

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN

**Exposition of the Sedes Doctrinae of the Lord's
Supper.**

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(Continued.)

The all-important part of this first section of the words of institution is now before us, and a correct understanding of their true, intended meaning is essential to a God-pleasing celebration of the Sacrament. The Lord expressly tells His disciples what He gives them, and what they, therefore, shall receive, with the

bread. "And [He] said," *καὶ εἶπεν*, thus the apostle proceeds, likewise Matthew and Mark, while Luke uses the participle: He gave them the bread "saying," *λέγων*, which shows that Jesus did not first give the bread to His disciples and then add the words which follow in the record in explanation thereof, but that the giving and the speaking was done simultaneously. He extended the bread to them, saying, "Take, eat," *λάβετε, φάγετε*, as we read in the records of Paul, Matthew, and Mark; Luke omits these words. The Lord commands His disciples to take and to eat what He extends to them, and that with the mouths of their body. They were to take it, not in a spiritual manner, by faith, but in a natural manner, be it first with the hand, then with the mouth of their body, or be it directly, immediately, with the mouth, so that, as regards the mode of receiving the element, it is immaterial whether the ministrant convey it directly to the mouth of the communicant or the latter take it in hand from the former and complete the action himself. And the disciples were to eat the bread; they were not to adore, revere, worship, or idolize it, but they were to eat it, and that likewise not spiritually, by faith, but orally; and accordingly it is important for us to note, with reference to our celebration of the Eucharist, that oral, or bodily, eating is an essential part of it.

And what was it that the Lord gave to His disciples and which they were to take and eat? "This is My body," said the Lord, as we find it stated harmoniously in all four records, *Τοῦτό μου ἔστιν τὸ σῶμα*. These words are clear and simple; it is obvious from them that the Lord commands His disciples to take and to eat His body. Let us analyze this simple sentence: *This* is the subject; *is My body* is the complete, or logical, predicate; or *My body* is the complement of the verb *is* or the predicate of the sentence, and *is* is the copula, which tells of the subject *This*, what it is, *viz.*, My, *i. e.*, the Lord's, body. The subject *This* is the singular and the neuter gender of the same demonstrative pronoun. Now what does the pronoun *This* relate to? Some would have it relate to the foregoing word, bread. By substituting *This bread* for *This*, which would, in such case, be necessary, the sentence would read: This bread is My body. This is not materially incorrect; for what the Lord held in His hand and commanded His disciples to take and to eat was the bread which He had blessed and broken. However, the whole logico-grammatical construction stands in opposition to such an analysis, or explanation, of the subject *This*. The pronoun *This* relates not to the preceding, but

to the succeeding words. The subject of the sentence is qualified by the predicate. The Lord wishes to say: That which I extend and give to you, that which you are to take and eat, is My body. This is a common and comprehensible mode of speech. When one says, *e. g.*, "This is a book," every one understands the meaning of these words to be, This which you see, this article, is a book. Just so in the words of institution: The Lord says, This which you shall take and eat is My body. He does not refer to the bread in these words. He does not thereby deny that the bread is truly present, and that it, too, is to be taken and eaten by the disciples. It was merely unnecessary to direct their attention to this; for the disciples saw and tasted the bread. The Lord did find it necessary, however, to emphasize that what He gave them and what they were to take and eat with the bread was His body. This He does when He says: "This is My body."

That this is the correct explanation of the pronoun *This* in the sentence before us is apparent also from the fact that, whenever in Scripture-passages pertaining to the Eucharist the term which designates the earthly element forms the subject of the sentence, we then notice a change in the predicate. Luke and Paul, *e. g.*, in reporting the institution of the second element, specifically call the earthly element "this cup"; however, they do not now proceed thus: This cup is My blood, but they write as follows: "This cup is the new testament in My blood." And in 1 Cor. 10, 16 the apostle does not say, The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the body of Christ? He writes thus: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the *communion* of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the *communion* of the body of Christ?" The sacramental bread is the communion of the body of Christ; together with the bread the communicant receives Christ's body. Dr. Graebner writes: "It is not a matter of arbitrary choice how we would refer the pronoun. Here as elsewhere the context must decide. According to the context these words, 'This is My body,' were spoken in the course of a continuous action, of which Christ said, *Τοῦτο ποιείτε*, 'This do.' In the act of giving to His disciples the bread which He had blessed, Jesus said, 'Take, eat, this is My body.' All this must be taken together to determine the meaning of *τοῦτο*. What Jesus would say is, *This which I give you* to eat as I give you this consecrated bread is My body. That He gave them bread the disciples saw and thus knew without being told. Hence Jesus tells them that

with the sacramental bread He gave them His body: *Τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ σῶμά μου.*" (*Theol. Quarterly*, Vol. 5, p. 161 sq.)

"This is My body," thus says the Lord. He says clearly and plainly of that which He gave His disciples to eat that it is His body. Clearer and plainer and simpler words than are contained in this sentence cannot be found. The proponents of a false doctrine of the Eucharist realize this, and therefore they seek to establish their doctrine from other Scripture-passages and then interpret and explain the actual words of institution accordingly. Consequently all sorts of methods have been applied in an endeavor to give these words a figurative meaning. Some would find a trope, or figure, in the subject of the sentence; others would find one in the predicate; still others look for it in the verb or copula. As to the latter, we may state without reluctance or hesitation that *is* in all languages means *is*, nothing else, nothing more, nor less. *E. g.*, in the sentence, "The seed is the Word of God," Luke 8, 11, which actually contains a figure, the figure is not contained in the verb *is*, and the sentence is not to be explained thus: The seed *signifies* the Word of God, but it is to be explained thus: The seed *is, is actually*, the Word of God. The figure in this sentence is in the subject, the seed. The seed of which the Lord speaks is not natural seed, such as is sown into the ground, but figurative seed, and this seed *is* His Word. The matter becomes still clearer when the predicate contains a metaphor, or figure. In the sentences, "Christ is the Vine," "Christ is the Rock," the meaning is not that Christ signifies the vine or the rock; no, the meaning is that Christ is truly the Vine, the Rock; indeed, not a natural vine, such as grows in the vineyard, but the true spiritual Vine; not a natural rock, but the true spiritual Rock, from which flows the Water of Life. When Christ says, "I am the Good Shepherd," "I am the Way," "I am the Door," it would be nothing short of belittling and dishonoring Him to explain His sayings to mean that He merely signifies the Good Shepherd, the way, the door; for He actually and truly is all this. The predicate is merely not to be understood in its native, but in a figurative sense. Thus it is clear that a figure, or trope, is never in the word *is*. But even if an example could be found in which *is* means *signifies*, it would not prove that such is the case in the words of institution. Moreover, in every figurative form of speech there must be some point of comparison, a *tertium comparationis*. But where is the point of comparison in the words in question? All that can be said is that there is none. The burden of proof

that the words of institution are to be explained and interpreted figuratively really rests upon those who give them a figurative meaning. To this day, however, such proof has been conspicuous by its absence. Until convincing proof to the contrary has been offered, — and we have reason to doubt the possibility thereof, — we shall cling to the meaning, to the explanation, as stated: “This is *truly* My body.” — “In offering the physical elements to the disciples,” thus Dr. Dau writes, “the Lord employs the *locutio exhibitiva*, common to every language of men: He names that which is not seen while giving that which is seen. (‘Here are your spices,’ says the grocer delivering the package containing them.) The *locutio exhibitiva*, except when used by a jester or dishonest person, always states a fact. The bread in the Eucharist is the body of Christ. . . . The relation [of the elements to one another] is expressed in 1 Cor. 10, 16. 17 by *koinonia*, “communion.” *Koinonia* declares a communion of the bread with the body of Christ.” (*I. S. B. E.*, Vol. 3, p. 1927.)

Nor do we cling to the stated meaning of the words in question as a matter of arbitrary choice. Scripture compels us to do so; for the stated meaning is the simple, proper, and apparent meaning of the words. And surely, the exposition of these words is governed by the same law of Bible exegesis applicable to the entire sacred Record, *viz.*, that every word and statement of Scripture must be understood in its proper and native sense unless a plain and urgent reason compels the adoption of a figurative interpretation. Regarding the words of institution, however, a reason for doing this is completely lacking; there is no indication in the record that these words are to be understood figuratively. Again, the very fact that the words of institution of the Eucharist are the expression of the Lord's last will, or testament, not only forbids the use of figurative language on the part of the Lord, it also precludes any right or option on the part of man to turn, or twist, or interpret the words as he will, but makes it imperative that he accept them in their plain, simple, literal meaning, just as they read. Even the testament of man is interpreted and executed strictly according to the proper and native meaning of the words and specifications set forth therein. For instance, it is stated in the testament of a deceased father that the estate shall be divided between the two sons in this way, that the one son, John, is to receive the farm and the other son, Henry, the cash and the personal property as the equivalent of the real estate. If, in such a case, the latter were to contest the will and say, It is true, according to the simple words of the

document, Brother John is to receive the farm; however, this was not father's meaning; he meant to say that John is to receive a picture of the farm, would not a fair judge, in such an event, be apt to lose his equilibrium and his mental poise, and would he not be justified in censuring the contestant most severely? If the word: "Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto" (Gal. 3, 15), applies, as it surely does, to the will, or testament, of man, it applies with triple force to the words of institution of the Eucharist, the last will, or testament, of the Lord. Furthermore, the words of institution are the *sedes doctrinae* of the Eucharist, the *loci classici* of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. Now, if one would be justified in giving these clear passages of Scripture a figurative meaning merely because their simple import lies beyond the grasp of human reason, one would be justified to do so in every other instance with regard to the *loci classici* of any other doctrine, and the result would be that reason would sit upon the entire sacred Volume as its master and superior, and thus not a single revealed doctrine could be retained. God forbid, therefore, that we ever waver in our firm conviction that the true, intended meaning of the words in question is and only can be: "This *is*," *is truly*, "My body."

The question confronting us now, then, is: Was the bread changed into the body of Christ? And again we must answer most emphatically, No! No transubstantiation took place. When the Lord said, "Take, eat; this is My body," the meaning of His words was not: The bread is no longer bread, but has been changed into My body; no, the meaning of His words was: That which I give you in and with the bread is My body. When one says to another in handing him a glass of water, "This is water," he does not mean to say that the tumbler is no longer a tumbler, but that it has been transformed into water; but this is what he means to say: In this tumbler I am giving you water. Again, referring to Christ and saying, God is man, we do not wish to say, that God has been transformed into man, but that God is man by virtue or reason of the union of the divine and human natures. And as in this case the divinity remains divinity and the humanity remains humanity, each retaining its own nature, just so in the Eucharist the bread remains bread and Christ's body remains the body of Christ, each retaining its own nature, however, by virtue or reason of the sacramental union of the elements, in this manner, that the earthly element is not present without the heavenly element

in the Lord's Supper, and *vice versa*. Therefore the apostle still calls the bread *bread after* the consecration. 1 Cor. 10, 16.

Again, the meaning of Christ's words, "This is My body," is not that His body was locally imbedded in the bread. The idea of a so-called impanation must be rejected. Neither were the bread and Christ's body consubstantiated, so that the two elements were transformed into a third substance. No; the bread was the carrier of the Lord's body. And as the vehicle and that which it carries are two things, just so the bread and Jesus' body remained two distinct elements.

The only true interpretation and explanation of these first words of institution, then, is that the disciples were to take and eat, and did take and eat, Christ's true body in, with, and under the bread. How that was possible we shall not attempt to determine and explain. Indeed, as Dr. Dau writes, "all we can assert is that in a manner incomprehensible to us the body of the Lord is in a sacramental union with the eucharistic bread and that the eating in the Eucharist is of a peculiar kind. It differs from mere natural eating of common food and also from spiritual eating. In natural eating there would be only bread and not also the body of the Lord; in spiritual eating there would be only the merits of the Redeemer and not also bread. In the sacramental eating, however, both the bread and the body of Christ are sacramentally received, the earthly element in a natural, the heavenly in a supernatural, undefinable manner, both, however, orally and both by every communicant. For according to 1 Cor. 11, 29 also the unworthy communicant receives the Lord's body, and that for his judgment, not discerning it." (*I. S. B. E.*, Vol. 3, p. 1927.)

The words of the first section of Paul's account of the institution which remain to be considered are the following: (This is My body) "which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of Me," *τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν κλώμενον· τοῦτο ποιεῖτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν*. The corresponding words of Luke are the same, with the exception that in his account we find the term "given" (*διδόμενον*) instead of "broken" for you. Matthew and Mark add nothing to the words, "This is My body." Now, what is the import of the Lord's words when He (only according to some texts) says with reference to His body: "which is broken for you"? The exegetes of the Reformed Church interpret also these words metaphorically. They hold that Jesus there alluded to His painful death on the cross. However, the fact that Christ's body was not to be, and therefore was not, broken on the cross stands in oppo-

sition to this explanation. John 19, 33. 36. Bengel, undoubtedly, hit the mark when he said that we have before us in these words a *locutio concisa*, "*hoc sensu: Quod pro vobis datur et vobis frangitur.*" In the Eucharist, Christ's body is broken for us; in and with the bread, which is broken, or distributed, the body of Christ is broken, or distributed, for our benefit and good. So close and intimate is the sacramental union of the bread and the body of Christ that, inasmuch as the bread is broken, or distributed, in the Eucharist, we may rightfully speak of a simultaneous breaking, or distribution, of Christ's body. Luther also explains the words of Paul as referring to the "breaking or distribution over table." As regards the words of Luke, "which is given for you," the Lord assures His disciples that He gives them His body, which is given into death for them, for their spiritual benefit and welfare. — "This do in remembrance of Me," says the Lord. He commands His disciples to do that which they have seen Him do: they shall take bread, bless, or consecrate, it, break, or distribute, it, take and eat it, and the Lord will then always do as He did at the institution, *i. e.*, give them His body in and with the bread. The words, "This do in remembrance of Me," show that the Lord instituted the Eucharist for His Church of all times. The Christians shall celebrate it repeatedly, shall celebrate it, as the apostle says in the 26th verse, "till He [the Lord] come," *i. e.*, till He comes at the end of days to execute judgment. The Reformed exegetes would find evidence also in these words that their figurative interpretation of the words of institution is sound. They argue thus: The Lord commands us to celebrate His Supper "in remembrance" of Him; we shall, when celebrating it, remind ourselves of, recall to our memory, the Lord. This implies that the Lord, or the Lord's body, is not truly present in the Eucharist; for one can remember, recall to memory, only something *absent*. The conclusion which they draw is based upon a faulty conception of the words "in remembrance of Me." The import of these words is not that by means of the celebration of the Eucharist we are to remember the Lord, but that the *Holy Supper itself*, inasmuch as we receive the Lord's body therein, *reminds us* of the Lord. Nor is it true that one can be reminded of, remember, recall to memory, only something *absent*. How often does Scripture admonish us to remember the Lord! How often do we beseech the Lord to remember us! Ps. 9, 12 we read: "When He maketh inquisition for blood, He remembereth them; He forgetteth not the cry of the humble." Prov. 3, 6 it is written: "In all thy ways acknowl-

edge [*i. e.*, remember] Him, and He shall direct thy paths." Would it not be folly to conclude therefrom that the Lord and His believers are separated, and that contrary to Is. 41, 10, where the Lord says: "Fear thou not; for *I am with thee*"? The fact that the Eucharist is also a memorial supper implies that that of which we are to be reminded is *invisible*; but it does not imply that it is also *distant*. The Lord rather says expressly, Ex. 20, 24, "In all places where I record My name *I will come unto thee*, and I will bless thee." The correct explanation of the words in question can only be that the Lord therein indicates for what purpose we are to celebrate His Holy Supper. It shall be done in (*eis*), unto, remembrance of Him. The eating of His body and the drinking of His blood shall remind us of the Lord, recall to our memory that Jesus, as our Substitute, in our place and stead, gave His body into death and shed His blood for the forgiveness of our sins. Giving the communicants the ransom-money paid for their redemption, the Lord assures them of, seals unto them, the forgiveness of sins. Receiving this ransom-money and believing, the communicants are powerfully reminded of Christ's vicarious suffering and death on the cross for the remission of their sins. Yes, in the Sacrament the Lord gives us His body, which was given into death for our sins, offers, conveys, and seals unto us all the benefits and blessings which He procured for us by His death on the cross — forgiveness of sins, righteousness, life, and salvation. Thus the Lord, in instituting the Eucharist, ordained not only a memorial supper, but also a powerful *means of grace*.

(*To be concluded.*)
