

296. The Church's Duty to Insure a Worthy Reception of the Sacrament.

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

To the hearing of the Word all men are invited, but not so to the Sacrament of the Altar. This Sacrament is a special privilege of those who attend it in true faith, the real members of Christ's true Church. God has entrusted the means of grace, His Word and Sacraments, to His Church. The Church, therefore, as a steward of God's mysteries, is to see to it that, so far as men can tell, only worthy communicants are admitted to the Lord's Table.

The Church should deny the Lord's Supper to all such as are known to be ungodly and impenitent, since they would eat and drink damnation to themselves. It is impossible to be a Christian and at the same time to live with the evil purpose of sinning again. No matter what the sin, if committed knowingly and without any intention of quitting it, it will destroy spiritual life within a Christian. Penitence and faith do not accord with an evil purpose.

The Church should deny the Lord's Supper also *to those of a false faith*, since it is a token and testimony of the unity of faith. There can be no real unity of the Spirit and of faith with those who deny the doctrines of our faith. The rule Titus 3,10 must stand: "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition reject." By admitting such to Holy Communion with us, we would disobey the command of God and sanction a false belief. Such must not commune with us, as a worthy communicant in the Lutheran Church must fully and truly confess the Lutheran, that is, Biblical, doctrines.

The Church should deny the Lord's Supper also *to such as have given offense and have not yet made amends*. We should be ready to forgive. First be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift.

Finally, the Church should deny the Lord's Supper *to all such as are not able to examine themselves*; for God's Word says: "Let a man examine himself and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup."

Prayer.

Dearest Redeemer, I am indeed not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof; but let Thy grace, able to do all things, render me worthy that I may not be found among the guests without wedding-garments, but be a worthy guest at Thy Table and partake of all the treasures of grace Thou hast provided. May Thy grace, O Lord Jesus, be and remain with me, even as my hope is continually in Thee! Let me always be well prepared when I approach Thy Table, so that Thy true body and blood, that priceless nourishment of the soul, may refresh my soul in this heavenly feast of love and joy. Array Thou me, I beseech Thee, in the vestures of salvation. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, to us attend,
Thy Holy Spirit to us send,
With grace to rule us day by day
And lead us in true wisdom's way.

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