

## **PART VI.**

### **The Sacrament of the Altar.**

#### **320. By what other names is this Sacrament known?**

The Lord's Table, the Breaking of Bread, the Lord's Supper, the Holy Supper, the Eucharist, Holy Communion.

524) 1 Cor. 10, 21. Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils.

525) Acts 2,42. They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

526 a) 1 Cor. 11, 20; When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper.

526 b) 1 Cor. 11,24. And when He had given thanks, He brake it.

527) 1 Cor. 10, 17. For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.

#### **First, What the Lord's Supper Is.**

#### **321. What is the Sacrament of the Altar?**

It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself.

#### **322. Where is it so written?**

The holy Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul, write thus:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave it to His disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is given for you: This do in remembrance of me.

After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Take, drink ye all of it; this cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

Matt. 26, 26-28. Mark 14, 22-24. Luke 22, 19. 20. I Cor. II, 21-25.

#### **323. Why are these words of institution found four times in the Scriptures?**

That they may be unto us all the more clear, sure, and important.

#### **324. Who has ordained and Instituted this Sacrament?**

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the God-man, who is true, all-wise, and almighty.

528) Ps. 33, 4. The Word of the Lord is right; and all His works are done in truth.

529) Eph. 3,20.21. Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church.

#### **325) Which are the visible, external signs In this Sacrament?**

Bread, prepared of flour, and wine, of the fruit of the vine.

#### **326. What does Christ give us under these external signs In the Holy Supper?**

In, with, and under the bread He gives us His true body; in, with, and under the wine He gives us His true blood.

**327. Why Is It inadmissible to take the words, "This Is my body," and, "This is my blood," in an improper or figurative sense? (*Reformed Understanding*)**

1. Because Christ expressly says that He distributes to us that body which is given for us and that blood which is shed for us.
2. Because, furthermore, St. Paul expressly says:  
530) "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" 1 Cor. 10, 16; and:  
531) "Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." 1 Cor. 11, 27.
3. Because they are the words of institution of a divine ordinance, and words of a divine testament.

For these reasons we must take these words just as they read.

532) Mark 14, 24. This is My blood of the new testament.

533) Gal. 3, 15. Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto.

**328. Do bread and wine remain in the Lord's Supper, or are they changed into the body and blood of Christ? (*Roman Transubstantiation*)**

They are not changed, but remain; for St. Paul expressly teaches that while the Lord's Supper is being eaten and drunk, the bread is still bread, and the wine is still wine.

534) 1 Cor. II, 26. 28. As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.

I Cor. 10, 16. See Qu. 327, 2.

**329. For what use does Christ, our Lord, give us Christians His body and blood under the bread and wine?**

To eat and to drink; not only to eat, as if, in distributing and eating Christ's body, His blood, too, were distributed and received;  
neither for adoration; nor as an unbloody sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead.  
*(Roman Sacrifice of the Mass)*

Matt. 26, 27. Drink ye all of it.

Mark 14, 23. And they all drank of it. "

Hebr. 10, 14. 18. For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. Now where remission of sins is, there is no more offering for sin.

**330. What manner of eating and drinking takes place in the Holy Supper?**

Not only natural, nor only spiritual, but sacramental eating and drinking; that is, the earthly elements, bread and wine, and the heavenly gifts, Christ's body and blood, are at the same time taken with the mouth of the body, but the former in a natural, the latter in a supernatural manner.

**331. What does Christ, our Lord, enjoin when He says: "This do in remembrance of Me"?**

That this Sacrament should forever be administered in His Church, and under the consecrated bread and wine His body be eaten and His blood be drunk.

538) 1 Cor. 11, 26. As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come.

**332. When only is our Supper truly the Lord's Supper?**

When it is administered according to Christ's institution.

**333. Are we to receive the Lord's Supper but once, as we do Holy Baptism?**

No; we should receive it frequently; and hereto we should be prompted by Christ's command and promise, and by the trouble that lies heavy upon us.

I Cor. II, 26. See Qu. 331. Acts 2, 42. See Qu. 320.

539) Matt. 11, 28. Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

**Secondly, of the Benefit of the Lord's Supper.**

**334. What is the benefit of such eating and drinking?**

That is shown us by these words, "Given, and shed for you for the remission of sins"; namely, that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

**335. What words teach us that such eating and drinking is of benefit to Us?**

The words, "Given, and shed for you for the remission of sins."

**336. What do these words tell us?**

That unto everyone who eats and drinks Christ here gives, as a seal of the remission of his sins, that same body and blood wherewith He, upon the cross, earned and procured the forgiveness of sins.

**337. But how do these words speak of life and salvation?**

"Where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation."

**338. For what purpose, then, do we approach the Lord's Table?**

1. Chiefly for the strengthening of our faith in the forgiveness of our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ;
2. for our furtherance in holiness of life; and
3. also in testimony of the communion of faith.

1 Cor. 10, 17. See Qu. 320.

**Thirdly, of the Power of the Lord's Supper.**

**339. How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things?**

It is not the eating and drinking, indeed, that does them, but the words here written, "Given, and shed for you for the remission of sins"; which words, beside the bodily eating and drinking, are as the chief thing in the Sacrament; and he that believes these words has what they say and express, namely, the forgiveness of sins.

**340. Has bodily eating and drinking in itself the power of doing such great things?**

No; it is not the eating and drinking, indeed, that does them.

**341 How is it, then, that by bodily eating and drinking forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are obtained?**

It is because by virtue of these words, "Given, and shed for you for the remission of sins," these great things are contained and offered in the Holy Supper. These words, therefore, are, beside the bodily eating and drinking, as the chief thing in the Sacrament.

**342. Does everyone receive this benefit?**

No; although everyone to whom the Sacrament is imparted according to Christ's institution receives the body and blood of Christ under the bread and wine, yet only he receives the benefit who believes the word of promise, "Given, and shed for you for the remission of sins."

**Fourthly, of the Salutory Use of the Lord's Supper.**

**343. Who, then, receives such Sacrament worthily?**

Fasting and bodily preparation is, indeed, a fine outward training; but he is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words, "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins." But he that does not believe these words, or doubts, is unworthy and unprepared; for the words, "For you require all hearts to believe."

**344. Why is it proper that we should particularly consider the true worthiness of each communicant?**

Because St. Paul expressly admonishes us: "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." 1 Cor. 11, 28. 29.

**345. Wherein does true worthiness consist?**

Only and solely in faith in these Words: "Given, and shed for you for the remission of sins."

**346. Can anyone render himself worthy by his own preparation, thoughts, and works?**

No; to appear with modesty and reverence at the Lord's Table is, indeed, due decency and a praiseworthy custom, but withal no more than an external thing of which even an unbeliever capable.

**347. But who is unworthy and unprepared?**

He who does not believe, or doubts, the words "Given, and shed for you for the remission of sins." For the words, "For you," require all hearts to believe.

**348. How should he who would eat this bread and drink this cup examine himself?**

He should examine,

1. whether he truly repent of his sins;
2. whether he believe in Jesus Christ;
3. whether he have the good and earnest purpose with the aid of God the Holy Ghost henceforth to mend his sinful life. (See Christian Questions in Small Catechism.)

**349. May those who are weak of faith approach the Lord's Table?**

Yes, indeed; they especially should come to the Lord's Supper, that their weak faith may grow stronger.

540) Mark 9, 24. Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.

541) Ps. 22, 26. The meek shall eat and be satisfied.

542) Is. 42, 3. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench.

543) John 6,37. Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.

**350. To whom must the Lord's Supper be denied?**

1. To such as are known to be ungodly and impenitent, since they would eat and drink damnation to themselves;

2. to the heterodox, since the Holy Supper is a token and testimony of the unity of faith;

3. to such as have given offense and not yet made amends;

4. to such as are not able to examine themselves, as, for example, children, and persons lying in a state of unconsciousness.

544) Matt. 7, 6. Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine.

545) Acts 2, 42. They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

546) Matt. 5, 23. 24. Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

1 Cor. 11,28.29. See Qu.344.

**331. What custom is therefore observed among us?**

The custom of admitting to the Sacrament those only who have been previously explored. Hence also those who are contemplating their first communion do previously and in the presence of the congregation render account of their faith, and profess adherence to the orthodox Church. (Confirmation.)

547) Rev. 2, 10. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

548) Rev. 3, 11. Behold, I come quickly. Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.