

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

CHAPTER 27.-Of the Sacraments.

V. The Sacraments of the Old Testament, in regard of the spiritual things thereby signified, and exhibited, were, for substance, the same with those of the New¹.

Question 1.—*Are the sacraments of the Old Testament, in regard of the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, the same for substance with those of the New?*

Answer.—Yes. 1 Cor 10:1-4. Thus do the Papists and Lutherans err, maintaining that the difference between the sacraments of the Old Testament, and the New, consists in this, that those did delineate and shadow forth grace, these contain, offer, and confer grace. They are confuted for the following reasons: 1.) Because the apostle Paul ascribes to the ancients our baptism and sign in their mode, not certainly with regard to signs (which were diverse), but with regard to the thing signified, 1 Cor. 10:1-4. The cloud, and the passing through the Red sea, did signify these things to the Jews, which baptism signifies to us. And the manna, and the water from the rock, did signify the same thing to them, which the Lord's supper signifies to us. So that in the thing signified and in their effect they evidently agree with ours; nor have ours any prerogative above them. 2.) Because the sacraments of the Old and New Testament, did obsignate and seal up the same righteousness of faith. Circumcision did not only figure grace, but in the lawful use conferred it, Gen. 17:11; Rom. 4:11. 3.) Because there is an interchange of names between the sacraments of the Old and New Testaments, which are promiscuously ascribed to the believers of both Testaments. Circumcision and the Passover are ascribed to us, 1 Cor. 5:7; Col. 2:11. And the Scripture applies to believers under the Old Testament, the sacraments of the New, 1 Cor. 10:1-3. Now, the Scripture applies the sacraments of the New Testament, to believers under the Old, which is not done by reason of the sign, for the signs are diverse and different, therefore it must be done by reason of the thing signified; and by consequence the sacraments of the Old Testament must agree in the thing signified with the sacraments of the New. 4.) Because the sacraments of both Testaments agree in the word of promise, Gen. 3:15; 17:7, 11; Acts 2:38, 39; Rom. 4:10-13; Gal. 3:29. Therefore they also agree in the thing signified, which is included in the word. 5.) Because Christ promises to the believers of the New Testament no other kingdom of heaven than that in which they sit down with Abraham and the other patriarchs, Matt. 8:11. He exhibits and seals also not another, but entirely the same grace in the sacraments of both people because Christ is the same yesterday, today and for ever, Heb. 13:8, whose day Abraham saw and was glad, John 8:56, and who invited us in the Supper to the communion of his body and blood, Luke 22:19, 20.

Question 2.—*How then are those passages explained which seem to say that the sacraments of the Old vaguely show forth or represent grace but those of the New contain it?*

Answer.—We must consider the following: 1.) The sacraments of the Old Testament were so shadows and types of things to come in their legal relation, Heb. 10:1; Col. 2:17,

¹ 1 Cor. 10:1-4.

that they in their manner also exhibited and applied in the gospel relation the body itself—Christ with his benefits. They are called shadows, not with respect to our sacraments, but with respect to Christ, who is the truth of all types, John 1:17, and the body of the shadows, Col. 2:17. If they are called by Peter “figures”, 1 Pet. 3:21, it is not because they are types of our sacraments, but because they are types similar to and corresponding to ours, which were put in their place. 2.) If the expiation of sin is ascribed to the sacraments of the New Testament, Acts 2:38; 22:16, it is not a proper and real expiation, which belongs to the blood of Christ alone, 1 John 1:7; Heb. 9:12, but a moral and sacramental expiation which is no less ascribed to the sacraments of the Old Testament, Lev. 1:4; 4:26, although a proper and real expiation is withdrawn from them, Heb. 9:10. 3.) The sacraments of the Old Testament are said to be nothing, 1 Cor. 7:19, to avail nothing, Gal. 6:15, to be infirm and weak elements of the world, Gal. 4:9, partly when they are regarded simply in themselves with respect to the signs in opposition to the thing sealed, just as in the case with our sacraments when viewed in the external rite alone; or with respect to their abrogation after the rising of the sun of righteousness, who scattered those shadows; or with respect to the abuse of men who (contrary to the divine institution and their legitimate use, by a deadly error) bound grace to them *per se*, which ought to have been ascribed to the death of Christ and to the Holy Spirit. 4.) The promise of grace annexed to the sacraments of the Old Testament was equally absolute with that which is added to those of the New because they were signs of the same covenant. The declaration that the new covenant was established upon better promises is not meant in regard to the thing promised (which was the same in both), but in regard to the mode of promising, which is both clearer and fuller and more efficacious. 5.) In the sacraments we must distinguish the *material* from the *formal*. The *material* is the sign with the external rites, which do not justify. But the *formal* is the very thing signified—Christ with his benefits, from whom alone is justification. The old sacraments were the same as ours; not *materially*, but *formally*.