

Lord's Day 29

78. Q. Are then the bread and wine
changed into the real body and blood of Christ?

A. No.

Just as the water of baptism
is not changed into the blood of Christ
and is not the washing away of sins itself
but is simply God's sign and pledge,
so also the bread in the Lord's supper
does not become the body of Christ itself,
although it is called Christ's body
in keeping with the nature and usage of sacraments.

1. Eph 5:26; Tit 3:5.
2. Mt 26:26-29.
3. 1 Cor 10:16, 17; 11:26-28.
4. Gen 17:10, 11; Ex 12:11, 13; 1 Cor 10:3, 4; 1 Pet 3:21.

79. Q. Why then does Christ call the bread his body
and the cup his blood,
or the new covenant in his blood,
and why does Paul speak of a participation
in the body and blood of Christ?

A. Christ speaks in this way for a good reason:

He wants to teach us by his supper
that as bread and wine sustain us
in this temporal life,
so his crucified body and shed blood
are true food and drink for our souls
to eternal life.

But, even more important,
he wants to assure us by this visible sign and pledge,
first,
that through the working of the Holy Spirit
we share in his true body and blood
as surely as we receive with our mouth
these holy signs in remembrance of him,
and, second,
that all his suffering and obedience
are as certainly ours
as if we personally
had suffered and paid for our sins.

1. Jn 6:51, 55.
2. 1 Cor 10:16, 17; 11:26.
3. Rom 6:5-11.