

**A CATECHISM FOR SUNDAY
SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES: IN
FIFTY-TWO LESSONS WITH
PROOF-TEXTS AND NOTES**

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A Catechism for Sunday Schools and Families: In Fifty-Two Lessons with Proof-Texts and Notes by Philip Schaff

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PHILIP SCHAFF

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A

CATECHISM

FOR

SUNDAY SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES.

In Fifty-Two Lessons.

WITH PROOF-TEXTS AND NOTES.

BY

PHILIP SCHAFF, D.D.

Professor in the Union Theological Seminary, New York.

FROM HOME TO THE SCHOOL: FROM THE SCHOOL TO THE CHURCH:
FROM THE CHURCH TO HEAVEN.

REVISED EDITION.

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FROM THE PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE preparation of this Catechism was to the author a labor of love and a spiritual recreation. Every Christian feels the need of going back, from time to time, to the simplest elements of religion, and becoming a child again among children. "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength." "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." The best part of our knowledge of divine things is contained in those familiar verses of the Bible and the hymn-book which we learn at home and in school; and, when we come to die, we willingly exchange the most learned systems of theology for the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, which recall to our heart the sacred memories and traditions of childhood.

A Catechism on the Christian religion should present the articles of faith fresh from the fountain of the word of God to the mind and heart of the pupil, for his instruction and comfort in life and in death. It should give no undue proportion to any particular doctrine, but should move in the central current of Christian truth. The more important denominational differences may be stated for historical information, but in a kind and charitable spirit, and with a view to promote rather than to diminish unity and harmony among the various branches of Christ's kingdom. There is room, however, for a variety of Catechisms, corresponding to the different degrees of Christian nurture, which commences at home under the eye of the mother, is carried forward in the school under the instruction of the teacher, and is completed in the catechetical class under the care of the pastor.

I have endeavored in the present work to combine the advantages of a historical with those of a merely doctrinal Catechism, and clearness and simplicity of style with fulness of matter. Whether, and to what extent, I have succeeded, and what position this Catechism may assume in the Sunday-school literature of our age and country, can only be determined by actual use. In commencing with the exposition of the Lord's Prayer, I deviated from catechetical usage, but conformed to the natural educational order; for children are gener-

rally first taught the Lord's Prayer, or how to pray, then the Apostles' Creed, or what to believe, and last, the Ten Commandments, or how to act. The division into fifty-two lessons was not made with reference to the number of Sundays in the year (as in the modern editions of the Heidelberg Catechism), but naturally grew out of the internal order and arrangement of the material, and was gladly accepted as an appropriate, and perhaps useful, coincidence. The Scripture passages have been selected with great care. Those marked by a (*) should be early committed to memory, as a treasure of proof-texts for guidance in the way of Christian truth and life.

May 10, 1862.

PREFACE TO THE REVISED EDITION.

THIS Catechism was originally prepared in 1861 for my own children, and has found friends among pastors and Sunday School teachers in different denominations. No effort was made to give it a wide circulation; yet several editions have been published since 1862 in English and German, with, and without the proof texts and notes. The American Tract Society has also issued a small German edition.

The author has now given the little work a final revision, without altering the plan or increasing the size. A few questions of minor importance have been omitted to make room for additional notes, which are intended to aid teachers and more advanced pupils.

In this improved form the book is submitted to those who feel the need of a simple, yet complete **BIBLICAL UNION-CATECHISM**, and commended to the blessing of Him, who said: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God."

PHILIP SCHAFF.

49 BIBLE HOUSE, New York,
April, 1871.

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