

Title: WSC Question 91: How Do the Sacraments Become Effectual Means of Salvation?

- I. The doctrine stated:
 - A. WSC Answer 91: The Sacraments Become Effectual Means of Salvation, Not from Any Virtue in Them, or in Him that Doth Administer Them; But Only by the Blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them.
 - B. WLC Answer 161: The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not by any power in themselves, or any virtue derived from the piety or intention of him by whom they are administered, but only by the working of the Holy Ghost, and the blessing of Christ, by whom they are instituted.

- II. The doctrine proved and explained.
 - A. The Sacraments Become Effectual Means of Salvation, Not from Any Virtue in Them. (1 PE 3:21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ)
 - B. The Sacraments Become Effectual Means of Salvation, Not from Any Virtue ... in Him that Doth Administer Them; But Only by the Blessing of Christ (1 CO 3:6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. [7] So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.)
 - C. The Sacraments Become Effectual Means of Salvation, Not from Any Virtue in Them, or in Him that Doth Administer Them; But Only by ... the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them. (1 CO 12:13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.)
 - D. The sacraments are a means of salvation. (contra Zwinglianism)
 - E. The sacraments are not made effectual by any inherent virtue in themselves or the one administering them. The sacraments are not magic nor are ministers magicians. (contra Romanism)
 - F. The sacraments become effectual for the faithful by means of Christ's blessing and the operation of the Holy Spirit.

- III. The doctrine applied.
 - A. Treasure the sacraments as you treasure the salvation of your soul neither neglecting nor despising them.
 - B. Use the sacraments for their appointed ends to lead you to Christ and increase your faith in Him.
 - C. Do not put your trust in the sacraments but rather in the Christ who blesses the faithful use of them.

Conclusion: WSC Answer 91: The Sacraments Become Effectual Means of Salvation, Not from Any Virtue in Them, or in Him that Doth Administer Them; But Only by the Blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them. "Lastly, Be concerned for the working of the Spirit in all ordinances, and particularly in the sacraments; for without that they can have no effect. When ye bring your children to baptism, and when ye come to the Lord's table, be concerned, and earnestly wrestle and pray for it. Let it be at these seasons the matter of your exercise, that the Lord may accompany these solemn ordinances with divine life and power unto you, and may excite your graces unto a vigorous and lively exercise, without which they will be utterly ineffectual to you." (Thomas Boston)