



1. Essay on the several Dispensations of God to Mankind in the order in which they lie in the Bible - 1728
2. Remarks on the several Answers to a Pamphlet intitled Christianity not founded on Argument.
3. A Review of the genuine Doctrines of Christianity comprehending Remarks on several principal Calvinistical Doctrines - By Joseph Towers 1763
4. The Nature & necessity of Catechising - 1746.
5. Observations on the Conduct & Character of Judas Iscariot 1751.


SCC

8232





J. Chamber



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2011 with funding from
Princeton Theological Seminary Library

THE
NATURE and NECESSITY
OF
CATECHISING:

BY
A Divine of the Church of *England.*

WITH
Some *Remarks* thereon,

AND
Proposals for the more effectual carrying
it into execution ; by another Hand.

D^r Law Bp. of Carlisle —

Edmund Law

CAMBRIDGE,

Printed by J. BENTHAM, Printer to the University;
for W. THURLBOURN Bookseller in *Cambridge*,
and J. BEECROFT in Lombard-Street *London.*

MDCCLVI.

To the Most Reverend the
A R C H B I S H O P S,
The Right Reverend the
B I S H O P S,
AND
The rest of the **C L E R G Y**
OF THE
CHURCH of *ENGLAND,*

The following Papers
Are most humbly Dedicated, and with all Duty
and Deference submitted

By the Authors.

Nature and Necessity of *Catechising*.

IT seems to be one great happiness of the present age, that strife about words, and a blind zeal for opinions visibly abates, but then it is no less visible that a true zeal and just concern for the substantials of Religion is abating likewise; and if this be not some way remedied, there is room to apprehend that we may soon fall as far short of former times in point of practice, as we exceed them in all parts of speculation. In order therefore to remove the growing levity and lukewarmness in subjects of this kind, at least prevent it from infecting the next generation; to restore that sober sense of and regard for these things which the importance of them must require; it may be proper to look back a little to the foundations of Religion amongst us, and see how rationally they are laid, and whether any improvement may be hoped for in this respect. Now these foundations are laid when we commence Christians, and this we properly do when in our own persons we undertake to perform our part of the Baptismal Covenant: till this be done, we are not in strictness bound to any particular mode or profession of Religion; I mean, by any thing that others have designed or undertaken for us, (who in truth can only engage for themselves, and certify what they will instruct us in, invite and exhort us to, and as far as in them lies, cause us to undertake; and who are accordingly required to be themselves above the state of *Childhood*, and

to have *communicated* with the Church before they can be regularly admitted to bring others into it. *Canon 29.*) And therefore I have placed the commencement of Christianity not so much in any operation performed on us, any dedication of us, or stipulation for us in our Infancy, as in our actual entrance on the Christian life; when the Religion of *Christ* begins in some degree to affect our understanding and determine our conscience; when it becomes our own choice, rather than the effect of chance, of the constitution or custom of the country wherein we were born: and this, I think, is with the generality in our Church to be dated from their *Confirmation*. What efficacy the administration of *Baptism* may have upon the souls of those who die before they come to the use of reason; — what authority there is for administering it to such, — or what necessity for the continuance of it to any other beside those who come under the character of Profelytes: — these are questions which I do not at all meddle with at present; but shall only beg leave to observe, that in what circumstances soever this Rite be administered, in order to make it a reasonable service, such an office as that of Confirmation with us seems very fit to follow, and a good deal of instruction to attend both of them as closely as possible. For that Baptism which alone has an effect on our salvation the Apostle plainly shews us [*1 Pet. 3. 21.*] must have this, not in itself, by virtue of the external act, and absolutely depending on any certain person, matter, form; or operating like a charm; but in a moral, intellectual manner; and so as to affect the heart
and

and influence the temper: it is *not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good Conscience toward God*: not the mere outward ceremony of washing and cleansing the body, but a most efficacious means of purifying and preparing the mind for heavenly things; including a solemn contract between God and us, whereby we engage to devote ourselves to *Christ*, and be his true Disciples; and God promises on our performing such engagement to forgive us our sins, and bring us to eternal life: and therefore implying a sincere conscientious declaration of our faith and resolution as to those several articles both of belief and practice, concerning which we are there properly *interrogated*. Now as all this is supposed to be done for us in our Infancy, and the chief parts of consequence transacted in our stead by proxy, the subsequent rite of Confirmation comes in very seasonably to supply the unavoidable defects of such a transaction, to constitute this primary religious Office of a piece with all the rest, and what each man's Religion ought to be, a *personal* thing; to render us complete members of the Christian Church, and fulfil the institution which our Lord has left for making his Disciples; *Matt. 28. 19.* And wisely has our Church appointed that we should be called to this just when we come to years of discretion, and are entering on a tempting, treacherous world; just as the lusts of the flesh begin to exert themselves, and gather strength upon us; and our great Adversary is lying in wait, and laying all his baits to ensnare us. Against each of these (which we before vowed to resist, and which are now forming their assault)

does the Church carefully prepare and arm its members, by reminding them of their engagements, and bringing them to a publick acknowledgement and repetition of them ; by fortifying them with resolutions, and directing them to the means of keeping these engagements ; by supplying them with suitable instructions on such an occasion ; by offering up her prayers, with them and for them, to that end. Thus are young persons happily initiated in the service of their Maker: this gives religious principles an early and sure possession both of the head and heart : this one good work, if properly attended and discharged with due qualifications, would not fail to strike them with that reverence and awe, and give so right a turn to their whole way of thinking, as would be remembered by them (as it has been by numbers) and retained, all their lives after. It must imprint in them so deep and lively a sense of their duty, as would in a natural way put them on some proportionable endeavours to perform it, and prove the best means of entitling them to the Divine assistance, and deriving on them all those *manifold gifts of grace*, which are there summed up, and particularly requested.

Let us in the next place observe the common practise of this part of the world in these respects. And first for *Baptism*. Many are extremely solicitous about their Children being admitted to it forthwith in a private way, especially if they be not very like to live, (though to those only who do are most parts of the Office evidently appropriated) on the least indisposition the Clergyman is sent for at all hours of Day or Night, and they

they grow quite inconsolable if any one should happen to die unbaptized on any account : but if that Ceremony once be got huddled over, they think all is done, or are very willing to trust Providence for the rest. As to Instruction, whether private or publick, about that they are easy enough, and rather inclined to put it off year after year, and pass it from one hand to another. As for those *Sponsors* who are to attend the publick administration of Baptism, who are so strictly charged and solemnly engaged *to see that the Child be taught so soon as he shall be able to learn* what was there done in his behalf; these when they have either personally appeared to satisfy the custom, and do credit to their Neighbour, or sent some Deputation to that purpose, and discharged their Fees, seldom concern themselves any farther about this Child, than upon set visits to own some sort of fashionable relation to it, and now and then make it some present; or, if they should be called upon, perhaps attend it once more to the Bishop, and that too either for mere form's sake, or in order to procure a release from all those stipulations which they formerly entered into upon its account, and which they never once bestowed a thought on since.

Which brings me to the next grand point of *Confirmation*: And this, it must be likewise owned, is either grossly neglected by too many for the greatest part of their lives, or hastily attended where and whenever it falls in their way : it is in the same manner treated as a ceremony, under which they are quite passive; looked on as little more than the Bishop's Blessing, which most
 peo-

people think may do them good as oft as they can have it, and to which therefore persons of all ages will flock in a confused, tumultuary way, notwithstanding all the care that Bishops or Parochial Clergy take to regulate it. So apt are people at all times to rest in shew, rather than enter into the meaning, or endeavour to comply with the intention of a rite! so ready to place Religion and the favour of God in some slight, empty, mechanical performance, of their own or of others for them, rather than in those real, solid, rational duties which reform and rectify the inward man, and are able to produce settled *habits* of Piety and Virtue; those true and only terms of acceptance which himself prescribes! And though great pains have lately been taken, and many useful treatises are daily published, to assist and improve Youth in almost all other parts of Science, and the means thereto, yet is the science of Religion, properly so called, left in great measure still uncultivated; and these neglects and abuses tolerated in the established administration of its ordinances. How these and the like may be remedied comes next under consideration.

Now the most natural if not the only method to recover a right apprehension of these things, seems to be a proper manner of *Catechising*. By catechising I mean, not the procuring that our own or any other Catechism, or Compend of Divinity, be said over some few times by rote; nor the delivering any stated Exposition, Catechetical Lecture or Discourse thereon; though these may be of great use in their turns; but the frequent, familiar exercising of young persons in it,

it, until they can thoroughly understand and express the meaning of each word and phrase; till they have learnt to invent and apply words of their own; by putting it out of its present form, and altering both the terms and method of it as occasion serves; by turning the same subject into different lights, conveying the same thoughts in various dress, and teaching them to give their notions of the thing as much as possible in their own way and language: gently instilling into their minds the first elements of religious knowledge, and again drawing them forth diversly according to the Child's capacity, experience and improvement: thus leading them on gradually from sounds to sense; forming their thoughts and fixing their attention to the reason and connection of things; aiding and inuring them to reflect a little on such points as are within their reach; and at length enabling them to give a clear account of all parts of the Christian Dispensation, and be fully acquainted with their duty both to God and man.

This is the office of Catechising: which though it may be deemed a common and contemptible one, yet is assuredly a rare and arduous task, and which perhaps requires the greatest pains and skill of any part of the whole ministerial function. Nor has it of late, so far as I know, been distinctly treated of: how seldom, and with how small care it is performed amongst us, may not be so proper for me to set forth. However, it must be allowed that we fall far short of the ancient practice on this head; as appears both from the accounts we have of so many famous

CATECHETICAL SCHOOLS established in the times of primitive Christianity, and from some exercises of the several eminent masters in them, which are yet extant: from which we may conclude that in those ages this would not have been esteemed a work fit to be trusted wholly to the Curate, and much less left to Parents, Parish Clerks, or petty School-masters; though the assistance of all these in private be very useful and even necessary to prepare and train up Children for the performance of it in the Congregation. At present this is a work which many, either discouraged by disuse and the low despicable notions which are too apt to be entertained of it, or deterred by its difficulty; are extremely shy of undertaking. Some have not the heart, some not the face, to set about it: most content themselves with causing the Church Catechism, or a comment on it, to be repeated in the time of *Lent*, or some few *Sundays* after; and if they continue to hear the Children employed in this till they can say every word in order, think that they have amply done their parts in this respect. But the Church of God in former times, both among *Jews* and *Christians*, understood his precepts and their duty on the point before us in a different manner: and whether our own Church by requiring (as she does in her rubrick after the Catechism and 59th Canon) every *Parson, Vicar or Curate to teach, instruct and examine the Youth and ignorant persons of his Parish, in some part of the Catechism, for half an hour or more every Sunday and Holy-day; and all Fathers, Masters, &c. to cause their Children, Servants and Apprentices to come at the time appointed*

obe-

obediently to bear and be ordered by the Minister ; and this with so high a Penalty on each for their neglect as Excommunication once was deemed ; whether, I say, she means only their being taught to repeat some portion of this Catechism by rote, I leave to be considered. Sure I am, Catechising in its original true sense implies a little more than the bare running over an old form, though that consist of question and answer, and contain whatsoever is needful either to belief or manners ; and though our own be as plain, clear, comprehensive, and in many respects as good as most, yet is there still room for some intermediate questions and elucidations before every point of Doctrine in it may be rightly understood, and well digested. Witness the definition of a *Sacrament*, wherein the latter part refers sometimes to the nearer branch of the foregoing ; sometimes to the more remote ; and where, beside the explanation of these terms *visible sign* and *spiritual grace*, it may not be improper to ask, what it is which is *given unto us* ; what was *ordained by Christ himself* ; how is that sign, or visible thing, *a means whereby* we receive *the same*, *i.e.* inward, invisible Grace : and what is a *Pledge*, and how comes this to be such a thing as can assure us *thereof*, *i.e.* of our receiving and becoming possessed of this Grace upon the application of that sign : as also in general, what goes to the making of a Sacrament ? who is the Author or ordainer of it ? to whom, and for what end appointed ? &c. Again, the reply to the second and third questions in our Catechism will admit almost as many queries to unfold them as they contain principal words. Our Duty

towards God and our Neighbour requires to have each part of it applied to that particular commandment of which it is designed to be explanatory : and so likewise in that which follows the Lord's Prayer. — But I am not about to propose any determinate set of queries, or fixed method of explanation : which must entirely depend on the Child's comprehension, and vary according to the answers given. Of such we have enough already, and the shortest and easiest the best. For whatever form of words is used in this case, when it becomes a *Form*, and is once gotten by heart, it comes almost to the same thing; and our own, as was said, may do as well as any, if persons be but duly versed and exercised therein. Here is the point; and all that is wanting here is only first to understand the words and their construction, so as to get the main substance, or the general doctrines of Religion inculcated into our Catechumen, and when this is done effectually, he may be carried on at leisure to what lengths we please; or otherwise directed to more accurate discourses on each head; and will be able in good measure to judge for himself, and edify by his own perusal of them.

But let not the Catechist be soon wearied out, nor straightway dejected at the slow progress he shall make, and the seemingly small effect of his labours at the first. The minds of Children will be found to open insensibly, and his way of accommodating himself to them grow more apt and easy: their courage and his own will be continually improving, and the whole conduct of the thing become more natural and more agreeable on every fresh attempt.

Many are indeed the real lets and impediments attending this, and more the excuses for postponing and omitting it. Among the poorer sort, Children are oft otherwise employed, interrupted and taken from School before they have been tolerably prepared, or even taught to aim at saying any thing out of the common road. Among persons of Condition (who should know these things better and judge of them with more justness) their Children are generally thought above mixing with the rest, and being subjected to such publick, particular examinations. Servants and grown up people (how ignorant soever) are unwilling to submit to them, and ashamed of standing exposed to the whole Congregation; many of whom likewise are but too apt, in the beginning more especially, to betray some unusual levity, to entertain themselves with remarking and ridiculing any the least mistake, oddity, or impropriety on such occasions. — But all such difficulties as these will soon be over when this custom is once introduced, and for a while persisted in: when each party becomes engaged and meets with encouragement according to their industry and ingenuity therein: and all those hardships will in time be amply recompensed by the visible *benefits* accruing to all that are either immediately or more remotely affected by it: which I proceed to touch on very briefly.

From what has been said it is easy to perceive,
 1. How much this custom would by proper exercise enlarge, strengthen and ripen all the powers of reason in young persons: and 2. remove that vicious bashfulness and inability to speak in publick,

which is so mightily prejudicial to most people with us; and thereby of what service it would be both to the Master and Scholar. 3. By being thus early grounded in the true faith we should help greatly to prevent the growth of Infidelity, and guard against the prevailing errors of Popery, or Fanaticism, or any others. 4. This would soon give a right notion of Religion, and shew that it depends not on a set of technical terms, or trifling ceremonies; not on any subtle distinctions, or superficial niceties; but consists in a few plain facts and rules of life, with the most easy, intelligible rites inducing us to enter on, and to continue the belief and practise of them. 5. This would not only lay a foundation for the instruction of Youth and improvement of the following generation, but serve to remind the present what they have hitherto been doing, or engaged to do in the affair of their Salvation; it may help to excite all hearers to a proper recollection of what they once learnt, or ought to have learnt, on this subject, and above all things conduce to the making each of the abovementioned offices more useful: to answer the intents of Baptism by what was done in our Infancy, and to retrieve the credit of that once valuable institution of Sponsors, but which, we may perceive by what has been already said, is now so much degenerated, as to become matter of scandal to Dissenters, and of triumph to Unbelievers, and of so little benefit to ourselves as makes it doubtful whether it be worth retaining.

That any thing of a religious kind should be mere matter of form is ever of bad consequence. When an appointment howsoever excellent at first,
(and

(and the more so, most commonly the worse is its corruption) dwindles into an empty unmeaning piece of pageantry; it then turns to a detriment and a disgrace; it introduces an habitual neglect of sacred things, infects the minds of men, and teaches them to look on all in the same light, and pass them over in the like *formal lifeless* way. It is true, the care of Parents, so long as they live and continue of the same Profession, may now-a-days be generally esteemed sufficient for the education of their offspring: but may it not be asked then, why are these other assurances still given and required with such solemnity, if no more be intended by them? And though a collateral security be in most cases reckoned an advantage, and was no doubt originally so in this, and therefore no objection lies against the appointment in itself; yet as it now stands it is no security at all; and can serve, I fear, only to reproach us: as may perhaps be the case with some other things originally of great use and expedience in the Church. — But it is not our province to direct the Church, nor of so much service to censure and complain of any Institutions which remain without effect, as to try all we can to recover those we have to their full purpose; to render them of some apparent use among ourselves, and thereby recommend them more effectually to others: which seems most likely to be done in the way proposed, *viz.* by considering the nature and the subject of each in a due course of *Catechising*; and which is therefore one strong recommendation of it. 6. Nor will there be other motives wanting to encourage patience and perseverance in this, which at first

sight

fight seems so forbidding an attempt: such as are drawn from a satisfaction to observe the rise and original dawnings of reason, and the daily growth of knowledge in young minds: (and the younger they are the quicker will their progress be) from a sense of our being instrumental in the formation, as it were, and furtherance of so many both reasonable and religious creatures: from a consciousness of having well discharged this so important, though at the same time so slighted, a duty: and from a comfortable assurance that our recompence will be the greater and the more entire in another world, inasmuch as we receive the less retribution of esteem or love for it in this. Farther, to animate and quicken our endeavours, we ought to consider (as the Church reminds us on another occasion) that our Lord himself thought it not below him to admit little Children to his presence, take them up in his arms, lay his hands upon them and bless them; and that he has hereby set us an example of shewing our good will to such by doing all we can to advance their spiritual interest; and proved (not in any figurative, symbolical way; but by the most significant, express declaration) that this is by no means foreign to the Pastoral Office.

Let all men therefore heartily concur in and contribute somewhat to this excellent work; adding their warmest wishes, prayers, interest and endeavours for the accomplishment thereof. Well were all these laid out, and happy might we think ourselves, could any thing of this kind prove effectual to excite a proper spirit in all orders and degrees amongst us: a true zeal, study, resolution in the Clergy faithfully to discharge their trust,
and

and painfully perform this so very useful, unexceptionable part of their vocation: a good inclination in Parents, Masters and Heads of Families, to prepare, urge and encourage all their Children and Dependents: a just regard in such as have been Sureties to enquire what sort of provision has been made for those for whom they themselves were once charged before God *chiefly to provide*; and an inspection (not merely out of compliment and curiosity, but in good earnest) into their respective attainments and behaviour under it: a disposition in the whole congregation to attend with seriousness and due composure: in short, the care and countenance, the approbation and influence, of all persons in each station and relation; in the Church and out of it; in Town and Country.

All this, were thus much to be hoped for, is little enough to recover the right use of a too long neglected Institution; which yet appears to be so necessary to all parts of Christian Faith and Worship, that without laying a sure groundwork here, the whole superstructure can be built only on the Sand, (*Matt. 7. 27.*) and will accordingly sink upon trial, and in time of temptation fall away: at best, each subsequent religious ordinance must be but very imperfectly perform'd, and with as little benefit to the performers.

Once more then, let all, as they rate these several advantages, lend their assistance to the security and preservation of them by the forementioned means; which is at all times so much in each person's power to promote, and in the duty of
pro-

promoting which every one has so large a share, as well as in the blessing.

Were we but once sufficiently perswaded of this; could we be prevailed on to give our attention to it; then would true piety be found to revive in these degenerate days, and virtue flourish; and our Church at length become the joy of the whole Nation. Thus might we see this ancient and ever valuable practise perfectly restored, and with it a true sense, sincere esteem, and pure profession of the Gospel; to the glory of its Author and the lasting good of Mankind; to the salvation and superior happiness of our own Souls, and of all those committed to our charge. *Amen.*

S I R,

TO the Treatise on *Catechising* I can see but one objection, though I think it will admit of several improvements. The objection is, that *Infant Baptism* seems a little depreciated, as if Infants were incapable of spiritual Blessings. It must be acknowledged that Baptism does not operate like a charm, and when performed without seriousness in the Parents, may have little or no efficacy. But we are bound to believe, that by virtue of the Parents faith, which is the principal thing requisite in Baptism, it may be the means of deriving spiritual Blessings. He that heartily devotes his Child to God, according to Christ's Institution, performs no vain Ceremony, but something truly beneficial to himself and his Child.

The improvements which this Treatise seems to require are chiefly the proposing of some proper means to facilitate the work. I am sensible without a Parish-School Children cannot be brought under proper discipline and duly prepared for Catechising; Might not the Author then subjoin some Proposals for erecting *Schools* in all Parishes where they are wanted?

The Children should be distributed into several Forms or Classes, according to their age and capacity. I see no necessity for Catechising before the Congregation; if it is performed after Divine Service, the People will be at liberty to stay or go as they please.

Why should the Author send this piece into the world in so obscure a manner? Why don't

he address it to the Bishops and Clergy, and call upon them loudly to set about that necessary work?

I have inclosed a sketch of such Proposals as seemed chiefly wanting, with some account of the occasion for them, and the uses of them, and am

Yours.



Proposals for erecting of English Schools in all the Parishes of England, for the benefit of the Poor, and for the farther regulating and improving of those that are already erected.

THE decay of Christian Piety and the increase of Sin and Vice are so visible in our days, notwithstanding the endeavours hitherto used to prevent them; that it is to be hoped any expedient which may be offered for putting a stop to this growing evil will be favourably received by all well-disposed persons.

It is a melancholy consideration that in a land where the Gospel of *Christ* is held forth in its greatest purity, so many Children for want of being taught to read, should for ever be deprived of one of the best means of Christian knowledge and piety, and suffered to pass that period of life which might be so beneficially employed, in rambling, in idleness, and contracting habits of sloth and vice. And what is no less to be lamented, of those who are so happy as to be taught to read,

too many have little farther care taken of their Education ; being generally put to school to some Woman of the place, who neither can furnish their minds with the religious knowledge they are capable of, and form them to virtue, nor has authority to restrain their vicious inclinations, and to govern their morals. Thus a great part of our Youth grow up ; their minds uninformed with religious truths, their morals destitute of proper care and discipline ; left to the propensities of nature, and the prevailing influence of bad examples. And when this happens to be the case, the Parish Minister can only lament their misfortune and his own ; for unless by an extraordinary Divine Grace they should be awakened to a sense of their condition, there is great cause to fear they will resist or avoid any future endeavours that may be used to instruct and reclaim them. There are various causes to which this evil may be attributed : Parents from the lowness of their Circumstances, or the largeness of their Families, are many times unable to procure for their Children the benefit of a plain and virtuous Education : and where that is not the case, a fit person may be wanted to teach them, and to inspect their behaviour while the Parents are abroad at their labour. But the most general cause is the corruption and negligence of the Parents ; who if void of a true sense of Religion themselves, will be at no pains or expence to procure that blessing to their unfortunate Children. And unless it be made the business either of the Parent or a Schoolmaster to prepare them and bring them to the Parish Minister, to be catechised and instructed,

he may never have it in his power to do them any material service.

The remedy for this evil seems very obvious ; *viz.* the instituting in every Parish a regular method of educating the Youth : they must be rescued from the negligence of their unnatural Parents, and committed to the care and discipline of a Man properly qualified to instruct and govern them : and the Parish Minister will by this means have an opportunity put into his hands to catechise them as often as he shall think proper, and in a manner suited to their capacity. The present Age, it must be acknowledged to the Glory of God, has distinguished itself by a pious zeal for propagating the Truths of our holy Religion, as well as by an uncommon spirit of Charity to the poor. While we are carrying on this laudable design in Foreign Parts, it were to be wished we did not overlook our Brethren at Home ; whose condition (as to many of them) no less calls for our Christian compassion ; and whose nearer relation to us gives them a prior claim to it.

If the Charity-Schools erected in *Ireland* and the Highlands of *Scotland*, and the circulating * Schools in *Wales*, have been found so serviceable
to

* Since these Papers were sent to the Press, I had the pleasure of perusing a most excellent account of this extraordinary undertaking, in the *Letter to a Clergyman*, together with the numbers entitled *Welch Piety continued*, which have indeed exhausted the whole subject ; and as well by producing proper authorities, as by the most powerful motives and the most pertinent example, have in the clearest manner evinced the necessity and vindicated this method of instruction ; demonstrating what may be done in it by a due zeal and diligence from some of the smallest and least promising beginnings.

to the ends of Religion, what might we reasonably hope for, were the like method to be instituted in every Parish of *England*? And it is pity methinks, that while we annually contribute towards the support of these Schools, any Parish of
our

ginnings. These Papers are well worthy to be read and recommended by all such as have a true concern for one of the most effectual and most unexceptionable means of civilizing and improving mankind by the promotion of real Virtue, sound Religion and undissembled Piety, wherever it takes place: and which perhaps is not less wanted in some other parts of Great Britain than where it has so happily been cultivated. It appears by the close of the last year's account, that there have been 815 Schools settled and 47230 Scholars taught to read and understand their Catechism since the Commencement of this Charity. I shall take the liberty of annexing a *summary recital* of their method from the *farther account* from *Mich. 1742. to Mich. 1743. p. 5, 6.* “Where a Charity-School is wanted and desired, or like to be kindly received, no pompous preparations or costly Buildings are thought of, but a Church or Chapel, or untenanted House of convenient situation, is fixed on; and publick notice given immediately that a *Welch* School is to begin there, at an appointed time, where all sorts that desire it are to be kindly and freely taught for three months (though the Schools are continued for three months longer, or more, when needful; and then removed to another place where desired.) The people having no prospect of such an opportunity, but for a short limited time, commonly resort to them at once, and keep to them as closely and diligently as they can: though some can afford to come but every other day, or in the night only, because the support of themselves and Families requires their labour. The masters are instructed, hired, and charged to devote all their time, and with all possible diligence, nor only to teach the poor to read, but to instruct them daily (at least twice every day) in the principles and duties of Religion from the Church Catechism, by the assistance of such Explanations of it as they and the Scholars are provided with; which they are not only to repeat out of the Book, but also to give the sense thereof in their own words, with a Psalm
“and

our own should be destitute of that pious assistance we so charitably extend to our Neighbours. Many well-disposed persons, it is to be feared, have been discouraged from contributing toward pious designs, by the apprehension they had of their Charity being improperly applied. In the present case the application will be made by the contributors themselves; or at least under their inspection; and the happy effects of it every day sensibly felt.

The carrying of this Design into execution must necessarily fall to the lot of the Parish-Minister; and in many places may possibly require his liberal contribution, at least till the Parish is made sensible of the benefit of it. But his labour and expence he will think well bestowed, when so effectually employed for the interest of those committed to his care; and when by the Divine Blessing he may thereby be enabled to gain many souls to Christ, for his Joy and Crown of rejoicing in the Day of the Lord.

1. That the erecting of the School be undertaken by the Minister of the Parish either alone, or in conjunction with one or more of the Gentlemen of

“ and Prayer night and morning after Catechising. Every
 “ Master is also obliged to keep a strict account of the
 “ names, ages, and conditions in the world, and progress in
 “ Learning of all the Scholars; and of the Books they learn,
 “ and the time or number of months, weeks and days that
 “ every one of them continued in the School; that the
 “ Masters may be paid accordingly. This account every
 “ Master is to bring in writing at the end of three months,
 “ with proper Certificates of the truth thereof, and of their
 “ own Behaviour, signed by such Clergymen as condescend
 “ to inspect them, as well as by several other creditable
 “ persons living near the Schools.”

of Interest in the place ; who are to take upon themselves the inspection of it, to have the nomination of the School-master, and to be the proper judges who are by their circumstances entitled to the benefit of this Charity.

2. That the School-master be of an unexceptionable Character, have a complete knowledge of the Principles of Religion, and be well qualified to teach the Children to read, and sing the Church Tunes: and if the place affords proper encouragement, that he be likewise capable to teach Writing and Arithmetick ; in which case the School may be supported at a smaller expence.

3. That the more substantial Inhabitants do pay for the Schooling of their own Children, at such rates as have been customary in the place ; which may be presumed to be the most equitable, but in case any alteration be thought proper, that it be made by the Visitors of the School, and agreed to by the School-master before his Admission.

4. That the School-master be obliged to teach all the poor Children of the Parish, or such as the Visitors shall require him to teach, to read and to sing the Church Tunes: in consideration whereof, he is to have such an yearly salary, suppose from one to ten pounds, as together with the profits arising from the other Children, may make a competent maintenance.

5. That all the poor Children be furnished with School Books ; and that a certain quantity of Wood, Turf or Coals be yearly allowed for the use of the School, as their proportion of firing.

6. That the Visitors by their own, and the voluntary contribution of most of the substantial
In-

Inhabitants do yearly raise such a sum of Money as will answer the demands above-mentioned. In many Parishes this will not exceed four or five pounds.

7. That as in many Country Parishes there are Houses upon the Waste, for the accommodation of poor Families, one of these be fitted up for a School-House, and furnished with Forms and Desks; otherwise that one be hired for that purpose.*

8. That at the opening of the School, the names and ages of all the poor Children in the Parish be taken down in writing; and to prevent its being crowded, only a proper number of the oldest be at first admitted; and that as these are perfected the rest succeed according to seniority.

9. That none shall be received into the School under five years of age, nor for a shorter time than a quarter of a year: and that the Parents be not allowed to call away their Children upon trifling occasions.

10. That the School-master morning and night use a proper form of prayer at School; that he carefully inspect the behaviour of his Scholars without doors; that he prepare them to be catechised by the Minister; and all Sundays and Holy-days bring them to Church, where a proper place shall be allotted for their accomodation.

11. That every Sunday after Divine Service, or at such times as shall be thought proper, the
 Chil-

* If the Schoolmaster is married, and his Family can be accommodated in the School-House, his salary may in that case be the smaller.

Children be brought to Church, to be farther catechised and instructed by the minister.*

12. That in Schools already erected and endowed, an additional salary be paid to the Masters or Ushers for their particular pains in *Catechising*; and some money set apart to be distributed as *Premiums* for the proficiency of Children therein.

13. That so many of these Rules be introduced into the present Schools, by their Visitors or others authorised thereto, as their respective Statutes, Orders, and the Circumstances of the place, will admit or may require.

I hope the Author of the foregoing Proposals will not be displeas'd to see them in some measure illustrated, and the great use and necessity of such a Plan confirm'd by the Testimony of that pious Prelate Bp. *Beveridge*, and therefore I have taken the liberty of adding a few passages from the *Postscript* to his very useful explanation of our Church-Catechism, wherein he offer'd his sentiments to the Publick upon this subject above forty years ago; with what success I am not able to say, but heartily wish that a revival of the

* 'Tis obvious that Children may say their Catechism by rote, without understanding any part of it; and that when an Exposition is read to them, they may chuse whether they will attend to it or no: It must be the business of the Catechist to put them into a way of thinking; and to descend to their capacity, by following some such method as is used in the Society's Catechism brok'e into short questions, or Dr. *Stebbing's Young Christian instructed*; at the same time enforcing the several Duties of Religion as they fall in his way. If the Children were instructed in this manner every Sunday, it is to be hop'd that persons of more advanced years would likewise attend and be profited by it.

ſcheme and ſhewing it in various lights, may help to gain it ſome attention now, and prove at length a means of its reception and encouragement, in this or any other ſhape, as may appear beſt ſuited to the preſent times and circumſtances: in which ſomething or other of that kind ſeems to be no leſs requiſite than formerly, and which in ſeveral reſpects are better qualified than ever to accompliſh it.

P. 156. — There are Pariſhes ſo very large and populous that it is morally impoſſible for their reſpective Miniſters to inſtruct all the Children and ignorant perſons that are in them. This ſeems to be foreſeen in making the law *relating to that ſubject*: for it is there provided, that the Curate of every Pariſh ſhall every *Lord's-Day* inſtruct and examine ſo many of the Children of the Pariſh as he ſhall think convenient. And therefore he ſatiſfies the law, who inſtructs ſome at one time, and ſome at another, ſo many as he conveniently can. But by this means the Curate in ſome Pariſhes can ſcarce go through all in a whole year; and then all the other will be neglected and ſuffered to continue in their ignorance.

Neither do I ſee how this can be prevented in ſuch great Pariſhes any other way than by erecting *Catechetical Schools*, ſuch as were uſual in the primitive times, and contributed very much to the Propagation of the Goſpel. There was ſuch a School at *Alexandria*, ſo ancient that it was thought to be begun by Saint *Mark* the Evangeliſt; of which the two famous men, *Pantænus* and *Clemens Alexandrinus* were ſucceſſively Maſters. *Origen* alſo taught in the ſame School, and afterwards in ſuch

such another at *Cæsarea*; and so did Saint *Cyrill* at *Hierusalem*, who was afterwards Bishop of the Place; whose Expositions of the Principles of our holy Religion, which he made, as it is supposed, when he was only a Deacon and Catechist, are still extant, and highly esteemed, as they deserve. And indeed this seems to have been a great part of the *Deacon's* Office in those days. They were not only to take care of the Poor, but to instruct the Ignorant, or at least assist the *Priests* in doing it. And so it is, or ought to be, at this day among us, by the Orders and Constitutions of our Church, which in this, as in all other particulars, keeps close to the pattern of the Primitive and Apostolical. As appears from the Form of Ordering a Deacon: for there the Bishop tells him who is Ordained, That it appertains to the Office of a Deacon, in the Church where he shall be appointed to serve, among other things *to instruct the Youth in the Catechism*. And then he solemnly promiseth that he will do so, *by the help of God*. Whereby the Church layeth as great an obligation as can be well made, upon every one that is Ordained, to instruct the Youth of the Parish, where he is to serve. And none can be admitted to the Office, unless he have a Title to some place where he may serve God and the Church in the execution of it.

Now if this was duly observed, it would conduce very much to the furtherance of this great work: for *Deacons* being obliged by the Law to continue one whole year at least in that, before they are advanced to the higher Order, if they all Catechised the Youth of the Places where they

ferve all that time, the Youth of fuch Places would, at leaft for that time, be taken care of: and they themfelves by teaching others would learn more, and be better fitted for the Priefthood, than by any other Studies which they can follow in the mean while. And if none could be ordained Priefts without Letters Testimonial, that they have faithfully executed this, as well as the other parts of the Deacon's Office, it would make them more diligent and careful to perform what they promifed at their Ordination. This therefore being an Office which Deacons, as well as thofe in higher Orders, may and ought to execute, and there being fo many Deacons every year ordained in our Church, out of them, together with thofe who are already admitted to the Priefthood, and are out of place (of which there are too many) all the great Parifhes may be fupplied with as many as are needful to the inftructing of all the Children and ignorant People in them, fo as that the Incumbents may have no more to do in this bufinefs than what they may eafily compafs. For they being all before inftructed in one or more private Schools, according to the extent of the Parifh, the Minifter upon the *Lord's Day* need only examine in the Church as many as he thinks convenient at one time, to fee whether they be fully and rightly inftructed, and at another time as many more, and fo by degrees go through the whole Parifh, and then begin again with thofe which he firft examined: for by this means there will not be that neceffity of examining the fame perfons publickly every *Lord's Day*: for they all continuing to be inftructed in the Schools, they will

will not lose what they have learned, as they otherwise would, but rather learn more than perhaps they could at Church. And if they be at Church too, as they ought to be, while the other are instructed and examined, they may receive the same benefit there, as if they themselves also were so. This I the rather observe here, lest any should think that these private Catechetical Schools might supersede the Minister's Duty of Catechising publickly in the Church. For this is what the Law requires, and the private Instructions are only in order to the having so good a Law better observed. And besides, as the Minister to whom the care of the Youth is committed, must have an eye to the private Schools, to see whether they be rightly instructed there; so it is requisite that he should instruct and examine them in publick, that his Parishioners likewise may be satisfied as well as he, that they are so, and may be thereby also put in mind of many things which otherwise they might not think of.

And I hope there is never a Pastor in the Church that will think this below him, upon which depends the safety of so great a part of his flock as the Lambs are, which he is expressly also commanded to feed as well as the Sheep, and that too in the first place. *Job. 21. 15, 16, 17.* I am sure the great Apostle did not think so when he solemnly professed, that although *he spake with tongues more than all those he wrote to; yet in the Church he had rather speak five words with his understanding that he might Catechise others also* (so it is in the original) *than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.* 1 Cor. 14. 18, 19. But the main difficulty will

will be in getting such Schools for the Children and Servants of the rich, as well as the poor (for whom there are Charity Schools already in some places), set up in all Parishes that have occasion for them, besides the Grammar and other Schools, if there be any, where the Masters ought to instruct their Scholars in the *Church Catechism*, as well as in any other Science, Art or Language. In many such Parishes the Maintenance of the Minister is so small, that it cannot be expected that he should do it himself: where it is otherwise, I doubt not but that he who is intrusted with the care of all the souls in the Parish, will do what he can towards it; as many do already. But as the case now stands with us, I do not see how it can be universally practised, as it ought to be, without the liberal contribution of pious and well-disposed Christians.

But, praised be God for it, we have still some among us, who out of a deep sense of their Duty, and pure Zeal for the Honour of Almighty God, are as forward and free to any pious and good work, as if they could merit by it: and such can never express their Piety and Charity both together any other way better, if so well as this, which hath an immediate tendency both to the Glory of the most high God our Maker and most merciful Redeemer; and likewise to the Salvation of so many thousand Souls; as well as to the Benefit of the Church and Kingdom in which they live; and that too, not only for the present, but for all future Ages.

T H E E N D.

