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# Admission to the Lutheran Altar: Reflections on Open versus Close Communion

John Stephenson

As Luther said, “The Holy Spirit is no skeptic, and it is not doubts or mere opinions that He has written on our hearts, but assertions more sure and certain than life itself and all experience.”<sup>1</sup> Recent generations have seen a marked intensification of the spiritual maladies besetting Holy Christendom as church bodies of all confessions hasten to plunge into the maelstrom of end-time apostasy. What goes by the name of unionism might thus at times have to be branded by the severer label of syncretism. Unionism is the common public administration of the means of grace by those not unanimously agreed in “doctrine and in all its articles”(FC-SD X, 31). Should common worship take place, however, with a goddess-fearing (and so anti-trinitarian) ELCA “pastoress,” the Rubicon dividing unionism from syncretism has clearly been crossed. At any rate “open communion” is where unionism takes tangible effect for the man in the pew, being a shorthand expression of the principle that the Sacrament of the Altar is properly administered to all baptized Christians who profess faith in the Holy Trinity and who are communicant members of their own church body.<sup>2</sup> But as the agenda of the ecumenical movement had spilled over from mere unionism to the more serious program of syncretism, it may be that “open communion” is being widened to embrace a wider clientele than just Christians. In other word, the “mid-course correction” of Bishop David Preus, embodied in the altar fellowship consummated between sundry Reformed church bodies and the former ALC and AELC, may be only the tip of the iceberg.<sup>3</sup>

## *The Root of Present Laxity*

The genealogy of “open communion” must be traced back at least as far as its eighteenth-century progenitor known as indifferentism. Weariness with a century and a half of confessional polemics and religiously motivated warfare caused questions of religious truth to be put on the back burner with a sense of relief. Lessing’s “Nathan” provides the manifesto of indifferentism as it tells of the father bound by family tradition to hand on the heirloom of a miraculous ring to his favorite son. Unable to decide between his three equally

beloved sons, the father has two perfect copies of the miraculous ring made and passes on the three identical rings to his heirs without even himself knowing which is the genuine article and which are the imitations. Under present conditions it is impossible to determine which is the genuine ring, so each of the sons must, albeit with seemly diffidence, regard his own ring as the authentic family heirloom. In the infinitely distant future it is conceivable that the sole genuine ring may be located, but until that time no one of the sons may make immodest claims for his own ring to the disparagement of his brothers'.<sup>4</sup> The point, being interpreted, is that no man can with certainty arbitrate between the competing truth claims of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, the so-called "positive" religions.

John 14:6 inoculates even the weakest believer against full-blown Enlightenment Age indifferentism, but rationalism's elder sister pietism, with her elevation of "life" above "doctrine" and blurring of the differences between Lutheran and Reformed theologies into a pan-protestant mélange, injected into church life a virus of indifferentism sufficiently strong to incubate the practice of "open communion." What is North American Protestantism *en masse* but a blend of rationalism and pietism? Zwingli's posthumous influence has transcended by far his achievements during his lifetime. What was denied him at Marburg in 1529 was offered him by S.S. Schmucker in the "Definite Platform" of 1855 and by contemporary Lutherans. Our religious *Sitz im Leben* is a non-sacramental synergism kept barely alive by the embers of yesterday's biblicism—such is the visage of the North American Protestantism which invites us to embrace its ethos, practices, and programs.

There is something defiantly counter-cultural about refusing "open communion" in the spirit of Luther at Marburg. The "Galesburg Rule" set the teeth of American Protestantism on edge, which has by now taken its revenge. "Lutheran pulpits for Lutheran pastors only and Lutheran altars for Lutheran communicants only" seems a dead letter in the ELCA. Nor can habitual reaffirmation by synodical conventions of the LCMS of "close communion" blind our eyes to the fact that at parish level our stance on altar fellowship is honored in the breach

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as well as in the observance. Let no one underestimate the pressures to which many parish pastors are subject. Applied to the church, American democratic theory is apt to reduce the office of the holy ministry to a servant of the voters' assembly. The pastor is expected to administer the holy sacrament in accordance with his congregation's wishes. And pressure comes not only in the shape of lay usurpation of the office of the keys. As the end of the church year looms in sight, statistics must be collated. Officialdom smiles on growth, but frowns on stagnation. A pastor is tempted to cut corners and stimulate growth by admitting Reformed prospects instantly to the Sacrament of the Altar. The polite request that potential converts first receive instruction in the Six Parts and then come to the altar is apt to be taken amiss: there is an unmistakable tension between sticking to principle and achieving the maximum growth.

The more adamant the LCMS is in her opposition to indifferentism, the more urgently she will seek to root out "open communion." We must take care here to observe the due order of first the horse and then the cart. Unless the demon of indifferentism is first exorcised, disciplinary measures to close our altars will produce only surly, uncomprehending parishioners. Given the massive cultural pressures that render our walking together in a common confession akin to walking into a hurricane-force wind, the exorcising of indifferentism is going to be no easy task. Indeed, it is a task that can only be accomplished over a period of years, in the midst of much frustration and at the cost of many tears. Pastors in every state of the union know the bitter experience of being informed by the parents of a teenage confirmand that he cannot possibly be expected to be present at the Divine Service every week, since the local high school has scheduled hockey practice on Sunday mornings. Nor does attendance at weekday evening confirmation instruction fare any better. Sports again or tomorrow's test are much more important than instruction in the Word of God! Our end-time apostasy has an unerring instinct to cut the nerve of congregational discipline.

We venture to take a threefold approach in our demonstration that "open communion" involves denial of the Word of God and therefore unfaithfulness to Christ Himself, to whom

as head we His body are rightfully subject. The Sacrament of the Altar must be considered in itself. Next, its immediate ramifications with respect to the other articles of faith must be considered. Thirdly, we must consider admission to the blessed sacrament in terms of the office established by our Lord for, among other things, the administration of Holy Communion. Our reflections aim to show that "close communion" is not a severe discipline imposed on Christendom by harshly legalistic clergy from without, but rather a corollary of all the articles of faith working as Gospel from within.

### *Barriers to Open Communion*

#### *1. The Essence of the Blessed Sacrament*

As Pieper said, belief in the words of institution, that is, in the real presence, "excludes the Christians in Reformed denominations" from the Sacrament of the Altar.<sup>5</sup> Article VII:32 of the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord is a most unpopular aspect of the Lutheran confession of the Holy Supper. Just as the Gospel is stifled in the Church of Rome, even so the sacrament instituted by Jesus Christ has been surrendered by the Reformed church bodies. Hermann Sasse was not joking when he wrote that, as the Roman mass was celebrated for the last time in the minster of Zurich, the souls under Zwingli's jurisdiction bade farewell not only to the accretions of the pope, but also to the very Sacrament of the Altar itself. The baby was thrown out with the bath-water. Zwingli and all Reformed Christendom which followed in his train have never intended to celebrate the one Lord's Supper founded by Jesus Himself, the one in which real bread and real wine become, by His Word, His real body and His real blood, to be eaten and drunk by His Christians. For Lutherans and Reformed to partake of the same Holy Communion would therefore involve blatant dishonesty and the forfeiture of religious integrity. Elert<sup>6</sup> and Sasse<sup>7</sup> have convincingly shown that unanimous confession of the real presence was intended in the formulation of *sanctorum communio* in the third article of the Apostles' Creed. Church (and hence altar) fellowship is obviously denied those who reject any article of the creed. Luther's stance at Marburg represented no passing fit of temper but rather flowed from his loyalty to the Holy Scriptures which he maintained to the end of his days. Rejection of the Christ-specified essence of the holy sacrament

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entailed refusal of church and, hence, especially altar fellowship. Choosing his words with care as one who would shortly render account to the Chief Shepherd, the aged Reformer made clear to those who “do not want to believe that the Lord’s bread in the Supper is His true, natural body, which the godless person or Judas receives orally just as well as St. Peter and all the saints” that they should “not expect to have fellowship with me. This is final.”<sup>8</sup>

The Lutheran Holy Communion and the Reformed Communion are not one and the same, and so the Lutheran-Reformed inter-communion is *eo ipso* a charade. Union is impossible without unity, and there can be no unity where communicants commune in different realities. My devout remembrance of Jesus Christ while eating and drinking symbols of His absent body and blood cannot—unless Hegel be followed—be the same thing as Christ’s refreshing me through His body and blood present in and under the elements. At this point we must insist that what is really present in the Lord’s Supper is not simply Christ as a person, but quite specifically His actual body and His actual blood. Much mischief has been wrought by Lutherans keen to water down the real presence into a shadow of itself. This latter process has kept pace with a parallel development in the area of Christology. The allegedly patristic and un-biblical ontological concepts of our Lord’s two natures are labeled as too complex for modern man to grasp. Ontological Christology is exchanged for a functional Christology in which talking about Christ seems to degenerate into nothing more than talk about the world. Now if Christ is not a real God-Man, then He has no real body and blood, with the result that Lutherans would have to admit that Zwingli was right after all.

What is given in the Holy Supper? The really present exalted Christ, acting through His earthly minister, consecrates and distributes His actual body and blood to communicants believing and unbelieving alike. Thomas Aquinas platonizes; not the actual body, but the substance, that is, the idea of the body, is present. Luther believes; the body born of Mary, which hung on the cross, which now reigns in glory at the Father’s right hand, is present. This truth is impossible to understand but easy to believe. And thus we believe on the basis of 1 Corinthians 10:16 and, above all, the scriptural narratives of the institution of the sacrament.<sup>9</sup>

Confession of the real presence is the third precondition listed by Francis Pieper for participation in the holy sacrament (the first two being baptism and the ability to examine oneself in accordance with 1 Corinthians 11:28). Not only integrity but also pastoral concern demand this restriction. It would seem that Lutherans are increasingly open to the Reformed understanding of 1 Corinthians 11:29, taking the body to be discerned as the mystical body (the church) rather than the actual historic body of Christ present in the elements. A re-reading of Paul, who connects the danger with the elements and not the congregation, and of Luther would be in order. Not a few bulletin announcements follow Luther and Paul, that is, our Lord Himself, in urging that only those commune who acknowledge the real presence. Such a printed restriction is undoubtedly intended to preclude "open communion" and hence to preserve the confessional principle. There are problems with this procedure, however. First, even regular communicants do not always read the bulletin, much less visitors. Secondly, even if non-Lutheran visitors do read the bulletin's communion invitation, is it likely that they understand what is written there? To begin with, a generic visitor is unlikely to concede that a Lutheran pastor may supervise the content of his faith. Moreover, teaching the real presence involves hours of catechesis, discussion back and forth, and the assimilation of the true faith in the setting of the worshipping congregation. Should a casual visitor sign a communion registration card phrased in an orthodox way, it is unlikely that he has any idea what is meant and even if the registration of a non-Lutheran communicant is to take the form of a personal announcement to the pastor, can we really take seriously as confession of faith a smile and a nod when the pastor, a few minutes before the Divine Service begins, says something about the bread and wine being the Lord's body and blood? Pieper's statement about confession of the real presence as a precondition for admission to the sacrament contains the law's accusing bite: "This provision excludes the Christians in Reformed denominations."

None of us are foot-loose and fancy-free individuals bidden to church-shop our way as tourists through earthly Christendom; rather we are pilgrims attached by baptism and confirmation to particular altars and particular pulpits. The admission of Reformed Christians to Lutheran altars betrays

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contempt for the various Reformed confessions, not respect. Considering the real presence in itself has a one-sided effect in excluding only the Christians of Reformed denominations from our altars. Bulletin announcements making access to the altar conditional upon confession of the real presence could, of course, have the heartening upshot of vastly increasing the number of Lutheran Christians on earth. Since not only Lutherans but also Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christians confess the real presence, defining Lutherans exclusively in terms of profession of the real presence would instantly boost the membership of the Church of the Augsburg Confession from the forty-five million figure given by the Lutheran World Federation to somewhere in the region of the one billion mark. This sensational result indicates that the premise upon which it is built is at fault: the real presence must be considered not only in itself, but also in the setting of the other articles of faith.

## *2. The Blessed Sacrament in Its Relation to the Other Articles of Faith*

As Walther said, "Hence in whatever church one partakes of the Holy Supper, one professes that church and its doctrine. There cannot be a more intense and fraternal fellowship than that into which one enters with those in whose company one enjoys the Holy Supper (1 Cor. 11:26 and 10:17). There is therefore a great difference between sometimes listening to a sermon in an alien ecclesial communion and partaking there in the celebration of the Holy Supper...Holy Communion, by way of contrast, is an act of confession; if one communes in an alien church, one actually joins it, appears as a witness for its doctrine, and pronounces its members one's brothers and sisters in the faith."<sup>10</sup>

Carefully considered, the blessed sacrament itself proves the wisdom of the confessional formulation "doctrine in all its articles." Belief in the real presence connects with every other article of faith. What one believes concerning the real presence corresponds to what one believes concerning the person of Christ and the nature of the Scripture. And what one believes concerning the purpose of the real presence cannot be divorced from what one believes about justification. Just as the



celebration of Holy Communion itself is not an occasional extra of congregational worship life, but rather the living heart thereof, so likewise one's belief concerning the Lord's Supper is invariably, on close inspection, a microcosm of one's grasp of the Christian faith as a whole. Thus, bare agreement on the real presence does not necessarily indicate deep consensus regarding the faith in its fullness. The fact that Roman priest and Lutheran pastor each holds the body of Christ in his hand in the distribution does not mean that these clerics are at one concerning the essence of Christianity. Joint acknowledgment of the real presence in the sacrament coexists with the deepest divisions concerning the very nature of the Gospel. Dissent as to the material principle of Christianity also includes divergence on its formal principle. Why does one believe in the real presence? The assertion of the pope, the weight of church tradition, and the voice of Christ in Sacred Scripture are not equal authorities. A real-presence reductionism tears at the tissue of the faith, in which the various articles combine to form one integral whole.

Reductionism may be defined as the casting aside of accessories in order the more firmly to retain hold of the fundamentals. To some the Lutheran definition of the article of justification as the *articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiae* may seem redolent of reductionism, but for this suspicion to prove well-founded justification must cease to be a fruit of Christology and turn into a facet of anthropology. Justification, in Luther and the Confessions, presupposes the Trinity, our Lord's one person in two natures and His theanthropic work of reconciliation, and the work of the Holy Ghost in the means of grace. In other words, justification does not displace the other articles of faith but rather sets them in proper focus. The confessional understanding of the Holy Supper likewise does not stand in isolation from the other articles of faith; instead it concretely pinpoints their evangelical significance.

Those who would consider confession of the real presence as the sole prerequisite to admitting baptized Christians of whatever persuasion to Lutheran altars can claim no support from the Reformer himself. Luther understood sin whole, grace whole, and doctrine whole. Doctrine, for him, was like a ring,

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which, when broken in just one place, ceases to be a ring.<sup>11</sup> The Reformer refused to allow for the possibility that one may be partly orthodox, wrong on the real presence but right on justification. There are no degrees of orthodoxy or heterodoxy; doctrinal purity is an all or nothing matter: "For it is certain that whoever does not rightly believe in one article of faith, or does not want to believe (after he has been admonished and instructed), he surely believes no article with an earnest and true faith...for this reason we say that everything is to be believed completely and without exception, or nothing is to be believed. The Holy Spirit does not let himself be divided or cut up so that he should let one point be taught and believed as trustworthy and another as false...for it is characteristic of all heretics that they start by denying one article of the faith; after that, all the articles must suffer the same fate and they must all be denied, just as the ring, when it gets a crack or a chink, is totally worthless. And if a bell cracks at one place, it does not chime any more and is completely useless."<sup>12</sup>

Fellowship in the Sacrament of the Altar therefore presupposes fellowship in the faith and in all the articles of the faith. Denial of this principle logically involves denial of the unity of Scripture. Moreover, a sharing of the holy things between those not in doctrinal agreement indicates small appreciation for the wisdom of the church in her age-old habit of expressing her one faith in binding creeds and confessions. Should dogma come apart into bits and pieces and no longer be guarded and transmitted as a whole, the Lutheran procedure of admitting communicants to the altar after prior instruction in the Six Parts will soon be dropped as a tradition of men. Our discipline, however, is suffused with the mind of Christ: taking the Six Parts as a whole confesses the unity of the Bible and is thus a corollary of the *claritas Scripturae*.

### 3. *The Office of the Ministry*

As Luther said, "We do not intend to admit to the sacrament and administer it to those who do not know what they seek or why they come" (LC V, 2). Likewise, the Apology to the Augsburg Confession states: "In our churches mass is celebrated every Sunday and on other festivals, when the sacrament is offered to those who wish for it after they have been examined and absolved" (Apology XXIV, 1). Francis Pieper expresses a far-reaching truth which the flesh of

Christians, even Lutheran Christians, is all too apt to forget: "...the pastor is personally and directly responsible, not only to the congregation, but also to God, with regard to the persons he admits to the Lord's Supper."<sup>13</sup> And Walther brings the charge that a clergyman who practices open communion thereby shows himself "an unfaithful and careless shepherd devoid of conscience" ("ein untreuer, sorg- und gewissensloser Seelsorger").<sup>14</sup> Parishioners in our congregations are known to ask their pastor by what right he asks non-Lutherans not to commune at his altar. Walther's reply to this question, which has lately been set forth with scholarly eloquence in the July 1988 issue of the *Concordia Journal*, does not beat around the bush: the impossibility of open communion is directly bound up with the fact that "a clergyman [*Prediger*] is not meant to be just a teacher, but also a shepherd, bishop, and watchman (Eph. 4:11; 1 Tim. 3:1; Heb. 13:17; Ezek. 3:17-21), not merely an administrator of the holy sacraments, but also a steward of them (1 Cor. 4:1)."<sup>15</sup> Only those bereft of pity would seek to force open communion on a Lutheran clergyman, since they thereby bring down on his head the curses of Ezekiel 3 and 33. Our Lord not only instituted the means of grace, but also established the office which is publicly to administer these means of grace until the Last Day. The pastor is responsible to his Lord for the preparation of those youngsters and new adult members whom he admits to the altar through the rite of confirmation, as well as for the ongoing preparation of his flock as a whole. When he receives members of sister congregations at his altar, he does so on the understanding that they have been and are being nourished with the same doctrine by a brother pastor.

Dissociation of the Sacrament of the Altar from the office established for its celebration and administration is invariably a most dangerous procedure, and it is well to note that the protest voiced by the St. Louis faculty against a lay ministry pilot program faithfully reproduces a solemn warning issued by Walther himself in his *Pastorale*: "The great majority of our theologians, with Luther at their head, are of the opinion that the Holy Supper should never be administered by someone who does not stand in the public preaching office or by a so-called layman. [This principle stems] partly from the fact that with respect to the Holy Supper—unlike baptism and absolution—

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no emergency situation can arise which would justify departure from God's order (1 Cor. 4:11; Rom. 10:15; Heb.5:4), partly from the fact that the Holy Supper is a public confession which ought therefore to have public ministers, and partly from the fact that such clandestine communion can easily beget schisms."<sup>16</sup> A called and ordained pastor is married to the body of Christ, but a "lay minister" or seminarian does not enjoy this relationship with the church of God. The practice, brought about in cases of clergy shortage, of having non-ordained men distribute "pre-consecrated elements" is to be regretted on two counts: first, a Roman Catholic understanding of the consecration is being adopted on grounds of expediency; and, secondly, the administration of the sacrament by those not so charged by God through the church suggests disregard for the holy ministry.

### *Conclusion*

Restoring orthodox practice in congregations where liberal practice had prevailed for a score or more of years cannot be achieved overnight. Pastors who intend, under God and with His aid, to reintroduce proper discipline must start not with dictates but with doctrine. It is a disturbing fact that some clergy are no longer using the Small Catechism in their confirmation instruction, preferring rather to teach a course of their own arrangement. One cannot but voice an anguished protest against this procedure; the faith once delivered to the saints in the Scripture is not ours to play with as we will. Just as the Sunday Divine Service is not a program to be made up according to each individual pastor's whim and fancy, but must mediate the one Gospel and the one Sacrament of the Altar through tried and tested fitting vessels given in officially approved liturgies, so likewise humility calls for us to pass on the faith to coming generations without eccentricity, one-sidedness, or showmanship of any kind. A Lutheran is one who learns (and keeps learning) Christ through the summary of Sacred Scripture given in the Small Catechism:

Lord, teach us ever to retain  
The catechism's doctrine plain,  
As Luther taught the word of truth  
In simple style to tender youth.

Diligent, unremitting catechesis is the means whereby the Holy Ghost can bring all Christians to acknowledge the irrefutable force of Elert's words: "By his partaking of the sacrament in a church a Christian declares that the confession of that church is his confession. Since a man cannot at the same time hold two differing confessions, he cannot communicate in two churches of differing confessions. If anyone does this nevertheless, he denies his own confession or has none at all."<sup>17</sup>

### Endnotes

1. *On the Bondage of the Will* (Library of Christian Classics, XVII), p. 109.
2. Such a definition of "open communion" would appear to capture the essence of the official communion policy of the Anglican Church at the present time. Until a generation ago, the Anglican Church regularly communed only episcopally confirmed Anglicans. The measure adopting "open communion" in the Church of England was introduced by G.W.H. Lampe, a Cambridge professor who was a lifelong Freemason and, in the last years of his life, an avowed unitarian.
3. The Advent 1988 issue of *Lutheran Forum* sets forth distressing evidence that WCC-sponsored ecumenism has lately degenerated into outright syncretism. See Mark E. Chapman, "A State of the Church Report: Ecumenical Paganism?" (p. 7). Some years ago I was informed by a college contemporary, a priest in the Church of England, that he had endeavoured to persuade some Moslems visiting his Sunday service to partake of Holy Communion! The breakdown of age-old discipline is clearly in the air when the (relatively conservative) Oxford Anglican theologian Rowan Williams can openly dismiss 1 Corinthians 11:27 in offering the following anaemic rationale for communing only Christians: "To share eucharistic communion with someone unbaptized, or committed to another story or system [viz., a heathen], is odd—not because the sacrament is 'profaned,' or because grace cannot be given to those outside the household, but because the symbolic integrity of the Eucharist depends upon its being celebrated by those who both commit themselves to the paradigm of Jesus' death and resurrection and acknowledge that their violence is violence offered to Jesus." *Resurrection. Interpreting the Easter Gospel* (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1982), p. 68.

4. See Karl Barth's chapter on Lessing in his *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (London: SCM Press, 1972), pp. 256 and following.
5. *Christian Dogmatics*, III, p. 383.
6. *Eucharist and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966), pp. 5-11.
7. See Sasse's essay "Sanctorum Communio," printed as Appendix II in the revised edition of *This Is My Body* (Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1977), pp. 351-370.
8. LW 38, p. 304 (*Brief Confession Concerning the Holy Sacrament*, 1544).
9. A young theologian of the ELCA, David Yeago, has an article in the Reformation 1988 issue of *Lutheran Forum* entitled "On Declining the Invitation: Lutheran-Reformed Dialogue III and the Doctrine of the Eucharist." Yeago's Lutheran instincts are betrayed by his unfathomable timidity precisely at the point of defining the real presence. While wishing to specify the sacramental gift as the Lord's body, Yeago subjects the concept of "body" to tortuous philosophical circumlocution: "The early Lutherans held that the concept of 'body,' in scriptural usage, does not imply the presence of a lump of stuff; rather, 'body' is the coincidence of identity and availability. If the sacramental elements are associated with Jesus Christ as he is identified by the biblical narrative (as they are by the words of institution), and if he is available to us by way of actions (eating and drinking) performed with the elements, then the elements are his body.... Those for whom the notion of body inescapably implies material substance will not be comfortable with Lutheranism's outright identification of the sacrament with Christ's body; we may chide them for metaphysical timidity, but we should not break communion with them simply on that account" (pp. 25-26). Since for Yeago the sacramental body is not identical with the natural, historical body assumed in the virgin's womb, his courageous opposition to Lutheran-Reformed intercommunion would seem unfounded. For a defense of the real presence as the presence of the Savior's actual body and none other, see Tom B. A. Hardt, *Venerabilis et Adorabilis Eucharistia* (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1988), especially chapter 1, "Verum Corpus."
10. *Amerikanisch-Lutherische Pastoraltheologie* (fifth edition, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1906), p. 145.

11. LW 38, p. 307.
12. Op. cit., p. 308.
13. *Christian Dogmatics*, III, p. 389.
14. *Amerikanisch-Lutherische Pastoraltheologie*, p. 146.
15. Op. cit., p. 142. Be it noted that in decent churchly parlance sacraments are “administered,” a process which involves, in the case of the Lord’s Supper, the “distribution” [*Austeilung*] of the sacred body and blood. There is something deplorably slovenly about the formulation “serving communion”; our Lord’s body and blood are of infinitely greater dignity than the tidbits and drinks “served” at social gatherings!
16. *Amerikanisch-Lutherische Pastoraltheologie*, p. 175.
17. *Eucharist and Church Fellowship*, p. 182.

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