

## THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

HAVING SEEN WHAT THE SCRIPTURES PRINCIPALLY TEACH US CONCERNING GOD, IT  
FOLLOWS TO CONSIDER WHAT THEY REQUIRE AS THE DUTY OF MAN

### QUESTIONS # 171 & 97.

*(Larger Catechism)*

Q #171. *How are they that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper to prepare themselves before they come unto it?*

A. They that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves<sup>1</sup> of their being in Christ,<sup>2</sup> of their sins and wants;<sup>3</sup> of the truth and measure of their knowledge,<sup>4</sup> faith,<sup>5</sup> repentance,<sup>6</sup> love to God and the brethren,<sup>7</sup> charity to all men,<sup>8</sup> forgiving those that have done them wrong;<sup>9</sup> of their desires after Christ,<sup>10</sup> and of their new obedience;<sup>11</sup> and by renewing the exercise of these graces,<sup>12</sup> by serious meditation,<sup>13</sup> and fervent prayer.<sup>14</sup>

*(Shorter Catechism)*

Q #97. *What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's supper?*

A. It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's supper, that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body,<sup>15</sup> of their faith to feed upon him,<sup>16</sup> of their repentance,<sup>17</sup> love,<sup>18</sup> and new obedience;<sup>19</sup> lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves.<sup>20</sup>

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Question 1—*Ought those who come to the Lord's supper to examine themselves?*

*Answer*—Yes, 1 Cor. 11:28. The command to examine (δοκιμαζέτω) oneself is a command to make a *proof* or *trial* of oneself, in order to determine genuineness, as

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 11:28.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. 13:5.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. 5:7; Ex. 12:15.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. 11:29.

<sup>5</sup> 2 Cor. 13:5; Matt. 26:28.

<sup>6</sup> Zech. 12:10; 1 Cor. 11:31.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Cor. 10:16, 17; Acts 2:46, 47.

<sup>8</sup> 1 Cor. 5:8; 1 Cor. 11:18, 20.

<sup>9</sup> Matt. 5:23, 24.

<sup>10</sup> Isa. 55:1; John 7:37.

<sup>11</sup> 1 Cor. 5:7, 8.

<sup>12</sup> 1 Cor. 11:25, 26, 28; Heb. 10:21, 22, 24; Ps. 26:6.

<sup>13</sup> 1 Cor. 11:24, 25.

<sup>14</sup> 2 Chron. 30:18, 19; Matt. 26:26.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Cor. 11:28, 29.

<sup>16</sup> 2 Cor. 13:5.

<sup>17</sup> 1 Cor. 11:31.

<sup>18</sup> 1 Cor. 10:16, 17.

<sup>19</sup> 1 Cor. 5:7, 8.

<sup>20</sup> 1 Cor. 11:28, 29.

appears from the way this word is translated elsewhere, Gal. 6:4; 1 John 4:1. Unworthy partaking of the Lord's supper is a very heinous evil whereby one contracts great guilt with respect of Christ's body and blood, 1 Cor. 11:27. Thus, the apostolic command enjoins a careful examination to avoid contracting this guilt and eating and drinking judgment to oneself, 1 Cor. 11:28, 29.

Worthiness to partake consists in two things: 1.) An habitual fitness for partaking, in respect to being in a gracious state, because the soul in a fallen state of nature is unfit for this ordinance, Ps. 5:5. Such a soul is spiritually dead and unable to communicate in this sacramental feast, Eph. 2:1. 2.) An actual fitness, in respect to a gracious frame, because in our addresses to God men must not only have life but be lively, Ps. 80:18. A sleeping man is no more fit for a feast than a dead man; thus, even a true believer may communicate unworthily, as some in Corinth did, 1 Cor. 11:30, 32. It is not only necessary that our lamps have oil, but that they are burning, if we would be fit, Matt. 25:3, 4; Song 1:12.

Thus, *first*, this self-examination should make serious and strict inquiry into our actually being in Christ, 2 Cor. 13:5. *Second*, there should be a careful scrutiny that our sins have been left off by repentance and our failure with respect to spiritual duties has been acknowledged and addressed by sincere resolutions of amendment, Ex. 12:15; 1 Cor. 5:7. Question 2—*What are some of the graces in particular that ought to be strictly examined?*

*Answer*—The graces which are to be particularly are those which are particularly related to a right and worthy partaking of this sacrament, 1 Cor. 11:28.

*First*, our knowledge is to be examined in order to right discerning of the Lord's body, 1 Cor. 11:27. It ought to be examined with respect to two things: 1.) To determine whether or not, as to its measure, it is competent because this ordinance cannot be managed to spiritual advantage without a competent measure of knowledge, Hos. 4:6. 2.) To determine whether or not it is, as to its quality, saving, because anything less than a saving knowledge is not sufficient for this ordinance, 1 Cor. 13:1.

There are two things necessary for a competency of knowledge: 1.) An understanding of the fundamentals of true religion, the nature of God, the persons of the Trinity, the fall of man, the sinfulness and misery of our natural state, the two natures and one person of Christ, the way of redemption and salvation by him, our need of him and of faith as the way how we come to have an interest in him, Matt. 28:19, 20; Luke 1:4; John 20:31; 2 Pet. 1:15, 16. 2.) An understanding of the nature, use and ends of this ordinance in particular, 1 Cor. 11:29.

There are two marks whereby this knowledge may be known to be saving in its quality: 1.) When there is an inward teaching whereby a man is brought out of himself to see his lost condition and absolute need of Christ for salvation, John 6:45. 2.) When it is influential to produce a sanctified life, Matt. 11:29. While notional knowledge may leave the heart unhumiliated, saving knowledge humbles the heart, Job 42:5, 6; as well as sanctifying the conversation, Jer. 22:15, 16.

*Second*, our faith, by which we feed upon Christ in this ordinance, must be examined, 2 Cor. 13:5. This ought to be examined with respect to its necessity because: 1.) Without true faith no one has a right to this ordinance because unbelievers are not within the covenant of grace, faith being that by which we enter in, they have no right to the children's bread, John 1:12, 13. Without faith, there is no pleasing of God in anything that

we do, Heb. 11:6. 2.) Without faith, there can be no spiritual feeding upon Christ because faith is the hand and mouth of the soul, 1 Cor. 10:3, 4.

The marks of true faith are known: 1.) From a superlative desire of Christ and his grace, Isa. 26:9; Matt. 5:6; for him as well as his benefits, and not for his benefits only, Ps. 73:25. It is a desire for the whole of Christ, to conform the soul to the image of God, without reserve, condition or exception, Acts 9:6. 2.) A receiving and use making of Jesus Christ in all his offices, Col. 2:6. The importance of this is underscored in this ordinance, Matt. 26:28.

*Third*, our repentance must be examined, 1 Cor. 11:31. The necessity of repentance in this ordinance appears in the following: 1.) Without it, there can be no suitable remembrance of a crucified Christ, Zech. 12:10. Jesus is represented, in this sacrament, as broken and dying for our sins, 1 Cor. 11:24. Communicating with an impenitent and hard heart does not comport well with an affectionate remembrancing of it, Ps. 32:3-5. 2.) Without it, one cannot expect a sealed pardon, which is the end of the sacrament, Acts 2:38; for God will not seal a pardon to an impenitent soul, nor give spiritual comfort to insensible sinners, Ps. 7:11.

The marks of true repentance that one has turned from all sin unto God are known: 1.) By no longer living in sins, having turned to God, Ps. 119:59; Acts 26:18. 2.) By turning from all sin, whether gross sins in practice or from all sins simply, in heart and affection, Ezek. 14:6. A heart loosed from sin is a heart that hates all sin, Ps. 119:104. 3.) By a turning from it not only for the wrath annexed to it but because of its contrariety to the will of God and the nature of man, Ezek. 36:31. 4.) By discovering the burden in one's spirit from the remains of corruption, as they are to the Spirit of God, Isa. 6:5.

*Fourth*, our love must be examined, 1 Cor. 10:16, 17. The necessity of love in this ordinance is twofold: 1.) Love to God is necessary in it, because therein is held forth the greatest display of God's love in giving his own Son to die for his people, 1 John 4:19. 2.) Love to the brethren is necessary, because God's love, which is represented in it, does require it, Eph. 4:32. It is this love of the brethren which characterized the life of the apostolic church, Acts 2:46, 47.

The marks of true love to God are discerned by: 1.) True love to God is supreme love which will swallow up all affections to the creature, whether lawful or unlawful enjoyments, Luke 14:27. 2.) Love to our neighbor will instill a disposition of charity toward all men, 1 Cor. 5:8; the lack of which is contrary to the nature of this ordinance, 1 Cor. 11:18, 20. Love to our neighbor will make us forgiving of those that have done us wrong, even as we desire to be forgiven of God, Matt. 5:23, 24. Especially, this love is manifest in a love to the people of God, because of the image of Christ appearing in them, 1 John 3:14.

*Fifth*, our desires after Christ, Isa. 55:1; together with the new obedience it entails must be examined, 1 Cor. 5:7, 8. The former consists in a felt sense of need for redemption in and through Christ, John 7:37; the latter in that conformity without which we cannot pretend to be Christ's disciples, Matt. 11:29. The marks of which consist in: 1.) Proceeding from the love of God, Heb. 6:10. 2.) Having respect to the glory of God, 1 Cor. 10:31. 3.) Being universal, Ps. 119:6. 4.) It is constant, Matt. 24:13.

Preparation for a worthy reception consists in renewing the exercise of these graces, with respect to the sacrament, 1 Cor. 11:25, 26, 28; and our consciences, Heb. 10:21, 22, 24; Ps. 26:6; by: 1.) Serious meditation on the ordinance and its requirements, 1 Cor. 11:24, 25. 2.) Fervent prayer for grace and pardon, 2 Chron. 30:18, 19; Matt. 26:26.