

Questions/answers on the Sacraments of the Church

by James Blaine Chapman

The sermon discusses the importance of reverence in worship, the meaning of the Lord's Supper, and the relationship between baptism and repentance.

Scripture: Mark 16:16, John 6:53, Romans 14:22, 1 Corinthians 11:30, Colossians 2:12

Topics: "Sacrament Theology", "Christian Salvation"

Description

James Blaine Chapman addresses various questions related to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, emphasizing the importance of understanding the meaning of the sacrament before partaking in it, the consequences of irreverence and carelessness in celebrating it, and debunking the Roman Catholic theory of transubstantiation. He clarifies that drawing spiritual life from Christ is essential, regardless of partaking in the sacrament, and highlights the significance of faith in Christ for salvation and eternal life.

Transcript

QUESTION #264 -- Is there any age limit for those who participate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper? If not do you think it wise to administer it to the children under five?

ANSWER #264 -- There is no age limit, but I think children under five could scarcely be expected to understand enough of the meaning of the sacrament to be profited by it. It would vary with different children, of course, but I think seven young even for those who have been trained in our homes, Sunday schools and churches.

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QUESTION #265 -- Please explain in I Corinthians 11:30, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."

ANSWER #265 -- This is a part of the apostle's treatise on the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The careless manner in which the Corinthians had been celebrating it had led to other and more serious offenses and to weakness and backsliding among the members. Irreverence in the house of God breeds contempt for the things of God and brings about shallowness and spiritual declension. I have seen instances in which parents allowed their children to run and play in the church or tabernacle until I am sure

the spirit of the meetings was hurt. And I have seen singers and preachers proceed with an evident lightness that presaged the running of the spiritual plow out of the ground. Let us take warning and instruction from Paul's words to the Corinthians which concluded with the words, "Let everything be done in decency and in order."

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QUESTION #266 -- The Roman Catholic Church believes that the bread and wine, for the Lord's Supper actually turn into the flesh and blood of the Lord as soon as the priest sanctifies it. Two Chinese Catholic priests recently told me of an instance in which a Protestant in Italy or France entered a church during high mass, and being utterly opposed to the idea that the bread and wine become flesh and blood, he rushed to the altar, snatched the bread from the hand of the priest and began to cut it into pieces. To his horror and amazement the blood began to flow freely from the supposed bread. I am told there are many stories like this. Is there any foundation for such stories? If not, what does the Lord mean when He says, "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. Except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of man and drink of his blood ye have no life in you. Whosoever eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day"?

ANSWER #266 -- There is of course no foundation in facts for these fabulous stories by which Rome keeps credulous people under her influence. And what is more, the whole Roman Catholic theory of transubstantiation is a fabrication of the hierarchy and is unscriptural and pagan. As to the meaning of the scripture quoted above: the plain meaning is that one must draw his spiritual life from Christ or have no life at all. At the time these words were spoken they were applied as a present test, and yet the sacrament of the Lord's Supper had not yet been established. We may therefore be sure that there is no direct reference to this sacrament in the passage. The meaning is deeper and more fundamental. One might partake of the elements of the sacrament and still have no life. But if he eats the flesh and drinks the blood of Christ he invariably and without fail does have life. The reference is not therefore to any outward ordinance but to faith in Christ by means of which one becomes partaker of His vital salvation and abiding life. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life" is a parallel passage. And "He that believeth not shall be damned" is the equivalent of the other side of the statement Except one partake of the life which is provided in Christ he abideth in death.

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QUESTION #267 -- The scripture which says, "Repent and be baptized" seems to make water baptism a very important part in fully and wholly obeying the Scriptures. Is this not so? If a person was baptized as an infant, will this baptism answer for the baptism which is commanded in connection with repentance?

ANSWER #267 -- It is difficult for people to get away from the idea that water baptism is in some sense a saving ordinance: hence all the controversies concerning mode, etc. Baptism is "an outward sign of an inner work of grace," and a sign of the covenant of grace. It should not be refused nor neglected. But if one is satisfied with the baptism which was administered to him in infancy, who is there that is authorized to become conscience for him and compel him to do that which his own conscience does not require?

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