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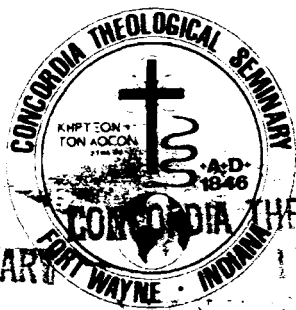
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# The Case of the Lost Luther Reference

Bjarne W. Teigen

The authors of the Formula of Concord appeal especially to Luther to cast further light on what they are expounding. They speak of him as “This highly enlightened man” (SD VII, 28), and call him the “chief teacher of the Augsburg Confession” (SD VII, 34). They particularly appeal to his writings on the Sacrament of the Altar in connection with Article VII and VIII of the Solid Declaration. A careful reading of the Formula of Concord shows that the confessors wanted to confess completely the doctrine of Luther on the Lord’s Supper and the Person of Christ because they were convinced that his doctrine expressed what the Word of God teaches.

The Solid Declaration, as a guide for the proper understanding “concerning the consecration and the common rule that there is no sacrament apart from the instituted use” (SD VII, 73), asserted the general rule which “has been derived from the words of institution: Nothing has the character of a sacrament apart from the use instituted by Christ, or apart from the divinely instituted action (that is, if one does not observe Christ’s institution as He ordained it, it is no sacrament)” (SD VII, 85). The Formula, then, to show that its intention is to return to Luther’s understanding of the Lord’s Supper as opposed to that of the Sacramentarians, appeals to Luther: “It was against such papistic abuses that this rule was first formulated and explained by Dr. Luther” (SD VII, 87). It is, however, also evident that the rule was intended to guard against those who deny that it is the omnipotence of the Lord Jesus Christ who through His almighty Word achieves the presence of the body of Christ (SD VII, 90; SD VII, 74). There can hardly be any question that all that Luther said about the Lord’s Supper, and especially the consecration, has a bearing on this part of the Formula because he is the chief teacher (SD VII, 73-90).

But a specific reference to Luther would be of great help in shedding light on this section of Article VII. Judging from the context, very evidently one must look for a passage of Luther that discusses the “use” or the “action” of the Lord’s Supper and the time element during which the sacramental union takes place. The Tappert edition of the Book of Concord has been on the way of being more or less the official English translation since its publication in 1959.<sup>1</sup> As the source for the Lutheran reference in SD

VII, 87, it gives "WA 30, II, 254, 255; cf. Smalcald Articles, Pt. III, Article XV, 4." If one takes the time to look up the reference one finds that it refers to Luther's "Exhortation to All Clergy Assembled at Augsburg" (1530; LW 34, 9-61).<sup>2</sup> The Tappert footnote refers to the pages of this work where Luther describes superstitions rampant in the Roman Catholic churches, e.g., that only men (no women) could wash the corporals, the baptism and dedication of churches, bells, altars, pictures, etc. But there is nothing in the entire work about the "action" or "use" with regard to the Lord's Supper. The other reference which Tappert gives in this same footnote is to the Smalcald Articles. Here Luther in a concluding after-thought to his Confession says that he does not wish to have anything to do with the "Pope's bag of magic tricks which contains silly and childish articles," and he gives as examples the consecration of churches, the baptism of bells and altar stones, the blessing of candles, palms, spices and oats, etc. He asserts that they cannot be called blessings and they are nothing but mere mockery and fraud. Once again, there is no reference here to the "useful rule and norm derived from the words of institution."

Tappert, for the most part, took his supplementary notes from the Goettingen edition of the Book of Concord,<sup>3</sup> and this particular footnote came lock, stock and barrel from the modern, definitive German edition of the Confessional books. But Tappert made one significant alteration in the text proper. The German version, after the reference to Luther, has in the text this reference, "Tom. IV, Jena." The reference to the Jena edition of Luther's works has fallen by the wayside in the English translation so that we have here a lost Lutheran reference in SD VII, 87. But then the Goettingen edition is not much help either, since the footnote in question has only the same references which Tappert reproduced. The unwary reader would be tempted to think that in "Tom. IV, Jena," there would be a reference to Luther's 1530 address to the clergy. Such, of course, is not the case. The Goettingen edition gives no information where this reference to volume four of the Jena edition could be found in modern editions of Luther. The Jena edition of Luther's Works is not found in the ordinary pastor's library; as a matter of fact, it probably is not in too many university and seminary libraries. After all, the German edition was first published in 1555 and the Latin edition in 1556. When one looks at the earlier editions of the Book of Concord, one finds the following: The 1580 edition of the Concord has it embedded in the text. The first Latin translation of the Concordia, done in 1580, gives the reference on the margin of the page, as it does all the other references. The reference also occurs in such recent editions of the Book of Concord as J. T.

Mueller's, the Caspari-Johnson Norwegian translation of the Book of Concord, and the Triglot.<sup>4</sup> Those of us who were raised in the Triglott edition of the Lutheran Confessions were at least given the privilege of being curious as to just what Luther said about the useful rule and norm in volume four of the Jena edition, something denied the reader of the Tappert edition. Not that we ever heard or read any comment about what Luther said in volume four of the Jena edition. A cursory reading of the conservatory theological material of the last hundred years does not yield any information as to what Luther said in this volume.

For one who is not familiar with all the facts surrounding the controversies which brought into existence the Formula of Concord, but who now looks at what the reference could mean, he will find two possibilities. The reference can be either to the German or the Latin edition. Volume four of the German edition contains Luther's German writings from 1520-1530. This writer has not had the opportunity to examine this volume, but Dr. Tom Hardt has. The only possible reference in the German volume four that he could come up with which might have some reference to the "common rule that there is no sacrament apart from the instituted use" was Luther's letter to Carlstadt, written on January 29, 1528. As Hardt rightly points out, however, it really does not have anything to say about the useful rule and norm.<sup>5</sup> Yet this letter of Luther's clearly sets forth what is often contested in this regard; Luther teaches that the bread becomes the body of Christ at the consecration. But Luther makes it clear that neither he nor any true Lutheran would want to be drawn into the old argument from the Middle Ages as to the exact point in the syllables of the words of institution at which the body of Christ is present. Rather, Luther says, "We are simply content to believe with certainty that whatever God says happens or exists does happen." But Luther assumes that when the officiant speaks the words of institution in accordance with Christ's command, then there really takes place what the words declare. For Luther says specifically, "We are not curious about the time of the syllables or the moment at which it was done; and Lazarus was revived as the Word of Christ sounded, 'Lazarus, come out' (John 11:43). We leave it to the idle and to the boastful as to whether or not he revived him at the word 'come,' or 'out,' or 'Lazarus.' and there are many such things, And so here we say that bread is the body of Christ because Christ said, 'This is my body,' and we stay away from the other idle arguments, when they dispute about moments and syllables. For we are commanded to believe that the words of God are true, but not to investigate at what instant or how the words are true and how they are fulfilled."<sup>6</sup> There can be no doubt that in Luther's mind the bread becomes the body of Christ at the

consecration. And it need hardly be stated that this letter to Carlstadt agrees dogmatically with what Luther said in 1526 in his "The Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ — Against the Fanatics" (LW 36, 340-341) and in his "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper" (LW 37, 180-191).

Volume four of the Latin Jena edition remains to be examined. This volume contains the Latin writings of Luther from 1538 to 1547. Here, folio pages and following are obviously the reference to which the SD VII, 87, directs us. It is Luther's second letter to Wolferinus, July 20, 1543:

Grace and peace, Indeed, why should I not have been disturbed and saddened, my dear Simon Wolferinus, when I saw you two, living together in one town and the ministers of one church, agreeing completely in doctrine, but carrying on between yourselves with such a bitter spirit, because of a matter which you have neither examined closely enough, and which is not that important if it were examined more closely? Look at these propositions of yours, and see whether or not such a terrible outcry is in keeping with charity and brotherly love. I see that Satan is tempting you, by making a beam out of a splinter, or rather a fire out of a spark. You could have solved this by a meeting between the two of you, since it is not a matter of being against the madness of the papists, but against a colleague of yours in the ministry and in religion.

Indeed Dr. Philip wrote rightly that there is no sacrament outside of the sacramental action; but you are defining the sacramental action much too hastily and abruptly. If you do it in this way, you will appear to have absolutely no sacrament. For if such a quick breaking off of the action really exists, it will follow that after the speaking of the Words [of institution], which is the most powerful and principle action in the sacrament, no one would receive the body and blood of Christ, because the action would have ceased. Certainly Dr. Philip does not want that. But such a definition of the action would bring about infinite scruples of conscience and endless questions, such as are disputed among the papists, as, for example, whether the body and blood of Christ are present at the first, middle, or last syllable. Therefore, one must look not only upon this movement of instant or present action but also on the time. Not in terms of mathematical but of physical breadth, that is, one must give this action a certain period of time, in a period of appropriate breadth of time, as they say, "in breadth."

*Therefore, we shall define the time or the sacramental action in this way: that it starts with the beginning of the Our*

*Father and lasts until all have communicated, have emptied the chalice, have consumed the Hosts, until the people have been dismissed and [the priest] has left the altar.* In this way we shall be safe and free from the scruples and scandals of such endless questions. Dr. Philip defines the sacramental action in relation to what is outside it, that is, against reservation of and processions with the sacrament. He does not split it up within [the action] itself, nor does he define it in a way that it contradicts itself. Therefore see to it that if anything is left over of the sacrament, either some communicants or the priest himself and his assistant receive it, so that it is not only a curate or someone else who drinks what is left over in the chalice, but that he gives it to the others who were also participants in the body [of Christ], so that you do not appear to divide the sacrament by a bad example or to treat the sacramental action irreverently. This is my opinion and I know that it is also Philip's opinion too.<sup>7</sup>

This letter of Luther to Wolferinus gives the definition of the time or the action of the Lord's Supper. The writer examined volume four of the Latin Jena edition (published in 1583) in the rare book room of Concordia Theological Seminary Library, Fort Wayne. The temptation was strong to pursue a side-trail to discover the provenance of this particular volume, because the words that are underlined in the translation above were heavily underlined in the Latin text with a large "N.B." written on the margin. The pages were otherwise free from markings. Some theologian, apparently several hundred years ago, had caught the significance of this definition of the time or the action as set forth by Luther and referred to in SD VII, 87.

There can be no doubt that this is the lost Luther reference of SD VII, 87, because it clarifies beyond question what the authors of the Formula had in mind. It is difficult to understand why the scholarly Goettingen edition did not have in its footnote to SD VII, 87, the following notation, "WA, Br. 10, 348, 349." The Weimar edition of Luther's letters correctly gives the Wolferinus reference to the Jena edition as "Jen. 4, 585 b."

The question may arise why the folio number was not given in the original edition of the Book of Concord. If it had been, it may have encouraged theologians in later centuries to check on the reference. A probable explanation is that the Wolferinus letter at the time of the composition of the Formula was so well known to the theologians that it did not need more identification. A modern analogy by way of illustration, might be the resolution passed at New Orleans Convention of the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod in 1973 which sets forth as a guiding principle for a confes-

sional synod the proposition that false doctrine cannot be tolerated in the church of God, much less be excused and defended. Since this statement has been so hotly debated and has received so much publicity one would need to say no more than "Res. 3-09" or "1973 Convention Proceedings." One would not have to be an especially knowledgeable theologian to identify the reference.

An examination of the Solid Declaration in the 1580 Dresden edition reveals that some references are specifically identified, with the folio number also in the text. Sometimes there is a marginal reference to the Wittenberg edition of Luther's works (e.g., SD VII, 28), and sometimes there is a reference made to Luther and he is quoted as in SD VIII, 21, where the confessors refer to Luther's Great Confession and his remarks on Zwingli's *alloeosis*. The authors note that Luther called this the devil's mask and damned it to the depths of hell. In this quotation there is absolutely no identification of the exact source either in the text itself or in the margin. But there is no question that Luther's remarks on Zwingli's theory of *alloeosis* were so well known that knowledgeable theologians could find them very quickly. Similarly, the Luther-Wolferinus correspondence was quoted a great deal in the controversies that arose before the settlement of the Formula of Concord. To take a specific example from a book published in Erfurt in 1563 by the loyal Lutheran Erhard Sperber, it is significant to note that he appeals to the Luther-Wolferinus correspondence as a further explanation of the meaning of the rule, "Nihil habet rationem sacramenti extra usum institutum" ("there is no sacrament apart from the instituted use"). He gives the source of the quotation, but without the folio number, "Er spricht aber der frome Lutherus in 4 Lateinischer Tomo / zu Jena gedruckt / in einer epistle / so er im 43. Jar an magistrum Wolfferinum geschrieben."<sup>8</sup>

The reference to "Tom. IV, Jen." entered the Solid Declaration via the Swabian-Saxon Concord, which chiefly authored by Chemnitz and Chytraeus. In May 1576 it was accepted into the Torgau Book. It is virtually impossible to conceive of the other four formulators of the Solid Declaration at Torgau not knowing what Chemnitz and Chytraeus had in mind when the Luther-Wolferinus correspondence was accepted into the Torgau Book. It is even more incredible to assume that, when the six men met a year later at Bergen Abbey to draft the final text of the Solid Declaration, they overlooked an oblique Luther reference which had inadvertently slipped into the Torgau Book the year previous. As a matter of fact, it is evident that they did scrutinize this particular sentence (SD VII, 87), because they made a slight change in it from the Torgau Book. The original sentence had

read, “Denn solchen papistischen Misbräuchen diese Regel erstlich entgegen gesetzt und von D. Luthero Tom. 4 Jen. erklärt ist.” The Bergic Book substituted “anfanglich” for “erstlich” but left the rest of the sentence intact, including the reference to the Jena volume.<sup>9</sup>

In addition, there is further evidence that the Luther-Wolferinus correspondence was pivotal for understanding the intention of the axiom, “Nihil habet rationem sacramenti extra usum a Christo institutum” (“there is no sacrament apart from the use instituted by Christ”). On July 28, 1619, the theological faculty of Wittenberg rendered a decision with regard to the question as to whether it is right for a pastor to take the remaining consecrated wine home for common use, since with the cessation of the action the sacrament ceases. The faculty gave a negative answer although granting that “quod cessante actione, cesset sacramentum” (“when the action ceases, the sacrament ceases”). But the faculty then insists that the sacramental action must be correctly defined.<sup>10</sup> They insist that the three parts of the action must be done entirely together *in ipso usu sacramenti*; otherwise the sacramental action is not carried out. From this it follows that such action does not end until all that has been consecrated has been consumed. For this reason it is not proper to take consecrated wine home for common table use. Then excerpts from Luther’s two letters to Wolferinus are quoted to support this decision, and the reference is precisely given, “Tom 4, Jenensi Lat. fol. 585 b.” From the first letter of Luther to Wolferinus (July 4, 1543), they quote the following: “For you can do what we do here, namely, eat and drink the remains of the sacrament with the communicants, so that it is not necessary to raise these scandalous and dangerous questions about when the action of the sacrament ends, questions in which you will choke unless you come to your senses. For with this argument you are abolishing the whole sacrament and you do not have anything with which to answer those who are making false accusations, who say that in the action of the sacrament there is more cessation than action.”<sup>11</sup> The faculty opinion then goes on to quote from the second letter, where Luther defines the time or the sacramental action. It is quite evident that when the formulators of the Solid Declaration added the specific reference in SD VII, 87, to volume four of the Jena edition of Luther’s Works, it was not an occult reference. We do not realize today that the controversy between the Philippists and the Gnesio-Lutherans was far-reaching and very deep and that the so-called Saliger Controversy was only a small part of the controversy.

Luther’s two letters to Wolferinus were occasioned by the fact



that there was a disagreement between Wolferinus and another pastor (Frederick Rauber) in Luther's home city, Eisleben, on the action in the Lord's Supper. Wolferinus, on the basis of Melancthon's teaching, had been mixing consecrated and unconsecrated elements. An appeal had been made to Jonas at Halle (the superintendent) and to Luther at Wittenberg. It is evident that the practice had caused Luther great grief, and so in the first letter he writes to Wolferinus saying, "Perhaps you want to be considered a Zwinglian, and am I to believe that you are afflicted with the insanity of Zwingli?" Luther speaks even more harshly to him, "But the Lord whom you oppose will oppose you in return." And he then concludes that if the church were to follow the ideas of Wolferinus, "We would be forced to have a sacrament only in the action and not what happens in between, and finally time and the moment will be the causes of the sacrament, and many other absurdities will follow." Apparently Wolferinus continued to defend himself so that Luther felt compelled to send him the second letter.

A brief analysis of the Luther-Wolferinus correspondence yields the following conclusions and questions:

1. Luther and the Formula always turn to the Words of Institution for their doctrine of the Lord's Supper. While they make use of 1 Corinthians 10, it is always ancillary and it does not receive the emphasis that it does with many today. The useful "rule and norm" has been derived from the Words of Institution (SD VII, 85). Luther's exegesis of the Words of Institution (LW 37, 180ff.) demands that the command, "Do this in remembrance of me," refers to everything in the Words of Institution (LW 37, 187). Hence, Luther says, "Now let the whole world be judge between me and this spirit which bread must yield to the other. My bread has on its side the text 'Eat, this is my body,' and explains with emphatic words that this bread is the body of Christ" (LW 37, 189). Luther understands Christ's institution of the Lord's Supper to include the fact that the consecration effects the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the bread and that the sacramental action includes the eating of that which by virtue of the consecration is the body of Christ. For Luther those elements that come under the word "this" of the words of consecration spoken in the name of Jesus and at His command are the body and blood of Christ. Hence Luther writes in the second letter to Wolferinus, "For if such a quick breaking off of the action really exists, it will follow that after the speaking of the words [of institution] *which is the most powerful and principal action in the sacrament*, no one would have received the body and blood of Christ because the action would have ceased" (emphasis added). Luther reiterates his central thesis that the Word of God

when used at His bidding is an all-powerful Word that accomplishes what it says that it does. This is true not only of the Lord's Supper but also of Baptism and Absolution. The Solid Declaration accepts this exegesis of Luther, "For wherever we observe His institution and speak His words over the bread and cup and distribute the blessed bread and cup, Christ Himself is still active through the spoken words by virtue of the first institution, which he wants to be repeated. Chrysostom says in his *Sermon on the Passion*: 'Christ Himself prepares this table and blesses it. No human being, but only Christ Himself who was crucified for us, can make of the bread and wine set before us the body and blood of Christ. The words are spoken by the mouth of the priest, but by God's power and grace through the words that he speaks, "This is my body," the elements set before us in the Supper are blessed'" (SD VII, 75b 76a). This is the reason that Luther defines the time of the sacramental action as he does in this letter. He is entirely consistent with what he has previously written and practiced and what he will write in his letter to Amsdorf in January 1546 regarding the Priest Besser who gave a communicant an unconsecrated Host instead of one that was consecrated and which had fallen to the floor.<sup>12</sup>

2. There is a difficulty, however, in this letter of how to understand Luther's words, "with the beginning of Our Father." The original Latin reads, "ut incipiat ab initio orationis dominicae." Hardt has examined the difficulties with this phrase. Luther never refers to prayer as effecting the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the elements. This is so evident it hardly needs to be mentioned. But Luther has discussed various liturgies and where to place the Lord's Prayer in the liturgy. In the *Formula Missae* the Lord's Prayer follows the Words of Institution. In the *Deutsche Messe* the Lord's Prayer comes before the Words of Institution, as in our liturgy. We know from Luther's letter to Carlstadt that he does not worry about which syllable effects the presence of Christ's body and blood. He only confesses that we know that the body and blood are present because Christ says, "this is my body." Hardt has brought together considerable evidence that medieval religious language still used the word *oratio* in its classic sense, meaning discourse, speech, speaking, etc. Although Luther generally uses the word *oratio* in the sense of prayer, there is evidence that at times he does revert to late medieval theological language in the use of this word. Then the sentence would simply mean that the sacramental action begins with the Words of Institution.<sup>13</sup>

3. Another difficulty arises as to how are to interpret Luther's references to Melancthon. He writes, "Indeed Dr. Philip wrote rightly that there is no sacrament outside of the sacramental

action: but you are defining a sacramental action much too hastily and abruptly." And a little later Luther says, "Certainly Dr. Philip does not want that." And then the further sentence, "Dr. Philip defines the sacramental action in relation to what is outside it, that is, against reservation of and processions with the sacrament; he does not split it up within itself, nor does he define it in a way that it contradicts itself." In view of Luther's positive view of Melanchthon in this letter of 1543, it becomes necessary to look at what Melanchthon really believed regarding the sacrament and when he began to believe it.

The whole question of what Melanchthon taught and when he taught it is just now being carefully analyzed. Wilhelm H. Neuser has published one volume on Melanchthon's doctrine of the Lord's Supper in its historical development from 1519 to 1530 (475 pages of text), and he has planned a second volume examining Melanchthon's doctrine from 1530 to 1560. Hardt has elicited from the Melanchthonian material some new insights into Melanchthon's doctrine of the Lord's Supper with particular reference to his views on the modes of Christ's presence.<sup>14</sup> For a clearer understanding of the critical points where Luther and Melanchthon parted company and of which note is taken in the Solid Declaration, the following differences should be noted. These shifts in Melanchthon's doctrine occurred quite early in his career.

a. Melanchthon in a judgment on Zwingli's doctrine (made about July 25, 1530) identifies himself with Luther as confessing the Real Presence, but he identifies the sacramental presence with the general omnipresence. He identifies the presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper with "that mode by which the person of Christ or the whole Christ is present in all creatures" (CR 2, 224).<sup>15</sup> Melanchthon had already arrived at this position by March 1528, for he writes to Balthasar Thuring that he does not approve of the position that the body of Christ cannot be in many places, "because Christ is exalted above all creatures and He is everywhere. For he says, I am in your midst." (CR 1, 949).<sup>16</sup> And in a letter to Oecolampadius in 1529, Melanchthon says, "You contend that the body of the absent Christ is, so to speak, represented as in a tragedy. But I see existing promises such as 'I am with you to the end of the world.' . . . Since this is so, I feel that in the Supper there is a communion of the body that is present" (CR 1, 1049).<sup>17</sup>

Luther, however, does not identify the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper with the general omnipresence of Christ or as the presence of Christ in the church, where two or three are gathered together. He says that the one body of Christ has a three-fold existence, or all three modes of being at a given place. Besides the

comprehensible, corporeal mode of presence as when he walked bodily on the earth, Luther says that there is “secondly, the uncircumscribed, spiritual mode of presence according to which He neither occupies nor yields space but passed through everything created as He wills . . . . He employed this presence when He left the closed grave and came through closed doors, in the bread and wine in the Supper, and, as people believe, when He was born in His mother.” Luther clearly distinguishes this mode from the third mode, where “you must place this existence of Christ which constitutes Him one person with God far, far beyond things created, as far as God transcends them; and, on the other hand, place it as deep in and as near to all created things as God is in them. For He is one indivisible person with God, and wherever God is He must be also; otherwise our faith is false” (LW 37, 222-224). This doctrinal position of Luther has been taken over into the Formula (SD VII, 92-103).

b. According to Neuser, Melanchthon sometime after 1526 stopped speaking of the omnipotence of the Word with respect to the Lord’s Supper, thus separating himself from the teaching of Luther. When Melanchthon speaks of the words of institution, he talks about them “according to the promise” or “according to the Word of Christ because Christ has so spoken.”<sup>18</sup> In January 1528, Melanchthon writes to Balthasar Thuring that in the matter of the Lord’s Supper, the consecration, as they call it, had for a long time caused him offense. Also, Oecolampadius had been strongly pushing him with the question as to whether it was possible that Christ could be called down from heaven. Does this happen through the merits and prayers of the priest or the people, or, as they say, by the power of the words? (CR 1, 948). Neuser concludes that Melanchthon denied both the assertion that the sacramental presence is achieved through the prayers of the priest or the people and that it is achieved by the power of the Word (p. 363), because Melanchthon says later in the letter that he has finally come to the opinion that Christ gives us His body and blood not through the merits and prayers of the priest or the people nor by the power of the words, for that, as it is said, is magic.

Since Melanchthon identifies the general omnipresence and the sacramental presence, Christ is present in the sacrament through His general promises that He is in the midst of us and is with us always until the end of the world. Hence He is present in the sacrament when we believe His promises. One should consult Neuser for a fuller understanding of how Melanchthon reinterprets the words of consecration. The words of institution are words or promise; that is, they are directed to men. According to him, there is no particular sacramental word (*Sakramentswort*).

The words of institution in their entire extent are promise so that they are directed only to the faith of man and not to the elements (pp. 367-370).

Luther, it will be recalled, firmly clings to the doctrine of the sacramental presence through the powerful words of consecration. He had confessed this in 1526 against the Fanatics (LW 36, 341); and in 1528 (February), while Melanchthon writes to Thuring, Luther is reiterating the truth in "The Confession Concerning Christ's Supper" that the sacramental presence is achieved through the consecration, but "of course, it does not reside in our speaking but in God's command, who connects His command with our speaking" (LW 37, 184). It is further evident that Luther's doctrine has been taken over by the Formula because the succeeding words from this book are embodied in SD VII, 78.

In the ensuing controversies that raged in the decades prior to the adoption of the Formula, one of the chief charges hurled against the Gnesio-Lutherans by the Philippists was that of "magic." Erhard Sperber in his book published in Erfurt in 1563 records an incident where a Philippist insists that it is "magic" ("eine Zauberey vel Magiam") to teach that through the Words of Institution that the officiant speaks the bread and wine are consecrated to be the body and blood of the Lord. The Gnesio-Lutheran answers that it is not *Magia* because what is done is done at the command and through the Word of God, and therefore what takes place, is precisely what God says. It would be different if evil people said something without the command of God. That might be termed the devil's magic, but there is no similarity of that with the institution of the Lord's Supper.<sup>19</sup>

Since this charge can still be heard today, it might be helpful to note Sasse's words, "We should never speak of the 'magic' of the Roman mass, as if the words of consecration which effect the Real Presence were a sort of magical incantation. 'Magic' is the attempt of man to compel the Deity to do something. A magical formula must always be the same, while words of consecration may be spoken in different languages and even in various forms, as happens to be the case in the Western and Eastern church. According to Thomas [Aquinas], the words are effective as the words of Christ. He refers to the utterances of the Fathers in which the power of consecration is solely attributed to the almighty words of Christ, and insists on the minister's being only the instrument of Christ in this case."<sup>20</sup>

This is the doctrine of Luther which the Formula of Concord also takes over in SD VII, 73-90. The Sacrament of the Altar is "promise." for it is the Gospel, as Luther so often said (LW 36,

289; LW 38, 38). But it is so because we administer it on the basis of a divine command, *mandatum Dei*. This is why Luther asserts that it is a “man-made opinion” to think that God is here “performing some kind of hocus-pocus.” Rather, “He has put Himself into the Word and through the Word He puts Himself into the bread also” (LW 36, 343). For Luther the reverse side of this theological fact is that where there is no *mandatum Dei*, one has only the work of man, and hence he ends the Smalcald Articles with the straight-forward statement that all such consecrations “cannot be called blessings, and they are not, but are mere mockery and fraud” (SA III, XV, 5). One comes to the conclusion that by 1543 Melancthon had drifted much farther from the Scriptural doctrine that an unsuspecting Luther could have imagined.

If we, in conclusion, assess the theological damage done because of the lost Luther reference, it is evident that by the omission of the Luther reference in SD VII, 87, in the Tappert edition, Luther’s doctrine of the consecration has been seriously maimed. And then by supplying in the footnote to this passage totally misleading information as to Luther’s doctrine with regard to a consecration done in accord with Christ’s command, the Tappert edition has given this section of the Formula a definite Melancthonian twist. This may not be so serious for those Lutherans who today look upon the Book of Concord merely as an historically conditioned response to problems that confronted the Lutherans four hundreds years ago. But it should be of great concern to those who today make a *quia* subscription to the Book of Concord. They should be moved to make a fresh but careful, independent, objective study of the doctrine of the Book of Concord.<sup>21</sup>

#### Footnotes

1. Theo. G. Trappert, tr. and ed., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959.
2. *Luther’s Works*, ed. J. Pelikan and H. T. Lehman (Concordia Publishing House and Fortress Press), 34, 52; here note 104 observes that for a more detailed and complete listing of topics by Luther, one should consult WA 30 II, 249-255. Actually, Luther’s “Exhortation to All Clergy” is found in Volume V of the German Jena edition and not in either the German or Latin Volume IV.
3. *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, 5th ed. (Göttingen, 1963).
4. *Concordia: Christliche widerholte einmutige Bekenntnis* (Dresden, 1580), fol. 301. *Concordia: Pia et Unanimi Consensu Repetita Confessio Fidei et Doctrinae* (Lipsiae, 1580), fol. 715. J. T. Mueller, *Die symbolischen Bücher der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche, deutsch und lateinisch*, 8th ed. (Güttersloh, 1898), p. 666. C. P. Caspari and Gisle Johnson, *Konkordiebogen* (Decorah, Iowa: Lutheran Publishing House, 1899), p. 459. Fr. Bente, *Concordia Triglot* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1922), p. 1003.

5. Tom G. A. Hardt, *Venerabilis et Adorabilis Eucharistia. En Studie I Den Lutherska Nattvardsläran Under 1500 Talet* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 9, 1971), p. 286f.
6. WA Br. IV, 367-388. The letter is also found in De Wette 3, 231, and Enders 6, 127. There is a German translation in St. Louis 20, 324f. I use the translation of E. F. Peters, *Extra Usum Nullum Sacramentum. The Origin and Meaning of the Axiom: "Nothin Has the Character of a Sacrament Outside of the Use" in Sixteenth-Century and Seventeenth-Century Lutheran Theology*. A thesis presented to the Faculty of Concordia Seminary, Department of Systematic Theology, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Theology, 1968, p. 198f.
7. Jena, Latin edition, IV (emphasis added). The edition the writer examined was reprinted at Jena in 1583. It is to be found in the rare book room of Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, Indiana. The Latin text is to be found in De Wette 5, 577, and in Enders 15, 182. There is a German translation in St. L. 20, 1604f. I use the English translation of E. F. Peters (see note 6), p. 209f. Hardt (see note 5), p. 286f. (including footnotes), supplies considerable information on the use made of the Luther-Wolferinus correspondence.
8. Erhard Sperber, *Christliche und notwerdige verantwortung Erhardi Sperbers wider die gewliche bezichtigung und beschwerliche Aufslag der Sacramentirer und Rottengeister zu Dantzig* (Erfured, 1563), fol. 14b, 206f. Duplicated copies of this book are available in the libraries of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mankato, Minnesota and Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, Indiana.
9. Heinrich Heppe, *Der Text der Bergischen Concordienformel, verglichen mit dem Text der swäbischen Concordie, der schwäbisch-sächsischen Concordie, und des Torgauer Buches* (Marburg: Druck und Verlag von John. Aug. Koch, 1857), p. 139.
10. This Faculty Censura is to be found in *Redekin: Thesauri Conciliorum*, 1 (Hamburg, 1671), p. 585.
11. English translation by E. F. Peters, p. 208 (see note 6).
12. Adam Besserer, a young assistant of Amsdorf, had given an unconsecrated wafer to the last communicant. Later a woman found the original consecrated wafer laying on the floor. Besserer put it back with the unconsecrated bread, since, as he later explained, he was not sure whether it had fallen to the floor before or after the consecration. When Besserer became aware of what had happened, he was reported to have stated that there was no difference between a consecrated and an unconsecrated wafer. Superintendent Amsdorf had him put in jail while he wrote to Wittenberg for advice on how to handle such a situation. Luther, after consulting with Bugenhagen, writes back that it was not necessary to jail him, but that he must be excommunicated, "Let him go to his Zwinglians' (*vadat ad suos Zwinglianos*). Luther writes in this way because he regarded the act as not mere indifference but as something evil (*sed nequitia*). At a later hearing Besserer exonerated himself by saying that as a young, inexperienced assistant he was so nervous that he had not realized what he was doing. The original letter in Latin is to be found in WA Br. XI, 258f; De Wette, 5, 776f.; there is a German translation in St. L. 21b, 3179f.; there is a Danish translation in C. J. Holt, *Udvalgte Breve of Dr. Martin Luther* (Copenhagen, 1923), II, 428f. Regin Prenter discusses the letter in some detail in his *Kirkens Lutherske Bekendelse* (Fredericia: Hovedkommission Lohses Forlag, 1978), p. 116f.
13. Hardt, p. 230.
14. Neuser, Wilhelm, *Die Abendmahls-lehre Melanchthons in ihrer*

- geschichtlichen Entwicklung (1519-1530)* (Neukirchener Verlag, 1968); see esp. pp. 363-371, "Die Weise des Gegenwärtigwerdens (Consecratio)." Hardt (see note 5), pp. 89-99.
15. The reference is to Bretschneider, *Corpus Reformatorum* (Halle, 1834-1879): ". . . sed illo modo quo Christi persona seu totus Christus praesens est omnibus creaturis."
  16. "Christus enim exaltatus est super omnes creaturas, et adest ubique. Inquit enim: *in medio vestrum sum.*"
  17. "Vos absentis Christi corpus, tanquam, in tragoedia representari contenditis. Ego de Christo video exstare promissiones: *Ero vobiscum usque ad consummationem seculi . . . .* Quod cum ita sint, sentio, in illa Coena praesentis corporis Koinonia esse."
  18. Neuser, pp. 364-369.
  19. Sperber (see note 8), fol. K2.
  20. Sasse, Hermann, *This is My Body*, rev. ed. (Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House, 1977), p. 35.
  21. Samuel H. Nafzger has again forcefully reminded us that "a pastor (or professor or teacher) of a confessional church body subscribes unconditionally to the doctrinal content of the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, 'because,' in the words of C. f. W. Walther, 'he recognizes the fact that it is in full agreement with Scripture and does not militate against Scripture in any point, whether that point be of major or minor importance . . .'" ("The Future of Confessional Lutheranism in the World," *CTQ*, July 1978, p. 221.)

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