

## 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

### QUESTION # 170.

*(Larger Catechism)*

Q #170. *How do they that worthily communicate in the Lord's supper feed upon the body and blood of Christ therein?*

A. As the body and blood of Christ are not corporally or carnally present in, with, or under the bread and wine in the Lord's supper,<sup>1</sup> and yet are spiritually present to the faith of the receiver, no less truly and really than the elements themselves are to their outward senses;<sup>2</sup> so they that worthily communicate in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, do therein feed upon the body and blood of Christ, not after a corporal and carnal, but in a spiritual manner; yet truly and really,<sup>3</sup> while by faith they receive and apply unto themselves Christ crucified, and all the benefits of his death.<sup>4</sup>

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Question 1—*Is the body and blood of Christ corporally or carnally present in, with, or under the bread and wine in the Lord's supper?*

*Answer*—In opposition to the Popish doctrine of transubstantiation and the Lutheran conceit of consubstantiation, we understand that, the bread and wine, after consecration or blessing, are not changed into either the real body and blood or the substance of His body and blood so as to be found in, with, or under the elements, 1 Cor. 11:27; Matt. 26:29. This opinion is contrary to the Scriptures, and is repugnant to our reason and to our senses and destroys the very nature and end of the sacrament:

*First*, it is contrary to the *Scriptures*, which expressly affirm that, after the blessing, the elements are called by the same names as before, which is surely an intimation that no such change has taken place, Mark 14:22-25; 1 Cor. 11:26.

*Second*, it is repugnant to *reason*, which informs us that a body cannot occupy but one place at one time, and cannot possibly be in numerous different places at one and the same time, 1 Cor. 13:11. Those who advocate these views assert that the body of Christ is in as many places as there are consecrated wafers, that accidents may be without substance and a substance without accidents, Prov. 6:27, 28.

*Third*, it is repugnant to our *senses*, which inform us that, after the blessing, the elements are still bread and wine, 1 Cor. 11:28. If this were the case, then every miracle would be rendered uncertain and dubious by which the Word of God is confirmed, John 2:9-11.

*Fourth*, it blasphemously destroys the very nature and end of this sacrament, as both a sign and a seal, which in this supper is to commemorate the bodily absence of Christ, 1 Cor. 11:26. We are assured by the Scriptures, that the heavens must retain his bodily presence until he come again, Acts 3:21.

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<sup>1</sup> Acts 3:21.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 26:26, 28.

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. 11:24-29.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. 10:16.

Question 2—*How is the body and blood of Christ to be accounted present in the Lord's supper to those who worthily communicate?*

*Answer*—Although there is no *physical* change which occurs with respect to the bread and wine, yet there is a *moral* change, by which their use and signification are changed, 1 Cor. 11:24, 25. Thus, as symbols of Christ's body and blood, and of the benefits of His redemption, believers are made partakers *spiritually*, by *faith*, Ps. 16:5, 6. If any object that Christ Himself says, "this is my body," Matt. 26:26; it is replied that this expression is not to be understood *literally*, but *figuratively*, as numerous other places of Scripture confirm, 1 Cor. 10:4; John 10:7, 11; 15:1, *etc.*

The body and blood of Christ are, then, present: 1.) *Spiritually*, as Christ and His benefits are always present to believers, John 14:20-23; but in a more visible way *sacramentally*, Luke 22:19, 20. 2.) *By faith*, whereby this spiritual presence is received by those who believe, John 6:51, 63, 64. 3.) Yet *truly* and *really*, as much as the elements are truly and really present to their outward senses, Matt. 26:26, 28. By the working of the Spirit, that which is locally present at the right hand of the Father, Christ's body and blood, is made present to us mystically, John 3:13; 6:53, 54; and, we, by that same Spirit are seated together mystically with Him in heavenly places, Eph. 2:6, 13, 18.

Question 3—*How do those who communicate worthily feed upon the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's supper?*

*Answer*—Those who communicate worthily, although they do not feed upon Christ's body and blood carnally and corporally, as some aver, do partake of the spiritual realities signified and sealed, John 6:27. We must partake of His body and blood, not physically with the natural mouth, but spiritually by the mouth of faith, Ps. 81:10.

That a worthy communicating is required appears from the apostle's warning against a scandalous profanation of this sacrament, 1 Cor. 11:27, 29. The meaning of his use of this word is to prevent any partaking in a manner unsuitable to the nature of the ordinance, 1 Cor. 10:21. Furthermore, none are to be accounted worthy receivers of this sacrament but those who are true believers, who account their worthiness not in themselves but in their union with Christ, 2 Cor. 3:5.

This participation, or reception, of the body and blood of Christ by faith, though not carnal, is spiritual and real and embraces: 1.) Faith in Christ's sufferings and death by reason of the incarnation of the Son of God, 1 Cor. 11:24. 2.) Faith in the provision of the covenant of grace ratified by the shed blood of Christ, 1 Cor. 11:25; Isa. 55:1-3. 3.) The forgiveness of sins, and the gift of eternal life through faith in that shed blood, 1 Cor. 11:26; Col. 1:14. 4.) Our union with Christ through the Holy Spirit, who dwells both in Christ and in us, 1 Cor. 11:27; 12:13. 5.) The quickening influence of the same Spirit, John 6:63.

An unworthy reception fails to discern one's interest in Christ or that He is present in this sacrament to the judgment of the unworthy recipient, 1 Cor. 11:28, 29.

Question 4—*What do they by faith receive and apply?*

*Answer*—Those who partake worthily do, by faith, receive and apply: 1.) Christ crucified, the power and wisdom of God, 1 Cor. 1:23, 24; which is a real communion with His body and blood, 1 Cor. 10:16. 2.) All the benefits of this death, for spiritual nourishment and growth in grace, indicated by: 1.) A desire for the sincere milk of the Word, 1 Pet. 2:2. 2.) A living by faith and not sense, 2 Cor. 5:7. 3.) More inward opposition to sin, Ps. 66:18. 4.) An outward tenderness of deportment, Ps. 39:1.