

sacrament The notion that all, depends upon the intention of the officiating priest, *ex opere operantis*, led to great abuse in the Romish Church, and left it ordinarily uncertain whether one had at any time received the communion or not. (2) The Protestant doctrine places the efficacy in the observance of the acts prescribed in the institution, and in the fulfillment of the condition of faith on the part of the receiver as therein implied. 'All receive not the grace of God, which receive the sacraments of His grace. Neither is it ordinarily His will to bestow the grace of sacraments on any but by the sacraments; which grace also, they that receive by sacraments, or with sacraments, receive it from Him, and not from them.' (Hooker, Eccles Polity Bk. v. ch. lvii.)"

-- John MacPherson, *The Westminster confession of Faith* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1881), pp. 148-149.

c. The Lutheran View

"The Evangelical (the Evangelical Lutheran Church) Church herewith most distinctly opposes the Romish doctrine of the efficacy of the Sacrament *ex opere operato* (Ap. Conf., VII, 18): . . . We teach that faith is necessary to the proper use of the Sacraments; as faith which believes the promises and receives the things promised, which are here offered in the Sacrament. And the reason of this is plain and undeniable. A promise is useless to us unless it be embraced by faith. But the Sacraments are signs of the promises. Therefore faith is necessary to their proper use. . . .

Holl. (David Hollaz): 'The primary design of the Sacraments is the offering, conferring, applying, and sealing of the Gospel grace.' 'Gospel grace is offered to all who use the Sacraments; it is conferred on those who worthily use them; it is applied and sealed to adult believers.' Hence the Sacraments are not mere significant signs but such as also present and tender what they set forth; for this is included already in the idea of a Sacrament as a means of salvation.

Chmn. (Martin Chemnitz): 'The Ap. Conf. correctly declares that the effect, virtue or efficacy of the Word, and of the Sacraments, which are the seals of the promises, is the same . . . As, according to this, the Sacraments effect the same grace as the Word, the question may arise, Why has God employed a twofold means to this end? Chmn. (Ex. C. Trid., II, 29) answers: . . . And, indeed (as Chrysostom says) If we were angels, we would need no external sign; but our carnal infirmity hinders, disturbs, distracts, and weakens our faith. For it is hard to continue firmly persuaded of those things proposed in the Word which are not apparent to the senses. . . Moreover faith, when it determines that the divine promise is in general a living one, is yet principally concerned about the question, Does this promise belong to me individually? . . . God, therefore, who is rich in mercy desires to present His grace to us not only in one way, that is, by His mere Word; but He desires also to help our infirmity by certain aids, namely, but Sacraments instituted and annexed to the promise of the Gospel, i.e., by certain signs, rites, or ceremonies obvious to