

BOOK REVIEWS

THE CATHOLIC CATECHISM. Drawn up by Peter Cardinal Gasparri. Only authorized English translation, by the Dominican Fathers, Blackfriars, Oxford. (London : Sheed & Ward, 1932. Pp. xxvi, 482; 7/6.)

This is the translation of the *Catechismus Catholicus*, recently issued by the Vatican Press, designed to meet the need in these days of growing internationalism of a uniform catechism for the whole Church. The statement of doctrine is by means of questions and answers, arranged in three progressive parts. Of these three catechisms, which for present convenience are printed together in one volume, the first (pp. 3—8) is for little children preparing for their first Holy Communion, the second (pp. 11—60) for older children, the third (pp. 63—220), which is annotated with references to scriptural and ecclesiastical authority, for grown-ups. Appendices (pp. 223—458) contain the texts of many of the important references with remarks on some disputed questions touched on in the Catechism. There is a full index. The publishers have attributed the *imprimi potest* to the censor.

There is a danger that in some quarters this authoritative work will be quoted in support of the parrot-system of catechetical instruction. Two points are to be stressed. First, that the First Catechism is a short scheme for the teacher, not a text for the children to learn by heart. An English Ordinary was assured of this by Cardinal Gasparri himself, and indeed it will be evident from a mere glance at the text, from such phrases as 'most pure spirit, infinite in all perfections,' 'the free actions of creatures,' 'unity of nature,' 'sins . . . remitted.' In his introduction, the Cardinal deprecates burdening the minds and memories of little children and keeping them long from their first Holy Communion. Second, that the Second Catechism, as the most eminent author echoing the advice of the Sacred Congregation of the Sacraments observes, 'has to be learned by degrees, and according to a child's age and capacity.' No book of instruction is completely fool-proof, least of all one which calls for such delicate and discerning application as does a children's catechism. All Catholic teachers, and the laity generally, will desire to have this well-articulated system of doctrine.

T.G.