

THE CHURCH CATECHISM AS A BASIS  
OF DOCTRINAL TEACHING.

(By Rev. Canon O'Meara, of Winnipeg.)

In dealing with the subject as stated above, I wish in the first and chief place, to exhibit the Church Catechism as being a most complete compendium and valuable statement of Christian truth. In the second part of the paper I wish to speak of the duty incumbent upon all who are in any way responsible for the carrying on of Church of England Sunday School work, to assign the Catechism that place of honor in our system of teaching which was evidently the intention of our Church that it should occupy. And first notice how in the first question the child is brought, as it were face to face with its own individuality. *What is your name?* The name is the epitome of the individual character. In their first intention Christian names were meant to compress into one word the very essence of the personality of the one bearing it. We see this often in Scripture, but more especially in the name of our Blessed Lord. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins." The nature the character, the office of the Master compressed into the quintessential virtue and force of a single name. What a splendid opportunity is offered by this question of pressing home upon the child Christ's care of individuals, as such. Our good shepherd calleth his sheep (you and his lambs too) by name. What a beautiful thought to suggest to the child that it is by its name given in baptism that Christ knows it, and if it wanders from home searches for it, and sends forth his ministering agents of mercy to find it and bring it home to him. And again, how this question of name can be made to force in on the child's mind its individual responsibility; that, once named, it is marked off as a distinct personality, to whom there is no possibility of getting into God's favor under the shelter of other people's faith, but for whom the only way of salvation lies in an act of personal, individual faith appropriating the mercy of God made over to it by covenant in baptism. And again, how the thought that the Christian name is the one that is always the name it shall bear; that an act of Parliament or act of marriage may change the surname but that it can never change its Christian name; the name associated with God's promises and God's love to it; how this thought can be used, simply but effectively, to press upon the child the tremendously important fact that in the long life before it, it is the unseen things that are abiding, that amid all the changes and chances of life it is the love of God that will always be round it, and the law of God be always upon it, and the spirit of God be always striving with it.

In the second question the child is reminded of the privileges which belong to it as a baptised member of Christ's Church. Whichever of the three distinct but related views held by divines of the Church of England as to the effect of baptism we may take; whether we regard it as the implanting of a seed, or the admittance to a state, or the sealing and making over of covenant mercies; whatever we hold we must regard the state of baptised children as one of very great and superior privilege. What a splendid leverage for the conversion of the young is put in the hands of the Sunday school teacher in the answer to that second question: "A member of Christ, a child of God, an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven." "A member of Christ" with all the multiplied activities of Christ's Body, the Church, hedging it round with tender care, and seeking to lead its young footsteps to the Master's feet. "A child of

God" how simple but effective to picture the lost child, wandering far out into the storm but not far enough to get away from the mother's love or the father's anxious care; the weary vigils; the painful search; the happy finding; the glad home-coming; how the child's tenderest and deepest feelings may be touched and drawn on to describe and bring home to God's ceaseless love for each member of his family. "An inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven" what an opportunity is here presented to put clearly the incalculable blessings of life lived out to its last days in the abiding love of Christ, the favor of God, and the sure hope of an Eternal Home: and, in contrast, to portray the glitter and glamour of a sinful life and its ultimate failure and bitter shame; and to press upon the child an immediate and final choice of Christ and his inheritance of pardon, peace and final joy and glory as its portion for life and for eternity. In the third answer we pass by a natural and necessary sequence from privilege to responsibility. And this very order seems instinct with possibilities of teaching. How easy for the teacher to bring home the lesson that every blessing and privilege in the child's life has its corresponding responsibilities. In the third and fourth answers we front one of the difficulties which has sometimes presented itself in pressing upon young people their responsibilities under the baptismal vow. The thought occurs to the child and is not infrequently expressed "What right have I to be bound by what was not my own act? How can moral obligation be involved without previous consent?" What I have already mentioned as to the relation between responsibility and privilege will suggest at least one answer to this. It can be pointed out to the child that all the influences for good which have been around him from his earliest years, the mother's love, the father's guiding, the lessons of the Sunday School, the repeated and varied messages of Divine Mercy; all those things which raise him so far above the condition of a heathen child, they all constitute so many links of obligation to bind him to the performance of his part in the baptismal covenant. And again do we not find ourselves again and again morally bound by circumstances over which we had no control. How easy to point out to the child that, while it had no personal choice of the family into which it should be born, the fact of its being in that family surrounds it from the outset of life with multiplied and very binding obligations. Or, if a further illustration of this principle be sought, how easy to point to the supreme duty of loyalty and service to the Queen, laid upon it by the mere fact of birth into the British Empire, and how natural and easy the transition to his higher obligation of life-long loyalty and supreme service to the King of Kings.

And in the threefold vow of renunciation, faith, and obedience what an epitome we have of Christian doctrine and life. Faith, the central fact, looking backward to a death unto sin, looking forward to a new life unto righteousness. When we come to speak of the fundamentals of Christian truth, as presented to us in the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer. I wish to note what seems the wealth of teaching involved in the order in which these occur. You will notice that the child is fronted at its very entrance into the Church's exposition of truth with the necessity of Faith and that as, the first word of the Creed implies, a personal individual faith. I believe a faith so intensely personal that from its obligation and necessity to our individual salvation, no position of privilege, no outward environment whatever, can release or relieve us. And then in the sentence of the Creed you have presented to the child that which is the very essence of saving faith, and that is, that it is not assent to a system of truth but a belief in a person; it

is a personal Father who creates us, preserves us, hedges us round with his quenchless care and watches over us with beseeching tenderness, even in the far land of sin, ever yearning to get back his wandering children to the waiting arms of his love: in a personal Saviour who died upon the bitter cross to redeem not only the world at large but me, the child of his love and of his pain: in a personal Holy Ghost who is ever with me to plead with me, to press upon me Christ's message, to warn me of danger, to strengthen me in difficulties, to comfort me in sorrow, to work out in me by his sanctifying grace, the lineaments of the Christ-face which, as his chosen children, it is ours to shew forth in our daily life. And so, right at the threshold, the child may learn that most supremely important distinction, the distinction between intellectual assent to a system, and trust in a Person—the one the act of the intellect alone; the other the supreme act of the whole man. An act in which intellect, feeling and will are all alike engaged—the one *fides*, the other *fiducia*; the one *assent*, the other *trust*. Let me mention an illustration by which we may bring home to the child this distinction between faith in a system and trust in a person: which lies on the very threshold of the Creed. The miner has to go down into the mine—to let himself down by a rope: he look at the rope and says I believe that that rope is strong and sound—that is assent to a truth, but then he fastens the rope to the edge and then leaving all else; leans his weight on the rope, trusts the rope, and trusting it, swings out over the dreadful chasm. Now this is not a question of opinion, it is a supreme and vital act of the whole man: the faith by which God lifts us to Eternal life is a threefold strand: belief in a truth: and trust in a person: and the going out to him of our heart's deepest homage and affection. Christ comes to us and says, "Trust to me and I will save you, I will give you pardon for the past, strength for the present and a blessed hope for all the eternity to come,"—and leaving all else we may before have trusted in, our good or our ceremonial observances, or in any other of the rotten ropes by which men seek to climb to heaven, we lay hold on Jesus Christ as a realized, present, personal Saviour, and leaning our whole weight Him, trusting our whole weight on Him, trusting our whole eternity to Him we swing out over the dark abyss of a guilty past and an unknown future and we know that the strong cord of a Saviour's quenchless love will bring us at last to our Father's home.

(To be continued.)

"MALE AND FEMALE CREATED HE  
THEM."

By REV. T. DE WITT TALMAGE, D.D.

(From the Ladies' Home Journal.)

Since my connection with the editorial staff of *The Ladies' Home Journal* many letters have come to me from its readers requesting me to devote an article to the question of "Woman's Rights." I have not responded to this desire because I did not feel the importance of the subject. The pressure, however, has continued, and at the suggestion of the editor of *The Journal*, I heed the wishes of my readers.

THE TWO EMPIRES OF HUMANKIND.—To me all discussions of the subject of "woman's rights" or the "superiority" of man over woman are as tiresome as they are uncalled for. God, who can make no mistake, made man and woman for a specific work, and to move in particular spheres—man to be regnant in his realm, woman to be dominant in hers. The boundary line between Italy and Switzerland, between England