

CATECHIZING TOWARD DISCERNMENT B by Rev. Professor-Emeritus Dr. N. Lee

12:3-37	"Take every man a lamb..., Every man according to <u>his</u> eating.... <u>Your sons</u> shall say to you: "What are you doing?'.... 600 000 men on foot, <u>beside</u> children." Exodus
22:6.	"Keep on <u>catechizing</u> a lad in the way he <u>should</u> go! <u>Then</u> , when his beard grows, <u>he will not depart</u> ." Proverbs
11:24-29.	"Do this in <u>remembrance</u> of Me!... Let a man examine himself..., <u>discerning</u> the <u>Lord's body</u> !" First Corinthians

Was Adam to have partaken of the tree of life repeatedly at regular intervals -- or but once, at the very end of the period of his probation? Either way, Adam was an **adult** -- long before he was able to ingest the fruit or the leaves of the tree of life. Some consider the latter to have been a Sacrament. Yet technically, there could have been no redemption nor seals thereof -- until after the fall. Genesis 2:9-16 & 3:22 *cf.* Revelation 22:2-14.

Yet even if the fall had never occurred, Adam the patriarch would still have offered sacrifices alias gifts to God (thus Luther and Bavinck) -- and done so also on behalf of the various human beings under his care. His minor children would apparently then have watched and learned, even if not eating thereof sacramentally. Hosea 6:6-8; First Timothy 2:12 to 3:5; Genesis 8:20*f*, 12:7*f*, 13:4*f*, 18:7*f*, and 22:1*f*.

Catechizing before Communion in the times of the Older and the Newer Testaments

Certainly after the fall, minor children were to be 'guarded' and kept away from the tree of life. For they needed to be protected against their own ignorant eating of its fruit. Genesis 2:15 *cf.* 3:19-22.

The penitent Adam no doubt catechized his sons (Cain and Abel and Seth) before they grew up -- and it is certain they were no longer babies or toddlers when they themselves brought their own sacrifices to God. Genesis 4:2-4. Cain, in fact, was already of marriageable age. Genesis 4:17.

Adam's son Seth was a father, before he taught people to call upon the Name of the Lord (apparently at public worship). Genesis 4:26. And also Enoch, the son of Seth's descendant Jared, seems to have been similarly trained before he too had reached that same age. Genesis 5:19-22f. For the very name 'Enoch' means: 'catechized.' Genesis 5:18 *cf.* 14:14-18 & Proverbs 22:6.

God Himself taught the mature Abraham. Indeed, also his own men-servants had all been "trained" (or 'catechized') -- ere Melchizedek "brought forth bread and wine." God kept on "communing" with the adult Abraham while he sacrificed; and Abraham himself "commanded his children and his household after him" to "keep the way of the Lord." Genesis 14:14-18f *cf.* 18:19-33.

Ishmael had attained teenage before he married, and God would have spared even Sodom if that city had contained but ten righteous men alias mature males who were not there practising homosexual sexual intercourse. Genesis 17:25; 18:20-32; 21:20f.

Also Isaac was a well-trained teenager, before he himself brought sacrifices to the Lord. Gen. 18:19; 22:2-13f; 26:1-5. Very understandably, then, Moses instituted the Passover sacrifice for catechized "men" -- as distinct from the "children" who clung to their mothers' sides. Genesis 4:1-26; 5:19-23 (*cf.* Proverbs 22:6); Genesis 14:14-18; 18:7, 12, 19, 33; 22:1-19; Exodus 12:3f, 21, 26f, 37, 48.

Ever since the time of Moses, the Passover itself has been a 'catechism school' for those seeking admission to that Sacrament at puberty. More specialized schools later became attached to the Temple and the Synagogues. There, from the Holy Scriptures, circumcised covenant youth were officially catechized by the Elders -- "line upon line." Exodus 12:3, 21-50; Ecclesiastes 12:1-12; Isaiah 28:9-10; Luke 2:40-47.

As the inspired Proverbs remark (22:6): "Keep on catechizing a lad in the way he should go! Then, when his beard starts growing, he will not depart." The same applies to the New Testament Church -- now Circumcision has been replaced by Baptism, and the Passover by the Supper. Luke 22:1-20; John 21:15; First Corinthians 5:6-9; 11:20-32; Ephesians 4:5, 11-14; Colossians 2:11-13; First Peter 5:1-5; First John 2:13f.

The noun 'cat-echism' (meaning 'instruction') is derived from the Greek verb *kat-►chein*. This means: 'to din into the ears' or 'to cause to echo' -- thoroughly! The verb is frequently found in the New Testament ^B at Luke 1:4; Acts 18:25; 21:21, 24; Romans 2:18; First Corinthians 14:19; Galatians 6:6; Hebrews 10:23.

There, it refers: to Hebraic instruction from God's Law; to the Christian catechizing of Theophilus and Apollos; to good education by the Apostle Paul; to the training of others in the Church; and to being in-doctrin-ated by the teachings of Christianity. It is also used with the meaning of "hold[ing] fast the Profession of our Faith" -- the 'Profession' made on becoming Communicant Members of Christ's Church

Now Old Testament covenant children received 'the First Ordinance' -- alias 'the

Sacrament of Initiation' -- in infancy. Yet it was not before puberty -- after being catechized toward that end -- that they were admitted to the 'Second Ordinance' alias the 'Sacrament of Maturity.' Genesis 14:14-18; 17:10-25f; 18:2-7,33; Exodus12:3f,26f,37,43f.

This was permitted only after (several years of) catechetical instruction. According to Ancient Hebrew practice (B.C.), such training began "at ten years" of age -- and was usually completed on one's *Bar Mitzvah* "at thirteen, for the fulfilling of the Commandments." Thus the Talmudic tract *Aboth* 5:21 cf. Luke 2:42f & Acts 22:3.

Compare here Genesis 17:25 and Exodus12:3f,26f,37 with Luke 2:40-47. Then, at Calvary, this Hebrew practice of catechizing covenant youth for the Passover -- was transferred to preparing for the admission of Christian catechumens to the Lord's Supper. Luke 1:4; 2:40-52; Acts 19:8-10f; 20:31; Galatians 1:15-18.

Perhaps the most important Biblical passage on this, is Hebrews 5:11 to 6:5. There, we are reminded that even after the foundational "doctrine of baptisms" has been administered, an unweaned "babe" is still "unskillful" in the Word. The passage teaches that "many things" are "hard to be uttered" -- because too many addressees "are dull of hearing." Such are rebuked -- because by this "time you ought to be teachers." Yet "you need someone teach you again the first principles of the Oracles of God."

You have "become such as need milk, and not strong meat. For everyone that uses milk is unskillful in the Word of righteousness; for he is a baby. But strong meat [like Christ's flesh at His Table] belongs to them that are of full age [*teleiōn*], even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern [cf. First Corinthians 11:29].... Therefore, going on from the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to maturity (*teleiōta*) ^B not laying down again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of Baptisms, and of [the] laying on of hands [at Confirmation]...., having tasted the heavenly gift" etc.

Here, we are reminded that even after the foundational "Doctrine of Baptisms" has been administered, an unweaned "babe" is still "unskillful" in the Word and needs further 'teaching' before becoming admissible to the "strong meat" of the Lord's Supper. For the latter belongs only to those of 'mature age' -- who are able "to discern both good and evil."

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Such an ability is achieved precisely by way of being catechized toward maturity. The attainment of the latter is to be marked by the confirmatory "laying on of hands" -- at one's first admission to the Holy Table.

Catechizing before one's first Communion in the Early-Patristic Church

Also after the time of the Apostles, the Early Christian Church continued the confirmatory Hebraic "custom" of 'catechizing for three years' -- before giving her own covenant youth the Lord's Supper at puberty. Luke 2:42f & 1:4, see *Aboth* 5:21. Compare: Clement of Alexandria's *Paedagogue* 1:4-7; the *Apostolic Constitutions* VII:2:24 to VIII:4:32; and Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* IV:19:4, 12-13.

In every age, such catechetical instruction always included: an exposition of the *Ten Commandments* and of the *Lord's Prayer*; a summary of Christian doctrine, as expressed in the *Apostles' Creed*; and an explanation of the nature of the Sacraments in general and of our Saviour's Supper in particular. For the catechumen was precisely then being instructed -- toward eating and drinking specifically at the Lord's Table.

Notably was this the case in the Alexandrian Catechetical School of Clement; in the canons of the Council of Nicea; and in the *Apostolic Constitutions*.¹ Great were the 'revival blessings' which resulted from such procedures. Just read the catechetical works of Cyril, Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Augustine!²

Calvin on the importance of catechizing before one's first Communion

On Hebrews 5:12f & 6:1, Calvin comments³ that "those who are of such tender years that they cannot receive the more advanced teaching, are called children.... The true purpose of teaching is to fit us together -- so that we grow up to a perfect man, to the measure of full maturity; so that we are not children tossed to and fro.... An infant is nourished on the milk of its nurse -- not that it may always depend on the breast, but that it may gradually be weaned onto stronger food.... Anyone who ought to grow with time, is inexcusable if he remains forever a child.

"The children of believers were baptized as infants, since they were adopted from the womb and belonged to the body of the Church by right of the promise. Then, after their infancy was over ^B and they had been instructed in the Faith -- they too offered themselves for a Catechumenate [alias a period of preparation for Communicant Membership in their Church].... Another sign was then added -- in the 'laying on of hands.'

"This single passage [Hebrews 5:11 to 6:5] is abundant evidence that the origin of this rite came from the Apostles.... We should know that it was instituted by its first authors, to be a solemn **ceremony** of prayer.... They intended by this sign to '**confirm**' the '**Profession** of Faith' which **adolescents** make, when they **pass from their childhood**.... Today, we must retain the institution in its purity [cf. Acts 19:1-6; 8:14-17; First Timothy 6:11f; Second Timothy 1:5 & 3:14f; Hebrews 5:12f & 6:1f].

"The word 'Faith' [in Hebrews 6:1] means the short summary of religious teaching which is commonly called the '**Articles of Faith**'.... A short space of time was given to Catechumens.... The Catechumen was admitted to...make 'Confession' of his faith.

"There were certain cardinal matters about which the Pastor questioned the Catechumens -- as clearly appears from the various evidences of the Fathers. This examination," concludes Calvin, "was concerned particularly with what is known as the

Apostles' Creed.

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Calvin explains in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*:⁴ "If you vow abstinence from wine...; if you have some end in view which is not perverse -- no one can disapprove." Yet the opposite applies after childhood -- in making Profession of our Faith.

"There is one **vow** common to all believers which, **taken in Baptism**, we '**confirm**' and as it were sanctioned **by our Catechism** and **partaking of the Lord's Supper**. Calvin originally wrote: "*en faisant protestation de notre foy* = 'in making profession of our faith.'"

"It was anciently customary for the **children of Christians**, **after they had grown up**, to appear before the Bishop -- to fulfil that duty required of such **adults** as present themselves for baptism [as adults].... These [infantly-baptized covenantal adolescents] sat among the Catechumens [being prepared for adult baptism] -- **until** they [the infantly-baptized covenantal adolescents] were **duly instructed** in the '**Mysterics**' [or Sacraments] of the **Faith**, and could make a '**Confession**' of it **before** Bishop [alias **Minister**] and **people**.

"The **infants** therefore who had [previously] been initiated by **Baptism**, not having then [at the time of their Baptisms when infants] given a '**Confession of Faith**' to the Church -- were again, toward the end of their boyhood or on adolescence, brought forward by their parents, and were **examined by the Bishop** [or **Minister**], in terms of the **Catechism** then in common use.... The ceremony of **laying on of hands** was also used. Thus the youth, on his faith being **approved**, was dismissed with a solemn blessing."

Also the early-patristic practice⁵ of catechizing even the covenant child for some three years, seems to have been approved by Calvin. "I wish we could retain the custom which as I have observed existed in the Early Church.... It would...be...catechising, by which those in boyhood or immediately beyond it would give an account of their faith...."

"A boy of ten years of age would present himself to the Church" -- explains the Reformer⁶ -- "to make a 'Profession of Faith'" when later ready to do so. Then, he "would be questioned on each head, and give answers to each [Exodus 12:26-37 and Luke 2:42-47]. If he was ignorant of any point or did not well understand it, he would be taught. Thus, while the whole Church looked on and witnessed, he would profess the one true sincere faith with which the body of the faithful with one accord worship one God.

This was a practice which Calvin himself stated he would like to see followed also in the Protestant Churches. "Were this discipline in force in the present day, it would undoubtedly whet the sluggishness of certain parents who carelessly neglect the instruction of their children...."

"There would be greater agreement in faith among the Christian people, and not so much ignorance and rudeness. Some persons would not be so readily carried away by new and strange dogmas. In fine, it would furnish all with a methodical arrangement of Christian doctrine."

Declares Calvin's own *Geneva Catechism*:⁷ "It has ever been the practice of the Church...to see that children should be duly instructed in the Christian religion.... It was a received public custom and practice, to question children in the churches...."

"There was written-out a Formula, which was called a *Catechism*.... The Minister ought to take heed not to give it [the Lord's Supper] to anyone who is clearly unworthy of receiving it.... The method is for Elders to be chosen -- to preside as censors of morals; to guard watchfully."

In his *Ecclesiastical Ordinances*, Dr. John Calvin adds:⁸ "The Supper was instituted by our Lord.... It should be administered four times a year.... On the Sunday before its celebration, an **announcement** shall be made that **no child is to come to it** before having made 'Profession of Faith' in accordance with what is taught in the *Catechism*.... None should approach to his own condemnation [cf. First Corinthians 11:24-29].... When a child has been sufficiently instructed to pass on from the *Catechism* -- he shall solemnly recite the sum of what is contained in it...as a **profession** of his Christianity, in **presence** of the Church. Before this has been done, **no child is to be admitted as a Communicant** to the Supper.... It is **very perilous** both for the children and for their fathers to present them without good and sufficient instruction.... Those who **contravene** this order, shall be **called before the Company of Elders**."

To the Calvinistic Regent (and Catechist) of ten-year-old King Edward VI of England, Calvin wrote:⁹ "**The Church of God will never preserve itself, without a *Catechism***. For it is like seed which keeps the good grain from dying out, and causes it to multiply -- from age to age.... If you desire to build an edifice which shall be of long duration and which shall not soon fall into decay -- **see to it that the children be educated by the hand of a good *Catechism*** which, in short, teaches them the meaning of true Christianity!"

Knox and the Westminster Standards on catechizing before one's first Communion

No different was the view of Calvin's famous Scottish Presbyterian student. Wrote the godly John Knox:¹⁰ "Four times in the year, we think sufficient to the administration of the Lord's Table.... All Ministers must be admonished to be more **careful to instruct the ignorant**...and to use **sharp examination**.... The administration of the Table ought

never to be without examination passing beforehand -- and especially of them whose knowledge is suspect....

"None are to be admitted to this 'Mystery' [alias Sacrament] **who cannot formally say the Lord's Prayer, the Articles of the Belief [alias the Apostles' Creed], nor declare the Sum of the Law [alias the Ten Commandments] -- and understandeth not the use and virtue of this Holy Sacrament!"** This was not to be done before the thirteenth year. Indeed, by 1575, the Presbyterian Church of Scotland even extended the minimum age of Communion -- from fourteen, to sixteen.

Similar teachings are implied by the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*. This obviously presupposes that those desiring to receive the 'Second Sacrament' for their first time, initially need to be tested and approved by the local Session of Christ's Church before their Admission to the Holy Table. For "it is required" of all those "that would worthily partake of the Lord's Supper, that they **examine** themselves: of their **knowledge** to **discern** the Lord's body; of their **faith** to feed upon Him; [and] of their **repentance**, love and new obedience -- lest, coming unworthily, they **eat and drink judgment to themselves!**"¹¹

This was approved "by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to be a Directory **for catechising** such as are of weaker capacity." Also note the very important *Epistle to the Reader of the Westminster Standards* -- and the *Introductory Epistle* to those Standards by the Puritan Theologian Thomas Manton (later to be Cromwell=s Chaplain).

Manton remarks¹² that "Ministers and parents" are "to train up young ones" -- and "betimes to instil the principles of our most holy faith...drawn into a short sum in *Catechism*." Manton would therefore have us view -- "with the greatest earnestness" -- the work of "catechising.... Then, one Pastor need not be put to do the work of two or three hundred or thousand Governors.... Nor should we have need to shut out so many from Holy Communion, upon account of ignorance.... First, let them read and learn the *Shorter Catechism*; and next, the *Larger*; and lastly, read the *Confession of Faith!*"

Now the *Westminster Directory for the Publick Worship of God* clearly states¹³ that "the ignorant are not fit to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper." Also the *Westminster Form of Presbyterial Church-Government* insists¹⁴ that "it belongs" to the "Office" of "Pastors...to catechise" -- before they may proceed "to dispense...divine 'Mysteries' [or 'Sacraments']". Hebrews 5:12; First Corinthians 4:1-2."

Sadly, many baptized children today, even when grown up, do not come to understand how their own Infant Baptism obligates them to become (and to remain) sincere Communicant Members of Christ's Church -- at the Lord's Table, when they reach teenage. They thus stay ignorant of what the *Westminster Larger Catechism*¹⁵ calls that "much neglected duty of improving our Baptism" -- the initial duty of catechizing for the Holy Table; and the subsequent duty of ongoing repentance.

The Lord's Supper, declares the *Larger Catechism*,¹⁶ should be given "**only to such as are of years and ability to examine themselves (First Corinthians**

11:28-29)." Even more so -- "such as are found to be **ignorant**, notwithstanding their profession of the faith and desire to come to the Lord's Supper, may and **ought to be kept from that Sacrament** by the power which Christ has left in His Church" and vested in the Session of Elders who are to guard the Lord's Table from being misused.

Even backslidden '**Communicants**' should therefore be suspended from the Sacrament of the Holy Table and **should keep on having the Lord's Supper** withheld from them, "**until they receive instruction**"-- alias further (re-)catechizing -- "and manifest their reformation" yet thereafter. Thus the *Westminster Larger Catechism*,¹⁷ citing Matthew 7:6; First Corinthians 11:27-34; Second Corinthians 2:7; First Timothy 5:22 and Jude 23.

How very much more all this should be the case with those younger unexcommunicated Members of the Church who have not yet started receiving and still less completed their catechetical instruction and who, never having been admitted to the Holy Table, are likewise suspended from partaking there until they too have successively finished receiving such instruction and then solemnly been admitted to our Saviour's Supper by authority of the Session of Elders who are to watch over such little lambs as well as over the older sheep! John 21:15f cf. First Peter 5:1-5.

This is why the *Westminster Confession of Faith*¹⁸ states that "our Lord Jesus...instituted the Sacrament...called the Lord's Supper -- to be observed in His Church" in the proper fashion. He did so, for many reasons -- "for: the...sealing all benefits thereof unto true believers; their spiritual nourishment and growth in Him; their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto Him; and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with Him and with each other as Members of His mystical body. Matthew 7:6; First Corinthians 5:6f, 11:23f & 10:16f,21; Second Corinthians 6:14f, Second Thessalonians 3:6,14f " etc.

As stated above, Christ Himself "**instituted**" His Holy Supper. At that very time, however, only adult Christian disciples ate and drank of it -- at the Worship Service, there in the Upper Room. Hence the *Confession* rightly professes that this Sacrament is thenceforth indeed "to be observed [**in**] **His Church**" -- but **not** by His Church as a whole; and still less by **all** of her Members.

As also stated above, that Sacrament is for "sealing all benefits thereof." It is therefore appropriate that the Catechumens first be 'pre-sealed' at their confirmation as adolescent or adult Members, right before their first Admission to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Indeed, because that Sacrament is only for Christ-professing "true believers" -- it is incumbent upon Church Officers first to catechize and then to **examine** -- those who make that claim about themselves.

Now their Confirmation and consequent Admission to Communion, insists the *Westminster Confession* (29:1) involves "their further engagement in and to **all** duties which they owe" to the Lord. Thus it is clear that prior catechizing must be a pre-requisite. Further, such Holy Communion is "to be a bond and pledge of their

communion with Him and with each other as Members of His mystical body." Accordingly, it is obvious that such a binding promise cannot properly be made -- before reaching the binding oathing-age of **adolescence**.

Thus the *Confession* 29:8 says that not just the ungodly always, but even such of the godly as are still "ignorant" of these matters, are "unfit to enjoy communion." For they are "unworthy of the Lord's Table and **cannot without great sin against Christ** -- while they remain such -- **partake of these 'Holy Mysteries' or be admitted thereunto**. First Corinthians 5:6-13 & Matthew 7:6."

Wherever Communicants commit a serious misdemeanour, insists the *Westminster Confession of Faith*,¹⁹ "the Officers of the Church are to proceed by admonition." If unheeded, it is to be followed respectively by "**suspension from the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper for a season**, and [if necessary even] by **excommunication** from the Church: according to the nature of the crime and demerit of the person. Matthew 18:17; First Corinthians 5:6f,13; First Thessalonians 5:12; Second Thessalonians 3:6,14f; Titus 3:10."

Here, note the clear **difference between suspension and excommunication!** Suspended Members are not excommunicated from the Church. Nor are such Members of the Church as are baptized babies or baptized toddlers, "excommunicated" -- even though indeed suspended from the Biblical Sacrament of the Lord's Supper until such time as they credibly and maturely and publically profess their Christian Faith.

This **difference** is vital! It shows just how false the claims of Paedocommunionists like Peter Leithart are, when they insist that the baptized infants and toddlers in traditional Protestant Churches have been excommunicated. Note here the full title of Leithart's anticonfessional work: *Daddy, why was I excommunicated? An Examination of Leonard J. Coppes's 'Daddy, May I Take Communion?'* Leithart has here excommunicated not only part of the *Westminster Standards* B but even the full title of the antipaedocommunionistic Dr. Coppes's book *Daddy, May I Take Communion? Paedocommunion vs. The Bible!*

Classic Dutch Reformed view on catechizing before one's first Communion

Ever since Rev. Herman Faukel(ius) drew up the *Kort Begrip* alias the *Short Compendium of the Heidelberg Catechism*, catechizing infantly-baptized covenant children before their first Communion has always been a pre-requisite for their admission to manducation at the Lord's Supper in all Dutch Reformed Churches worldwide. Only in the last several decades, under the liberalizing influence of the World[ly] Council of Churches, have some but by no means all of the Dutch Reformed denominations now exchanged Calvinistic Antipaedocommunionism for Liberalist-Leftist Paedocommunionism.

In his famous work *Paedagogical Principles*,²⁰ Rev. Professor Dr. Herman Bavinck rightly notes that "a child needs long and tender care -- precisely because he is human! This is grounded in his nature; it is the condition of his existence.... At his birth, a

human being is not yet what he can become -- and still less, what he ought to be.

"According to Scripture, angels were created together; immediately; and as adults -- needing no process of development in order to become what they should be.... Animals, on the other hand, are subject to the law of development. They are born, they grow up, and they die. But there is no question of a goal or a destination to which they need to aspire.... For an animal itself -- this is a matter of indifference. For animals are not moral beings! 'Education' is thus a concept which does not apply to the world of animals.

"Human beings, however, stand 'in between' angels and animals. Like angels, human beings possess a spiritual and a rational-moral nature.... Like animals, humans need to become what they should be -- by way of development! Humans are born not mature but immature; not old, but young; not as adults, but as children.... Education is essential.... But just as essential as is care for the body -- is care for the soul. That is what education is concerned about. What food is for the physical life of human beings -- education is for their psychical and rational-moral existence.

"Food and education are therefore both equally indispensable. Without food, humans die -- bodily. Without education, humans die -- spiritually. **For a child who does not get educated -- becomes as wild as a tree which never gets pruned....** Those humans who remain deprived of all education, become: a curse to themselves; a shame to their families; a burden to society. They dishonour God."

The internationally famous Rev. Professor Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr. makes many valuable comments about **Catechetics**: He explains²¹ that, "in the small compass of the New Testament, the word "*kat►chein* is encountered no less than eight times with the meaning of 'instruct.'" This is so, "specifically in Luke (Gospel of Luke 1:4 & Luke's Acts 18:25 & 21:21-24) and in Paul (Romans 2:18 & First Corinthians 14:19 & Galatians 6:6 **twice**).... This very definitely points to spiritual instruction.

"Indeed, already at the very outset, it does so with a far-developed technical meaning. That is why in Galatians 6:6, Paul could write: *koin►neit► de ho kat►choumenos ton Logon, t►i kat►chounti!* 'Let the one being catechized the Word, share with him who catechizes'!...

"*Kat►chein* in the New Testament, like *kat►ch►sis* already in Hippocrates (18:25), points to instruction resting totally on authority -- and thus to instruction for the benefit of those not themselves able to conduct an investigation.... Meantime, '**Catechism**' most definitely has a meaning even for individual persons.... It forms the ecclesiastical bridge from the one Sacrament to the other, from Baptism to the Holy Supper."

The above-mentioned Abraham Kuyper Sr. also had noteworthy sons who became Theologians. One of them, Rev. Professor Dr. Abraham Kuyper Jr., wrote:²² "All education leads to a *terminus ad quem* [alias a termination point]. Religious education too finds its *terminus*.

"There the child, having grown up, comes to 'improve his Baptism' -- to confess his faith, and to approach the Holy Supper as one who professes the Name of the Lord.... Christianity leads to Christian virtue..., so that the man of God may be 'perfect' B thoroughly furnished unto every good work [Second Timothy 3:17]."

In his book *The Character of Catechism*, Rev. Professor Dr. H. Biesterveld defines²³ the latter word as "the instruction by the Church of her baptized Members, authoritatively executed by herself through her Officers, in order to bring them to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper." Likewise, Professor Dr. Jan Waterink, in his great tome *Theory of Education*, declares:²⁴ "The Church indeed has the calling to educate her Members -- from the Sacrament of Baptism, to that of Holy Communion."

Similarly, in his useful book *Religious Instruction in the Church*, the South African Scholar Rev. Dr. E. Greyling defines²⁵ 'Catechism' as "the official religious instruction given by the Minister of the Word to baptized but spiritually immature Members of the Church, in cultivating them toward Mature Members." Too, Rev. Professor Dr. G. van der Leeuw, in his famous work *Sacramental Theology*, regards²⁶ Confirmation as a postponed aspect of Baptism -- of which it is both historically and essentially a part.

Rev. Professor Dr. Karl Dijk, in his book *Goal of Catechizing*, insists:²⁷ "The youth must be led into the treasure-houses of the *Confession*.... They too are to fight the good fight of faith, and with the bread and the cup to proclaim the Lord's death.... For the latter, it is essential that even the 'Children of the Congregation' be able to distinguish the Lord's body correctly (First Corinthians 11:27-29).

"This *diakrinein* [discernment] which they should possess, is a knowledge of Christ; of His work; of the whole of His revelation; of His grace; and of what the Church professes about Him. The Congregation which takes them into her Communion, will need to be guiltless before God (First Corinthians 10:21-22). Therefore these children are to be examined as to their knowledge, when they profess that they possess faith" in Christ.

In his other book *Ministering to the Youth of the Church*, Dijk adds²⁸ that Catechism is the ecclesiastical instruction, in the Biblical sense, by the Church's Officers, of the already-baptized but immature Members of the Covenant, to assist them to profess their faith. Declares Dijk: "Catechism is the task imposed upon the Officers, as far as humanly possible to bring the young and still-ripening life of faith unto development -- and, through education, to operate upon the entire life of the covenantal seed" (alias the growing children born and raised in the Church).

In his doctoral dissertation *Catechizing*, the South African Calvinist (Rev. and later Professor Dr.) Dawid W. de Villiers insists²⁹ that "already Calvin saw Baptism and 'Confession of Faith' indissolubly connected..... The Reformed views were deeply rooted, and catechizing was narrowly connected to 'Profession of Faith' and the Lord's Supper....

"The consequences for Church Law connected with Admission [to the Holy Table],

are: (a) Subjection to ecclesiastical discipline" and "(b) Admission to the Lord's Supper.... It is expected there will [thenceforth] be a continuing appreciation for the Supper -- and that, should apostasy occur, there will have to be ecclesiastical discipline.

"The goal of catechizing can thus be seen as preparation for making 'Profession of Faith' -- and Admission to Holy Communion.... 'Teach our people, and above all the youth of our people -- to understand their Baptism!' [Wormser]. What else is 'Profession of Faith'? In this way, the Church gets her great opportunity with the youth.

"Also K. Dijk places himself strongly upon this standpoint.... He maintains that Profession of Faith [at adolescence], is a personal acceptance of one's own Baptism [earlier in infancy].... Public Profession of Faith is the goal of Catechism. It is the public acceptance -- of the 'yes' of Baptism -- by the baptized children of the Congregation. It is the way whereby the [Baptismal] Member enters into participation of the Lord's Supper -- together with the Congregation.

"A.C. van Uchelen [in his famous book *The Holy Instruction of the Church*]³⁰ states it as follows: "The essence and goal of this Catechism...is to be guided obediently under the Word, unto a right profession [of faith] and good works -- and unto regular participation in the Lord's Supper. That is a 'sealing' and a 'Confirmation' of the essential and vital 'Communion' with God in Jesus Christ His Son, through the Holy Spirit, in the Mystical unity of the body of Christ."

Continues Rev. Professor Dr. De Villiers: "It is in this connection that Rev. W.A. Wiesinga [in his book *Feed and Guide!*] made the statement: 'Always hold onto this -- to profess one's faith and to celebrate the Lord's Supper, is one and the same'.... The sermon for the day when faith is to be professed..., requires the following: (i) looking back at Holy Baptism; (ii) the Congregation confessing the wonderful works of God; (iii) professing one's personal faith, within the Congregation; (iv) the new walk of life, whereunto one is called; (v) living together in the Congregation; (vi) referring to the celebration of the Lord's Supper at hand"; and (vii) pointing forward to the final Marriage Feast of the Lamb -- to His then-all-adult Bride.

"Catechizing," concludes De Villiers, "involves the child -- from [infant] Baptism, toward the [adult] Lord's Supper. It is the task of catechizing to bring the child from the unconscious to the conscious acceptance of the **knowledge** of the faith in Christ Jesus -- and to **experiencing** it. This child, is a child of the covenant. This child -- is also a sinner, living in a sinful world. Catechizing proceeds from the presumption that the child of the covenant has been educated, as required -- according to the precious baptismal promises."

Rev. Professor Dr. R. Bijlsma rightly states in his book *Short Catechetics*:³¹ "Catechizing the Catechumens should begin when children leave Junior School, and start to learn the *Catechism for Junior Catechumens*.... They should be received as Catechumens.... This should take place in a Church Service of the Congregation.... During the previous week, one or two evenings should be set aside to permit all [intending] Catechumens to enrol themselves.

"On the Sunday morning, all of the Catechumens should sit in the front of the Church, together with the twelve-to-fourteen-year-olds.... At this special 'Family Service' the sermon should be targeted on the Catechumens. After the sermon, the names of the [new] Catechumens should be announced.... They should be admitted to the Catechumenate through a prayer...in which the entire Congregation should be held responsible.

"This should be seen as an extension of Infant Baptism. It assures the growing children that the God of their Baptism...has now placed them in the ranks of the future 'Professing Communicant Members'.... The Confirmation [several years later by the laying on of hands], at the end of their period of catechizing, is the direct door to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.... This Confirmation should be compared to the Hebrew *Bar-Mitzvah* Feast (cf. Luke 2:40-47)."

Also Rudolf Kittel stresses catechizing before one's first Communion

In his famous *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*,³² Kittel makes the following relevant remarks about the word 'catechize' alias *kat▶che▶*. "This is a late and rare word in secular Greek....

"Its basic meaning is 'to sound from above' -- (compare *Luc. Jup. Trag.* 39, where it is said of poets addressing their hearers from a stage).... In common use, we find two senses developing.

"The first of these, **a**, with double accusative, is: 'to recount something to someone, to inform'.... *Jos. Vit.* 366 quotes a letter from Agrippa II, in which the king writes, after reading the *Jewish War*, that -- while the author obviously needs no further instruction -- on a visit he [King Agrippa] will tell him many things that happened to him: *kai autos se polla kat▶ch▶s▶* At any rate, it [*kat▶che▶*] stands in correspondence to *didask▶*.

"The word also means, **b**: 'to instruct someone, to teach' especially in respect of the rudiments of a subject or skill. Thus, Suidas renders the term *protrepomai* or *paraine▶*.

"The noun *kat▶ch▶sis* is found occasionally in Stoicism.... The word *kat▶che▶* is often used for 'to impart instruction' in the Post-NT period. Compare *Ps.-Luc. Asin.* 48, where it is used for training an ass to do tricks."

Kittel next explains that, "in the New Testament, *kat▶che▶* is used" with the meaning of "to tell about something." Indeed, it is also used "to receive news of something."

Thus, "in Acts 21:21, James tells Paul that amongst the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, there is a 'rumour' concerning him (*kat▶ch▶th▶san peri sou*)." For, James explains, 'they are informed' (*kat▶ch▶th▶san*) "that he [Paul] teaches the Jews of the *diaspora* to forsake the Law." Paul, however, should now "make it clear...that the

'rumour' is false (21:24) -- *hoti h▶ n kat▶ ch▶ ntai...ouden estin.*

"What had been 'reported' in this way, was an account of historical actions.... Meyer (*Ursprung* I:7)...claims that *kat▶ che▶* always means instruction, in the New Testament.... In exposition of Acts 21:21..., he exploits the twofold sense of the German word *unterrichten* ['instruct']. Paul himself uses *kat▶ che▶* exclusively in sense **b**, 'to give instruction concerning the content of faith.' He can use it already with reference to Pre-Christian Judaism. Thus, the true Jew is *kat▶ choumenos ek tou Nomou* ['catechized from the Law']. Romans 2:18.

ⒶWhen the Congregation is assembled -- Paul himself would rather speak five words with an understandable sense, *hina kai allous kat▶ ch▶ s▶* ['so that I might teach others also'], than ten thousand words in tongues. First Corinthians 14:19. This is the high value he attaches to the significance of *kat▶ chein*. For he realizes that faith comes through preaching.

"Galatians 6:6 draws a contrast between the *Kat▶ ch▶ n* [the 'Catechist'] who gives instruction in Christian doctrine, and the *Kat▶ choumenos* [the 'Catechumen'] who receives this instruction.... The *Kat▶ chountes* [or Catechists] of Galatians 6:6, are to be equated with the *Didaskaloi* of First Corinthians 12:28 and Ephesians 4:11. Hence Paul uses not only the common *didaskein* ['to teach'], but also this much rarer word [*kat▶ chein* alias 'to catechize']...as a technical term for Christian instruction.

"He desires thereby to emphasize the particular nature of instruction on the basis of the Gospel. The word selected, was in fact very apt to assume the exclusive sense of Christian instruction -- and it finds an echo today in the word 'Catechism'.... A model for the high significance attached to the religious teacher, was to be found...in the *Rabbi* of Judaism. Schürer -- II:372f,491f,154.

"In early Christianity, teaching was a decisive part of the missionary task and of congregational life.... Acts 18:25 sums up the scope of this teaching in a phrase -- when it says of Apollos that he was...*kat▶ ch▶ menos t▶ n hodon tou Kuriou* ['catechized in the way of the Lord'], and that he himself taught (*edidasken*) *akrib▶ s ta peri tou I▶ sou*" -- 'taught diligently the things of Jesus.' "Here already, it seems that *kat▶ chein* denotes elementary instruction in the Christian faith, and *didaskein* the teaching constantly given to believers."

Finally, concludes Kittel, there is "the use of *kat▶ chein* in the dedication of Luke [1:4]." There, the Greek reads: "*hina epign▶ s peri h▶ n kat▶ ch▶ th▶ s log▶ n t▶ n asphaleian* ['so that you may fully know about the things in which you have been catechized'].... If it bears a more specific sense, we must render [it]: 'In order that you may have certainty, concerning the doctrines in which you have been instructed'.... [Thus] Meyer *Ursprung* (I:7)...and Pr.-Bauer (III:705)."

Francis Nigel Lee on catechizing before one's first Communion

In his *Talks in Preparation for Confirmation*, also Rev. Dr. R.W. Howard asks:³³ "What is Confirmation?" Howard defines it as the 'laying on of hands' by a relevant Office[r] of Christ's Church (Acts 8:17f & 19:4f and Hebrews 6:2f). He then further adds: "It is led up to by special training and preparation and instruction, for those who wish to take the Christian life seriously -- and by the service of 'laying on of hands' to become Full Members of one branch of Christ's World-Wide Church."

I myself would now seek to combine the best of Ancient-Hebraic, Inter-Testamentical, New-Testamentical and Early-Patristic catechetical theology with that of Calvinism. Regarding the latter -- I here draw heavily on the French, Swiss, German, Dutch, Scottish, English, American, South African and Australian expressions thereof.

Thus the following **ideal catechetical scheme** is suggested. It starts at Marriage. Next, it runs through the Infant Baptism of one's resultant children. Then, it culminates in their own later eating and drinking at Holy Communion -- for their very first time.

First, commencing at Marriage itself, there should be daily household worship from the wedding day onward. Genesis 25:21 & First Peter 3:7.

Second, whenever the wife becomes pregnant, God should be thanked, and the daily household worship should be intensified. Genesis 18:11-19 & Judges 21:2-21.

Third, each covenant child -- when born -- should be treated as a Christian and therefore be baptized in infancy. Genesis 17:10-25 *cf.* Mark 16:15-16 & Colossians 2:11-13. The *Westminster Directory for the Publick Worship of God* says that the covenantal "promise is made to believers and their seed," and that such children "are Christians and federally holy before Baptism and therefore are they baptized."

Fourth, the covenant child -- from tenderest infancy -- should be given daily family worship, even before being weaned. First Corinthians 7:14 *cf.* First Timothy 1:5-6. In his *Commentary* on the latter passage, Calvin comments: "The covenant child is to suck in godliness, along with his mother's milk."

Fifth, the infant should be raised throughout childhood with daily Bible study and increasing catechetical training in the home. Psalm 22:9-10; Jeremiah 10:25; Luke 2:40.

Sixth, when the covenant child is ten, he should be enrolled in the Church's official 'Catechism Class' for **some three years**. First Samuel 1:24f; 2:11, 18f; Proverbs 22:6; *cf.* Acts 20:31 & Galatians 1:18. See too: *Aboth* 5:21; Clement of Alexandria's *Paedagogue*. I:4-7; *Apostolic Constitutions* VII:2:24 to VIII:4:32; and Calvin's *Institutes* IV:19:4, 12-13.

Seventh, when the child is twelve, the Church's Officers are to catechize him or her especially about the Passover and the Lord's Supper, using the "Question" and "Answer" method. Exodus 12:26f & Proverbs 22:6 & Luke 2:41f.

Eighth, when the child is thirteen, and when the Elders are satisfied he or she can "discern" the Lord's body, let him or her assent to the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*. For, as the Westminster Assembly declared, such is "to be a Directory for Catechizing such as are of weaker capacity" -- to which are appended "*The Ten Commandments*" and "*The Lord's Prayer*" and "*The Creed*."³⁴

Ninth, let him or her then profess personal faith in Christ before the whole congregation. See Rev. Dr. John Calvin's *Ecclesiastical Ordinances*.³⁵

And tenth. Let him or her then be admitted to the Lord's Table by solemn Confirmation -- with the laying on of the hands of the Minister of the Word and Sacraments! Genesis 17:20f; Luke 2:41f; Hebrews 5:11 to 6:2f.

For the Church needs to start being serious about the joyful giving of the Sacrament of Holy Communion solely to catechized Communicants in good standing -- and about withholding it from both errant Communicants and ignorant Non-Communicants. In both respects, there is today indeed an urgent need of thorough Catechizing -- toward Revival. Only then, can the Church expect God's full blessing.

ENDNOTES

1. Clem. Alex. *Paedag.* I:4-7; *Conc. Nic.* can. 14; *Ap. Const.* 7:2:24 to 8:4:32.
2. Cyr. *Pro-Catech.* and *Cat. Lect.*; Chrysost. *Homilies* on Matt. 26:26f, John 6:41f, I Cor. 11:17-28, 14:20, II Cor. 1:6f, I Tim. 1:18f, Heb. 5:1-3, 6:1-3, & 7:11f, Amb. *Myst.*; August. *De. Cat. Ign.* and *De. Rud. Cat.*
3. J. Calvin: *Comm.* on Heb. 5:12-14 & 6:1.
4. nn. 1 & 2 above.
5. J. Calvin: *Inst.* IV:19:12f.
6. J. Calvin: *Tracts & Treatises*, II:33-39,93f.
7. Dr. P.E. Hughes's *Register of the Company of Pastors of Geneva in the Time of Calvin* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 1966, pp 35,44f,47.
8. J. Calvin: *Sel. Works*, V, pp 191f.
9. J. Knox: *1st Book Disc.*, XI:5.
10. See the *Annex* of the *WSC*, & esp QQ. 4-38, 40-84, 98-107, and particularly Q. 97 (quoting: I Cor. 5:5f, 10:16f, 11:28f,31; II Cor. 13:5).
11. *Subordinate Standards of the Free Church of Scotland etc.*, pp 1-9.
12. *Ib.*, p. 295.
13. *Ib.*, pp. 301,304f.
14. *WLC* 167 (quoting: Rom. 4:11f, 6:3f,22; I Cor. 12:13-17).
15. *WLC* 177 (quoting: I Cor. 10:16f & 11:23f).
16. *WLC* 173.
17. *WCF* 29:1,8.
18. *WCF* 30:4.
19. *WCF* 30:4.
20. H. Bavinck: *Paedagogische Beginselen [Paedagogical Principles]*, Kok, Kampen,1904, pp. 10f.

21. A. Kuyper Sr.: *Encyclopaedia of Holy Theology*, Kok, Kampen, 1909, III, pp. 503f.
22. A. Kuyper Jr.: In his *Education and the Family* (in Bavinck & Others: *op. cit.*, Hollandia Press, Baarn, n.d., pp. 73f).
23. P. Biesterveld: *The Character of Catechism*, Kok, Kampen, 1900, pp. 11 & 58.
24. J. Waterink: *Theory of Education*, Kok, Kampen, 1958, p. 610.
25. E. Greyling: *Religious Instruction in the Church*, [D.R.C.] Sunday School Bookroom, Bloemfontein, 1942, p. 3.
26. G. van der Leeuw: *Sacramental Theology*, Callenbach, Nijkerk, 1949, p. 123.
27. K. Dijk: *Goal of Catechizing*, Kok, Kampen, 1952, pp. 143f.
28. K. Dijk: *Ministering to the Youth of the Church*, Kok, Kampen, 1954, pp. 8-10.
29. D.W. de Villiers: *Catechism in the D.R.C. in South Africa*, Pro Rege, Stellenbosch, 1957, pp. 54f,61,91.
30. A.C. van Uchelen: *The Holy Instruction of the Church*, Amsterdam, p. 129.
31. R. Bijlsma: *Short Catechetics*, Callenbach, Nijkerk, 1962, p. 93.
32. G. Kittel: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1984, III, pp. 638f & n. 1-8.
33. R.W. Howard: *Talks in Preparation for Confirmation*, London, 1941, p. XI.
34. *The Shorter Catechism agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster with the Assistance of Commissioners from the Church of Scotland as a Part of the Covenanted Uniformity in Religion Betwixt the Churches of Christ in the Kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland, and approved in the year 1648 by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to be a Directory for Catechising such as are of weaker Capacity, with the Proofs from the Scripture. In The Subordinate Standards and Other Authoritative Documents of the Free Church of Scotland [to which are appended The Ten Commandments and The Lord's Prayer and The Creed]*, Offices of the Free Church of Scotland, 15 North Bank St., Edinburgh, 1933, pp. 223 & 249f.
35. Cf. at n. 8 above.