



Bread and Wine

While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, 'Take; this is my body.' Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.'

Mark 14-22-25

It was unexpected and unsettling. Jesus departed from the script for the meal, taking an ordinary loaf and an ordinary cup and giving them an altogether new meaning. "This is my body;" "This is my blood." This is me—my body broken for you, my blood shed for you—and it was as they took that bread and shared that cup, just as when you and I take the bread and share the cup, that they and we receive into our lives anew the gift of Christ's life and love.

What precisely does this mean? Does the bread *become* the flesh of Christ and the wine the blood of Christ? Is their fundamental structure somehow altered? Some would declare: "Yes!" while others say that such a notion is preposterous. Wherever you come down on the debate, what Jesus was saying is simply *this is me*. All of us have in our homes gifts from others which we have kept for years and never would dream of disposing, not because they are in themselves valuable pieces, but because the gift has come to represent to us that person's life and love. When you look at it, when you hold it you remember and not merely remember but in some way you re-experience the presence of the one who gave it to you. However it may be, when in faith we take the bread and share the cup Jesus is among us and within us.

Prayer

*Bread of the world, in mercy broken, wine of the soul, in mercy shed, by Whom the words of life were spoken, and in Whose death our sins are dead. Look on the heart by sorrow broken, look on the tears by sinners shed; and be Thy feast to us he token, that by Thy grace our souls are fed.
Amen.*

Reginald Heber, 1827