

they hear from the pulpit plain straightforward exposition of the word of God, the kind of sermon which, while paying full respect to the intelligence of the hearers as grown men and women, is content to tell them just what the Bible says, and just what it means, and, as far as can be discerned, what it has to say to them today? A beginning is only a first step. But here, as in so many other fields, it is always the first step that counts.

The Revised Catechism

BY JAMES PACKER

THE labours of the Commission which the Archbishops appointed in February, 1958 to revise the Church Catechism are now before us (*A Revised Catechism*, S.P.C.K., price 2/-). The document is one that evokes both admiration and sympathy for those who produced it. They were set an impossible task, at which they have failed brilliantly. Indeed, their performance is so distinguished that a first reading of their Catechism almost convinces one that they have succeeded; though a second reading gives a truer impression. But it is not their fault that they have not succeeded. What they were asked to do simply could not be done. It is indeed, the very brilliance of their work that brings this out. What they have achieved may be compared with the Charge of the Light Brigade (we hope they will not resent this; it is an honourable comparison). They have made a noble attempt at something which it was not sense to ask them to do, and which in the circumstances was bound to be some sort of a failure. "Someone had blunder'd"—they were given unrealistic orders. Prayer Book revision, like diplomacy, is the art of the possible, and some things are not possible. Part of what statesmanship means is that one confines oneself to the realm of the possible. A study of the Revised Catechism serves only to confirm what should have been clear in 1956, when the Archbishops were asked to set up the Commission—namely, that it is not possible to revise the Catechism satisfactorily with the Church of England in her present state.

What was the Commission set to do? Its terms of reference gave it a double task. It was "to consider the revision of the Church Catechism in order that *its scope may be enlarged and its language made more suitable for present conditions*".

Now the *second* of these tasks was undoubtedly practical politics. It was simply a matter of eliminating archaisms and anachronisms, of seeing that all the wording of the new Catechism was in line with contemporary speech, and that all references to social and cultural matters were made in up-to-date terms. The Commission has, in fact, done this part of its work very ably. For simplicity and conciseness,

plainness and dignity, the language of the new Catechism would be hard to beat.

The Commission has not fallen victim to the temptation to make the faith cheap, by expressing it in the arch and slangy journalese which Christian teachers often affect today to try and get on to the linguistic wavelength of our time. Nor have they denied themselves the use of a proper theological vocabulary as the medium of instruction. "It has not been possible, nor would it be desirable," writes Dr. Coggan, the chairman, "to avoid using certain terms which belong to the technical language of theology. No one can enter into the heritage of Christian faith and worship without some understanding of these words, and in our view it is the responsibility of the catechist to explain them" (p. ix). For this approach they are to be applauded.

But what of their *first* task? That was a more problematical business altogether. They were invited to enlarge the scope of the Church Catechism. But on what principles? How were they to decide what extra subjects to cover, and what to say about each of them? Such queries raise the more fundamental issue: what canons of judgment should determine the contents of any catechism? This is a grave theological question, and one which calls for more discussion than it seems thus far to have received.

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Both the history and theology of the catechumenate, as a training-school for adult Christianity, suggest that the right principles for deciding what a catechism should, and should not, contain are two.

1. A catechism should *limit itself to Christian essentials*. The catechumenate should be viewed as, first and foremost, an ecumenical institution, the purpose of which is to inculcate "mere Christianity". As Professor T. F. Torrance has recently written:

The Catechisms set forth Christian doctrine at its closest to the mission, life, and growth of the Church from age to age, for they aim to give a comprehensive exposition of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the context of the whole Counsel of God and the whole life of the people of God. . . . They shape the mind of the historical Church, building up its understanding of the Faith and directing its growth and development. . . . While each Church provides this instruction in responsible fulfilment of its mission in its own place and time in history, the Catechism is designed, not for the self-expression and self-culture of a particular Church, but to serve the Communion of Saints, so that all who use it may worship one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and be schooled in one Faith in the unity of the whole Church of God past and present. It is for that reason that the common basis of the Catechisms has traditionally been the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer, and these have been expounded as far as possible in the universal language of the Church, and apart from the particular characteristics of any one Church and age (*The School of Faith*, 1959, p. xi).

From this it follows that it is theologically improper for catechisms to include anything more than the minimum that is thought necessary for a healthy adult faith. Non-essentials have no place in them. Nor should catechisms contain matter that ministers merely to denominational self-consciousness or self-defence. It is true that catechisms, like Communion services, are found within some denomination or other, but the catechumenate is not denominational property any more than the

Lord's Table is, and it would be as wrong to use the former for purposes of denominational propaganda as it would be to use the latter. If what our transatlantic friends call "denominational distinctives" are put into a catechism (as, for instance, the Pope's headship is put into all Roman catechisms), this can only be justified on the ground that knowledge of these things is ordinarily necessary for salvation—in other words, that they are, in fact, part of the Gospel. (This, of course, is precisely what Rome would claim about the papal headship.) But nothing that cannot be defended as being part of the Gospel has any right of entry into a catechism. Catechisms exist to set out the bare essentials of catholic Christianity, and if they go beyond these it is not a virtue, but a defect. It would be theologically wrong to enlarge the scope of any catechism beyond the realm of that knowledge which is necessary for the spiritual health and safety of the individual Christian.

This has an important corollary for Anglicans. Historic Anglicanism rests on the principle that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation" (Article VI). It follows, therefore, that in any catechism that is fit for Anglicans to use every assertion will admit of Scripture proof. At least one Anglican theologian has recently stressed this point. The report entitled *Principles of Prayer Book Revision*, by a select committee of C.I.P.B.C., published in 1957, tells us that when the principle governing additions to the Catechism came under discussion, "one member . . . maintained that since the reception of Holy Communion is generally necessary to salvation, the normal instruction to be required of all before admission to Holy Communion should be restricted to what is necessary to eternal salvation. In view of the principle . . . that 'the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all doctrine required of necessity to eternal salvation' it follows that every part of the Catechism, as the normal standard of instruction before Confirmation and admission to Holy Communion, must be capable of proof by Holy Scripture" (p. 60). Exactly. This, the principle on which all the Reformation Catechisms were compiled, including our own, seems to be the only principle that is open to an Anglican to adopt. We conclude, therefore, that any part of a catechism for the Church of England which could not be proved by Holy Scripture would, by Anglican standards, have no business to be there; for what cannot be proved by Scripture cannot be necessary to salvation, and doctrines, however true, and facts, however interesting, that are not necessary to salvation have no place in rightly constructed catechisms.

"The aim of the Commission," writes Dr. Coggan, "has been to set out the minimum basic facts necessary for instruction in the Christian faith" (p. vii). This suggests that they recognized the principle that only essentials should appear in catechisms. Presumably, therefore, the reason why they "felt it imperative to add material on, for example, the Church, the means of grace, the Bible, Christian duty, and the Christian hope" (p. ix) was because they judged all this extra matter to be essential and indispensable for the making of adult Christians. Presumably, too, omissions are to be explained on this principle. When Dr. Coggan refers to "much material which different people would have liked to see included in the new Catechism, but for which there is no room", we take him to mean, not that the Commission was

only allowed to produce a catechism of a certain maximum length (there is nothing in the terms of reference to suggest that), but simply that the Commission did not regard anything more than what it actually included as being essential and indispensable for catechetical purposes. We suppose, also, that it was this same principle of judgment that led the Commission to exceed its terms of reference and *delete* certain doctrines which find a place in the existing Church Catechism (see below).

It seems doubtful, however, whether the Commission related the principle that only Christian essentials should appear in the Catechism to this further principle, that nothing which cannot be proved by Scripture can be regarded as a Christian essential. Looking at the new material, we defy anyone to prove from Scripture what is said (for instance) about the relative functions of the threefold ministry (14-17), the nature of Confirmation (43), or the Church's ministry in marriage (53). Also, if our argument so far is sound, we must regard the definitions of the Church of England and the Anglican Communion (18, 19)—on any showing, a sad lurch into denominational arrogance—as improper intrusions. Their presence disfigures the new Catechism, and they ought to go. But more of this in a moment.

2. The second principle for determining the proper contents of a Catechism is this: that the Catechism should limit itself to Christian essentials *as professed and understood by the Church which is to use it*.

One result of the increasing theological and pastoral disorder in the Church of England is that the existing Church Catechism no longer exerts the influence that it once had. Few clergy now make Confirmation candidates learn it; some have ceased to use it as a basis for catechetical instruction. Living amid these trends (which, no doubt, it is hoped that the production of the new Catechism will help to reverse), it is hard for us to realize how significant and influential in a church's life a properly ordered catechumenate is. It has often been remarked how the Westminster Shorter Catechism moulded the Scottish mind for more than two centuries. It was equally true, though in a less spectacular way, that the Prayer Book Catechism was a decisive influence in forming Anglican minds till very recently. In reality, a properly ordered catechumenate is an institution of enormous influence, for it decisively shapes the outlook of the rising generation. Rome knows the value of catechizing the young; it is to be wished that Anglicans generally could re-learn the lesson. An ineffective catechumenate produces an ignorant laity, as we have learned to our cost during the past fifty years. The re-invigorating of the catechumenate is one of the most urgent needs in the Church of England today.

The mark of a properly ordered catechumenate in any church is that in it the contents of that Church's Catechism are faithfully and thoroughly taught. A Church's Catechism is its official manual of instruction for those who would become adult communicants. As such, it has a confessional significance. It has the status of what the Church of Scotland calls a "subordinate standard"; that is, it is a normative exposition of the faith of the church that uses it second only in authority to that Church's Creed, or Confession. It is thus a foundational document in any Church's life. It is, or should be, the basic form in

which the growing child meets that Church's faith. The doctrinal importance of the Catechism is well brought out in the following quotation from *Principles of Prayer Book Revision* :

Changes in the Catechism are of considerable moment for two reasons : *first*, because it provides the priest with a syllabus of what he is required to teach candidates for Confirmation, whether children or adults, and, though he may supplement the syllabus, he cannot omit anything which it contains ; *secondly*, because it can be appealed to as an authoritative interpretation of the faith of the Church (p. 59).

It is clear, then, that a Church's Catechism is a document of major importance. It is clear, too, that the effect of altering a Church's Catechism will be (assuming that its catechumenate is well ordered) to alter its faith within a couple of generations. What you strike out of the Catechism, you absolve the clergy from teaching and the laity from learning. When you add fresh matter to the Catechism, you thereby charge the clergy to present it, and the laity to receive it, as vital to the health and safety of the Christian soul. The Catechism must not therefore, be changed irresponsibly ; changes in the Catechism have the most far-reaching consequences. For the Catechism is, for teaching purposes, the archetypal, fundamental, and normative presentation of the Church's faith.

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But if this is true, three things clearly follow.

First, it follows that the teaching of any Church's Catechism must be wholly in line with the teaching of its official confession of faith, and of any other subordinate standards that it may have ; otherwise the effect of the Catechism will be to throw that Church into disorder on the theological level.

Second, it follows that any Church's Catechism must command the assent of that Church as a whole, and especially of the clergy as a whole ; otherwise it will not be regularly and universally used, and that Church will, in consequence, be thrown into disorder on the pastoral level.

Third, it follows that the contents of a Church's Catechism must not be made a party issue. The essentials which the Catechism contains must be essentials agreed upon by all parties. There is no place in the Catechism for unrepresentative minority views or party lines ; otherwise the Catechism, instead of standing as an agreed platform of Church teaching, becomes itself a bone of contention and a cause of further division within the Church.

Now, therefore, we can see why it is simply impossible to revise the Catechism satisfactorily with the Church of England in its present state. In the first place, there is not sufficient agreement about Christian essentials. Those who hold that a particular doctrine of the Church, and of its ministers and ministrations, is part of the Gospel, would think the Prayer Book Catechism defective for not covering these topics, and would not be content with any Catechism that did not deal with them. Those, however, who take a different view would object on principle to the inclusion of much that the former group would think indispensable, and would object in detail to much that the

former group would want said on these themes. Then, in the second place, there is not sufficient contentment with, and loyalty to, the doctrine defined in the Articles, embodied in the Prayer Book, and expounded in the Homilies, concerning grace, the Church, the ministry, and the sacraments. Some would demand that any new Catechism move away from this doctrine; indeed, the hope of moving away from it all along the line is a main reason why some are pressing for Prayer Book revision at the present time. Others, however, would argue, on grounds equally of truth, of principle, and of expediency, that it would be disastrous for the Church of England to authorize any forms of worship or instruction which cut loose from the historic Anglican position, and would demand that all Prayer Book revision be confessionally controlled, lest the Church of England condemn itself to a life of everlasting theological schizophrenia. With minds in the Church of England thus divided, it is clearly impossible for a new Catechism that will give general satisfaction to be produced at present. However much or little approval the existing Prayer Book Catechism commands, it seems certain that any new Catechism will command less. And a Catechism that has not gained the approval of the whole Church would be, as we saw, a liability, not an asset, in the Church's life.

What, then, could the Commission of revisers hope to do? No doubt the divisions of opinion noticed above were reflected among its own members, so that they could not have agreed on a material principle for determining what should not go in, however hard they may have tried. What they evidently did—and with great skill and fairness; the chairmanship must have been masterly—was to pin their faith to the compromise formula and the principle of something for everybody: something about personal faith and the Bible for the Evangelicals, and something about the five non-dominical "sacraments" (here called "ministries of grace") for the Anglo-Catholics. We do not blame them; we do not see what else they could have done. The result, however, is a document that at certain points is out of step with the Articles, the Prayer Book, the Homilies, and the central Anglican theological tradition. Though groomed like a pedigree product, it is a mongrel catechism, and we think it unlikely that a single member of the Commission, let alone anyone else in the Church, is entirely pleased with it.

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But it is time now to look at the revisers' work in detail.

The Prayer Book Catechism deals with the Baptismal Covenant, the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Christian Sacraments, and contains twenty-five questions and answers. The Revised Catechism is about twice as long, and contains sixty questions, set out under the following heads: I. The Call of God: The Christian Answer (1-4); II. Christian Belief (5-10); III. The Church and Ministry (11-19); IV. Christian Obedience (20-24); V. The Holy Spirit in the Church (25-55), subdivided into: Grace (25-26), Worship and Prayer (27-30), the Bible (31-33), the Gospel Sacraments and other Ministries of Grace (34-55); VI. The Christian Hope.

Of the new material, some is excellent. There are clear statements

on the work of Christ as Saviour and Sin-Bearer, Advocate, Intercessor, and coming Judge (9). There is a whole new section on His personal return, the resurrection of the body, and the final judgment. (It is true that these things are already contained in the Creed, but it is good to see them drawn out in careful catechetical statement. The faith of young Anglicans, and older ones too, would benefit from some eschatological stiffening.) Again, the Revised Catechism speaks explicitly of the outgoing of personal faith towards Christ, in self-commitment to Him as Saviour and Lord (4, 41, 44, 50). It gives a positive formulation of Christian assurance, based directly upon Rom. viii. 38f. and I John iii. 2 (60). It specifies the essence of Christian worship as glorifying the Triune Creator and Redeemer (10b), and gives good general definitions of worship and prayer (27-29). It speaks clearly of the work of the Holy Spirit, both in common grace and in all communications of saving grace (25). The Spirit, we are told, is the inspirer, authenticator, and interpreter of Holy Scripture (32-33), and the giver of spiritual life (10). It is He Who sets the Church apart for God (13) and who transforms its members into the likeness of Christ (10, 60). (The Prayer Book word "sanctifieth" is dropped, but the idea is adequately expressed in these three answers.) Also, the new Catechism contains good, clear, theologically satisfying statements on the Bible (31-33)—though the sufficiency and supreme authority of Holy Scripture are not, alas, asserted—and on the four credal notes of the Church. All this matter is consonant with biblical teaching, integral to the Gospel message, and authentically Anglican, and would add a considerable enrichment to the Catechism that we have at present.

The same can hardly be said, however, of all the new matter on the Church, the Ministry, the Gospel Sacraments, and the "other Ministries of Grace". Some of this is seriously objectionable. The main points perhaps are these :

(i) The answer to question II ("What is the Church?") begins : "The Church is the whole people of God worshipping him in heaven and earth." That is good. But the answer goes on : "It (the Church) is the Body of Christ through which he continues his reconciling work among men." That is not so good. It would certainly be appropriate to have here a sentence which said that the Church on earth is a fellowship that witnesses to Christ and fights evil, as well as worshipping God. Perhaps that is what this sentence means ; but it is curiously inept, for : (1) It speaks of Christ as continuing his reconciling work in the present, whereas when the New Testament speaks of His "reconciling work", whether of man to man or of men to God, it identifies that work with the achievement of Calvary, and insists that it was finished on the Cross (see Eph. ii. 14-16 ; Col. i. 19-22 ; Rom. v. 10 ; 2 Cor. v. 18f.). If, as we suppose, the intended reference here is to evangelism, and the thought is of Christ drawing sinners to Himself and hence into fellowship with each other, "continues his reconciling work among men" is hardly, by biblical standards, a proper phrase in which to speak of this. (2) The metaphor that is here chosen, out of the many that the New Testament provides, to describe the Church, is peculiarly unsuitable when the thought is of evangelism. As Ernest Best has pointed out, the "body of Christ" metaphor "looks inward and not

outward ; it is used, not to express a truth about the place of the Church in the world, but about the relationships of members of the Church of Christ to Christ and to one another ; it is concerned, not with the external life of the Church but with its internal life " (*One Body in Christ*, 1955, p. 113).

There are, of course, those who regard the Church as Christ's body, not metaphorically, but metaphysically and ontologically, and see it as an extension of the Incarnation, and would not think any description of the Church complete in which the phrase " body of Christ " did not occur ; and no doubt the sentence under consideration was framed thus, with biblical language used in this oddly unbiblical way, in order to leave it open to such persons to expound what is said, not of evangelism, whereby Christ calls men out of the world to Himself, but of the Church as supernaturalizing society, or as linking men to Christ through its sacraments, or else of Christ as in some sense continuing His work of redemption by endlessly offering Himself to God in organic union with His members. But all these are minority views in the Church of England, of dubious biblical credentials, and scarcely a century old ; they can hardly be said to be rooted in Anglican tradition, and they are certainly not countenanced in any official formulary of the Church of England. As such, they have surely no right thus to deflect the wording of the Catechism from the biblical norm of usage.

(ii) The section (14-17) introduced by the question : " What orders of ministries are there in the Church ? " ought to be dropped. In the first place, the question presumably refers to the Church universal on earth, but it is answered by a description of bishops, priests, and deacons, and their work in the Church of England. This is odd : is the Church of England, then, to be identified with the Church universal ? And furthermore : it is essential for the catechumen to be instructed in the precise functions of bishops, priests, and deacons in the Church of England set-up before he be admitted to the Lord's Table ? Such instruction could only be held essential if this organizational structure were itself essential to the being of the Church, as such, so that where this threefold ministry could not be recognized the Church must be judged non-existent, and the conclusion drawn that there are no valid or efficacious Eucharists there. Knowledge about the threefold ministry would then be " saving knowledge " in the strict sense, for valid sacraments are generally necessary to salvation ; but is this the historic Anglican view ? Can it be proved by Scripture, which " containeth all things necessary to salvation " ? The answer is no in both cases. It is true that a vocal minority in the Church of England today holds this opinion in some form, but it does not seem right to give space in the Revised Catechism to a matter whose presence there could only be justified if this minority view were accepted as being Scriptural and normatively Anglican.

This section leaves the impression that the ministry is the Church for all practical purposes, and this impression is strengthened when, at a later stage, we read that " the Church's ministry in marriage is to *bless* the man and the woman in their wedding, so that they may together receive the grace of God . . . " (53). Certainly not ! This is Roman doctrine, not the doctrine of the Church of England. The Church is the

fellowship of the faithful, not just the minister; and the *Church's* ministry in marriage is to *pray for and with* the marrying couple—a ministry of which the officiant's pronouncement of blessing is only one small part. Here, too, a change of wording is imperative; unless, indeed, question 53 be deleted altogether, which we ourselves would favour (see below).

(iii) Baptism is defined (38) as “the sacrament in which, through the action of the Holy Spirit, we are christened or made Christ's”. This definition is not very satisfactory. In the first place, it has no clear meaning (which fact alone makes it unfit to stand in a catechism). In the second place, it most naturally implies that there is a peculiar grace received in baptism *ex opere operato*. But it is not historic Anglican teaching (think of the Gorham judgment), nor, we think, is it unanimous present-day Anglican opinion, that the grace exhibited in baptism is always received in the rite itself, and never before or after. In the answer to question 42, however, we are told that “Confirmation is the ministry by which, through prayer with the laying on of hands by the bishop, the Holy Spirit is *received to complete what he began in baptism . . .*”; which form of words (based, it seems, on the audacious assertion in the Scottish Prayer Book that “Confirmation is an apostolic and sacramental rite by which the Holy Spirit is given to complete our baptism”) seems to force us to interpret answer 38 of some sort of baptismal regeneration. Yet it is a very odd sort of regeneration, for it is only a partial initiation into Christ and His Church, needing the further grace given in Confirmation (also *ex opere operato*?) to perfect it. Such a concept has breath-taking implications. It implies that every baptized Christian throughout the universal Church whose ecclesiastical system does not make available to him episcopal confirmation misses some grace, forfeits some blessing, foregoes some degree of union with Christ. On this view, as Professor G. W. H. Lampe has pointed out, “Christian Baptism would be reduced to the level of the baptism of John, a preparatory cleansing in expectation of a future baptism with Holy Spirit; Confirmation would become, not merely a sacrament in the fullest sense (which the Anglican Articles deny), but the great sacrament without whose reception no man could call himself a Christian . . .” (*The Seal of the Spirit*, 1951, p. xiii). Lampe calls these “monstrous conclusions”. We agree. Are they historic Anglican teaching? Can they be proved by Scripture? Again, the answer in both cases is no. We know, certainly, that this view (the “Mason-Dix line”) has been argued at various times during the past hundred years by a small band of very able men, that it has a certain following today, and that it has actually been embodied in the proposed new Confirmation rite. But most Anglicans, we think, still hold to the historic view expressed in the structure of the 1662 Confirmation service—namely, that Confirmation is simply a domestic institution whereby the Anglican community, acting through the bishop as its appointed representative, welcomes into adult fellowship, on the basis of a personal profession of faith, those who in baptism were originally received, normally as infants, with the status of sponsored members. The congregation prays that the Spirit may strengthen the confirmees for the new responsibilities which their increased status in

the Church brings. But this is not in the least to imply that in the sight of God the blessings of the Spirit which their baptism signified—"union with Christ in his death and resurrection, the forgiveness of sins, and a new birth into God's family, the Church" (40)—are necessarily incomplete till Confirmation has taken place. Here again, then, we must protest against the intrusion into the new Catechism, which the whole Church, it is hoped, will use, of a minority opinion which most Anglican clergy in their teaching of Confirmation candidates would wish to ignore, or indeed repudiate.

(iv) At this point, however, we would make a more radical criticism. The passages dealing with the five "other Ministries of Grace" ("confirmation, holy order, holy matrimony, the ministry of absolution, and the ministry of healing") ought, we suggest, to be dropped entirely. For the assumption behind the phrase "other Ministries of Grace" evidently is that in each of these five cases (though, one would gather, in no other case) the activity of the officiant confers some special gift of God which would not otherwise be received. We saw earlier how clearly this comes out in the tell-tale wording of the statement about matrimony; and the assumption appears again when absolution is defined as the ministry whereby penitents who have made "free confession" of their sins in the minister's presence "receive *through him (sic)* the forgiveness of God". (This, of course, as it stands, is simply not historic Anglican teaching, but a well-known party line. To express the Anglican view of absolution, as witnessed to by the Prayer Book, the last words would have to read: "receive through him *assurance of* the forgiveness of God"—rather a different thing.)

But the assumption that these five types of ministerial action each convey a special grace *ex opere operato* is without warrant in Anglican theology—not to mention the Bible! We might, perhaps, be told that no such assumption is implied, and all that "ministries of grace" means in this context is that God blesses His faithful people through each of these ministerial functions. This is an undoubted truth; but if nothing more than this is intended, we should at once have to ask why, in that case, only these five receive mention? Why is healing specified when the visitation of the sick is not? Why is absolution spoken of while the preaching of the Word is left out? Whichever way we look at it, neither the Articles, nor the Prayer Book, nor the Bible, can justify the selection of just these five activities, and no more, as the Church's "other ministries of grace". The selection is inherently arbitrary and untheological. This idea behind it is presumably that the catechism ought to mention one ministerial action in the Church of England to correspond with each of Rome's seven sacraments; but there is no obvious reason why it should. The habit of mind which takes its cue from Rome and aims to keep step with Rome wherever possible is found in the Church of England, but it is not authentically Anglican. We ask again: can it be held that the knowledge of these five "ministries of grace" is in any way essential to salvation? Can the things that are said, in particular, about Confirmation, and matrimony, and absolution, be proved from Scripture? Can any warrant or sanction for them be found in existing Anglican formu-

laries, or in the main stream of the Anglican theological tradition? If not (and we think that the answer to all three questions is no), then they can have no rightful place in a Catechism for the Church of England.

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So much for the new material. But to complete our survey we should also note what has been omitted of the old material. Here are the more important deletions.

(i) The reference to the world, the flesh, and the devil in the first baptismal vow has been replaced by a weak general reference to "wrong" and "evil". (We gather, however, that the devil, at least, is soon to be restored to his rightful place as an object of specific renunciation.)

(ii) The assertion of original sin ("being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath") has been dropped entirely. This is disturbing, for the new Catechism now says nothing positive at all about man's lost condition by nature. It is true that the biblical doctrine of original sin (under its ecclesiastical name of Augustinianism) is having a raw deal in Anglican liturgical circles these days; but it is there in the Bible, and it ought to appear in an unexpurgated form in the Catechism. For the Catechism exists to teach the Gospel of God's grace, and you cannot understand grace till you have first understood sin.

(iii) The sanction of the second commandment has also gone, so that the new Catechism now contains no mention of God's penal wrath against sin.

(iv) The description of the Church as God's "elect people"—the covenant community—has gone. The thought of the covenant relationship seems to be completely absent from the wording of the Revised Catechism.

(v) The conception of a sacrament as a visible word of God, summoning its recipients to "Faith, whereby they stedfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that sacrament", has vanished too.

(vi) So has the demand that those who come to the Lord's Supper should first examine themselves.

Whether these omissions are just oversights, or whether the Commission judged these items to be unnecessary for catechetical instruction in the twentieth century, we do not know. To our mind, however, it would be necessary to restore them before the Revised Catechism was fit for use.

It is not easy to predict what the fate of this document will be. It may well be torn apart, as Prayer Book churchmen press for the restoring of omitted doctrines and the deleting of some of the new matter and Anglo-Catholics contend (as doubtless they will) for a yet more overt restoration of the seven sacraments. Perhaps this would be the best thing to happen to it; for, while it will win deserved admiration for the skill with which it is put together, it will not give unqualified satisfaction to anyone as it stands, and it would not be a gain to have authorized for use in the Church a Catechism with which nobody is quite happy. Were it amended at the points specified in this article, it

might satisfy others beside the present writer, but it would scarcely win the consent of the whole Church. And that is the crucial problem. We need desperately a revived catechumenate ; we could do with an enlarged Catechism ; but until the present-day Church has regained more of a common mind on doctrine, and come more thoroughly to terms with its own confessional position, there is no hope of any new Catechism commanding the general approval that it must have if it is to do its proper work, and not make confusion worse confounded. We cannot, therefore, imagine that the Revised Catechism has much future before it. Nonetheless, we would unstintedly "honour the Light Brigade"—Dr. Coggan and his men—for making such a gallant, if unavailing, charge.
