

blessings appropriated by faith, and as directing our faith away from ourselves to the grace of God in Jesus Christ. For him the sacraments were memorials and badges of profession, though he also uses expressions which seem to point to a deeper significance."

-- L. Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1937), pp. 253-254.

"By the ordinances, we mean those outward rites which Christ has appointed to be administered in his church as visible signs of the saving truth of the gospel. They are signs, in that they vividly express this truth and confirm it to the believer.

In contrast with this characteristically Protestant view, the Romanist regards the ordinances as actually conferring grace and producing holiness."

-- Augustus Hopkins Strong, *Systematic Theology*, volume III, p. 930.

b. The Reformed View

"The first point clearly taught on this subject in the Symbols of the Reformed Church is that the sacraments are real means of grace, that is, means appointed and employed by Christ for conveying the benefits of his redemption to his people.

The second point in the Reformed doctrine on the sacraments concerns the source of their power. On this subject it is taught negatively that the virtue is not in them. . . The efficiency does not reside in the elements . . . It is not in the sacrament actions. Neither does the virtue of efficiency due to sacraments reside in, or flow from the person whom they are administered. It does not reside in his office . . . Nor does their efficiency depend on the character of the administrator in the sight of God; nor upon his intention; that, his purpose to render them effectual The affirmative statement on this subject is, that the efficacy of the sacraments is due solely to the blessing of Christ and the working of his Spirit. . . The third point included in the Reformed doctrine is, that the sacraments are effectual as means of grace only, so far as adults are concerned, to those who by faith receive them.

-- Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, Volume Three, pp. 499-500.

III -- The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments, rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them; neither doth the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that administer it, but upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of institution; which contains, together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers.

The efficacy of the sacraments is here described negatively and positively. (1) The power does not lie in the sacrament viewed *per se*, nor is it conditioned by the character of him who administers it. The Romish theory makes the sacrament efficacious in itself, *ex opere operato*, and thus gives what may be called a magical view of the