

THE CHURCH CATECHISM EXPLAINED FOR THE LITTLE ONES.

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(Continued.)

CHAPTER III.

THE CREED.

YOU have learned that there is only one God, and that there are three persons in one God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. This is called the Trinity. What is the Trinity? Three persons in one God. The Creed begins by saying "I believe in God the Father." God the Father is the First Person in the Trinity. What has He done for you? He made you, and not you only, but all the world, and the things that are in it,—The beasts, the birds, the insects; the sea too, and the grass, trees, flowers and fruit. He made all things, and He takes care of them and keeps them alive. Can any one on earth make a man with life? Or can any of us make the grass grow or the flowers blossom? No; we know that we can not. If our Father in Heaven did not take care of us we could not keep ourselves alive for one minute. He made us and He keeps us alive.

Then you believe in God the Son, who is the Second Person in the Trinity. The Creed calls Him Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord. You have heard of Jesus, our Saviour, who, though He was the Son of God, was willing to come down on earth for our sakes, that He might save us from our sins; that He might die for us. But first, He must become a man, for God cannot die, and Jesus Christ is God. But is there more than one God? No; there is only one God, but there are three Persons in one God, as I told you. We cannot understand how this can be, but we can believe it, as we believe everything God's Holy Word tells us. How can we who live on earth, and so often fall into sin, expect to understand all about the great, holy God who never sins, and who lives in Heaven above? Before Jesus Christ could die He must become a man. So He became the baby of the Virgin Mary, and grew up just as any other boy would, only there was one difference,—one way in which He was not the same as those around Him. Jesus never did wrong. He was a pure and holy child. When He became a man, He began to preach to people about His Father in Heaven, and did a great many wonderful works. He cured the sick, opened the eyes of the blind, made the dumb speak, and even raised men who were dead to life again. A great many of the people loved Jesus and listened to his preaching and began to live better lives, but some of the Jews would not believe that Jesus was the Son of God. The priests and chief rulers also hated Jesus when they saw how many believed

on Him, and they wished to put Him to death; and because Jesus had come into the world to die, God allowed these wicked people to take Him to put Him to death. They took Him before their Governor, whose name was Pontius Pilate; for they could not have any man put to death until the Governor said they might. Pontius Pilate was not one of the Jews; he did not believe in the true God, and he did not know anything about Jesus being the Son of God; but when he talked to Jesus he thought He was a good man and ought not to die. When he told this to the Jews, they were very angry and made a great noise, and said that Jesus must die. The Governor did not wish to make the Jews angry, so at last he told them they might take Jesus and crucify Him. To crucify is to nail to a cross. Jesus was put upon a large cross made of wood, and His hands and feet fastened to it with nails. The cross was then stood up in the ground, and He was left there to die. Because Pontius Pilate was the governor of the Jews at that time, we always say in the Creed that He "suffered under Pontius Pilate." What a dreadful thing for Jesus to die like this! Jesus need not have died unless He liked, for you must not forget that although He had become a man He was God too, and He could do anything He wished; but Jesus had promised to die for us, that He might bear the punishment which we should bear for our sins. And so He let Himself be crucified. When Jesus was dead some kind friends took His body down from the cross and buried it.

The body of Jesus lay in the grave, but where did His soul go? The Creed tells us it went down into hell. When we say hell we do not mean that dreadful place which is for the wicked; for the devil and his angels; but we understand it to mean the place where the souls of those who die go when their bodies are put in the graves. But the soul of Jesus did not stay there; neither did His body stay in the grave. After three days He became alive again, and many people saw Him. By this we are quite sure that Jesus was the Son of God, for no one else could rise from the dead in this way. He rose from the dead to go back to His Father in Heaven, and there He stays in glory at the right hand of God the Father, until the end of the world, when He will come back again with His holy angels to judge the quick and the dead. When we say the quick we mean those people who will be still living when He comes. Those who are dead He will raise up to life again, that they may all be judged. To judge them means that Jesus Christ will show which are the good and which are the wicked. Those who have tried to live good lives, and have loved Jesus, and have had their sins forgiven for His sake, He will take with Him to the Kingdom of Heaven; but the wicked will be sent to live forever with the devil and his angels in hell.

The Creed goes on to say, "I believe in the Holy Ghost." The Holy Ghost is the Third Person in the Trinity. His work is to make us holy.