

THE LARGER AND SHORTER CATECHISMS.

WHAT MAN OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD

QUESTIONS # 69 & 32.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #69. *What is the communion in grace which the members of the invisible church have with Christ?*

A. The communion in grace which the members of the invisible church have with Christ, is their partaking of the virtue of his mediation, in their justification,¹ adoption,² sanctification, and whatever else, in this life, manifests their union with him.³

(Shorter Catechism)

Q #32. *What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?*

A. They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification,⁴ adoption,⁵ and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.⁶

Question 1—*What is that communion in grace with Christ?*

Answer—Previous questions have taken up the vital union which members of the invisible church have with Christ in their effectual calling, Col. 2:6, 7; in this question, we must consider that communion in grace which the same have with Christ, 1 Cor. 6:15, 19. The former is that participation in Christ whereby we are regenerated and, subsequently, justified, Rom. 7:4; the latter is the partaking of the virtue of his mediation whereby those things which manifest this life in Christ is made manifest, Eph. 2:20-22. As union with Christ is not union with a system of doctrine, nor with external religious influences, nor with an organized church, nor with an ideal man but with a personal, risen, living, omnipresent Lord, Eph. 5:31, 32; so this latter is a partaking of that which pertains to participation in the life of this divine Person, John 15:5.

This communion with Christ does not in the least import our being made partakers of any of the glories or privileges which belong to him as Mediator, whether personally, *cf.* John 1:1, or in regard of his office, *cf.* Isa. 44:6; Rev. 22:13; but it consists in our participation of those benefits which he has purchased for us, Phil. 1:11. The former are incommunicable while the latter are communicable and the basis for our communion in grace, 1 Cor. 10:16. It implies, on his part, an infinite condescension, that he will be pleased to communicate such blessings to us, Phil. 2:6-8; and, in ours, unspeakable honors and privileges, which we enjoy from him, 2 Cor. 8:9. This is sometimes called “fellowship,” which results from friendship, and proceeds from love, 1 John 1:3. For this reason, Christ speaks of “loving” his disciples, “and manifesting himself to them,” John 14:21. As this itself proceeds from union with him, and is the immediate effect and

¹ Rom. 8:30.

² Eph. 1:5.

³ 1 Cor. 1:30.

⁴ Rom. 8:30.

⁵ Eph. 1:5.

⁶ 1 Cor. 1:26, 30.

consequence of effectual calling, it is said that God has called the elect, the invisible church, unto this fellowship of communion, 1 Cor. 1:9. And, as a manifestation of this union, we receive those blessings which he has purchased by his blood, as from a fountain of all grace, John 1:16.

This communion with Christ is one of intercourse, wherein there is an intimacy and sweet freedom which Christ and his people have with one another, Isa. 58:9. Moreover, it is a communion of interest, consisting in their actual title to and possession of Christ himself and his purchased blessings, Song 2:16.

Question 2—*What are the benefits of those who are effectually called?*

Answer—The leading benefits which they who are effectually called partake of in this life are three:

First, we have a communion with him in his merits, which are as fully imputed to us for justification, as if his sufferings had been endured by us, Rom. 8:30. As soon as the soul answers the call of the Gospel, and comes to Christ, that man is brought out of a state of condemnation, and is absolved of the guilt of sin, Rom. 8:1. His sins are pardoned and he is accepted as a righteous man being adjudged and acquitted for Christ's sake, Rom. 4:25; thereby bestowing on him a white stone of innocence, Rev. 2:17. He alone, without any merit of his, suffered our punishment, that we, without any merit of ours, might obtain grace, 2 Cor. 5:21.

Second, we have communion with him in his Sonship, whereby the peculiar nature of God's electing love is manifested in us, 1 John 3:1. By this, not only are those who are effectually called acquitted of their sin and get a white stone, but they receive a new name, as being sons and daughters to God, Rev. 3:12; John 1:12. This adoption of sons is according to the good pleasure of the will of God, Eph. 1:5; and, thus, they are brought out of the family of the devil and made members of the household of faith, not as servants but as sons, Gal. 4:7; 6:10. Christ's Father is now their Father, he is their elder brother, Heb. 2:10-13; and the Spirit of his Son dwells in them, teaching them to cry, Abba, Father, Gal. 4:6. All are of the same household with the excellent of the earth, though some dwell above and other below, they are one family, Eph. 3:15.

Third, we have communion with him in his life and grace, by habitual and real infusion, and inhabitation of his Spirit unto sanctification, 1 Cor. 1:26, 30. Thus, we are said to be sanctified in him, 1 Cor. 1:2. This effectual calling is a call to holiness, 1 Thess. 4:7; because it is a holy calling, 2 Tim. 1:9. The author of the call is holy, 1 Pet. 1:15, 16; as is the communion that issues forth, 2 Cor. 13:14.

Additionally, there are several other benefits which accompany these and manifest their union with him: 1.) Reconciliation with God, for when the sinner is effectually called, the real enmity is taken away, and the legal enmity is removed by justification, Rom. 5:1. God and the sinner become friends, and are firmly so in a covenant of peace, having common friends and enemies, Rom. 5:10. 2.) Access to God, as children to a Father, even as one friend to another, opening a communication between heaven and earth, Eph. 3:12. 3.) Freedom from the slavery of sin and Satan, John 8:32. 4.) A right to eternal life, Rom. 8:17. They may claim it in their head Christ, and their title is good and sure in him, Rom. 4:16; for it is a heavenly calling, whereby they are called to the eternal inheritance, 2 Cor. 5:1.

There are also those benefits which those who are effectually called partake of in the life to come which are comprehended under the word *glorification*, 2 Thess. 2:14.