

# John G. Morris

# Catechization



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# Catechization

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# Catechization

by John G. Morris, D.D.

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# Preface by Lutheran Librarian

In republishing this book, we seek to introduce this author to a new generation of those seeking authentic spirituality.

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JOHN GOTTLIEB MORRIS (1803-1895) attended Princeton and Dickinson Colleges, and Princeton Theological Seminary and was a member of the first class of the Lutheran Seminary at Gettysburg. Dr. Morris founded the *Lutheran Observer* and was president of both the Maryland and General Synods. Morris was a frequent lecturer before the Smithsonian Institution and author of the *Catalogue of the Described Lepidoptera of North America* (1860), among other scientific and religious publications. He and his nephew founded the Lutheran Historical Society. [Source: William and Mary Special Collections Database.]

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# Catechization

**By John G. Morris, D. D., of Baltimore, Md.**

IT WAS not very long ago that many of us looked back to our fathers with a sort of pity for their snail-like progress in religious knowledge, and their groping growth in “spiritual understanding.” We regarded them as insensible to the more elevated emotions of piety, and have often wished that they might have beheld the rapid advances in sanctification and the general commotion and rushing activity of church people in these modern days. They may have been behind us in many things; they did not travel, nor eat, nor sleep, nor read, as fast as we do, but were they not before us in honesty, humility, modesty, frugality in the domestic virtues and in general Christian integrity?

There is a growing disposition to examine the religious measures and experience of those men of the olden time — their memory is beginning to be revived and cherished — the obliterated names and epitaphs on their tombstones are re-chiseled, and their good deeds are brought to light. The “old paths” of the fathers are found not to be so objectionable after all — “the first principles” are found to be substantial; — we have discovered our errors in relation to the religious life of “the ancients,” and we are beginning to see that our religious health has not been so sound as it seemed; we find that since the fever has abated, the system is relaxed and weak, and that we require something more nourishing to keep it in constant vigor than the effervescing nostrums we have so greedily swallowed.

Solid religious instruction begun at the earliest practicable period — long continued and oft repeated exercises in Scriptural doctrine, morals and history — plain illustrations and affectionate enforcement of Bible truth — frequent interchange of opinion with the pupils — propounding questions and patiently waiting for answers — encouraging their enquiries and aiding their researches — in a word, the time-honored and primitive system of catechizing the young, is beginning to be considered as the great thing needed



and the best substitute for every other species of extraordinary religious effort.

It would be superfluous to prove, that it is the duty of the church to train the young for religious service, and that this should be done in the best possible way. This is granted. — There was a time, indeed, when her maternal solicitude extended even farther than their spiritual interests. She felt a mother's care in their temporal welfare also, and gave directions and issued admonitions in regard to their bodily health and preservation. As late as A. D. 1236, in England, mothers were instructed by *the church* to be cautious about:

“...overlying their infants in bed, lest they might press them to death, and not to allow their older children to go near the water alone. These cautions were enjoined on the latter every Sunday morning.”

This may seem simple to some of us now, but consider the age in which it was done, and think, besides, of the *maternal* character which *the church* as such, ought to sustain in every age.

## What We Mean By “Catechizing”

By *catechizing*, we mean, not the bare repetition of the Catechism by the pupil, nor the delivery of lectures on it by the pastor, nor the recitation of its answers and proof texts by the whole class, but a full, frequent and familiar explanation of it evolved by numerous plain, oft-repeated additional questions, until the catechumen thoroughly understands the subject. The Scriptural quotations are to be carefully studied, and the whole lesson affectionately enforced. This course is to be repeated day after day, until the whole is deeply engraved on the mind, and if the teacher does not grow weary of his work, he will not fail to see its blessed fruits. It should not be expected of all to commit the whole book to memory, but if this course of frequent repetition is pursued, most of them will know it by heart in the end, without having had the task assigned them.

The words *catechize*, *Catechism* are derived from the Greek word *κατηχεω*, *to sound aloud, to resound, to re-echo*. It means, to convey instruction not by an elaborate or continued discourse, nor by epistle or lec-

ture, but by brief and familiar *viva voce* teaching. The word is thus used in Luke 1:4. in which he tells Theophilus that he intends to give him a succinct account of those things which he had been previously taught *catechetically*, or *by word of mouth*, or by having them *sounded in his ears*. Luke uses the same word in the same sense in Acts 18:25. “This man was instructed (*catechised*) in the way of the Lord.” Paul in 1 Cor. 14:19. applies the term in the sense of oral instruction: “that by my voice I might teach (*catechize*) others,” etc. The word occurs in other passages of the New Testament with the same meaning, ex. gr. Acts 21:21. Gal. 6:6. Rom. 2:18. etc.

## **Catechetical Instruction Practiced In Every Church Age**

Catechetical instruction has been practiced in every age of the church. There is no other way by which the knowledge and worship of God can be propagated among the young and ignorant than by question and answer. We have various evidences of its existence among the Hebrews: In Gen. 18:19. it is taken for granted that Abraham’s children knew “the way of the Lord”—they were instructed in it and that instruction was accommodated to their capacity and could have been imparted only by question and answer. In Exod. 12:26, 27. we discover traces of the same practice. We there find an instance of catechetical instruction on the nature of the Paschal lamb, and in Deut. 6:2, 6, 7. the duty is distinctly inculcated. Those who have written on the subject of catechization among the Hebrews refer us to Deut. 11:19. Josh. 4:6, 7. 24:15. Ps. 58:4, 5. and other places as proofs of the practice, and they also inform us that the “proselytes of righteousness” were *catechetically* instructed in the Jewish religion before they were received into the church.

## **Christ’s Use Of Catechism**

Christ pursued the same course. He taught the people and his disciples *viva voce*. As in that age the method of teaching by symbols and parables was common, he also adopted it. Sometimes, indeed, he taught every thing necessary to salvation in discourses, but as he dealt with very ignorant persons,

he accommodated himself to their capacity and mode of instruction, and thus he may be said to have performed the duties of a catechet. We have an example of it in Matt. 16:13. “Whom do men say, that I the son of man, am?” etc.

## The Apostles’ Use of Catechism

The Apostles followed their master’s example. Paul in writing to the Corinthians. 1 Cor. 3:2. says, “I fed you with milk,” which Clemens Alexandrinus and Cyril explain of catechizing. In Heb. 5:12. he speaks of the “first principles or elements of the oracles of God,” which, like the elements of a science, must be taught catechetically to the learner: in ch. 6:1. he mentions the “principles of the doctrine of Christ,” which could be learned by beginners in no other way than by question and answer. The catechumens of the Apostles were those of whom he says in Heb. 5:12. that “they had need of milk,” and whom he calls in 1 Cor. 3:1. “babes in Christ.”

## Cave and Grotius

It was the opinion of Cave and Grotius, according to Bingham, Orig. Sacr. B. xi. ch. 7. §3. that Peter alluded to the catechetical system when he speaks of “the answer of a good conscience toward God,” and it has been thought still more probable that Philip’s conversation with the eunuch, Acts 8:26. had some alliance with this method of apostolical teaching.

## Church Fathers

The Fathers of the church used the word *catechizing* to signify their method of teaching the elements of Christianity by question and answer and impressing the lesson on the hearts of the learners by frequent repetition. Hence we have the definition of Clem. Alexandrinus: “Catechism is the knowledge of religion first delivered to the ignorant by the catechist and then repeated over and over again,” which, says Comber, “appears farther from the very origin of the word, being derived from ηχῶ, that is, an echo,

or a repeated sound, because the catechist did first teach them, and then by way of question, try if they had learnt what he delivered to them.”

The Fathers were diligent in prosecuting this work, and even such illustrious men as Origen, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Cyril, Gregory, Nazianzen, Cyprian and Augustine, did not deem it beneath their office to catechize the young, and even after they had attained to the episcopal miter, they did not disdain it. Some of these men wrote treatises on this very subject. Cyril in his “Catechesis,” and Augustine in the work on Catechizing, which he assisted a young deacon in writing, show what importance they attached to this department of the clerical office.

In the primitive church there was a private and public catechization. The private was practiced by parents according to Eph. 6:4. Augustine and Basil mention the cases of their own pious mothers, and many other interesting instances can be seen in Gottf. Arnold’s *Abbildung der ersten Christen*, Lib. 6, ch. 4. § 3. p. 713. The public was held in schools, churches, and other places, and the pupils were called catechumens, from *κατηχουμενοι*, learners, the word that is used in the New Testament passages before quoted.

In the course of ages, as the church became more corrupt, the practice fell into disuse, or sadly degenerated. Yet the councils recommended and enjoined it, but the duty, where attended to all, was wretchedly performed. Its condition in the times immediately preceding the Reformation, was stated in the first No. of this *Review*.

## The Reformation and Catechization

The Reformation revived the ancient system of catechizing, and if it had done nothing more, it would still be a glorious event. The Reformers immediately prepared catechisms for the young and ignorant, and all the preachers regarded this as one of the most important functions of their office. So it should be considered in every age.

All the illustrious divines of that period, both of the Continent and Great Britain, unite their testimony in favor of constantly catechizing the youth. Luther has written largely on the subject and insists on the practice as indispensable in the pastor; Calvin has expressed himself vehemently in favor of it; Zwingli is not behind either in urging it; all their contemporaries concur in their views. In those days it was considered of equal importance with

preaching the gospel to adults. The children were as regularly and systematically catechized as they were baptized. Indeed, in their view, (and they were correct,) the design of infant baptism was not fully accomplished unless the children were thus carefully trained for efficient service in the church.

In the infancy of the established church of England, stringent canons were enacted compelling the clergy to perform this duty, and the hosts of eminent divines of that communion down to the present age, have given their testimony in favor of it.

But the non-conformist ministers have also uttered their potential voice, and in their writings and practice, have given evidence of their high estimate of the apostolic custom.

## In The Roman Catholic Church

It is by faithfully catechizing the children, that the priests of the church of Rome, retain them in their communion.— They are far too wise to let slip the advantages derived from an early training of their youth. They understand the injunction, “Feed my lambs,” and practice it most assiduously. They will not even allow parents to interfere, but claim the education of the children as the right of the church. What is the result? Few Romish children are ever found in Protestant schools; but alas! how many Protestant children in Romish schools? *Fas est ab hoste doceri* — (It is good to be taught even by an enemy).

The Council of Trent had the good sense to enjoin the duty of catechizing as one of the most binding on the priests, and in the *Preface to their Catechism* is a remark which shows their apprehensions of what Protestants may do. “The age is sadly sensible what mischief the Protestants have done the Catholic church, not only by their tongues, but especially by their writings called Catechisms.” In the darkest corners of Romish Switzerland; in the obscurest and most out of the way Alpine villages, where the priests performed no other duty than read the mass and shrive an occasional penitent, we have seen him most laboriously and tenderly catechizing his juvenile mountaineers.— That he very properly regarded as his chief duty and therein displayed at once his sagacity and his obedience to the church.

# Those Who Speak Lightly of This Pastoral Duty

There are few at the present day who will speak lightly of the pastoral duty of catechizing; and yet there are some.

They say, that the *modern Sunday school system has superseded this pastoral duty*. We deny this. There might be some truth in it, if the pastor had time to instruct the children in the Catechism every Sunday, or if all the teachers were properly qualified for their post, or, if even those who are capable would have the requisite patience and time to indoctrinate their pupils thoroughly; but neither of these is the case any where. Besides, the pastor has not the liberty of entrusting to other hands, that which the Great Shepherd of these lambs has given into his hands. No human institution can supersede a divine appointment. It was to Peter, as the representative of the Apostles, that He said, "Feed my lambs." Sunday schools are mighty auxiliaries to the pastor, and well qualified teachers are his efficient adjutants, but they cannot be his substitutes in any work peculiarly clerical. Let them teach the Catechism with all fidelity, but let not the minister say, that is enough, and therefore I need not attend to it.

Some plead *the superabundance of other pastoral labors*, as an excuse for neglecting catechizing. There is some force in this, but should not this duty be considered paramount and some other subordinate matters be made to yield to it? Can any duty be more important than feeding the lambs of Christ? and would not any congregation or pastoral charge rather dispense with other services or requirements of their minister, than see him neglecting the religious training of their children? We are sure all would, except those who are corrupted by the high pressure system of excitement, and who can never feel happy or be ordinarily religious, except in a protracted meeting or in the presence of the minister. And even these, when they "are converted and become like little children" themselves, will begin to pay some regard to the religious education of their children, and allow the pastor a furlough of a few months to hold a protracted catechetical meeting with those of the church of whom Jesus said "suffer them to come unto me and forbid them not."

Others are deterred from the duty, because *they are surrounded by sects who reject and perhaps ridicule it*. We know some such. They are so ex-

tremely liberal as to accommodate themselves to the mischievous practical errors of bigoted sectaries around them. They are afraid of being peculiar, of differing so much from Dr. Presbyton's, Elder Watersink's, or Br. Shouton's church. They are dreadfully apprehensive of being charged with teaching a *Catechism religion*, and thus the poor children are uninstructed in the doctrines of their own church; they are practically taught that there is no difference between orthodox Protestant churches; that one is as good as another, if only it has a little of the perfume of Christianity about it, and what is the result? Not a few of them take their minister at his word and unite themselves with the aforesaid churches, for the fence between him and them was by himself made very low. Should he be astonished at this? We wish there were more of this *Catechism religion* among us, for we are convinced it is the best sort of all.

Some are alarmed by the *discouragements and difficulties* attending the work. These are associated with our whole work. It is difficult to preach well; it is discouraging that our preaching is not productive of more visible good fruits. Christ had hard work; so had the Apostles; so have had faithful ministers in every age of the church since, but shall we give up on that account? It is Christ's work, and He will give us strength to perform it. These difficulties are disciplinary, and instead of deterring us, they should rather urge us on to more active service, patient self-denial and repeated persevering effort.

Profitable catechizing requires peculiar gifts and tact, and many a good preacher may be but a poor catechet. Old Fuller has even said, that "every youth can preach, but he must be a man indeed who can profitably catechize," still, if this were literally true, it is no excuse for the total neglect of the duty.

## **Slovenly Catechistics**

There is a slovenly way of catechizing which will produce no benefit to the pupils, and no wonder that the teacher soon becomes uneasy. The difficulties, for the most part, may be of his own creating, or his disinclination to labor may powerfully lead him to imagine them.

There are those who *do not entertain correct notions of its vast importance*, and hence they neglect it. They regard it as a work of drudgery, and

are satisfied with committing it to Sunday-school teachers, or most probably it is entirely overlooked. But can that be unimportant which Christ practiced; which the apostles, evangelists, fathers, martyrs, reformers, and good men of every age followed and sanctioned? Will the command " Feed my lambs " ever be abrogated? Will the children of the church ever cease to be her hope? God forbid that our church in this country should ever sink so low or degenerate, so sadly, as to look with unconcern on any of her ministers who so utterly disregard their ordination vows as to neglect or despise the duty of thus "feeding the lambs" of their flock.

## Benefits

When we come now to speak of the benefits of catechizing, we apprehend the danger of extending this article over too wide a space. But let us be content with enumerating a few.

Whatever tends to bring the children of the church, from their earliest years, into close and familiar spiritual intercourse with the pastor, is vastly beneficial. There is no way by which this can be more effectually done than by catechizing. They love the man whom they see taking an interest in their religious welfare; they regard him as their guide in holy things, and look upon him as a father and friend. They regard themselves as the lambs, which he, the shepherd, gathers with his arm and carries in his bosom. Their hearts are tender, and are drawn out in affection for their minister. But it is not for his person only that they cherish this attachment: they venerate his office; they feel that his work is of God, and they thus receive impressions of religious truth which are never effaced. His religious influence over them is thus established, and they will never forget the man from whose lips they received instruction—whom they have so frequently heard praying for them—under whose affectionate warnings they have often shed tears, and whose paternal counsels have guarded them from sin. To be useful to children, the pastor must know them, and show that he is concerned about their religious progress. He can no where so well discover their character, temper, and special wants as in the catechetical class. He thus wins them for himself, for the church, for God, and exercises over them an influence for good all their days. Irreligious parents are also thus gained; their interest is awakened; they are led to the sanctuary to hear the man who apparently puts himself to



so much inconvenience to teach their children the truths of God. They observe the effects of the system in the improved obedience and dutifulness of their children, and thus are brought to reflection themselves. This faithful pastoral supervision of the young of a church compensates for not a few other ministerial deficiencies. People are willing to overlook a preacher's ill-digested sermons, or even some grosser faults, if he only makes up for these by perseveringly catechizing the children. The advantages derived from that seem to overbalance all the evils of which he may have been the cause.

Another benefit is, that it *qualifies children for understanding the sermons of their pastor*. There is no doubt of the fact that much good preaching is entirely profitless to thousands for want of elementary religious training. They do not understand the terms we use; they are not acquainted with the connections of divine truth; they are ignorant of the facts of Christianity. Let any preacher make the experiment, and he will soon discover that he took it for granted that his hearers in general knew much more than they ever had an opportunity of learning. How is this to be remedied but by faithful catechizing? Bishop Hall has well said, "There is no employment in the world wherein God's ministers can employ themselves so profitably as in this of plain and familiar catechization. What is a building without a foundation? If this groundwork be not surely laid, all their divine discourses lie but upon shifting sand." Bishop Wilson, in his eighty-fifth year, said, "It is a truth not to be questioned, that the plainest sermon from the pulpit will not be understood, nor profit any who has not been well instructed in the principles of Christianity contained in the church catechism." And Luther, who, among a hundred other good things on this subject, has said, *Die gemeinen, öffentlichen Predigten*, etc. "The ordinary public preaching in churches is of very little advantage to the young; they understand and retain very little of it. They should be diligently instructed in the school and family, and that will qualify them to understand preaching. It is indeed a wearisome work, but very necessary."

Faithful catechizing *fences out heresy and all sorts of error from the church*. Let the children be taught the true doctrine, and they will not depart from it when they grow up. No form of error can find place in a congregation in which the youth have been properly indoctrinated in the catechism. No modern religious mountebank can get up an audience for his 'show,' unless it is to see the fun, in a well catechized neighborhood. There would not

be such an endless variety of petty sects if the youth had been well trained in the elements of religion. There would not be so many apostasies from the true church if the people had been carefully instructed when they were young. It is the “wet wadded cloth that giveth fixation to the color, so that it changeth not so soon,” as old Faller has it; so it is sound instructing in the catechism that establishes doctrine in the minds and hearts of the young, and they will not run after every new light that scours the country. Luther may well say, “A diligent and faithful Christian, if he had nothing more than the catechism, the commandments, creed, Lord’s prayer, and sacraments, would be fortified against all heresies.”

This system *will furnish an efficient corps of Sunday-school teachers*. They who have been well instructed will be able to teach others. The catechumens will make a strong body of ministerial deputies. They have not only learned the doctrines themselves, but, what is vastly important, they have also learned how to teach. They will follow the course and observe the rules practiced by their pastor. They know how their own attention was kept awake, their minds interested, their hearts impressed, and they will apply these rules when they are entrusted with that responsible charge.

It is of *great benefit to the minister himself*. The man who regularly goes through the catechism several times in the year; who illustrates, simplifies, and expounds the doctrines of Christianity in their systematic order; who distinctly recites or hears the principal proof texts, cannot but be profited himself. *Docendo docemur*, (by teaching we are taught.) Every man who has faithfully attended to his duty in this respect must be conscious of having been much benefited.

On the general benefits of this system Bishop Hall has observed, “The most useful of all preaching is catechetical; this being the ground, the other raiseth the walls and roof; this informs the judgment, that stirs up the affections. *What good use is there of those affections that run before the judgment*, or those walls that want a foundation? For my part, I have spent the greater half of my life in this station of our holy service, I thank God, not unpainfully nor unprofitably. But there is no one thing of which I repent so much as not to have spent more hours in this public exercise of catechism; in regard whereof I would quarrel with my very sermons, and wish that a greater part had been exchanged for this preaching conference.”

# Need to Understand The Rules of Teaching

We are convinced that the reasons why some men are averse to catechizing, and why much time is spent unprofitably in the practice of it by others, are, that they do not understand the *rules of teaching*; they do not know how to render the exercise interesting and instructive, nor in what way to keep up the attention of the catechumens. Hence, it is a dull, unprofitable business; the pupils are listless and the teacher is disheartened.

To ensure attention and success, we must be *familiar* in our illustrations, and *direct* in our addresses. It will not answer to wear the professor's cap, nor the preacher's gown in the catechetical class room. We must be as a father among his children, and not as a schoolmaster among his scholars. We must put our catechumens at their ease, and address them even by name. We must come down to the capacity of each one, and by kind words and gentle manner remove all timidity and apprehension. Each one should be directly questioned, but yet in such a manner as not to expose any to the unkind remarks of the rest. The heart of each must be addressed, and the eye of each must be arrested. Striking incidents, illustrative narratives, every day occurring facts must be brought in to fix their attention and throw light on the truth. What the rules of sermonizing would condemn, the rules of catechizing sanction, hence we cannot ask too many questions, nor employ too familiar language, nor too often repeat our explanations, nor be too direct and, sometimes even, too personal in our affectionate admonitions and enforcements of truth. With regard to this directness of application, we may quote what Quintillian says of young people: "They are like narrow-necked bottles, which, if you wish to fill with water, you must take singly and pour it into one after another; for, you will never speed by watering them all together and casting ever so much water among them."

To succeed in maintaining their interest we must be clear in our statements and *simple* in the proof. They must understand our meaning and comprehend the argument. Hence all scholastic and scientific terms must be avoided; the language of theological seminaries must be banished. Nothing above the capacity of young people dare be introduced. We must present the subject in different attitudes; turn it into different ways; and repeat it again and again, until we are sure they see through it like daylight. But to effect this, we must have a clear view of it ourselves. There are some men who

only make things darker by trying to throw light on them; their minds are cloudy, or if that is not the case, their method of speaking is obscure; their language is not distinct; their ideas are not strung out in a row, but are jumbled up in their brain like jewels in a pawnbroker's drawer; they touch each other, but are not united, and no wonder they, fall out in confusion.

To be simple as well as dear, we must not pursue a subject to its remotest end, nor say on it every thing that has been said by others, nor that can be said by ourselves. It should be well arranged with all its connections and consequences and a few strong arguments brought in to establish it. Too many arguments or illustrations; too much complexity of statement would only confuse, therefore a single doctrine, a single precept clearly stated and simply illustrated, will make a deeper impression than the most voluminous torrent of words.

To win our way to the hearts of the catechumens and to make them love the exercise, we must show that *we love to teach them* and must *give our instructions mildly and cheerfully*; any exhibition of weariness or impatience on our part will be disastrous to our pastoral influence; any harshness will be discouraging to the pupil; any magisterial air or dogmatical austerity will intimidate, and, probably, disgust them. Gentleness and condescension, cheerfulness and love will accomplish all that you desire.

Every thing like monotony is fatal to our design, hence we must constantly study *variety*. A long, unbroken lecture would render them uneasy and distract their attention; a prosy discourse would put them to sleep. We must often suddenly interrupt our explanations by asking questions; we must abruptly introduce an incident from Scripture or every day life; we must make an unexpected diversion from the principal point, and draw in something fresh and striking; we must quote a verse of poetry or tell a religious anecdote; and thus by constant and sprightly variety, all of which is perfectly consistent with seriousness, we will keep their attention awake.

There are many rules of a general character which we must also observe: e.g. where it is possible, the exercise should not endure longer than an hour. When weariness begins, attentiveness ends. *Qui breviter dicunt, docere possunt*. — (Short speaking is the best teaching.) Every allowance must be made for young persons who have little leisure to learn the Catechism, or who have had small opportunities of elementary education. We should ask no questions which we think our catechumens cannot answer, for that will only discourage them. We should never allow them to be long at a loss, but

either simplify the question or answer ourselves. Let us be careful not to single out the most intelligent to answer the hardest questions, for that will only create envy in the others. We should not expect every one to commit the whole book to memory, though it is highly desirable. In our concluding prayer, let the subject of the lesson be the main subject of petition. Let us prepare ourselves for each lesson as we should do for our sermons; and finally, let us not be afraid of the labor of catechizing. "FEED MY LAMBS." Let this command be written in large letters on our study table, yea, deeply engraved on our hearts.

## Frequency of Catechetical Classes

How often should a catechetical class meet? That depends on the age of the catechumens. The children, properly so called, should be catechized at least once a week all the year round. But when? For the minister scarcely ever has time on Sunday, and during the week the children go to school. Alas! this is the difficulty; we are speaking of what should be done, and not of what is done. The children *should be* catechized in school by the pastor, but this is impossible until we reestablish the excellent old *church* system of parochial schools; but we fear that we shall die without that sight. If possible, let him meet them on Sunday, even if it is *at the expense of the evening public service*. We are convinced that it would be a good substitute. We know that people would complain of it; that some would stray off to other places of worship; but if the exercise were performed openly in the church, and the minister properly understood his business, many adults would attend, and they would probably learn more than from the sermon. But alas! many go to the house of God not so much for sound edification as for excitement; not so much for hearing the Lord's word expounded as for hearing the preacher uttering pleasant tones. But it is not so with all. Others know that the children should be taught; that it is the minister's business to do it; that the church requires it of him; that his ordination vows impose it on him. They know that two sermons, besides catechizing, are too exhausting, and would, therefore, cheerfully yield one of the services for the sake of the lambs of the flock.

If the class is composed of candidates for confirmation, it should meet more frequently than once a week for the last two months of the course, es-

pecially if, as is unfortunately too often the case, catechumens have not been faithfully instructed in their earlier youth.

An American divine has forcibly said, “If you would have united and prosperous parishes, affectionate to yourselves and devoted to your Redeemer; if you would enjoy the blessed satisfaction to see your spiritual children walking in the truth, and to meet them joyful and happy at the judgment of the great day, never lose sight of your duty to the lambs of the flock of Christ: the duty of thorough personal catechetical instruction.”

Those of us who, in our tender years, had such a shepherd to guide us, and who, every week, called us around him to repeat our catechism, and to hear his paternal counsels, will be able to enter into the spirit of the following lines from Wordsworth:

“From little down to least—in due degree,  
Around the pastor, each in new wrought vest.  
Each with a vernal posy at his breast.  
We stood, a trembling, earnest company!  
With low, soft murmur, like a distant bee.  
Some spake, by thought—perplexing fears betrayed:  
And some a bold, unerring answer made.”

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# How Can You Find Peace With God?

The most important thing to grasp is that no one is made right with God by the good things he or she might do. Justification is by faith only, and that faith resting on what Jesus Christ did. It is by believing and trusting in His one-time *substitutionary* death for your sins.

Read your Bible steadily. God works His power in human beings through His Word. Where the Word is, God the Holy Spirit is always present.

Suggested Reading: [New Testament Conversions by Pastor George Gerberding](#)

## Benediction

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. (Jude 1:24-25)

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