

A SHORT CATECHISME

Wherein are briefly handled

the fundamentall principles
of Christian Religion

Needfull to be knowne by all Chris-
tians before they be admitted to
the Lord's Table.

Whereunto are added sundry prayers.

The seventh edition, corrected and enlarged by
WILLIAM GOUGE.

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*When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need againe that one
teach you which be the first Principles of the Oracles of God.*



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TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

I AM not ignorant that thorow the good gift of the grace of God given to many faithfull ministers before my time, sufficient formes of Catechismes have been published, so as there was no need of publishing this little forme which followeth. The Lord knoweth how far it was from my purpose to send it forth to the open view of the world. The occasion of first publishing it was this. When I used to catechise the youth of my parish, the minister which was assistant to me in my place copied out from time to time the heads of such points as I propounded to those whom I examined, and at length brought them to this forme. These heads were given forth beforehand to such as were to answer, that they might know whereabout they should be examined. Many other questions were out of them deducted, but these layd down as the ground work of all. By this meanes the printer got a copy of them and published them once and againe before I yielded to fater them. At the third impression I was moved to revise the forenamed forme, and to acknowledge it to be mine; which I doe not in any conceit of adding more than hath been before set down in other catechismes, but rather to testify mine owne faeth and consent to the doctrine long taught and received in this Church. Howsoever I think it very requisite that there were one compleat approved catechism to be used in all churches, yet I find that in all ages of the Church God hath stirred up many of his servants to publish several formes all agreeing in the substance; and I observe, among many other, these two good uses to arise from thence: First, That the doctrine of the gospell is by the mutuall

consent of many faithful ministers the more confirmed, as is the history of Christ penned by four severall witnesses all agreeing in substance, though varying in order, in phrase, and in brevity or prolixity. Secondly, That many more are instructed in the principles of religion than otherwise would be; for some desire one man's booke that would not another's, yea more bookes are vented, because they come from severall authors, than would be if they came from one. In hope that these briefe rudiments will turne to the prejudice of none, but to the edification of some, I commend them to the Church of God, and myselfe to the prayers thereof.

WILL. GOUGE.

A Short Prayer before reading or hearing of the Holy Scriptures expounded, or learning of the Principles of Christian Religion.

O Father of Light, who hast been pleased to vouchsafe unto us poore miserable sinners, who by nature sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, the light to direct us thorow the darkness of this world unto the light of glory, We beseech thee to pardon all our sins, and to open the blind eyes of our understanding, that we may rightly conceive thy Word, and withall to give us grace rightly to apply it unto our owne hearts, and to yield all holy obedience thereunto through Jesus Christ our Lord and only Saviour. Amen.

A BRIEF METHOD

of Catechising, wherein are handled

*The Fundamental Principles
of Christian Religion.*

[SPECIMEN.]

Qu. What is everyone bound to know ?

Ans. God, and Himselfe.

Q. Where is this knowledge to be had ?

A. In the holy Scriptures, contained in the Old and New Testament.

Q. Who is the author of those Scriptures ?

A. The Holy Spirit of God, who inspired holy men to write them.

Q. What is God ?

A. A Spirit of infinite perfection.

Q. How many Gods are there ?

A. Onely one: but distinguished into three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Q. How is God further made known unto us ?

A. By his properties, and by his workes.

Q. What are the properties of God ?

A. No other than the very essence or nature of God, but as certaine attributes applyed to him to distinguish him from all creatures.

Q. What are the kindes of them ?

A. Either incommunicable, which are so proper to God alone, as in no respect they can be attributed to any creature; or communicable, which in some respects are attributed also to creatures.

Q. Rehearse some of the former kind.

A. Eternity without beginning; Infinitenesse, filling all places; Prescience, knowing all things before hand; Immutability, not subiect to any change; All-sufficiency in himselfe, Omnipotencie, etc.

Q. Rehearse some of the latter kind.

A. Power, Purity, Wisedome, Truth, Justice, Mercy, etc.

Q. What difference is there betwixt these latter properties as they are in God, and as they are in the creatures ?

A. I. God hath them of and from himself; the creature receiueth them from God. II. God hath al of them infinitely without measure; the creature hath but a portion.

Q. What are the workes of God ?

A. His decree, and the execution therof.

Q. What beleve you concerning God's Decree in generall ?

A. That he ordained all things before all times, according to his will.

Q. What beleve you concerning God's particular decree of men ?

A. That God from all eternity elected some to be saued in Christ, and left others to be damned for their sins.

Q. What is the principall end that God aymed at therein ?

A. The Glory of his Mercy and his Justice.

Q. Wherein consisteth the execution of God's decree ?

A. In making and gouerning all things.

Q. How did God make all things ?

A. By his Word, of nothing, in six dayes, very good.

Q. How did God governe all things ?

A. As by wise prouidence he preserueth all, so he disposeth them to his own glory, and his childrens good.

Q. How may we come to the knowledge of our selves ?

A. By a due consideration of the seuerall estates of man.

Q. Which are they ?

A. 1. That happy estate wherein man was made. 2. That miserable state wherinto he fel. 3. That renewed estate whereunto by grace he is called. 4. That glorious estate which is in Heauen reserued for him.

Q. Doe all men passe thorow all these estates ?

A. No ; not all ; but onely the elect : the other as they fel into misery, so in misery they lye for euer.

Q. Wherein did that happinesse consist in which man was first made ?

A. In that he was made after God's Image.

Q. In what respect is he said to be made after God's Image ?

A. In that he was indued with perfect knowledge, and with true holiness and righteousnesse.

Q. Have we any platforme of that holinesse and righteousnesse ?

A. Yea, the law of God, consisting of ten seuerall commandements.

Q. Which are those ten Commandements ?

A. Those which God himselve vttered on Mount Sinai to the Israelites, and after wrote in two tables.

Q. Rehearse them.

A. I am the Lord thy God ; thou shalt have no other gods before me, etc.

*A briefe Abstract of the former Catechisme for
the helpe of the younger and ignoranter sort.*

Q. What are we most bound to know?

A. 1. God. 2. Ourselves.

Q. Where is this knowledge to be had?

A. In God's Word.

Q. By what is God made knowne?

A. 1. By His nature. 2. By His persons. 3. By His properties. 4. By His workes.

Q. What is God?

A. A Spirit of infinite perfection.

Q. How many Gods are there?

A. One onely.

Q. Into how many persons is this one God distinguished?

A. Into three, 1. The Father. 2. The Sonne. 3. The Holy Ghost.

Q. How is God further made knowne to us?

A. By His workes.

Q. What are they?

A. 1. Creation. 2. Providence.

Q. How did God create things?

A. By His Word, of nothing, in six days, very good.

Q. Wherein is God's providence manifested?

A. 1. In preserving things. 2. In governing them.

Q. What was man's first estate wherein God made him?

A. Most holy and happy.

Q. What is now his naturall estate?

A. Most miserable.

Q. How did man become miserable?

A. By sinne.

Q. What is sinne?

A. A breach of God's law.

Q. What are the kindes of sinne?

A. 1. Originall, which is the corruption of nature. 2. Actuell, which is the fruit of that corruption.

Q. What are those fruits?

A. Evill thoughts, words, and deeds.

Q. How are they manifested?

A. 1. By omitting good. 2. By committing evill. 3. By doing good evilly.

Q. What hath sin pulled on man?

A. All sorts of miseries, with death and damnation.

Q. Can any free himself from this miserable estate?

A. No.

Q. Is there then no hope of being freed from it?

A. Yes.

Q. By whom?

A. By Jesus Christ alone.

Q. What is he?

A. God and man in one person.

Q. What offices hath Christ undertaken for us?

A. 1. A prophet to reveal his Father's will to us. 2. A king to govern us. 3. A priest to make satisfaction and intercession for us.

Q. What further did Christ for our redemption?

A. He fulfilled the righteousness of the law.

Q. How appears it that he was made a curse?

A. By his death on the Crosse.

Q. Did Christ free himselfe therefrom?

A. Yea; for on the third day he rose again from the dead.

Q. Whither went he after his resurrection?

A. He ascended into heaven, and there he sitteth at the right hand of God.

Q. How are men made partakers of the benefit of those things which Christ did and suffered?

A. By Faith.

Q. What benefit doth faith receive from Christ?

A. 1. A right to the things of this world. 2. Justification from our sinnes. 3. Sanctification of soule and body. 4. Eternall salvation.

Q. How is true faith manifested?

A. By repentance.

Q. What are the parts of repentance?

A. 1. Dying to sin. 2. Living in righteousness.

Q. How is faith wrought?

A. By the word.

Q. How is it strengthened?

A. By the sacraments.

Q. What are the parts of a sacrament?

A. 1. A visible signe. 2. Invisible grace.

Q. Why are these joynd together?

A. By the visible signe the invisible grace is sealed up to us.

Q. How many sacraments are there?

A. Two: Baptisme and the Lord's Supper.

Q. What is the speciall use of Baptisme?

A. To ingraffe us into Christ.

Q. What is the outward signe thereof?

A. Water.

Q. What doth it set out?

A. Christ's blood.

Q. What doth the sprinkling of water in baptism set out?

A. The renewing of our nature.

Q. What is the special use of the Lord's Supper?

A. To make us grow in grace.

Q. What are the outward meanes thereof?

A. Bread and Wine.

Q. What doth the Bread set out?

A. Christ's Body.

Q. What doth the Wine set out?

A. Christ's Blood.

Q. Why is Christ's Body set out by bread?

A. To shew that he is spirituall food.

Q. Why is his Blood set out by wine?

A. To shew that he is spirituall refreshing.

Q. What makes God's ordinances effectuall?

A. The inward operation of God's Spirit.

Q. What must we do to obtain all needfull blessings?

A. Pray to God.

Q. What must we return for blessings received?

A. Praise to God.

Q. What becomes of men's bodies after death?

A. They shall be raised from death.

Q. What becomes of their souls?

A. They never die.

Q. Shall the future estate of all be alike?

A. No.

Q. Where shall the faithfull be?

A. For ever in heavenly glory.

Q. Where the wicked?

A. For ever in hell torments.

A Prayer drawn out of all the principles contained in this Catechisme.

Blessed be thy name, O heavenly Father, who hast been pleased to vouchsafe unto us the bright light of thy Word, wherby we attaine to knowledge of Thee and of ourselves: By it are we taught that thou art the only true God, one in essence but distinguished into three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; which mysterie never was nor can be applied to any false god. Thou art of infinite perfection, eternall without beginning, filling all places, knowing all things, searching the hearts and trying the reins of men, all-sufficient in thyselfe, almighty, able to do what thou wilt, not subject to any change, a God most pure, wise, just, faithfull, and mercifull: who from all eternity hast ordained all things according to thine owne will; and in the beginning of time didst of nothing by thy word make all things very good, and ever since by thy wise providence hast upheld all things, and disposed them to thine own glory and thy children's good. O grant that by this knowledge of Thee we may learne to esteeme and respect Thee as the only true God: which we are bound unto because we are thy creatures, the worke of thine hands, whom Thou didst at first make in a most happy estate even after thine own image in

perfect knowledge and true holiness and righteousness, engraving in man's heart thy whole law, that perfect platforme of holiness and righteousness, and giving him power perfectly to fulfill the same. But wretched man, not considering as he ought that goodness done to him, transgressed the charge that Thou gavest him, and by sin hath made himselfe a most miserable wretch. For being deprived of that grace which Thou shewedst him, he is altogether drenched in sin and polluted therewith. All mankind is now conceived and born in sin. From that originall corruption many bitter fruits in evil thoughts, words, and deeds, daily do proceed. Yea, of so perverse a disposition we are, as we omit the good we should do, and commit the evill we should not do, and very sinfully performe all the good things that we take in hand whereby we have pulled upon ourselves thy curse, which causeth all miseries in this life, and in the end death and eternall torment in hell: from which misery we are no way able to helpe ourselves, being dead in sin, vassals of Satan, and in the most wofull plight that possibly can be. But thy endlesse mercy hath afforded unto us a Savior to deliver us out of this endlesse misery, even thine owne Son Jesus Christ, who being true God was made flesh, and by the union of his two natures in one person became a sufficient Saviour; for he being true man was subject to death, so as by the same nature which had sinned was a satisfaction made for sin: and being God he supported his manhood with infinite power to brave that infinite burthen which was laid on him as a surety for us sinners, and his satisfaction was of infinite value to turne away thy wrath and to procure thy favour: yea, for our greater good he became our Prophet to reveale thy will unto us and to write it in our hearts: our King to protect and provide for us and to destroy all our enemies: and our priest to make satisfaction and intercession for us: which intercession, after that he rose from death and ascended into heaven, he continueth to make at thy right hand. All these things we steadfastly beleeve, and in this faith approach to the throne of thy grace, humbly and earnestly entreating Thee to accept of us in this Son of thy love, to forgive us all our sins, and to sanctifie us throughout, that our minds may be enlightened with a saving knowledge of the mysteries of godliness, and that also true

repentance may be wrought in us: for which purpose, we beseech Thee to give us a sight and sense of our spirituall miserie and godly sorrow for the same; but withall work in us faith in the pardon of sin, that thus we may daily mortifie our corruptions, and live in true holiness and righteousness. For the working and increasing of these and all other needfull graces in us, it hath pleased Thee to sanctifie the ministry of thy Word and the administration of thy Sacraments: Now, therefore, holy Father, we beseech Thee to continue among us these thy holy ordinances, and to give us grace to make a right use of the same: Grant that we giving diligent heed to thy word may mix faith with the hearing by beleiving it as truth, and applying it as a truth which concerns ourselves in particular: And for the strengthening of our faith and renewing of our repentance, grant that we oft call to mind thy covenant sealed to us by baptisme in our infancy, and the promise there made to Thee on our parts; and withall take such occasions as are offered unto us of our partaking of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ at the Table of the Lord, coming preparedly thereunto by examining of ourselves, and that especially about our knowledge, faith, repentance, and love. Now, praier being a farther meanes to obtaine thy blessings on these thine ordinances, and on every good thing that we take in hand, give unto us, we beseech Thee, the spirit of supplication; assist and direct us therein by thy Spirit, that we may powre forth our souls before Thee after a right manner, thorow the mediation of Christ, in truth, faith, holiness, and love, and in all things give thanks unto Thee, even for publike and private blessings, concerning body or soul, ourselves or others, whether received or promised, as now from our hearts we doe. Finally, we beseech Thee, O Lord our God, of thy free grace to grant that when our souls and bodies doe depart one from the other, our souls may be taken to glory in heaven, and our bodies quietly sleepe till the day of resurrection, and then the body being raised from death, both body and soule may againe be united and enjoy everlasting happiness, and that for Jesus Christ his sake, in whose name we beg these and all other needfull blessings even in that perfect platforme of prayer which he himselfe hath prescribed unto us, saying, *Our Father, etc.*