

The Sacraments Part II



This is chapter VII of a book written in 1941 entitled, "[Our Priceless Heritage Christian Doctrine In Contrast With Romanism](#)" by Henry M. Woods, D.D, LL.D. It is also the continuation of [The Sacraments Part I](#)

This section talks more about the Lord's Supper and also about the Mass.

If "flesh and blood" are not to be taken literally, what is the meaning?

"Flesh and blood" figuratively mean Christ's atonement for our sins, made by His death on the Cross; that perfect redemption which He wrought out by His sufferings and death, as the sinner's substitute.

Why does our Saviour use the figure of "eating" and "drinking" in partaking of the Sacrament?

To show that faith is to the soul what eating and drinking are to the body. By eating and drinking food is received, assimilated and sustains the life of the body; so by faith the saving truth of Christ and *His vicarious atonement for sin* are received, made our own, and become the very life of the soul.

Rome's Eucharist A Medieval Superstition

Was not the Roman Eucharist, including Transubstantiation and the Mass, a Medieval error which became a fixed dogma at a very late date?

The Roman dogmas of the Eucharist was a *medieval superstition*, intended to *impress ignorant people* and greatly *increase the power of the clergy*, by making the priest appear to have miraculous power, and the people *practically dependent on them for salvation*; for it is falsely asserted that in the sacrament they repeat the sacrifice which the Son of God offered on the cross to atone for the sins of the world. They also use the Greek name Eucharist for the sacrament instead of the simple Scriptural name of the Lord's Supper (I Cor. 11:20), in order to throw a veil of mystery over it, similar to their use of the Latin language in the liturgy. It did not become a formal doctrine *until the thirteenth century, A.D. 1215!*

Has not the Roman Church's monstrous teaching, that communicants in the sacrament eat the literal flesh and blood of Christ, and that Roman priests

have power to change a wafer into Christ's body, shocked many intelligent, earnest men, and turned them away from Christ and salvation?

This gross heresy of the Church of Rome, acceptance of which is demanded of every communicant under threat of expulsion from the Church and of eternal condemnation, has driven many honest people, who saw that there was no such doctrine in the Bible, away from the Christian religion *into atheism!* How could it be otherwise, when men are forced to accept as true, what they *know to be false?* For if men think at all, they know that what the papal church requires them to believe in the Eucharist, under penalty of an eternal curse, is a monstrous untruth. They know they are eating a wafer (bread) and not flesh and blood; and they know that no sinful human priest can offer a real atoning sacrifice for sin; only the Almighty Son of God can do that, and He actually did it on the cross, "ONCE FOR ALL." Heb. 9:26, 10:10.

In celebrating the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, what other grave sin does the Church of Rome commit?

The Church of Rome refuses to *give the wine to the laity.* The pope and priests presume to mutilate God's holy ordinance, and deprive believers of *half the benefit of the sacrament,* thus committing the great sin of sacrilege. Rome asserts, "that Christian people for whom Jesus Christ hath shed His blood, ought not to have the use of the cup." Council of Constance, sess. 13, Council of Trent, sess. 21, 12. Bellarmine, De Euchar., 4:20.

Is not withholding the wine of the sacrament from the laity, and the celebrant appropriating it all for himself, a gross violation of Christ's command?

It is a flagrant act of disobedience to the sovereign Lord; for Christ commanded all believers to partake of the cup, saying, "All of you, drink of it," see the Greek, Matt. 26:27. And Mark records, "They all drank of it" Mark 14: 23.

The Council of Trent adds this threat: "If anyone saith that the Church of Rome was not moved by just causes to order that laity, and clergy who do not celebrate, shall communicate only under the species of bread, or that she hath erred therein, *let him be accursed.*" What audacity for any Council of sinful men to claim "just causes" to forbid what Almighty God has clearly commanded! Is not this a sure mark of apostasy? What awful impiety to curse those who humbly obey God's command given in Holy Scripture!

Was not the Church of Rome, in withholding the wine from the people, guilty of gross inconsistency, as well as guilty of violating God's command?

Yes, but this is only one of many inconsistencies in Roman Church practices. The Canon, requiring Communion in one kind (i.e., withholding the wine from the laity) was passed June 15, 1415, and at that time the Roman Church was without a Head. The same Council that enacted this decree had deposed pope John XXIII on May 29, 1415, and his successor was not elected until November 11, 1417. According to Church law therefore, the enactment of this Canon was illegal, because it was passed without the sanction or authority of a pope.

And yet "infallible" popes have continued to observe this illegal enactment ever since!

It should be noted also, in passing, that according to high authority, the Roman Church is uncertain as to the valid performance of its sacraments, for Cardinal Bellarmine declared, "No one can be certain with the certainty of faith that he receives a true sacrament, because the sacrament cannot be valid without the intention of the minister (celebrant) and no man can know another's intention!" *Disput, Cont. de Justitia* III, 8, 5.

It follows inevitably from this, if Cardinal Bellarmine told the truth, that no Roman Catholic can be sure that he has ever been baptized, confirmed, absolved, or received communion, because he cannot know the intention of the officiating priest! In contrast, how precious is the true Scriptural and Reformed doctrine that sincere believers may surely know. The validity of the sacraments does not depend on the intention of any priest, but on the faithfulness of Almighty God and His everlasting covenant of grace, which, to the faith of the true believer, are as sure as the eternal Rock of Ages! Matt. 24:35. Thank God, the teaching of God's Holy Word and of the Protestant faith drawn from that Word, is wholly different from that of the Church of Rome! The Bible clearly teaches that believers may surely know that they are saved. St. John in his first Epistle says: "These things have I written unto you that ye may KNOW THAT YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE."

How does the requirement of the Roman Church, that communicants abstain from all food for hours before partaking of the sacrament, appear in the light of Scripture?

The requirement that communicants abstain from all food for hours before partaking of the sacrament is nothing else than a harmful superstition; for it directly conflicts with Holy Scripture which represents the disciples as partaking of the Lord's Supper immediately after they had eaten the Passover. Mark records, "As they did eat, our Lord took bread, blessed it and broke it, and gave to them," etc. Matthew's statement is similar, "As they were eating, Jesus took bread," etc. Therefore this rule of the Roman Church requiring that the communicant fast for hours before eating the Lord's Supper has no authority in Scripture, and is directly contrary to what Christ did in instituting the Eucharist, just at the close of the Passover feast. Mark 14:22, Matt. 26:26.

Was not withholding the cup from the laity not only contrary to Holy Scripture, but also to the practice of the early Church?

Withholding the cup from the laity was indeed contrary to the command of Christ and also to the practice of the early Church. Leo I, bishop of Rome, denounced the Manichaeans for refusing to take the cup in communion. So also Gelasius I, bishop of Rome, 492 to 496, wrote of those who abstained from the wine of the sacrament: "Either receive the sacrament in its entirety, or be excluded from the sacrament entirely, because a division of the mystery cannot take place without great sacrilege." *Corp. Jur. Can. Decree* 3:11, 12.

Regarding the Communion, does not history show how popes contradicted one

another, each claiming to be "infallible"?

History shows plainly that "infallible" popes and Church Councils contradicted each other concerning the matter of celebrating the Communion in one or both kinds.

The Council of Clermont, A.D. 1095, presided over by Pope Urban II, decreed in Canon 28 that "no one shall communicate at the altar unless he receive the body and blood of Christ separately" (that is, in both kinds). So also Pope Paschal II decreed A.D. 1118, "In receiving the Lord's body and blood, let the Lord's practice be observed; for we know that the bread was given separately, and the wine separately by the Lord Himself," i.e., in both kinds. Four popes and a Council of 218 bishops and abbots decided for communion with both bread and wine, but at the Council of Constance in 1415 this was reversed, and a canon decreeing half communion, that is, withholding the wine from the laity, was passed instead! Into such strange confusion do leaders fall, who substitute tradition or their own arbitrary opinions for the Word of God and the plain command of Christ! Letter of Rev. H. A. Ironside, page 11.

Does the Reformed Church obey the divine command in administering both bread and wine in the sacrament?

The Reformed Church gladly obeys Christ's command and welcomes all true believers to partake of both the bread and the wine.

The One Atoning Sacrifice For Sin

What is the only hope of guilty humanity for time and eternity?

The only hope of mankind for time and eternity is in the perfect atoning sacrifice for sin which the Son of God offered on the cross of Calvary. "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29.

What did Christ intend the Lord's Supper to be, in relation to His atoning death on the Cross?

Christ declared that the Lord's Supper was intended to be commemorative, a reminder or memorial of His precious death on the Cross. Luke records His words: "This do in remembrance of Me." Luke 22:19. St. Paul repeats the words "this do in remembrance of Me," as He gave them the bread, and also as He gave them the wine, "this do ye, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me." I Cor. 11:24, 25. Then in order to show that the Lord's Supper was intended to be a reminder of His death on Calvary, He repeats the same thought in different words, "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come!" "to declare, announce or publish" Christ's atoning death on the cross till He comes again in glory.

What fatal error does the Roman Catholic Church make concerning Christ's atoning sacrifice?

It presumes to teach that Christ's atoning sacrifice can be repeated, or offered anew by men: that a sinful human priest may offer it; and that in the

so-called Mass the Roman priest does repeat, or offer again, the same atoning sacrifice which our divine Redeemer offered on Calvary 1900 years ago.

Does Holy Scripture teach that Christ's atoning sacrifice for sin could ever be repeated or offered up again?

Never. Scripture teaches that no mere man could make atonement for sin, and no human priest could offer the sacrifice of Calvary: only the Son of God could offer it; and He did offer this atoning sacrifice only once on the Cross—"ONCE FOR ALL." Hebrews 9:14, 13:20, 10:10.

What proof does the Church of Rome give for her blasphemous assertion that her priests can repeat the atoning sacrifice of Christ?

No real proof whatever; for this unholy dogma contradicts many declarations of God's Holy Word.

Is not the whole conception of the Roman Mass a fabrication of the Dark Ages, exalting the power of the priests at the expense of our Saviour, and His one ever-prevalent sacrifice for sin?

The whole conception of the Roman Mass was an invention of Satan in the Dark Ages, which falsely makes the priest appear to have power to offer a true atoning sacrifice for sin,—all of which is directly contrary to the Word of God, and grossly dishonors the blessed Redeemer of men, giving glory to the creature which belongs only to the Creator. Rom. 1:25.

What name do Romanists often give to the priest usurping the high position, honor and power of the Creator?

The Roman Church often *blasphemously* calls the sinful priest, "*alter Christus,*" "*the other Christ.*" This horrible sin St. Paul warns against as a mark of apostasy, calling the guilty party "that man of sin, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." Any man who allows himself to be called *alter Christus*, and claims to repeat the divine sacrifice of the Son of God on Calvary, is guilty of this terrible sin. II Thess. 2:3, 4.

The Divine Sacrifice Of The Cross Can Never Be Repeated

Does not the Word of God often declare that there is only one true atoning sacrifice for sin; that the Son of God offered it by His vicarious sufferings and death; and that this perfect Atonement for sin avails for all ages, and will never pass away?

The Word of God clearly teaches this. It is the central theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews; and to it the whole Old Testament, especially the Levitical priesthood and sacrifices, directly pointed. No less than ten times in Hebrews is it proclaimed that Christ, the one and only great priest of His people, has offered the one and only Sacrifice for sin under the New Covenant; and that this divine sacrifice the Son of God Himself offered ONCE FOR ALL time, and it could never be repeated.

What are these ten passages which show the perfection and finality of Christ's one atoning sacrifice?

Scripture declares, both negatively and positively, that the Son of God's sacrifice, unlike the Old Testament sacrifices, was offered:

1. "Not daily." Heb. 7:27.
2. "Nor often." Heb. 9:25.
3. "Nor often times." Heb. 10:11.
4. "But *once only*. 'This He did once, when He offered up Himself.' "" Heb. 7:27.
5. "He entered in *once* into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Heb. 9:12.
- 6 and 7. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment; so Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of many." Heb. 9:27, 28.
8. "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ *once for all*." Heb. 10:10. The Greek word means *once for all*, "*once and no more*."
9. "But this man after He had offered *one* sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God." Heb. 10:12.
10. "For by one offering He hath *perfected forever* them that are sanctified." Heb. 10:14.

It seems impossible to find language more clear and explicit, repeatedly declaring that there is only one atoning sacrifice for sin, which can satisfy divine justice. That our Lord Jesus Christ offered this on Calvary once for all; and that for this divine sacrifice there can be no substitute, and of it there can be no repetition.

No human being could offer the divine sacrifice, only the eternal Son of God could do that. And to claim as the Roman Church does, that her priests do offer it, is the great sin of blasphemy against God, and a gross disparagement of the glorious Saviour, the Son of God.

If a Roman priest were literally repeating in the Mass the sacrifice of Calvary, as is falsely claimed, would he not be guilty of an unpardonable sin?

Yes, he would, for he would be "crucifying the Son of God afresh," which in Hebrews 6:6 is given as the sin of apostates.

And if the theory of the Mass were really true, would not Roman priests, saying thousands of Masses all over the world, be torturing the Saviour afresh with the agonies of the Cross?

Yes, that is true; though the thought is too awful to dwell upon. But thank God the Roman Mass is not true; for Holy Scripture declares that our gracious Redeemer no longer suffers for sin—He "dieth no more," but is now highly exalted in heaven, triumphant over sin and suffering, death and hell. Rom. 6:9, 10, 8:34, Phil. 2: 9-11.

How does the Church of Rome try to evade the shocking consequences of her mistaken doctrine of the Mass, that the priest repeats Christ's sacrifice of the Cross?

The Church of Rome declares that the sacrifice the priest offers in the Mass is a "bloodless sacrifice." But if "bloodless," then it is not a real sacrifice; for God's Word declares, "It is the blood that maketh atonement," and, "without shedding of blood is no remission." Levit. 17:11, Heb. 9:22.

What fact shows that the so-called Sacrifice offered in the Mass is counterfeit and can never save sinners?

The fact that Christ's perfect atoning sacrifice offered on Calvary is not held to be sufficient, but that it is necessary also to have a Roman priest repeat that sacrifice in the Mass. Unless the priest repeats the sacrifice in the Mass, the sacrifice of Christ cannot avail, that is to say, is incomplete! In other words, according to the teaching of the Church of Rome, atonement is in part made by the death of Christ and in part made by what the priest does; which directly contradicts the Word of God, dishonors the Saviour and can never save men.

What does a careful survey of Holy Scripture show concerning the Lord's Supper?

Scripture shows that the Reformed doctrine of the Lord's Supper is the true apostolic doctrine; that the whole theory of the Roman Mass, and of priests repeating Christ's sacrifice of Calvary is directly contrary to Holy Scripture and dishonors the great Redeemer. Moreover the Reformed doctrine is full of comfort and strength to the believer; Christ is truly present in the sacrament and fills our hearts with joy and peace, and this doctrine renders, as is justly due, all glory and praise to the crucified and risen Saviour, and not to a sinful human being. For it cannot be repeated too often, the Roman heresies of Transubstantiation and the Mass are a gross perversion of Holy Scripture, offering a counterfeit atonement which can never take away sin, but like a broken reed will pierce the hand that leans upon it, and will utterly fail the sinner in the Day of Judgment.