

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 # 160 & 90.

(Larger Catechism)

Q #160. *What is required of those that hear the word preached?*

A. It is required of those that hear the word preached, that they attend upon it with diligence,¹ preparation,² and prayer;³ examine what they hear by the scriptures;⁴ receive the truth with faith,⁵ love,⁶ meekness,⁷ and readiness of mind,⁸ as the word of God;⁹ meditate,¹⁰ and confer of it;¹¹ hide it in their hearts,¹² and bring forth the fruit of it in their lives.¹³

(Shorter Catechism)

Q #90. *How is the Word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation?*

A. That the Word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence,¹⁴ preparation,¹⁵ and prayer;¹⁶ receive it with faith and love,¹⁷ lay it up in our hearts,¹⁸ and practice it in our lives.¹⁹

Question 1—*What is required of those who hear before they hear or read?*

Answer—The Word of God must attended to and understood in order to be effectual, Acts 8:30. Therefore, the Scriptures ought to be attended to, whether in the reading or hearing of the Word preached, with that diligence which characterizes those desirous of gaining wisdom, Prov. 8:34.

First, it is necessary that those who would hear this Word with the hearing of faith attend it with a due preparation, Luke 8:18. Therefore, we must, like Jacob, prepare

¹ Prov. 8:34.

² 1 Pet. 2:1, 2; Luke 8:18.

³ Ps. 119:18; Eph. 6:18, 19.

⁴ Acts 17:11.

⁵ Heb. 4:2.

⁶ 2 Thess. 2:10.

⁷ Jas. 1:21.

⁸ Acts 17:11.

⁹ 1 Thess. 2:13.

¹⁰ Luke 9:44; Heb. 2:1.

¹¹ Luke 24:14; Deut. 6:6, 7.

¹² Prov. 2:1; Ps. 119:11.

¹³ Luke 8:15; Jas. 1:25.

¹⁴ Prov. 8:34.

¹⁵ 1 Pet. 2:1, 2.

¹⁶ Ps. 119:18.

¹⁷ Heb. 4:2; 2 Thess. 2:10.

¹⁸ Ps. 119:11.

¹⁹ Luke 8:15; Jas. 1:25.

ourselves for the reception of the ordinances, Gen. 35:2, 3. This preparation should consist in the following: 1.) Impressing upon one's heart a sense of the majesty and holiness of that God into whose presence we are going and whose Word we are hearing, Ps. 89:6. Though the voice is upon the earth, the speaker is in heaven, and we should consider that so as to come to hear what God has to say, Acts 10:33. The more we cherish this impression, the more good we may expect from his hand, Isa. 66:2. 2.) Banishing out of our hearts those worldly cares that are at other times lawful, Matt. 13:7, 22. We ought to say to these cares, as Abraham to his servants, abide here, Gen. 22:5. 3.) Making application of the blood of Christ to the soul for removing guilt and putting away the enmity between us and God, Amos 3:3. We must approach the altar of the Lord with clean hands, Ps. 26:6. 4.) All of those spiritual obstacles to a right hearing, carnal and corrupt lusts and affections, must be laid aside so that there will be a stirring up and profitableness in the Word of God, 1 Pet. 2:1, 2.

Additionally, this diligence and preparation, especially because it respects spiritual instruction, must all be undergirded with prayer for enlightenment, Ps. 119:18. Just as the preaching of the Word of God must be accompanied with prayer for freedom and faithfulness of utterance, Eph. 6:18, 19; so, too, men stand in need of the blessing of God upon that Word that they might be turned from darkness to light, Acts 26:18. Therefore, we ought to pray: 1.) For assistance to the minister, 2 Thess. 3:1. 2.) For a blessing to ourselves, that God would direct the Word to our case and use, John 9:39. 3.) For the outpouring of the Spirit in these ordinances, according to the promise of the Lord, Prov. 1:23.

Question 2—*What is required of those who hear going along with the hearing or reading?*

Answer—It is required of those who hear the Word that they examine that according to the Scriptures, Acts 17:11. All right hearing and reading must be to receive the truth with:

First, that faith due the truth of God, as drinking water out of the wells of salvation, Heb. 4:2. This must be a faith of assent to the truth and righteousness of the precepts, promises and threatenings, Ps. 119:128, 160. Faith receives this truth as having the divine authority of God's own testimony, Ps. 19:7. The power of faith in this truth captivates the soul into the belief of it, 2 Cor. 10:5. By faith, men receive the kingdom of God as little children, Luke 18:17. Faith also makes application of this truth to ourselves, Job 5:27. Wherefore, the Word of God is compared to falling rain, Deut. 32:2; and the soul to a thirsty ground, Ps. 143:6.

Second, that love of that truth, as the means of salvation, 2 Thess. 2:10. Faith receives that Word as true, but love receives that Word as good for us, Isa. 39:8. There are three ways we ought to love this Word: 1.) With a love of esteem, Job 23:12. 2.) With a love of desire, Ps. 19:10. 3.) With a love of complacency, Ps. 119:162.

Third, that meekness with respect to that truth which lays aside all self-trust or reliance, Jas. 1:21. It is in meekness that we find divine guidance and instruction, Ps. 25:9.

Fourth, that readiness of mind wherein there is a disposition to receive that Word, Acts 17:11. Those so disposed will receive that Word with gladness unto salvation, Acts 2:41.

Finally, with the firm persuasion that it is indeed the very Word of God, 1 Thess. 2:13. It is this persuasion that ought to move us to assemble unto the hearing of that Word, Acts 13:44.

Question 3—*What is required of those who hear after they hear or read?*

Answer—Those who hear or read this Word ought to do several things upon hearing it:

First, there should be a meditating upon it, Ps. 1:2. We stand in need that this Word is allowed to sink down in our souls, whereby we might be profited, Luke 9:44. In so doing, we are enabled to take firmer hold upon the truth that it does not slip away, Heb. 2:1.

Second, there should be a conferring, or discussing, of the truth of this Word throughout each day, Deut. 6:6, 7. The repeating and discussing of the truth of the Word is of great delight to those who believe, Luke 24:14. In this repetition, there is often to be found more delight in it than when the truth was first proposed, Prov. 6:22.

Third, there should be a laying it up in our hearts, as a precious treasure, Col. 3:16. Through this hiding, or laying up, our hearts and memories become storehouses of this Word, Prov. 2:1. This, then, becomes a stay keeping us from sinning against the Lord, Ps. 119:11.

Fourth, there should be an endeavoring to put into practice, or bringing forth the fruit thereof, in our lives, Luke 8:15. The Word heard but not reduced to practice leaves men with a greater guilt and offense before God, Jas. 1:25.