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*The Abiding Word*

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*The*  
ABIDING  
WORD

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AN ANTHOLOGY OF DOCTRINAL  
ESSAYS FOR THE YEARS  
1954-1955

*Volume Three*

Continuing the Centennial Series

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## *Publisher's Preface*

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**T**he essays in this volume were selected by the Literature Board of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod from those presented at the District conventions of 1954 and 1955. They are made available as a continuation of Volume I (1946) and Volume II (1947), issued under the direction of the Centennial Literature Committee and edited by Dr. Theodore Laetsch. Since the original two volumes, published under the title **THE ABIDING WORD**, are still in demand, the publisher is encouraged to make these additional essays available as Volume III of the series.

**THE PUBLISHER**

# Contents

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	PAGE
PUBLISHER'S PREFACE	v
THE LUTHERAN SCHOOL IN THE AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM . . . . . <i>S. J. Roth</i>	3
YOUTH: FIRST-CLASS COMMUNICANTS . . . . . <i>Arthur H. Gerhardt</i>	45
THE LAST THINGS . . . . . <i>A. H. Schwermann</i>	87
OUR DIVINE ADOPTION . . . . . <i>R. P. Sieving</i>	131
THE DOCTRINE OF THE ANGELS . . . . . <i>Richard C. Jahn</i>	184
CHRIST IN COLOSSIANS . . . . . <i>W. H. Wentz</i>	244
THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH . . . . . <i>Alfred von Rohr Sauer</i>	287
THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH . . . . . <i>H. Richard Klann</i>	342
THE MEANS OF GRACE IN AN EFFECTIVE CHURCH PROGRAM . . . . . <i>Carl A. Gaertner</i>	394

THE LORD'S SUPPER . . . . .	425
<i>Ottomar O. Krueger</i>	
THE PROPER USE OF THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION . . . . .	476
<i>A. E. Krause</i>	
THE PRACTICE OF HOLY COMMUNION . . . . .	531
<i>Richard R. Caemmerer</i>	

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*The Abiding Word*

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## *The Lord's Supper*

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### INTRODUCTION

THE word "sacrament" is not found in the New Testament; it is an *agraphon*. The English word *sacrament* and the German *Sakrament* are merely the Latin word *sacramentum* transferred into our living languages which are in use in our worship today. The word is used profusely in ecclesiastical language, and our good members are familiar with the word. The word *sacramentum* means simply, in its widest usage, a holy deed or act or ordinance, and in this sense we might speak of a multitude of sacraments. Any holy, sacred act would be a sacrament then. Attending public divine worship, giving alms to the poor, visiting the invalids and ill people, prayers, comforting the afflicted, rescuing the drowning and suffering, conducting the meetings of the ladies' aid and the men's club, collecting the mites as a worker of the Lutheran Women's Missionary League, going on a hike with the youthful Walther Leaguers, and a thousand other things would be sacraments in that sense, for certainly these are all God-pleasing acts if performed by a believing child of God.

When we learned in the explanation of our Small Catechism that a sacrament is defined as "a sacred act, ordained by God, wherein He by certain external means, connected with His Word, offers, conveys, and seals unto men the grace which Christ has merited," we were given the assurance that this definition is not to be found verbatim in the holy Scriptures, but that it is one formulated upon the basis of Scriptural teaching. We learned that a sacrament is really, as this definition indicates, a means of grace; that the sacraments and the holy Gospel are *media gratiae*. St. Paul in 1 Cor. 4:1: "Let a man so account of us," etc., is referring to the exalted office of the holy ministry and calls himself and his fellow associates in the office ministers, servants of Christ, and *oikonomous*

*mysterion theou*, "stewards of the mysteries of God." This word "mysteries" naturally does not here designate the inscrutable depths of God's divine being, His Trinitarian Being, His being eternal, His "ways that are past finding out," but it refers in 1 Cor. 4:1 to the means of grace, to the sacraments and the Word, over which the servants of Christ in the office of the holy ministry are to be stewards, householders, guards, and watchmen. These are the real treasures of the church; these are the mysteries of God.

A sacrament is therefore a means of grace, a medium through which the grace of God is transmitted to the Christian, to the human being; it is the conduit which leads the stream of living water down from the reservoir of the eternal mercy and goodness of God to the sinners living along the streets of the cities of this world. These conduits are not for dispensing grace to the *inhabitants of heaven*, for they have no need any longer of the forgiving mercy of God, they are made perfect and relieved of the unfortunate consequences of sin. The *media gratiae* are for poor imperfect sinners on earth.

Because of the fact that everything depends on the definition of a sacrament and the understanding of what a sacrament is, there is little point in arguing concerning *the number* of sacraments. The Roman and the Greek Catholic churches enumerate seven sacraments, namely, Baptism, Lord's Supper, confirmation, marriage, holy orders, penance, extreme unction. The Council of Trent officially decided this number seven and condemned anyone who denies that there are seven sacraments; however, the number had already been established after much controversy and difference of opinion at the Council of Florence in 1439. Besides these the Roman Church has a host of sacramentals, e. g., rosary, crucifix, holy water, palms, ashes, lights, etc.

Our Apology of the Augsburg Confession says: "No prudent man will strive greatly concerning the number or the term, if only those objects still be retained which have God's command and promise" (Apol., Art. XIII, *Trigl.*, p. 313). The sacramental system received most careful attention and profound speculation of the Schoolmen. The theologians who were most prominent in developing the sacramental system were Hugo of St. Victor, Peter Lombard (died 1164), Alexander of Hales, England, and Thomas

Aquinas, "Dr. Angelicus," a Dominican who wrote *Summa Theologiae*, a standard of doctrine, 1226–1274. The last named undoubtedly had the greatest and most lasting influence in this matter. While they all followed St. Augustine, who laid emphasis on the spiritual side of the sacraments, they developed more and more the Catholic theory of *ex opere operato* of the sacraments, which means that the sacrament has virtue merely by the performance of the act. Augustine stressed the grace of God; Scholastics *opus operatum*. Dionysius the Areopagite enumerated six sacraments: Baptism, the Eucharist, unction, the ordination of priests, the ordination of monks, and burial rites; while Bernard of Clairvaux spoke of many sacraments and contended for ten of them, including footwashing. The idea of seven originated not with Peter Lombard, but with an obscure Otto of Bamberg in 1158. The number seven is considered a holy numeral, it recalls the seven virtues (Gal. 5:22), seven deadly sins, seven gifts of the Spirit, etc. Thus also seven sacraments in the Roman Catholic Church.

Our dear Lutheran Church, since the days of the Reformation, and the other Protestants to a certain extent with us, contend for the two sacraments, although many of the Protestant groups, following a Reformed idea, hold that Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper are not really means of grace, but merely outward signs of the grace of God. We contend with our Confessions and the plain Word of God that there are these two means of grace, mysteries of God, sacraments which offer, convey, and seal unto the sinner the grace of God which Christ has merited. Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper are therefore held, with the holy Gospel, in like esteem and revered in our church. Holy Baptism is spoken of and considered as the sacrament of introduction into the church and the Holy Supper as the sacrament of keeping us and confirming us in the faith. In our present essay we are not directly concerned with a consideration of the former, and although we may allude to the introductory sacrament from time to time, we are here at this convention charged with the duty of presenting a study of the second sacrament, the Lord's Supper.

We approach this task with all veneration for the sanctity and the importance of this subject and with reverence for the depth of the mystery of our God and Savior here conveyed to us poor

sinner; however, also with a great feeling of thanksgiving and gratitude to our wonderful God, who in His mercy and love instituted this sacrament for the encouragement, strengthening, and salvation of us unworthy servants. It is not our purpose to discover anything new or to bring forth any undiscovered doctrines, but to review on the basis of Holy Writ and our Confessions, as well as certain dogmatical and doctrinal works, the teaching of Scripture concerning this beloved and frequently used means of grace. We shall try to make this study practical also in its application to our daily lives and to congregational observances. May God grant us the mercy and grace and His Holy Spirit's guidance.

Our outline is composed of four parts:

- I. What the Lord Said It Is
- II. What Our Confessions Say It Is
- III. What Others Have Said and Say It Is
- IV. Practical Aspects of This Doctrine and Its Use

In our Small Catechism we find an answer which tells us that this second sacrament is known under different names, that it is referred to as the Sacrament of the Altar, the Lord's Table, the Breaking of Bread, the Lord's Supper, the Holy Supper, the Eucharist, the Holy Communion. These names are by no means fictitious, nor are they inventions of the Lutheran Church, but they are Biblical names for this sacrament, and the underlying ideas are immediately apparent for each one of the appellatives. We explain to our children in the Christian day schools or Sunday schools and to the catechumens, whether children or adults, that it is called the Sacrament of the Altar because of the location in the church building at which it is observed, namely, at the altar; it is known as the Lord's Table because it is celebrated at the *mensa* or table of the altar and the elements rest on the table and because the Lord is the Host at this table, which He has prepared for us; we call it the Breaking of Bread because one of the visible elements used for the celebrating of the sacrament is bread, and this bread is broken, divided, as it was in the night in which our Savior instituted His meal for us; we call it the Lord's Supper because the Lord prescribed or instituted this meal, and since the word "sup" simply means "to eat," this is the *Lord's Meal*; we call

it the *Holy Supper*, since it is not a simple ordinary meal but something holy and sacred which the Lord Jesus commanded. It is interesting to note that formerly the evening meal was quite commonly designated as supper, while today it is more frequently called dinner. Both words have the same significance, to sup and to dine mean merely to eat, and both therefore are applicable to any meal; we might with all justification and perfect non-chalance call our breakfast dinner or supper. The German term, however, for the evening meal cannot be misunderstood, namely, *das Abendmahl*, or *das Abendbrot*. Therefore when we call this sacrament *das heilige Abendmahl* or *Nachtmahl*, the descriptive word indicates that it was evening when the Lord Jesus instituted the meal, and we place two candles on the retable of the altar and light them at the celebration of the Lord's Supper to remind ourselves that it was evening and an *evening meal* in that all-important night when the Lord Jesus sat at the table with His disciples. We call it the Eucharist, which is merely a Greek word introduced into the English language and means giving thanks or thanking, because twice this verb is used in the words of institution, when we read of Jesus that "He gave thanks" and "when He had given thanks." We call it "Holy Communion" because there is a communion or union here in this sacrament, on the one hand among the participants, the union of the Christian faith, but on the other hand, as the Scriptures teach us, a mystic union between the external elements and the spiritual gifts which the Lord supplies in, with, and under the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper.

Lest anyone should think that these names are still merely a human invention, we find that in 1 Cor. 10:21 the term Lord's Table is used; in Acts 2:42 the Breaking of Bread; in 1 Cor. 11:20 the term Lord's Supper; in 1 Cor. 10:16 and 17 the idea of the communion is expressed, where we read: "For we, being many, are one bread and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread." We notice therefore that they are Biblical terms and not human discoveries. Somewhat disturbing to some folks may be another name which is used in the Confessions for the Lord's Supper, namely, the word "missa" or "mass." Article XXIV of the Augsburg Confession treats of the Mass. Dr. Edward W. A. Koehler in his *Summary of Christian Doctrine* surmises that this term probably

developed from the custom in the early church of dismissing those from the common service who were not yet entitled to partake of the sacrament. He says on p. 193 of his *Summary of Christian Doctrine*, "As long as no heterodox ideas are connected with any of these names, we should not quarrel over them. However, we should not introduce needless innovations in our terminology, especially as some terms have become tainted with false connotations, as is the case with 'Eucharist' and 'Mass.'"

Naturally, the word "mass" in the Augsburg Confession is not used in the sense of the papistic Mass, as an unbloody sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead. That is evident from the explanation that is given in the article itself. "The people are accustomed to partake of the sacrament together, if any be fit for it, and this also increases reverence and devotion of public worship. For none is admitted except they be first examined. The people are also advised and admonished regarding the dignity and use of the sacrament, how great consolation it brings anxious consciences, that they may learn to believe God and to expect and ask of Him all that is good. In this connection they are also instructed regarding other and false teachings on the sacrament. This worship pleases God; such use of the sacrament nourishes true devotion toward God. It does not therefore appear that the mass is more devoutly celebrated among our adversaries than among us" (Art. XXIV, *Trigl.*, p. 65). It is well to use a proper term, e. g., "Holy Communion."

## I

## WHAT DOES THE LORD SAY THIS SACRAMENT IS?

Here we turn to the words of divine institution of our Lord Jesus, the Author and Establisher of this sacrament. These words are recorded, as is familiar to all of us, not merely once in the Bible (which would have been sufficient) but four times, three times by the evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and once by the apostle Paul, for which we thank God. Jesus certainly endeavored to make these important words so clear to us, so understandable, so impressive, that He left no stone unturned in having them recorded four times. It is not God's fault if there is any misunderstanding about the Lord's Supper, and surely a person is entitled

to feel that there might be no uncertainty, no misapplication, or misinterpretation in this point of doctrine.

Matt. 26:26-28 we read: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it and brake it and gave it to the disciples and said: Take, eat; this is My body. And He took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them, saying: Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Mark 14:22-24 we read: "And as they did eat, Jesus took bread and blessed and brake it and gave to them and said: Take, eat, this is My body. And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And He said unto them: This is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many." Luke 22:19-22 we read: "And He took bread and gave thanks and brake it and gave unto them, saying: This is My body, which is given for you; this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying: This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you." The new Revised Standard Version omits the twentieth verse (also part of the nineteenth) in its rendering, but adds a footnote saying: "Other ancient authorities add 'which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of Me. And likewise the cup after supper, saying: This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.'" The words are found in Nestle with footnote. Now we come to the words of St. Paul in 1 Cor. 11:23-25, which are especially precious to us Christians, for they corroborate what three evangelists say. Besides giving us the identical words of our Lord, they show this whole Christian doctrine of the Lord's Supper in its practical use and application in early Christianity. He writes: "For I have received of the Lord [which refers to the inspiration by the Holy Ghost] that which also I delivered unto you. That the Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it and said: Take eat, this is My body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup when He had supped, saying: This cup is the new testament in My blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me." In our consecration of the elements we use a composite of these recorded accounts, which brings out all the features

or details that Christ mentioned. From this fourfold record it is evident then that the Lord used two elements, bread and the contents of the cup, wine, which they had used just previously in the observance of the Old Testament Passover celebration. It is likewise evident that the Lord commanded the participants to eat and drink. It is also apparent that the Lord gives us more than mere bread and wine, for He expressly says it is His body and His blood, given and shed for us. It is also patent that the Lord stressed the benefit of this meal as the forgiveness of sins. Our Small Catechism therefore states clearly in answer to the question: What is the Sacrament of the Altar? "It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself."

## II

### WHAT DO OUR CONFESSIONS SAY?

In answer to this question, "What is the Sacrament of the Altar?" our Small Catechism of Martin Luther says: "It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself." Then the foremost of our confessional writings, the Augsburg Confession of 1530, in Article X very briefly and concisely states, "Of the Supper of the Lord they teach that the body and blood of Christ are truly present and are distributed to those who eat in the Supper of the Lord; and they reject those that teach otherwise" (*Trigl.*, p. 47). Whereas the Small Catechism not only defines the Lord's Supper, but follows with four other questions and answers, the Augsburg Confession settles everything with one short paragraph.

In the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, 1531, again in Article X, which is a reaffirmation of the Confession itself, we are told that the Tenth Article is approved and "that we believe that in the Lord's Supper the body and blood of Christ are truly and substantially present and are truly tendered, with those things which are seen, bread and wine, to those who receive the sacrament. This belief we constantly defend, as the subject has been carefully examined and considered." Then the writers refer to the fact that the Emperor, His Imperial Majesty, does himself not disapprove

of this article, since the Roman Church and also the Greek Church believe and teach that Christ's body and blood are really present, and it is not the intention of the fathers in this article to undertake a discussion of this subject here. (*Trigl.*, p. 247)

In Article VI of the Smalcald Articles, which were written by Dr. Martin Luther in the year 1537, which were to have been presented to the council, if any had been assembled at Mantua or elsewhere, to indicate what the Lutherans could accept or yield, or what they could not accept or yield, we find several new features added. Article VI is no longer than Article X of the Apology, in fact, a bit shorter, but something else needed to be said in the meantime. The article reads: "Of the Sacrament of the Altar we hold that bread and wine in the Supper are the true body and blood of Christ, and are given and received not only by the godly, but also by wicked Christians. And that not only one form is to be given. We do not need that high art which is to teach us that under the one form there is as much as under both, as the sophists and the Council of Constance teach. For even if it were true that under one there is as much as under both, yet the one form only is not the entire ordinance and institution ordained and commanded by Christ. And we especially condemn and in God's name execrate those who not only omit both forms, but also quite autocratically prohibit, condemn, and blaspheme them as heresy, and so exalt themselves against and above Christ, our Lord and God, opposing and placing themselves ahead of Christ. As regards transubstantiation, we care nothing about the sophistical subtlety by which they teach that bread and wine leave or lose their own natural substance and that there remain only the appearance and color of bread, and not true bread. For it is in perfect agreement with Holy Scriptures that there is and remains bread, as Paul himself calls it 1 Cor. 10:16: 'The bread which we break,' and 1 Cor. 11:28: 'Let him so eat of that bread.'" (*Trigl.*, p. 493)

Here Luther's words indicate that certainty and developing understanding of the true doctrine which came gradually by degrees to him in his studies of the Scriptures and by being forced into thoroughgoing study of God's Word to answer attacks made upon him and his teaching. Whereas Luther at the beginning of his reformatory work in 1517 still adhered to some abuses that

were prevalent in the Roman Church and that had become second nature to him through his background and training, he threw off one after another and came to greater clarity in his thinking and teaching so that nothing but the clear words of the Bible prevailed and bound his conscience. Here he speaks against the practice of Communion in one kind and the doctrine of transubstantiation, which had prevailed in the Roman Catholic Church since the Lateran Council in 1215, as he had already done earlier in his career.

Luther in his Large Catechism treats of the Lord's Supper more fully after first giving us the same definition as in the Small Catechism. The length of this treatise prohibits its reproduction here in this essay; however, I should like to summarize it, since the Large Catechism is also one of our Lutheran confessional writings. Luther points out that as in Holy Baptism it is *the Word* that makes this a sacrament, and just as in the first sacrament we say it is not simple water only, here we say it is not merely bread and wine, but both comprehended and connected with God's holy Word. When the Word is joined to the element, it becomes a sacrament. Here is a characteristically Lutheran word: "With this Word you can strengthen your conscience and say: 'If a hundred thousand devils, together with all fanatics, should rush forward, crying, How can bread and wine be the body and blood of Christ? I know that all spirits and scholars together are not as wise as is the Divine Majesty in His little finger.'" Here he refers to the question whether even a wicked priest could administer the sacrament, and he answers: "For here we conclude and say: 'Even though a knave takes or distributes the sacrament, . . . that is the true body and blood of Christ just as truly as he who receives or administers it in the most worthy manner. For it is not founded upon the holiness of men but upon the Word of God. And as no saint upon earth, yea no angel in heaven, can make bread and wine to be the body and blood of Christ, so also no one can change or alter it, even though it be misused. For the Word by which it became a sacrament and was instituted does not become false because of a person or his unbelief.'" (*Trigl.*, pp. 755, 757)

Then he answers the question of the wise spirits, as Luther calls them, who "contort themselves with their great art and wisdom,

crying out and bawling: 'How can bread and wine forgive sins and strengthen faith?' Although they hear and know that we do not say this of *bread and wine*, because in itself bread is bread, but of *such* bread and wine as is the body and blood of Christ and has the words attached to it. . . . Therefore this is also vain talk when they say that the body and blood of Christ are not given and shed for us in the Lord's Supper, hence we could not have forgiveness of sins in the sacrament. For although the work is accomplished and the forgiveness of sins acquired on the cross, yet it cannot come to us in any other way than through the Word. . . . But now the *entire Gospel* and the article of the Creed: 'I believe a holy Christian Church, the forgiveness of sin, etc.,' are *by the Word embodied in this sacrament presented to us*. Why should we allow this treasure to be torn from the sacrament when they must confess that these are the very words which we hear everywhere in the Gospel?" (*Trigl.*, pp. 759, 761)

Then the Large Catechism speaks of the preparation for the use of the Lord's Supper and then the proper use of the sacrament. Luther complains about those who come infrequently to the altar, or those who feel that they must first be impressed with hunger and thirst for the sacrament, or the cold and indifferent. He draws the conclusion that if a person withdraw from the sacrament, he will daily become more and more callous and cold and will at last disregard it altogether. Those who feel that they must be perfectly pure before they come will never be able to approach. "But whoever would gladly obtain grace and consolation should impel himself and allow none to frighten him away, but say: 'I indeed would like to be worthy; but I come, not upon any worthiness, but upon Thy Word, because Thou hast commanded it, as one who would gladly be Thy disciple, no matter what becomes of my worthiness.' But this is difficult, for we always have this obstacle and hindrance to encounter, that we *look more upon ourselves* than upon the Word and lips of Christ." (*Trigl.*, p. 767)

Finally Luther points out the words of the Lord Jesus, which, he says, "are not preached to wood and stone, but to me and you; else He might just as well be silent and not institute a sacrament. . . . Here He offers us the entire treasure He has brought for us from heaven and to which He invites us also in other places

with the greatest kindness, as when He says: 'Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. . . .' Besides, on your part, your own distress which is about your neck and because of which this command, invitation, and promise are given, ought to impel you. For if you would wait until you are rid of such burdens, that you might come to the sacrament pure and worthy, you must forever stay away. If you cannot feel such distress, at least believe the Scriptures, they will not lie to you, and they know your flesh better than you yourself." Then he admonishes all to consider the fact that they are in the world and that the devil is still about them, as we have those words in the Christian Questions and Answers by Luther. (Cp. *Trigl.*, pp. 769-773.)

We come then to the last of our confessions, the Formula of Concord, which *was not a new confession* but a repetition and explanation of the old Lutheran confessions. It does not set forth or formulate a new faith or tenets hitherto unknown to the Lutheran Church. Nor does it correct, change, or in any way modify her doctrines. This confession was completed in 1577; however, it was first published in German at Dresden in 1580 as a part of the *Book of Concord*. The first authentic Latin edition appeared in Leipzig in 1584.

In our modern triglot edition of the confessional books we have first the "Summary Content, or Epitome of the Articles in controversy among the theologians of the Augsburg Confession, set forth and reconciled in a Christian way, according to the direction of God's Word, in the following recapitulation." This epitome was prepared by Andreae and was revised and critically gone over at the same time with the second part, which is designated "Thorough, Pure, Correct, and Final (Solid, Plain, and Clear) Repetition and Declaration of Some Articles of the Augsburg Confession, concerning which, for Some Time, there has been Controversy among Some Theologians who Subscribe Thereto, Decided and Settled according to the Analogy of God's Word and the Summary Contents of Our Christian Doctrine." (*Trigl.*, p. 844)

Article VII deals with the doctrine of the Lord's Supper and for the sake of brevity and economy of time we shall consider the much briefer Epitome and summarize what the Formula of Concord contains on this point of our doctrine. The *status controversiae*

is stated between us and the Sacramentarians, two kinds of whom are distinguished: the gross Sacramentarians, who declare in clear words that nothing but bread and wine is present in the Lord's Supper, and the subtle Sacramentarians, who speak in our words and pretend that the body and blood of Christ are in the sacrament. These people insist, however, that this occurs only spiritually, in faith, and they retain beneath these specious words the same gross opinion that there is nothing present but bread and wine, that the body of Christ is in no wise present except only above in the highest heaven, that we should elevate ourselves into heaven by the thoughts of our faith, and *there* should seek this body and blood, not at all, however, in the bread and wine of the Holy Supper. — Then follow 10 short theses which declare affirmatively what we believe. Thus, 1. "We believe, teach, and confess that in the Holy Supper the body and blood of Christ are truly and essentially present and are truly distributed and received with the bread and wine." Then we confess that the words of Christ in the institution are not to be understood otherwise than they read, according to the letter, so that the bread does not signify, etc. Then the recitation of the words by a human being *does not produce* the body and blood of Christ; this is to be ascribed only to the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. Reference is made to the Large Catechism of Martin Luther for the arguments against the Sacramentarians. In point six the manner of eating is confessed, namely, not merely spiritual eating and drinking by faith, but also oral; yet not in a Capernaïtic but in a supernatural manner. Furthermore, we believe that not only the true believers receive Christ's body and blood, but also the unworthy; and there is only one kind of unworthiness, and that consists in unbelief. We believe that no true believer, however weak his faith may be, receives the sacrament to his judgment, which was instituted especially for Christians weak in faith, yet penitent for the consolation and strengthening of their weak faith, and that true worthiness consists in the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ alone, which the believer appropriates to himself in faith. (*Trigl.*, pp. 809–813)

Then follows the rejection of the teaching of papistic transubstantiation, the Mass, Communion in one kind, the sectarian ideas that the body of Christ is not received orally; that the words of

institution are to be understood as meaning that bread and wine are mere symbols or tokens by which Christians recognize one another, or that bread and wine are only figures of Christ's body and blood, or that bread and wine are no more than a memorial, seal, or pledge through which we are assured that when faith elevates itself to heaven, it there becomes partaker of the body and blood of Christ; that the body and blood of Christ are so enclosed in heaven that they cannot be present at one time in many places where the Lord's Supper is celebrated; that Christ's human nature could never permit of such presence; that God, despite His omnipresence, is not able to cause His body to be essentially present in more than one place at one time; that not the omnipotent words but faith causes the presence of the body and blood of Christ; that believers must raise their eyes to heaven and there seek the body and blood of our Lord; that unbelievers receive only bread and wine and not the heavenly elements; that the true worthiness of the guests consists not in faith alone, but also in the external preparation of men; that even true believers can receive the sacrament to their judgment, because they are still imperfect; that the external visible elements should be adored in the sacrament. Par. 20 reads: "Therefore we consign also to the just judgment of God all presumptuous, frivolous, blasphemous questions, which decency forbids to mention, and other expressions, which most blasphemously and with great offense to the church are proposed by the Sacramentarians in a gross, carnal, Capernaïtic way concerning the supernatural, heavenly mysteries of this sacrament." Par. 21: "Hence we hereby utterly reject and condemn the Capernaïtic eating of the body of Christ, as though we taught that His flesh were rent with the teeth and digested like other food." This mystery is not apprehended but by faith alone and revealed in the Word alone. (*Trigl.*, pp. 813-817)

Here we quote Francis B. Cassilly, S. J., *Religion, Doctrine, and Practice* (Chicago: Loyola University Press), intended for use in Roman Catholic high schools. This book is written in the form of a large catechism in questions and answers.

11. Must we receive Communion under both kinds?

No, it is sufficient to receive Communion under the form of bread, for Christ is present whole and entire under each form.

. . . . .

As this is a matter of *discipline* and not of *doctrine*, the practice of the Church has varied. There are many reasons why in our day Communion is restricted to one kind. It is sometimes difficult and expensive to get the wine; there is danger of spilling and also of contagion when persons drink from the same spoon. Passing over numerous other reasons we may mention here that to distribute Communion under both kinds to a large number of communicants would take a long time and fatigue both priests and people. The result would be a great falling off in frequent Communion. Accordingly the present usage of the Church in the West is very beneficial to us. (Pp. 203, 204)

Must one be fasting before Communion?

Yes, before Communion one must be fasting from midnight.

Cassilly continues by outlining certain intricacies of the Roman Catholic laws of fasting.

The Communion fast requires that one should take nothing in the way of food or drink, not even medicine. Things that are not digestible, such as a hair, thread, or piece of wood do not break the fast; neither do the remains of food sticking between the teeth nor blood from the mouth or gums or tongue, since they do not come from without. Little drops of water which mingle with saliva in washing the teeth and are swallowed unintentionally are not considered a violation of the fast. One who breathes in a fly or gnat or snowflakes or rain-drops, or swallows them with saliva, may receive Communion. Gargling the throat or rinsing the mouth is not forbidden. One who is eating or drinking must stop at the first stroke of twelve o'clock, though he may swallow what is in his mouth. (P. 206)

Regarding the celebration of mass this author makes the statement: "There is no moment of the day or night in which the Mass is not being said in some part of the world" (p. 213). He goes on to defend the use in worship of Latin and other languages other than the current vernacular.

In the beginning Mass was *said in Greek* even at Rome; but in that city Greek was gradually replaced by Latin. Today Mass is said *in a number of languages*, such as Greek, Old Slavonic, Coptic, Armenian, and Syriac. The Eastern Churches are permitted to use the rite and language established by ancient custom. Nearly all the languages, however, in which Mass is said have gone out of daily use, and so cannot be understood by the people.

The objection made by some Protestants to the use of Latin, that *the people cannot understand* the Mass prayers, is really not so im-

portant, for many of the prayers are pronounced in a low tone of voice and the others, owing to the distance of the people from the altar, could scarcely be heard or understood in any language. Moreover, these prayers are addressed directly to God and are not sermons intended for the people. (Pp. 215, 216)

#### CONTROVERSIES SETTLED THROUGH THE FORMULA OF CONCORD (1577 and 1580)

There were three theological parties among the Lutherans after the Interim of Augsburg and Leipzig. (1) The Philippists, named after Philip Melanchthon, embraced interimists, synergists, and crypto-Calvinists. They were led by Melanchthon, and their object was to supplant the authority and theology of Luther by the unionistic and liberal views of Melanchthon. (2) The Gnesio-Lutherans, genuine Lutherans represented by the theologians of ducal Saxony, as Amsdorf, Flacius, Wigand, championed the cause of Luther and withstood Melanchthon and followers. Their strongholds were Magdeburg and the University of Jena. Later they had to oppose some of their own number when they went too far. (3) The third party, the center party, was composed of loyal Lutherans who took no part in the controversy. They were of service in settling controversies, framing the Formula of Concord and restoring a godly peace. Men like Brenz, Chemnitz, Selnecker, Chytraeus, and others, were among them.

The first controversy was called the Adiaphoristic Controversy, which lasted from 1548 to 1555. The question was whether Lutherans could with a good conscience partake in ceremonies which the papal church under threat of persecution and violence demanded to be reintroduced. The Adiaphorists said "Yes"; the opponents "No." The opponents contended that while ceremonies are ordinarily adiaphora, they may under circumstances become matters of conscience; such would be the case when they are demanded as necessary. This controversy was settled by Article X of the Formula of Concord. Flacius' position was ratified.

The second controversy was the Majoristic Controversy, which lasted from 1551 to 1562. Melanchthon was actually the author of this quarrel, because he first of all used the expression "Good works are necessary to salvation." Luther and others had already argued the question with Melanchthon. Prof. George Major was

the first one to champion this cause openly; he was a close friend of Melanchthon at Wittenberg. Nicholas Amsdorf, who opposed him, permitted himself to make the assertion that good works are harmful to salvation. Having made the statement, he also contended for it. The Formula of Concord settled this matter in Article IV.

The third controversy was the Synergistic Controversy, which lasted from 1555 to 1560. The Majorists declared salvation dependent on good works; since they were necessary to salvation, therefore salvation was somewhat dependent on the behavior of the Christian after his conversion. They asserted: "Man, too, must do his bit and co-operate with the Holy Spirit." Conversion and salvation depended in part at least upon man. The real father of Synergism was Erasmus of Rotterdam, but Melanchthon's theology tended toward that of Erasmus. Luther stood for monergism. A colloquy was held at Weimar in this matter. Strigel was a contender for the free will of men. The Formula of Concord in Article II took a stand against all forms of synergism.

The fourth controversy was the Flacian Controversy, which grew out of the Synergistic Controversy. It was named after the fine Lutheran champion Matthias Flacius, who took such a determined stand in the related quarrels. Now he made some rash statements, among them that original sin is not an accident but a substance. This contention caused grave offense to many. It stirred up a heated controversy. This was ended by Article I of the Formula of Concord. It lasted from 1560 to 1575.

The fifth controversy allayed by the Formula of Concord was the Osiandrian and Stancarian Controversy, lasting from 1549 to 1566. Andrew Osiander began publicly to propound a doctrine in which he abandoned the forensic contention of justification by imputation of the merits of Christ, and returned to the Roman teaching of justification by infusion, namely, infusion of the natural righteousness of Christ. Francisco Stancaro, an Italian, who looked upon all other theologians as ignoramuses, called Osiander the antichrist and became involved in the controversy. The Lutheran theologians tried to ignore him. He denied the two natures in Christ and Christ's complete redemption. Article III of the Formula of Concord settled this quarrel.

The sixth controversy was the Antinomistic Controversy, and it ran from 1527 to 1566. Antinomianism is the contention that under the Gospel dispensation the Moral Law is of no use or obligation, faith alone being necessary to salvation. Agricola spoke most disrespectfully of the Law of God, claiming that knowledge of sin does not come by the Law but by the Gospel. There is no room for the Law and its preaching in the Christian Church. Luther disputed with Agricola, and the latter afterwards recanted his false teaching publicly but continued to teach the same false doctrine privately or secretly. Melanchthon and the Philip-pists taught similarly of the Law and the Gospel. Articles V and VI of the Formula of Concord put an end to this disagreement.

The seventh controversy was the Crypto-Calvinistic Controversy, which continued to vex the church from 1560 to 1574. This was caused by the false teaching of Calvin regarding the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. Some of the Lutherans began following in Calvin's steps, but as they had subscribed to the Augsburg Confession, they were called Crypto- (hidden) Calvin-ists. Melanchthon, who had from the beginning stood with Luther in the doctrine of the Holy Communion, later began to lose his firm hold on the clear words of the institution of the Lord Supper. He permitted himself to be misled by human authorities, such as Oecolampadius and Bucer. Calvin in 1557 publicly claimed Melanchthon as his ally. After Melanchthon's death Calvin wrote the following words: "A hundred times you have said, when fatigued with labor and overwhelmed with cares, you as an intimate friend familiarly laid your head upon my breast: 'Would to God I might die on this bosom.' But afterwards I had wished a thousand times that we might be granted to be together." Saxony fell into the hands of the Crypto-Calvinists; however, when in 1574 Lutheranism was again restored, thanksgiving services were held in all churches in Saxony, and a special medal was struck to celebrate the God-given victory. Chemnitz and Andreae were the trusted advisers of Elector August of Saxony. This controversy was settled by Article VII of the Formula of Concord.

This Article VII covers only six pages in the Epitome, but 21 pages in the Thorough Declaration of the Formula of Concord. Thus we have briefly seen what our Confessions say the Lord's Supper is.

## III

## WHAT HAS BEEN AND IS THE OPINION OF OTHERS?

In this third section of our essay on the Lord's Supper we shall endeavor to present somewhat what others say the Lord's Supper or Sacrament of the Altar is. This will take us on a journey into the doctrines of several of the major divisions of outward Christianity. The entire visible church on earth that calls itself Christian and falls under the category of organizations that at least adhere to a belief in Christ as the Son of God and our Savior may be divided into three great bodies. There is the Catholic Church, Roman and Greek and Old Catholic, which is the antithesis of our Biblical doctrine in so many different points. Whatever is not Catholic may be divided into two parts, namely, Lutheran and Reformed churches. Since the day of the Reformation there is a fundamental cleavage between our Lutheran Church and the Reformed branch of Protestantism, regardless of what the differentiating name of that portion of the Reformed Church may be called. There are several fundamental features which separate the two large Protestant groups, the chief cause of this division being the attitude of the Reformed movement in determining and deciding what to believe and what not to accept in theology and being satisfied to permit human reason to be the deciding factor. Rationalism is at the bottom of this separation, which appeared definitely in 1529 at Marburg. Huldreich, or Ulrich, Zwingli, who lived 1481–1531, contemporaneously with Luther, being born just two years before the great Reformer and at first considered an adherent to the Lutheran cause, later produced ideas that were foreign to Lutheran and Biblical theology and helped to cause the cleavage. He sided in with Dr. Carlstadt, who denied the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper. Likewise John Calvin, 1509–1564, who was younger than Luther and Zwingli, was considered early to be a follower of Luther, but soon sided with Zwingli and also followed the Reformed idea of the Lord's Supper. John Calvin lived in Geneva, while Zwingli resided in Zurich, Switzerland. Calvin was by far the greater scholar and theologian, very studious, who catalogued and systematized the doctrines of the Reformed movement in his *Institutiones*. From Switzerland the Reformed influences spread to France, South-

ern Germany, the Netherlands, Scotland, England, and other countries. A highly important and deciding event took place in 1529, when Philip of Hesse invited the Lutheran and Swiss theologians to hold a colloquy at Marburg. He, as well as other princes, had hopes that there might be no cleavage in the Protestant ranks and that the breach might be healed. Melanchthon still hoped that there would be a *rapprochement* of Lutherans and Catholics so that the great universities of Europe might remain intact and on friendly terms also. The Lutherans were represented by Martin Luther, Justus Jonas, Philip Melanchthon, Andreas Osiander, Stephanus Agricola, and John Brenz; the Reformed contingent was composed of Ulrich Zwingli, Johannes Oecolampadius, Martin Bucer, and Caspar Hedio, whose signatures we find as shown in Dr. Bainton's book entitled *Here I Stand*, on page 321.\* Dr. Schwiebert in his *Luther and His Times*, on page 700, also lists the names of Myconius, Cruciger, and Roerer on the Lutheran side and Capito and Sturm on the side of the Zwinglians as having been present at Marburg and having participated in the discussion. In this latter book the entirely different origin and orientation of the twofold theology of Luther and Zwingli is pointed out. Whereas Luther's doctrine of the Lord's Supper and his interpretation of Christ's words based itself upon his *Christology* and grew out of this root, Zwingli's theology had its source in the *Erasmian tradition* and was of the humanistic and rationalistic type. Zwingli was not a trained theologian.

Zwingli's theology concerning the Lord's Supper was very simple. He held that in Holy Communion the individual receives only the bread and wine, but by reflecting on Christ's suffering and death the individual receives a spiritual blessing from this symbolical eating and drinking. Melanchthon and Zwingli were paired off, and the more even-tempered Oecolampadius and Luther, to avoid clash of personalities. Luther, we are told, retained admirable self-control, and the whole discussion was held on a high academic level. The Colloquy of Marburg was not entirely fruitless; there were 14 points set forth on which agreement was reached between the two contending parties, and these formed the basis for the Wittenberg Concord. It was *ein Entgegenkommen*, as it would be called today, but the fundamental difference of the

\* *Meridian paperback*, p. 261

doctrine of the Lord's Supper was not resolved; indeed it was brought out more plainly and vividly. As all of us know, it was here at Marburg where Luther scrawled the Latin words *Hoc est corpus meum* on the table and constantly took his position on these plain words and repeatedly called attention to them. They parted, and Luther refused the hand of brotherhood to Zwingli and his followers, because of the different spirit. The German historian Leopold von Ranke expresses his opinion of Luther's attitude at the Marburg Colloquy of 1529 as follows: "Man mag das tadeln, wenn man will, wie es so oft getadelt worden ist. Politisch klug war es nicht. Allein nie wohl trat die reine Gewissenhaftigkeit rücksichtsloser, grossartiger hervor. Luther will die Verteidigung des Glaubens nicht mit andern fremdartigen Interessen vermischen. Er will sich nicht zu Dingen, die er nicht uebersehen kann, fortreiszen lassen. Gewiss, klug ist das nicht, aber es ist gross. (One may censure that if one will, as it has been censured so often. It was not politically wise. Never; however, did pure conscientiousness stand forth more inconsiderately and more sublimely. Luther will not confuse the defense of his faith with other extraneous interests. He will not permit himself to be carried away by things that he cannot overlook. Certainly it was not wise, but it was mighty.)"

#### WHAT THE REFORMED CHURCH SAYS IT IS

Whereas our Lutheran faith holds to the plainly stated words of Christ in the institution of His Supper, the Reformed groups, following Zwingli and Calvin and their other theologians, have always contended that there must be some representation or symbolism somewhere in the words of Christ. The various leaders of the Reformed group were not agreed just where this symbolism lies, in which word; some found it in one place, others in another. Thus Dr. Carlstadt insisted that the explanation lay in the *touto*, the subject of the sentence, "This" is My body. He suggested that the Lord had made an accompanying gesture in that night at the table and had pointed at His physical body reclining or sitting at the table. The Lord would then have said: "Take eat, *this* is My body," *pointing at Himself*. Zwingli could not accept that interpretation, but finds the explanation in the copulative verb "is"; he

wrote: "So the whole burden does not lie on the demonstrative word 'this,' but in another which, as number of letters go, is no larger, namely, on the word 'is,' which in the Scriptures is accepted to mean *signifies* in not a small number of places." He is referring to the two Latin words, *hoc* and *est*, when he says they have the same number of letters. This expression of Zwingli is found in the St. L. edition of Luther, XX, 470. Zwingli's interpretation, then, is that the word "is" means "represents." Krauth in his *Conservative Reformation* says, page 619: "Language itself would commit suicide if it could tolerate the idea that the substantive verb shall express not substance, but symbol." Every pupil learns in school in the study of language that the indicative mood of the verb makes a statement of fact, and when we have a declarative sentence and say, "This is a book, or, this is a dog," we do not mean this represents or is a picture of a book or dog, but is in actuality a book or dog or whatever the object may be that we are designating. It is a factual statement. Calvin and Oecolampadius preferred to find the solution in the predicate nominative "My body," in this sense: The bread which I give you to eat is *signum corporis*, a symbol of My body.

We shall all acknowledge that when the Lord Jesus spoke in parables He was using figures of speech, also when He said of Himself: "I am the Door" (John 10:9); or, "I am the Vine" (John 15:5); or when the Bible says (1 Cor. 10:4): "The rock which followed was Christ"; or when Jesus said: "The seed is the Word of God" (Luke 8:11); or in Matt. 13:38: "The field is the world"; Gal. 4:24: "These are the two covenants." There is a figure of speech when the Lord says that He is the Door, but the figure is not in the verb "is" but in the predicate nominative "door"; He is the *Door* all right, but it is a different kind of door. He is no physical door, but He is the Door to heaven, to eternal life. "No man cometh to the Father but by Me," He says. He is not a *natural* rock, yet He is a *Rock*, namely, the Rock of our salvation, the Rock of Ages, cleft for me. He is the Rock from which the fathers drank spiritually, and we drink likewise of Him and live.

The Reformed doctrine rejects both the idea of transubstantiation and also the doctrine of the real presence in the sacrament. They base their doctrine of the Lord's Supper, as we have pointed out,

upon their human reason and wish to found it on the words of Christ spoken in John 6:53-56. These words, however, do not treat of the Lord's Supper at all, as Luther pointed out in his "Babylonian Captivity" under the heading "The Sacrament of the Bread," on page 178 of the *Works of Martin Luther*, Philadelphia Edition, Muhlenberg Press. The Lord's Supper had not then been instituted. John 6 teaches that by faith one must receive the merits of Christ which He procured by giving His body and shedding His blood and that all those who so eat His body and drink His blood have eternal life. But not all who eat and drink the body and blood in the sacrament shall have life, as St. Paul writes in 1 Cor. 11:27-29. The Reformed think that Christ's real presence is ruled out by the fact that Christ ascended into heaven, which they explain as involving His being shut up in heaven in such a way that His body and blood cannot be present in the Lord's Supper. When they speak of Christ's body and blood being present in the Eucharist, they mean only a spiritual presence. Chapter XXIX of the *Westminster Confession* states of the body and blood of Christ that they are not "corporally or carnally in, with, and under the bread and wine, yet as *really*, but *spiritually*, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance as the elements themselves are to their outward senses."

There are two views current among the Reformed concerning the benefits of the Lord's Supper. One is that the Lord's Supper is to be looked upon as a memorial meal, reminding the believing communicant of what Christ through His suffering and death has accomplished for him. The other is that in the Lord's Supper a spiritual eating and drinking, performed by faith, takes place and unites the believer with Christ. Zwingli was the chief exponent of the former view and Calvin of the latter. It is true that Reformed teachers often use a language that is very similar to that employed by Lutherans. They frequently speak of the eating and drinking of Christ's body and blood. Their opposition to the teaching of the Scriptures becomes apparent at once when they are asked whether unbelieving, unworthy communicants receive Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist. In their reply they emphatically deny that such partake of Christ's body and blood. Article XXIX of the *Westminster Confession*, chapter 8, declares:

“Although ignorant and wicked men receive the outward elements in this sacrament, yet they receive not the thing signified thereby.”

If we wish, therefore, to summarize what the Reformed Church says the Lord's Supper is, we may say that it is not the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, but only symbols and signs or representations of these heavenly elements. They have followed Zwingli's footsteps, who at the Colloquy of Marburg in 1529 refused to accept the clear statement of our Lord, because his human reason could not understand how it is possible for the body and blood of Christ to be given us under the bread and wine and for it to be present in so many places at one time.

The fundamental difference between the Reformed and the Lutheran stand is quite evident; it is a matter of human reason guiding on one hand and the Word of God on the other, though human reason cannot comprehend.

In one of our beautiful Communion hymns we confess this inability to reconcile God's plain words and human reason when we express it thus:

Human reason, though it ponder,  
Cannot fathom this great wonder  
That Christ's body e'er remaineth  
Though it countless souls sustaineth,  
And that He His blood is giving  
With the wine we are receiving.  
These great mysteries unsounded  
Are by God alone expounded. (*L. H.*, 305:6)

And in a stanza of another hymn we sing:

Though reason cannot understand,  
Yet faith this truth embraces;  
Thy body, Lord, is everywhere  
At once in many places.  
How this can be, I leave to Thee,  
Thy Word alone sufficeth me,  
I trust its truth unfailing. (*L. H.*, 306:5)

#### WHAT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH SAYS IT IS

The Roman Catholic doctrine regarding the Lord's Supper is entirely different from either the Reformed or the Lutheran. Their whole conception of a sacrament is contrary to our belief that the sacraments are means of grace. The Roman sacrament is an act

which has virtue in itself by the very performance of the act, *ex opere operato*, and therefore the number of sacraments has been increased and the use of them is more perfunctory, as we notice in the attendance at Mass or the frequenting of the confessional. The Lord's Supper has for the most part degenerated into the Mass, which, according to their own textbooks, is the *very center of their entire worship*.

Before the Lateran Council of 1215 the Roman Church observed the Eucharist as we also do, by distributing the host and wine to the partaking communicants; however, since that time the Lord's Supper is much distorted and abused. Martin Luther grew up in an atmosphere which is foreign to us and with an understanding of the Lord's Supper which did not correspond with that which he had later in life, after having studied the Holy Scriptures for a number of years and after the spiritual trials of his troubled conscience were endured and suffered. His writings indicate that there was a gradual development also in this point of Christian doctrine with Luther, even as there had been in the cardinal doctrine of justification by faith.

The Roman Church refers to this sacrament as the Eucharist and divides it into two parts, the sacrament, or Holy Communion, and a sacrifice, the Mass. The fundamental doctrine which covers the whole matter including the Mass is the teaching of transubstantiation. The Council of Trent says of this: "By the consecration of the bread and of the wine a conversion is made of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ, our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood" (Session XIII, ch. 4). Of the bread and wine only the outward appearance is said to remain. This teaching since 1215 is the foundation upon which the Roman Church builds three other anti-Biblical doctrines which would be senseless without this basis, namely, Communion in one kind; adoration of the corpus; the Mass.

First the persons must be led to believe that the priest, who has an indelible sacrosanct character, by speaking the words of institution changes the visible elements into the heavenly elements so that no bread remains and no wine remains. There is now only Christ's body and blood. From this springboard they can

now move on or jump to three other teachings which are contrary to the plain words of Christ and God.

"Communion in one kind" means that the cup is denied the communicants in the Roman Church. This requires considerable reasoning on the part of the common people, for they must first believe that this is no longer bread but the true *corpus Christi* lying on the altar; that means that it is Christ's flesh; from this follows that as in nature there are some particles of blood in a piece of flesh or meat (a fact which every housewife will know from her experience at the butcher shop and at the subsequent preparing of the steak for her dinner in the frying pan); hence the people must believe there are particles of Christ's blood in His body here on the altar; consequently when the body is received, or the flesh of Christ, the communicant also receives His blood; ergo, the laity do not need the cup but only the bread. Although many, probably the majority of the laymen and women and children in the Roman Church, cannot follow this philosophical reasoning, they are satisfied to believe what their church teaches and to accept what the priest teaches them.

The second false doctrine which has been deduced from transubstantiation is that of using the *corpus Christi* for purposes of adoration. We note the good Catholic member doffing his hat as he passes his church edifice, or bowing the knee slightly as he passes; we see the visitor to the church genuflecting before he is seated in the pew, and he does that toward the altar; we read of Clare Booth Luce, our representative in Rome, relating in her story of her conversion to Catholicism that she had always been mystified when attending a Roman church by some inexplicable feeling of satisfaction and goodness while in such a building, which she never felt in any Protestant church. All of which is founded on and brought about by the idea of the real presence of the body of Christ in the cubicle of the Roman altar, where that part of the visible element is kept from one observance of the Holy Communion to the other and for celebration of Mass. The *altar* is not the object of their veneration but the *corpus Christi*, which is supposed to have its resting place there. Christ's body is here adored as Christ Himself. Then on the Thursday following Trinity Sunday each year, called Corpus Christi Day in the Roman calendar, a proces-

sion takes place in which the sacred wafer is carried about among the people, who are to fall down on their knees and worship it. This reminds us of the procession through the streets of Augsburg on Corpus Christi Day 1530, when the Lutheran confessors refused to bow the knee as the procession passed by. Christ, however, did not command us to worship bread and wine, nor His body and blood, but He said: Eat and drink.

The third false doctrine which has its foundation in transubstantiation, and which was the real objective of this teaching, is using the Lord's Supper for the Mass, which is designated as an unbloody offering for the sins of the living as well as the dead. This opened an avenue of immense revenue to the Roman Church and robbed the offering of Jesus on Calvary of its value to the world of sinners. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says in chapter 10:14, 18: "For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified; now where remission of sins is, there is no more offering for sin," but the Roman Church contends that Christ died and sacrificed Himself for our original, or inherited sins, only and that the individual Christian must now himself or in some other manner by the works of supererogation of others much holier than he himself is, make restitution for his actual sins.

Of this unbloody offering, the Mass, which is the high point and acme of their entire worship, the Council of Trent has this to say (Session XXII, ch. 2): "In this divine sacrifice, which is celebrated in the Mass, that same Christ is contained and immolated (offered) in an unbloody manner who once offered Himself in a bloody manner on the cross; this sacrifice is truly propitiatory, and by means thereof this is effected, that we obtain mercy and find grace in seasonable aid if we draw nigh unto God, contrite and penitent, with a sincere heart and upright faith, with fear and reverence. For the Lord, appeased by the oblation thereof and granting the grace and gift of penitence, forgives even heinous crimes and sins. For the Victim is one and the same, the same now offered by the ministry of the priests who then offered Himself on the cross, the manner alone of offering being different." The officiating priest always communes himself at the Mass; others may commune, but this is not required. During the celebration the priest presents the host and chalice to the people for adoration.

Requiem Masses are Masses for the dead; low Mass is without music, in the high Mass there is music, incense, etc.; pontifical Masses are said by bishops. When a Mass is requested by anyone, a tax or stipend, fixed by the bishop, is paid the celebrant of the Mass. The *Catechismus Romanus* says that Mass is "a true propitiatory sacrifice, by which God is reconciled and made merciful towards us." (II, 4, 76)

Of the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion Pope Pius X in 1910 declared that children should be admitted to communion at about the age of seven, the ability to distinguish the Eucharistic bread from common and material bread being made sufficient proof of fitness. This latter decree again illustrates the fact that the church of Rome believes firmly in the teaching of *opus operatum*, i. e., that these sacraments confer the grace of God by the working of the work, *ex opere operato*, that is, by the performance of the outward sacramental act apart from the spiritual condition of the recipient, *opere operantis*. On this very thing the Council of Trent declared: "If anyone says that by the said sacraments of the New Law grace is not conferred through the act performed (*ex opere operato*) but that faith alone in the divine promise suffices for the obtaining of grace, let him be accursed." (Session VII, can. 8)

Most serious of all was Luther's reduction of the mass to the Lord's Supper. The mass is central for the entire Roman Catholic system because the mass is believed to be a repetition of the Incarnation and the Crucifixion. When the bread and wine are transubstantiated, God becomes flesh and Christ again dies upon the altar. This wonder can be performed only by priests empowered through ordination. Inasmuch as this means of grace is administered exclusively by their hands, they occupy a unique place within the Church; and because the Church is the custodian of the body of Christ, she occupies a unique place in society. (R. H. Bainton, *Here I Stand*, p. 138) (*Meridian paperback, p. 107*)

Next came the reform of the liturgy, which touched the common man more intimately because it altered his daily devotions. He was being invited to drink the wine at the sacrament, to take the elements into his own hands, to commune without previous confession, to hear the words of institution in his own tongue, and to participate extensively in sacred song. . . .

A particular form of the Mass rested exclusively upon its sacrificial character. This was the private Mass [*Winkelmesse*] for the benefit of departed spirits for whom the priest offered a sacrifice;

and since they could not possibly be present, he communed alone. This form of Mass was called private because privately endowed. It was also privately conducted. Luther objected first to the principle of sacrifice and second to the absence of the congregation. In *The Babylonian Captivity* he had been willing to tolerate such Masses as private devotions on the part of the priest, provided of course that they were conducted in a devotional spirit and not rattled through to complete the quota for the day. At Wartburg he reached a more pronounced position. To Melancthon he wrote on the first of August, "I will never again celebrate a private Mass in eternity."

On the old question raised by the Hussites, whether the wine as well as the bread should be given to the laity, Luther and the Wittenbergers were agreed in desiring to restore the apostolic practice. As to fasting and confession prior to Communion Luther was indifferent. There was variance as to whether the priest should hold aloft the elements. Carlstadt viewed the act as the presentation of a sacrifice to be rejected, whereas Luther saw only a mark of reverence to be retained. (Bainton, pp. 202, 203) (p. 156-157)

By the beginning of 1525 the Mass was at an end in Wittenberg. It had continued 2½ years after Luther's return from the Wartburg. Luther came out with his *Deutsche Messe* in 1526; all was German but the Kyrie. With the canon removed, the Gospel and the Epistle assumed a more prominent position; the words of institution were given in German; the sermon occupied a larger place, and not infrequently the notices were as long as the sermon. The church thus became not only the house of prayer and praise, but also a classroom.

"On October 29, 1525, the *Deutsche Messe* was celebrated for the first time in Wittenberg in the presence of the two court musicians. . . . When it was officially introduced in the Town Church on Christmas 1525, Luther briefly explained its content and purpose to the congregation. The *Deutsche Messe* was considered by Luther as a kind of colorful Sunday dress for those not yet strong enough in the faith. In time he hoped to dispense with the outward glitter and display of vestments, incense, candles, etc., and to provide more mature congregations with simple preaching, prayers, and hymn singing. But unfortunately *he did not yet have a congregation ready for the removal of such props*. In 1526 the Elector made the new form of service official throughout his lands with the proviso that those who felt obliged to deviate had the freedom of choice in the matter." (Quotations from Weimar Ed.

and Paul Graff, *Geschichte der Aufloesung der alten gottesdienstlichen Formen*, etc., Schwiebert, *Luther and His Times*, p. 668.)

"All communicants had to announce themselves in advance." (Richter, *Kirchenordnungen*, quoted by Schwiebert, p. 668)

"In both the *Formula missæ* and the *Deutsche Messe* the word Mass is misleading when used instead of Communion. . . . Luther meant to emphasize that he had not created a new Communion, but merely restored the original Catholic Mass of apostolic days." (Ibid., p. 668)

*Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia* under the head of "Transubstantiation and the Oblations Offered" points out that in the early church the use of the word "offering" is found, even in the *Didache*. Then Irenæus, Origen, and Tertullian also referred to it, and gradually there was a transfer of meaning connected with the word "offering." At first it meant an offering of praise, but later an offering of propitiation. Cyprian already wrote: "The priest initiates that which Christ did and offers a true and complete sacrifice in the church to God the Father." (Epist. 63)

The real doctrine of Transubstantiation began with Paschasius Radbertus, A. D. 831. Finally all opposition was squelched, and in 1215 the declaration became official, and at the Council of Constance it was made the law.

#### IV

### PRACTICAL PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH ITS OBSERVANCE

#### A. WHEN DOES THE SACRAMENTAL UNION TAKE PLACE IN THE LORD'S SUPPER?

The Roman Church with its doctrine of transubstantiation teaches that at that instant when the officiating priest speaks the words *Hoc est corpus meum*, the change takes place, the bread is no longer bread, but is the Lord's body lying on the altar; the wine is the blood of Christ in the chalice. If we were to accept that interpretation, then we would certainly have to subscribe to the doctrine of transubstantiation. When the apostle Paul, however, by inspiration of the Holy Ghost writes in 1 Cor. 11: "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come," he expressly refers to the elements as bread and

wine, using the figure of speech *contingens pro contento*, a synecdoche, and does not indicate that the bread has been united with the body and blood of Christ at the words of institution, but rather at the eating, for now he goes on to say that "whosoever *eats* this bread and *drinks* this cup unworthily is guilty of the body and blood of our Lord." So, then, the union is there when we receive the elements, and therein lies the actual presence, not in some change that the ministrant brings about when he pronounces the words of consecration or institution. The Council of Trent in its 13th session decided that this latter is the case. If the mystical union took place at consecration or if there were any form of transubstantiation that had taken place, then we, too, would need to treat the bread and wine which is left over after the celebration of the Lord's Supper as the Romans treat it, namely, as the body and blood of the Lord, and nothing short of that. But we do not do so, knowing that the bread is still bread and the wine is still wine. The essential thing, besides the words of consecration, is the eating and drinking which the Lord commanded. Although the words of institution are important and we should not omit them at the observance of the Eucharist, nevertheless we should not feel that by the simple speaking of these words the sacramental union takes place. The elements must be taken, eaten, and drunk to make the sacrament complete.

The Epitome of the Formula of Concord says (*Trigl.*, p. 811, pars. 3 and 4):

Now as to the consecration, we believe, teach, and confess that no work of man or recitation of the minister of the church produces this presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper, but that this is to be ascribed only and alone to the almighty power of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But at the same time we also believe, teach, and confess unanimately that in the use of the Holy Supper the words of the institution of Christ should in no wise be omitted but should be publicly recited, as it is written in 1 Cor. 10:16. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" This blessing occurs through the recitation of the words of Christ.

Regarding the time of the sacramental union Quenstedt says: "No sacramental union takes place if there is no distribution."

Christ says: "Take, eat," and thereupon He says: "This is My body." (*De Coena Domini*)

Aegidius Hunnius points out that a fire might break out in the church just after the words of consecration, or a storm. What then about the sacramental union?

Consecration, administering, and receiving the bread and wine must be one uninterrupted act, as it was in the case when the Lord first instituted and administered the sacrament.

#### B. THE PROBLEM OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT OR REGISTRATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

Because of the fact that our Lutheran Church celebrates "close" Communion we instruct our people to register for their Communion attendance. The pastor wishes to know *who and how many* intend to partake of the Eucharist on a designated Sunday or at some festival Communion service. There is always that possibility that he may desire to discuss some difficulty with an individual communicant who may have given offense to his fellow Christians and has not yet straightened the matter out. There is also the item of preparing sufficient quantities of the visible elements, bread and wine, so that there is no embarrassment later during the distribution of the elements. It is always delaying and disconcerting when there is a sudden shortage and the administrant has to re-consecrate the elements before proceeding with the celebration. In our large city congregations there is always the possibility of having some visitors or strangers approach the altar, unless they are instructed that they need to announce themselves beforehand. We make an announcement before celebration begins.

But how shall this registration take place? The best practice is undoubtedly the *personal announcement* with the pastor wherever this is feasible and practicable. In our small country charges or little towns and villages this can be carried out very nicely and is still quite generally in vogue; however, in larger congregations and where people live at great distances it becomes almost impossible to insist upon the personal appearance of the head of the family or of at least one member of the family. There are those congregations which appear in groups for registration at stated hours when the pastor delivers a brief address to them in preparation. An-

nouncement on the hour or half hour is popular in some places and works out very effectively and profitably. In most of our larger city congregations there is registration by card at a previous service indicating the intentions of those who would come to the Lord's Table on the following Sunday. This may be the most impersonal method of all, yet it is serviceable and practiced for that reason and others. Probably a combination method is the most practical, namely, where some members come to the office or church and declare their intentions, others use the telephone and announce over it for themselves or their entire families, still others wait until Sunday morning and appear at the sacristy to "mention" for Communion. This last-mentioned practice is to be discouraged, but will probably never be entirely eliminated; and who are we poor servants of the church and our Lord that we should hinder anyone from approaching the Lord's Table on a Sunday morning, merely because he disturbs us at our meditation and causes some confusion and disturbance to mar our tranquil spirit?

In congregations where there has been an influx of refugees, DPs, expellees from Europe in the last years, the matter of registration for Holy Communion causes some concern, for these people are not accustomed to such a practice, and some show considerable resentment that they should be required to announce themselves beforehand. Some special attention must be given this matter, and not a little time is consumed in bringing this educational information to the people. Most of our good Lutheran Christians conform readily to this practice, since they realize it makes for good order in the church in connection with such a holy act as the commemoration of our Lord's death and the reception of His holy body and blood.

### C. PRIVATE COMMUNION

Ordinarily the Lord's Supper is to be celebrated publicly. This is self-evident from the very nature of the Supper, since it is also a confession of the unity of our faith and a demonstration of the holy fellowship that exists there among those who participate (1 Cor. 10:17). This does not mean, however, that it may be observed publicly only. Jesus instituted it with a group of people, and His apostles observed it thus also in the congregations. It is a public confession in which we show the Lord's death till He

come (1 Cor. 11:26). It is certainly not to be celebrated in small groups of the congregation, which groups would set themselves off from and possibly even above the congregation of believers itself. It should not be made a matter of certain families for themselves, which are not the congregation either, for this could easily lead to friction and disorder in the Christian congregation. The congregation as a whole has jurisdiction over the sacraments, and not an individual clique. We do not follow the sectarian practice of having a special Communion for the ladies' aid or the men's club or the youth group. If the *local congregation authorizes* a celebration of the Lord's Supper, then we may have a special service for some convention, as for the Walther League possibly. We should remember in this connection that all convention delegates *have their own altar* at which they should attend, at home in their own church, and that we should not permit ourselves to be carried away by certain emotional, sentimental considerations to think we must have a Communion service at all gatherings.

There are private Communion services to be given in every Christian congregation to those who are invalids in their homes, to those who are being prepared for a serious operation in the hospitals and desire Holy Communion, or to someone who may be called to the colors or must leave on a long and probably hazardous journey.

One of the finest experiences that a Lutheran pastor can have is that of visiting his sick parishioners and administering the Lord's Supper to them periodically, according to their desires and longing for the sacrament. It is highly satisfying to be addressed by some aged mother or father on a bed of lingering illness who accosts you with a cheery greeting and perhaps says: "Pastor, you have come to give me Holy Communion today. You don't know how I appreciate that; I am so glad you came." Likewise to see the gratitude and feeling of satisfaction, the peace of heart, reflected in the shining eye of that patient after he or she has received the sacrament. How wonderful when they pray along with you, confess their sins as you recite the words of the General Confession, even accompany your pronouncement of the words of institution! Where you have 50 or 60 such people whom you visit regularly and to whom you give the Lord's Supper frequently, there you have a blessed ministry, a foretaste of heaven, and you leave each

bedside with the feeling of having accomplished something for the Lord by His surpassing grace.

A warning may be in place for us that we do not give the desperately sick and long-suffering invalids the impression that the sacrament is to be some kind of physical medicine for them, or that they are strengthened in a misdirected and misunderstood conception of the sacrament as though it were different from the other means of grace, the Word, the Gospel, and that in order to be really prepared for death and die a blessed death it is necessary to have the Lord's Supper first, after which all is then well, or that now, having received the sacrament, the patient *is certain to die*.

Communing the sick should be done in a reverent solemn manner and with as little interruption or disturbance in the sickroom as possible. We need not insist on too much formality, but we should insist on decency and some degree of cleanliness and order about the person who is being communed. Any persons in the room should most certainly give attention to the holy act there being performed; if they are not at all interested, they ought to leave the room out of respect for the convictions of others and regard for the patient. It ought to be self-evident that there ought not to be a resounding, blaring radio pouring forth in the adjoining room, much less some television set in operation because friend junior must needs see a certain favorite program just then.

#### D. SELF-COMMUNING

According to God's divine order the called ministers of Christ are to administer the sacraments, Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Christ, our Lord, teaches this in 1 Cor. 4:1; Rom. 10:15; Heb. 5:4. There will be exceptional cases arising, although most of the questions that are asked by children in confirmation instruction or by students at our preparatory colleges and at the theological seminaries are hypothetical problems which probably will never occur in the practical ministry. There are still *Nottaufen*, emergency baptisms, to be performed occasionally, though most of these have been eliminated also through modern means of communication and modern transportation. In a few moments the pastor can be summoned, in a few more he can be in the hospital to perform such a baptism; *yet emergency cases do occur*.

So also there can be exceptional cases in which some vicar is authorized by a congregation and the arrangement is sanctioned and approved of by the seminary authorities, to celebrate Holy Communion, or a case in which a congregation authorizes a layman, probably an officer of the congregation, to assist the pastor in the distribution of the elements, or even to commune the pastor. These are exceptional and unusual cases and should not become the common practice, for the Lord is a God of order and wants everything to be done decently and in order in His church on earth.

Might a pastor administer Communion to himself? The consensus of opinion in the past has been that this could be done as an absolute necessity, although it is rather difficult to imagine what this absolute necessity should consist of. Since practically all pastors in this day and age have facilities for attendance at conferences with their brethren and the Lord's Supper is there celebrated, why should they feel constrained to commune themselves? This urgency which here and there appears seems rather to be connected with the wrong estimation of the Lord's Supper, namely, that this means of grace has greater value and perhaps more validity than the holy Gospel.

Dr. John Fritz in his *Pastoral Theology*, p. 127, remarks: "Rather than give Communion to himself (which he might legitimately do; of course, only in the regular church service and not privately), the pastor should ask the congregation to request a layman (a member of the church council) to administer the sacrament to him. Under ordinary circumstances this will not have to be done, for pastors almost without exception have ample opportunity to receive the sacrament at the time when conferences and synods are held or by calling in a brother minister for that purpose."

Undoubtedly most of our church members would find it strange if their pastor would begin communing himself regularly in the public service as often as the Lord's Supper is celebrated in their midst. There would be much explanation necessary to restrain them from many abuses which might seem justifiable to them in their lay position in the church. Some might argue that since the celebration of Holy Communion comes under the head of the Office of the Keys, and since every Christian is a royal priest in his own right and has power of the keys also, therefore he might as well use the prerogative and commune himself as the pastor does on

Sunday. However, we have always contended that the *congregation is the guardian of the means of grace* and that only those who are called or especially delegated by the congregation have any right to administer the Office of the Keys publicly. Holy Communion, rightly conceived and administered, presupposes some spiritual care of the soul, and that is the duty of the pastor of a congregation specifically and not of the laymen. God has very definitely established the public ministry in His church (1 Cor. 4:1; Acts 20:28; the pastoral epistles to Timothy and Titus), and we should not deliberately allow all kinds of confusion to be introduced into our congregations which disturb the consciences of men.

The pastor is not only the teacher but also the shepherd and watchman of the souls of his congregation, Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 3:1; Heb. 13:7; Ezek. 3:17-21. He is the bishop, and he is the steward. (1 Cor. 4:1)

#### E. FREQUENCY OF CELEBRATION AND PARTICIPATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

According to our latest *Statistical Yearbook* the average appearance at the Lord's Table in our congregations in the year 1930 was 2.10; a decade later, in 1940, it was 2.45; still another decade later, in 1950, it was 3.22; and in 1953 the average had risen to 3.48. May I state for your encouragement, members of the Southern District of Synod, your average was 3.53, in other words, above the average of our Synod. These figures testify a regular, rather slow rise, but they indicate improvement nevertheless, and we certainly thank God for making the hearts of our people more conscious of their spiritual needs for the stupendous treasure which the Lord has planted in His field, the church, for their benefit.

In evaluating such averages and figures and probably also complaining about them in many instances, we must take into consideration the infrequency with which the Lord's Table is spread in many instances. We have a good many congregations in our Synod where the old custom still prevails of celebrating the Eucharist quarterly, as they have congregational meetings on that same schedule, and one can barely wean them away from such traditions. Now where that is the case, we can readily understand that some people have an additional tradition, namely, that they attend every other time, which means that they would never attend

on the average more than twice a year. With such a condition existing, we can also see why the average over Synod does not increase more rapidly.

Alongside this incidental consideration there is — and no one could or would dispute it — the natural tendency toward indifference and negligence concerning everything that the Lord wants us to do. If the great apostle Paul had to complain in Romans 7 that “the good that I would I do not,” we shall all have to join his refrain and complain with him. Satan sees to it that many of our members are negligent in coming to hear the Word and also in making use of the sacrament, and *these two go hand in hand* in most instances. The Lord through His apostle encourages us to accept the sacrament freely. He puts it thus: “*As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till He come.*” This does not mean, if perhaps sometime, if perchance you happen to celebrate the Lord’s Supper, then remember the significance of it and declare My suffering and death, but it means that you should do it *frequently*. This frequency is the indication of the high esteem and recognition which we should display toward the Lord’s sacrament; furthermore, the proper preparation shows that also, and likewise the entire manner of celebrating Holy Communion solemnly and reverently.

Luther complained about the slackness of people in attending the Lord’s Table, and we complain in our day. In every congregation there are many who come regularly and diligently to the Lord’s Supper; oftentimes you will find the newly received adults to be most conscientious and regular in their attendance, while, on the other hand, you have those who are completely satisfied with an annual appearance at the Lord’s Table, probably at Easter or on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, or Christmas. A great portion of this latter evil we can attribute to European background and customs, particularly among those whom we have received in goodly numbers during the last ten years. Some of the foreign-born element in our congregations have their customs that are ironclad and as unchangeable as the laws of the Medes and Persians. (Parenthetically I should like to insert an incident which happened recently to illustrate something rather new. I visited some prospects and found a German family of which the grandmother is

Lutheran, also the daughter and the two children; the husband, however, is a Catholic. They welcomed me with open arms. Then we spoke of church membership, of attendance at Holy Communion, and I explained how we announce ourselves and that we observe close Communion. Then the grandmother seemed horrified to think that her son-in-law would not be able to take Communion with her daughter in our church. I assured her that this could be done after some instruction. She assured me that they had all taken Communion together over in the old country. Then I suggested that they had probably lived in some small village where there was either a Catholic or an Evangelical church, Lutheran. This was a crime of lese majesty, and I thought she might have a heart attack, as she assured me not so, that they came from *Hamburg*. So far they have not yet attended the Lord's Supper in our church.)

When we urge our people privately to attend the Lord's Supper, and admonish them, we find a number of stock excuses. Some feel no hunger and thirst for the sacrament; there is a spiritual satiety in their hearts and a lack of appreciation of the greatness and importance of the Lord's Supper for sinners. Luther already in his *Christian Questions and Answers* gave us the proper procedure in dealing with such people. The fundamental trouble is the lack of spiritual knowledge; they do not understand their sinful nature or the temptations of this world that surround them or the viciousness of the archenemy of man's soul, namely, of Satan the deceiver. There is a great lot of self-righteousness in such hearts, a feeling of satisfaction with themselves as they are, and an unwillingness to acknowledge that there is much room for improvement. Their souls are starving, but they do not suspect it. There is only one remedy, and that is that they consider themselves in the mirror of the Law of God and ascertain that they are poor sinners who need forgiveness, comfort, help for their souls. God's Law can soon dispel the smugness of self-satisfaction. We soon learn to cry for mercy.

There are those who are persuaded by Satan to believe that they are unworthy to come to the Breaking of Bread, that there is a certain standard of righteousness which they must first attain before coming. If Satan is allowed to continue such persecution and

temptation in the heart of a Christian, he may finally drive him to despair. If the devil can make us believe that we must have a certain degree of faith, or reach a certain standard of righteousness before coming to the Lord's Table, then he can also persuade us that the entire comfort of the holy Gospel cannot pertain to us and is not applicable to us, but is for others who are better than we. True, there is no righteousness of our own; there is no worthiness which we achieve, but faith in these words: "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins," we say is the worthiness which everyone needs in coming to the sacrament. Now faith is faith, even if it be but a tiny glow of a light. God did not prescribe a certain minimum or maximum of faith for reception of His grace. He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. The person who is ill should not wait until he is healed before he takes the medicine, but should take the medicine to help him recover from his sickness. Such worried persons should be comforted with the wonderful words of our Lord Jesus: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"; and again: "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." Of ourselves we should all feel unworthy, for we have nothing to bring before our God's altar besides our sins, but God has provided the worthiness in Christ Jesus and says, "Only believe." How cheered and happy such a person feels when he knows his sins are forgiven and Jesus has given him the pledge of that fact in His holy body and blood at His altar! How many have said, "I feel better now"! They are relieved of that worry, and Satan has no hold on them any longer to make them doubt or hesitate.

Occasionally there is some person who remains aloof from the Lord's Table because he has committed some secret sin or has something in particular that bothers him, which he does not want to share with anyone and which worries him constantly. He does not want to take the sacrament to his punishment; he knows he is heaping wrong and sin upon sin if he comes; he prefers not to burden his conscience any more than it already is burdened. Probably, by God's grace, the pastor can persuade this person to find peace and cause him to come cheerfully again to the Communion Table. These are difficult cases and not so easily discovered or analyzed. Here we need the guidance and blessing of God in a large measure and the wisdom of a Solomon.

Luther asks: "What should admonish and incite a Christian to receive the sacrament frequently?" and answers: "In respect to God both the command and promise of Christ the Lord should move him, and in respect to himself the trouble that lies heavy upon him, on account of which such command, encouragement, and promise are given." In truly evangelical manner we should encourage and coax our people to receive this holy sacrament, even as we constantly incite them to come regularly to hear the Gospel of our Savior. God has commanded us to come often; He has given us the promise that we shall receive a great boon in the Lord's Supper: He will give us peace; furthermore, we badly need the forgiveness of our sins that is extended to us and sealed to us; we should attend to give evidence to others of our confession of Christ and our faith; we should come to set others an example in Christian faith and application of it to the marvelous institution which the Lord Jesus gave us in that night in which He was betrayed. Our God is wonderful that He has given us a sacrament to initiate people into His kingdom, Holy Baptism, and He has given us a sacrament to further us in our Christianity and to sustain us, namely, the Lord's Supper. The third means of grace and the chief one is the Word, which makes both Holy Baptism and Holy Communion means of grace also, so that we call them "the visible Word." May we treasure them all three and use them as God has prescribed; may the Lord's Table be frequented more and more in our circles with all due reverence and with faith in our hearts.

#### F. TYPES OF THE LORD'S SUPPER IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Ernst Eckhardt, pastor in Nebraska for many years and author of the Eckhardt *Reallexikon*, which he published by popular subscription in 1907 at Blair, Nebr., speaks in Vol. I, 13, par. 4, of some types of the Lord's Supper in the Old Testament. He refers to the Tree of Life which stood in the middle of the Garden of Eden as one type of the holy sacrament, another was the Passover meal of the Israelites at the time of the Exodus. No doubt, the thought was that as both of these objects were life-giving to those who believed in the time before the Savior's coming, so the Lord's Supper is a meal which gives forgiveness and life eternal to the believers of the New Testament.

Likewise the following Bible passages have been referred to as portraying the Eucharist: Ps. 22:26, where David says: "The meek shall eat and be satisfied," a parallel passage being Ps. 69:32, which reads: "The humble shall see this and be glad, and your heart shall live that seek God." Also Is. 65:13: "Behold, My servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; behold, My servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; behold, My servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed." Another passage of Scripture which is looked upon as being prophetic of the Lord's Supper is Ps. 111:4: "He hath made His wonderful works to be remembered; the Lord is gracious and full of compassion," which Luther rendered: "Er hat ein Gedächtnis gestiftet seiner Wunder, der gnaedige und barmherzige Herr." Finally also Ps. 23:5: "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; Thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over," has been regarded as typical of the sacrament. There is certainly nothing in the context of these passages which would *compel* anyone to think of the Lord's Supper, and nobody ought to be faulted if he cannot find the holy sacrament indicated there. We may conclude, however, that just as the sacrament of Holy Baptism has its counterpart in the covenant of circumcision in the Old Testament, so the Lord's Supper had a parallel in the Paschal Meal, when the blood of the lamb on the doorposts and lintel saved Israel, as the blood of the Lamb and His body eaten and drunk in the Lord's Supper saves us from our sins.

Another prefiguration of the Lord's Supper is found by Cyprian in the example of Melchizedek in Gen. 14:18, when he approached Abraham and brought bread and wine. (Cyprian in a letter to Caecilius, his brother; Epistle LXII, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, V, 359)

#### G. FELLOWSHIP AT THE LORD'S ALTAR

Whereas the Lord said nothing about any special preparation for reception of the sacrament of Holy Baptism, He did make a distinction when He instituted His Supper, and St. Paul admonishes us to examine ourselves before partaking of this holy meal. Whereas the Lord Jesus commanded His disciples and church for all times to come to evangelize the world by baptizing them and teaching them, and opened the preaching of the Gospel and

Baptism to all human beings, He celebrated His Lord's Supper in closed company of the twelve; the attendance was restricted. Thus today also, Holy Baptism and the holy Gospel are distributed, preached and applied publicly to all who have a desire, but the Eucharist is for those who already believe, who can examine themselves for their spiritual worthiness or unworthiness, and to those who can testify by participation of the unity of their faith.

Dr. Fritz in his *Pastoral Theology*, p. 109, quotes a word of Chrysostom, illustrious preacher and churchman, who spoke this heroic word: "I would rather let my own body be destroyed than permit that the body of the Lord be given to an unworthy person; I would rather let my own blood be shed than permit that the most holy blood of the Lord be given to an unworthy person" (Homily 83 in Matt.). In the 25th article of the Augsburg Confession our church says: "It is not usual to give the body of the Lord except to them that have been previously examined and absolved." In speaking of our custom in the Lutheran Church of modern days, our synodical Catechism (of 1912) says in answer to Question 351, What custom is therefore observed among us? "The custom of admitting to the sacrament those only who have been previously explored. Hence also those who are contemplating their first Communion do previously and in the presence of the congregation render account of their faith and profess adherence to the orthodox church (confirmation)." Thus our church insists that our communicants be able to examine themselves according to the Word of God.

We insist therefore that there are certain groups of people who cannot be entitled to partake of the Lord's Supper in our church or with us at the altar. Our Small Catechism points out a number of these groups, four in number, to be exact. First we would mention the rank unbelievers and ungodly, and the reason for that is apparent, namely, that these could only come unworthily and would eat damnation unto themselves, and for that *we*, who administer the sacrament to them, would be held responsible by our God. Furthermore, the group which includes all those who cannot examine themselves properly, and this takes in considerable territory; for there are the children who lack sufficient instruction; there are the adults who have not been indoctrinated as to the

meaning and use of the Lord's Supper and would come altogether ignorantly; there are those who are suffering with some mental weakness or illness, which will not permit them to concentrate for any length of time on the seriousness and meaning of the sacrament; and there are those who are lying in a state of unconsciousness and are not aware of what is going on about them, who therefore cannot prepare themselves spiritually for proper reception of the sacrament. Regarding the last-mentioned group, we continually urge our good people to send for the minister of the Word when they notify the physician so that the pastor may speak with their loved ones while they are conscious, and pray with them and possibly give them Holy Communion, if there is the desire and reason for doing so.

Others who are not eligible to partake of Holy Communion are those who are in a state of unforgiveness and unreconciled with their brother, or those who have given an offense and have not yet made amends by having their sins forgiven them. The barrier to admittance to the Lord's Table is not the *gravity of the sin* committed, but the *attitude* which the perpetrator assumes over and against his sin and his brother whom he has offended. The most heinous sin may be repented of and gladly forgiven if the person shows his repentance and desires forgiveness, and a minor offense may become the cause of suspension from the Holy Supper if the person remains obstinate and unrepentant. The Lord's Supper is a meal characterized by love; love of Christ toward us, love toward one another.

In the Old Testament no stranger who was not united with the Israelites in their faith and belief was permitted to eat the Passover with them. Therefore we contend today that the Lord's Supper in our Lutheran churches is not to be administered to those of a heterodox faith, be that what it may. The Galesburg Rule of 1875, a name given to a ruling of the General Council in regard to altar and pulpit fellowship at Galesburg, Ill., in 1875, reads: "Lutheran pulpits for Lutheran ministers only; Lutheran altars for Lutheran communicants only." This was inquired into by the Iowa Synod of that day, and Dr. Krauth gave the answer himself by quoting the rule, then stating that any exceptions would belong to the sphere of privilege and not of right, and that the determination of an exception

was to be made in consonance with these principles by the conscientious judgment of pastors as the cases arise.

The Lord's Supper is a testimony of the unity of our faith, and going to Communion together means a fellowship which we have with all participating. Those who partake together enter into a most intimate communion according to 1 Cor. 10:17 and 21, where we are called one bread and one body, and in verse 18 the apostle asks: "Are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?" There can be no denial of this intimate relationship into which we are brought and confess to stand when we partake of the Lord's Supper together. False teachers and false believers cannot therefore be admitted to our altars. It would mean a denial of the unity of our faith, or it would be mere pretending. 2 John 10, 11 and Rom. 16:17 do not give us any such permission but rather forbid any such practice. It would not be according to the Epistle for the 17th Sunday after Trinity, recorded in Eph. 4:3-6, which speaks of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace and gives examples of this desired unity. In denying such a one the Lord's Supper *we are not condemning him as though he were an unbeliever; we shall speak with him charitably and patiently and try to demonstrate to him the reason for our stand.*

At the present time in our Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod we certainly have all reason to be careful, patient, watchful, in this very point under consideration, that we not give offense or violate our convictions and those of our fellow Christians. For example, our church body expressly declared that before any altar or pulpit fellowship is to be practiced with a fellow Lutheran church body with whom negotiations have been carried on for a number of years, the President of our Synod must make an official pronouncement to the effect that a God-pleasing true agreement has been reached on Biblical grounds. This decision you and I are in conscience bound to respect and observe. As much as we desire peace and strive for it and as much as everyone would rejoice to see true unity established, we shall not do anything to violate our conscience in such matters. Unionistic practices have never worked for good in the church, never have brought blessings. We need only to think of the history of our Lutheran Church in Germany since the days of the Reformation, and we can see it illustrated; and then cast a sweeping glance over the domain of the United States and the

history of Lutheranism here. Let us maintain our stand; many will misunderstand us; others will admire and appreciate our courage and boldness to stand for the Biblical principles. The chief thing is that our God and Savior commends such a stand on His divine Word.

#### H. MYSTICISM AND SENTIMENTALISM

A warning is certainly also in place in our day and age in our beloved Synod against falling into a pit of mysticism and sentimentalism when celebrating the Lord's Supper and when speaking of it in sermons or in our instruction classes. There are some who are carrying this matter entirely too far, as the following excerpts of a letter will illustrate. This letter was written as the answer of a called teacher to the calling congregation. He says: "I might briefly state my reason for this *decision* [declining]. At N. N. church we are working in the philosophy that the Church, the Body of Christ, meets each Sunday morning to do its liturgy at the Holy Communion. At this time, we relive the life of our Lord, and continue His humanity here on earth by being His body. From this weekly communion stems the entire consecrated life of the Christian as he follows in the footsteps of Christ Himself. This philosophy bears a tremendous impact for Christian education, but in so many ways the actual practice of this theory is a relatively unexplored field. Hence there remains a great job to be done. I have been here at this parish — years, and every day this philosophy means more in my own personal life in my work in the Teaching Ministry." ("Teaching Ministry" capitalized.) Now this matter of the Lord's Supper is no "philosophy," which means worldly wisdom, if anything. The Lord's Supper is Christ's plain teaching and not a "theory." The Christian congregation meets not foremost to observe the liturgy, but to hear the Word of God, and it has been Lutheran tradition since the days of Luther to consider the sermon the chief portion of the Sunday service, the preaching of the Word. It is true that the Christian Church is the spiritual body of Christ. This, however, does not mean any specific congregation, but all the Christian believers together, and it is not just the Lord's Supper which connects them, but the union in faith in Christ. Besides, Jesus talked about His holy Christian Church in Matt. 16, etc., long before the Lord's Supper ever existed or was instituted.

The connection brought about by faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ is just as intimate as any brought about by participation at the Lord's Table. John 8:31, 32 Jesus said: "If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." In Eph. 2 St. Paul says: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Cornerstone." He stresses the Word, if He stresses anything.

#### I. CUSTOMS OF THE EARLY CHURCH

Tertullian writes in the treatise Chapter of De Cordona: It was therefore tolerated in some places that the communicants should take each one his portion, with his own hand, but now we suffer none to receive this sacrament except at the hand of the minister. By our Lord's own precept it may be received at the hour of the ordinary meals and alike by all faithful whether men or women, yet we usually do this in our gatherings before daybreak. Offerings are made in honor of our departed friends, on the anniversaries of their deaths, which we esteem their true birthdays, as they are born to a better life. We kneel at other times, but on the Lord's day from the Paschal Feast to Pentecost we stand in prayer, nor do we count it lawful to fast on Sundays. We are concerned if even a particle of the wine or bread, made ours in the Lord's Supper, falls to the ground by our carelessness.

Cyprian writes to his brother that wine must be used in the Lord's Supper, but the wine must be mingled with water. He has a long argument that water signifies the congregation and wine the blood of Christ, hence these two must come together, hence mix water and wine.

Although there is a great deal of uncertainty about the matter, it is probable that at first the love feast was held in the evening: the Lord's Supper was separated from the love feast and observed at a morning meeting. We know that in the second century the Lord's Supper, or Eucharist, was celebrated on the morning of the Lord's day. (Robert Nicholas, *The Growth of the Christian Church* [Westminster Press, Philadelphia], p. 23)

*Prayer After Communion*

Prayer from the *Didache*, The Teaching of the Twelve —

But after ye are filled, thus give thanks:

We thank Thee, holy Father, for Thy holy name which Thou didst cause to tabernacle in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which Thou madest known to us through Jesus, Thy Servant; to Thee be the glory forever. Thou, Master Almighty, didst create all things for Thy name's sake; Thou gavest food and drink to men for enjoyment, that they might give thanks to Thee; but to us Thou didst give spiritual food and drink and life eternal through Thy Servant. Before all things we thank Thee that Thou art mighty; to Thee be the glory forever. Remember, Lord, Thy church to deliver it from evil; make it perfect in Thy love, and gather it from the four winds, sanctified for Thy kingdom, which Thou hast prepared for it, for Thine is the power and the glory forever. Let grace come and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the Son of David! If anyone is holy, let him come; if anyone is not so, let him repent. Maranatha.

Amen.

J. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN SACRAMENTAL AND SPIRITUAL  
EATING AND DRINKING

1. Sacramental eating and drinking is done with the mouth; spiritual is done with our faith, our heart.
2. Sacramental is done with earthly elements, bread and wine; spiritual is done without any visible elements. (Cf. John 6)
3. Sacramental can never be beneficial without the spiritual; the spiritual can be beneficial without the sacramental.
4. Sacramental can be done to one's damnation; the spiritual can never.
5. Sacramental pertains to Christ's body and blood in their essence; spiritual receives Christ with all His benefits through faith.
6. Sacramental is not always done nor is it absolutely necessary to salvation; spiritual eating and drinking is done daily and is necessary to salvation.

K. SOME INCIDENTAL MATTERS

Wafers have been in use in the church since the 14th century. No one can tell just who is the author of this custom of using wafers.

The breaking of the bread is nonessential. Christ broke it because of the style of the bread used then (cf. the bread in Palestine and Egypt today). The Lord said "Eat," not "Break."

The word "broken," used in 1 Cor. 11:24, is explained by the evangelists as "given" for you.

Taking can be done with the mouth as well as with the hand. In the early church the communicants did take it with the hand. Immaterial though. We still have such people today in private Communion.

In some congregations it is still customary for the communicants to place a special offering in some receptacle when coming to the altar, probably on a pedestal behind the altar as the people go around it. This is the ancient custom of which Origen and other ancients speak. The gifts of the people were then used to defray the expense of the Lord's Supper celebration and the rest used for the servants of the church or for the poor. These offerings were called *Opfer* or *Oblaten*, in Latin *hostiae*, or *oblaciones*, *oblata*, because they were a God-pleasing offering, *thusia*. Therefrom arose the custom of calling the table upon which these offerings were placed the altar. St. Augustine refers to this in *De coena Domini, liber X*.

When our Small Catechism refers to the author of the Lord's Supper and says it is "our Lord Jesus Christ, the truthful, allwise, and almighty God-Man" it wishes to remind us of the fact that the Lord Jesus is God and can do what we cannot, and what we cannot comprehend either. His Word is truth. We leave the mystery all to Him. With God nothing shall be impossible.

V. CONCLUSION

When our Lord Jesus instituted the Sacrament of the Altar for us, He specifically instructed His disciples of that day and us what the glorious purpose of His Supper was and is in His words: "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins." The Lord's Supper is a means of grace; that means it gives us God's grace which Christ has merited.

We believe therefore that the Lord's Supper was given us for the forgiveness of our sins and nothing less. When we approach the Lord's Altar, we prepare ourselves through a consideration of our sins and repentance for the reception of Christ's body and blood for the purpose of receiving forgiveness. Christ added the words "for the forgiveness of sins" to indicate that this is the avowed purpose and intention.

The Lord's Supper is to us the absolute pledge and earnest of the forgiveness, the same forgiveness which the Gospel or the Sacrament of Holy Baptism gives us. The Lord lets us taste and feel how gracious He is.

Through the reception of the Eucharist our faith in the forgiveness is strengthened, and we receive peace of mind, knowing that all is well between God and us.

The celebration of the Lord's Supper gives us the opportunity of confessing our faith before our fellow Lutherans and others. It is the testimony of the unity of our faith. Wherefore the early Christian congregations did not permit anyone else to be present when they celebrated, and even excluded strangers from their assemblies. They admitted only those who had been baptized in the Christian faith.

The final benefit of the participation is that our love toward God and our fellow men is strengthened and fortified. This is brought out in the prayer after the distribution when we say in our liturgy: "We give thanks to Thee, Almighty God, that Thou hast refreshed us through this salutary gift; and we beseech Thee that of Thy mercy Thou wouldst strengthen us through the same in faith toward Thee and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen."

All of us can undoubtedly recall with what fear and trembling we approached the Lord's Table for the first time years ago after our confirmation. It was a holy, sanctified hour for us, and we realized that we were in the very presence of our Lord and Savior who had invited us to His table. We were in dead earnest about our soul's condition and the proper preparation for partaking of Christ's holy body and blood; we heard the warning words of eating and drinking damnation to oneself ringing in our con-

sciousness. That was a holy hour, yet not more holy than each time we have approached since then.

May the Lord grant that we in our dear Lutheran Church always remain with Christ's plain words in the sacrament and maintain this doctrine against all erroneous theories and conclusions. May God encourage all our members to partake of the Lord's Supper frequently, regularly, conscientiously, to the glory of His name and our eternal welfare and the welfare of many immortal souls. May we join heartily in the prayer for our communicants which reads:

PRAYER FOR THE COMMUNICANTS

Lord Jesus, who callest unto Thee all that labor and are heavy laden, to refresh them and to give rest unto their souls, we pray Thee, let these guests experience Thy love at the heavenly feast which Thou hast prepared for Thy children on earth. Keep them from impenitence and unbelief, that no one may partake of this holy sacrament to his damnation. Take off from them the spotted garment of the flesh and of their own righteousness, and adorn them with the garment of the righteousness purchased with Thy blood. Strengthen their faith, increase their love and hope, and after this life grant them a place at Thy heavenly table, where they shall eat of the eternal manna and drink of the river of Thy pleasure forevermore. Hear us for Thine own sake. Amen.

Lord, I believe what Thou hast said, Help me when doubts assail me;  
Remember that I am but dust, And let my faith not fail me.  
Thy supper in this vale of tears Refreshes me and stills my fears  
And is my priceless treasure.

For Thy consoling supper, Lord, Be praised throughout all ages!  
Preserve it, for in every place The world against it rages.  
Grant that this sacrament may be A blessed comfort unto me  
When living and when dying. (*L. H.*, 306:6, 8)

Vouchsafe, O blessed Lord, That earth and hell combined  
May ne'er about this sacrament Raise doubt within my mind.

Oh, may I never fail To thank Thee day and night  
For Thy true body and true blood, O God, my Peace and Light!  
(*L. H.*, 310:5, 6)