

284. The Words "This Is My Body," "This Is My Blood," Must Not be Taken in a Figurative Sense.

Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto. *Gal. 3, 15.*

Christ says: "This is My body." Does that mean: "This signifies My body"? We maintain that the word *is*, according to the plain, natural understanding, does not mean "signifies" or "represents" in any language of the civilized world; but *is* shows that something really exists. *Body* means a true essential body, not an unreal, apparent, body; and in order to remove all doubt, the Lord says: "*My body.*" That does away with all figurative language, and to cut off all subterfuges, the Lord adds: "This is My body, *which is broken for you.*" If any words in human speech are plain, these are. Christ spoke these words. They are the very words of the institution of a divine ordinance, words of a divine testament. We do not believe that in this will, or testament, Christ used His words figuratively and left them hopelessly ambiguous, but that He made a plain testament and that He would have His words understood as they stand. As no man disannuls a man's covenant by adding to it or by subtracting from it, so, too, and much more, it behooves us to respect the words of the divine Testator, who gave us this Sacrament.

"This is My body," Luther wrote on the table before him at Marburg, where he discussed with Zwingli the doctrine of the Real Presence. His reasoning power was as strong as Zwingli's, and his reason suggested as many doubts to him about the Real Presence as it did to Zwingli; but the words were in the Bible, he could not take them out, and he would not ignore them; the text was too powerful. And it is just as powerful to-day as it was then. Therefore we, too, must reject the false doctrine of the Reformed Church which takes the words of Christ in a figurative sense, so as to make them read, This bread represents, signifies My body; and this wine represents My blood. We affirm that no man, no, not even an angel, has authority to change any word of Christ's testament. We must therefore take the words of institution in their proper meaning.

Prayer.

O Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true man, who, the same night in which Thou wast betrayed, didst institute Thy Holy Supper for a memorial of Thy suffering and death, we pray Thee give us grateful hearts evermore to praise Thy goodness; but enable us also to understand aright the intent and meaning of this Thy will and testament, that we may neither add to it nor subtract from it. Let us accept the words of institution as they are written. Let us firmly believe that in this Sacrament Thou art Thyself really and certainly present and with the outward means we receive Thy true body and blood. Amen.

Help us sincerely to believe
That we Thy mercy do receive
And in Thy grace do find our rest.
Amen. He who believes is blest.

This devotion is one of 318 taken from *Daily Bread* by F. E. Pasche, published by CPH in 1926, but now in the public domain. They have been copied and reformatted by Rev. Bruce G. Ley and made available for distribution by pastors and missionaries. You may contact Rev. Ley at: pastorley@leychalet.com.

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