

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 # 175.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #175. *What is the duty of Christians, after they have received the sacrament of the Lord's supper?*

A. The duty of Christians, after they have received the sacrament of the Lord's supper, is seriously to consider how they have behaved themselves therein, and with what success;¹ if they find quickening and comfort, to bless God for it,² beg the continuance of it,³ watch against relapses,⁴ fulfill their vows,⁵ and encourage themselves to a frequent attendance on that ordinance:⁶ but if they find no present benefit, more exactly to review their preparation to, and carriage at, the sacrament;⁷ in both which, if they can approve themselves to God and their own consciences, they are to wait for the fruit of it in due time:⁸ but, if they see they have failed in either, they are to be humbled,⁹ and to attend upon it afterwards with more care and diligence.¹⁰

Question 1—*What should be the immediate duty of those who have received the Lord's supper?*

Answer—There ought to be a serious consideration of the manner in which they have received of the sacrament which consists in two particulars:

First, inquiring how they behaved themselves in the time of the reception, 1 Cor. 11:17. We have reason to blame our conduct in this ordinance if: 1.) When our minds and affections have been conversant in those things which are altogether unsuitable to the work we have engaged in, Col. 3:2. 2.) When our thoughts and meditations are taken up chiefly in worldly matters, Phil. 3:18, 19. 3.) Even if our thoughts and meditations have been conversant about religious affairs, if they are not set upon the design of the ordinance, they are to be blamed, 1 Cor. 11:29. 4.) It is still unbecoming them in this ordinance, who meditate upon the thing signified, Jesus Christ crucified for sin, who do so as unconcerned spectators having only an historical faith, without making specific application to themselves, Gal. 2:20. 5.) Their behavior is to be blamed when, instead of heightening and exciting affection for Christ pouring out his blood for their sin, they respond as if the atoning death was a subject of mere common import, Heb. 10:29.

¹ Ps. 28:7; 85:8; 1 Cor. 11:17, 30, 31.

² 2 Chron. 30:21-23, 25, 26; Acts 2:42, 46, 47.

³ Ps. 36:10; Song 3:4; 1 Chron. 29:18.

⁴ 1 Cor. 10:3-5, 12.

⁵ Ps. 50:14.

⁶ 1 Cor. 11:25, 26; Acts 2:42, 46.

⁷ Cant. 5:1-6; Eccles. 5:1-6.

⁸ Ps. 123:1, 2; 42:5, 8; 43:3-5.

⁹ 2 Chron. 30:18, 19; Isa. 1:16, 18.

¹⁰ 2 Cor. 7:11; 1 Chron. 15:12-14.

Second, inquiring into the success of the receiving and whether they have any ground to conclude they were favored with the special presence of God in it, Ps. 85:8. To those who partake worthily, there should be a seeking of God's presence through communion with Christ, Ps. 28:7. Those who are guilty of unworthy partaking ought to inquire into God's special presence against such, 1 Cor. 11:30, 31.

Question 2—*What should they do if they find quickening and comfort in it?*

Answer—If they can say they have had some communion with God in the love of Christ, and the witness of his Spirit, having engaged in this ordinance in the right manner, then they ought to: 1.) Bless God for it, considering that he alone can excite grace in those in whom he has first wrought it, both with gladness and joy, 2 Chron. 30:21-23, 25, 26; as well as singleness of heart, Acts 2:42, 46, 47. 2.) They ought to beg a continuance in this quickening and comfort, Ps. 36:10; whereby they discover that they set a value upon them and glorify God in it, Song 3:4. This is the best expedient for walking with God at other times, as well as when engaged in holy ordinances, 1 Chron. 29:18. 3.) They ought to watch against relapses into those sins which they formerly were overtaken with, as they now see reason to abhor, 1 Cor. 10:3-5, 12. Although they are sometimes brought into a good frame, especially during sacramental seasons, yet the deceitfulness of the heart remains, Rom. 7:15; and they are constantly subject to the endeavors of Satan to ensnare them, 1 Pet. 5:8. 4.) They ought to be careful to fulfill their vows, considering that they are under an indispensable obligation to perform those duties, and put forth those acts of grace, whom Christ has taken into covenant relation with himself, Ps. 50:14. 5.) They ought to encourage themselves to a frequent attendance upon this ordinance, 1 Cor. 11:25, 26. Having experienced a sense of God's quickening and comforting presence is an encouragement to wait upon his ordinances, Ps. 116:2. Continuance in his presence ought to excite a desire to continue in his ordinances, Acts 2:42, 46.

Question 3—*What should they do if they find no present benefit?*

Answer—Should those who receive find no present benefit in the quickening and comforting, which even the best of believers sometimes do not, they ought to endeavor to find out the particular causes, either in their preparation to or carriage at the sacrament, of God's withdrawing from them, Song 5:1-6. It may be that God withholds this privilege from them in a way of sovereignty, that they learn that their comforts are not at their own disposal, John 3:8. Or, it may be he withholds this blessing from them for a trial of graces, so that they see how needful it is for them to wait for those blessings, Isa. 30:18. Yet, it may be they do apprehend some particular reason, connected with sins of commission or sins of omission before or during our observance of this ordinance, which holds the reason why God denies his quickening and comforting presence, Eccl. 5:1-6.

Question 4—*What should they seek to do in either case?*

Answer—If, after due examination and review of their preparation to and carriage at the sacrament, they can approve themselves to God and their own consciences, then they are simply to wait patiently for the fruit of the observance in due time, Ps. 123:1, 2. They ought not to allow the lack of quickening and comfort to dampen their affection toward God, Ps. 42:5, 8; acknowledging that all their hope is in him, Ps. 43:3-5. If they see they have failed in either, they are to be humbled for their sin in lack of preparation, 2 Chron. 30:18, 19; and, being affected with a godly sorrow, 2 Cor. 7:11; they ought to correct this failure afterwards with more care and diligence, 1 Chron. 15:12-14.