

HOME,
School And Church

THE SCHOOL,

AND

THE CHURCH;

OR THE

PRESBYTERIAN EDUCATION REPOSITORY.

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THE
PRESBYTERIAN EDUCATION REPOSITORY.
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ARTICLE I.

CHILDREN BLESSED IN THEIR PARENTS.

BY THE REV. DAVID MAGIE, D.D., OF ELIZABETHTOWN, N. J.

“And the Lord said unto Noah : ‘ Come, thou and all thy house, into the ark ; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.’”—GEN. vii. 1.

IN all the dealings of God with men, we find that mercy rejoiceth against judgment. The very threatening to destroy the world by a deluge was accompanied by a kind and gracious invitation to Noah to come with all his family into the ark. Not himself merely, but his sons, and his wife, and his sons’ wives, were to be preserved.

Taking this invitation to the patriarch in its connexion, it seems like a bright and beautiful bow, formed on the background of a black and angry cloud. One family was to be saved from the wreck of a drowning world. Not a window of heaven could open, or a fountain of the great deep break up, until this entire domestic circle, as well as those brought into it by marriage as those born in it, was securely enclosed in the ark. It was a household deliverance in which all the members were represented by their appropriate head. Brothers, sisters, and other relatives, of whatever degree, were left behind, and those only preserved, who made up the single, regularly constituted family. The reason given for this gracious procedure, is “for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.” Noah’s personal piety not only saved sons, wife, and sons’ wives from destruction by the deluge, but it led to influences which, we have ground to hope, rescued them from the bitter pain of eternal death. Thus it is that light shineth in the midst of darkness, and the very denunciation of judgments is coupled with a precious intimation of mercy.

We find here the germ of a doctrine, which runs through the whole Bible, and is daily carrying encouragement and consolation to the bosoms of thousands of pious parents. In covenant with God themselves, it cannot but be delightful to see the pale of this covenant including their children also. God’s promise is first to them personally, and to their seed after them in their generations ; and it is a promise which we are assured shall never fail, so long as the sun and moon endure. What can be more interesting to fathers and

stances, may be justified by the exigency arising from the neglect of the original parties to supply the wants of the community.

3d. State education must practically exclude religious teaching.

4th. The present State system is an inferior and temporary dispensation, which, like some things under the law of Moses, may be tolerated as antecedent to the introduction of a more perfect system.

5th. State co-operation, by means of pecuniary grants to Christian institutions, may be lawful under circumstances which involve no connivance with fundamental error.

The chief interest, which the Board of Education have had in this discussion, is to sustain the prerogatives of the Church of Christ in the instruction of her children. Whatever may be yielded to the State temporarily, and in view of present exigencies, it is clear to the Board, that the Church has a divine title to engage in the work of public education; and that it is both right and wise for the General Assembly to persevere in efforts to establish religious institutions of every grade, under the care of the Church, as extensively as possible.

ARTICLE IV.

CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTION BEFORE THE REFORMATION.

BY THE REV. JOHN PROUDFIT, D.D., NEW BRUNSWICK, N. J.

THE great instrument by which God has chosen to diffuse and perpetuate his truth among men, is THE LIVING VOICE. John Bunyan, as usual, clothes a great truth in a quaint conceit, when he represents "Ear-Gate" as the principal entrance to the town of Mansoul, through which Diabolus first carried the city, and against which those valiant soldiers of the great King Shaddai, and Captain Boanerges and Captain Conviction, "did bend their main force." The pen and the press, powerful as they are, are mostly powerful in seconding, extending, and perpetuating the impressions of the living voice. They are utterly inadequate to the first publication of truth, or to the making immediate, profound, and general impressions on the minds of men. They could never have called the world to repentance and preparation for the coming of the Son of God as did "the voice" of John the Baptist. They could never have sent out the "line" of the Gospel "into all the earth, and its words unto the ends of the world," within the space of a quarter of a century, as it was "sounded forth" by the preaching of the apostles and primitive Christians. They could never have rolled up the population of Europe in one vast surge, and precipitated it upon Asia, as did the preaching of Peter the Hermit. They could never have made or begun the Reformation, though they had a mighty and indispensable agency in

extending and completing it. They could never have awakened the slumbering churches of England and America as did the preaching of Whitefield and Wesley. They could never have agitated the general mind of Britain and of this country, as we have recently seen it done by the presence and the voice of one man. The pen and the press have done, and are doing, great things, and will do greater still. But they cannot transcend their office. They cannot pass out of their sphere. Their power must be exerted, for the most part, upon minds and communities already attentive, thoughtful, and mature. To arouse the soul, to pour into it the vivifying power of new truth, is the peculiar work of the living voice, trembling under the vast emotions which that truth has already awakened, and transmitting those emotions, by the mysterious and irresistible power of sympathy, to other souls.

If this truth has, in any case, a special and peculiar force, it is in its application to the training of the young. Then, especially, is "Ear-Gate" the main avenue, and the voice the most effective, in fact, the only effective instrument, when truth is to be adapted to the ever-changing moods of the young mind, all eager as it is for knowledge, yet impatient of protracted attention; curious of facts, yet easily wearied of abstractions; earnest and tender, yet prone to levity; deeply and keenly susceptible at once to the things of the spiritual and the sensible world. Oral instruction was the great ordinance of God for perpetuating religion in the ancient Church. "I know Abraham, that he will *command* his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." Gen. xviii. 19. "These words which I command thee this day—thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shall *talk* of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deut. vi. 6, 7. "Tell ye your children of it, and let your children *tell* their children, and their children another generation." Joel i. 3. "The priest's *lips* should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law *at his mouth*." Mal. ii. 7. Thus, the whole historical and spiritual life of the Church was to be borne along from generation to generation by the living voice of parent, priest, and prophet.

In what precise form this oral instruction was administered, cannot now, we believe, be determined. The Hebrew words used to denote the process (ספר—to *narrate, rehearse*, Joel, i. 3, and שן—to *inculcate*, lit. to *sharpen*, Deut. vi. 7), signify a constant and earnest oral teaching, but imply nothing as to the recipient of the instruction. Josephus represents *constant oral tuition in the law of God*, as the great peculiarity and incomparable excellence of the Hebrew system, and the true cause of the unquestionable superiority of Jewish morals, and of the deeper influence of their religious and ethical system on the hearts of the people. "Our legislator," he says, "beginning at once from the earliest culture, presented the law as the most beautiful and necessary of instructions, and required the

people to assemble every week to *hear* it, and to *learn it thoroughly*; a method which all other legislators seem to have neglected."* This process (denoted by ἀκροάσις and ἐκμανθάνειν) seems to come very near to the *question and answer* involved in the later idea of catechetical instruction, but does not necessarily imply it. Κατηχέω does not occur in the ancient Greek writers, nor in the Septuagint. The latter translate the Hebrew words, signifying *to teach*, by the usual Greek words, προηβιάζω, &c. It never occurs with the signification, *to instruct*, till it is so used in the New Testament.† There it occurs in six passages, in all of which, save one (Acts, xxi. 24), it clearly bears the sense of *oral tuition in divine truth*. The religious instruction of Theophilus (Luke, i. 4), of Apollos (Acts, xviii. 25), and of the Jew addressed by Paul, as the representative of his Church and nation (Rom. ii. 18), are all alluded to under the term κατηχέω. The Christian convert and disciple (Gal. vi. 6) is denominated ὁ κατηχούμενος, and his pastor or teacher ὁ κατηχών. Paul also uses the word (1 Cor. xiv. 19) to denote *intelligible and edifying Christian instruction*, as distinguished from "speaking in an unknown tongue." "In the church, I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that *by my voice* I might teach others also (ἵνα καὶ ἄλλους κατηχήσω), than ten thousand words in an *unknown tongue*." These are the only instances in which it occurs in the New Testament. They disclose, however, not only an idea, but a method which, destined to undergo a gradual expansion, was to assume a vast importance and power in diffusing through the world the truth and life of Christianity.

If we look simply at the form and derivation of κατηχέω, it seems too intimate a process vocal and audible on both sides (γυ., κατ' ἑχῶ διδάσκειν), in which the thought and voice of the pupil give back an *echo* to that of the teacher. For the special signification of ἑχῶ, in distinction from other Greek words of like meaning, is *sound returned*.‡ Such a meaning must, however, rest on the derivation of the word, and not on its use; though Melancthon and D'Outrein have claimed even the latter in its support. "Κατηχέιν," says Melancthon, "signifies not simply to teach, but carries with it the idea of reading or lecturing, and hearing the pupils recite what has been said;" and again, "that method of teaching in which the utterances of the master are called forth by questions, is properly denoted by κατηχέιν."

It was not so understood, however, by the early Christian writers. All their Κατηχησῆς are composed in a direct and continuous form, without question and answer. The earliest composition which is

* 'Ο δ' ἡμετέρος νομοθετής—εὐθὺς ἀπο τῆς πρώτης ἀρχαίως τροφῆς—κάλλιστον καὶ ἀναγκαϊότατον ἀπέδειξεν παιδευμάτων τον νόμον—ἐκάστης ἐβδόμαδος ἐπὶ τὴν ἀκρόασιν τοῦ νόμου ἐκέλευσε συλλέγεσθαι καὶ τοῦτον ἀκριβῶς ἐκμανθάνειν. δ δὲ πάντες δι νομοθέται εἰκοσι παραλιπεῖν. Joseph. Cont. Apionem, lib. ii. s. 17. Op. tom. ii. p. 1378. Ox., 1720.

† We meet with it but once in Josephus, where it simply means *to communicate verbally*. Agrippa, in a letter to Josephus, says, ὅτ' ἂν συντύχῃς μοι καὶ αὐτός σε πολλὰ κατηχήσω τῶν ἀγνωστομένων. "When we meet, I will myself *communicate* to you *verbally* many things of which you are not now aware." Jos. Vit. Op. tom. ii. p. 940. Ox. 1720.

‡ Sonus—ex reflexu et repercussione geminatus." Hen. Altung. Prol. ad Cat. Pal., p. 1.

noticed under this name, in the history of the Church, was written by Dionysius, a bishop of the church of Corinth, about the middle of the second century. Eusebius, in his notice of Dionysius,* calls it *ἐπιστολὴ ὀρθοδοξίας κατηχητικὴ* ("an epistle explanatory of Christian doctrine.") Nicephorus says, more fully, Dionysius not only laboured to instruct and edify those who were specially under his charge, but sought to impart divine truth to those who dwelt in other regions (*τοῖς ὑπ' ἀλλοδαπίας*), showing himself accessible to all, and addressing general epistles to them; one of which is to the Lacedæmonians, *κατηχησὺν περιέχουσα ὀρθοδοξίας περὶ ἐιρήνης τε καὶ ἐνώσεως ὑποτιθεμένη* (lit.) "containing a catechism of orthodoxy, entitled, 'Concerning peace and unity.'"† The most ancient production of the Church, therefore, to which ecclesiastical history has given the title of "catechism," was a letter from a Christian pastor, containing an exposition of the great truths of Christianity, and designed to promote "peace and unity" in a neighbouring church.

Cyril of Jerusalem has left eighteen *Κατηχήσεις* or Catechetical Discourses, which are simply short and plain homilies on the principal points of Christian doctrine. As they are much the most considerable remains of this kind which have come down to us from the early Church, some notice of their contents will not be without interest, showing, as they do, the topics, method, and intention of catechetical instruction in the fourth century. They afford internal evidence that they were composed, as Jerome states,‡ "when the author was a young man." Still, they are beautiful and instructive, though by no means free from the superstitions which disfigure the productions of the fourth century.§ They are arranged systematically (*κατ' ἀκολουθίαν*, as the author expresses it), so as to lead the catechumen to a complete elementary knowledge of Christian doctrine. To each address is prefixed the following title: "Extemporary catechetical discourse to those who were about to be enlightened [*i. e.* baptized||] at Jerusalem, designed to introduce the candidates for baptism" (*Κατηχησις φωτισζομένων ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις σχεδιασθεῖσα εἰσαγωγικὴ τοῖς τῷ βαπτίσματι προσελθούσιν*), with the special subject of the address, and the portion of Scripture to be expounded, annexed. They are preceded by a *Προκατηχήσις* (prefatory catechetical discourse), from which we make a few extracts. "Already," thus he begins, "ye who are about to receive Christian baptism, the odour of blessedness is upon you; already ye are gathering spiritual flowers to weave celestial crowns; already the fragrance of the Holy Spirit is breathed upon you; already ye have come into the vestibule of the royal palace.

* Ecc. Hist. iv. 23.

† Niceph. Call. Ecc. Hist. iv. 8.

‡ Ex:ant ejus (Cyrilli) *κατηχησεις* quas in adolescentia composuit." Hieron. Cat. Script. op. tom. i., p. 101 (ed. Erasmi).

§ These have led Rivet and others to question their genuineness. But they are, we think, undoubtedly Cyril's, though probably to some extent, corrupted by interpolation.

|| It is scarcely necessary to state that *φωτισμα* is used by the Greek fathers as equivalent to *baptism*; *φωτισθέντες* denoted those who had been prepared by catechetical instruction to receive baptism; *φωτισθέντες*, those who had actually been baptized.

May you now be led in by the King himself! The blossoms of the trees have already appeared. May the fruit ripen to perfection! . . . He cannot lie who hath said, that 'to those who love God, all things shall work together for good.' God is bounteous to do good; but he waits for the free choice of every one. . . . If thou bringest thy body hither, but dost not dedicate thy mind, it profiteth nothing. Simon the Sorcerer was baptized, but he was not enlightened. He washed his body with water, but he did not illuminate his heart by the Spirit.* . . . Thou wert heretofore called catechumen, being instructed without. Thou shalt no more be instructed without, but within; (*δοῦλέτι περιχρῆ ἀλλ' ἐντρίχτι.*) . . . Thou hast entered on the strife. Finish thy course. . . . Abide in catechetical instructions, even if we prolong them much, lest thy mind grow faint; for thou puttest on armour against hostile powers. . . . Thou hast many enemies, take many weapons. . . . It is needful that thou shouldst learn how to pierce the Greek, how to combat with the heretic, the Jew, and the Samaritan. And lo, here are the weapons, and that most effective 'sword of the Spirit.' . . . Look not on these catechetical discourses as on the congregational homilies (*τὰς συνήθεις ὁμιλίας*). They, too, are good and worthy of faith; if we neglect them, however, to-day, to-morrow we may learn them. But if the instructions given in order, pertaining to 'the washing of regeneration,' be neglected to-day, how will the defect be repaired? Consider this as the season for the planting of trees: unless we dig and deepen (*βαθύνωμεν*), how is it possible afterwards to plant aright that which is now planted amiss? Look upon catechetical instruction as on the building of a house: unless we bind the house together with girders (*δεσμοῖς οἰκοδομητῆς*), as the building goes on, so that nothing be insecure, the whole structure will be ready to fall asunder. But we must lay stone upon stone and add joint to joint, and rejecting all superfluous materials, so must the building rise to its complete form. Thus we bring to thee the stones of knowledge. Thou must hear the things which pertain to the living God. Thou must hear the things which pertain to the judgment. Thou must hear the things which pertain to Christ. Thou must hear the things which pertain to the resurrection; and many things are to be delivered in due order which are now spoken in a scattered way (*σποράδην*), but are afterwards to be reduced to system. Yet, if thou do not bind these things together, and fix in thy memory the things spoken first and afterwards (*τῶν πρώτων καὶ τῶν δευτέρων*), the architect indeed doth his part of the work, but thou wilt have a tottering house of it."†

The works of Gregory of Nazianzum contain one catechetical oration.‡ It is entirely on the subject of baptism, and gives a full and rather fanciful exposition of the propriety of calling it *illumination*, and of terming the baptized *illuminated*. It contains little

* It will be seen that the good father was quite clear of the heresy of *baptismal regeneration*.

† Cyrilli, Op. p. 1-9. Tho. Miller, Oxon. 1703.

‡ Orat. 40, *εἰς τὸ ἅγιον βαπτισμα*. Op. (Ed. Bened.) tom. i. p. 691.

solid instruction, being written in that declamatory and somewhat turgid style which marks most of the productions (especially the prose), of that writer. His hymns are more simple and edifying than his sermons.

Of Gregory Nyssen* we have one, divided into forty parts, intended especially, as he tells us in the preface, to meet the objections and difficulties of Pagans, Jews, and heretics of various sorts, without any mention of the young, to whom, in fact, these discourses would be wholly inappropriate, from the abstruseness of the points which they handle, the very first of them being designed to show, for the conviction of the Jews, that the trinity of persons is not inconsistent, in the nature of things, with the unity of the Divine nature.

Chrysostom has left two *κατηχησεῖς*,† which are beautiful models of this kind of composition. They, too, are addressed *πρὸς τοὺς μελλόντας φωτίζεσθαι*, i. e., “to those who were preparing for baptism.” The first expresses his joy on beholding around him an assembly of the young brethren. The second contains some remarks which are interesting from the light which they throw on the nature of the exercise. “I come,” he says, “to seek some fruit of those instructions which were formerly addressed to you. For I do not speak that you should hear only, but that you should remember the things which are spoken, and that you should give a manifestation of this in your actions, not so much to us as to God, who seeth the secrets of the mind.” This renders it not likely that a *vocal response* or *recitation* of what had been delivered formed at that time a part of the exercise. The response was to be given, “the harvest,” as he afterwards tells them, was to be “presented” in their lives.

All these are direct and continuous addresses. *There is no Κατήχησις of the early Church in the form of question and answer.*

The communication of instruction by *ἐρωτησεῖς* and *ἀποκρισεῖς*, dates, it is true, from a very early period. We have specimens of it in Justin Martyr,‡ in Basil of Cæsarea,§ and in Athanasius.|| The subjects handled in this way, however, were for the most part of an abstruse and controversial character. Some of the “questions and answers” of Basil seem to have been intended for the benefit of the young and ignorant, but the greater number are solutions, rather, of difficult and disputed questions in theology and ethics. Certain questions appear to have been proposed to the catechumens when applying for baptism. These are alluded to by Cyprian when he

* Greg. Nyss. Op. tom. iii., p. 43, &c. (Λογὸς κατηχητικὸς ὁ μέγας.) Paris, 1638.

† Op. (Ed. Bened.) tom. ii. p. 225, 234.

‡ See his *Ἐρωτησεις Χριστιανικαὶ πρὸς τοὺς Ἕλληνας*. (“Christian interrogations to the Greeks,”) which are followed by their answers. Op. Just. Mart. p. 159, &c. Colon., 1666.

§ Basil has left three hundred and thirteen solutions of doctrinal and practical difficulties in this form. Op. tom. ii. p. 581–753. (Ed. Bened.)

|| Πρὸς Ἀντίοχον, περὶ πλείστων καὶ ἀναγκαίων ζητημάτων, &c.: “Concerning various and necessary questions in the Holy Scriptures which are the subjects of controversy, and, are useful to be known by all Christians.” Athan. Op. tom. ii. p. 275, &c. 1601.

speaks of the "interrogatio quae fit in baptismo;"* of which he gives one example in the same passage, as follows: "Credis in vitam eternam et remissionem peccatorum per sanctam ecclesiam?" ("Dost thou believe in eternal life and the remission of sins by means of the holy Church?") Augustine incidentally gives another of these questions: "Si dixerimus catechumeno, credis in Christum? Respondet, Credo." ("If we say to the catechumen, dost thou believe in Christ? He answers, I do.") But these questions were plainly intended simply to ascertain the fitness of the catechumen for initiation into the church by baptism. The proper catechetical instruction of the early Church was given in direct and continuous discourse. The application of question and answer was a much later idea.

Oral religious instruction, in a familiar way, suited to impress the young and unenlightened mind, and excite it to attention and recollection, is the proper and universal idea expressed by *κατήχησις*.† This was held in the highest estimation in the early Church, not only as a means of holy nurture to her own children, but of recovery to the lapsed, and of conversion to Pagans and others who were yet without. The fathers of the Church were general and firm in the belief that they had direct scriptural and apostolic sanction for the practice. They looked upon the *γάλα* of Paul (1 Cor. iii. 2; Heb. v. 12, 13), and the *λογικὸν ἀδόλυν γάλα*‡ of Peter (1 Pet. ii. 2), as referring distinctly to familiar oral instruction in Christian truth, adapted to young and simple minds, and interpreted the *στοιχεῖα τῆς ἀρχῆς τῶν λογίων τοῦ θεοῦ* (Heb. v. 12), and the *λόγος τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ χριστοῦ* (Heb. vi. 1), as denoting the elements of Christian doctrine imparted in the catechetical form. Those who were under this kind of instruction were regarded as *ἐν πρὸθυροῖς τῆς ἐκκλησίας*,§ "in the vestibule of piety." Cyril speaks of them as "caught with the hook," "enclosed in the nets of the Church." One class of Christian ministers was specially charged with this sort of instruction, and were called *κατηχούμενοι* or *κατήχηται*—catechists. Apartments in connexion with the church edifices were at a later period appropriated to this use, and were called *κατηχούμενα* and *κατηχουμενεία*. Female catechists were employed to instruct young and ignorant persons of their own sex.|| The zeal

* Epist. LXX. Op. p. 301. Bishop Pearson's ed., 1700.

† Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ κατήχησις λέγεται ἵνα καὶ ἀπόντων ἡμῶν ὁ λόγος ἡμῶν ἐνηχῇ ταῖς διανοαῖαις. "For this reason is it called *κατήχησις*, (lit. *a sounding forth*), that even when we are absent, the word may resound (or echo) in your minds." Chrys., *ubi sup.*

‡ Γάλα ἡ κατήχησις. ("The milk spoken of by the apostle is catechetical instruction.") Clem. Alex. Strom. on 1 Cor. iii. 2, who also largely expounds the same passage in this sense in his Paed. Op. p. 98. Lutet., 1629.

§ Greg. Naz. Or. 40.

|| Jerome thinks (Comm. in Rom. xvi. 1) that it was in some such way that Phebe was "a servant of the church at Cenchrea," which he translates, "in ministerio ecclesiae quae est in Cenchraeis." He quotes also the instance of Priscilla, who, with her husband, assisted Paul "in opere doctrinarum;" and states that, in his own day, deaconesses in the Eastern churches gave private instruction to persons of their own sex. The early history of these churches is rich in the names of women of eminent piety and high endowments. Basil, in his letters, often speaks in terms of grateful admiration of his mother, and grandmother, the latter of whom, he says, "formed and moulded his early

and activity with which the Christians plied these means of diffusing a knowledge of their religion and converting Pagans, drew on them the profane irony of Lucian, who, in one of his Dialogues,* burlesques the name of "catechumen," in connexion with "the marvellous wisdom of the Christians" and the "eternal life" for which they professed to hope.

In some of the larger and wealthier churches, the office of catechist appears to have been distinct, but generally, we think, was included in that of pastor and minister of the Word; and Jerome and Augustine have observed, that while the Apostle Paul has in other cases separated the functions of Christian ministers, he has spoken of these two together: "pastors and teachers." (Eph. iv. 11.) Some of the most valuable names of the ancient Church are enrolled among the catechists of Alexandria. Pantænus, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Origen, head the list. Pantænus was the teacher of Clemens, as Clemens was of Origen, and in both cases the pupil succeeded his master in the office of catechist. Jerome entitles Clemens *κατήχησεων* magister,† and Origen adjutor *κατήχησεως*,‡ which renders it probable that in the Church of Alexandria that office was a distinct one, and formed the proper occupation of those eminent men. Jerome says that Origen availed himself of the great concourse of youth who flocked to him for literary instruction, to teach them in the Christian faith.§ According to Eusebius,|| when the entire charge of catechetical instruction was devolved upon Origen by Demetrius, then bishop of that church, he immediately forsook his profession of literary teacher, to devote himself wholly to that work. In such high estimation was the business of catechetical instruction then held, as to command the whole time and labour of the greatest minds of the Church.

And in the like estimation it continued to be held so long as truth was looked upon as the proper glory and power of Christianity, and the teaching of truth as the great means of converting souls and rearing up a holy posterity to perpetuate the Church. But when the ecclesiastical spirit overcame the evangelical, and the Church grew more and more worldly and material in all her institutions and in-

years by the doctrines of godliness: (ἡμῶς ἐτι νηπίους ὄντας ἐπλάττε καὶ ἐμάρτυ τοῖς τῆς ἐκείνης λόγμοις.) Ep. 204. Cf. Ep. 223: "From my childhood, I learned how to think of God from my blessed mother [Emmelia], and my grandmother, Macrina." (τε ταύτης λαβὼν ἑννοίαν περὶ Θεοῦ παρὰ τῆς μακαρίας μητρὸς μου καὶ τῆς μάμης Μακρίνης.) The abtuse discourse of Gregory Nyssen, the brother of Basil, "On the Resurrection," is in the form of a dialogue with their sister Macrina, occasioned by the death of Basil, of whom, says Gregory, Macrina was at once the sister and the instructress. If Christian ladies of that age were capable of discoursing in the strain there ascribed to her, modern education has certainly little reason to vaunt its superiority.

* Mors Peregrini.

† Alexandria ecclesiasticam scholam tenuit et κατήχησεων magister fuit. Catal. Scrip. Ecc. cap. 48.

‡ Ibid. cap. 64.

§ Concursus ad eum miri facti sunt, quos ille propterea recipiebat, ut sub occasione secularis literaturæ, in fide Christi eos institueret. Ibid.

|| Ecc. Hist. lib. vi. cap. 3.

strumentalities, relying on the secular arm rather than the sword of the Spirit, and adopting the usages of Paganism in order to convert Pagans, and making more of a splendid ritual than of a pure faith, and magnifying church orthodoxy above vital piety, and addressing the senses by shows and music and incense, rather than the soul by the vivifying light of truth, catechetical instruction of course declined. During the proper period of Papal domination, it was almost extinct and forgotten. The peril of awakening intellect and stimulating thought, is an *arcanum imperii* of all despotisms, and pre-eminently of that, the most enormous and inexorable despotism under which the prostrate intellect and soul of man ever groaned. There were occasional attempts, in councils held for ecclesiastical discipline, to revive the practice of catechetical instruction. It was enjoined on the clergy in the canons of the Council of Braga, A. D. 572, of Tourain, 813, and of Mentz, 1347. The Capitularia of Charlemagne also required it, and directed, moreover, that it should be given *in the popular language*. But the spirit of the dominant Church was too strong for the edicts of princes or the canons of councils. Rubrics, breviaries, rosaries, and agends, were much more to the mind of Rome than catechisms. They amused and tranquillized the minds of men with a semblance of religion, but did not implant those fructifying germs of thought and irrepressible aspirations which always accompany truth. Images were, in her esteem, a much safer medium of instruction than books.*

Few and meagre, however, as were the catechetical productions of that dark period, they are never to be forgotten. There is a curious specimen still extant, of a German catechism, composed by an unknown monk of Weissenburg, in the ninth century, containing an explanation of the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed, and (instead of the ten commandments) *a list of the deadly sins*.† This substitution was not unfrequent during that period. The Papal Church has never faltered in her policy to abrogate the law of God, that she may keep her own traditions.

As the spirit of life began to stir in the Church, and resistance to Rome waxed stronger, catechisms were multiplied. The Waldenses, in their Confession of Faith presented to Francis I., allude to catechetical instruction as in use among them. John Wickliffe composed in English several tracts under the title of *Pauper Rusticus*, intended to teach the poor the principal truths of Christianity, "without an apparatus of many books." Among these were an exposition of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments.‡ Huss wrote a catechism in his prison at Constance, which is still ex-

* "*Gregorius Papa idola et imagines in templis collocavit, ut essent pro libris imperite multitudini.*" Sibelius, quoted by Van Alphen, *Prol. ad Cat. Heid.* p. 17; as if idolatry were a refuge from ignorance! This was, indeed, throwing the blind man into the ditch instead of attempting to restore his sight.

† Augusti, *Versuch einer Einleitung*, &c., p. 33.

‡ From the decrees of the Councils of Braga, Tourain, and Mentz, it appears that these were of old considered the heads of catechetical instruction.

tant among his works. And (stirred up, it is said, by these examples) Gerson, the learned and excellent Chancellor of the University of Paris, wrote a tract (how sweet the title!), "*De parvulis ad Christum trahendis*," and spent the last days of a life, distinguished by the highest honours of genius and learning, in *catechizing little children*. He was, however, looked upon as a bringer-in of "new measures" into the Roman Church, and complains bitterly of the "sloth, infidelity, and indifference to the salvation of immortal men,"* which prevailed in his time, and of the "shameless perversity† with which, both openly and secretly, his efforts for the instruction of the young were thwarted," declaring that "his zeal in this work was almost imputed to him as a crime." He passionately intreats Christians to instruct little children, and lead them, in love, patience, and humility, to Christ. This man, the glory of the Roman Church in the fifteenth century, passed the last years of his life in flight and exile. He was wont, shortly before his death, to assemble young persons and pray with them in the vulgar tongue, exclaiming, "O my God, my Creator, have mercy on thy poor servant, Gerson!" If any one demand how such unquestionable traits of deep and earnest piety are to be reconciled with the part he took at the Council of Constance, we answer that it is one of those inexplicable contradictions which are occasioned by the attempt to reconcile fidelity to Christ with servile reverence for a despotic Church. Gerson was, after all, an unflinching Catholic. After having, in the above treatise, portrayed with glowing beauty the act of Christ inviting and embracing little children (Mark x. 14-16), and exhorted all Christians to conduct children to Christ, as the brightest and most indispensable manifestation of their Redeemer's spirit, he thus drops, in an instant, from the Christian into the Catholic, concluding in these words:‡ "I wholly submit myself, nevertheless, in this matter, to the authority of my gracious superior; nor shall I oppose my own wisdom or judgment to the counsel of my spiritual friends; so that my zeal being tempered by this humility, I may not so run as to run against" (the authority of the Church). What is this but setting the authority of the Church above that of the Head of the Church? Gerson was one of the "Reformers before the Reformation." But, verily, the time was not yet. A bolder and mightier champion of the truth was at hand, who would not only *run against* that despotic Church, but shake the whole fabric by the force of his onset.

* *Videte quanta etiam vel inertia vel infidelitas! dum animos immortalium salutem non curare Christianos, &c.*

† *Immo qualis impudentissima perversitas hujusque nunc aperte nunc occulte impudire, &c.*

‡ *Submitto tamen omnia auctoritati benevoli superioris me in hac parte, &c. . . ne ut sic cursum incurram.* Gersoni Cancellarii Parisiensis, Op. tom. ii. tit. xxxiv. 1499. This ancient and curious edition of Gerson is in the Astor Library.