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What Do We Learn from the Words of Institution about the Two Elements in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper?

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The words of institution of the Lord's Supper read as follows: "And as they were eating," etc. Matt. 26, 26—29; Mark 14, 22—25; Luke 22, 19, 20; 1 Cor. 11, 23—26. These are the words from which we are to learn all we need to know about the Eucharist. By these words we should be taught and guided in all matters concerning the Lord's Supper.

I.

"As they were eating," we read, "Jesus took bread," τὸν ἄρτον. St. Matthew writes: "and blessed it and," etc. Evidently the disciples had bread with their meal; there was bread lying on the table. This bread Jesus took, broke it, and gave it to His disciples, and said: Take it and eat it. Λαβὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἄρτον, St. Mark writes. Λαβὼν ἄρτον are the words in Luke's report. St. Paul also says: ἔλαβεν ἄρτον. Jesus took bread. And τοῦτο ποιῆτε, He tells us. We should likewise take bread, break it, and eat it, believing in our hearts that it is the body of Jesus we are eating. But now I am asked right and left, What kind of bread was it that Jesus had and which we are to use? Why should we ask this question? Is there a word in what we have read about the Sacrament that requires us to know just what kind of bread Jesus used and to use the same kind ourselves? Jesus did not say: This do, being careful that you have the same kind of bread I have, nor do we find in all the words which tell us about the Eucharist anything which would make it our duty to know and even to institute an investigation as to what kind of bread it was which He used on that occasion. We know what bread is, so we know, too, what to do when Jesus says, "This do."

II.

“And He took the cup,” etc., we read in the passage found in Matthew. *Τὸ ποτήριον*, he says. So also Mark, Luke, and St. Paul. Evidently Jesus and the disciples had a cup on the table when they celebrated the Passover-feast in that “upper room.” This cup the Lord gave to His disciples, saying they should all drink of it. We are given a description of this cup in Luke 22, where it reads: “And He took the cup and gave thanks and said, Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come.” It was a cup, therefore, that contained fruit of the vine in liquid form, so that one could drink its contents. This same cup the Lord used for the Eucharist, as can be seen from the words following, v. 20: *ὡσαύτως καὶ τὸ ποτήριον, μετὰ τὸ δειπνῆσαι. Τὸ ποτήριον*, that means the *ποτήριον* just spoken of. The same description of the cup is given by Matthew, Mark, and St. Paul. Such is the cup, therefore, which according to the Lord's injunction, *τοῦτο ποιεῖτε*, we are to take and to drink of, believing in our hearts that it is the blood of Jesus we are drinking. — Again some one will ask, “What kind of fruit of the vine was it?” But again I say, Why should we ask this question? We know what *γέννημα τῆς ἀμπέλου* is. Did Jesus say: This do, being sure that you use the same fruit of the vine that is in this cup? He did not. Nor do we read in these words anything which would make it our duty to know just what kind of *γέννημα τῆς ἀμπέλου* it was. That would make it necessary for us to institute an investigation which would mean that we would have to learn about the results of former investigations and what the church fathers have to say about it. But as it is, as long as we continue to learn from these words of the Bible and suffer ourselves to be guided by them only, we are not in need of such investigations, but we can do without human opinions. As long as we use wine with the Sacrament as we have hitherto been doing, we are doing *τοῦτο*, and if at any time circumstances should cause us to substitute something for wine, we must be sure that it is *γέννημα τῆς ἀμπέλου* that we put in the cup.
