

GLEANINGS — April 3, A.D. 2016
Body and Blood

Any six syllable word is surely a bone to be chewed! Today we set the teeth of our understanding on one them. It is term that relates to the Lord's supper, and the Bible believing disciple must not swallow its meaning as he or she partakes thereof. The word is...

TRAN-SUB-STAN-TI-A-TION

The word speaks to the alleged TRANSformation (change of form) of certain SUBSTANces into other substances. For example, those involved in an occult practice by the name of alchemy believe that one substance, lead, can be transformed into another substance: gold!

The substances we are considering are those served when we come to the Lord's table: the bread representing His broken body, and the cup representing His shed blood. Those holding to transubstantiation believe that those material elements are transformed...that they actually become the physical body and blood of Christ. Appealing to God's almighty power, they believe that God causes the physical elements to mysteriously turn into Jesus' body and blood.

The idea assaults the senses and reason of anyone who comes to the Lord's table; no such transformation can be observed. Yet, if we base our objection to transubstantiation on that grounds alone, it is likely that we will swiftly get tangled up in a nest of questions dealing with the properties of matter and its relation to its Creator, Who is spirit (John 4:24).

God is indeed all powerful and He can change the basic nature of matter as surely as He turned water into wine in Cana of Galilee. Jesus healed a man born blind and opened the ears of a deaf man. We rightly infer that some drastic change in organic matter (the bodies of the healed ones) took place when Jesus worked these miracles. Surely this also obtains for the risen bodies of Lazarus et. al., and of our Lord Himself in His greater resurrection.

But transubstantiation makes a worse assault. The Bible teaches that Christ's once for all sacrifice saved an innumerable multitude for all eternity. Transubstantiation claims that every time the Lord's supper is served, not only are substances being transformed, but that Jesus is being sacrificed again and again!

Thus the error of transubstantiation must be opposed primarily on the basis of the all sufficient, glorious sacrifice God provided. Although God is almighty and COULD transform one substance into another substance, God WILL NOT do so in this specific case. That is because there is no need for Jesus' sacrifice to occur on many occasions and at many places! In fact, to say that Jesus' sacrifice of Himself must be continually repeated is actually unbelief. It is rejecting God's word and saying, "No, Jesus has not fully and finally accomplished salvation for His people once and for all." (Romans 6:10; Hebrews 7:27, 9:12, 10:10; Jude 3)

Consider the words of our Lord at John 6:63 – "The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life." The material bread and the cup are not the spiritual food and drink we need. The real food and drink which those things represent is received according to Jesus' own ordinance by faith in His once for all sacrifice of Himself, not by ingesting matter about which unreasonable claims are made.