

**CATECHISING NOTES.
INTENDED FOR
THE USE OF TEACHERS IN
SUNDAY SCHOOLS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649284498

Catechising notes. Intended for the use of teachers in Sunday schools by Anonymous

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Cover @ 2017

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ANONYMOUS

**CATECHISING NOTES.
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CATECHISING NOTES

ON

The Apostles' Creed;
The Ten Commandments;
The Lord's Prayer;
The Confirmation Service;
The Forms of Prayer at Sea;
The Form of Prayer for 20th June;
Thanksgiving for Harvest;
The Nine Beatitudes.

INTENDED FOR
THE USE OF TEACHERS IN SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

BY

A WORCESTERSHIRE CURATE.



Parker and Co.

OXFORD, AND 6 SOUTHAMPTON-STREET,
STRAND, LONDON.

1885.



The Hymn-book referred to is "Church Hymns." S.P.C.K.

Printed by Parker and Co., Crown Yard, Oxford.

The Apostles' Creed

WAS used in very early times by the Christian Church, and may have been composed by the Apostles, for St. Paul speaks of a "form of knowledge," Rom. ii. 20, a "form of doctrine," Rom. vi. 17, and a "form of words," 2 Tim. i. 13, and exhorts St. Timothy to "hold fast the form of sound words," and tells us to "hold fast the profession of our faith." Heb. x. 23. But, even if the Apostles had not this Creed in exactly the form which we have, yet it exactly represents their doctrine, as we shall see.

It is usually divided into twelve Articles, ["Rehearse the Articles of thy Belief," Catechism,] of which one relates to God the Father, six to God the Son, one to God the Holy Ghost, and four to the Church.

ARTICLE 1.

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

I believe: not *we*. Yet the Lord's Prayer begins, *Our* Father, not *my*.

The reason is, we can pray for others, but we cannot believe for others. "I believe" in Latin is "Credo," from which comes the word Creed, belief. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is." Heb. xi. 6. "The devils also believe" that much, "and tremble." St. James ii. 19. "I believe *in* God" means more than a mere belief that He exists. It means, I trust His character. And such trust must influence our life and conduct. Rom. x. 10.

God. A holy Name, not to be lightly spoken. Exod. xx. 7; Ps. xcix. 3, cxi. 9.

The Father. Our Father. St. Matt. vi. 9; Isa. lxiii. 16; Mal. ii. 10. But more especially, "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. xv. 6; 2 Cor. i. 3, xi. 31; Eph. i. 3; 1 St. Peter i. 3.

Almighty. Omnipotent. Rev. xix. 6; Job xlii. 2; Ps. ciii. 19; Dan. iv. 35.

Maker of heaven and earth. Gen. i. 1; Ps. xcvi. 5; Heb. xi. 3; first line of Hymn 22; verses 1, 2, 3 of Hymn 295; Rom. i. 20, and Hymn 518. Heaven means not only the sun, moon, and stars, but also the unseen world. So, in the Nicene Creed, God is called the Maker "of all things visible and invisible." He "hath made me and all the world." Catechism.

Hymn 529.

The Apostles' Creed.

ARTICLE 2.

I BELIEVE "in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord," who Himself desires that as we believe in the Father so we shall believe in Him. St. John xiv. 1. We cannot truly believe in the Father without believing in the Son. 1 St. John ii. 23; St. John xii. 44. It is through the Son that we come to the Father. St. John xiv. 6. In the Son we see the Father. St. John xii. 45, xiv. 9. In honouring the Son we honour the Father. St. John v. 23. In the Son's Name we pray to the Father. St. John xvi. 23. So this second article naturally and properly follows the first.

Belief in (or on) Christ is the beginning of Christian doctrine. St. John ix. 35—38, xi. 27; Acts viii. 37, xvi. 31. See the power and value of this belief: Rom. i. 16, ix. 33, x. 11; 1 St. John v. 1, 5.

Jesus is another form of the name Joshua. [That explains how Jesus, not our Lord, is named in Acts vii. 45; Heb. iv. 8; Col. iv. 11.] The name means Saviour. Joshua saved the Israelites, and brought them into the Promised Land. Deut. xxxi. 23. Jesus "shall save His people from their sins," St. Matt. i. 21, and bring them into the heavenly Canaan. Hymn 519, verses 3, 4. His Name is "far above every name." Eph. i. 21; Phil. ii. 9, 10; Hymns 406, 387, 536.

Christ is the Greek form of the Hebrew word Messiah, meaning Anointed. St. John i. 41, iv. 25. Priests, prophets, and kings were anointed. Aaron: Exod. xxviii. 41. Elisha: 1 Kings xix. 16. David: 1 Sam. xvi. 12, 13; Ps. lxxxix. 20 (21 in Psalter). So our great High Priest (Heb. iv. 14, v. 5, 6, 10), and Prophet (Acts iii. 22, 23), and King (St. Matt. xxi. 5, xxv. 34), is called The Anointed of God, Ps. ii. 2; St. Luke iv. 18; Acts iv. 27; although His anointing was not (so far as we know) actually with oil, but was spiritual. Acts x. 38.

His only Son. St. John i. 14, 18, iii. 16, 18; 1 St. John iv. 9. Jesus alone is called "the Son of God." [The italics shew that this title is not really used in St. Luke iii. 38.] St. Luke i. 35; St. Matt. xxvii. 43, 54; St. John x. 36; 1 St. John iv. 15; Hymn 85, verse 2. Christians are sons of God by adoption through Jesus. Eph. i. 5.

Our Lord. Rom. vi. 23, viii. 39; Gal. vi. 14; 1 Thess. iii. 13, v. 23, 28; Hymn 488. Because He is our Lord we bind ourselves to His service, by the baptismal covenant.

The Apostles' Creed.

ARTICLE 3.

The Incarnation.

I believe that "He was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary."

HOW could "the Son of God" [see previous article] become man? By being born of a human mother. Gal. iv. 4. He had no earthly father*. Joseph was only called His father by supposition, St. Luke iii. 23, and sometimes the sacred writers pointedly avoid calling Joseph His father. St. Luke ii. 43; St. Matt. i. 16, where "whom" is (not plural but) feminine singular. God only was His Father, as is implied in the statement that He was born of a Virgin. Verses 2 and 4 of Hymn 85. As God made "the first man, Adam," 1 Cor. xv. 45, without any earthly parents, so was "the last Adam" (1 Cor. xv. 45) made of but one earthly parent, Mary. He was conceived by the Holy Ghost.

We never gain good by attempting to pry into the working of a miracle. And this was a miracle—the Incarnation of God the Son; so we must be content with the mere record of the fact: and perhaps the plainest statement of it is the angel Gabriel's prophecy addressed to the Virgin herself. St. Luke i. 35: lay stress on "therefore." Verse 2 of Hymn 406. [Remember her song of praise, Magnificat.] See also an angel's declaration to Joseph, St. Matt. i. 20; and the ancient prediction, Isa. vii. 14.

Study St. John's record of the "in-carnation," the putting on of our flesh by Christ. [1 Tim. iii. 16; 1 St. John iv. 2; 2 St. John 7; Rom. i. 3, viii. 3; Heb. ii. 16.] "The Word, which was in the beginning, and was God, was made flesh, and dwelt among us." St. John i. 1, 14; verse 2 of Hymn 80.

* He is called "the Son of man." The Hebrew, Greek, and Latin languages have two separate words for "man." One means a human being, whether man or woman, and this is the word used here. The other, which means a male and not a female, is not used in the name "Son of man."

The Apostles' Creed.

ARTICLE 4.

I believe that He "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried."

CHRI^ST *suffered* death *under* the government of *Pontius Pilate*, who was the Roman Procurator of Judæa from A.D. 26 to 36. It was because this was a *Roman* Governor that the death was crucifixion. A Jewish government would have put Jesus to death by stoning, Lev. xxiv. 16, the punishment for blasphemy, with which He was charged. St. Matt. xxvi. 65, 66. The Jews in their conquered state had not the legal power of putting to death. St. John xviii. 31. Their stoning St. Stephen was the illegal deed of a mob. Acts vii. 59. So were their attempts to stone Jesus. St. John viii. 59, x. 31.

Was cruci-fied, fixed to a cross, of wood. Verses 1 and 2 of Hymn 577.

How often we are told that all these things were in fulfilment of the prophetic Scriptures! St. John xix. 24, 28, 36, 37. The twenty-second Psalm, for instance, is a prophecy about the Crucifixion, [verses 7, 8, 14, 15, 17, 18,] and the Lord began to say this Psalm as He hung upon the Cross. St. Matt. xxvii. 46. The Old Testament has so many allusions to the suffering of Christ for us that it is plain that this plan for our salvation was laid by God long, long before. 1 St. Peter i. 20; Rev. xiii. 8; verse 2 of Hymn 352. Christ Himself says it was necessary He should fulfil those prophecies. St. Luke xxiv. 25-27, 44-46; St. John iii. 14. Hymn 547.

Dead. He foretold this. St. Matt. xvi. 21; 1 Cor. xi. 26; and (with His latest breath) St. Luke xxiii. 46. And He declared that He died of His free will. St. John x. 18. And after rising again He said that He had been dead. St. Luke xxiv. 46. Both His enemies [St. John xix. 33,] and His friends [St. Luke xxiii. 52 to xxiv. 1] were sure of His death. It is necessary for us to believe in His death, or we cannot believe in His resurrection nor in Himself. 1 Thess. iv. 14; 1 Cor. xv. 16, 17.

Buried. "... God's dying Son

Passed through the grave, and bless'd the bed."—*Watts*.

He shared the common lot, "earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," [Gen. iii. 19,] and taught us not to fear the grave. Verse 3 of Hymn 21; and verse 1 of Hymn 405.

The Apostles' Creed.

ARTICLE 5. First half.

I believe that "He descended into hell."

READ the Third of the Thirty-nine Articles. We commonly use the word hell to designate the place of torment. But here it is put for Hades, and means the unseen state, good or bad, after death. "The word Hades signifies indefinitely the state of separation, whether blessed or accursed; it means only 'the invisible place,' or the region of darkness, whither whoso descends shall be no more seen. For as among the heathens the Elysian fields and Tartara are both in Hades, so among the Jews and Christians paradise and gehenna are the distinct states of Hades."—*Jeremy Taylor*. He descended into hell means much more than the being laid in the grave, which was stated in our belief that "He was buried." While His marred and wounded body (Isa. lii. 14, liii. 5) rested in the grave all the Sabbath [rest-day], His spirit went into the unseen world (Hades) on an errand of mercy. 1 St. Pet. iii. 18, 19. "I have the keys of Hades." Rev. i. 18. Hardly anything is revealed to us about that world. And nothing is told us about Christ's merciful journey thither, except the mere fact. There He met the penitent thief, St. Luke xxiii. 43, on "this day" (towards its close) of their crucifixion—the first of His three days' "sojourn 'midst the dead." Verse 5 of Hymn 581.

The ancient idea of Hades was that it was situated somewhere in the heart of the earth. So we have taken to speak of our Lord's "descent into hell." "He went down." Creed at Baptism. So, when He announced it beforehand, He said He would "be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." St. Matt. xii. 40. [He was in Hades only three days and *two* nights really: but this coupling of day-and-night, day-and-night, was a form of speech.] St. Paul seems to refer to this in Eph. iv. 9; Phil. ii. 10, end. And St. Peter, besides writing of it (as mentioned above), also preached about it, Acts ii. 27, 31. See how he speaks both of the body and of the spirit of his Lord; that His flesh laid in the grave did not turn to decay; and that His soul did not remain in Hades, which is as much as saying that His soul did go there. Though He once "was dead," yet "it was not possible that He" who has "the keys of hell (Hades) and death should be held by death." Rev. i. 18, and Acts ii. 24.

"Sleep'st Thou indeed? Or is Thy spirit fled,

At large among the dead?

Whether in Eden bowers Thy welcome voice

Wake Abraham to rejoice*,

Or in some drearier scene Thine eye controls

The thronging band of souls,

(That, as Thy blood won earth, Thine agony

Might set the shadowy realm from sin and sorrow free,)

Where'er Thou roam'st, one happy soul, we know,

Seen at Thy side in woe*,

Waits on Thy triumph."—*Kellicott: Easter Eve.*

* "Of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting."—*Ath. Creed.*

† St. Luke xvi. 26; St. John viii. 56. ‡ St. Luke xxiii. 40—43.