

The benefits which they signify and which they are the means of signifying, sealing, and applying to believers, are not so tied to their use that those benefits cannot be secured without them. . . . The Lutherans and Romanists, on the other hand, hold that the sacraments are necessary means of grace, in the sense that the grace which they signify is not received otherwise than in their use."

-- Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*,
Volume Three, pp. 516-517.

c. The Lutheran View

"Saving grace is imparted to man not only through the Word, but also through the Sacraments A Sacrament is, therefore, a holy rite, appointed by God, through which, by means of an external and visible sign, saving grace is imparted to man, or, if he already possess it, is assured to him.

The question of the necessity of the Sacraments is thus decided by Chmn. (Ex. C. Trid., II 30): 'The Sacraments are necessary both by reason of the infirmity of our faith, which needs aids of this kind, and by reason of the divine institution . . .'

Holl. 'The Sacraments are necessary by the necessity of the precept and of the means. They have no absolute, but an ordinate or conditionate necessity.' Quen. (John Andrew Quenstedt): 'Baptism is necessary in infants not only by the necessity of the precept, but by the necessity of the means, because there is not other means by which they may be regenerated; but in adults it is necessary by reason of the precept, because in that case it requires faith. The Eucharist is necessary to all Christian adults by the necessity of the precept.' "

"3. The immediate design of Baptism is, finally, to work saving grace in man. But, as also the Word of God has the like effect, Baptism is intended to produce this result only in such cases in which it is applied at an earlier period than the Word; this is the case with infants who are not yet susceptible to the preaching of the Gospel. But in adults who, with their already developed reason, can understand the preaching of the Gospel, the Word has precedence, and produces its results before the Sacrament. But, in such instances, Baptism serves to seal and establish the gracious result already accomplished by the Word."

-- Heinrich Schmid, *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* pp. 520, 535, 537.

d. The Roman Catholic View

The necessity of the sacraments may be seen in the *Baltimore Catechism No 3's* discussion of baptism:

"315. What is Baptism?

Baptism is the sacrament that gives our souls the new life of sanctifying grace by which we become children of God and heirs of heaven.