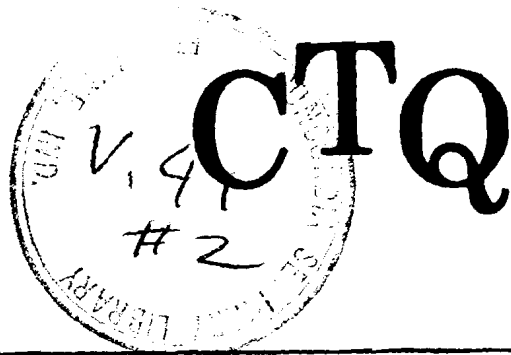


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Editorials	1
Annual Symposium Series	8
New Wine In Old Bottles	Robert G. Hoerber 10
The Smokescreen Vocabulary	Armand J. Boehme 25
The Real Presence in the Book of Concord	B. W. Teigen 41
The Statement on Communion Practices: A Critical Appraisal	Lowell C. Green 58
Theological Observer	70
Homiletical Studies	78
Book Reviews	97

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The Real Presence in the Book of Concord

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As one studies the doctrine of the Lord's Supper as expounded on the basis of the Scriptures in the Book of Concord, one is struck by the profound mystery that confronts us here and with the inestimable blessings of the Gospel that are given us in the Lord's Supper. The words of Johannes Frank (1649) come home very strongly to us:

Now I sink before Thee lowly,
Filled with joy most deep and holy,
As with trembling awe and wonder,
On Thy mighty words I ponder,
How, by mystery surrounded,
Depths no man hath ever sounded,
None may dare to pierce unbidden
Secrets that with Thee are hidden.

Because of the fact that the Lord's Supper is "by mystery surrounded," the temptation to stray from the Scriptural doctrine is unusually strong, as is evidenced by the false positions that have arisen over the course of the centuries. One apparently is tempted to say too much or too little; and too often, because of the controversies which have swirled around this doctrine, one overlooks the fact that it was instituted by our Savior for our good.

I. THE REAL PRESENCE

The Real Presence of Christ is taught in all the Lutheran Confessions, beginning with the Augsburg Confession: "Our churches teach that the body and blood of Christ are truly present and are distributed to those who eat in the Supper of the Lord. They disapprove of those who teach otherwise" (AC, X). The words of the Small Catechism are well-known to us: "What is the Sacrament of the Altar? Instituted by Christ Himself, it is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ

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under the bread and wine, given to us Christians to eat and to drink" (SC, VI, 1. 2).

While Melancthon emphasized the *action* in the Lord's Supper, Luther placed a great emphasis on the *elements*: "We hold that the bread and the wine in the Supper are the true body and blood of Christ and that these are given and received not only by the godly but also by wicked Christians" (SA, III, VI, 1). These words emphasize that the Real Presence of Christ is in the bread and the wine. The Large Catechism does the same thing. Luther not only says that the Sacrament of the Altar is the true body and blood of the Lord Christ in and under the bread and wine, but he warns us not to be swayed by the fanatics who are certain that the bread and the wine cannot be Christ's body and blood (LC, V, 12); and he further reasserts that he is speaking of "that bread and wine which are Christ's body and blood and with which the words are coupled" (LC, V, 28).

After summarizing the former Lutheran Confessions and quoting generously from them and from Luther, the Formula of Concord sets forth the Scriptural proof for the Real Presence (SD, VII, 42-60). Christ's words are decisive, infallible truth, and therefore all men are to "listen to him" (SD, VII, 43). On the occasion of the institution of the Lord's Supper, "Christ selected His words with great deliberation and care in ordaining and instituting this most venerable sacrament," saying of the "blessed and proffered bread, 'Take eat, this is my body which is given for you,' and concerning the cup or the wine, 'This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you for the remission of sins'" (SD, VII, 44). Since there is nothing in the context that indicates that they are "flowery, figurative, or metaphorical expressions," the words must be understood in a literal sense (SD, VII, 45). Further, we are "to believe in all humility" that Christ who instituted the Lord's Supper is able to do what He has promised and effect what He has commanded (SD, VII, 47). The words of institution are recorded four times (Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:25) in "simple, indubitable, and clear words," so that we must understand that our Savior "was speaking of His true essential body, which He gave into death for us, and of His true essential blood which was shed for us on the tree of the cross for the forgiveness of sins" (SD, VII, 49-53).

The force of these words of the Formula, it appears to me, is often overlooked and unexamined. But they set forth some very shocking propositions. It is a presence of Christ that is not merely the presence which Christ promised in the words "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Sasse, p. 368). Rather, in the consecrated

elements we receive, as Luther sings in his hymn on the Lord's Supper, "Thy holy body, Lord, the same Which from Thine own mother Mary came" (*The Lutheran Hymnary*, 156; cf. *The Lutheran Hymnal*, 313). In the Lord's Supper it is Christ's body and blood which He once gave and shed on Calvary and which He now as the exalted Christ gives to us; not only the Christ who was on the cross, but also He who sits at the right hand of God the Father is present in the Lord's Supper: "It is the true body and blood of the Lord Christ in and under the bread and wine which we Christians are commanded by Christ's words to eat and to drink" (LC, V, 8). It will be noted here that Luther emphasizes both the elements in the Lord's Supper and the action. The two go together.

St. Paul's explanation of the words of institution (1 Cor. 10:16; 1 Cor. 10:10) are a "special and manifest testimony to the true and essential presence and distribution of the body and blood of Christ in the communion." Therefore, "that which we break and bless is participation in the body and blood of Christ so that all who eat this bread and drink this cup truly receive and partake of the true body and blood of Christ" (SD, VII, 54). Paul cannot possibly be speaking of a "spiritual participation" or a "spiritual eating," because if he did, "he would not say that the bread but that the spirit of faith is participation in the body of Christ." Therefore, "the bread . . . is the common body of Christ distributed among those who receive the broken bread" (SD, VII, 55-59). This was the true intention of the Augsburg Confession, and Luther so understood it, as he testified in his last confession shortly before he died, and which is repeated again in the Formula: "I reckon them all as belonging together (that is, Sacramentarians and Enthusiasts), for that is what they are who will not believe that the Lord's bread in the Supper is His true natural body, which the godless or Judas receive orally as well as St. Peter and all the saints" (SD, VII, 33).

Lutheran theology, in holding that "the bread is the true body of Christ" or "a participation in the body of Christ," at times used other formulas. These formulas were: "*under* the bread, *with* the bread, *in* the bread, the body of Christ is present and offered" (SD, VII, 35; the last eight words are a Latin addition, Bente, p. 983). These phrases, as Hardt has noted, were not coined by the Lutherans but came from the Middle Ages, nor "were they intended to deny the superiority of the original, Biblical 'the bread is the body'" (Hardt, 1973, p. 5). As far as I know, the Reformers did not use the phrase, "in, with, and under," as is so commonly used today. The most commonly used terms were "under the bread" and "in the bread," although "with the bread" is occasionally used. But

this latter expression became suspect after Melancthon had diluted Article X in the 1540 *Variata* by dropping "*vere adsint*" and adding "*cum pane et vino*" (Schlink, p. 170). The Reformers were not introducing some new doctrine but used such phrases merely "to indicate the sacramental union between the untransformed substance of the bread and the body of Christ" and to "reject papistic transubstantiation" (SD, VII, 35). The term "sacramental union" did not mean that they no longer accepted the words of Christ in a strict sense and as they read; much less did they think that Christ's words, "This is my body" had "to do with a figurative predication but rather with an unusual one" (SD, VII, 38). By the term "sacramental union" they only wanted to say what Scripture says, namely, that the bread in the Lord's Supper is Christ's body without ceasing to be bread, and the wine is Christ's blood without ceasing to be wine. It may well be that today, as Hardt suggests, the expression "in, with, and under" is thought to mean something less than that the bread is the body (Hardt, 1973, p. 5).

As a further antithesis to the Reformed view that the Real Presence is a mere spiritual presence, the Formula of Concord demonstrates that Paul not only teaches the sacramental union, but also that the communicants receive the body and blood of Christ orally (*manducatio oralis*), and that the unbelievers truly receive the body and blood of Christ (*manducatio indignorum*) (SD, VII, 60). But the Confessions further add, to avoid misunderstanding, that this "oral or sacramental eating" is not to be understood in a "coarse, carnal Capernaitic manner, but in a supernatural, incomprehensible manner" (SD, VII, 63; cf. also 127; and Ep., VII, 42).

An objection that had also been raised against the Lutheran doctrine of the Real Presence in the Lord's Supper was that since "Christ is at the right hand of God the Father," He could not at the same time be in the bread of the Lord's Supper. In replying to this objection of the Enthusiasts, Luther referred to the doctrine of "ubiquity," which is then taken over into the Formula of Concord (SD, VII, 91-106). Luther demonstrates that the "right hand of God" is everywhere (SD, VII, 95), and that, according to the Scriptures, Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, "in one person, undivided and inseparable," has at least three different modes "of being at any given place":

1. The comprehensible, corporeal mode, as when He walked bodily on earth and occupied space according to His size. He can still employ this mode "as He will do on the last day."
2. The incomprehensible, spiritual mode of presence, according to which He neither occupies nor vacates space

but penetrates every creature wheresoever He will. Christ employed this mode of presence when He left the closed grave and came through locked doors, in the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, etc.

3. The divine, heavenly, or repletive mode: Since He is one person with God, He is present in all creatures, in a mode according to which He fills all things. Hence, one cannot "deny in any way that God's power is able to make a body be simultaneously in many places, even in a corporeal and comprehensive manner" (SD, VII, 91-103).

Article VIII of the Formula of Concord, following close on the heels of the article on the Lord's Supper, deals with the person of Christ, showing that in the Incarnation there was a union of the human and divine natures without confusion or separation, and that the one person of Christ now exists in the two natures inseparably, but each nature retaining its identity.

This doctrine, however, was not to prove the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper, since that is drawn directly from the Scriptures, but rather to show that the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper is not in conflict with any other doctrine revealed in Scripture. Chemnitz, one of the authors of the Formula, sets this forth very clearly in his *Examen* (1573). He asserts that we should hold to the simple, proper, and usual meaning of the words of Christ in the institution of the Lord's Supper, because "this meaning does not clash with a single article of faith. For it is certain that, because the whole fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in the human nature of Christ, and the human nature of Christ has been exalted through His ascension above every name which is named, whether in this or in a future age, —that therefore Christ can be present with His body wherever He wills, and to do whatever He wills. Therefore the presence of the body of Christ in the sacrament does not conflict with the articles of faith, either of the true human nature or of the ascension of Christ."¹

At the conclusion of the Formula's statement of the Lord's Supper, the antitheses make clear the Lutheran doctrine of the Real Presence by, first of all, rejecting papistic transubstantiation, that is, "that the consecrated or blessed bread and wine in the Holy Supper completely lose their substance and essence and are converted into the substance of the body and blood of Christ, so that only the mere species of bread and wine, or their accidents without a subject, remain" (SC, VII, 108). This harmony with the Smalcald Articles where Luther rejects transubstantiation in what might be said to be rather mild terms: "as for transubstantiation, we have no regard for the subtle sophistry of those who teach that bread and wine surrender or lose their

natural substance and retain only the appearance and shape of bread without any longer being real bread, for that bread is and remains there agrees better with the Scriptures, as St. Paul himself states, 'The bread which we break' (1 Cor. 10:16), and again, 'Let a man so eat of the bread' (1 Cor. 11:28)" (SA III, VI, 5). On the other hand, the errors of the Sacramentarians, including those who "have the effrontery to penetrate our churches as adherents of the Augsburg Confession, regarding the true presence of the body and blood of Christ," are spelled out in great detail with twelve rejections, because they "are inconsistent with, opposed to, or contrary to the doctrine set forth above, based as it is on the word of God" (SD, VII, 111, 123).

II. HOW THE REAL PRESENCE IS EFFECTED

The Lutheran Confessions hold both to the reality of the body and blood of Christ and also to the reality of the bread and the wine in the Sacrament of the Altar, and they do this because, as Luther said, "As we said of baptism that it is not mere water, so we say here that the Sacrament is bread and wine, but not mere bread and wine such as is served at the table. It is bread and wine comprehended in God's Word and connected with it" (LC, V, 9). And Luther puts a further emphasis on this truth by saying: "If you take the Word away from the elements or view them apart from the Word, you have nothing but ordinary bread and wine" (LC, V, 14). Now Luther has in mind the words of institution which he regards as God's active and powerful Word of consecration. One must note that Luther is also here quite specific with regard to the relationship between the Word and the elements, as he is with regard to the Sacrament of Baptism, when he says about the Lord's Supper: "It is the Word, I maintain, which distinguishes it from mere bread and wine and constitutes it a sacrament which is rightly called Christ's body and blood. It is said, *accedat verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum*, that is, 'When the Word is joined to the external element, it becomes a sacrament.' This saying of Augustine is so accurate and well put that it is doubtful if he said anything better. The Word must make the element the sacrament; otherwise it remains a mere element" (LC, V, 10). As can be seen from the context, Luther is thinking of the active, powerful Word of consecration of that divine majesty at whose feet every knee should bow. Fagerberg is certainly right when he says that the words of institution are regarded by Luther as the words of consecration whereby bread and wine become something other than ordinary bread and wine (Fagerberg, pp. 186, 195).

To understand Luther's position better, it is necessary to go back to the Smalcald Articles, where he uses Augustine's

maxim with regard to baptism and which would apply to the Lord's Supper also: "Baptism is nothing else than the Word of God in water, commanded by the institution of Christ; or as Paul says, 'the washing of water with the Word,' or again, as Augustine puts it, 'the Word is added to the element and it becomes a sacrament'" (SA, III, V, 1, 2). Luther then, all too briefly for us today to understand clearly, rejects two false positions that have been transmitted from the theology of the Middle Ages. One is that of Thomas Aquinas and the Dominicans "who forget the Word (God's institution) and say that God has joined to the water a spiritual power which, through the water, washes away sin." Nor does Luther agree with Duns "Scotus and the Franciscans who teach the baptism washes away sins through the assistance of the divine will, as if the washing takes place only through God's will and *not at all through the Word and the water*" (SA, III, V, 3-4; my emphasis). Hardt gives background for these two observations, showing that Luther understood correctly what these two positions were and that Luther rejected them as not adequate, because what was essential to Luther was that the words of consecration are "God's Spirit-filled creative Word" (Hardt, 1971, pp. 157-161). In casting further light on Luther's words in the Smalcald Articles, Hardt refers to Luther's sermon on the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ against the Enthusiasts (1526), adducing among several quotations the following: "As one cannot deny that she (the Holy Virgin) becomes pregnant through the Word and no one knows how it happens, so it is here too. As soon as Christ says, 'This is my body,' His body is there, through the Word and in the power of the Holy Ghost. If the Word is not there, it is simple bread, but as soon as the words come to it, they carry with them what they speak about" (cf. also Hardt, 1973, p. 3).²

While the Augsburg Confession and the Apology do not use the word "element," the Augsburg Confession certainly indicates the presence of the body and blood in the elements before the final act of the *sumptio*: "It is taught among us that the true body and blood of Christ *are really present in the Supper* of our Lord under the form of the bread and wine, and are there distributed" (AC, X, 1; my emphasis). The Apology repeats virtually the same words (Ap., X. 1 and 4). Krauth is undoubtedly correct when he answered the objection of Kahnis, who stated that "according to the Lutheran doctrine, there is but bread and wine, not the body and blood of Christ before the eating and drinking," by insisting that "the very opposite is the doctrine of the Lutheran Church." Krauth answers Kahnis by quoting the Augsburg Confession, Article X: "The body and blood of Christ are present *in the Supper*, and there com-

municated and received" (Krauth's emphasis). Krauth further declares: "From the *beginning* of the Supper, *strictly defined* (that is, from the time when Christ's consecrating words are uttered in His name by His authority), to *its end* (that is, until the last communicant has received the elements), or in other words, from the first time to the last '*in the supper*' in which, by Christ's authority, it is declared 'This is Christ's body, This is Christ's blood', that of which this affirmation is made *is* His body and *is* His blood" (Krauth, pp. 822-824; Krauth's emphases).

There is a further discussion of how the Real Presence is effected in the Lord's Supper in the Formula of Concord (SD, VII, 73-90), where it is asserted that the words of consecration effect the Real Presence of the body and blood of Christ. There evidently had been some controversy about this even before Luther's death (cf. the Wolferinus incident and Luther's letters to him), but a rather strenuous controversy had broken out in Lübeck and Rostock, the so-called "Saliger Controversy," and which is settled in this part of the Formula of Concord. It was apparently a complicated and heated controversy, with severe personality conflicts involved. Unfortunately, at least until recently, historians have not treated Saliger as impartially as he deserves to be treated. This may be partially due to the fact that some of the documents in the case were not available from the archives until recently. And it is especially unfortunate for conservative Lutherans in our country that two authorities which are used among us as resource people, need to be supplemented because they have not presented the whole picture, Bente (Historical Intro., p. 179) and Pieper (III, p. 372). Bente calls him "an extremist" who "taught that in virtue of the consecration before the use (*ante usum*) bread and wine are the body and blood of Christ," and Pieper says virtually the same, that "Johann Saliger, pastor at Lübeck and Rostock, had tenaciously defended the opinion that the *unio sacramentalis* occurred already *ante usum*; hence before the distribution and reception." Saliger did teach that the Real Presence began with the consecration, which he held to be part of the *usus*. Some later Lutherans have held that the *usus* is confined only to the *sumptio*, and if one held that position so believed, it would be right to say that Saliger taught that the Real Presence occurred before the *usus* or *sumptio*. But one must examine quite carefully the Formula of Concord to see what is meant by *actio* and *usus*, and what is the significance of the consecration, because the controversy was settled in the Formula of Concord. Dr. Jobst Schöne, a theologian of the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany, has recently written an enlightening monograph on this controversy, *Um Christi*

Sakramentale Gegenwart—Der Saligerische Abendmahlstreit, 1568/1569 (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1966). Others have also begun to set the record straight on behalf of Saliger in their writings: Sasse (p. 175), Hardt (1971, pp. 258-268). It is the consensus of these men that Saliger was not guilty of false doctrine, but rather that as a Gnesio-Lutheran he was upholding Luther's doctrine of the Lord's Supper, and what is confessed in Article VII of the Formula of Concord is nothing else but what Saliger was contending for.

The Formula explicitly states that on the controverted questions "concerning the consecration and the common rule apart from the instituted use" the Confessors reached unanimous agreement among themselves (SD, VII, 73). The first point they establish is that no man's word or work, whether it is the speaking of the minister or the eating or drinking, or the faith of the communicants "can effect the true presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Supper" (74).³ This statement clearly rejects the thought that man is in any way a contributing factor to the Lord's Supper. As with the other doctrines, synergism with regard to the consecration is forthrightly rejected. Rather, as the second part of this paragraph asserts, the true presence of the body and blood of Christ is to be "ascribed only to the almighty power of God and the Word, the institution and ordinance of our Lord Jesus Christ" (74b; cf. Ep. VII, 8, 35). But on the other hand, the Formula confesses that the first institution of Christ confers its power to the consecratory words of the church:⁴ "they (i.e., the words which Christ spoke at the first institution) still retain their validity and efficacious power in all places where the Supper is observed according to Christ's institution and where His words are used, and where the body and blood of Christ are truly present, distributed, and received by the virtue and potency of the same words which Christ spoke in the first Supper" (75). Here is thus ruled out the false understanding that the words of institution are without effect. As a matter of fact, the final sentence in this paragraph makes it crystal clear what the position of the authors of the Formula was: "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 the virtue of the first institution, which He wants to be repeated." Ruled out as inadmissible is the false conception that the words of institution are not efficacious today when they are used as Christ instituted their use. Quotations from Chrysostom and Luther are then adduced as evidence for this being the doctrine of the church (76-78). It should be evident that nothing new is being said here which Luther and the

Confessions had not previously said. Luther never thought that whatever he said or did had any effect simply because he was Martin Luther or a called servant of the Word. He laid it all to the power of God's command and promise, as, for example, he says in the Leipzig Reformation Sermon (1539): "The Blessed Sacrament is not administered by men, but rather by God's command; we only lend our hand to it" (LW, 51, pp. 303-312). Our speaking and doing do not create anything in the Sacrament, but the words of institution, which are spoken through men, are words of power because Christ Himself speaks through His servants: "Ministers act in Christ's stead and do not represent their own persons, according to the Word (Luke 10:16), 'He who hears you hears me'" (Ap. VII, 47; cf. Ap. VII, 28; XII, 40; XXVIII, 18).

In the following paragraphs of the Solid Declaration (79-82), several points are made which help us understand the full meaning of the Lord's Supper. The words of institution are also a most important proclamation of the Gospel. They therefore are not a mere formula to be spoken *sotto voce* so that only a few could understand them (as was done by the priests in the Roman Catholic church). Rather, they are to be read or chanted loudly before the whole congregation. And, again, it is emphasized that they "are under no circumstances to be omitted." The necessity for this is grounded on a three-fold basis: 1) thereby we render obedience to the command of Christ, "This do"; 2) thereby the faith of the hearers in the essence and benefits of the Sacrament is awakened, strengthened, and confirmed through His Word; 3) thereby the elements of bread and wine are hallowed or blessed in this holy use, so that therewith the body and blood of Christ are distributed to us to eat and to drink, as Paul says, "The cup of blessing which we bless," which happens precisely through the repetition and recitation of the words of the institution.

To further clarify the doctrine of the Consecration and to avoid error, the Solid Declaration insists that the complete action of the Lord's Supper as Christ ordained it must be carried out (83-87). Christ's command comprehends the whole action: the blessing of the elements, the distribution, the reception, and the proclamation of the death of the Lord. All this is included in Christ's command, "Do this." Next (85), the Solid Declaration explains an axiom ("useful rule and norm") which the Lutherans have been using and 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" (*Nihil habet rationem sacramenti extra usum a Christo institutum*). There are two words here that need careful definition from the

Formula itself, *actio* and *usus*, since some seventeenth century dogmaticians, followed by some twentieth century theologians (see Sasse, p. 173), have restricted the *usus* only to the moment when the elements are received (*sumptio*). The *usus* and the *actio* are identified as synonyms and the definition repeated: "The entire external and visible action of the Supper as ordained by Christ: the consecration or words of institution, the distribution and reception, or the oral eating of the blessed bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ" (86). The rule is then applied against those who believe that the "use" or "action" primarily means faith, and it is also applied against the practice of the Roman church. The Confessors declare that apart from the entire external and visible action of the Supper, "it is not to be deemed a sacrament, as when in the papistic Mass the bread is not distributed but is offered up, or locked up, or carried about, or exposed for adoration" (87). The Solid Declaration concludes this section by declaring that it is a misuse of this rule to deny the Real Presence and oral eating of the body of Christ by the worthy and the unworthy alike (88). And it reiterates again that it is not our faith, but the word and institution of Christ which remains efficacious in Christendom and makes the Lord's Supper a sacrament (89, 90). The LC-MS theologian, F. E. Mayer, summed up this part of the Formula quite succinctly and accurately: "Lutheranism holds that every Word of God is a creative Word. Christ's words of institution, 'This is my body', is a mighty fiat. When—so Lutherans maintain—the officiant today speaks the words of consecration, his words are effective by virtue of Christ's command and institution" (Mayer, p. 164).

But it is interesting to know what the authors of the Formula said otherwise on this doctrine. My limited resources and limited time do not give me an access to much of their writings. I have nothing of Andreae. Sasse asserts that Selnecker said that with regard to the phrase, "in the bread", etc., "they intend to say not more than this, that Christ is veracious, and that when giving us the bread in His Supper, He gives us simultaneously His body to eat, as He himself says" (Sasse, CTM, 1959, p. 37).

Chemnitz, the chief author of the Formula and especially of Article VII, is much more accessible to the average Lutheran today. In his *The Two Natures of Christ* (1578), with regard to the Real Presence, Chemnitz testifies that Christ "wills to be present with His body and blood in the observance of His Supper as it is celebrated in the gathering of the church here on earth in accord with His institution. For not even the adversaries dare or can deny that if the words of Christ's testament, wherein He asserts and affirms regarding the bread

which is *present, shown, and eaten* in the Lord's Supper, 'This is my body', are allowed to stand, apart from all figurative language in their simple, proper, native, and genuine sense, they demonstrate the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Supper. . . . But Christ mentions His body and blood, not because His body is separate from His blood or because both are separated from His soul and outside the personal union with the deity, apart and separate, as if He wished us to believe He is present in the Supper only in the abstract" (Chemnitz, 1578, p. 432; my emphasis). Chemnitz, in discussing the hypostatic union of the two natures of Christ as something permanent, inseparable, and intimate, has some comment on the nature of the "sacramental union" and "the use" of the sacraments: "By the external ministry of the Word and Sacraments God is truly present in the church, working with us and effectually acting in us through these means. He is present even in the external signs in the use of the sacraments, dispensing and communicating through these visible signs His invisible grace, according to His Word. But the signs themselves, by themselves, add nothing towards this grace. God is not present with them inseparably, but because of the covenant and according to the Word they are not sacraments apart from their use. When these sacraments have been completed, they either pass away, as Augustine says, or are separated from the sacramental union" (Chemnitz, 1578, p. 109).

In his *Examen* (1573) Chemnitz says much which sheds light on Article VII. Confining what he says to SD, VII, 73-90, where the words of consecration are discussed, Chemnitz notes that "some rejected the papistical consecration in such a way that they imagined that the Lord's Supper could also be celebrated without the words of institution." The comment of Chemnitz on this is clear and forthright: "This is manifestly false. For it is most certain that there is no sacrament without the Word, as Paul calls baptism 'the washing of water with the Word' (Eph. 5:26). The saying of Augustine has it correctly: 'Let the Word come to the element, and it becomes a sacrament.' Likewise: 'Take the Word out of baptism and what will the water be but water?' In no way therefore can there be a Eucharist without the use of the Word. For if the Word is taken out of the Eucharist, the bread will be nothing but bread. For this reason Augustine says (*Contra Faustum*, lib. 20, cap. 13): 'Our bread and cup becomes sacramental by a certain consecration; it does not grow that way.' Therefore, what is not consecrated, though it be bread and cup, is food for refreshment, not a religious sacrament. This ground is very firm, being derived from the definition of the sacrament. This addition of the Word to the element in the sacraments is called

sanctification by the ancients. The common people call it consecration. Paul, following the description of Mark, calls it blessing when he says: "The cup of blessing which we bless" (1 Cor. 10:16)" (Chemnitz, 1573, p. 300). Chemnitz then fortifies what he has said as being Scriptural by clear quotations from Ambrose, Justin, Irenaeus, and Chrysostom to show that this has always been the doctrine of the "ancient church."

There are some practical matters that arise with regard to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper as presented in the Book of Concord. It is difficult to discuss them since so much heat has been generated around them and not too much light is shed on them from the Scriptures or the Confessions. Concerning the mode of the Real Presence, we agree with Chemnitz: "We on our part simply believe this presence, because it has the testimony of the Word of God. But we judge that one ought not to dispute about the mode of the presence, because it has not been revealed by the Word of God. Therefore we do not define an established mode of this presence, but humbly entrust it to the wisdom and omnipotence of God. Therefore we do not establish a physical, or geometrical, or crass and carnal manner of presence. We do not dispute about inclusion in a certain place nor about descent or ascension of the body of Christ. Briefly, we do not hold that the body of Christ is present in the Supper in any manner that is natural to this world" (Chemnitz, 1573, p. 300).

With regard to the time or "the moment" when the Real Presence begins and the moment when it ceases (see Sasse, p. 173), Luther believed that it began with the words of consecration and ended when the communion service was over. This is what the Solid Declaration is saying (73-90), and it was certainly the understanding of the Augsburg Confession, as Krauth shows (see above). Luther was not ready to stipulate under which syllable the sacramental union takes place. It would appear to me that F. E. Mayer does not quite represent the Lutheran Confessions when he says that: "The Lutheran Confessions refrain from entering on the precise moment when the sacramental union begins and ends," but he is correct when he says that the Lutheran Confessions "state that there is no sacramental union outside the entire sacramental action or use which comprises the Consecration, the Distribution, and the Reception of the elements (SD, VII, 79-87)" (Mayer, p. 162). It seems to me that a fairly definite time is here set forth and that the Confessions do not limit the sacramental union to the instant of distribution and reception. While this latter theory may possibly eliminate some practical problems regarding the spilling of the elements, what to do with what is left over after all have been communicated, etc., it seems to me that it raises

some hard questions about the creative power of God's words of institution and the promise.

The Lord's Supper was instituted for us Christians to eat and to drink. If the action is not completed because of some accident (which would be the only reason for a Lutheran why it is not completed), we can not answer the questions that might thereby arise (Sasse, p. 175). The Formula warns us against speculation when it says: "We also reject and condemn all presumptuous, scoffing, and blasphemous questions and expressions which are advanced in a coarse, fleshly, Capernaitic way about the supernatural and heavenly mysteries of this Supper" (SD, VII, 127). Chemnitz has said, in a general way, of the elements: "God is not present with them inseparably, but because of the covenant and according to the Word, they are not sacraments apart from their use. When these sacraments have been completed, they either pass away, as Augustine says, or are separated from the sacramental union" (Chemnitz, 1578, p. 109). But if one accepts what the Confessions say regarding the Real Presence, one will indeed treat the elements with the greatest respect, as Luther did, just as Sasse has again recently shown (*Christian News*, Oct. 28, 1974, p. 10).

On more important point ought to be raised here, but which really goes beyond the limits of this paper; nevertheless, it will eventually need careful investigation by someone among us. Apparently something strange happened to the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper, especially with regard to the consecration, on its way to being formulated by the seventeenth century Lutheran dogmaticians. It is no secret that the view of consecration set forth in the second part of this paper would not coincide with the general view in our circles. There might be more or less agreement, and there might be more or less disagreement. There may be cases among us where the elements have not been consecrated in the Lord's Supper, or where at least additional elements were brought in and not re-consecrated. And what probably would be said in defense of this practise is that the consecration of the elements is not an integral part of the *sacramental action*. It would not be difficult to find the reason for this type of thinking. Perhaps most of us were introduced to the practical application of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper in the congregational services via Fritz's *Pastoral Theology*. Here we received the instructions: "The minister therefore should repeat the words of institution at the time when the sacrament is to be administered in order thereby to consecrate the elements, that is, to set them apart and bless them for their holy use in the sacraments even as Christ has commanded, and at the same time thereby to invite the communicants to receive not only bread and wine but also,

orally, Christ's body and blood. (1 Cor. 10:16)" (Fritz, p. 143). This is saying considerably less than paragraph 75 of the Formula said, that Christ is still active through the spoken words by the virtue of the first institution which He wants to be repeated. But this was not something new with Fritz; rather, one will find this point of view in Walther's *Pastorale* and in Pieper's *Dogmatics*. Sasse has pointed out that the theory that Christ's body and blood are present only at the "moment" when they are being received has come into Walther and Pieper via some of the later Lutheran dogmaticians, notably father and son, Egidius and Nicholas Hunnius (Sasse, p. 173).

Tom Hardt's paper prepared for and read to the four ELS representatives (Orvick, Kuster, Madson, Teigen), "On the Babylonian Captivities of the Sacrament of the Altar," is a calm plea that, just as the American Confessional Lutherans of a century ago felt free to take a cool, objective look at some of the seventeenth century Lutheran dogmaticians' views on the doctrine of the Election of Grace (*Intuitu Fidei*) and were not afraid to say that they found them wanting, so Confessional Lutheranism today should not be afraid to examine the formulations of the seventeenth century dogmaticians in the light of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions (Hardt, 1973, p. 2). One at this time need not agree with everything Hardt has said in his paper, but I would suggest that one should be extremely cautious that he does not immediately reject out of hand what he has to say and slough it all off by crying "Romanizing views."

There is, of course, another reason why we must devote our studies to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper at this time, and that is the pressing fact that the Reformed and Lutherans, both in Europe and in this country, have today moved very close together on their views of the Lord's Supper.⁵ The words of institution as having consecratory power do not figure in these agreements. Why? Sasse (pp. 164-170) has set forth the fact that there existed a profound difference between Luther and Zwingli on the power of Christ's words of institution. Luther accepted Augustine's statement that the Word causes the element to become a sacrament, while Zwingli could not do that. The Lutheran doctrine of the sacraments comes out of Ephesians 5:26, "the washing of water by the word."

We also need to be driven back to this Lutheran doctrine that the Word of God is a creative Word and the only channel of the Holy Spirit, in view of the tremendous tidal wave of Reformed Enthusiasm that is sweeping over us in the Evangelistic youth movements and the Charismatic movement which downgrade the power of the Word, no matter whether it is read, preached, or administered as the Visible Word of our gracious God. Has

there been a tendency for us to overlook this in Baptism, Absolution (especially individual and private), and in the Lord's Supper, so that our people are not aware of this precious truth but rather look upon the Scripture as only a means of defining correct doctrine?⁷

FOOTNOTES

1. This and other translations from the *Examen* I owe to the courtesy of Prof. Fred Kramer, Concordia Theological Seminary, who kindly sent me xeroxed copies of his manuscript before it had received its final checking for publication.
2. The sermon is found in WA 19, pp. 482-523; the English translation is in LW 36, pp. 335-361; the quotation occurs on p. 341.
3. In this section I must confess my indebtedness to Schöne (pp. 60-63); but I do not want to hold him responsible for what I have said, since I had access to his book for only a short time and my abysmal knowledge of German could well have completely misunderstood the points he was making; my hurried jottings on this section are quite incomplete.
4. Prof. Roland Hoenecke in a nineteen-page essay on Article VII of the Formula rightly brings out the point that it is the Word alone which accounts for the Real Presence, but, strangely enough, he passes over the material in 75 and the following paragraphs, which clearly states that the words of consecration are efficacious today when spoken by Christ's representative at the celebration of the Lord's Supper. (See "Formula of Concord—Article VII on the Lord's Supper," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, July 1973, pp. 174-193).
5. See the essays and the "Report to the Sponsoring Confessional Organizations" of Marburg Revisited, the Arnoldshain Theses, and the Leuenberg Theses. As a possible key to these agreements one might, for example, consult Vilmos Vajta's book, *Luther on Worship—An Interpretation*, pp. 90-107 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958). This modern, ecumenical Lutheran, who is director of the Department of Theology of the LWF, waters down Luther's and the Book of Concord's doctrine to the point where Christ's presence in the elements depends in general on His omnipresence, so that "Christ is in the elements long before they are placed on the altar" (p. 95).
6. It might be profitable also to examine in detail Luther's doctrine of the Lord's Supper (his whole doctrine of the creative power of the Word, for that matter) in the light of what Robert Preus calls "Luther's Realist Principle" (the 1973 Bethany Reformation Lectures; see the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, XIV, 1, Fall, 1973, pp. 31-33). Luther would have repudiated later Idealism, and any "theology of non-event is unthinkable to Luther and our Confessions," etc.

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