabbath in profaneness, or in idle roaming about the fields: here, between two and three hundred children are not only persuaded to come to

* Should it become more general in the Parochial Clergy to devote a portion of their time to the public instruction of children in Church, might we not hope, that sponsors also would begin to entertain more serious notions of the responsibility of their office? “Ye shall call upon them to hear sermons,” is one of the baptismal exhortations. The short and practical discourses, which find their way into catechetical examinations, are “sermons” which it would do well for sponsors to invite their adopted children to attend.

Church, but to devote the hours immediately before and after public worship to religious acquirements. And not only so, but many of their relatives and friends, moved by their example, or anxious or curious to know the extent of their proficiency, are induced to follow them to the same place of instruction, and to pass, in seriousness, time which might otherwise be consumed in levity or sin. So much of the Sabbath being spent becomingly, it is reasonable to hope, that the remainder of it will not be mis-spent, and that a great number of responsible beings are put in the way, by this simple ordinance, of cultivating a spirit of true devotion, and of reflecting at home on what they have been learning in the house of God.

Have we not cause to expect a blessing upon such labours, when a blessing has been promised ?

After all, says Secker, the most valuable instruction * for servants, for children, and

* Wherever the system is adopted, that is where instruction is conveyed, not merely by teaching the

for all *persons*, is the *public one of the Church*, which our Saviour himself hath promised to *bleſs with his preſence*.

“Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, that they may hear, and that they may learn and fear the Lord your God, and obſerve to do all the words of his law, and that their children which have

catechiſms, as by *catechiſing*, the bleſſing of God appears to crown the undertaking. The annexed account is extracted from the laſt Report of the Society for Promoting Chriſtian Knowledge, p. 39.

“From *Barbados* the Society learns that there is a progreſſive deſire on the part of the ſlave to receive, and of the higher claſſes to impart the bleſſings of religion. The Catechetical ſystem explained in the laſt Annual Report, has advanced materially during the year which has juſt cloſed ; and Sunday Schools have been opened in many places. It appears that by the united exertions of the clergy and their catechiſts, with the perſonal eo-operation of the proprietors, their families, and overſeers, by far the greater number of eſtates in this iſland are receiving the benefits of religious inſtruction ; and one good effect already perceived has been an in-creaſed attendanc of the Negroes at Church, where they behave with exemplary decorum.”

not known any thing, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God *.”

Several Adults, who had not been previously admitted into the Church, have, at their own request, received the Sacrament of Baptism, in consequence of the impression made upon their minds, by remarks which they have heard, after questions on the nature of baptismal vows and promises, and the efficacy of the baptismal covenant.

Many young persons of both sexes, and of different conditions in life, have kindly proffered their aid, and have requested permission to act as Teachers, and to prepare the children for their catechetical examination. They not only attend at an early hour on Sunday mornings, but they have signified their readiness to give Lessons, during the summer months, from six till half-past seven on Sunday evenings. Not to dwell upon the advantage, which the children themselves derive from the superintendence of steady instruc-

* Deut. xxxi. 12, 13.

tors, who are fully aware of the obligations of the Christian Covenant, whose age and respectability give weight to their admonitions, and who exercise an authority over the minds of boys and girls, which monitors chosen from among themselves could not be expected to attain; it is a most important point gained, to have such coadjutors enlisted in our cause, and to unite them closer and closer to our Church, by bringing them into frequent converse with us.

The relation does not end here; the intercourse which begins so kindly is improved, and in all his pastoral functions the parish priest may look to have his hands strengthened, his plans seconded, and his influence extended, by the zeal and affectionate partizanship of these his lay friends and assistants, who are first united with him as fellow-labourers in the work of religious education.

With regard to the children themselves, out of several cases, to which my inquiries and observations have been directed, the following

will not be thought unworthy of selection :— A boy of fourteen years of age, after having attended the catechising for some months, was bound apprentice, or placed in the service of a tradesman in the Borough. His master employs him on Sunday mornings, but permits him to call his time his own after noon-day. The lad regularly finds his way to the Church in Somer's Town, makes his appearance at afternoon Prayers and Sermon, and takes his place in the chancel for examination, among his former companions. None answer better than himself; he evidently devotes many of his leisure hours to religious study, and has made himself master of a Bible and Prayer Book, partly by producing tickets of merit, and partly by purchase money. He is altogether, from disposition, good conduct, and application, a youth of considerable promise.

The annexed letter from another lad of fourteen years and a half, who has also left the Parish, but is occasionally seen among

our children, will tell his history and state of mind better than any words I can adopt. It is addressed to the master of the Sunday School.—

“ Sir,

“ I hardly know how to express my gratitude enough for the kindness and learning which I received while at your Sunday School, but am obliged to discontinue attending, as I have got a situation at Mr. ———, Westminster, who is a very religious good man, and with him I am very comfortable and happy. I should feel obliged to you, if you would give my best thanks to Mr. Judkin *, for the learning I have received from him, which I hope will never die in my memory. I have paid one shilling to a large Bible, and will send all as soon as possible ; if you will have the goodness to send me one, when I have paid enough to purchase one. I think you have also some tickets of mine, if you

* Assistant minister of Somer's Town.

please to send me a little book for them, you would oblige, dear Sir,

Your ever grateful servant,

R. B."

These two boys have displayed the same uniform attention and good conduct, during the whole of their connexion with us. The subjoined cases are of a different description.—

Samuel ———, long after his admission into the Sunday-school, was so untractable and perverse, that his teachers began to despair of his reformation. It was even proposed to expel him. But indications of improvement were gradually exhibited, and he is now pronounced to be among the most attentive and best behaved of his class.

Another lad, whose name it is not necessary to mention, was for many weeks in the habit of mixing unwillingly among the children at their Sunday examinations. His master insisted upon it, under the hope of seeing an obstinate and disobedient temper

improved. The boy has derived so much benefit by his attendance, that his master is trying the same experiment with a second youth in his service.

A girl, whose ready answers and good conduct lately attracted my notice, was represented to me, as having been so giddy and ill-behaved, when she first came among us, that it would have been pronounced "enthusiasm" to have looked for any effectual change. She is now in the highest class, and after receiving several rewards, has saved money enough to purchase one of our best bibles.

Added to these, and many other examples of the same nature, there are several very young children, whose emulation has been so strongly excited, that I have been obliged to check it, lest their application during the week should prove injurious to their health. One of these, not seven years of age, came prepared, upon a late occasion, to repeat the

whole of the eighth chapter of St. John,—fifty-nine verses,—the self-imposed exercise of the past week. Every Sunday, a hundred voices exclaim, “I have learnt the Collect—and I the Gospel,—and I a page of Lewis’s Exposition of the Catechism.”

The system thus affords the clergyman an opportunity of becoming known to the rising generation, and extending his influence among them. This is one of the most substantial advantages obtained by catechising. It follows as a certain consequence. Kindness always finds its way to the hearts of young persons, and more particularly when it proceeds from those, whom they are in the habit of regarding as persons vested with authority. From the very constitution of our Church Establishment, and from other causes, which it is unnecessary to discuss, the youth of the lower orders seem to require more than ordinary invitation to approach us. Catechising, well conducted, breaks down this partition

wall ; the child's bosom opens to the minister, who frequently accosts him in a voice of affectionate concern, and manifests an interest in his behalf. Seeing that there is some feeling for him, he loves and reverences the man, for whom he before entertained nothing more than cold respect. The parents also are bound by cords of love to the priest, who takes more than formal and official notice of their children,—who holds his station among them, not merely as a national functionary, rendering back a measured return of duty for the revenue he draws,—but whose intercourse is an intercourse of zeal, and friendship, and affection, exercised equally towards old and young. In more instances than one, I have found a whole family moved by means of a child, who has been desired to repeat at home what he has learnt at church, and to read a particular passage to his father or mother, or to warn a brother or a sister, who has not yet been restrained by the fear of God.

The catechumens themselves, conscious

that the clergyman has his eye upon them, measure their conduct accordingly, and are oftentimes restrained in an hour of temptation, by the apprehension, that a knowledge of their transgression would expose them to his reproof, and to the charge of inconsistency. It is frequently enough to say to them, What, will you, who have answered so well at the examination in Church, and received the commendations of your minister, will you now act in direct violation of the precepts, which you then professed to observe? Will you, who have had a kind counsellor and friend in your parish priest, turn your back upon him, and go to unauthorised persons for spiritual direction, when you have had so many proofs that he is much more deeply concerned in your spiritual integrity and safety, than any stranger can be?

It is not, however, my wish to go into any great length upon these topics, important as they are. I have merely proposed to give a sketch, in outline, of the superstructure which

a good master builder may erect upon catechising : it will therefore be enough to add, on this head, that one great desideratum in our ecclesiastical system, may be supplied by it.

For the most part we lose sight of our flock at a very dangerous period of life,—after they leave the Parochial Schools. Except during the short seasons, few and far between, which are devoted to the preparation for Confirmation, young persons, from fifteen to twenty years of age, are seldom brought into contact with their Clergyman. The Catechist makes opportunities of intercourse, of familiarising himself with names and countenances and dispositions, which other ministers, especially in very large parishes, cannot hope to enjoy. He gives himself a right, which is willingly conceded to him, of enquiring after those, whom he has been in the habit of instructing every week, in their progress from tender to riper years. Should he hear, or see, or learn from

others that they are going astray, either in opinion or practice, he has an appeal to them, which they cannot easily resist. Whether he shall miss them at Church, or at the Sacrament, or whatever be his reason to suspect that they are departing from the way of truth, he has opened a door to their hearts and understandings, which no man can shut : which they themselves cannot close against him, and through which he may regain access whenever he pleases.



*IT ACTS AS A STIMULUS TO DOMESTIC
INSTRUCTION.*

Of all excitements that have ever been devised, to encourage the parents to teach, and the children to learn, there is none like this. The publicity of the proceedings,—the solemnity of the place,—the presence and earnestness of the Pastor of the flock,—the honest pride which the parents take in having an opportunity of proving to their neigh-

bours and acquaintances, that they have not neglected their children,—and the gratification of the children in receiving praise or rewards * in the face of all whom they are accustomed to hold in respect ; each of these is enough in itself to operate powerfully upon the mind during the week, and to spur on old and young to make preparation against the ensuing enquiry. What then may be expected to be the result when these motives act in combination, when they are constantly at work, when there is no intermission, but when every Sabbath makes new demands upon the same attention † ?

* The Bishop of Salisbury was present at one of these examinations in Somer's Town Chapel, and being highly pleased with the answers of three or four children he kindly gave them a piece of money each. These young folks were so excessively gratified by the notice of his Lordship, that they preserve his presents, and wear them as medals round their necks.

† A Letter from my parish in the country, where the system has been tried upon the same plan, gives the following pleasing account of its success.

“ The new plan answers remarkably well, and I have

I will confine myself to the mention of two facts in proof of the strong feeling, which prevails in families to qualify the children for their catechetical examination in Church.

The mother of eleven children in Somer's Town, sends seven of them to Church to be catechised, and three of these are so well trained by her, that they are among the best of those who answer. They all come prepared with some portion of the Scripture, or expositions of the catechism, committed to memory during the week.

At a very early stage of our proceedings, a boy of about eleven years of age was noticed for the extraordinary readiness of his answers, when he was asked for Scriptural references. It was explained to me, that his

had clear proof that it will operate as a stimulus, not only to the children themselves, but to those connected with them. I drew out several little confessions, that brother A., and sister B., and aunt D., had been hearing and questioning the young folks at home."—*See Letter from the same writer, page 182.*

father, who had previously been inattentive to his religious duties, began to "search Scripture" with this child every evening, with the view of preparing him for the Sunday questions. That, which commenced with the mere desire of making his son a proficient in an exercise of memory, has ended in conviction, and the man is now a reformed character.

Such, my Lord, are the remarks which I have thrown together as concisely as possible, more in the form of fragments and hints, than of a regular disquisition, under the hope of inducing other Clergymen to give their serious consideration to the merits of an ordinance, which most men know how to appreciate in theory, while few are disposed to try its effect in its several practical bearings. But since a plan adopted by myself may seem to require something more than my own testimony in evidence of its practicability and success, I beg attention to the annexed extract of a letter, addressed to me by a Lay friend, who witnessed the manner in which

the business of catechising was carried on by my Curate, during my absence from Somer's Town, and the impression made upon the children and the congregation.

“ I was last Sunday afternoon at Somer's Town chapel. Perceiving many of the congregation collecting round the Communion-table after the service, to hear the children of the district Schools catechised : I joined the throng. It was indeed a most gratifying scene. The children, to the number of one hundred and fifty, or sixty, evidently assembled willingly ; they came not as by constraint to an ungrateful task. They seemed to feel that they were in the presence of their fathers and their mothers, their relations and their friends ; they were cheered too, by the interest which was manifested by many of their richer neighbours. The spectators, I was glad to observe, were numerous, and of all ranks and ages. Nothing could exceed the kindness of Mr. Judkin's manner. His questions related chiefly to the Lessons,

the Collect, and the Epistle and Gospel for the day, parts of which many of the children had learned during the week. Their answers were frequently extremely pertinent and correct ; and if they hesitated, they were encouraged to say what they did think and know, though they might err widely from the mark ; and by thus learning the extent and nature of their ignorance, the Catechist was the better able to instruct them, *κατηχεῖν τὸν λόγον*. The young Catechumens seemed to feel that something more was required of them than answers, with which their lips had been long familiar. When a question was proposed, it immediately arrested their attention ; and if they perceived, or thought they perceived the answer, they strove to catch the eye of the examiner. The sacredness of the place prevented any unseemly bursts, but their emulation was not checked by unnecessary form.

“ It is imposible to suppose that the bystanders did not profit by such an examina-

tion; the mere questions must have incited many to reflect; and the words of instruction and advice, which were offered from time to time by the Catechist, could not be lost. And surely he does not rightly conceive the duty of a Catechist, who thinks it satisfied by asking certain formal questions, and hearing the prescribed answers. The occasions which an examination must offer, are the most valuable for reproof and explanation of the doctrines of the Gospel.

“What a contrast between the animated scene I have faintly sketched, and the system set forth by the Canon! The service of the Church is interrupted; a dozen children are drawn up before the reading desk in prim array, and repeat the words of their Catechism. This mode is inconvenient and uninteresting, and is therefore seldom adopted. But what is the consequence? Catechetical instruction is almost disused in our churches, though its observance is recommended by the most potent considerations.”

THE SAME SYSTEM ADOPTED AT DURHAM.

The preceding pages give an account of an experiment made in the metropolis : your Lordship will have no objection to hear how the system may work in a country town, and in a parish where it might be thought, that the introduction of a new force was not so imperiously necessary.

In November last I became the Incumbent of St. Margaret's, a parish in Durham. The population is about three thousand, and I found the way prepared for me by the labours of two eminent predecessors *, each of whom had distinguished the period of his cure by some beneficial improvement in the parish. The clergyman, whom I immediately succeeded, had put into efficient training a Sunday-school, and an Infant-school, and had secured such an ample provision of Bibles,

* The Dean of Chester, and the Rev. W. N. Darnell.

Testaments, and Prayer-books, that there is scarcely a family which cannot produce a proof of his zeal, in their possession of a copy of the Scriptures. The path thus smoothed had been further improved by the constant residence of a curate*, who has been, during sixteen years, **THE PARISH PRIEST**, in every sense of that term, full of meaning as it is. All possible means were open to me of putting myself in immediate communication with my new flock, through the introduction of one who knew them all, and was known of them. Therefore, if Somer's Town presented a fair spot for the experiment of catechising, on your Lordship's modified plan, in consequence of the difficulties, which a parochial clergyman would have to encounter there, St. Margaret's might also be regarded as favourable ground, in consideration of its facilities.

Perceiving afternoon prayers to be indif-

* The Rev. P. George.

ferently attended, and the Sunday-school to furnish a muster very unequal to the numbers on the list, I determined to have recourse to catechising forthwith, and I looked with sanguine expectation to the result. The effect was even greater than that which I anticipated. The afternoon congregation increased every Sunday ; and in ten weeks the number of children in attendance at school, which did not exceed 60 on the first day I officiated, had swelled to 146. It has now reached 160.

I derive no small satisfaction from having an opportunity of inserting the following Report, by Mr. George, of the improvement already resulting from steady perseverance in the practice. It is important to have the opinion of a clergyman who has reflected so much and so seriously upon the nature of clerical duties, and to adduce such an accession as this to the valuable authorities which I have already cited in behalf of Public Catechising.

“ In compliance with your request, I send you a hasty sketch of the plan of Catechising in the Church first adopted when you became the Incumbent, and still continued; together with a statement of the effects it has produced.

“ It seems proper, in the first place, to advert briefly to the nature and extent of our population; and also to certain measures which had previously been put into operation. The population of the Parish amounts to more than 3000; and is of a very indigent and fluctuating character. Being a detached suburb of a considerable town, and abounding in mean houses, which are, moreover, in a multitude of instances, divided into tenements occupied by distinct families;—it naturally becomes, for these reasons, the abode of the poorest orders; and, on some other accounts, also attracts very many of the vagrants, and loose and suspicious characters, who pass along the great North-road. These circumstances, in conjunction with the almost

total want of accommodation in the Church, for the mass of the poorer orders, (until within the last three or four years) tended, in no ordinary degree, to cherish vice and ignorance, and a total apathy to religion, and, indeed, to improvement of any kind. One essential step towards the amelioration of a Parish so circumstanced, seemed to be the providing accommodation for the poorer orders in the Church. A *free* gallery was, accordingly, erected at the suggestion, and through the exertions of the last Incumbent; which, although by no means adequate to supply the wants of the Parish, has proved a material aid. The education of the children was obviously the next step, which afforded any prospect of success. By giving them religious instruction, and training them to habits of due observance of the Lord's day, and attendance at Church, it was hoped that many of them would not only be rescued from the ignorance and irreligion which surrounded them, but that they might be made the means

of bringing a beneficial influence to bear on their parents and relatives, whose habits had become such as to make them scarcely accessible by other means. With this view, a Sunday-school was established, and subsequently, an Infant-school, by way of nursery and preparation, for it. In addition to this, the several dames' and other schools in the Parish, were regularly visited by the Clergyman, for the purpose of securing due attention to the teaching of the Church Catechism, and of watching over the progress of the children in it. By these means religious instruction was, in some measure, advanced among the mass of the children, and the way cleared for the adoption of your plan of Catechising in Church; which, before, would have been, if not impracticable, at least much less interesting and efficient, on account of the very small number of children, who were capable of any thing beyond the merest elementary instruction.

“ In forming a plan for Catechising in the Church, it was of great importance to adapt it, not only to the instruction of the children themselves, but so as also to excite the notice of their parents and relatives, and to render it a vehicle of attractive instruction ; and consequently of some general interest to a congregation. With these views a portion of the Church Catechism is given out to be got up during the week, together with some texts of Scripture, that are confirmatory or explanatory of the doctrines or precepts, which it contains. The Sunday Collect is also committed to memory, and the children are encouraged to endeavour to prepare themselves to answer such questions as the matter it contains may suggest. In addition to these, the Gospel for the day is learnt or read over by the children ; a certain number of verses by each, (several of them voluntarily get up the whole) and they are required to state the incidents recorded

in it ; the doctrines or precepts it teaches ; the promises or threatenings it holds forth, &c. ; and to quote the references it may contain, on any of the above particulars, to the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Tickets of merit are distributed publicly in Church, at the conclusion of the Catechising, to those who have answered best ; and a certain number of these entitle their possessors to a Bible, New Testament, or Prayer-book, or some other suitable gift, which is also bestowed publicly. The Sunday-school is now so regulated as to be in every respect preparatory for the above plan of Catechising in Church, which is held out, and is considered by the children in a remarkable degree, as a great distinction and privilege to be attained to.

“ If it be now asked, what have been the effects of this plan ? It is answered, First, It has more than doubled the numbers at the Sunday-school. Secondly, The order and discipline among the children have been

greatly improved ; and are now maintained with a degree of ease before unknown ; in consequence of the value attached to the Catechising in Church, both by children and parents, and the desire to merit the distinction of being admitted to it. Thirdly, It has attracted a respectable congregation in the afternoon, when very few attended before. Fourthly, It has excited many among the poorer classes (of which several striking proofs have occurred) to endeavour to assist their children in preparing themselves, as well for the Catechising in the Church, as for the examinations in the School ; a circumstance which cannot fail to prove highly beneficial, and of which there have been already proofs, especially in the attendance of many poor parents, and others, on divine worship, who formerly, very much, if not altogether, neglected it. Fifthly, It is evidently working a great improvement in the general behaviour of the children during the week, probably from the feeling, that the eyes of the public

are more particularly fixed on them, in consequence of their appearing at the Catechising in Church, and also, it may be hoped, in consequence of the instruction they have there received. These are plain facts, which admit not of being doubted ; and which fully bear out the expectations entertained by you, with regard to the utility of public Catechising in Church, if judiciously managed, and vigorously pursued. *Its* influence may be made to operate where a Clergyman's preaching never, perhaps, reaches ; and where his advice and admonitions can be heard only on an occasional visit, and will then be heard too often only to be speedily forgotten. *It* operates upon parents through a channel which remains open, when every other is, perhaps, shut—*through their feelings for their children.* *It* forms the most effectual check to dissent ; and if it were generally adopted, and well conducted, would, if I may venture to state my humble opinion, more powerfully extend the influence and useful-

ness of the Church *among the mass of the people than any other expedient that could be devised.*"



CONCLUSION.

My Lord, I have now come to a termination of my proposed task. The system which I have adopted in your diocese, will, I trust, be continued by my successor, and I take leave of the district, with an earnest hope, that the beneficial results of a plan originating in your Lordship's Charge, will be of a lasting nature. The experiment has been tried, and fully stated; and my object will be as fully attained, if any persons who entertain low views concerning the duty of Catechising, or if any, whose practice does not correspond with their proper estimate of its importance, shall be induced to give their serious attention to the subject.

A service, which has been sanctioned by the example of the primitive Church, and of early reformed Churches : which has been enjoined by the Canons and Rubrics, and recommended by the most distinguished divines of our Establishment, which has been adopted by the Roman Catholics, and exercised by Protestant congregations of every name and sect throughout the Christian world, cannot but be practicable, instructive, and lovely in itself. “ For, however individuals and societies may have differed in all other points, on the utility and necessity of Catechising all have agreed.—Europeans, Asiatics, and Africans, Greeks and Latins, Papists and Protestants, Lutherans and Calvinistics *.” Wherever, therefore, it has been discontinued, the blame must rest upon individuals, whose duty it is to embrace every means, which the Church sets forth, of explaining its doctrines, and extending its influence.

* Mant.

At the present crisis, when the Church of England has descended from her vantage ground, and declared her willingness to depend upon her moral strength—the purity of her Creed—the strictness of her discipline—the attachment of her supporters—and the fidelity of her ministers, for maintenance and ascendancy, there is a louder demand than ever for pastoral exertion in every branch of her ordinances. It will no longer suffice to talk of attachment to the Establishment, to write in its defence, or to controvert the arguments of its adversaries. Ours must be the persuasive reasoning of effective ministry. We must find our way to the hearts of the people, by exercising every duty which the Church imposes, as a test of usefulness and sincerity. The Dissenters boldly measure strength with us; the Roman Catholics openly menace and oppose us—they argue with us, they challenge us to a contest of words, and to a comparison of professional activity. But as long as we are vigilant and true to ourselves

we have nothing to fear. Our former triumphs have been achieved by a lively zeal in the diffusion of light and knowledge, by guiding the public mind in the search of truth, and by taking the lead in all pursuits that conduct to it. But having, by the blessing of God obtained our pre-eminence, in part at least, by promoting national education, and religious inquiry, we must now preserve our station by personally superintending their progress, not only in Schools, and among individuals, but in the face of the congregation.

I have the honour to be,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's most obliged

And faithful servant,

WILLIAM STEPHEN GILLY.

May 1, 1828.

APPENDIX.

NOTHING can be more strongly conclusive of the advantages which arise out of a system, where instruction is imparted to children, through examinations in Scripture, and in elementary knowledge, than the Reports which arrive in this country from India. When Bishop Heber declared "THE STRENGTH OF THE CHRISTIAN CAUSE IN INDIA LIES HERE," he was speaking of the Missions in Tanjore, where well-conducted schools, for the diffusion, in the first place of European, and ultimately of Christian Knowledge, are prominent among the means employed of enlightening the natives.

"I can assure the Society," says the Rev. Thomas Robinson, secretary to the Calcutta District Committee, addressing himself to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, "*that their native schools in Bengal hold out most encouraging prospects of success in converting the heathen to our holy faith.* I have visited these seminaries, and am satisfied that no human means can be so effectual in sapping the foundations of idolatry as they are.

The work may not immediately be followed by brilliant results, but there can be no doubt of the ultimate effect. Prejudice and alarm are rapidly subsiding, and difficulties which a few years ago presented a formidable barrier are now unknown. We are at liberty to introduce the Scriptures and other religious books without a murmur. The word of God is taught daily; the Lord's Prayer is committed to memory, whilst treatises, calculated to convey useful knowledge, are received and learnt with avidity."

The following extracts from Reports of proceedings in India *, relative to hopes entertained of reaching the hearts of the population at large, through the young, will not be thought foreign to

* Similar expectations are indulged in another part of the world upon the same principle.

"Besides the model schools at Bridge Town, the Bishop of Barbados has adopted a plan for the general instruction of the black population throughout his diocese. He proposes to appoint one or more catechists in every parish, whose especial duty it will be to instruct the slaves, under the direction of the Clergy, and with the permission of their respective masters. His Lordship has been so fortunate as to procure the services of several highly respectable persons in the situation of catechists; and the system is undoubtedly calculated to communicate religious knowledge, both to the adult and to the child, with greater rapidity and greater regularity than any that had been previously proposed."—*Report of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge*, 1826, p. 31.

the question discussed in this volume. We may argue from the unconverted heathen abroad, to the nominal professors of Christianity at home, and expect the same results to follow.

“ Each succeeding despatch, and every fresh arrival from the East furnish accumulated evidence to prove that education, and education alone, can overcome the prejudices of the Heathen, and prepare the way for the reception of Christianity. And when this fact is understood in Europe as completely as it appears to be understood in India, the Society may expect those important additions to its Native School Fund, which will enable it to answer the purposes for which it was formed.”—*Report of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge*, 1826, p. 27.

“ Stimulated by these encouraging assurances, the Society will continue to give its most earnest attention to the increase and maintenance of native schools. The liberal provision now made by the Indian Government for the literary instruction of its subjects, seems to point out the communication of religious knowledge as the peculiar field for the operation of the Society.”—*Society's Report of 1827*, p. 29.

“ At Bombay, to which a Missionary has now been appointed by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, there has been a considerable increase in the number of children educated in the

Native Schools ; a large supply of books has been requested ; a large remittance in payment for former supplies has been received ; and it is hoped that Christianity will soon be introduced into the schools in this Presidency in the same unobtrusive and effectual manner which has been already adopted in the neighbourhood of Calcutta.

“ In Ceylon, where the number of Native Christians has long been considerable, and where nothing seems to be wanted but an improved and extensive system of schooling, the plan suggested by Bishop Heber for the education of native teachers has been unavoidably interrupted by his death. But so valuable a suggestion will not be lost sight of.”—*Society's Report of 1827*, p. 32.

“ In these schools the Scriptures are read as a book of elementary instruction, without opposition from the natives, or any appearance of dislike. Here, it would seem, *a great door, and effectual*, is opened to the preaching and reception of the Gospel. For it may reasonably be hoped that many, whose minds have been thus seasoned in early life with the words of truth and soberness, will see, when they grow up to manhood, the folly and wickedness of their popular creed and superstitions ; will listen with gladness to those messengers of Christ who propound to them the truths, and ply them with the lessons of godliness, to which they had been accustomed in their child-

hood; will renounce the errors and idols of their forefathers, and become sincere and willing converts to our pure and holy religion. Under these convictions of their tendency to advance the good work of conversion, a separate fund has been formed for their support. And the Society entertains a sanguine hope that, under your protection, they may, through God's blessing upon the instruments which he vouchsafes to employ, serve to promote the knowledge of the Gospel, and to extend the boundaries of the kingdom of heaven."—*From the Bishop of Gloucester's Valedictory Address to the Bishop of Calcutta, Society's Report of 1827*, p. 91.

“ Six schools have been established in different parts of the city, (Benares), containing about 240 boys: in these schools, after the first books, the Gospels are read, and the treatise on Geography in Hinduwee printed by the School-Book Society. The streets of Benares being mostly very narrow, the boys assemble in long *verandahs*, and the *passers-by see and hear all that takes place*: this, though unfavourable for the purposes of a school, yet causes what the boys read to be heard by many, and sometimes a hundred people or upwards will crowd around while the boys are examined in the previous week's exercises, and their knowledge is diffused.”—*Report of the Church Missionary Society*, 1827. Page 114.

The Calcutta Committee gives the following account of an examination of the schools :—

“ On the 23d of April, a general examination was held of all the schools, previous to the Annual Meeting of the Committee. About sixty attended, from seven years old and upwards. The business of the day commenced with the Third Chapter of Galatians, read by one of the elder boys in Hindoostanee, and a Hindoostanee prayer by Mr. Wilkinson, in which the Christian boys joined, the teachers and other boys attending in a very orderly manner. The different classes were then examined in an Elementary Catechism composed by Mr. Wilkinson, the Assembly’s Catechism, and Watts’s Catechism of Scripture Names, various Native Class-books, the Hindee, Oordoo and Persian Testaments, the Pentateuch in Oordoo, and the Psalms in Persian. One boy repeated a Poem of considerable length, on the Being and Attributes of God; and all performed very well with reference to their ages and periods of attendance. But what appeared to give most general satisfaction, was the performance of a class of six boys, (two from the Seminary, and four from the Central School,) who read various passages from the New Testament, Pentateuch, and Psalms, in Persian and Hindee. The feeling and intelligent manner in which they delivered their various portions, contrasted with the formal drawl so generally exhibited by native readers—*the readiness, ac-*

curacy, and facility with which they referred to different Scriptures bearing on the subject of their Lecture, particularly from Psalm viii. to the interpretatory passage in Matthew xxi. and Hebrews ii. —and the good sense and correctness with which they answered the various questions proposed to them, could not fail to excite mingled gratification and surprise in the minds of all who considered how lately they had come under this species of instruction. The interest also taken in the Lecture by the native teachers, and their inquiries respecting passages of which an explanation was offered, could not but be highly pleasing.”—Report of the Church Missionary Society, 1827, p. 121.

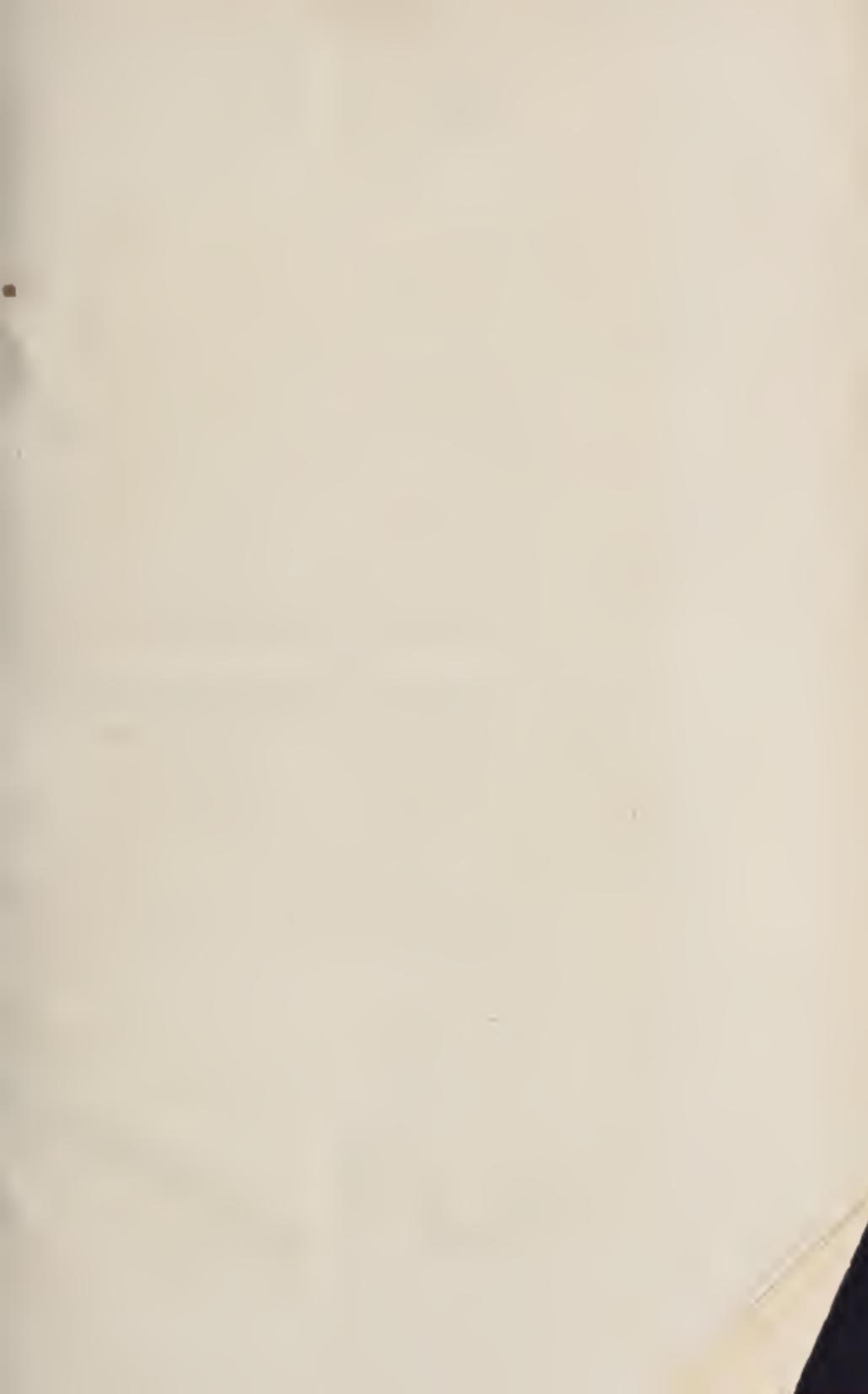
“ I sent out the schoolmaster last Sunday while the bell was ringing, to those who lived near, to invite them to come ; but they would not : they asked what profit they should get by going to hear a sermon. *Finding that no adults attended the services on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, I dispensed with preaching, and now read the prayers, and catechise the children on the history of the Bible and the leading truths of Christianity : by beginning these services an hour before the usual time of closing the school the attendance of most of the children is secured ; for though they are not compelled to remain, yet they generally do—that is, the Cingalese boys on the Wednesday, and the Portuguese on the Thursday. Several also of the*

Headmen's sons, who come to school to learn English, are, by this means, brought to engage in Christian Worship, who would not venture to come on the Sunday for the express purpose: in this way it may be hoped that some good may be effected—that their prejudices against our religion will, in time, wear away—and that the truths of the Gospel, becoming familiar to them, will, through the blessing of God, enlighten their minds: they will not kneel with the other children at prayers, but they do not object to take a book and join in the service.”—*Report of the Church Missionary Society, 1827, p. 149.*

Of the schools generally, Mr. Ward writes—

“They are all visited twice, and in some cases three times, a week, by our young people; which, together with our own visits, will be productive, I trust, of a gradual improvement in the rising generation. We have never before possessed the means which we now do for the accomplishment of this important object.”—*Ibid. p. 150.*

THE END.





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