

ON THE LORDS SUPPER

by Jerome Zanchius

Jerome Zanchius' theological exposition of the Lord's Supper, explaining how bread and wine unite with God's Word to strengthen faith and bind believers to Christ's body and blood.

4 Chapters

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01 - Of Those Things Which Are Given Unto Us in the Supper

The Confession of Master Zanchius

in his Miscellania, touching

the Supper of the Lord.

Chapter I Of those things which are given unto us in the Supper

I believe these three things to be offered unto all men in the Supper and to be received of the faithful. The signs, the bread and the wine being joined with the words of Christ. For the word is not separated from the figures, nor the signs from the word; or else the Sacraments were no Sacraments. For the word is added to the element and so the Sacrament is made. The body and blood of the Lord, that is the Lord Jesus Christ himself. For as in [---] [-rath] the Divinity is not separated from the humanity, neither the humanity from the Divinity; even so unto us, the one is not offered without the other. Wherefore neither are they to be separated of us even in thought, but as the whole Christ is offered, so is the whole Christ to be received. The New Covenant or Testament. I mean that which is renewed and confirmed in Christ. For this is that thing for whose cause chiefly the Supper is instituted and administered, to wit, that we being incorporated more and more into the person of Christ might have the covenant more and more confirmed unto us. Now the body and blood of Christ and the new Testament made in Christ are that Spiritual, but the elements of Bread and Wine are those earthly things whereof Irenaeus speaks.

02 - Of the Use of These Three Things

Chapter II Of the use of these three things, and first of the use of the Word, of the Bread and of the Wine.

I believe these three things to be offered and given for those certain and proper uses whereunto among themselves they were ordained. And first I believe the Elements of Bread and Wine together with the Word to be offered and given, that by this Word and those Elements (as it were instruments of God's Spirit working in the hearts of the Elect) their faith might be more and more stirred up and confirmed. And by that faith we believe that the matter is indeed that as the Word of Christ sounds in our ears and represents the Elements to our eyes and other senses, to wit, that the Heavenly Bread, which is the Body of Christ, has been broken, that is, killed and died for us. And [we also believe] the heavenly Wine, that is, the blood of Christ to have been shed for us and for many more, even all the Elect for the remission of their sins, and so [we believe] the New Testament to have been confirmed in the body of Christ and sealed in his blood, and that this Heavenly Bread Christ with the New Testament and the heavenly Wine with the remission of sins, to be offered unto us by the Earthly bread and by the Earthly Wine; yes, further that we are commanded to receive them in these words: "Take, eat." I believe the Bread and the Wine to be given unto us for this end. For this is the proper and immediate use of all speech and of all signs, especially of those signs which are used for confirmation of our speech, not only simply to signify this or that, but also that by signifying they may make belief, that is, may stir up faith in the hearers and seers, whereby they are persuaded that the thing itself is even so as the words of the speaker signifies unto the ears and as the signs represent unto the eyes. Paul also in the tenth chapter to the Romans speaking of the Word of God and of the preaching of the Gospel, says that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Therefore the proper and immediate use of the Word is to beget faith in the hearer. Signs also and Sacraments are visible words. I conclude then that Bread and Wine together with the Word are given for this use and immediate end: that faith may be more and more increased in us, whereby we believe that the thing is so, as the Word signifies and as the Elements represent and in this manner signifying offer and represent unto us. The Second Position: Of the use of Faith being wrought in us by the Word and Sacraments

I believe this faith to be wrought in us of the Holy Ghost by the Word and Sacraments that by this faith we might immediately receive and eat the body of Christ which was delivered up for us, and receive and drink the blood of Christ which was shed for us for remission of sins. And so we might more and more be engrafted and immediately united unto the body of Christ as our Mediator who died for us. For even as the Bread and Wine being Earthly and Material Bodies cannot be incorporated into our Earthly bodies, unless we receive them in at our mouth and eat them and drink them. So we cannot be united and incorporated into the body and blood of Christ, which Irenaeus calls a Heavenly thing, unless by faith we take hold on Christ, eat him and drink him, that is, apply him unto us. The Third Position: Of the use, for which we eat the body of Christ and drink his blood.

I believe that the body of Christ in the Supper is offered and exhibited unto us to be eaten and his blood to be drunk. And [I believe] that faith, being wrought in our hearts by the Word and Sacraments by the help of the Holy Ghost, is eaten of us indeed, to the end that we being more nearly and effectually incorporated into Christ, we may also be more thoroughly confirmed in the New Covenant which, in Christ, is communicated unto us. For as Christ did therefore deliver his body unto death and shed his blood that by his death and blood, our sins being purged, he might confirm and forever establish the covenant being renewed between God the Father and us, even as the words of the Supper concerning the blood teach us and as other books of the Scripture (especially the Epistle to the Hebrews) confirm, even so for this end the body and blood of Christ also is communicated unto us: that by the participation of them we, in like manner being more and more incorporated into Christ, might be more and more confirmed in the New Testament. Therefore, when Christ gave forth the cup, he named it the new Testament in plain words in order that the Apostles might understand to what end the blood of the son of God was not only shed and poured out, but also was exhibited to be drunk of them. Verily, it was to this end that, as by the shedding of his blood, their sins and the sins of all God's Elect were purged, and being purged, the covenant between them and God was for all eternity confirmed. So also by the drinking of the same both they and all the elect, being more and more incorporated, may know themselves to be confirmed and established in the everlasting Covenant. But yet, because the Covenant and the flesh and blood of Christ are diverse objects and the one is ordained unto the other, therefore for the sake of doctrine, I distinguish the one from the other and show what is the proper use of either of them. The Fourth Position: Of the benefit or use of the Covenant communicated unto us.

Lastly, I believe that by the bond of the covenant itself, being ratified and confirmed in the body of Christ and by the blood of Christ, we may thereof wholly be united more and more unto God the Father, the Fountain as of the whole Divinity, no matter who we are, so of all the goodness and blessedness by Christ, the Mediator, the spirit working and dwelling in us and that we may be so united that in mind we may daily more clearly acknowledge him, by the Holy Ghost, yes with all the powers of soul and body, we may daily more sincerely honor him and may be made like unto him in Holiness and Justice until at length, sin being utterly destroyed, and death abolished and the perfect Image of God recovered, we may so perfectly be united and coupled after this life unto God the Father through Christ in the Spirit of God, that he may be all in all. Amen. For this is the last end unto which not only the Supper of the Lord, but also Baptism, yes even the whole Word of God, all his benefits, all his corrections and lastly all the words and works of God, lead us unto.

03 - Of the Duty of a Christ Man in the Supper of the Lord

Chapter III. Of the duty of a Christ man in the Supper of the Lord.

Wherefore I think and believe that these are the duties of a Christian man in the Lord's Supper:

First, that he set before his eyes the perfect Communion with God which is nothing at all without Christ and is to be found only in him and that he direct all things unto it as unto the last end.

Secondly, in order that he may reach this end he must make his beginning from the means which do incur into our senses as those things which are first perceived by our understanding and are better known by nature. In the same way he must bear the word attentively and come unto the Sacraments reverently and diligently consider as well what the word signifies as well as what the Sacraments represent and what is offered unto us by the minister of them both. And what is offered is this: that Christ has offered up his body unto death for us and shed his blood for the remission of sins and therefore he has by his blood sealed and confirmed in himself (being the Mediator) the New Testament of our everlasting reconciliation and peer with God. And these things are so signified by the Sacraments that they are also offered and given unto us to be received. Whereby it comes to pass that they are truly called Signs, not only signifying but also exhibiting and giving the things which they signify.

Thirdly, I believe because the things signified and offered by the Signs are to be received by faith and faith is the gift of God. Therefore God is to be prayed unto as he who offers the things by the Signs and who commands us to receive them by faith. He also can give and increase faith whereby we are able to receive them.

Fourthly, I believe that faith being begotten in us by hearing of the Word and increased by the diligent consideration of the Sacraments through the Holy Ghost, it is the duty of a Christian man while he receives the External and Visible Signs with his hands (being also External and Visible) and eats them with the mouth of his body and drinks them here upon the earth together also to receive them with the hand and mouth of faith and to eat and drink the Heavenly and Invisible things (namely the flesh and blood of Christ with a faithful heart lifted up unto the Heavenly Table), that he, being more and more coupled unto Christ and made flesh of his flesh and bone of his bones, may live in Christ and Christ in him. For I believe the faithful in the Supper truly to receive and eat (by the Spirit and by faith) the very true body of Christ which was crucified for us and so far forth as it was delivered up for us; and that they drink his blood which was shed for us for the remission of sins, according as the words of Christ manifestly testify. And that indeed the body is present and the blood is present, but unto the Spirit and unto the inward man. For unto the Spirit all things which he receives by faith are in truth present according to that, that Christ dwells in our hearts by faith. And no distance of place can effect that the things we receive by faith should be absent from us (even as the sun cannot be said to be absent from the eyes by which it is perceived).

Fifthly, I believe because the new covenant in Christ is established by his blood and the Testament is confirmed by the death of the Testator, and because we are forever joined unto God by the blood of the eternal covenant, therefore a Christian man, who now by faith feels himself to be incorporated into Jesus Christ ought also to believe that he is confirmed in the covenant with God the Father by a bond that cannot be broken and therefore that all his sins are forgiven him of God and that he is destined and assured to be the Son of God and Heir of eternal life without any fear of being disinherited. For these things which we, on our part, owe unto God according to the condition of the covenant (namely Faith, Love, Obedience), we may firmly believe that all those things are fully effected for us and imputed to us by Christ the first begotten. Further we ought to be certainly persuaded that by the assistance of Christ we shall never be forsaken, but that we may in some part perform the same. And because Christ himself has both performed those things for us and promised us this assistance, we ought to believe that the New Testament will remain sure and perpetual (both on God's part and also on our part) until at length we, being received into the full possession of the heavenly Inheritance, do live in perfect happiness with the Father, Son and Holy Ghost our God. For there are three principal heads of the covenant on God's part: The forgiveness of sins; Adoption, which is joined with a promise of God's perpetual good will, grace, protection; and last the full possession of heavenly inheritance. There are also three things which on our part God requires by covenant: Faith in God; Charity toward our neighbor and Holiness of life or perfect obedience. Christ by his perfect obedience even unto death and by his own blood and death has obtained for us both those things which God has promised as he has also performed those things which God by covenant required at our hand. In testimony whereof he gives us faith whereby we believe in God and charity whereby we love our neighbor and the Spirit of regeneration whereby we endeavor unto holiness of life and whereby true obedience is begun in us. So Christ brings to pass that not only the covenant on God's part, but also on our part remains sure and perpetual. It is therefore our duty that, first, by faith given unto us by Christ, as we eat his flesh and drink his blood, so also we believe ourselves to be confirmed in the covenant with God; and therefore both our sins to be remitted and God to be our Father; and that he will perpetually love and protect us; and lastly that we shall be heirs of eternal life and shall arise to glory and life everlasting and that will occur through Christ, with whose flesh we are fed in the Supper. And, we ought to be persuaded that we ourselves also are nourished to the end we may be partakers of a blessed resurrection. And therefore we ought to give due thanks for so many and so great benefits. We ought also to embrace in love our neighbor and especially our faithful brethren. That as we are all one with Christ, so we may also grow up together in one body more and more with the Church. Even as the Apostle Paul exhorts us by this argument, that we are all one Body and one Bread because we are all partakers of the same Bread. With the endeavor of a holy life and true obedience, which is also the gift of Christ, we ought always to glorify God and declare indeed that we are true and lively members of Christ and therefore have interest to that true felicity which consists in that most precious union with God wherein he shall be all in all. Thus I believe concerning the duty of a Christian in the Supper wherein he may worthily and for his Salvation eat the Bread of the Lord and drink of his cup.

04 - Of the Words of the Supper

Chapter IIII Of the words of the Supper

Seeing all things are so as I have before showed, my opinion is that the words of the Lord's Supper cannot be well understood and declared without some trope: first, regarding the cup it is manifest both by the Evangelists and by the Apostle Paul; then, regarding the Bread it is also manifest because where as Christ said, "This [that is, the bread which I have broken] is my body, and the Apostle expounding is says, "The Bread which we break is the Communion of the body of the Lord." Thirdly, according to the rule of St. Augustine in his third Book of the institution of a Christian man, chapter 16. Because when we are commanded to eat the flesh of Christ, if we take the word of eating properly, it seems we are commanded to do a heinous deed, therefore the speech of Christ concerning the eating of his flesh is to be understood figuratively. Moreover, because if you shall understand the words without a trope, it will follow that the Bread of Christ was indeed delivered up for us and the blood shed for the remission of our sins. Lastly because Luther himself upon the fifth chapter of Isaiah says that in the words of the Supper there is a synecdoche with whom in the point Bucer always agrees. Therefore, albeit each word in that speech ("This is my body") is to be taken in its proper signification so that the true and essential body of Christ is attributed to the Bread (as indeed it is attributed), yet in the speech as a whole there must needs be some trope seeing that the bread which is given to us and was not crucified cannot properly be said to be the body of Christ which was delivered up for us. So then, the controversy is only concerning the kind of trope by which the Bread is called the body of Christ (I call it that true body which was truly delivered up for us). And I think this controversy is not of so great worth that for it the peace of the Church ought to be troubled or that he who says it is a synecdoche ought to condemn him that says it is a metonymy. And contrariwise, he that says it is a metonymy ought not condemn him who says it is a synecdoche so that both part agree in this: that it is the true and natural body of Christ as the Evangelists and the Apostle plainly teach, that it is spoken of the true bread and so that the Articles of faith are kept on both sides in their plain meaning, pure and uncorrupt. That meaning being that the natural body of Christ is one, is finite, is human, is in heaven, does no more die, is not consumed and is not broken. And yet indeed, as the Scriptures teach it is offered unto all, it is communicated to all the faithful but in a mystery and after a spiritual manner: even as the faithful themselves grow up into one body and are incorporated with their head Christ and with the whole Catholic Church, not after a Carnal, but after a Spiritual manner. And therefore (just as in the Spiritual and Mystical fellowship between Christ and the Church wicked hypocrites have no part, seeing that they lack faith, but are only in the outward and visible society), so I believe that those hypocrites are partakers not of the true and natural and truly heavenly flesh and blood of Christ but only of the external and outward signs, which are also designated by the name of the flesh and blood of Christ, even by Christ himself. Wherefore, whereas the Apostle says, "They who eat in an unworthy manner are guilty of the body of the Lord," (if we understand this to be said of the wicked, which certainly and not without a cause Bucer denies,) I interpret it in the sense wherein the same Apostle says unto the Hebrews that

some tread underfoot the Son of God and account the blood of the Testament a profane thing; to wit, not because they actually do eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood, although doing it unworthily, but rather because when they reject by their ungodliness the body and blood, when the Bread and Wine are offered, they drink and eat the Bread and Wine unworthily. This thing, good Christian, assure yourself of: that I am not so wicked as to doubt the truth of Christ's words in the Supper as some too impudently accuse me of; neither that I dispute of the simple understanding of every word in this proposition: "This is my body." For by the word, "This," I believe that the Bread is declared. Additionally, Paul also interprets the text to teach this in 1Co 10:1-33 and 11. The word "is" does not signify anything else than to be. And I take the word "body" to be the true body of Christ, as Christ himself interprets when he adds, "Which is given for you." And therefore there is no controversy among us whether in the lawful use of the Supper the Bread is truly the body of Christ; we only dispute of the manner by which the Bread is the body of Christ. And moreover, neither of us call into question that the bread is after that manner the body of Christ after which Christ would then have it and will now have it to be, for it must be according to his will. And whereas in the words of the Supper the will of Christ is not expressed concerning the manner, I think it is to be gathered out of similar places, to wit, sacramental kind of speeches. Moreover, this foundation being laid, that Christ did not then desire and does not now desire that the bread should be his body according to any of the manners of those men who take away the truth of his true human body or else disagree from the analogy of faith from his simple meaning. So the manner of Christ's being in the sacrament by Transubstantiation is excluded because (1) in the Sacrament of Baptism the substance of the water is not changed (2) and also because straight away many bodies here upon the earth would be feigned upon Christ, besides that body which he has in heaven and (3) lastly because the substance of bread neither before nor after the conversion was delivered to death for us. I add, moreover, that St. Mark believed that the substance of wine was in the belly of the Apostles when he said, "This is the blood." The manner also of Consubstantiation is excluded both because they argue that neither in the water of Baptism is the body of Christ locally included (whereby we are washed from our sins) and also because it takes away the nature of the true human body and diametrically opposes the article of the ascension into heaven and of the sitting at the right hand. For the same causes that manner also is to be taken away which is like unto this, which is imagined by a real and local adherence or conjunction; not to say that not one word can be read for the proof of this that after some of these three manners Christ would have the bread to be his body.

After what manner then is it probable that Christ would have the bread to be his body? Verily, after this manner, as all other Sacraments are said to be that thing whereof they are Sacraments, to wit, by a Sacramental and so a Mystical union. For that which we call a Sacrament, the Greeks call a mystery. Wherefore, this speech is usual with the Fathers, that the bread is the body of Christ, even the present body, and that it is eaten in a mystery. Now a mystery is said to be when visible things lead us to the true understanding and receiving of invisible things, and earthly things of heavenly things, corporeal things of spiritual things. In which sense the Apostle to the Ephesians calls the carnal marriage of Adam and Eve a great mystery because of the spiritual marriage which is contracted between Christ and his Church and to which that other marriage leads us. But carnal men destitute of the spirit of God and of faith cannot be brought by earthly things unto heavenly things or by the participation of those earthly things unto the communion of these heavenly things seeing that they cannot so much as understand them as the Apostle says. Which is the cause why

I judge and believe that the flesh and blood of Christ, being heavenly and spiritual things, cannot in deed and truth be received of wicked men; no, not by the mouth of their body, which also was Bucer's opinion. Therefore he said that the body of Christ was both present and eaten of us in the Supper not after any worldly manner, but only after a spiritual and heavenly manner. Concerning which, what else does it mean to say that it is eaten of us by the spirit of Christ? For by Christ heavenly things are joined unto earthly things and by him they are received by them. And this is my belief and judgment for the meaning of the words of the Supper which I will constantly hold till a better, a truer and a more agreeable one to the Scriptures shall by other men be offered and plainly proved to me.

Ille non edit corpus Christi qui non est de corpore Christi. – Augustine.

"He cannot eat the body of Christ that is not of the body of Christ."

Accipe, panis est, non venenum: mala res non est, sed malus accipit. – Idem.

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