

THE

# Catechism

OF

THOMAS BECON, S. T. P.

CHAPLAIN TO ARCHBISHOP CRANMER, PREBENDARY  
OF CANTERBURY, &c.

WITH OTHER PIECES WRITTEN BY HIM IN THE  
REIGN OF KING EDWARD THE SIXTH.

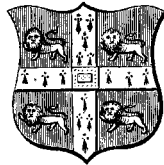
EDITED FOR

**The Parker Society,**

BY THE

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OF GONVILLE AND CAIUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, MINISTER OF ST JOHN'S CHAPEL, HAMPSTEAD.



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## ERRATA AND ADDENDA.

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PAGE

- 116 margin, *for A go, read A good.*
- 253 note 9 line 3 from end, *for Tit. lxi. read Tit. xli.*
- 256 All the references in note 2 may be found Cassandr. Op. Par. 1616. Liturg. cap. xxvi. pp. 55, 6.
- 273 note 2 line 7, *insert Alex.* The passage referred to was more probably the following: Sed diligenter hic animadvertendum, quod etsi corporis sui præsentiam hinc subduxerit, majestate tamen divinitatis semper adest: sicut ipse a discipulis abiturus pollicetur: Ecce ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus usque ad consummationem seculi.—Cyril. Alex. Op. Lat. Par. 1604-5. In Joan. Evang. Lib. vi. cap. xiv. Tom. I. p. 562.
- 284 note 4 lines 3, 8—10, *transpose* Ibid. and Decret. &c.
- 288 note 8 line 4, *insert* Tom. IV.
- 289 note 9 line 9, *for* Theophyl. *read* Theophil.
- 535 note 3 line 3 from end, *read* putatur.
- 578 last line but 1, *omit* [which].

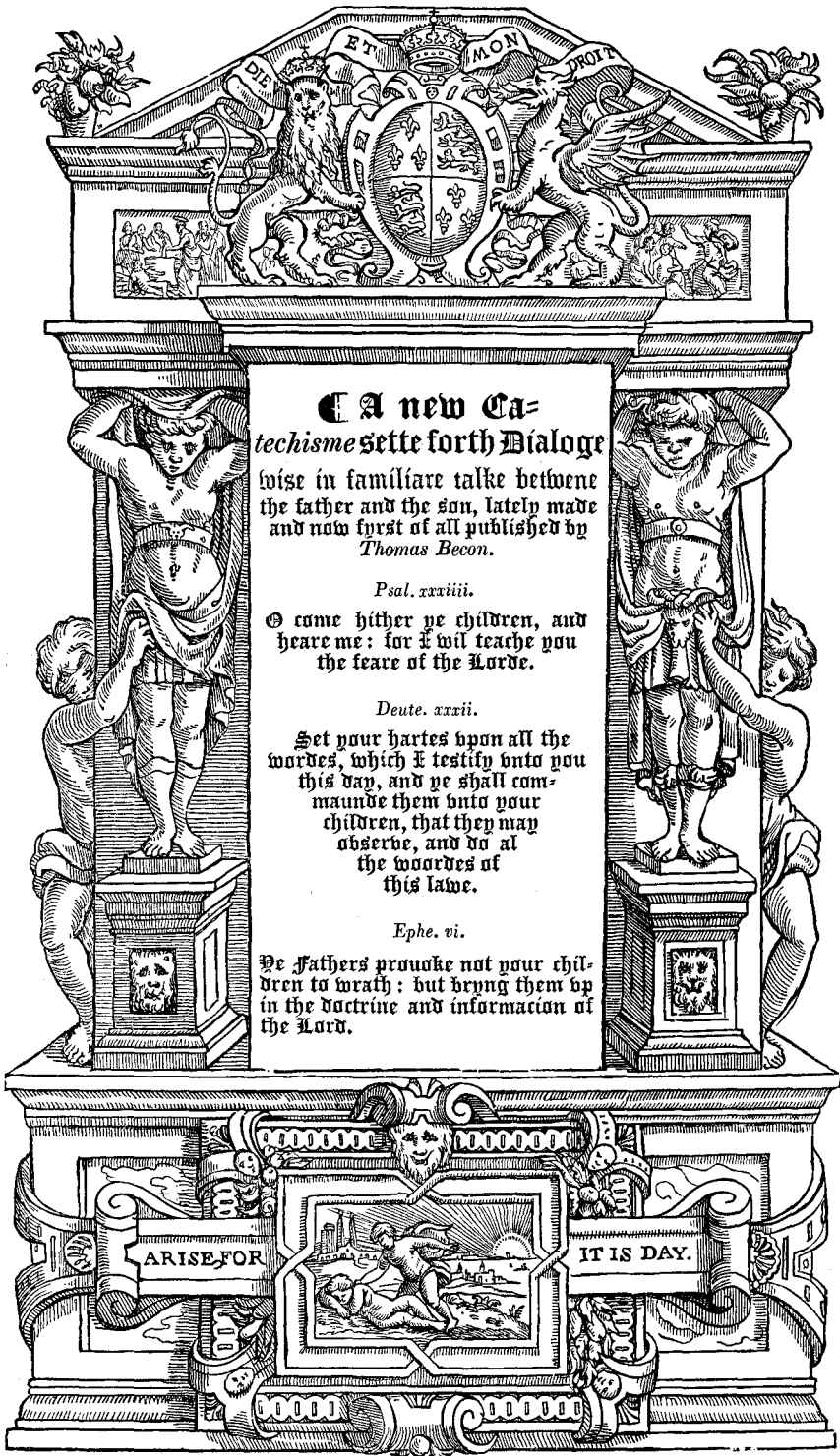
**A NEW CATECHISM,**

**SET FORTH**

**DIALOGUE-WISE IN FAMILIAR TALK BETWEEN THE FATHER  
AND THE SON,**

**MADE BY**

**THOMAS BECON.**



**A new Catechisme sette forth Dialoge**

wise in familiare talke betwene  
the father and the son, lately made  
and now first of all published by  
*Thomas Becon.*

*Psal. xxviii.*

☉ come hither ye children, and  
heare me: for I wil teache you  
the feare of the Lorde.

*Deute. xxxii.*

Set your hartes vpon all the  
wordes, which I testify vnto you  
this day, and ye shall com-  
maunde them vnto your  
children, that they may  
observe, and do al  
the wordes of  
this lawe.

*Ephe. vi.*

Ye fathers prouoke not your chil-  
dren to wrath: but bring them vp  
in the doctrine and informacion of  
the Lorde.

ARISE FOR



IT IS DAY.

TO THE READER THE BOOK SPEAKETH.

THOUGH I be small in quantity,  
Yet despise me not, good reader ;  
For perchance thou shalt find in me  
That wanteth in many greater.

Though I be without eloquence,  
Rude and barbarous to behold,  
Yet much true divine sapience  
Have I forth brought, and here enroll'd.

No subtile logic, nor sophistry,  
Shalt thou in me find and perceive ;  
But Christ and his doctrine plainly,  
Which can no man living deceive.

To teach thee Christ is mine intent,  
And all that to him do belong,  
That thou mayest keep his commandment,  
And in the christian faith be strong.

Approach, therefore, O gentle reader,  
Pray to God for understanding ;  
So shalt thou in all things prosper,  
And enjoy life everlasting.

Mark x.

☞ Suffer the children to come unto me : forbid  
them not. For unto such doth the  
kingdom of God appertain.

THE  
PREFACE OF THE AUTHOR

UNTO HIS CHILDREN,  
THEODORE AND BASIL HIS TWO SONS, AND RACHEL HIS ONLY DAUGHTER<sup>1</sup>:

GRACE, MERCY, AND PEACE, FROM GOD THE FATHER, AND FROM THE LORD  
JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD AND ALONE SAVIOUR, THROUGH THE MIGHTY  
OPERATION OF THE HOLY GHOST, BE WITH YOU, MY DEAR  
CHILDREN, BOTH NOW AND EVER. AMEN.

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AFTER that it pleased the Lord my God to call me unto the holy state of honourable matrimony, and to bless me with the increase of you, not of you only, but also of two more your brethren, named Theodore and Christophile, which now rest in glory with our head Christ; I thought no charge more straitly to be laid upon me of the Lord our God, than with all diligence to provide and aforessee, that you, my most dear and sweet children, may be brought up, even from your very cradles (as they use to say), in the knowledge and doctrine of the one alone true and everlasting God, and of his Son Christ Jesus, our most mighty Lord and alone sufficient Saviour: which knowledge, learned out of the holy scriptures, bringeth to the faithful believers everlasting life.

John xvii.  
Wisd. xv.

And as I judged this to be my duty and office committed unto me of God, if I would in any point answer his good will and pleasure, and satisfy my vocation or calling; so likewise to the uttermost of my power I have ever travailed godly and virtuously to bring you up in the knowledge of God and of his holy word, even from your tender years, that at the last you, being now young children, may wax ancient in Christ, and through him obtain everlasting life.

Rom. vi.

Wicked  
parents.

For in mine opinion, howsoever the wicked world judgeth in this behalf, those fathers, which only study to enrich their children with worldly possessions, and neglect their duty in the virtuous education and godly bringing up of their youth, are rather to be counted fathers of the body than of the mind, of the flesh than of the soul, and may right well be resembled, likened, and compared to unreasonable and brute beasts, which are also led with this care, and so affected toward their younglings, that with all diligence they travail and labour for the fostering and feeding of them, by this means providing that they lack nothing concerning the safe state and harmless conservation of the body. These parents are beastly parents: these fathers and mothers are ungodly fathers and mothers, and altogether unworthy of this great blessing of God, I mean the gift of children, whom God hath given unto them for this purpose and end, that they in this world should be godly and virtuously brought up in the doctrine and knowledge of his holy word, lead a good life, call on his holy name, be thankful for his benefits, study to profit the commonweal, and to do good to all men; that, when they shall be called out from this vale of misery, they may be made citizens of the heavenly kingdom, and there for ever reign and remain with their head Christ, in the glory of his Father. And would God we had not too too many of these ungodly parents in this our age! Verily unto such corruption of manners and lewd disposition of life are we come now-a-days, that all parents almost seek rather how to advance their children in worldly than in godly things; how to beautify them rather with the vain and fitting goods of the corruptible body, than with the true, constant, and immortal goods of the uncorruptible mind; how to get them rather the favour of men, than the good will of God; how they may increase rather in worldly studies, than in the knowledge of God; and in fine, how they may rather become in this world men of great renown and of innumerable possessions, than after this life glorious and well-accepted citizens of that most glorious

To what end  
God giveth  
children.

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[<sup>1</sup> The principal part of the information we have | biographical memoir of him prefixed to the former  
of Becon's family is obtained from this preface. The | volume of his works may be consulted, p. xiv.]

and heavenly kingdom. Certes the greatest multitude of our parents at this day, although they profess Christ, and glory to be called Christians, are much inferior to the heathen, which knew not God nor any point of godliness rightly, if we should respect the good and virtuous bringing up of youth.

To whom is this unknown, that the very gentiles spared neither cost nor labour that their children might be brought up learnedly and virtuously, and at the last become worthy citizens of the commonweal? Read we not, that when it was objected unto Lycurgus, that noble prince of the Lacedemonians, that he gave too much a liberal stipend to the teacher and bringer up of his children, he answered on this manner: "If any man will take upon him to bring up my children, and to render them unto me better than he received them, I will not only give him large sums of money, but also the half of all my goods"? Read we not, that Philip, king of the Macedonians, when his son Alexander was born, wrote letters unto Aristotle, the philosopher, in the which he gave thanks unto God, not only because he had given him a son, which should succeed him in his kingdom, but also that it chanced him to be born in the time of so noble a philosopher, which should bring him up in virtue, learning, and knowledge, and make him a prince worthy of such a father and of so flourishing a kingdom? Read we not, that a certain noble woman of Rome, called Cornelia, when a strange lady, which lodged in her house, shewed unto her her ornaments and jewels, yea, and those so precious and goodly as none could be found more precious nor more goodly, prolonged the talk with her until her children came home from school, and then brast out into these words, *Et hæc ornamenta mea sunt*? That is in English: "And these," saith she, "are my ornaments and jewels;" signifying by this her answer, that nothing is so precious and goodly a jewel to a discreet, wise, and sober matron, as children virtuously and learnedly brought up. Read we not, that when Alphonsus, king of the Aragones, was demanded how it came to pass that he had so flourishing a realm, whether it was that he was so excellently learned, or of so good success in martial affairs, whereof he also had singular knowledge, he answered on this manner: "Of books I learned both armours and the law of armours"<sup>2</sup>?—hereby confessing, that learning was the alone occasion of all his good success and of so flourishing a commonweal: so truly is it said of Plato, that blessed, fortunate, and happy is that commonweal, wherein either philosophers do bear rule, or else kings that be studious of philosophy and of good letters do reign.

The earnest study of the gentiles for the virtuous bringing up of their youth. Lycurgus.

Philip, king of the Macedonians.

Cornelia.

Alphonsus, king of the Aragones.

Plato.

But wherefore do I tarry so long in rehearsing these profane and heathenish histories concerning the good and virtuous bringing up of youth, seeing that in the holy bible, which, containeth the words of everlasting life, examples do abound?

As I may pass over with silence those holy, grave, and ancient patriarchs, Adam, Seth, Enos, Henoah, Noha, Thare, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, &c., which lived before Moses, of whose industry and diligence in the godly and virtuous bringing up of their younglings to doubt, I think it more than double wickedness; who is able to express what study and care that most excellent and prince-like prophet David, the most worthy and most noble grandfather of our Lord and alone Saviour Jesu Christ, took for the godly and honest education of his children, specially of Salomon, that for his godliness, learning, and wisdom he might be counted of all men worthy to enjoy the imperial crown after him? He was so diligent in exhorting his son Salomon unto virtue and true religion, that, lying upon his death-bed, he ceased not continually to put him in remembrance of his duty toward the Lord his God. Among other were not these his words: "I go the way of all the world: be strong therefore, and shew thyself a man. Keep thou the watch of the Lord thy God, and see that thou walk in his ways, and keep his statutes and his precepts, his judgments and his testimonies, even as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and in every thing that thou meddlest withal; that the Lord also may make good his word, which he spake unto me, saying, If thy children take

The earnest study of God's people in times past for the godly bringing up of their children. David, king of Israel.

1 Kings ii.

[<sup>2</sup> A. Gell. Noctes Attic. Lib. ix. cap. iii.]

[<sup>3</sup> Valer. Max. Lib. iv. cap. iv. 1.]

[<sup>4</sup> Alphonsus V.—Anton. Panorm. De Dict. et Fact. Alphons. Reg. Arag. et Neap. Witeb. 1585.

Lib. iv. 19. p. 87. It is to this monarch that a saying, erroneously attributed in the former volume, p. 398, to the king of Castile, really belongs.]



heed to their way, that they walk before me in truth with all their hearts, and with all their souls, then shalt thou not be without a man on the seat of Israel, &c.”

Tobias also, that ancient father and faithful servant of God, taught his young son Tobias, even from his tender age, to fear God, and to refrain from all sin. His admonitions which he gave to his son are so godly and profitable, so avancing virtue and repressing vice, that they may justly seem worthy to be written in letters of gold; and would God they were so surely graven in the hearts of all men that they might never fall out of remembrance!

The noble parents likewise of that most noble lady Susanna, beautiful in body, but more beautiful in mind, goodly in the lineaments of the body, but more goodly in the virtues of the soul, brought up their aforesaid daughter Susanna, from her very young age, in all godliness and honesty according to the law of God given by Moses: which godly, virtuous, and honest bringing up so greatly prevailed in her, that she rather choosed to suffer any kind of cruel torments, yea, most cruel death, than she would once turn aside from those godly lessons and virtuous instructions which she had learned of her godly and virtuous parents in her young and tender years; so profitable a thing is it even from the very cradles, as they use to say, to drink in godliness and honesty.

But what shall I speak of Philip the evangelist, which, having four daughters, brought them up so godly and learnedly that they were able to prophesy, that is to say, to understand the holy scriptures according to the meaning of the Holy Ghost, and to render a perfect accompt of their faith in Christ Jesu our Lord? I pass over the godly bringing up of bishop Timothy, which from his very infancy and childhood learned and understood, as St Paul writeth, the holy scriptures, which alone are “able sufficiently and even to the uttermost to instruct the man of God unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesu.”

Many and divers other histories are contained in the holy scriptures, which abundantly remember what studious diligence and diligent study, what painful labour and laborous pain, the holy fathers in times past did take to bring up their children godly and honestly according to the doctrine and commandment of the Lord our God, that they might truly be counted fathers not only of the body, but also of the mind, and by this means satisfy the good pleasure of God, which requireth nothing more earnestly of fathers and mothers, than that they should godly and holily bring up their children which he hath given them, that not only in this world, but in the world to come, they may celebrate, praise, and magnify his holy and glorious name.

Provoked with these and such like examples, my most dear and sweet children, I have done mine endeavour to the uttermost of my power, from time to time, as your age requireth, to sow in your tender breasts the wholesome seed of God's most holy word, that from your very cradles ye may learn to know your Lord God, which made you and gave you unto me, which also conserveth and nourisheth you by me; and to believe in him the alone true God; to call on his holy name, from whom alone cometh all goodness; to fear and reverence him as your most beneficial Lord; to love him as your most gentle and kind Father; to be thankful unto him for his benefits as your most bounteous and merciful Saviour; and to reverence and honour the magistrates and all that be in authority; again, to shew yourselves humble, lowly, and obedient to the faithful ministers of God's holy word: Item, to be gentle, loving, and helping to all men; and in fine, so to train your lives according to the rule of God's holy commandment, that, in this world being good and profitable members of the christian commonweal, in the world to come ye may be made citizens of that glorious and heavenly kingdom. And according to this my doctrine, yea, rather God's doctrine, ye for your little strengths daily do your endeavour to bring forth the fruits of this good seed, which, by the help of God's Spirit, I have sown in your young and tender breasts: which thing delighteth me so greatly, that I can none otherwise than daily offer unto God the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, which by his Holy Spirit hath wrought so good things in you, yea, and that in so young and tender age; most humbly beseeching him to continue his fatherly favour toward you, that he may bring unto a fortunate and blessed end that which he most mercifully hath begun in you, unto the glory and praise of his holy name.

Tobias.  
Tob. i.  
[Vulgate]  
Tob. iv.

Hist. Sus.  
The parents  
of Susanna.

Acts xxi.  
Philip the  
evangelist.

Timothy.  
2 Tim. iii.

Deut. iv. xi.  
Eccles. vii. x.  
xxx. xlii.  
Eph. vi.  
Col. iii.  
Tit. ii.

James i.

And forasmuch as I your father, from my youth up even unto this day, have ever been attempted with the cruel assaults of envious fortune, which for the most part is always an unmerciful stepdame to all such as are truly studious of virtue and learning, and contrariwise a bounteous mistress to such as are dissolute and careless livers, without all fear of God, without all care of godliness, without all honest and godly disposition, &c.; and by this means have no worldly possessions to leave unto you, whereby ye may be the more able to resist the fierce and cruel darts of froward, frowning fortune; I, in this behalf leaving you to the merciful and bounteous providence of God, which never leaveth them succourless that cleave unto him with strong faith, and labour to “serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life,” have thought it good to study how I may enrich you, not with the flitting goods of fliring<sup>1</sup> fortune, or with the trifling treasures of the wicked world, (after the which all degrees of people in this our age, without exception, run headlong, and so inordinately hunt after them, as though they should continue in this vale of misery for ever, utterly forgetting that they are “strangers and pilgrims,” and can “have no long abode here,” but must give over to nature and depart hence, as their ancestors and elders have done before them, and leave their pelf, for the which they have so swinked<sup>2</sup> and sweat, they cannot tell to whom, as we read in the gospel of a certain ungodly rich man; and as the psalmograph saith, the covetous, rich worldling “heapeth treasure upon treasure, and knoweth not for whom he gathereth his treasure”;) but with such riches, goods, treasures, and possessions, as neither fire can bren, nor water overwhelm, nor wind blow away, nor tempest disquiet, nor old age consume, nor froward fortune remove, neither any adversity put to flight; I mean the goods and riches of the mind; as doctrine, learning, knowledge, the right understanding of the holy scriptures, sincerity of judgment, wisdom, discretion, and such other godly and virtuous qualities, wherewith whosoever is endued, he may worthily be counted rich, although he were utterly destitute and void of all those things which the madness of men hath in these our days in so great admiration and price; yea, where these honourable treasures of the mind are, there the frail goods of most frail fortune offer themselves, and willingly give their service, not suffering the possessor of them extremely to lack, as divers histories do evidently declare.

Therefore to the end that you may the more plentifully abound with these immortal, constant, and unmoveable riches, and by this means become richer than king Croesus, even in the midst of your poverty; I thought it not unseemly, nor unworthy either of my vocation or of your young years, to give unto you this little book, which of late I made; wherein is contained whatsoever is necessarily required unto the perfect instruction of a christian man; that you, exercising yourselves diligently in the reading of it, may become learned in the rules of your profession, and attain unto such knowledge of God’s doctrine in this your tender age, that at the last ye may become ancient and perfect in Christ, and so in fine obtain that which is the end of our hope, I mean everlasting felicity.

This book I commend unto you, my most sweet and dear children, as a noble and singular treasure, profitable both for the body and for the soul, and necessary for the right institution of your life: according to the doctrine whereof if you frame your life, ye shall not only wax and become learned in your profession (whereof to be ignorant is too much ungodliness), but also not attempt any thing at any time that shall either be displeasing to God, or to godly men, or to yourselves.

Take it, therefore, with joyful hearts as a testimony of your father’s good will toward you; yea, receive it as your patrimony, left of your father unto you, which otherwise is not able to enrich you; and glory no less in this my gift, than other children do in the riches of this world. And I shall most humbly beseech God to be your father and defender, and to give you his Holy Spirit, which may govern you in all your doings, that ye may walk blameless in his sight, and be found in the number of God’s elect.

The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit! Amen.

[<sup>1</sup> Fliring: fleeing.]

[<sup>2</sup> Swinked: laboured, toiled.]

# THE CATECHISM,

SET FORTH

## DIALOGUE-WISE IN FAMILIAR TALK BETWEEN THE FATHER AND THE SON.

Deut. iv. xi.  
Eccles. vii. x.  
xxx. xlii.  
Eph. vi.  
Col. iii.  
Tit. ii.

*Father.* FORASMUCH, my dear child, as all parents are commanded of God diligently to bring up their children in the knowledge of his most holy and blessed will, that they, even from their very cradles, may learn to fear God and to walk in his ways, neither declining on the right hand nor on the left; I have, to the uttermost of my power, not only by myself, but also by other godly and virtuous learned men, (as I may speak nothing of my diligence in bringing thee unto the temple to hear the preachings of God's law, and the godly prayers which are there used unto the glory of God and the edifying of such as be present, whereby thy knowledge in the Lord's ordinances may not only be confirmed, but also increased,) travailed to bring thee up even from thy very infancy and tender age in the doctrine of holy letters; following in this behalf not only the commandment of God, but also the examples both of the ancient patriarchs and of many other godly men, whose names as they be registered in the book of life, so likewise are they honourably remembered in the holy bible. Wherefore my desire is at this present to have some taste, by familiar talk between thee and me, of thy knowledge in the Lord Jesu, and how thou hast profited in matters of everlasting life; that by this means I may know whether thou hast satisfied my expectation, and no less prospered in the study of godliness, than my opinion is that thou hast done.

*Son.* I can none otherwise, most loving father, than acknowledge and confess your fatherly good will toward me, which have neither spared labour nor cost to bring me unto the knowledge of God, and of my salvation in the Lord Jesu.

Psal. xxxii.

*Father.* Son, that hath been ever my desire. For he is not worthy the name of a christian man, but rather may justly be resembled to "an horse or mule," that have not this knowledge.

John xvii.

"This is everlasting life," saith our Saviour Christ, "that they know thee (that thou only art the true God), and whom thou hast sent, Jesus Christ." Hereto pertaineth the saying of the wise man: "To know thee, O God, is perfect righteousness; yea, to know thy righteousness and power is the root of immortality." "Vain are all men, which have not the knowledge of God." "Ye err," said Christ to the Sadducees, "because ye know not the scriptures." Again: "Search the scriptures, for ye think ye have everlasting life in them, and the same are they which testify of me; and ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life."

Wisd. xv.

Wisd. xliii.

Matt. xxii.

John v.

But come off, let me now have some experience of thy good success in matters of christian religion.

*Son.* I am ready, most gentle father, at your commandment. Only I shall most humbly desire you to consider my young age, and the small continuance which, by the reason of my few and tender years, I have had in the studies both of godliness and letters.

*Father.* This thing is not unknown unto me. Thy age is young, thy years are few, thy continuance in study is small, for as yet art thou not six years old. Therefore my mind is only at this present to talk with thee, not of things which far exceed both thy age and capacity, but of such matters as be meet for children to know, wherein also thou hast heretofore (as thy age hath suffered) been exercised, both by me thy father, and also by the preacher, and by thy schoolmaster.

*Son.* Do you mean such matters, as be contained in my catechism? *Father.* The very same. *Son.* If it shall be your good pleasure to examine me in them, I trust, by the help of God and by the assistance of his Holy Spirit, to make such answers

as shall not only not displease you, but also most highly please you, content your mind, and satisfy your expectation; so that you shall think both your labour and cost to have been not unfruitfully employed and bestowed upon me.

*Father.* If thou performest no less in deed than thou promisest in word, thou shalt not only content me, but also deserve at my hand both praise and a continuance of my fatherly favour and liberality toward thee. And forasmuch as our whole communication at this time shall be altogether of the doctrine contained in the catechism, I first of all demand of thee, what thou meanest by this word *Catechism*. For many have this word *Catechism* in their mouth, but few understand what it meaneth.

*Son.* As I remember, I heard our schoolmaster say, that it is a Greek word, and signifieth a doctrine taught of the wise and learned to the younglings of Christ's religion, in the which, after a brief and goodly order, is comprehended whatsoever is necessarily required unto the right institution of a christian man; so that whosoever hath and understandeth this doctrine, hath and understandeth the whole sum of all things necessary unto salvation contained in the old or new testament.

*Father.* Is not this kind of teaching younglings new, and lately invented? *Son.* No, verily. It is rather old, and of long time used in the church of Christ, as the monuments of the ancient writers testify. For in the primitive church there were not only bishops and pastors that preached the gospel of Christ to the people, which were already grafted by baptism and the Holy Ghost in Christ Jesu, but also certain teachers, called *catechistæ*<sup>1</sup>, which taught not only the young children that were already baptized, but also such as being in age came and were contented to forsake gentility and to take upon them christianity, and to turn from idolatry unto the worshipping of that one and alone true, living, immortal, and everlasting God, the principles of christian religion, before they received baptism, and were openly admitted into the congregation of the faithful. And as these teachers were called *catechistæ*, that is to say, instructors, or teachers; so likewise were the younglings called *catechumeni*, that is to say, persons instructed or taught. And the office of the catechist was not only to instruct and teach, but also to examine such as they taught how they profited and increased in the knowledge of God's mysteries; and if they failed in any point, diligently to instruct and teach them, till they were well exercised in the doctrine of Christ.

*Father.* They then do evil which report, that the teaching of the catechism, that is to say, the elements or principles of Christ's doctrine, to the young lambs of Christ's flock, I mean the children, is a late invention, and newly crept into the church of Christ, through the device of certain backsliders and runaways from the catholic church.

*Son.* The true catholic and apostolic church hath had the catechism taught in it from the beginning. It is no late invention, but before many hundred years used of Christ and of his apostles, and also of the ancient fathers, both in the Greek and Latin church. Of this kind of teaching speaketh St Paul in his epistle unto the Galatians on this manner: "Let him that is taught with the word minister in all good things unto him that teacheth him."

*Father.* Let this suffice concerning this word catechism. Declare now unto me of how many parts the doctrine of the catechism consisteth. *Son.* Of six parts.

*Father.* Which are they? *Son.* Repentance, faith, law, prayer, sacraments, and the offices of all degrees.

*Father.* Is the whole sum of Christ's doctrine contained in these six parts? *Son.* Yea, verily.

[<sup>1</sup> The office or duty of the catechists, in the primitive church, was precise and well-defined; but it does not appear that they were a distinct order. See Bingham, Orig. Eccles. Book III. chap. x.]

## THE FIRST PART OF THE CATECHISM.

## OF REPENTANCE.

Repentance. *Father.* AND is repentance the first part of that doctrine which is taught in the catechism? *Son.* So have I learned. For our catechist declared unto us, that, when John Baptist, Christ, and his apostles began to teach, they preached first of all repentance.

*Father.* Where readest thou that John Baptist began his doctrine of repentance? *Son.* In the third chapter of St Matthew's gospel, where we read on this manner: "In those days came John Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Jewry, and saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Again, in the first chapter of blessed Mark: "John baptized in the wilderness, preaching the baptism," that is to say, the doctrine, "of repentance unto the remission of sins." The very same thing read we in the gospel of Luke.

*Father.* Began Christ also his preaching of repentance? *Son.* So write the evangelists. Matthew hath in his gospel thus: "Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Mark hath these words: "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent, and believe the gospel." Hereof learn we, that both John Baptist and Christ began their preaching of repentance. And in the gospel of Luke we read, that Christ gave in commandment to his disciples, that they should preach repentance and forgiveness of sins unto all nations. And according to the commandment of Christ the apostles taught. For in the Acts of the Apostles we read that, when Peter laid their sins before the Jews, they were greatly dismayed and stricken with an inward sorrow, so that they brast out into these words: "Ye men and brethren, what shall we do? Peter said unto them, Repent ye of your sins, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Again: "Repent, and turn, that your sins may be put away." In another place of the same book we read, that St Paul maketh mention of his doctrine which he taught "to the Jews and to the gentiles, which is, that they should repent, turn unto God, and do works worthy such as do repent." All these testimonies of the holy scripture do abundantly declare, that the doctrine of repentance ought to have the first place in the institution of a christian man, if we will observe that order which John Baptist, Christ with his apostles, and St Paul used.

*Father.* What is repentance? *Son.* Repentance is an inward and true sorrow of the heart, unfeignedly conceived in the mind by earnest consideration of our sins and wickednesses, which heretofore most unkindly we have committed against the Lord our God, of whom we have freely received so many, so great, and so noble benefits, with a perfect detestation and utter abhorring of our former wicked life; whereunto is also added a fervent and inward desire from henceforth to live godly and virtuously, and to frame our life in all points according to the holy will of God expressed in the divine scriptures. Of this repentance speaketh St Paul in his second epistle to the Corinthians on this manner: "A godly sorrow causeth repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of; when the worldly sorrow causeth death. For behold this thing, what diligence this godly sorrow that ye took hath wrought in you; yea, it causeth you to clear yourselves: it caused indignation, it caused fear, it caused desire, it caused a fervent mind, it caused punishment."

*Father.* Thou confessest then the doctrine of repentance to be necessary for the right institution of a christian man? *Son.* Yea, so necessary, that without it the other parts of christian doctrine do not much profit.

For the doctrine of repentance bringeth a man unto the knowledge of himself, without the which no man shall ever know God aright, nor his salvation, which he receiveth of God through Jesus Christ. "I came not," saith Christ, "to call the right-

eous, but sinners unto repentance." "For such as are whole need no physician, but they that are sick." What brought the people of Israel, David, Manasses, Mary Magdalene, &c. unto the knowledge of themselves and of their sins, and enforced them to run unto God for mercy, but the doctrine of repentance? The doctrine of repentance setteth before the sinner the greatness and weight of his sins, the heavy anger of God against the sinner for his sin, everlasting damnation for committing the sin, and so combereth the conscience of the sinner with the terrors of God's judgment, that in himself he can find no rest, no ease, no consolation, no remedy; but is compelled with all humility and submission of mind to confess his sin, to grant himself a most damnable sinner, and to seek comfort not of himself, nor of his own good works, but of God and of his great mercies.

The fruit of the doctrine of repentance.

Moreover, the doctrine of repentance enarmeth a man against the assaults of Satan, against the enticements of the flesh, against the pleasures of the world, against the sting of sin, against the dart of desperation, and admonisheth him afterward so warily and circumspectly to live, that he fall no more into the same sins, nor be snarled again with the like snares; but rather from henceforth so frame his life, that he shall not need to be combered with the like shame and sorrow for committing the like wickedness, while he endeavoureth himself to the uttermost of his power to garnish his conversation with all kind of spiritual virtues and godly works, as St John Baptist saith: "Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance." "For even now is the axe laid at the root of the tree: every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn up and cast into the fire."

Matt. iii.

*Father.* They then that truly and with a faithful heart receive this doctrine of repentance, whereof thou hast hitherto spoken, are not excluded from the grace, favour, and mercy of God, but may well persuade themselves to receive remission of sins, and to be made inheritors of everlasting glory. *Son.* Yea, verily. For thus saith God himself by the prophet: "As surely as I live, I desire not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn and live." And the prophet Esay saith: "Let the ungodly man forsake his own ways, and the unrighteous his own imaginations, and turn again unto the Lord; so shall he be merciful unto him. For he is such a God as is ready to forgive." "If the ungodly," saith God by the prophet Ezechiel, "will turn away from all his sins that he hath done, and keep all my commandments, and do the thing that is equal and right, doubtless he shall live and not die. As for all his sins that he did before, they shall not be thought upon, but in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. For have I any pleasure in the death of a sinner, saith the Lord God, and not rather that he should convert and live?" "Be converted, and turn you from all your wickedness; so shall there no sin do you harm. Cast away from you all your ungodliness that ye have done. Make you new hearts and a new spirit. Wherefore will ye die, O ye house of Israel, seeing I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God? Turn ye then, and ye shall live." Doth not Christ in the gospel call lovingly unto him all such as be diseased and laden with the burden of sin, and promise that he will ease and comfort them? Saith he not that he came "to save such as were lost"? What other thing do we learn of the parables of the lost sheep and of the prodigal son, than that sinners repenting be received unto mercy and favour? And are not these Christ's words? "I say unto you, that there shall be joy in heaven before the angels of God over one sinner, more than over ninety and nine righteous that need no repentance." There is no sin that giveth not place to repentance.

Such as sin and afterward repent are not excluded from grace and remission of their sins. Ezek. xxxiii.

Isai. lv.

Ezek. xviii.

Matt. xi.

Luke xix.

Luke xv.

*Father.* And is this repentance the gift of nature or of grace? *Son.* It is the gift of God, and cometh not of ourselves. For what good thing either have we, or can we do, except we first receive it of God? This testifieth St Paul, saying: "What hast thou that thou hast not received? If thou hast received it, why dost thou glory as though thou hadst not received it?" Hereto pertaineth the saying of St James: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights." Forasmuch therefore as repentance is a good gift, therefore cometh it from God.

Repentance is the gift of God.

1 Cor. iv.

James i.

*Father.* Came the repentance of Caim, Esau, Saul, Judas, and such like, from

The repentance of the reprobate is no true repentance. 2 Cor. vii.

God also? *Son.* It came from themselves, and from the devil, author of all sin and wickedness. For this repentance leadeth unto desperation and finally unto damnation, and is that "worldly sorrow," which, as St Paul writeth, "causeth death." But that repentance, which is wrought by the Spirit of God in the hearts of men, doth not only contain in it an hearty sorrow for the sin committed, with an earnest intent and full purpose to live from henceforth according to the will of God, but also an assured faith and undoubted persuasion that God for our mediator Jesu Christ's sake will be merciful unto us, forgive us our sins, and make us inheritors of everlasting glory. And this repentance, I say, cometh not of ourselves, but it is the gift of God.

True repentance hath faith to her companion. True repentance is the gift of God.

Ezek. xxxvi.

*Father.* Prove that by the word of God. *Son.* By the prophet Ezechiel God speaketh on this manner: "I will pour clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; yea, from all your uncleannesses and from all your idols shall I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put into you. As for that stony heart, I will take it out of your body, and give you a fleshly heart. I will give you my Spirit among you, and cause you to walk in my commandments, to keep my laws, and to fulfil them. And ye shall be my people; and I will be your God."

Jer. xxxi.

The prophet Jeremy prayeth on this manner: "Convert thou me, O Lord, and I shall be converted; for thou art my Lord God. As soon as thou turnedst me I repented, and as soon as thou shewedst me my sins, I smote my thigh: yea, I was confounded and right greatly ashamed." Again: "O Lord, turn thou us unto thee, and so shall we be turned." St Paul, in his epistle unto Timothy, by most manifest and expressed words sheweth repentance to be the gift of God. "The servant of God," saith he, "must inform them that resist, if that God at any time will give them repentance, for to know the truth, and that they may come to themselves again out of the snare of the devil, which are holden captive of him at his will."

Lam. v.

2 Tim. ii.

*Father.* That therefore is the alone true repentance, which, being the gift of God, and wrought in the hearts of men by the Holy Ghost, doth not only contain in it an inward sorrow of the mind for the sins tofore committed against God, with a full determined purpose from henceforth to amend and to lead a new life, but also a perfect faith to be forgiven for Christ's sake. *Son.* Repentance not accompanied with faith driveth rather unto desperation than unto salvation; as we may see in Caim, Esau, Saul, Judas, and in such like. But repentance combined with faith lifteth up the wearied and cast down soul, comforteth the troubled heart, rejoiceth the sorrowful mind, and quieteth the restless conscience; as we have for examples in the holy scripture David, Manasses, Mary Magdalene, Peter, &c. And therefore in a most goodly and seemly order followeth the second part of the doctrine of the Catechism, which entreateth of faith. For after the doctrine of repentance, the doctrine of faith necessarily is to be set forth unto such as will be rightly and truly instructed in the rules of christianity.