

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 # 176.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #176. *Wherein do the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper agree?*

A. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper agree, in that the author of both is God;¹ the spiritual part of both is Christ and his benefits;² both are seals of the same covenant,³ are to be dispensed by ministers of the gospel, and by none other;⁴ and to be continued in the church of Christ until his second coming.⁵

Question 1—*Who is the author of both sacraments?*

Answer—The author of both of the sacraments is God who, in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, appointed these holy ordinances, or means of grace, Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:23. Thus it is that we ought to expect his presence and blessing to make them effectual to our salvation, John 3:5; which we cannot expect without engaging in them by his own warrant, Isa. 1:11, 12. This warrant has been given in His Word, 1 Cor. 11:24, 25; and in the experience of many believers, Ps. 104:34. So, too, it has come to pass that many of His people have found a sensible advantage from observing these ordinances, Luke 24:30, 31, 35. The effects of His power and grace which have been produced in their hearts when engaged in them carry convincing evidence that God is their author, Luke 24:32. With respect to baptism, this is more especially the case of those who are baptized as adults, Acts 8:37, 38. When infants are baptized, though God can and often does, own this ordinance by regenerating them at the time of their receiving it, yet His doing so cannot be known by us, unless it is inferred from the extraordinary communications of grace which those may experience who are enabled by faith to give up their children to God in that ordinance, 1 Sam. 1:11, 27, 28; Luke 1:41, 42, 59-64.

Question 2—*What is the spiritual part of both sacraments?*

Answer—Both sacraments agree in holding forth, or signifying, Christ and his benefits, Rom. 6:3, 4; 1 Cor. 10:16. In baptism, there is signified a taking up of these benefits, Gal. 3:27; in the Lord's supper, there is an application of these benefits, John 6:53. Baptism signifies the atonement made sure by the resurrection of Christ whereby our consciences are made clear before God, 1 Pet. 3:21; the Lord's supper the broken body and shed blood are signified and held forth whereby there is continual nourishment and hope of redemption for those who trust in Christ, John 6:54-57. Thus, it should be that in these sacraments, faith ought to make use of the signs and reach forth to the things signified thereby making a spiritual appropriation, 1 Cor. 12:13. In so doing, we have communion

¹ Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:23.

² Rom. 6:3, 4; 1 Cor. 10:16.

³ Rom. 4:11; Col. 2:12; Matt. 26:27, 28.

⁴ John 1:33; Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:23; 4:1; Heb. 5:4.

⁵ Matt. 28:19, 20; 1 Cor. 11:26.

with Christ as crucified, dying, and buried, and as afterwards rising from the dead to bring the work of redemption to perfection, Mark 14:22-25; Heb. 3:14.

Question 3—*What do both sacraments seal?*

Answer—Just as the Old Testament sacraments pointed to and sealed the promises of the covenant of grace, in the hearts of believers, Rom. 2:28, 29; Deut. 30:6; so, too, the same covenant is sealed by the same Spirit in the hearts of believers under the New Testament, 2 Cor. 1:22. These two New Testament sacraments also agree in that both are seals, as the Old Testament sacraments were, of the same covenant, Rom. 4:11. Jesus Christ is the Mediator of the covenant of grace, 1 Tim. 2:5, 6; which covenant is now sealed to the people of God under a New and better Testament than the Old Testament dispensation of this covenant, Heb. 8:6. These sacraments are, therefore, signs and seals of this better dispensation of the same covenant of grace, Col. 2:12; Matt. 26:27, 28.

Question 4—*By whom are the sacraments to be administered?*

Answer—Baptism and the Lord's supper find more agreement in this, that they are to be dispensed by none but those who are ministers of the Gospel, Matt. 28:19. Under the Old Testament dispensation, all the parts of the temple service, being significant signs of Christ and the benefits of the covenant of grace, were to be administered by none but those who were qualified, called, and lawfully set apart to that work, Heb. 5:4. We may conclude, then, that the moral reason of the thing extends itself to the administration of the seals of the covenant under the Gospel dispensation, 1 Cor. 4:1. It is certain that some must be appointed or set apart to the work of dispensing these ordinances who might be said to have a special call to this work from God and man, John 1:33; 1 Cor. 11:23. This point may also be inferred from those Scriptures which speak of pastors after God's own heart who are to feed his people with knowledge and understanding, as being His special gift, Jer. 3:15; as well as from what the apostle says concerning Gospel ministers, whether ordinary or extraordinary, that they are Christ's gift to His church when He ascended on high, Eph. 4:8, 11.

Question 5—*How long are the sacraments to be continued in the church?*

Answer—These two ordinances agree, moreover, in their being continued in the church until Christ's second coming, Heb. 9:28. Though we are to look and hope for more of the presence of God in them, and a greater effusion of the Spirit to make them more effectual, and render the church more bright and glorious, as being favored with greater degrees of divine grace, John 7:39; yet we have no ground to expect new ordinances, or a new dispensation to succeed this which we are under, till Christ's second and most glorious coming, 1 Cor. 15:45; Heb. 10:10. Hence it is that this present dispensation is called the last time, 1 John 2:18. Thus also the apostle would have us to understand that the dispensation of the Gospel, which we are under, is to be expected to last until Christ's second coming, 1 Cor. 10:11. That this includes the ordinance of baptism appears in the promise Christ has given of his presence with his ministers and churches when faithfully engaged in this sacrament, Matt. 28:19, 20. That this promise extends to the Lord's supper is made clear by the intention of the service itself, 1 Cor. 11:26.