

## 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 # 162 & 92.

*(Larger Catechism)*

Q #162. *What is a sacrament?*

A. A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ in his church,<sup>1</sup> to signify, seal, and exhibit<sup>2</sup> unto those that are within the covenant of grace,<sup>3</sup> the benefits of his mediation;<sup>4</sup> to strengthen and increase their faith, and all other graces;<sup>5</sup> to oblige them to obedience;<sup>6</sup> to testify and cherish their love and communion one with another;<sup>7</sup> and to distinguish them from those that are without.<sup>8</sup>

*(Shorter Catechism)*

Q #92. *What is a sacrament?*

A. A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.<sup>9</sup>

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

*Answer*—The word *sacrament*, is borrowed from the Romans, who understood by it a military oath, whereby soldiers bound themselves to be true and faithful to their general. Gradually, this term was appropriated and applied to baptism and the Lord's supper, because in them we engage to be faithful soldiers to Jesus Christ the captain of our salvation, Heb. 2:10. The author of the sacraments is the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Head and King of His church, Col. 1:18; Luke 1:32. Man neither made, nor can make a sacrament, but the Lord only, because: 1.) He only is the author of promise, and of the covenant of which the sacraments are appointed signs and seals, Gen. 17:7. Abraham did not invent the sacrament but received it from the Lord, whose institution it was, Gen. 17:10. Likewise, the apostle confesses that he, too, received the sacrament from the Lord, 1 Cor. 11:23. 2.) The sacraments are a part of that religious worship, which belongs only to God to appoint, Matt. 15:9. They are instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ, who, in so doing, revealed that He is the Lord who was the author of them, Matt. 28:19, 20; furthermore, it is the word of his institution joined to the rite, with a promise annexed, that makes a sacrament, Matt. 26:26-28.

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<sup>1</sup> Gen. 17:7, 10; Ex. 12 (containing the institution of the passover); Matt. 28:19; 26:26-28.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 4:11; 1 Cor. 11:24, 25.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 15:8; Ex. 12:48.

<sup>4</sup> Acts 2:38; 1 Cor. 10:16.

<sup>5</sup> Rom. 4:11; Gal. 3:27.

<sup>6</sup> Rom. 6:3, 4; 1 Cor. 10:21.

<sup>7</sup> Eph. 4:2-5; 1 Cor. 12:13.

<sup>8</sup> Eph. 2:11, 12; Gen. 34:14.

<sup>9</sup> Gen. 17:7, 10; Exod. 12; 1 Cor. 11:23, 26.

Again, it is the nature of the sacraments to be instituted in Christ's church, Ex. 12. Therefore, they are referred to as holy ordinances, being set apart from common use to a sacred use, 1 Cor. 9:13; Isa. 52:11; because they are designed to promote holiness in those who receive them, 2 Cor. 13:5; and because those who receive them are, by profession, a holy or peculiar people, 1 Pet. 2:9.

Question 2—*What is the purpose of the sacraments?*

*Answer*—The purpose of the sacraments is threefold: 1.) They are given for signs, in order to signify the grace and promise of God, Gen. 17:10; Deut. 30:6. These are sensible signs representing Christ, in both the Old Testament, 1 Cor. 10:3, 4; and, in the New Testament, Col. 2:12; Mark 14:22-24. 2.) They are given for seals, Rom. 4:11; whereby those, even in external covenant, are made to partake of the good gifts, 2 Cor. 1:22; Heb. 6:4, 5. 3.) They are given to make exhibition of the grace and promise of God in Christ, 1 Cor. 11:24, 25.

The signing, sealing and exhibiting of the grace and promise of the covenant is unto those who are within the covenant, Ex. 12:48. Unto them alone, the promises are confirmed and sealed by the ministration of the Spirit, Rom. 15:8; Eph. 1:13. Unto them alone, the benefits of Christ's mediation are applied, Ezek. 44:9.

Unto those to whom the grace belongs, the promises of the benefits of Christ's mediation are exhibited and conferred, John 6:53, 54; including the remission of sins, Acts 2:38; and communion with Christ, 1 Cor. 10:16. Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are applied to believers in the sacraments, John 6:56, 57.

Question 3—*What do the sacraments work effectually in those who rightly receive them?*

*Answer*—The covenant is held out in the Word to be embraced by all to whom it comes, Isa. 53:1; by believing we enter into the covenant, John 3:36; by the sacraments God declares it to be a sure covenant, as one does by subscribing a contract, and sealing it, Rom. 4:11; Luke 22:20. By the sacraments, the faith of believers is both strengthened and increased, Gal. 3:27; together with all other graces, 1 Cor. 1:30.

Together with strengthening and increasing faith, the sacraments also oblige, or bind, those who receive them to a greater obedience, Rom. 6:3, 4. The sacraments signify and seal the promises and all the responsibilities, which are entailed in the covenant, binding those who would profit therein to a careful walking and threatening those who would abuse the sacraments, 1 Cor. 11:28, 29. Thus, it is dangerous for those who are hypocrites to receive the sacrament, for in so doing they rob God and wound their own souls, Matt. 7:6. The sacraments call us to a closer and more circumspect obedience in communion with Christ whilst forbidding us communion with the wickedness of this present evil age, 1 Cor. 10:21.

Through the use of the sacraments, the saints also testify and cherish their love to one another, Eph. 4:2-5. This love is rooted in, as well as testifies to, the communion that they have with each other by Christ's Spirit, 1 Cor. 12:13. By means of the sacraments, the saints are reminded to live continually in the light of hope and Christ's return, 1 Cor. 11:26.

Finally, the less principal end of the sacraments is to be a badge of our Christian profession, to distinguish those who are within the church from those who are without, Eph. 2:11, 12. This distinction ought to be one that helps to shape and define the parameters of intimate society, Gen. 34:14.