

(d) The sacramental signs were instituted by Christ. Our Lord is the Author of all the sacraments. Only God can give to material things or to outward signs the power of producing grace in the soul.

2. The Number of Ordinances/Sacraments

a. The Protestant View

"Baptism and the Lord's Supper are admitted to be sacraments. They are (1) Ordinances instituted by Christ. (2) They are in their nature significant, baptism of cleansing; the Lord's Supper of spiritual nourishment. (3) They were designed to be perpetual. (4) They were appointed to signify, and to instruct; to seal, and to confirm and strengthen; and to convey or apply, and thus to sanctify, those who by faith receive them. On this principle the definition of a sacrament given in the standards of our Church is founded. 'A sacrament', it is said, 'is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the New Covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.' . . . . If the word sacrament be taken in the wide sense in which it was used in the early Church for any significant religious rite, it is obvious that no definite limit can be set to their number. If the word be confined to such divine ordinances as answer the conditions which characterize baptism and the Lord's Supper, then it is evident that they are the only sacraments under the Christian dispensation; and such is the view taken by all Protestants . . . . The Romanists have seven sacraments, adding to baptism and the Lord's Supper, matrimony, orders, penance, confirmation, and extreme unction. Matrimony, however, although a divine institution, was not ordained for signifying, sealing, and applying to believers the benefits of redemption, and therefore, is not a sacrament. The same may be said of orders. And as to confirmation, penance, and extreme unction, in the sense in which Romanists use those terms, they are not divine institutions at all."

-- Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Volume Three (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, and Company, 1872, reprinted by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1952), p. 492.

"As for the number of them, if they should be considered according to the exact signification of a Sacrament, namely, for the visible signs, expressly commanded in the New Testament, whereunto is annexed the promise of free forgiveness of our sins, and of our holiness and joining in Christ, there be but two; namely, baptism, and the Supper of the Lord. For, although absolution hath the promise of forgiveness of sin; yet by the express word of the New Testament it hath not this promise annexed and tied to the visible sign, which is imposition of hands. For this visible sign (I mean laying on of hands) is not expressly commanded in the New Testament to be used in absolution, as the visible signs in baptism and the Lord's Supper are; and therefore absolution is no such Sacrament as Baptism and the Communion are. And though the ordering of ministers hath His visible sign and promise, yet it lacks the promise of remission of sins, as all other Sacraments