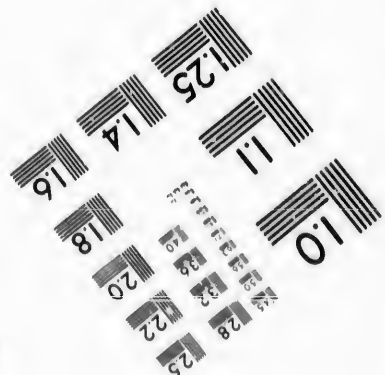
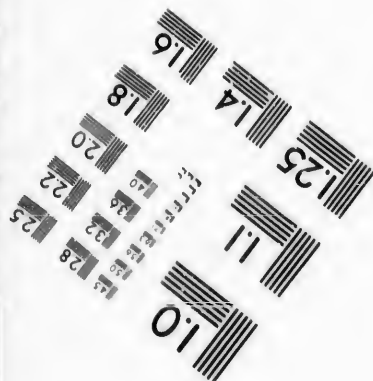
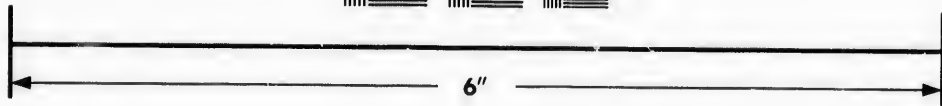
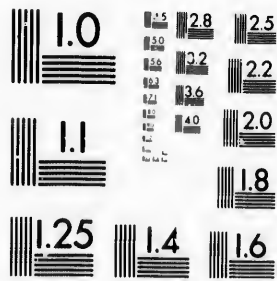


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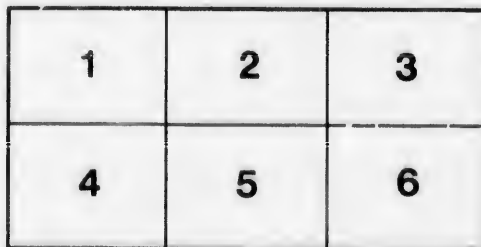
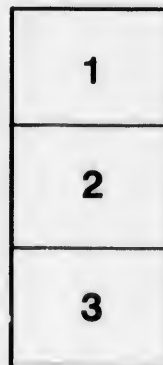
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CATECHISM

FOR

THE INSTRUCTION OF COMMUNICANTS

IN THE NATURE AND USES

OF THE

SACRAMENT OF OUR LORD'S SUPPER,

AND

IN THE DOCTRINES AND DUTIES CONNECTED
WITH THAT ORDINANCE;

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A SACRAMENTAL ADDRESS.

BY ANDREW THOMSON, D. D.

LATE MINISTER OF ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, EDINBURGH.

REVISED AND CORRECTED BY THE AUTHOR.

WITH RECOMMENDATORY PREFACE.

MONTREAL:

PRINTED BY JAMES STARKE & CO.,

ST. THOMAS STREET.

1839.

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It is not intended that the following Catechism should be committed to memory, in the way that other Catechisms are usually learnt. Most of the answers are so long as to render this, in a great measure, impracticable; but the Catechetical form has been adopted, because it seems best calculated for conveying instruction to the generality of readers, with ease, distinctness, and effect.

That this little work may, under the Divine blessing, prove edifying and useful to many, is the author's fervent wish.

Sprouston, }
May 30, 1807. }

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P R E F A C E.

IN forming the resolution that they will partake of the Lord's Supper, which all professing Christians do, who are arrived at the years of maturity, it is of vital consequence, that the motives in which such a resolution doth originate, be examined by them, and that they be satisfied they are such as will admit of being looked back upon with a serene and self-approving mind. Of the multitudes who every year encompass the altar of God, there are many who are actuated by no proper principle whatever, and so far from being fit to approach the table of the Lord, are not fit to join themselves even to the ordinary assemblies of his saints. There are some who celebrate the ordinance of the Supper because it happens to be the practice of their country, and they do not wish to refuse compliance with the customs of the place in which they have been born and brought up, who are so far flexible as to their creed, and their conduct, as blindly to follow the faith, and to conform to the usages of their Fathers, who make what, in relation to them, is certainly the *accidental* religion of their parents—who make *that* the rule of their obsequious belief, and thus partake of the holy feast in remembrance of Christ's sacrifice, when they have neither part nor lot in the sacrifice itself. And there are some who never fail to observe it, because they deem a formal and external observance of it a decent and exceedingly respectable thing—because they see it regularly attended by the wise and by the good, and because they think there is something peculiarly becoming and attractive in those who, though as individuals they may be many, yet, as God's people, profess to be one, joining together in the

services and sacrifices of the temple, commemorating the death of their common Saviour by a visible description of it, and united together in this ordinance to one another by a common participation. And there are some who are quite sure to frequent it, in order to allay the suspicions, which they think will otherwise get up, to wipe out the memory of some past misconduct, and to provide themselves with a store of after-merit, to throw a mask of sanctity over the impurities of their lives, and to endeavour, by their seemingly devout attention to this commemorative solemnity, to lay in a stock of reputation for the future necessities of their character. And finally, there are not a few who approach to it with feelings of the most abject and absurd superstition: who come forward to this ordinance as a bribe to their own consciences, with the view of satisfying, or at least of silencing, those secret misgivings, which cannot otherwise be appeased; for the purpose of settling, by their apparent fervour at the table of the Lord, the annual reckoning of their sins; and whose devotion, checked as it undoubtedly has been during the rest of the year, is yet, speaking by comparison, quite sure to flow out somewhat extravagantly now.

Wherever men are actuated by sentiments and feelings such as these, they can never come with acceptance to the table of the Lord; and so far from reaping any of those benefits which the ordinance itself is calculated to afford, they do but incur the guilt, and expose themselves to the doom, of those who deny the Lord that bought them with such a price, and trample under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing. Motives such as these can never be well pleasing unto God, nor, in the undisturbed hour of self-examination, ever even be thought much of by themselves, and we cannot qualify the severity with which they ought all of them to be condemned.

Of everlasting moment, therefore, it certainly is, for all men, in proposing to come forward to this ordinance, that their motives should be sifted, that their intentions should be laid bare, that their very *thoughts* should be looked into, and that they should not shrink from a scrutiny, so solemn and so severe, as that to which they are called.

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Of everlasting moment it certainly is, that all professing Christians do understand the *real* reasons that do induce them to partake of the Lord's Supper; and as it is possible many may be actuated by improper motives when they think they are not, so they should recognise it as a matter of incumbent obligation, not only to examine their own hearts in this matter with all strictness and severity, but also to avail themselves of the help afforded by those Catechisms, or little books, which may best explain the nature and obligation of commemorating the death of Christ—that they, having their understandings enlightened to comprehend the solemnity and the design of the action, and having their hearts prepared after the preparation of the sanctuary, may be enabled to approach with due reverence to the table of the Lord, and when they eat of the bread, as a symbol of Christ's body, and when they drink of the wine, as a symbol of Christ's blood, may be *worthy* partakers of these holy mysteries.

Of the little works that are adapted to form such an help, we are acquainted with none that is superior to the Sacramental Catechism, by the late Dr. Andrew Thomson. It has been in the hands of the public for upwards of twenty-four years. It has been honoured of God, to be the instrument for the edifying of many souls; the very extensive sale which it has had, as well as the still increasing demand which there is for it, are manifest proofs of the estimation in which it is held by the religious world, and we are aware of no treatise of the same size, where there is a clearer or more forcible statement of the nature of the Lord's Supper in general, the names by which it is called, the spiritual truths it is intended to represent, the reasons especially that should lead men to partake of it, and the qualifications which are necessary for all who would partake of it with the acceptance of the God of ordinances, and profit to their own souls.

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A CATECHISM, &c.

1. Q. *What parts of the New Testament give us an account of the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper?*

A. Matth. xxvi. 26; Mark xiv. 22; Luke xxii. 19; 1 Corinth. xi. 23.

2. Q. *By whom was this Sacrament instituted?*

A. By Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and Saviour of the world.

3. Q. *When did he institute it?*

A. The same night in which Judas betrayed him into the hands of his enemies.

4. Q. *By what names is it usually known?*

A. It is usually called the Lord's Supper, the Eucharist, or the Communion.

5. Q. *Why is it called the Lord's Supper?*

A. Because it was instituted by Christ immediately after he had eaten the Paschal Supper with his disciples, and is to be regarded by Christians as a feast in honour of their Lord.

6. Q. *Why is it called the Eucharist?*

A. Because it is an occasion of special and solemn thanksgiving to God, for his goodness in giving up his own Son to death for our salvation—the term Eucharist being derived from a word which signifies thanksgiving.

7. Q. *Why is it called the Communion?*

A. Either because it is a communion with Christ the Saviour, or because it is a communion with one another as disciples of Christ.

8. Q. *Was it intended to be of perpetual obligation in the church?*

A. Yes.

9. Q. *Why do you think so?*

A. Because the Apostle Paul says, (1 Cor. xi. 26.) "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come:" and because the Christians of the first ages, who enjoyed the best means of information, had this opinion of it, and continued to celebrate it after the disciples and apostles had left the world.

10. Q. *How often should it be observed?*

A. Scripture gives us no particular instruction on that point; but certainly we may conclude from its nature and purposes, that we should observe it as often as opportunities occur, and circumstances permit.

11. Q. *What are the elements made use of in the Sacrament?*

A. Bread and wine.

12. Q. *What did our Saviour do before he distributed the bread and wine?*

A. He gave thanks and blessed them.

13. Q. *What does this teach us?*

A. To express our gratitude to God for his great and tender mercy, before we partake of the ordinance, and to depend upon his blessing as that which alone can make it useful.

14. Q. *What do the bread and wine made use of in the Lord's Supper, represent?*

A. The bread that is broken, and the wine that is poured out, represent the broken body and shed blood of Christ; or, more properly speaking, they

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represent that atoning sacrifice of himself which Christ offered up for sin, when his body was broken, and his blood was shed upon the cross.

15. Q. *Whence does this appear?*

A. From the words of the institution. When our Saviour gave the bread to his disciples, he said, "This is my body, which is given for you;" and when he gave the cup, he said, "This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you."

16. Q. *What do you mean by Christ's offering himself up a sacrifice for sin?*

A. I mean his submitting, in our room and stead, to that wrath and curse of God which was due to us for transgressing the divine law.

17. Q. *Did Christ actually offer himself up a sacrifice for sin?*

A. Yes: we are told so in Scripture as plainly and distinctly as language can express it.

18. Q. *What is the language of Scripture on this point?*

A. "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice unto God." (Eph. v. 2.)

"Even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." (1 Cor. v. 7.)

"Christ also hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh." (1 Peter, iii.

18.)

"And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifice, which can never take away sin; but this man, (Christ,) after he had offered one sacrifice for sin, for ever

“sat down on the right hand of God.” (Heb. x. 11, 12.)

19. Q. *Is this sacrifice, which is represented in the Lord's Supper, to be trusted in as perfectly sufficient to answer the ends for which it was offered up?*

A. Yes: it is so, both because it was appointed, and because it has been accepted of by God.

20. Q. *How do you know that it was appointed by God?*

A. From such passages of Scripture as these:

“God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John iii. 16.)

“The Lord had laid on him (that is, on Christ,) the iniquities of us all.” (Isa. liii. 6.)

“Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth (or ordained) to be a propitiation.” (Rom. iii. 24, 25.)

21. Q. *How do you know that God hath accepted of the sacrifice that Christ offered?*

A. I discover this from the whole tenor of the gospel, as contained in the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles, and particularly from such declarations as the following:

“We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” (Rom. v. 11.)

“He (that is, Christ) humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God also (that is, in token of his approbation) hath highly exalted him, and

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“given him a name which is above every name.
(Philip. ii. 8, 9.)

“All things are of God, who hath reconciled us
“to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us
“the ministry of reconciliation: to wit, that God
“was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself,
“not imputing their trespasses unto them.” (2 Cor.
v. 18, 19.)

22. Q. *Is the death or offering up of Christ upon the cross, to be considered as any thing more than an atonement for sin?*

A. Yes: it is also to be considered as the finishing part of that obedience to the law of God which Christ undertook to render as “the Lord our righteousness:” (Jer. xxiii. 6.) and as he was then in a suffering state, it is usually called his passive (or suffering) obedience; as his fulfilment of the precepts of the law during his life is called his active obedience.

23. Q. *Is not the death of Christ, therefore, held out in Scripture, as the great meritorious cause of all the blessings communicated through the gospel?*

A. Yes, the Apostle Paul says, (1 Thess. v. 9, 10,) “God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.”

24. Q. *Is the pardon of sin ascribed to the death or sacrifice of Christ?*

A. Yes. “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.” (Eph. i. 7.)

25. Q. *Is peace and reconciliation with God ascribed to the same cause?*

A. Yes: “Ye who sometimes were far off, are

“made nigh by the blood of Christ, for he is our
“peace;” (Eph. ii. 13, 14.) and, “when we were
“enemies, we were reconciled to God by the
“death of his Son.” (Rom. v. 10.)

26. Q. *Is the gift of eternal life ascribed to the same cause?*

A. Yes: for our Saviour himself says, (John vi. 53, 54,) “whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my
“blood,”—that is, whoso confideth in the merits
of my death,—“hath eternal life, and I will raise
“him up at the last day.”

27. Q. *Is a meetness for heaven ascribed to the same cause?*

A. Yes: “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth
“from all sin.” (1 John i. 7.)—“By the will of
“God we are sanctified through the offering of
“the body of Jesus Christ, once for all.” (Heb. x.
10.) “By one offering Christ hath perfected for
“ever them that are sanctified.” (Heb. x. 14.)

28. Q. *Are not all these blessings, then, set before us in the holy Sacrament of the Supper?*

A. Yes: in that ordinance Jesus Christ is held
out to us, and we see him by faith, as our salvation,
in the most extensive sense of the word—as “made
“of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and
“sanctification, and redemption.” (1 Cor. i. 30.)

29. Q. *Why should we partake of this ordinance?*

A. For several strong and important reasons.

30. Q. *What is your first reason or motive?*

A. Christ, to whose authority we are subject,
has commanded us to “do this in remembrance
“of him,” and it is our interest, as well as our duty,
to obey him in every particular.

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31. Q. *What is your second reason ?*

A. We should love Christ; and partaking of this ordinance is an expression of love to him, inasmuch as it is complying with his injunction; for he himself hath said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" (John xiv. 15.) and inasmuch as it is bearing our testimony to his goodness and mercy in dying for us.

32. Q. *What is your third reason ?*

A. This ordinance is one great means of keeping up the remembrance of Christ in the world and in our own hearts; and he deserves, in an eminent sense, to be held in everlasting remembrance.

33. Q. *What is your fourth reason ?*

A. The Sacrament of the Supper is an excellent opportunity of professing, publicly and solemnly, our faith in Jesus, and our attachment to his gospel.

34. Q. *Are you bound to make a public profession of your faith ?*

A. Yes: Our Saviour has said strongly, "Who-soever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven;" (Matth. x. 32, 33.) and surely, not confessing Christ, must be considered as equal to denying him.

35. Q. *Why is the ordinance of the Supper peculiarly fitted for the purpose of professing our faith ?*

A. Because the eye of the world is then more particularly upon us: and because by eating and drinking at the Lord's Table, we give our assent

to the doctrine of the cross, which lies at the very foundation of the gospel, and is the chief cause of offence to its adversaries.

36. Q. *What is your next reason?*

A. The Sacrament of the Supper is a powerful mean of strengthening and improving the most important graces of the divine life.

37. Q. *How does it operate in strengthening our faith?*

A. It strengthens our faith by giving us a lively representation of the great and interesting doctrine of the atonement, which makes Christ so worthy of our most unreserved confidence.

38. Q. *How does it improve the grace of repentance?*

A. By showing in the strongest manner possible, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, which God would not pardon without the sacrifice of his own Son; and by thus naturally leading us to hate it with a more perfect hatred, to feel a greater sorrow on account of having committed it, and to be more determined to avoid it in our future conduct.

39. Q. *How does it improve our love and gratitude to Jesus Christ?*

A. By setting him forth as voluntarily dying to avert the divine displeasure from our souls, and to restore us to the favour and friendship of God.

40. Q. *How does it improve our love to mankind?*

A. By reminding us of the value of the human soul, manifested in the sacrifice which Christ offered for its salvation; and by associating us together in an ordinance which exhibits "the great love wherewith God hath loved us;" (Eph. ii. 4.) "for if God so loved us, we ought to love one another." (1 John iv. 11.)

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41. Q. *What is your next reason for partaking of the Lord's Supper?*

A. It is a source of great consolation under all the afflictions to which we are subject in this state of sin and imperfection.

42. Q. *How does it comfort us under the consciousness of guilt?*

A. It sets before us that perfect sacrifice which Christ offered, and God accepted of, for human guilt, and on which, therefore, we may safely depend for pardon and reconciliation.

43. Q. *How does it comfort us under the sense of our spiritual weakness and danger?*

A. We see in the memorials of Christ's broken body and shed blood, a solemn pledge or promise that he who thus died for us will never forsake us, that he will help our infirmities, that he will defend us from our enemies, and conduct us in safety to his heavenly kingdom.

44. Q. *How does it comfort us under the burden of temporal distress?*

A. We behold in the bread and wine, as emblems of our Redeemer's sacrifice, the seal of that gracious covenant by which God, the disposer of every event, is our compassionate heavenly Father, who will make the afflictions of this life "work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (2 Cor. iv. 17.)

45. Q. *What is your next reason for partaking of the Lord's Supper?*

A. It is an appointed token of our acceptance of the Gospel, and of God's favour to us, if our acceptance is sincere: for Christ said, when he gave the wine to his disciples, "This cup is the New Testa-

“ment, (or as it might be translated the New Co-
“venant) in my blood.”

46. Q. *How do you explain yourself, when the Gospel is considered as the Testament, or last will of our Saviour?*

A. In this case the sacramental wine represents the blood or death of Christ the Testator, with which he purchased the blessings that he bequeaths; and when we partake of the wine we declare at once our firm belief in the merits of his death, and our cordial reception of the blessings that he conveys to us by his Testament or Gospel.

47. Q. *How do you explain yourself, when the Gospel is considered as a Covenant?*

A. In this view the blood of Christ is the seal by which the new Covenant is ratified; and when we drink the wine, as representing the blood of Christ, we declare our acceptance of that covenant, and bind ourselves to fulfil all the engagements under which it lays us.

48. Q. *Were not these engagements entered into when you were baptized?*

A. Yes: by having the sacrament of Baptism administered to me, I was solemnly and truly engaged to be the Lord's; but as, on account of my infancy, I could not give my own consent to what was done, I partake of the Lord's Supper to renew my baptismal engagements by a conscious and voluntary dedication of myself to God through Jesus Christ, into whom I was baptized; and this renewal of my baptismal engagements I make as often as I partake of the Lord's Supper.

49. Q. *In what respect do Baptism and the Lord's Supper differ?*

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A. Baptism is to be administered but once—the Lord's Supper frequently: the former is a sign of our regeneration and "putting on Christ"—the latter is a sign of the spiritual nourishment that we derive from him: the former may be administered to infants—the latter to such only as are able to "examine themselves:" by the former we are admitted, or initiated, into the visible church of Christ—by the latter we profess our willing continuance in the church, and our adherence to its doctrines and laws.

50. *Q. In what respect do these two ordinances agree?*

A. They are both of divine appointment: they both represent Christ and the benefits of his purchase; they are both seals of the same covenant; they both lay us under peculiar obligations to holiness in heart and life: and they are both to be continued in the church till Christ's second coming.

51. *Q. What is your next reason for partaking of the Lord's Supper?*

A. It is an open testimony of our communion and fellowship with Christ; as we learn from the words of the apostle Paul, (1 Cor. x. 20, 21.) when he is dissuading the Corinthians from idolatry, or "having fellowship with devils," on the ground that they were already "partakers of the Lord's Table;" and in this way had declared their fellowship with Christ.

52. *Q. Have you any other reason beside those you have already mentioned?*

A. There is one more, and it is this:—the Lord's Supper is an opportunity of holding communion with one another, as believers in Christ; since by

eating and drinking the memorials of his death at the same table, we declare our willing participation in all the blessings which his death has secured for us, and our Christian union and friendship, as members of his body, which is the Church.

53. Q. *From what passage of Scripture does this appear?*

A. From the following: "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? For we being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." (1 Cor. x. 16, 17.)

54. Q. *Since there are so many strong reasons for partaking of the Lord's Supper, are not those extremely culpable who wilfully neglect this ordinance?*

A. Yes: it is so positively enjoined by Christ; it is such a becoming expression of our attachment to him; and is so well fitted to promote our spiritual improvement, that nothing but the most serious obstacle can justify such as absent themselves from the Lord's Table.

55. Q. *Are all persons, whatever be their principles and character, entitled to partake of this ordinance?*

A. No: it is necessary for us to possess certain qualifications, in order to partake of it with propriety and advantage.

56. Q. *What is the duty of those who are conscious that they do not possess these qualifications?*

A. It is their duty, not to abstain from the ordinance, but to endeavour immediately and ear-

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nestly to acquire the requisite qualifications, and then to take the first opportunity of communicating that occurs.

57. Q. *What is the unworthy communicating of which the Apostle Paul speaks in the eleventh chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians?*

A. It is partaking of the Lord's Supper as if it were a common meal, and eating and drinking at it even to excess.

58. Q. *What was the consequence of the Corinthians acting in this manner?*

A. We are told that visible judgments were inflicted on them: "for this cause," says the Apostle, "many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep"—that is, the sleep of death.

59. Q. *Are we liable to the same crime for which the Corinthians were so remarkably punished?*

A. No: the manner in which the ordinance is conducted among us renders it impossible for us to eat and drink unworthily, in the same sense in which they are said to have done so.

60. Q. *When may we be said to "eat and drink unworthily," and be "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord?"*

A. When we go to the Lord's Table from improper motives; when we do not possess the necessary qualifications; when we attend without suitable preparation; when we engage in the ordinance with an undevout spirit, and in a careless or irreverent manner; or when we do not study or apply it to the purposes for which it is designed.

61. Q. *Is not such conduct both wicked and prejudicial?*

A. Yes: it is wicked, because it is a profanation

of that which our Saviour hath made sacred, and, therefore, an offence to him whom it is our first duty to please; and it is prejudicial, because it prevents that spiritual improvement which the ordinance is intended to promote, and which is necessary for our present and our future welfare.

62. Q. *What is the first step to be taken by those who propose to partake of the Lord's Supper?*

A. A serious and impartial self-examination, in order to know whether they are sufficiently qualified, or in what particular graces they are deficient. "Let a man examine himself," says Paul, (1 Cor. xi. 28.) "and so let him eat of that bread, and "drink of that cup."

63. Q. *What are the qualifications which they ought to possess?*

A. They are such as are prescribed in Scripture, or suggested by the nature and ends of the ordinance; and may be reduced under these five heads—Knowledge, Faith, Repentance, Love, and New Obedience.

64. Q. *What is the knowledge that is required?*

A. Knowledge to "discern the Lord's body."

65. Q. *What does the Apostle strictly mean by "discerning the Lord's body?"*

A. He means, distinguishing between the sacrament of the Supper and an ordinary feast, which two things the Corinthians had been guilty of confounding.

66. Q. *May not "discerning the Lord's body" be justly taken in a larger sense?*

A. Yes: it may signify being acquainted with the peculiar nature and various uses of the institution: knowing, for instance, that the bread and

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wine represent Christ as our sacrifice, and that our eating and drinking represents our cordial reception of Christ in that capacity; that this ordinance is a mean appointed by the Saviour, for carrying on the work of sanctification in our souls, &c.

67. Q. *Is it sufficient to have a knowledge, however great, of this ordinance merely?*

A. No: our knowledge must be much more extensive; it must embrace the various doctrines which we are to believe, and the various duties we have to perform, in order to our attainment of eternal life.

68. Q. *Whence is this knowledge to be derived?*

A. From the Holy Scriptures, which should be frequently and carefully read: from the preaching of the word, and other stated means of instruction; from godly conversation; and from those religious books which may help us to understand the Bible.

69. Q. *Should not you always study to have your knowledge accompanied with understanding?*

A. Yes: although I knew all the facts, and all the doctrines, and all the precepts that are contained in the Bible, yet these are useful to me only in so far as I understand their meaning and application. And, therefore, Paul and Timothy prayed, (Col. i. 9.) that the Colossians "might be filled with the knowledge of Christ's will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding."

70. Q. *Is knowledge sufficient, then, if it be accompanied with understanding?*

A. No: it is not even then sufficient, unless it is also reduced to practice in our daily life and conversation; for to the passage just now quoted from the Epistle to the Colossians, it is added, as

the great use and purpose of knowledge, "that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work." In another place (1 Cor. xiii. 2.) Paul says, "though I understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and have not charity," (that charity which is the fulfilling of the law,) "I am nothing." And our Saviour has said, (John xiii. 17.) "If you know these things, happy are ye if ye do them:"—thus making our happiness depend, not so much on our knowledge, as our practice.

71. Q. *Why is knowledge necessary as a qualification for communicating?*

A. Because, if I have remained ignorant with the revelation of God in my hands, I have committed a great sin against him, in thus "loving darkness rather than light," (John iii. 19.) and if I have been unable to procure sufficient knowledge, still it wou'd be absurd and dangerous to engage in a religious solemnity without proper motives, which my ignorance of the gospel would prevent me from having.

72. Q. *What is faith in Jesus Christ?*

A. "Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel."*

73. Q. *What reason have you to believe in the missions and doctrines of Christ?*

A. 1. I believe in Christ, because in him were fulfilled great variety of prophecies, that were uttered some ages before he appeared; and by him were wrought many miracles, or wonderful works,

* Assembly's Shorter Catechism.

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“him.” (John iii. 2.) This I know on the evi-
dence of testimony more powerful than what was
ever employed to establish the truth of any other
fact—the testimony of a great number of witness-
es, of irreproachable characters; who showed no
symptoms of enthusiasm; who were capable of judg-
ing of what they saw and heard; whose declara-
tions were consistent, although made at different
times, in different languages, and in different cir-
cumstances; whose evidence was contrary at once
to their strongest prejudices and their worldly in-
terest; who, notwithstanding, gave it boldly and
distinctly; who maintained it by a life of danger
and suffering; and who (many of them at least)
sealed it with their blood, amidst tortures and in
death.

2. I believe in the religion of Christ, because it
is worthy of God to promulgate, and every way
suitable to the nature and circumstances of man;
because it contains the sublimest truths and the
purest system of morality that were ever taught.
and because, with all this excellence, it was pub-
lished not only at a time when the world around
was grossly mistaken with respect to the very first
principles of Religion and Morals, but also by
men who had received no education, and who were
utterly unqualified of themselves for teaching man-
kind.

3. I believe in the religion of Christ, because,
although it was universally resisted by interested
priests and civil rulers, by bigoted Jews and idol-
atrous mobs; although it opposed the whole cur-
rent of religious opinion, and condemned the most

favourite practices that prevailed in these times; although it was preached by none almost but men of low birth, without force, without learning, and without influence; although the most effectual means that can be imagined were made use of to crush and destroy it: yet, in spite of all these disadvantages, it made such a rapid and triumphant progress, that in the space of thirty years after the death of Christ it was diffused over the greatest part of the then known world; which astonishing success can be reasonably ascribed to nothing else than the power of God accompanying the labours of the Apostles.

4. Lastly, I believe in Christ, because he delivered several prophecies which were afterwards most exactly fulfilled:—one, in particular, of the destruction of Jerusalem, which was so circumstantially foretold, and so minutely accomplished, that we should consider the language of our Saviour rather as a history than a prediction of the event, were we not certainly informed of the contrary.

74. Q. *Before you can properly receive or believe in Christ, must not you be sensible of your need of a Saviour?*

A. Yes: I must be sensible that I am guilty before God; that I cannot of myself merit his pardon and favour, and that I am undone for ever, unless some gracious and powerful Redeemer interposes in my behalf.

75. Q. *Must not you be also persuaded that Christ is such a Redeemer as you stand in need of?*

A. Yes: I must be convinced that he is willing to save me: that he is as able as he is willing; that he has been sent of God for this very purpose; and

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that his mediation and atonement have been accepted of as perfect and satisfactory.

76. Q. *Is it not necessary that you receive Christ in all his offices and characters, in order to believe on him aright?*

A. Yes: it is absolutely necessary that I receive Jesus Christ just as he is offered in the gospel, and not according to my own private views and inclinations. I must receive him as my Prophet, as my Priest, and as my King, which are the three great offices that he executes as our Redeemer.

77. Q. *How do you receive Christ as your Prophet?*

A. I am ignorant; and I take him to instruct me by his word and spirit in divine things.

78. Q. *How do you receive him as your Priest?*

A. I am guilty; and I trust in him as one who has atoned for my guilt, and is making intercession for me at the right hand of God.

79. Q. *How do you receive him as your King?*

A. I am naturally weak and perverse; and I apply to him to protect me by his power, and govern me by his laws.

80. Q. *What is faith, considered as the instrument of our justification before God?*

A. It is simply that principle of the heart by which we accept and trust in the righteousness of Christ. For the sake of this righteousness alone God justifies us; that is, pardons our sins and accepts of our persons; in order to which he is graciously pleased to impute it to us; or place it to our account. And faith is, as it were, the hand or instrument with which we receive and hold the meritorious gift.

81. Q. *Is not true faith always a living and practical principle?*

A. Yes: wherever true faith exists, it fails not to "purify the heart," (Acts xv. 9.) "to work by love," (Gal. v. 6.) and to "overcome the world." (1 John v. 4.) To think, therefore, that we have saving faith, whilst we are not "careful to maintain good works," (Tit. iii. 14.) is a gross and fatal error.

82. Q. *Why is faith necessary for partaking worthily of the Lord's Supper?*

A. Because, if I do not believe in Christ as a true messenger from God, I cannot with any propriety do what is designed to keep him in grateful remembrance; for this would be to commemorate an impostor:—if I have no trust in the merits of his death, I cannot with any propriety partake of the Sacramental elements; for these represent the perfect sacrifice for sin which he offered up when he died on the cross:—if I do not confide in him as an all-sufficient Saviour, I cannot reasonably expect to receive any blessing from his hand when I approach him in this ordinance; and therefore my approach would be in vain.

83. Q. *What is the just and simple notion of repentance?*

A. It is turning from sin unto God.

84. Q. *What is the first step of repentance?*

A. The first step of our repentance is entertaining a just view of sin.

85. Q. *What is the view of sin which you should entertain?*

A. I should consider it as that abominable thing which the Lord hates; as that which is contrary to

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his will, and injurious to his perfections, as that which has introduced all the misery that prevails in the world ; as that which dishonours and degrades human nature; and as that which tends directly to the destruction of the soul.

86. Q. *But must not you be sensible or convinced of sin as something attached to yourself?*

A. Yes : I must regard it as something with which my own heart and character are deeply stained; as that which I have committed times without number, in thought, in word, and in deed, and which in my case has been highly aggravated.

87. Q. *What are the proper consequences of having these views of sin?*

A. From these views of sin, I am naturally led to hate it as a most odious quality : I am led to mourn for it with a sincere and godly sorrow ; I am led to forsake its ways, and to return to my duty and my God with firm resolutions and earnest endeavours to be henceforth " holy in all manner " of conversation." (1 Peter, i. 15.)

88. Q. *Can you return to God without having reason to hope that he will graciously condescend to receive you?*

A. No : if I had no reason to cherish that hope, I could not dare to approach God after having offended him so much, but would either continue in sin or fall into despair.

89. Q. *Have you reason to cherish that hope?*

A. Yes : great and abundant reason.

90. Q. *What is it?*

A. God has sent forth his own Son as a propitiation for sin ; and in consideration of the sacrifice which Christ offered up, and the memorials of

which we celebrate at his table, he has declared his willingness to receive all true penitents to the enjoyment of his mercy and favour. Having this assurance, I am encouraged to "forsake my wicked ways, and to return unto the Lord, who will have mercy upon me, and abundantly pardon me." (Isa. lv. 7.)

91. Q. *How will your repentance show itself to be sincere and genuine?*

A. By its producing a life and conversation conformable to the will of God, as revealed in the gospel.

92. Q. *Do you look on repentance as any kind of atonement for the sins which you forsake?*

A. No : it cannot be so in the sight of God. There is no other atonement for sin than the atonement of Christ. Repentance is merely that moral change which a holy God requires of us, and which, by the operation of his grace, we are enabled to make, that we may be qualified for being admitted into heaven, and is itself acceptable to him, only through the merits of a Redeemer.

93. Q. *Why is repentance necessary for partaking worthily of the Lord's Supper?*

A. Because this sacrament is a memorial of Christ's "suffering for sin;" and to celebrate that memorial without an abhorance of sin, and a determination to forsake and to avoid it, is evidently to insult the sufferings of Christ, and to provoke the displeasure of the God of ordinances, who is "of purer eyes than to look on iniquity." (Hab. i. 13.)

94. Q. *To whom is your love to be exercised?*

A. To God, to Jesus, and to our brethren of mankind.

95. Q. *Why should we love God?*

A. Because he is possessed of all amiable perfections, and because "he first loved us." (1 John iv. 19.)

96. Q. *Why should we love Jesus ?*

A. Because he is "the brightness of the Father's glory," (Heb. i. 3.) and because he gave himself for us to the cursed death of the cross.

97. Q. *Should not you love your God and Saviour supremely ?*

A. Yes: "with all my heart, and with all my soul, and with all my might." (Deut. vi. 5.)

98. Q. *What is the best proof of your love to God ?*

A. "Keeping his commandments" is the only substantial and satisfying proof that I can give.

99. Q. *Why should you have this love to God and Jesus in order to your being worthy to partake of the Lord's Supper ?*

A. Because the want of it shows that I am not properly acquainted with the divine character, that I have not a just sense of the value of my Redeemer's sacrifice, and that I am not qualified for holding "fellowship with the Father, and with his Son "Jesus Christ," (1 John, i. 3.) whose love to men is commemorated in this ordinance.

100. Q. *Why should we love our brethren of mankind ?*

A. Because they are children of the same heavenly Father, and subjects of the same dispensation of grace, and because we are expressly commanded to do so by our Saviour.

101. Q. *Should you love all your brethren of mankind alike ?*

A. No: I must have a particular affection for those who are of "the household of faith,"—for those

who have the image of God renewed in their hearts, who believe in Christ, and obey his gospel.

102. Q. *But must not you love the rest of mankind also with a sincere affection?*

A. Yes : whatever be their name, their kindred, their character, or their circumstances, I must feel towards them sentiments of kindness and liberality ; I must refrain from doing them any injury ; I must relieve their distresses, when I can ; I must do them all the good that lies in my power.

103. Q. *Is not particular stress laid in Scripture on that branch of love or charity which is usually termed forgiveness of injuries?*

A. Yes : our Saviour has said, (Matt. vi. 14, 15.) " If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

104. Q. *What do you particularly conclude from this at present?*

A. I conclude that it is particularly unbecoming to go to the Lord's Table with a spirit of revenge ; and that " if I bring my gift to the altar, and there remember that I have a quarrel with my brother," (that is, with any person whatever,) " I should leave my gift before the altar, and go my way, first be reconciled to my brother, and then come and offer my gift." (Matt. v. 23, 24.)

105. Q. *Must not your love to man be chiefly expressed in endeavours to promote their spiritual and eternal welfare?*

A. Certainly ; their souls are infinitely more precious than their bodies, and their eternal than their temporal interests : if, therefore, I love them at all, I must be principally concerned, as far as

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106. Q. *Why must you love your brethren of mankind, in order to partake worthily of the Lord's Supper?*

A. Because this ordinance is only for the disciples of Christ, and he has made brotherly love the very test of our discipleship to him; "By this," says he, (John xiii. 35.) "shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." And, besides, there is a great absurdity, as well as gross presumption, in professing to celebrate the memorials of his love to us at the very time that our hearts are burning with hatred, or cold with indifference, towards any of those "for whom he died."

107. Q. *What do you understand by New Obedience?*

A. Such a pious and holy deportment, such an abstinence from what is sinful, and such a pursuit of what is good and praiseworthy, as is prescribed in the word of God, and as faith, repentance, and love, are naturally fitted to produce in the case of those in whom these graces have been really and effectually wrought.

108. Q. *Why is this obedience called NEW Obedience?*

A. Because it is the obedience which the true Christian is enabled to yield in consequence of his being regenerated, or becoming what is termed in Scripture (2 Cor. v. 17.) "a new creature."

109. Q. *Is regeneration a doctrine of Scripture?*

A. Yes: our Saviour said to Nicodemus, (John

iii. 3.) "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God;" and Paul says, (Tit. iii. 5.) "Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

110. Q. *What is the moral state of man previously to this change?*

A. He is backward to good and prone to evil; "his heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;" (Jer. xvii. 9.) "in his flesh dwelleth no good thing;" (Rom. vii. 18.) "he is dead in trespasses and sins." (Eph. ii. 1.) &c.

111. Q. *What is the general change that takes place when he is brought from this state of corruption?*

A. It is described by Paul in these words, addressed to the Ephesians, (Eph. iv. 22, 23, 24.) "That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness."

112. Q. *By whom is this change wrought?*

A. It is wrought by the Holy Spirit of God.

113. Q. *Is the manner of his operation known to us?*

A. No: but that is no reason for doubting of the fact, which is clearly stated in the Scriptures, and is evidenced by the effects which are produced; as our Saviour himself argued with Nicodemus, (John iii. 8.) "The wind bloweth where it listeth," (where it will) "and thou hearest the sound thereof, but

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“canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the spirit.”

114. Q. *Are not all the graces of the divine life ascribed to the operations of the Holy Spirit?*

A. Yes: both their formation and their improvement are ascribed to him; and hence we read not only of the “renewing of the Holy Ghost,” but also of the “sanctification of the Spirit.” (1 Thes. ii. 13.)

115. Q. *What is the conduct of those who have experienced this change, and are said to yield a New Obedience?*

A. They are “dead unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Rom. vi. 11.) “They no longer yield their members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin,” but, under the influence of faith, repentance, and love, “they yield their members as instruments of righteousness unto God.” (Rom. vi. 13.) “They exercise themselves to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and men.” (Acts xxvi. 16.) “They are righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless.” (Luke i. 6.) They “deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this present world.” (Tit. ii. 12.) &c.

116. Q. *Must not your obedience to God be the obedience of the heart, as well as of the external conduct?*

A. Undoubtedly: according to the uniform language of Scripture, it is the heart which God principally requires, and if that be withheld from him, every thing else is vain and worthless in his sight.

117. Q. *Must not your obedience be yielded from right principles and motives?*

A. Yes : if my principles and motives are worldly, impure, or condemned in Scripture, it is evident that the actions flowing from them cannot be acceptable to God. My obedience must proceed, not from a desire to "be seen of men," or to "make gain of godliness," but from a profound regard to the authority and glory of God, from a sincere attachment to my Lord and Saviour, from a serious view to the rewards and punishments of a future state, and from other considerations of a similar kind.

118. Q. *Must not your obedience be universal?*

A. Yes : the divine law being the only rule by which I ought to regulate my thoughts and actions, and that law admitting of no vicious indulgence, and no neglect of duty, I must study to "cleanse myself from *all* filthiness of the flesh and spirit," (2 Cor. vii. 1.) and to be made "perfect in *every* good work to do the will of God." (Heb. xiii. 21.)

119. Q. *Must not your obedience be constant and progressive?*

A. Yes : I must be "*always* abounding in the work of the Lord;" (1 Cor. xv. 58.) and have my "path like the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." (Prov. iv. 18.)

120. Q. *In order to partake worthily of the Lord's Supper, is it necessary to have your obedience in that state of perfection in which you have now described it?*

A. No : I should, indeed, study always to obey God as perfectly as his law requires ; but as the Lord's Supper is itself an appointed and most im-

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portant mean for enabling me to yield that obedience, I must partake of it with a view to the attainment of that very end. It is a privilege which belongs to those who are "weak," as well as to those who are "strong in the faith"—to those who are "babes," as well as to those who are "perfect men in Christ Jesus."

121. Q. *How far then is New Obedience necessary in this case?*

A. It is necessary thus far ;—I must be conscious of a dislike to what is sinful, and an earnest wish to forsake it ; I must feel a hearty desire to be "reconciled to God in Christ, and in him to be created again unto good works ;" and I must have formed a sincere resolution, in a humble dependence on divine grace, to be henceforth faithful and conscientious in the discharge of all my various duties.

122. Q. *Why are these sentiments necessary for communicating worthily?*

A. Because the want of them would be most inconsistent with my professed design in partaking of the ordinance of the Supper, which is not only to commemorate but also to declare my reliance on the death of Christ, "who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Tit. ii. 14.)

123. Q. *Is any thing more than the self-examination that we have been considering necessary for you before you partake of the Lord's Supper?*

A. Yes: I should be frequently engaged in earnest prayer to God.

124. Q. *For what are you to pray on that particular occasion?*

A. I should pray that God would enable me to "examine and prove myself," and to see the real state of my heart and character; that he would enlighten my views of divine things; that he would bestow upon me the graces that I want, and increase those which I have already received; that he would confirm my faith, inflame my love, strengthen my hatred of sin, and my resolutions to be holy; and especially, that he would give me his Holy Spirit, to lead and guide me to the Table of the Lord, and to be with me while I am celebrating the Ordinance.

125. Q. *In whose name should you put up these prayers?*

A. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is "the only Mediator between God and man." (1 Tim. ii. 5.)

126. Q. *What do you mean by putting up your prayers in the name of Christ?*

A. I mean, not only making use of his name, but trusting at the same time with all my heart to his merits alone, for the acceptance of my prayers, and the attainment of the blessings that I ask.

127. Q. *What encouragement have you for asking these blessings from God?*

A. The Holy Spirit is said "to help our infirmities" (Rom. viii. 26.) in this respect, Christ himself is our "Advocate with the Father." (1 John, ii. 1.) And he expressly declares, (Matt. xxi. 22.) "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive," (that is, in so far as they are good.)

128. Q. *Is not prayer an exercise in which you should be engaged habitually at all times, as well as before or during the celebration of the Lord's Supper?*

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A. Yes: prayer being the communion of the soul with God, I cannot pretend, with any appearance of reason, to have a true sense of religion, unless prayer be my daily and habitual exercise.

129. Q. *What does Scripture say on this subject?*

A. "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving." (Col. iv. 2.) "Pray without ceasing." (1 Thess. v. 17.) "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint." (Luke xviii. 1.) "Be careful for nothing: but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." (Philip. iv. 6.)

130. Q. *Are these expressions to be understood literally?*

A. No: if they were understood literally, it would be impossible to comply with them, without neglecting every duty but prayer alone: they only mean that we should have constantly in our minds a spirit of devotion and supplication, which shall frequently express itself in addresses to God at the throne of his grace.

131. Q. *Does not prayer include something more than petition?*

A. Yes; it also includes Adoration of God, Confession of Sin, and Thanksgiving for Mercies.

132. Q. *In what way should these be particularly expressed with a view to your partaking of the Lord's Supper?*

A. I should adore God for the harmonious display of his perfections, especially of his justice and mercy, which he made in our redemption, as represented in this Ordinance. I should make a humble and sorrowful confession of my sins, as a part at

least of the procuring cause of my Saviour's sufferings, when "his body was broken and his blood was shed" upon the cross. And I should acknowledge, with the warmest gratitude, the many great and precious blessings which God communicates through the death of his well beloved Son, whom I am to "remember" at his Holy Table.

133. Q. *Should your prayers on this occasion be confined to yourself?*

A. No: I should also pray particularly for my fellow-communicants, and for the Ministers who are to dispense the Ordinance.

134. Q. *What prayers should you put up in behalf of the Ministers?*

A. That they may feel the importance of the work in which they are engaged, that they may be strengthened for the performance of their solemn duty, that they may be enabled to speak a word in season for our edification and comfort.

135. Q. *Do you confide in the Ministers for the efficacy of the Sacrament, that you thus pray for them?*

A. No: I trust to the divine blessing, as that which alone can make this or any other ordinance effectual as a mean of salvation: but in the ordinance of the Supper the Ministers are appointed to act a very important part; and surely it is my duty to pray earnestly that they may be qualified for doing it with success.

136. Q. *What prayers should you put up in behalf of your fellow-communicants?*

A. I should pray that they may be all prepared according to the preparation of the sanctuary; that they may be acceptable guests at the Table of the

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Lord ; that all their graces may be in lively exercise when they are engaged in the solemnity ; and that they may derive from it all the advantages which it is intended to convey.

137. Q. *What should be your conduct when seated at the Lord's Table, and partaking of the Sacramental Elements ?*

A. I should consider that I am not merely in the presence of my fellow-creatures, who may be imposed upon by the appearance of sanctity, but in the presence of Almighty God himself, who cannot be deceived, to whose eyes the inmost recesses of my heart are open, and who has declared that "the hope of the hypocrite shall perish:" I should therefore "keep the feast, not with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of *sincerity and truth*," (1 Cor. v. 8.) having a pious and spiritual frame of mind, as well as great decency of outward behaviour : I should study to banish the cares of the world, to repress every sinful and unworthy thought, and to devote my whole attention to the sacred service that is going on : I should rejoice that I am admitted to such a great privilege, and rejoice "with trembling," when I think how unworthy I am to enjoy it : I should meditate with the most ardent affection and gratitude on the character, and sufferings, and death, of that gracious Redeemer, who said, "Do this in remembrance of me:" I should have believing views of that great atoning sacrifice which he offered up for sin, and know and feel, that, when I eat the bread and drink the wine, I assent in the most solemn manner, to the merciful and holy covenant that he sealed with his blood ; I should now

surrender my soul and my body, my heart and my life, to him who "loved me and gave himself for me : " (Gal. ii. 20.) And resolve, over the memorials of his death, and in the strength of divine grace, to "glorify God in my body and in my "spirit, which are his," (1 Cor. vi. 20.) by denying myself to sinful gratifications; by "perfecting "holiness in the fear of the Lord;" (2 Cor. vii. 1.) and living, as much as lieth in me, in peace and charity with all mankind.

138. Q. *What should you do after having partaken of the Lord's Supper?*

A. I should express my thankfulness to God for the opportunity he has given me of celebrating this Ordinance, and pray that he would enable me to improve it to wise and useful purposes.

139. Q. *Should not you again employ some time in serious self-examination?*

A. Yes: the heart is so very deceitful; we are so apt to mistake outward solemnity for internal devotion, and the ordinance of the Supper is such a solemn transaction between God and the soul, that self-examination seems to be as necessary after as before communicating.

140. Q. *What is it with respect to which you should examine yourself?*

A. I should examine myself with respect to the manner in which I have acted, and the experience that I have had, at the Lord's Table.

141. Q. *What may be the result of this examination with respect to the manner in which you have acted at the Lord's Table?*

A. It may be that I have been careless, inattentive, and irreverent, indulging myself in vain

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thoughts, and eating and drinking without spiritual views and devout feelings; or it may be that I have had my mind suitably affected and employed, and, in other respects, partaken worthily of the ordinance.

142. Q. *What is your duty if the latter has been your conduct at the Lord's Table?*

A. It is my duty to thank God, who is the author of all the gifts and graces that I enjoy, for having enabled me to communicate in a becoming and acceptable manner.

143. Q. *What is your duty if the former has been your conduct?*

A. I should be humble before God, entreat him to pardon the unworthiness I have been guilty of, and determine, through his grace helping me, to avoid it carefully on every future occasion.

144. Q. *But is not your most worthy communicating accompanied with imperfection?*

A. Yes: sin and imperfection cleave to the very purest of my religious services, and therefore I have always great reason to abase myself; but I should be particularly careful to do so when my shortcomings are wilful and deliberate, or proceed from any kind of indifference to sacred duties.

145. Q. *What may be the result of your self-examination with regard to the experience you have had at the Lord's Table?*

A. It may be that I have been comforted, and gladdened, and improved; or it may be that none of these effects have been produced, but that I have felt weariness and disappointment, and the absence of those blessings which this Ordinance promises and is intended to bestow.

146. Q. *What is your duty if the former has been the case?*

A. It is my duty to be grateful to Him by whose grace the Sacrament has been made effectual, in giving me peace, and joy, and improvement, and to be careful to express my gratitude, by devoting myself still more zealously to the observance of all his ordinances and commandments.

147. Q. *What is your duty if your experience has been comfortless and unfruitful?*

A. It is my first duty to inquire seriously and candidly into the causes of this, and my next duty is to endeavour, by every proper mean, to remove these causes, that I may hereafter be able to partake of the Lord's Supper with greater benefit and success.

148. Q. *May not such an experience be always ascribed to some fault on the part of the communicant?*

A. Yes: the general truth is, that if we "draw nigh unto God, he will draw nigh unto us;" (James iv. 8.) and, therefore, if we are disappointed and sent empty away, we have every reason to suspect that our preparation has not been sufficient, that our expectations have been unreasonable, or that our conduct at the Lord's Table has not been altogether suitable.

149. Q. *What does this suggest?*

A. It suggests that in every case of such experience, whilst we bewail, in the spirit of perfect submission to the divine will, the absence of that peace and gladness we had hoped to enjoy, we should also search ourselves diligently, to see what that "wicked thing" is, which has, on this occasion, "separated between God and us," and prevented our "hungry souls" from being satisfied

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“with good things,” and “our strength from being renewed as the eagle’s.”

150. Q. *Is not there a kind of experience which some ignorant people look for, but which you have no reason to expect at the Lord’s Table?*

A. Yes: I have no reason to expect any sudden impulse on my understanding, or any violent affection of my heart and feelings; for though there is nothing to hinder the Spirit of God from operating in that remarkable way, yet his ordinary method is calm and secret, and the Sacrament of the Supper is one of those means, by which, in a rational manner, he works upon our minds and dispositions.

151. Q. *What is that kind of experience which the nature of religion in general, and of the Lord’s Supper in particular, gives you ground for expecting?*

A. I have ground for expecting that I shall feel that comfort and pleasure which the contemplation, by faith, of the memorials of Christ’s sacrifice is naturally fitted to inspire: that I shall experience a more heart-felt sorrow for sin, when I see all that Jesus suffered on account of it: that my love to him shall grow more warm and ardent, when I behold the great price that he generously paid for my redemption: that all my resentment towards others shall die away in my breast, when I have such a striking proof of the great mercy of God towards me; and, in short, that I shall receive more lively and lasting impressions of those infinitely important truths which are built upon the death of Christ, and essentially connected with the salvation of my soul.

152. Q. *Whatever your conduct and experience at the Lord’s Table may have been, are not you*

bound to fulfil the obligations which the act of communicating implies?

A. Certainly: since I have vowed unto the Lord, and since my vow is not only lawful, but highly proper and useful, I am bound, by every consideration of duty and of interest, to perform it with the utmost care.

153. Q. *What conduct does this vow bind you to maintain?*

A. Such a conduct as is prescribed by the will and word of God. "If I have done iniquity in times past, I must now endeavour to do no more." (Job xxxiv. 32.) If I have been living a stranger to Christ, I must now "deny myself, take up my cross daily, and follow him." (Luke ix. 23.) If I have neglected the care of my soul, I must now attend to it as "the one thing needful." If I have formerly loved and served my Redeemer, I must now study to love him more, and to serve him better than I have ever yet done. In short, it must now be my great object and business, to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge (the saving and practical knowledge) of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. iii. 18.)

154. Q. *What are we to think of those who, after partaking of the Lord's Supper, give themselves up as much as ever to the ways of the world and sin?*

A. We should not judge rashly or severely of any man; but these persons unquestionably show that they have not really "been with Christ," and "learned of him." Either their profession has not been sincere, or they are acting in gross contradiction to the "good profession which they have wit-

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“nessed;” in both which cases their conduct is highly culpable.

155. Q. *Is not this conduct of theirs extremely injurious?*

A. Yes: it is extremely injurious to themselves, because it is a great aggravation of their guilt; and it is extremely injurious to religion, because it sets a pernicious example before others, and gives a handle to wicked and unbelieving men to blaspheme, to vilify the gospel, and ridicule its ordinances.

156. Q. *Is not this treatment of the gospel, however, by unbelieving men, very uncandid and unjust?*

A. Yes: for the gospel, like every other system, must stand or fall by its own merits and evidences; and cannot be accountable for the lives of its professors. If it is to be judged by the conduct of professing Christians, it must only be when these sincerely believe its doctrines, and faithfully obey its precepts.

157. Q. *But since the enemies of religion do frequently judge and speak of religion according to the conduct of its professors, should not you be particularly cautious on that account?*

A. Surely having partaken of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and made the solemn profession which that implies, I should be especially careful to “walk in wisdom towards them that are without,” (Col. iv. 5.) to “abstain from all appearance of evil,” (1 Thess. v. 22.) and to “let my light so shine before men, that others, seeing my good works, may glorify my Father who is in heaven.” (Matt. v. 16.)

158. Q. *Is the fact that our Sacramental vows are apt to be forgotten or disregarded, any good reason for not partaking of the Lord's Supper?*

A. No: it is not a good reason; for we may as well say that no promise should be given, because it may not be fulfilled, or that no bargains should be made, because bargains are often broken. Besides, partaking of the Lord's Supper is a commanded duty, which must be performed, if we would submit ourselves to the authority of Christ. And having observed this Ordinance, we should strive to walk worthy of it, which we may certainly do with the help of Christ, "through whom strengthening me," says an apostle, (Phil. iv. 13.) "I can do all things."

159. Q. *Should not the practical effects of communicating appear in all the various relations and circumstances in which you may be placed?*

A. Yes: Communicants come under engagements at the Lord's Table which reach to every relation and condition of life. They engage to "adorn the doctrines of God their Saviour in all things," (Tit. ii. 10.) and therefore if they have been sincere in their profession, they will study to be more humble in prosperity, and more patient in tribulation; more resolute in withstanding temptation, more diligent in their improvement of the means and ordinances of grace, and more dutiful as husbands and as wives, as parents and as children, as masters and as servants, as magistrates and as subjects, as neighbours and as friends.

160. Q. *Is not the life which, at the Lord's Table, you undertake to lead, a life of difficulty and danger?*

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A. Yes: I am so much surrounded with temptations to sin, I have so many powerful enemies to struggle with, and my heart is so corrupted and perverse, that it cannot but be hard and difficult to lead that life of faith and holiness which my Saviour requires; and hence the Christian life is called in Scripture, a burden, a yoke, and a cross.

161. Q. *Do these expressions mean that the Christian life is destitute of comfort?*

A. No: they cannot mean this: the Christian life, though a burden, is light; though a yoke, it is easy; though a cross, it has, to those who bear it, its joys as well as its sorrows. Such is the account of it given in Scripture, and such is the experience of every real disciple of Christ.

162. Q. *Is not the Christian life perfectly consistent with the true enjoyment of this world?*

A. Yes: that is to say, the true Christian can enjoy all the *innocent* pleasures of the world, and these, to a mind like his, are numerous; he avoids the misery which is the appointed and certain attendant upon vice; he escapes the cares and disappointments which often harass ungodly men, because he "uses the world as not abusing it, knowing that the fashion of all things passeth away;" (1 Cor. vii. 31.) and the good things, nay the very evils of life, afford him a ground of satisfaction peculiar to himself, because his principles teach him to regard and treat them as means by which he is enabled to "lay up a good foundation for the time to come, and lay hold on eternal life." (1 Tim. vi. 19.)

163. Q. *At the same time, are not those greatly mistaken who enter on the Christian life, or continue*

in it with the idea that it has little or nothing but what is easy and agreeable?

A. Yes: for though "godliness has the promise of the life that now is, (1 Tim. iv. 8.) and all "who love the law of the Lord have great peace," (Psalm cxix. 165.) yet Scripture declares every true Christian can bear witness to the truth of the declaration, that there are many severe trials, many painful struggles, many discouragements, and many sorrows, necessarily connected with the belief and practice of the Gospel.

164. Q. *Has not God provided you with support and consolation fully adequate to these hardships and difficulties?*

A. Yes: every support and consolation that my situation needs—that I could reasonably expect or possibly desire.

165. Q. *What is that support and consolation?*

A. An assurance that God will make his "grace sufficient for me, and perfect his strength in my "weakness:" (2 Cor. xii. 9.) a divine intimation that Christ has already subdued my spiritual enemies, and that through him every true believer shall be more than a conqueror: a promise that the Holy Ghost shall be given to them that ask him, to abide with them continually, and to lead them in the way everlasting: and there is set before me the certain prospect of a most happy and glorious immortality in heaven, if I be faithful even unto death. With such encouragements, and such motives, I have every reason not only to be "steadfast "and immoveable," but even to go on my Christian way "rejoicing with joy unspeakable, and full of "glory.

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BEFORE DISTRIBUTING THE ELEMENTS.

BEFORE presenting yourselves at a Communion Table, I trust, my friends that you have studied to become acquainted with the nature and purposes of the Ordinance in which you are about to engage. Possessing the means of acquiring a sufficient knowledge of it, and yet through carelessness or unconcern, to remain in a state of ignorance, is an aggravated sin in the sight of God, and must unfit you for approaching him with acceptance. And independently of the sinfulness which such conduct involves, there would be an obvious impropriety—a violation of all that is decent and rational, in observing an institution whose meaning you had been at no pains to comprehend, though it professes to be a solemn transaction with Him who is the searcher of hearts and the judge of all. I would therefore hope that you have been careful to inform your minds respecting the Sacrament of our Redeemer's Supper—the authority by which it is sanctioned—the event which it commemorates, and the doctrine which it exhibits—the reasons for which it ought to be celebrated—the dispositions and conduct which it requires—the effects which it is calculated to produce—and the peculiar obligations which it imposes upon all who have partaken of it.

It is of much consequence, also, that in coming to the Lord's Table you act under the influence of suitable and worthy motives. If you come here merely to support a good reputation or to promote your worldly advantage—to comply with the custom of the country, or with the wishes of your friends—to atone for past irregularities, or to hide them from the eye of your fellow-men;—if these be the considerations by which you are actuated, I need not tell you that your service is vain—that it is hateful to God, and must prove injurious to yourselves. I trust however that your views are more rational, more spiritual, more holy. I trust that you come to the Lord's Table from respect to the authority of Christ, who has commanded you to “do this in remembrance of him:”—from ardent love to him for the goodness and mercy which he has manifested in suffering and dying for your redemption—from a desire to keep up the remembrance of him in your hearts and in the world—from a wish to make a public and solemn profession of your faith in the truth of his mission, and in the doctrine of his cross—from a view to the experience of that comfort and that improvement which this ordinance is calculated to impart—from the conviction that it is an appointed token of your acceptance of the Gospel, and of God's favour to you—and from the pleasure you expect to feel in holding communion with Christ your Saviour, and with one another as believers in Christ, and expectants of his salvation. If these be your motives, communicants, for partaking of this Sacrament, if you have felt in any considerable degree their constraining power, and are sincerely desirous to have them confirmed and en-

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livened, and pressed more powerfully upon your minds—then I would congratulate you on an attainment which divine grace alone could confer upon you, and which is a good earnest of the advantages that flow from a service so lovely and divine.

I trust also, that you have not presumed to engage in this Ordinance without suitable preparation. Have you carefully and impartially examined yourselves as to the state of your heart and character? Have you laboured to acquire those qualifications which are necessary to make your work of communion acceptable to God, and profitable to yourselves? Has it been your prayer and your endeavour to have all the graces of the Spirit in lively exercise? And are you now ready to devote yourselves without reserve, in soul and in body, to the service and the glory of the Redeemer? I trust, communicants, that this is your situation in the sight of Him who sees your inmost thoughts, whom it is impossible for you to deceive by any appearances of piety, who is jealous of the honour both of his character and his ordinances, and who will not be mocked with impunity. I trust that you have been paying more than an ordinary attention to the subject, and taking more than ordinary pains to understand its nature, and to feel the obligations which it implies. I trust that you have a lively faith in the divine mission of him whom you propose to “remember,” and a cordial dependance upon the merits of his death, which you are to show forth. I trust that you have repented sincerely of all your past offences, and that you feel a decided hatred for sin as the cause of your Saviour’s sufferings. I trust that your hearts are warm with supreme love to your God and Re-

deemer, with kind affection for one another, and with disinterested benevolence to all mankind. I trust that you have formed the holy resolution of denying yourself to every thing which is contrary to the precepts, or inconsistent with the spirit, of the religion you profess—of performing every duty which is required of you in your various circumstances and relations—of cultivating that purity of heart, and that righteousness of deportment, which become the followers of Christ, and the expectants of heaven. If, communicants, you are thus faithful, thus penitent, thus affectionate, thus holy in your purposes and your conduct—if you can lay your hand upon your heart, and say with truth that you possess, in any good measure, these necessary qualifications—and if, with all those, you are yet humbled under a sense of your imperfections, and are earnestly praying for mercy to pardon, and for grace to sanctify, and assist, and guide you—then may we safely declare, that for you this table is spread, and this feast prepared, and confidently promise that your service will be acceptable to the God of ordinances, and that it will prove “a savour of life unto “life” to your souls.

Eat and drink then in remembrance of Christ, according to his dying commandment; and may the Lord himself be with you, to bless you with the comforts of his presence, to accept your offering, to “grant you according to your own heart,” and “fulfil all your petitions!”

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AFTER DISTRIBUTING THE ELEMENTS.

HAVING partaken of the Ordinance of Communion, let me now exhort you to act suitably to the profession you have made, and the privilege you have enjoyed. Live by faith on the Son of God, who loved you and gave himself for you, and whose atoning death you have solemnly commemorated, as the foundation of all your hope. Renounce sin, in all its various forms and degrees, as that whose odious nature and bitter fruits you have seen exhibited in the symbols of Christ's body which was broken, and of his blood which was shed to deliver you from its guilt and power. Be careful to perform every duty to which you are called, as followers of him who died that he might "purify you unto himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works." And do not rest satisfied with a mere general or partial obedience—but recollecting that you have given yourselves away to God, study to be righteous before him, "walking in all his commandments, and in all his ordinances, blameless." Remember that this is necessary, both for your own salvation, and for the credit of your religion in the world—that unless you are thus faithful, and circumspect, and holy, you mar your spiritual comfort—unfit yourselves for entering into heaven—bring discredit on that worthy name by which you are called—and do material, incalculable injury to the everlasting interests of your brethren. And to encourage and support you in the path of righteous-

ness, reflect often on the engagements which you have contracted at a communion table—habitually anticipate that period, when he who “was once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear the second time, without sin unto salvation”—and fervently pray for the aids of that divine Spirit, who is promised to them that ask him, and who will make you “meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” Now “the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord JESUS, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through JESUS Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

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