

Sacraments

extract from Proposition XII § i, ii

§ i. In the explanation and proof of the previous proposition I showed how far the professors of Christianity, both Protestants and Papists, have degenerated in their worship; how much they are against, how much they are strangers to the true and acceptable worship in the Spirit of Truth, because of man's natural propensity, in his fallen state, to exalt his own inventions and to intermix his own work and products in the service of God. . . . If there is any Scripture practice, or conditional permission given because of the weakness or incapacity of some people, or appropriate to some particular dispensation — if they can stretch or twist\* that practice or permission to give some appearance of support to any of their inventions, then they stick to them stubbornly, and plead for them obstinately and obstreperously, and refuse to hear the most solid Christian reasons against those practices. If they would only examine their zeal seriously, they would find that it is only the prejudice of their education and the love of self more than of God and his pure worship. This is clearly seen in the things which are called "sacraments" . . . .

§ ii. The first thing to consider is the name "sacrament." It is strange that Christians stick to this word and argue for it so much, since it cannot be found in all the Scripture. It was borrowed from the military oaths among the pagans, from whom the Christians, when the apostasy began, borrowed many superstitious words and practices, in order to ingratiate themselves and more easily win the pagans to their religion. Perhaps they intended this practice for good, but since it is the fruit of human policy and is not according to God's wisdom it has had very pernicious consequences.

Sources: Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, Proposition XII § i, ii (Glenside PA: Quaker Heritage Press, 2002) pp. 344-347 and Roberti Barclaii, *Teologiae verè Christianae apologia*, facsimile (Amsterdam: Jacob Claus, 1676) pp. 264-266.