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THE
PRINCETON REVIEW.

JANUARY 1849.

No. I.

- ART. I.—1. *American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Special Report of the Prudential Committee, on the control to be exercised over Missionaries and Mission Churches.* Printed for the use of the Board at the Annual Meeting.* Revised edition. Press of T. R. Marvin.
2. *Correspondence between the Cherokee and Choctaw Missions, the Rev. S. B. Treat, and the Prudential Committee.* Missionary Herald, October, 1848.

IT is a matter of notoriety that the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, have for several years been sorely harassed on account of their supposed patronage or tolerance of slavery. Those known to the country as abolitionists, have felt it to be a duty to expostulate with the Board from time to time, for receiving money from the owners of slaves, for employing slaveholding missionaries, and for sustaining mission churches in which slaveholders were received as members.

* Also published in the Missionary Herald for October, 1848.

strengthen the conviction in the reader's mind that the presbyterian system is in all its parts *jure divino*; but if it be prosecuted with any measure of candour, we are perfectly certain that it will produce the persuasion that the modern *jure divino* prelatist who makes so much ado about the practice and testimony of antiquity, must stand self-condemned, for having departed so widely from what, on his principles, is the true and unalterable model of the church.

ART. III.—*The History of Catechizing.*

AMONG the works of Augustine, as scholars well know, is one on *Catechizing*.* It was written at the request of a Carthaginian deacon, named Deogratias. Now though it is not pretended that those who were contemplated in this instruction were children, or that the work was done by question and answer, yet when it is considered that the catechumens who came from heathenism were only children of a larger growth, often rudely ignorant, it will be readily believed that this book of the excellent bishop contains useful lessons for ourselves. The Carthaginian friend had lamented to him the hardness and tediousness of the work; and much of Augustine's treatise is intended to prevent this, and to show him how he may shed a most attractive cheerfulness over the whole business of catechizing. These advices are just as applicable to the catechist of modern times. "Remedies," says he, "are to be sought of God, whereby this narrowness of spirit may be enlarged, that so we may exult in fervour of soul, and take delight in the tranquillity of a good work: for the Lord loveth a cheerful giver." He urges his correspondent to come cheerfully to the duties of teaching, however annoying, by adducing the example of Christ, and even of human nurses, who reduce the infant's food to the minutest portions, that the child may be able to receive it.

Who that has ever taught a class of children or youth does

* *Dc Catechizandis Rudibus.*

not perceive that such advices as those which follow proceeded from experience? "If we grow weary of saying over things which are hackneyed and fit for babes, let us come close to them by fraternal, paternal, maternal love, and when thus joined to them in heart, we shall find even the old things seem new. For such is the power of sympathy, that when they are affected by our speaking, we also are affected by their learning, and thus the influence is mutual: so, in a manner, they speak the things which they hear us say, and we learn the things which we are teaching. Do we not find it thus, in regard to certain spacious and beautiful places, in city or country, which we have been accustomed to pass by without any pleasure, but which, when we exhibit to friends who have never beheld them, we contemplate with all the charm of novelty? And this the more, the more they are our friends: such being the bond of friendship, that the more we love them, the more do the old things become new. But if we have made a little proficiency in the contemplation of things, we shall not wish those whom we love to be astonished and delighted by the works of men's hands; but we desire to lift them to the plan and design of the author, and thence to rise to admiration and praise of the all-creating God, where we have the end of a love the most fertile. How much more ought we to delight, when any approach to learn about God himself, for whose sake all things are to be learned; and how ought our old instructions to grow fresh, by sympathy with their feeling of novelty?" These are expressions of our common nature, though uttered fourteen hundred years ago. And what is their principle? That warm love, and tender sympathy with the young, will make all the repetitions and labours of catechizing delightful.

Augustine lays down rules for arousing the attention of the careless, which are just as seasonable in a mission-assembly or in a parochial school, as in ancient Carthage or Hippo. And when all means, of narrative, of sudden question, of gentle remark are exhausted, and the learner is still hardened and averse, he says, we must "rather speak concerning him to God, than concerning God to him."*

So much in earnest is Augustine, that he gives a specimen,

* "Magisque pro illo ad Deum, quam illi de Deo multa dicenda." §. 18.

running through a number of chapters, of the sort of instruction which a Catechist of that day might give to a gentile, who should come for instruction. And then he goes over the same, under a shorter form.

The researches of the learned have brought many interesting things to light respecting the apostolical and primitive Catechizing. Professor Walch, of Jena, has treated this subject: we venture to present a few gleanings from his rich harvest.*

The word *catechize* is almost Greek. The original verb occurs often in the New Testament, but in different senses. In Acts xxi. 21, it means "to learn anything by common report;" in Rom. ii. 18, Gal. v. 6, 1 Cor. xiv. 19, "to be taught about religion;" in Luke i. 4, and Acts xviii. 25 "to initiate in Christian rudiments." The word is so used also by early church-writers.

This was not new among Hebrew Christians. When in Gen. xviii. 19, God says that Abraham will *command* his household, the word implies some previous instruction as to the nature of the command. Deut. i. 1-6, is an ordinance of catechizing, for all ages; so also, Ex. xii. 26, the rule about instructing children in the meaning of the passover.†

The apostles employed simple teaching, that is catechetical instruction: *I have fed you with milk*, says Paul to the Corinthians; and Clement of Alexandria applies this to catechizing. Such summaries as are found in Heb. vi. 1, were by the ancients called *catechetical*, by way of pre-eminence.

The persons submitted to this mode of instruction were called *Catechumens*. They were generally as has been already said, adults, but they were in knowledge no better than children. So they are expressly called, in Scripture; Heb. v. 13, 14. Paul divides Christians into adults and children or babes, who must be fed with infant's food. So also, 1 Cor. iii. 1, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto *babes* in Christ." Apollos, though a learned Alexandrian Jew, and a man of eloquence, was, in a sort, a Catechumen. "This man was instructed (*catechized*, the word is) in the way of the Lord," and a little after, "Knowing only the baptism of John:" he was therefore an unbaptized learner,

* *Miscellanea Sacra*. See a translation in *Biblical Repertory* for 1827, p. 37 ff.

† See also Deut. xii. 19. Josh. iv. 6, vii. 22, 24, 15. 1 Sam. i. 25. Pa. lxxviii. 4, 5.

a Catechumen. That excellent woman, Priscilla, and her husband, Aquila, took him "and expounded unto him the way of the Lord more perfectly." Some think that the "form of sound words," which Paul recommends to Timothy, (2 Tim. i. 13) was some little compend or syllabus of catechetical instruction. It is the better opinion, however, that the apostles left nothing of this kind in writing. We must not ascribe everything to the first age, which we find in use a little later. "Let it not be supposed," says a learned writer, "that the same kind of catechetical instruction was used in the time of the Apostles, which obtained in later ages, especially in the fourth and fifth centuries, when the catechumens were divided into distinct grades and classes. For in that first age of Christianity, when the gospel was preached by the Apostles themselves, many extraordinary and miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit were enjoyed, and especially that peculiar gift, conferred on the apostles, of trying the spirits, whether they were of God."*

The method of question and answer is not essential to catechizing, as is vulgarly thought, but is nevertheless closely connected with it, and of great importance. Here may be cited the celebrated Hoornbeek, one of the greater lights of Presbyterian Holland, in the seventeenth century. "The questions, the manner of examining, and the explanation, ought to be conformed to the capacity of the catechumens and hearers, (Prov. xxii. 8, Isaiah viii. 2) so that all things may be done with simplicity and perspicuity, for the edification of all; therefore the first and principal study of the catechist is, to be able to interrogate with dexterity (Luke ii. 46), so to propose and vary his questions, that the mind may be insensibly directed to the answer, and may scarcely avoid seeing it; and nothing is so necessary to this end, as to let down the manner of proposing questions to the capacity of children. *It is more important to interrogate properly than to explain*; for the former enters into the very nature of the catechesis, and the whole answer follows more or less readily, according as the question has been more or less clearly proposed."†

It was at a period subsequent to that of the apostles, that the regular Catechumens came into notice. These were they,

* Van Dale, *Historia Baptismorum*, p. 416.

† Hoornbeek: *Misc. Sacra*. l. i. c. 12.

whose religious proficiency was not yet enough to warrant their reception into the church. They were also called *Auditores* or Hearers. They might attend the reading and preaching of the church-service, but not the communion. The time of this probation differed with the individual; but the Council of Elvira ordained that it should not be less than two years. Origen speaks of two classes. those who only received private instruction, and those who frequented assemblies, and were approaching baptism.

Those who gave special instruction to these candidates were called *Catechists*. In Carthage and Alexandria, it was thought important to seek out men of knowledge and prudence, if possible also of learning, who might be able to contend with the Gentiles, and resolve their doubts. What is called the Apostles' Creed was probably framed for the use of catechumens. The whole theology of the Grecian world was affected by the famous normal SCHOOL OF CATECHISTS, at Alexandria. Of its origin Neander can find no trace. Among its distinguished teachers, who gave fame to the institution, were Pantaenus, Clements Alexandrinus, Origen, Heraclas, and Dionysius. Origen, when eighteen years of age, was a catechumen at this school. Clement of Alexandria was one of these catechists.*

It would be lost labour to endeavour to trace catechetical instruction through the Dark Ages. After all the ingenious efforts of Maitland and others, to show that they were more full of light than our own, it is hard not to perceive, that they were more concerned with legends, martyrologies, rosaries, feasts, and relics, than with any solid instruction. Here and there, however, we find attention drawn to the matter. At the Council of Tours, A. D. 1313, and at the second of Mentz, there were decrees enjoining the religious teaching of the young; the same order occurs in the capitulary of Charlemagne. In all these it was ordained that the instruction should be given in the vulgar tongue. From these decrees, and from other documents, we learn what constituted the body of catechetical instruction in that day. It comprised the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer; though sometimes one of the three is omitted. Instead of the Commandments, we find an

* Neander, I. p. 900. Eusebius V. 10.

enumeration of capital sins. It was out of regard to the time-honoured usage, in this respect, that the early Reformers followed the same order in their Catechism. There is a specimen of middle-age labours, in this line, extant in the Weissenberg Theotisc Catechism of the ninth century.* This contains the Lord's Prayer with an exposition, the capital sins, the Athanasian and Apostles' Creed, and the doxology "Glory to God in the highest." Some have attributed this little work to Rabanus Maurus, who is known to have been much concerned about the training of youth. Eccard, the editor of the book, refers it rather to Otfried, a monk of Weissenberg, and scholar of Rabanus. But the reign of scholastic theology and the plague of superstition brought all labours of this kind to an end. It is only in flourishing periods of Christianity, that Christ's lambs are duly fed. Hence whenever any witnesses for the truth arose, they invariably turned their attention to catechetical instruction. Thus one of the crimes laid to the charge of the Waldenses, was that they gave instruction to one another. From the Catechism which the Waldenses presented to Francis I, King of France, in 1545, it appears that they had not neglected this branch of evangelical labour. The same proved true under John Wiclif, who set himself to make simple books of instruction for the poor people. John Huss, likewise, wrote a catechetical work, while he was in prison at Constance: it is to be found among his printed works, in the edition of 1715. It is no more than just to add that the great Gerson, chancellor of the University of Paris, not only wrote a treatise concerning "the drawing of babes to Christ," but spent much of his latter days in carrying his principles into practice.†

The Reformation in the sixteenth century was accompanied by the restitution of catechetical labour. Only a shadow of this instrumentality remained. It was to remedy the brutish ignorance of the German people, that Luther prepared his celebrated catechisms. Of these works we propose to speak more particularly in another place. "The wretched aspect of things," says he, "lately beheld by me in making a visitation, has impelled me to issue this catechism, composed with all brevity and plainness. Alas! what calamity did I then see! The common

* Buddeus, *Isagoge* p. 333.

† Buddeus, p. 334.

people, especially they who dwell in the country, are so void of knowledge, that it were a shame to tell of it."

Among many generous traits in the heroic Luther, few are more striking than his zeal for the training of the young. He seemed to be before his age, in discerning that on this depended the existence of Protestantism. In 1525 he issued an "Address to all the Magistrates and Common Councils in all cities of Germany, in behalf of Public Schools." The learned historian von Raumer says of this treatise: "Who can avoid being delighted, to become acquainted with this great man as the reformer of German education? His admonitions went to the hearts of innumerable Germans, roused sleeping consciences, and strengthened weak hands: his decisions had, both with princes and people, the cogency of God's own voice."* Some of Luther's rugged, earnest, mighty sentences, will not lose all their force, even in our imperfect translation.

"I entreat you all, therefore, dear masters and friends, on God's behalf, and on behalf of the poor youth, that you would not treat this matter so lightly, as many do, who see not the devices of the Prince of this world. For it is a serious and great affair, important to Christ and all the world, that we help and counsel the young. Dear masters, if one must spend so much yearly, on firelocks, roads, bridges, dams, and numberless like things, in order that a city have temporal peace and quietness, why should we not all the rather lay out as much on the poor youth, so as to have a few fit men for schoolmasters?" Is it not plain, that one can now in three years train a boy, so that in his fifteenth or eighteenth year, he shall know more than hitherto all universities and convents could do? Yea, what hath been learned hitherto in universities and convents, but to be asses, blocks and stocks? Twenty, even forty years have men learned in them, without knowing either Latin or German; to say nothing of the scandalous, vicious lives, whereby noble youth have there been so woefully corrupted."

"God's command by Moses presses and exacts the teaching of children by parents, so often, that in the 78th Psalm it is said: 'he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children, and to children's children.' And the

* Karl von Raumer, *Gesch. d. Paedagogik*, 1. 189.

fourth* commandment shows this also, where God so earnestly commands obedience to parents, that rebellious sons were to be judicially slain. And why indeed do we elder ones live, but that we may guard and teach and train the younger?" "Wo to the world, for ever more! Here are children daily born and growing up, and alas! there is none to take charge of the poor young generation; so things are suffered to go as they may." "How can even reason, and especially Christian love endure it, that children grow up among us, untutored, and are poison and vermin-eggs to other children, till at last a whole city is corrupted, as befell Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Gaba! In the second place, alas the great mass of parents is unfit for the work, and know not how children should be brought up. For they have learnt nothing themselves, but to care for appetite."

"Our schools," adds Luther, with a noble warmth, "are no longer a hell and a purgatory, in which we were tortured upon *Casualibus* and *Temporalibus*; in which moreover we learned nothing but mere nought, after all our thumping, quaking, anguish and woe. If people take all this time and pains to make their children play cards, sing and dance, why not as much time to teach them reading and other arts, when they are young and at leisure, and fit and cheerful for it? I speak for myself. If I had children, and could do so, I would make them learn not only languages and history, but singing and instrumental music, and all mathematics. For what were all this but child's play, in which the Greeks in old time trained their children, so that they came to be marvellously expert, and afterwards fit for everything? Yea, it grieves me now, that I did not read the poets and histories more, and that no man taught me them. In place of which I had to read the devil's filth, the philosophers and sophists, at great cost, toil, and hurt, so that now I have enough to do to get rid of it." And then speaking of the ignorance prevalent in his day, he breaks forth as follows: "therefore we have received what was due, and God has right well repaid our unthankfulness, in not prizing his goodness, and providing while it was yet time, and while it was possible, for the securing of good books and learned persons, and in letting it slip as not concerning us. So, on his part, God, instead of the Bible and

* Reckoned by us as the Fifth.

good books, suffered Aristotle and innumerable hurtful books to come in, which drew us further and further from the Bible. Besides this, were the devil-masks, friars, college-spectres, maintained at huge expense, with many doctors, preachers, masters, parsons, and monks, that is to say, great, gross, fat donkeys, decked with red and brown caps, like swine led by a chain of gold and pearls, and we have laden ourselves with these, who have taught us nothing good, but have made us more and more blind and sottish, and, in return, have devoured all our goods, and filled every cloister and every corner, with the ordure of their unsavoury, poisonous books; till to think thereon is horror!" These coarse but powerful passages will do more to show the zeal of Luther for religious education, than pages of dissertation could do.

It has already been said that the Reformation brought with it a revival of catechetical instruction, and mention has been made of the Catechisms of Luther. The origin and general character of these compositions belongs to our subject. They were preceded by some smaller works. The Reformation had scarcely dawned, before Luther perceived the importance of giving religious training to the young, after a regular form. As the result of popular discourses delivered in 1516 and 1517, the Reformer, printed, in 1518, an exposition of the Decalogue.* Two years after he set forth a similar book in German; the Lord's Prayer and Creed being added. And in a preface to his book on the German church-service, he wrote, in 1526: "First of all, we stand in need, for God's service in German, of a *rugged, plain, simple, good Catechism*. Catechism means an instruction, whereby Heathen, who mean to be Christians, may be taught and directed, what they are to believe, do, and know, in Christianity."

When the visitation of the churches, alluded to above, was made in 1527 and the years following, Luther was so convinced of the wretched ignorance of the parish priests, that in the latter part of 1528, he prepared a Catechism. "Just now," writes he, "I am busy, making a catechism for the rude pagans."† It was his intention to confine himself to the first and larger work,

* "Decem Præcepta predicata populo, per Mart. Luther." Vit. 1518. Opera, ed. Walch. tom. x. p. 182. s. 99.

† Letters, III. p. 417, 426.

but afterwards he thought it necessary to afford something more compendious. There has been some question as to the order of their appearance, but it is now well established that the larger one came first; and this is what might be judged from examining it, since it bears every mark of a first draught. Of our two Westminster Catechisms, on the other hand, it is well known, that the Shorter was first written. Both of Luther's were issued in 1529. Both were written by him in his peculiarly nervous German. They began to be extensively used, and good old Mathesius says more than a hundred thousand copies were circulating in the Latin and German schools: so that now they are always included among the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church. The two principal Latin versions were those of Lonicerus and Obsopoeus. The Larger Catechism fills about one hundred and thirty pages of large duodecimo. After a twofold preface, it is divided into six parts, under these heads; the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, Baptism, and the Sacrament of the Altar (as he continued to call the Lord's Supper.)

Luther's Larger Catechism is not in the form of question and answer, but is a familiar and somewhat diffuse admonition to preachers and teachers, as to the way in which they should explain and inculcate the subjects above mentioned. Some of his sound and pungent sayings will give an idea of his plainness. These instructors, he says, had grown so conceited, and so cloyed with the simplicity of divine truth, that after reading over the catechism once, they were ready to throw it into a corner, as if they knew all about it; "a noxious and pestiferous evil." "Whereas I," he adds, "if I may speak of myself, though Doctor and preacher, and not less learned or experienced than those who thus presume, and who have come to so great assurance, am nowise ashamed to do as the boys do. For, as we teach them the Catechism, so do I, in the morning, or at any other spare time, say over to myself, word for word, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, some Psalms, &c.)* "Wherefore," says he, "I do now once more entreat and conjure all Christians, but especially all pastors and preachers, not to seek to be Doctors before the time, nor falsely to persuade

themselves that they know every thing. But if they use diligence, I solemnly promise them, and they shall themselves experience the same, that they shall thence derive great fruit, and that God will make superior men of them, so that they shall one day themselves confess, that the more they repeat and reiterate the doctrine of the Catechism, the less they apprehend and know it, but have need to be ever learning it."

Luther gives some directions as to the way in which the work of catechizing shall be conducted. Let the reader judge whether we do not find in them the germ of that household tree, which has borne such goodly fruit in the land of our Presbyterian forefathers. "The duty of the faithful and watchful father demands, that *once a week in the least*, he should make trial by examination of his children and family, and discover what they understand or have learnt; solemnly constraining them, in case of ignorance, to learn these things thoroughly."

The treatise (for such it is) abounds in those striking and memorable sayings, which characterize all Luther's writings, but especially those which are in German. The racy idioms often remind us of our own Bunyan: they are as strong, as witty, and as coarse. Writing as Luther did, to draw souls away from the gins and traps of popery, he loses no opportunity of detecting the Romish snares. "This (catechetical) way of education," says he, "so drives the roots into the heart, that children fear God more than they dread ferule or whip. And the reason I speak so simply is for the youth's sake, that the roots may at length penetrate their inmost mind. For when we teach children, we must prattle in their own tongue."* Speaking of the abuses of the Sabbath, he says: "Those indeed know full well how to keep holidays and festivals, who are very far from Christ and all piety; since we see all that hive, and idle luxurious throng of our religious orders, who stand daily in churches, chanting and trolling (*singen und klingen*) bawling and vociferating, and yet, with all their stentorian cry and lupine howling, keeping no Sabbath. For they neither teach nor practice any word of God, but express what is quite diverse and opposite, by both their doctrine and their life."

This larger Catechism of Luther well deserves our study. It

* Cat. Maj. P. L. §. 64.

was evidently written from a full mind and heart, and with a rapid pen. Being the first deliberate attempt, in this kind, of the Reformation era, it is not to be expected that it should be either so exhaustive or so succinct, as later productions. This will be manifest from a comparison of what relates to the Law, with the masterly exposition of the Decalogue, in our own Catechisms. The division of the Romanists is retained; so that our fourth commandment is Luther's third, and so on, to the tenth, which is numbered ninth and tenth. The view taken the Sabbath is lower than that of British and American Protestants, being much the same with that of Calvin. The sign of the cross, in prayer, is commanded. And, in regard to the sacraments, those remnants of popish opinion are of course apparent, in regard to which Luther differed so signally from Calvin, and especially from Zwingli. But the work, as a whole, is a good and great work, and must ever be venerable as the first monument of catechetical Protestantism.

The SHORTER CATECHISM of Luther is in the form of question and answer. It is very simple, and so short as not to take up more than twenty pages, duodecimo. The order is as follows: I. The Decalogue. II. The Apostles' Creed; under three articles, 1. Of Creation, 2. Of Redemption, 3. Of Sanctification. III. The Lord's Prayer. IV. The Sacrament of Baptism. V. The Sacrament of the Altar. There are three appendixes; 1. Morning and Evening Prayers; 2. Grace before and after Meat; 3. Economic Maxims.

A specimen of the doctrinal part will scarcely fail to be acceptable; it relates to the second portion of the Creed, viz.: "And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord," etc.

"Q. What is the meaning of this article?"

A. I believe that Jesus Christ, very God, eternally begotten of the Father, and very man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord, who redeemed me a lost and condemned human being [*hominem*] and freed me from all sins, from death, and from the power of Satan, not with silver and gold, but with his own holy and precious blood, and with his innocent passion and death, that I should be wholly his, and should live under him in his kingdom, and should serve him in perpetual righteousness, in-

nocence, and blessedness, as he himself rose from the dead, and liveth and reigneth forever. This is most certainly true.”*

The Economic Maxims, at the close, are under fourteen heads; of which all are simple texts of scripture, except the last. They relate to all relative duties. The closing one is a couplet, in three languages, Latin, German, and Greek :

“ Cuique sit in primis magnae sua lectio curae,
Ut domus officiis stet decorata suis.”

“ Ein jeder lern sein Lection,
So wird es wol im Hause ston.”

“ Let every one his lesson learn,
For this to household-good shall turn.”

In the preface to this Shorter Catechism, Luther is very urgent upon a point, which is essential to catechetical instruction, but which is in danger of being entirely neglected, in this day of supposed progress in education; namely, the importance of committing a set form to the memory.

“ I therefore,” says he, “ beseech and conjure all you, who are pastors and preachers, that you solemnly discharge your duty, and take care of the people committed to you by God. And this you will best do, by joining us in inculcating this catechism every where, and especially on the young. But if any of you are so unlearned, as to have no knowledge whatever of these things, let not such be ashamed, to read to their hearers this prescribed form, word for word, in this manner. First of all, let preachers beware how they set forth the decalogue, or the Lord’s Prayer, or the Creed, or the Sacraments, sometimes in one way, and sometimes in another; but let them constantly use the same form, in the common propounding and explaining these things. And my reason for giving this advice is that I know that the simpler people and youth cannot be successfully taught, *except by one and the same form often proposed and repeated*. For if you present the same things, sometimes in one way and sometimes in another, the more simple minds are apt to be confused, and the result is, that all your pains in teaching goes for nothing.” “ It is another affair, when you teach the gospel in an assembly of learned men; then you may give a specimen of your erudition; and I do not forbid your varying your mode of discussion, offering sometimes one and sometimes another as-

* Ed. Franke, p. 73.

pect in speaking. But with the more simple, always use the same form, set forth in certain words." "As I have said above, that the simple catechism is to be always taught in the same words, so I would desire, also, that in the explanation of the catechism, the same mode of treatment should be pursued, without altering a single syllable."

The principle contained in these directions is of great moment in all juvenile instruction. It is too commonly thought, that the point is gained with children, when they are known to *understand the matter for the time being*: and this fallacy is encouraged by the slovenly popular methods of abundant questions, to be answered in the pupil's own words. On the contrary, as the basis of every science, as a subject of teaching, is laid in concise and exact definitions; and as the language of these definitions cannot be altered without some loss; so the only safe method of beginning is to charge the memory of the learner with the very words of such definitions. This is equally true of syntax, geometry, physics, metaphysics, and theology. Those more diffuse and tentative methods which are good in the closet are out of place in the school; and the way of discovering truth is not always the way of inculcating it. All first-lines of instruction must proceed upon authority; the truth must be given as *dogma*. In a word, though we arrive at principles *analytically*, we teach them *synthetically*. Hence it is not a traditionary, but a most philosophic method, to demand the accurate learning by rote of catechetical forms. It is invariably found, that the best theologians are not those who have enjoyed the fullest cursory reading even of the best authors, but those who have enriched their memory with the most complete body of exact definitions.

In the churches of the Reformed, there was no less attention paid to the training of the young. Among their monuments, none is more venerable than the Catechism by John Calvin, commonly called the Geneva Catechism. This was set forth in French, in 1536, and in Latin, in 1538.* The Geneva edition of 1545 was revised by the author. It was followed by forms of prayer, both for private use, and for the church service: these may be seen appended to most old editions of the

* Augusti, Liber. Symb. Ecc. Ref. p. 647.

French New Testament. This Catechism obtained extraordinary diffusion, being publicly used in Switzerland, Holland, and to some extent for a time in Scotland and England.* Such was its value in France, that it was expounded in all the Reformed churches of that country, on Sunday afternoons, until the revocation of the Edict; and this by decrees of the great National Synods.† It was translated into almost all the modern languages of Europe, besides being put into Greek by Henry Stephanus, and into Hebrew by Tremellius.

The judgment of Calvin concerning the value of juvenile instruction, may be learnt from his famous letter to Somerset, and from his preface to the Catechism itself. "Let there besides," he writes to the Lord Protector of England, "be published a plain formula or catechism, for the use of children, and those who may be more ignorant among the people. Thus the truth will be rendered more familiar to them, and at the same time they will learn to distinguish it from impostures and corruptions, which are so apt to creep in by little and little upon the ignorant and careless. *It becomes you to be persuaded, that the church of God cannot be without a catechism;* for therein the true seed of doctrine is to be contained, from which at length the pure and seasonable harvest will be matured, and from this the seed may be multiplied abundantly. Wherefore, if you expect to build an edifice of this kind, which shall last long, and be safe from destruction, give all care that each child be instructed in the faith, by the catechism published for that purpose; that they may learn briefly, and as their capacities will admit, in what consists true Christianity. The usefulness of the catechism will not be confined merely to the instruction of children. The consequence will also be, that the people, being taught by it, will be better prepared to profit by the ordinary preaching of the word; and also if any one, puffed up, should introduce any new opinions, he may be detected by an immediate appeal to the rule of the Catechism."

In the Preface, Calvin uses language which may well seem prophetic to those who in this year of 1848, a little more than three centuries after the date of the Geneva Catechism, observe

* L'Enfant, Discours sur les Catechismes, p. 101, s. 99.

† Buddeus, Isagoge, p. 341.

the National Synod of the French Protestants repudiating the faith of their forefathers, and thus verifying the prediction of the Reformer.

“But if this is so needful now, what shall we say of posterity? On this subject I am so anxious, that I scarcely dare to think. *And O that our sons may not some day regard this rather as a vaticination, than a conjecture!* Whence we must give the more pains, to bind up in our writings, such remains of the church, as may survive us, or perhaps emerge into notice. Other sorts of writings may show, indeed, what the religious opinions of us all were; but the doctrinal agreement of our churches cannot be evinced by a more illustrious testimony, than that of Catechisms. For there will it appear, not merely what this or that man has taught, but what rudiments have been inculcated among us from boyhood, on all, whether learned or unlearned; all believers having this for a solemn symbol of Christian Communion. This indeed was my principal reason for setting forth this Catechism.”

A little after he adds in a characteristic passage: “Moreover I think it is becoming as an example, that it be testified to the world, that we, who endeavour the edification of the Church, should every where address ourselves faithfully to this, that the use of Catechizing, which some ages ago was abolished under the papacy, should now as it were be restored to its rights. For we can neither commend this holy institution according to its merits, nor sufficiently rebuke the flagitious popish corruptions, which by turning it into childish fooleries, not only did it away, but basely perverted it to a cloak for their own foul and impious superstition. For they observe no bounds, in adorning that adulterous Confirmation, which they have made to usurp its place, with a great meretricious splendour of ceremonies, and many deckings of pomp: but while they seek to adorn, they really bedeck it with execrable blasphemies, while they vaunt it as a sacrament worthier than Baptism, giving the name of *semi-Christians* to all who have been anointed with their unsavory oil: meanwhile their whole action comprises nothing but histrionic gesticulations, or rather the wanton tricks of monkeys.”*

* Augusti, p. 462.

The Address to the reader is in these words. "It was always an observance of the Church, and diligently provided for, that children should be duly trained in Christian doctrine. That this might be done more conveniently, not only were schools opened, of old time, and individuals ordered to instruct their respective families aright, but it was also matter of public injunction and practice, for children to be examined in churches, on each of the articles, which ought to be common and known among all Christians. That this might be orderly done, a formula was draughted, which was called the *Catechism*, or instruction. After that time, the devil, miserably lacerating the church of God, and bringing in horrid destruction, (the marks of which are even now too visible in most of the earth) overthrew this holy arrangement; nor did he leave anything in its place, but sundry trifles, engendering superstitions only, with no fruit of edification. Such is what they call *Confirmation*, fraught indeed with postures worse than laughable, quite befitting apes, and resting on no foundation. What therefore we here offer, is nothing else than the practice of those things, which from antiquity were observed by Christians and true worshippers of God, and which were never omitted, but while the Church was utterly corrupt."*

The starting point of the Geneva Catechism is the same as that of the Westminster, viz: "*What is the chief end of man's life?*" It proceeds then to develop the highest good of man—the knowledge and worship of God—in Jesus Christ—as set forth in the Apostles' Creed, which is then expounded. After this follow the Decalogue, and the Lord's Prayer. Then are treated the Scriptures, and the Sacraments. The plan of the work differs materially from the Catechisms with which we are familiar, and we cannot but think that the comparison is in favour of our own. The question is supposed to be asked by the teacher, and is in some instances longer than the answer; the question is not rehearsed in the answer; and the series of answers do not form a body of connected propositions. For example: "*M. How then say you that we are justified by faith?* P. Because, when with certain confidence of

* Augusti, p. 464.

heart, we embrace the promises of the gospel, we do, in a manner, obtain possession of this righteousness, of which I speak. *M. This is your meaning then, that the righteousness, as it is offered to us by God through the gospel, so it is received of us by faith? P.* So it is."

The exposition of the fourth commandment will serve more fully as a specimen, and will also show Calvin's doctrine of the Sabbath. "*M. Does he command to labour six days, that we may rest the seventh? P.* Not simply: but giving six days to men's labours, he reserves the seventh, on which it is not permitted to labour.

M. Does he forbid all labour on one day of the week? P. This commandment has a peculiar consideration. For the observance of rest is part of the ceremonies of the old law. And for this cause it was abolished at the coming of Christ.

M. Say you that this commandment pertains properly to the Jews, and was given for the time of the Old Testament? P. Yes; so far as it is ceremonial.

M. Why? Is there anything in it besides ceremony? P. It was given for three reasons. *M. What are they? P.* To figure spiritual rest; for ecclesiastical polity; and for the relief of servants.

M. What is spiritual rest? P. It is to cease from our own works, that the Lord may work in us.

M. How is this accomplished? P. By mortifying our flesh, that is, renouncing our nature, in order that God may govern us by his Spirit. *M. Should this be done only on one day of the week? P.* It ought to be done continually; for when we have once begun, we must continue all our life.

M. Why then is there a certain day assigned to figure this? P. It is not required that the figure be in everything like the reality; it is enough that it have some resemblance.

M. Why is the seventh day ordained, rather than any other? P. The number seven, in scripture, denotes perfection. It is therefore proper to denote perpetuity. Thus it admonishes us that our spiritual rest is only begun in this present life, and will not be perfected until we depart from this world.

M. But what is the meaning of the reason here alleged by our Lord, that we must rest, as he has done? P. After having created all his works in six days, he dedicated the seventh to

the consideration of these. And to lead us the better to do this, he alleges his own example. For there is nothing so desirable, as to be conformed to him.

M. Must we always meditate on the works of God; or is it enough to do so one day in the week? P. It should be done every day; but by reason of our infirmity, one day has been specially appointed. And this is the polity of which I spake.

M. What order then should be observed on this day? P. People should assemble, to be instructed in the truth of God, to offer common prayers, and to render testimony to the faith and religion.

M. How do you understand this precept to be given for the relief of servants? P. To give some relaxation to those who are under the power of others. And this equally subserves the common polity; for each one accustoms himself to labour the rest of the time, seeing he has a day of rest.

M. Now tell us how this commandment addresses itself to us? P. Touching the ceremony, it is abolished. For we have the accomplishment in Jesus Christ.

M. How? P. Because our old man is crucified by the virtue of his death; and because by his resurrection we rise to newness of life.

M. What remains of it then to us? P. That we observe the order instituted in the church, for hearing the word of the Lord, joining in public prayers and sacraments, and that we do not contravene the spiritual polity which exists among believers.

M. And is the figure of no more use to us? P. Nay, indeed: for we must return to its reality; which is, that being true members of Christ, we cease from our own works that we may resign ourselves to his government."

In this extract we have followed the French, which differs considerably in point of expression from the conciser Latin. When we consider the time at which this catechism was made, and the generality of its reception, by means of which hundreds of thousands in many countries received from it the lessons of salvation; and its exposition in all the French and Walloon churches, according to its division among the Sundays of the year; we may justly rank this among the most impor-

tant works of the great Reformer, while we place it by the side of the analogous production of Martin Luther.

The example of Luther and Calvin was followed by many in both divisions of the Protestant body. On the Lutheran side, some proceeded to frame other catechisms, intended to amplify what was in the original, or to supply its defects; others expended labour in commenting more or less largely on the text. Among the former must be numbered Philip Melancthon, John Brentius, John Mathesius (so well known as the affectionate biographer of Luther), Nicholas Selnecker, David Chytraeus, John Wigand, and Nicholas Hemming. Indeed almost every state in Germany had its respective manual in which the catechism of Luther was enlarged and explained. The Gotha catechism, for example, was by Solomon Glassius: the Dantzic catechism, is noted by Abraham Calovius, and those of Dresden, Frankfort, and Quedlinburg, by Spener, who added to his other labours for Christ, a plain exposition of the Smaller Catechism; a work which Buddeus says is marked by his characteristic judgment. It is called by Mayer "an incomparable work," on account of its fulness and clearness, the solidity of the scripture proofs, and the tendency of the whole to promote vital piety in the learner; nothing less was to have been expected from one whom God employed as a chosen vessel for the revival of religion in a cold time. Wittenberg, Tubingen, and Leipsick had their several catechisms.*

Other works of catechetical form far transcended the ability of youth, and even rose to the level of theological systems. Such was that of Dietericus, entitled "Catechetical Institutes," often enlarged upon, in the way of lectures and annotations, by such men as Chemnitius and Bechmann. A similar book by Danhauer, entitled '*Catechetical Milk*;' has been thought to contain not only milk for babes, but strong meat for men. There were many who published sermons founded on the order of this little book of the Reformer. So that we may bless God that Luther was ever led to such a composition.

On the side of the Reformed, much was also done; as may be read in L'Enfant's work on Catechisms. All these were however eclipsed by one, which acquired an authority, still

* Buddeus, u. s. p. 335.

existing in our own day; this was the *Heidelberg Catechism*.

A little explanation will here be necessary. Among those countries in which the Calvinistic doctrines found great favour one of the most noted was the Palatinate. Under Frederick II., surnamed the Wise, and Otto Henry, the Magnanimous, that is, from 1544 to 1559, the Palatinate was Lutheran. But Frederick III., about the year 1560, introduced the Swiss reform, both in doctrine and worship. He was a pious and distinguished man.* He thought it of great importance to fix the opinions which he maintained, by comprehending them in a catechetical formula. For the preparation of this, he employed two eminent theologians, Zachary Ursinus, and Caspar Olevianus; who were aided, some say, by Boquin and Tremellius. Ursinus, of Breslau, who is to be carefully distinguished from a Lutheran divine of the same name, was a pupil of Melancthon, and was professor first at Heidelberg and then at Neustadt; he died in 1583. Olevianus became professor at Heidelberg in 1584, and was afterwards at Herborn; he wrote an Exposition of the Apostles Creed, and died in 1587. The labour of compiling the new work fell chiefly on Ursinus. When complete it was subjected to the clergy of the Palatinate, in 1562, and in 1563 was published with the sanction of the Elector Palatine. It is a singular fact, that his successor, Louis VI., who lived during the days of the celebrated 'Formula of Concord,' reverted to Lutheranism, and altered both creed and church-service, after the Lutheran pattern. After his death, in 1583, Calvinism was restored.† Guericke, the representative of old school Lutheranism, commends this work, for its warmth and ability, and its general richness of doctrine, but adds, that on the Lord's Supper, it contains the Calvinistic and in part even the Zwinglian doctrine, in most decisive expressions, and that it utters the Calvinistic dogma of Predestination only in an obscure manner.‡ The Heidelberg or Palatine Catechism, for it was known by both names, received respectful attention from many Lutherans, for its method, comprehensiveness, and general truth; but among the Reformed it quickly rose to the authority of a public symbol. Next to the second Helvetic Confession, it is supposed to have

* Hase, Kgschte. § 362. † Hase, Kgschte. § 362. ‡ Guericke, Kgschte, ed. 6. vol. iii. p. 553.

been the most valued and widely extended formula. It had currency not only in Germany, but in Hungary, Switzerland, and especially in Holland, from which it came with the Dutch emigration to America. Among the numerous men of learning who have written commentaries upon it, may be mentioned Ursinus himself, Pareus, Mylius, Cocceius, Momma, Alting, Leydecker, Hulsius, Becker, and Reuter. It was vehemently assaulted by Angelo de Monte Bello, of Louvain, and was defended against him by Henry Alting, of Groeningen, who also defended it against the Arminian objections of the Remonstrants.

The undeniable excellencies of the Heidelberg Catechism ensured it a final triumph, and in the seventeenth session of the Synod of Dort, it was approved by that body, and comprehended among the symbolical books of the Reformed Dutch Church. This was further confirmed in the Convention at the Hague, in 1651.* Among the Rules of Church Government, established in the Synod of Dort, the sixty-eighth is as follows: "Every minister shall, in the afternoon service on the Lord's day, briefly *explain* the system of the Christian doctrine comprehended in the *Catechism*, adopted by the Reformed Churches; so that, if practicable, the explanation may be annually completed, according to the sections made for that purpose in said catechism."† It is to be observed, that the Catechism is divided into portions for fifty-two Lord's days. While this rule was faithfully observed, it tended to produce that uniformity of orthodox belief which has been the glory of the Dutch churches; and it is much to be deplored, that in our large cities, this venerable usage has fallen somewhat into desuetude. Such importance was ascribed to catechetical instruction by the Reformed Churches, that it is expressly decreed by the last Synod of Dort, in its seventeenth session, that there should be observed a threefold method of catechizing: viz.

"1st, Domestic, by Parents.

"2d, Scholastic, by Schoolmasters.

"3d, Ecclesiastic, by Pastors, Elders, Readers, or Visitors of the sick.

"And that all whose duty it is to visit and inspect the

* Buddeus, *Isag.* p. 339, s. 99. † *Const. Ref. Dutch Ch.* ed. N. Y. 1815. p. 192.

churches and schools, shall be admonished to make this the first object of their care."

To carry this plan into effect, so far as respects the second method of instruction, there was made another decree, which comprises the following resolutions:

"1st. Schools for the education of children and youth shall be established wherever they may be found necessary.

2d. Provision shall be made for procuring and maintaining suitable teachers.

3d. The children of the poor must be provided for in these schools, or in others, expressly for them.

4th. No person shall be appointed to the charge of these schools, who is not a member of the Reformed church, furnished with testimonials of his orthodoxy and good morals, and who shall not previously have subscribed the Confession of Faith, the Belgic Catechism, and solemnly promised to instruct the children committed to his care, in the principles contained in the church standards.

5th. They shall, according to the age and capacity of the children, employ two half-days in every week, not only in hearing them repeat, but assisting them to understand their catechism; shall examine them frequently, inculcate upon them the necessity of regular attendance upon the ordinances of religion, accompany them to the ordinances, and promote their benefit from them.

6th. To promote fidelity in the teachers, and progress in the children, it shall be the duty of the pastors and elders, frequently to visit these schools, to direct and encourage the teachers in the method of catechising; to examine the children with mild severity, and to excite them to industry, by holy exhortations, by commendations, and with suitable rewards."*

It is our purpose, at some more convenient time, to revert to this subject of Catechetical History; and we shall probably then find occasion to discuss at greater length the origin and character of the great HEIDELBERG CATECHISM.

* Report to General Synod of R. D. C., 1809.