Heidelberg Catechism (Question 76 to 100)

Q76. What does it mean to eat the crucified body of Christ and to drink His shed blood?

A. First, to accept with a believing heart all the suffering and the death of Christ, and so receive forgiveness of sins and life eternal. Second, to be united more and more to His sacred body through the Holy Spirit, who lives both in Christ and in us. Therefore, although Christ is in heaven and we are on earth, yet we are flesh of His flesh and bone of His bones, and we forever live and are governed by one Spirit, as the members of our body are by one soul.

Q77. Where does Christ promise to nourish and refresh believers with His body and blood as surely as they eat this broken bread and drink this cup?

A. In the institution of the Lord's Supper: "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." (1 Corinthians 11:23-26) This promise is repeated by Paul in these words: " The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread." (1 Corinthians 10:16-17)

Q78. Do the bread and wine become the real body and blood of Christ?

A. No. Just as the water of baptism is not changed into Christ's blood and does not itself wash away sins but is simply a divine sign and assurance of these things, so too the holy bread of the Lord's Supper does not become the actual body of Christ, even though it is called the body of Christ in keeping with the nature and language of sacraments.

Q79. Why then does Christ call the bread His body and the cup His blood, or the new covenant in His blood, and why does Paul speak of a participation in the body and blood of Christ?

A. Christ speaks in this way for a good reason: He wants to teach us by His supper that as bread and wine sustain us in this temporal life, so His crucified body and shed blood are true food and drink for our souls to eternal life. But, even more important, He wants to assure us by this visible sign and pledge, first, that through the working of the Holy Spirit we share in His true body and blood as surely as we receive with our mouth these holy signs in remembrance of Him, and, second, that all His suffering and obedience are as certainly ours as if we personally had suffered and paid for our sin.

Q80. How does the Lord's Supper differ from the Roman Catholic Mass?

A. The Lord's supper testifies to us, first, that we have complete forgiveness of all our sins through the one sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which He Himself accomplished on the cross once for all; and, second, that through the Holy Spirit we are grafted into Christ, who with His true body is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father, and this is where He wants to be worshipped.

(Note):

The Position of the Christian & Missionary Alliance Church/East London Alliance Church :

The Christian & Missionary Alliance Church/East London Alliance Church is an evangelical Protestant church that follows the theological principles inherited from the Reformation:

- **Symbolism and Remembrance:**
  The Christian & Missionary Alliance Church emphasizes Jesus' words, "Do this in remembrance of me." The bread and wine serve as means by which believers collectively remember and give thanks for Jesus' salvation through the cross.
- **Regarding the Sacrificial Nature:**
  The Christian & Missionary Alliance Church firmly believes that Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross was offered "once for all, forever." Therefore, Communion is absolutely not a re-sacrifice, nor do clergy have the power or privilege to transform the bread and wine into Christ's physical body.

Q81. Who should come to the Lord's table?

A. Those who are displeased with themselves because of their sins, but who nevertheless trust that their sins are pardoned and that their remaining weakness is covered by the suffering and death of Christ, and who also desire more and more to strengthen their faith and to lead a better life. Hypocrites and those who are unrepentant, however, eat and drink judgment on themselves.

Q82. Should those be admitted to the Lord's Supper who show by what they profess and how they live that they are unbelieving and ungodly?

A. No, that would dishonour God's covenant and bring down God's wrath upon the entire congregation. Therefore, according to the instruction of Christ and His apostles, the Christian church is duty-bound to exclude such people, by the official use of the keys of the kingdom, until they reform their lives.

Q83. What are the keys of the kingdom?

A. The preaching of the holy gospel and Christian discipline toward repentance. Both of them open the kingdom of heaven to believers and close it to unbelievers.

Q84. How does preaching the holy gospel open and close the kingdom of heaven?

A. According to the command of Christ: The kingdom of heaven is opened by proclaiming and publicly declaring to all believers, each and every one, that, as often as they accept the gospel promise in true faith, God, because of Christ's merit, truly forgives all their sins. The kingdom of heaven is closed, however, by proclaiming and publicly declaring to unbelievers and hypocrites that, as long as they do not repent, the wrath of God and eternal condemnation rest on them. God's judgment, both in this life and in the life to come, is based on this gospel testimony.

Q85. How is the kingdom of heaven closed and opened by Christian discipline?

A. According to the command of Christ: Those who, though called Christians, profess unchristian teachings or live unchristian lives, and who after repeated personal and loving admonitions, refuse to abandon their errors and evil ways, and who after being reported to the church, that is, to those ordained by the church for that purpose, fail to respond also to the church's admonitions — such persons the church excludes from the Christian community by withholding the sacraments from them, and God also excludes them from the kingdom of Christ. Such persons, when promising and demonstrating genuine reform, are received again as members of Christ and of His church.

Q86. Since we have been delivered from our misery by grace through Christ without any merit of our own, why then should we do good works?

A. Because Christ, having redeemed us by His blood, is also restoring us by His Spirit into His image, so that with our whole lives we may show that we are thankful to God for His benefits, so that He may be praised through us, so that we may be assured of our faith by its fruits, and so that by our godly living our neighbours may be won over to Christ.

Q87. Can those be saved who do not turn to God from their ungrateful and unrepentant ways?

A. By no means. Scripture tells us that no unchaste person, no idolater, adulterer, thief, no covetous person, no drunkard, slanderer, robber, or the like will inherit the kingdom of God.

Q88. What is involved in genuine repentance or conversion?

A. Two things: the dying-away of the old self, and the rising-to-life of the new.

Q89. What is the dying-away of the old self?

A. To be genuinely sorry for sin and more and more to hate and run away from it.

Q90. What is the rising-to-life of the new self?

A. Wholehearted joy in God through Christ and a love and delight to live according to the will of God by doing every kind of good work.

Q91. What are good works?

A. Only those which are done out of true faith, conform to God’s law, and are done for God’s glory; and not those based on our own opinion or human tradition.

Q92. What is God's law?

A. In Exodus 20:1–17, God spoke all these words, saying:

"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.
"You shall have no other gods before me.
"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.
"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.
"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour, and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.
"Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.
"You shall not murder.
"You shall not commit adultery.
"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.
"You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbour's."

Q93. How are these commandments divided?

A. Into two parts. The first teaches us how to live in relation to God; the second, what duties we owe our neighbour.

Q94. What does the Lord require in the first commandment?

A. That I, not wanting to endanger my own salvation, avoid and shun all idolatry, sorcery, superstitious rites, and prayer to saints or to other creatures. That I rightly know the only true God, trust Him alone, and look to God for every good thing humbly and patiently, and love, fear, and honour God with all my heart. In short, that I give up anything rather than go against God's will in any way.

Q95. What is idolatry?

A. Idolatry is having or inventing something in which one trusts in place of or alongside of the only true God, who has revealed Himself in the Word.

Q96. What is God's will for us in the second commandment?

A. That we in no way make any image of God nor worship Him in any other way than has been commanded in God's Word.

Q97. May we then not make any image at all?

A. God cannot and may not be visibly portrayed in any way. Although creatures may be portrayed, yet God forbids making or having such images if one's intention is to worship them or to serve God through them.

Q98. But may images not be tolerated in the churches as "books for the laity"?

A. No, for we should not be wiser than God. He wants His people to be taught not by means of dumb images but by the living preaching of His Word.

Q99. What is the aim of the third commandment?

A. That we neither blaspheme nor misuse the name of God by cursing, perjury, or unnecessary oaths, nor share in such horrible sins by being silent bystanders. In summary, we should use the holy name of God only with reverence and awe, so that we may properly confess God, pray to God, and glorify God in all our words and works.

Q100. Is blasphemy of God's name by swearing and cursing really such serious sin that God is angry also with those who do not do all they can to help prevent and forbid it?

A. Yes, indeed. No sin is greater or provokes God's wrath more than blaspheming His name. That is why God commanded it to be punished with death.