

The Sacraments Part I



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.

What is a Sacrament?

"A Sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein by sensible signs or symbols, Christ and His redemption are represented, sealed, and applied to believers." Matt. 28:19, 26:26, Westminster Shorter Catechism 92.

May a Church or its leaders, appoint sacraments?

No, they may not presume to do so. Because the Church belongs to Christ, only He as Head of the Church, could appoint them.

There Are Only Two Sacraments

According to Holy Scripture, how many Sacraments did our Lord institute?

Our Lord Jesus Christ instituted *only two sacraments*, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. Matt. 28:19, 26:26, I Cor. 11: 23-285.

How many Sacraments does the Papal Church have?

The Papal Church, contrary to Holy Scripture, presumes to teach that there are *seven sacraments*.

What proof does the Papal Church give for having seven sacraments?

Rome can give no proof whatever from Scripture. Having left God's Word, the papal church drifted about, uncertain as to the right number. Tertullian, obeying Scripture, names *but two*. Jerome, translator of the Vulgate (died 420), named *four*. Peter Damian (1072), twelve; Hugo St. Victor (1141), *thirty sacraments!* The Church of Rome at the Council of Florence in 1439, finally settled on seven, viz.: Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Orders, and Matrimony.

Why did the Church of Rome appoint seven sacraments?

Probably in order that it might *completely control the life* of its people by making them *absolutely dependent on the clergy*. The seven sacraments cover the most important events of human life, and the sacraments being controlled by the hierarchy, the laity are thus made absolutely dependent on the priesthood.

What grave error does the Church of Rome teach regarding the nature of the sacrament?

Rome teaches that the Sacraments confer divine grace *mechanically*, "by their outward action, as fire burns by its heat." This is called in Latin, *opus operatum*. Council of Trent, Sess. 7. Bellarmine, *de Effect. sacram.*, 1:9, 2:1.

What does the Word of God teach regarding the nature and operation of the sacraments?

The Word of God teaches just the *opposite* of the Roman dogma, viz.: that divine grace is not inherent in the sacraments, or in him who administers them, but is *bestowed directly by God the Holy Spirit* and is received by a *living faith*. I Cor. 12:8, 9, 11, Acts 10: 45, Heb. 11:6, Eph. 2:8.

What grave error does the Church of Rome teach concerning baptism?

As seen above concerning the sacraments, Rome teaches the mechanical efficacy of baptism; that without faith or conscious acceptance, "even while asleep," the baptized person's soul is regenerated and cleansed by virtue of the water of baptism! Bellarmine, *De Sac.*, 1, 9. But the Scriptures show that true baptism is of the heart, by the inward working of the Spirit of God. So St. Paul explained in his epistles. Rom. 2: 25-29, 4:9, 10, I Cor. 7:19, Gal. 5:6.

Similarly, Eph. 5:26 states that Christ cleansed the Church "with the washing of water by the Word"; that is, God's Word, is the instrument the Holy Spirit uses to cleanse the heart, of which cleansing baptism with water is the outward sign. So also Titus 3:5. God our Saviour "saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost"; the washing of regeneration means the washing of the soul from sin, when regenerated by the Holy Spirit, of which the washing or baptism with water is the outward symbol. The Scriptures nowhere teach that baptism is the means of regeneration.

Regeneration is always the work of the Holy Spirit, who gives "the new heart," and cleanses the soul from sin. The means of regeneration is the Word of God, which water baptism represents. Ezek. 36:25, 26, John 3:3, 5.

What other distressing error does the papal church teach concerning baptism?

The Roman Church teaches that all who die without baptism are eternally lost! Bellarmine writes: "Those who die without baptism are adjudged to condemnation and eternal death." *De Amuiss. Grat. et statu Pecc.*, 6:2.

The Lord's Supper, Or Eucharist

What is the sacrament of the Lord's Supper?

The Lord's Supper is a sacrament "wherein by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, His death is showed forth; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of His body and blood with all His benefits, to their

spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.” Matt. 26:26-29, I Cor. 11:26, I Cor. 10:16, Eph. 3:17, Westminster Shorter Catechism, 96.

Our Lord Jesus Christ on the night of His betrayal, took bread and wine, and blessing them, broke the bread and poured out the wine, as symbols of his broken body and shed blood, and commanded His disciples to eat and drink them in remembrance of His atoning death for their sins. He also commanded His Church to celebrate this solemn memorial until He should return in power and glory to judge the world and take His people home to heaven. I Cor. 11:25, 26, John 14:3, Matt. 26:31, 34, Luke 22: 14-20.

Did our Lord make any change in the bread and wine, or did these elements remain the same throughout the celebration of the sacrament?

The Scriptures clearly show that our Lord *made no change whatever in the elements*: the bread remained bread, and the wine remained wine throughout the sacrament.

What grave error does the Roman Catholic Church teach concerning the bread and the wine?

The Roman Church, directly contrary to the declarations of Holy Scripture, teaches that when the priest utters the words, “This is my body,” the bread and wine are *completely changed*, and become the literal flesh and blood of Christ’s body; that the communicant eats this literal flesh and blood, and by it *he is made good and saved*. Rome asserts, that “after the consecration, there is no more of the bread and wine of the sacrament,” but “that the substance of the bread and wine is changed into the proper substance of the body and blood of Christ.” Rome’s words are, “Jesus Christ is received by the *mouth of the body*,” that is, by the mouth of the communicant. Council of Trent, sess., 13:2, 4, 8. Bellarmine, De Euchar., 3:18.

Anyone can see, if he examines Scripture carefully, that the Roman Church has committed a great sin by falsely asserting that there has been a complete change in the substance of the bread and wine, for Scripture speaks of the bread and wine remaining the very same at the end of the sacrament. There was no change whatever. The Roman Church has *presumptuously disregarded Holy Scripture, and accepted in its place the false assertions of men*.

Christ’s Words Were Figurative

When our Lord said, “This is My body,” “This is My blood,” was He speaking literally, or figuratively?

The Scriptures give abundant evidence that He was speaking figuratively, not literally. He meant, “this bread represents My body broken on the cross for you.” “This cup represents My blood shed for you.” Notice that He *speaks figuratively* in using the word “cup” for the contents of the cup, the wine; this the Romanists also acknowledge.

The Bread and Wine Remain Unchanged

What is the evidence that Christ spoke figuratively and that the bread and

wine remain unchanged?

1. The fact that our Lord constantly used figures of speech, as the Jews did then, and as we do now. He said, "I am the Door"; "I am the Bread"; "the Vine"; "the Shepherd"; "ye are the branches"; "the salt"; "the light"; etc., etc. These were all figurative statements, and were well understood. When He said, "I am the Door," of course He did not mean a literal wooden door, with lock and hinges! When He said "I am the Vine, ye are the branches," He did not mean a literal grape vine with branches. He meant "this vine represents Me, and these branches represent you," and "the oneness of the vine and its branches represents the spiritual oneness of you believers with Me, your Lord and Saviour."

Note that these statements are *not true, if taken literally*, and Christ's disciples had no difficulty in understanding His figures of speech, many of which He and the apostles frequently used.

2. The fact that our Lord made *no mention of a change* in the bread and wine, as He surely would have done had He meant us to believe that a change had actually taken place. He made no mention whatever of a change, and so no one has a right to assert that there was a change, for that would be disobeying the command that nothing be added to Scripture. Rev. 22:18, Deut. 4:2, 12:32.

3. After the prayer of consecration and the declaration, "This is My body," when the Church of Rome asserts a change took place, our Lord still declares the elements to be bread and wine. He says, "this bread," "this cup," showing that no change into flesh and blood has taken place. At the close of the sacrament, after they had eaten the elements, He again speaks of "this fruit of the vine," showing that the elements had remained the same, that what they had drunk was wine, not blood. Matt. 26:29, I Cor. 11:26.

4. Again, when our Lord held the bread and wine in his hands, it is impossible that He meant they were His literal body, for at that very moment, His whole body was sitting at the table before His disciples!

5. The Church of Rome's assertion "that Jesus Christ is received by the mouth of body" directly contradicts many Scriptures which declare that Christ and His salvation are received by faith alone. "Justified by the faith of Jesus Christ," that is, "justified by trusting Christ as Saviour." "Live by the faith of the Son of God"; "Made children of God by faith in Him"; "Christ dwelling in your hearts by faith"; "without faith it is impossible to please Him"; "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." According to Scripture every blessing of salvation is received by faith, and never "by the mouth of the body." Gal. 2:16, 20, 3:22, 26, Eph. 3:12, 17, Rom. 14:23, Hebrews 11:6. A discerning Spanish priest, Maldonate (Maldonado), was once explaining the expressions "Come to me," "Eating," etc., and said in homely language, "Do not prepare your teeth and your belly for it (the "bread of life"), but believe in Him and you have eaten Him!" John 6:35, 50, 51. The priest thus held the true Protestant doctrine, as taught in Holy Scripture!

6. Note also that the Roman Church's claim that a miracle is wrought by the change of the bread and wine into Christ's literal body and blood is wholly

mistaken because it does not agree with the real miracles of our Lord, which were all evident to the human senses. Sight, touch, taste, smell, bore witness to the genuineness of Christ's miracles, when He fed the five thousand, stilled the tempest, raised the dead, and cast out devils. And so if a real miracle had taken place in the Sacrament, if the bread and wine had truly been changed into flesh and blood, the senses would surely have perceived it. But every communicant knows that the bread is still bread, and the wine still wine, because these look, taste, smell and feel like bread and wine, and nothing else. It is apparent to the communicant's senses that there has been no change whatever. To allege otherwise, as the Roman Church does, is clearly unreasonable and untrue, for it rejects the testimony of the senses, and discredits the mighty miracles of our Lord.

7. Another proof that what Christ gave His disciples to eat in the sacrament was simple bread and wine, and not His flesh and blood is this,—a. literal interpretation, that what the priest gives the communicant to eat is actual flesh and blood makes the sacrament a *form of cannibalism*—a thought too horrible and repulsive to dwell upon!

8. Note also that our Saviour rebuked the Jews for misunderstanding His words, just as the Church of Rome now misunderstands them. They took His words literally and imagined He said that His very flesh and blood were to be eaten. Christ then reproved them, and said in substance, "Even if you could eat the flesh and blood of My body, it would do you no good. It is the spiritual food that I give, the saving truth of My words, that gives life." "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life!" John 6:63.

9. Again, our Lord's bodily ascension to heaven proves that His literal flesh and blood are not eaten in the Sacrament. Christ's sacred body is no longer on earth. It is in heaven, and will not return to the earth until He comes in majesty and power to judge the world, and take His people home to glory. Luke 24:51, Acts 1:9, 11.

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