

Theology on *the Web.org.uk*

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes.
Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit
or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the
copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the
ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the
links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbadshaw>

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

ARTICLE VI.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE LUTHERAN
DOCTRINE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

BY PROFESSOR J. W. RICHARD, D. D., SPRINGFIELD, OHIO.

IN studying the historical development of the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper, we begin with the principle which is fundamental in the Lutheran system, viz., that the Word of God alone can make articles of faith.¹ This principle, acted on by Luther from the beginning of his reform, was more fully enunciated by him in his *Liber De Servo Arbitrio*, IV. Sec. iii.: "We ought everywhere to stick close to the simple, pure, natural sense of words, which both the art of grammar and the common use of speech as God has created it in man, direct us"....otherwise "nothing certain can be affirmed or proved, as touching any article of faith." Says Dorner, *Hist. Prot. Theol.* I. p. 150:

Luther lays the foundation-stone of an evangelical doctrine of the means of grace, in that he conceives of the Word of God, after a lively manner, as a speech of God continually sounding through the world, as it were, ever proceeding anew out of his mouth—conceives of it, as it were, sacramentally, but without anything magical. The mere empty doctrine transforms itself for him into deed, into a dealing of God in Christ with man, which continues throughout time, and forms and governs the history of religious life.

That is, the Word of God, which is an objective reality, must be fixed upon by the subjective faith of the individual, and must be absorbed into his living experience, so that he can be conscious of its power. "The basis," says Dorner again (*Ibid.* p. 151), "which Luther in this manner obtained

¹ "As he (Luther) adopted, for his general guide and limit in his reform of the church, the plain word of Holy Scripture and the practical demands of religion, so, on the other hand, he rejected all intermixture of merely speculative reason."—*Gieseler, Ec. Hist.*, iv. p. 108.

for the objective Word of God, comprehended in the Scriptures, from nothing else than the personal movement of faith towards certainty, proved besides of explicit advantage for the conception taken of the *sacraments*." But before faith can reach "certainty" and assured conviction, it must have a sure, simple, unchangeable, intelligible Word of God to which it can attach itself—it must feel that this which it reads, or sees, in the sacraments, is the veritable Word of God, and conveys no other meaning than that which "the art of grammar and the common use of speech require." And such must be the case preëminently and emphatically in those portions of Scripture which are testamentary, and which contain special promises of grace, as for instance in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, a *verbum visibile*, which contains the promise of the forgiveness of sins. Now, when, in the application of this principle of "the simple, pure, natural sense of the words," Luther comes gradually to construct a doctrine of the Lord's Supper, he sees how that doctrine must be placed absolutely upon the words by which Christ the Testator and Lord instituted the Holy Supper, and upon the words which Paul "received of the Lord" and delivered to the Corinthians. I. Cor. xi. 23-29.² But at first, in the exercise of his office as a Christian pastor, his aim is wholly practical and ethical. He seeks to confirm faith and to promote the salvation of individual souls—not to construct a system of doctrine. The sacraments are means to this practical and ethical end (means of grace). They have a real objective significance and value, but are entirely destitute of magical efficiency. They are sure promises and proofs of grace, as is also the spoken or written Word, but they must

² Once for all let it be said that the Lutheran Church does not apply the passage, John vi. 54, *et seq.*, to the Lord's Supper. In his *Grosses Bekentniß vom Abenmahl* 506, Luther says: "The sixth chapter of John does not speak in reference to the eucharist." Already in the *Babylonish Captivity* (1520), he had declared: "The sixth chapter of John must be set aside altogether, as not saying a single syllable about the sacrament." The passage is entirely omitted from the Lutheran confessions, except that in the Form of Concord, Sol. Dec. VII. 61, it is used in proof of spiritual communion by faith, and not of sacramental communion.

be apprehended and appropriated by faith before the grace which they promise and convey, can be realized in the life and experience of the recipient. This view of the sacrament brings him into sharp antagonism with the Romish doctrine of the *opus operatum* and introduces

THE FIRST PERIOD OF DEVELOPMENT.

The Romish conception of the efficacy of a sacrament was, (and is), that it imparts grace *ex opere operato*, that is, simply because the sacrament has been administered. To this, Luther's principle that every offer and promise of grace must be fastened upon by the receptive act of faith, was opposed. Hence, when in 1518 Eck said in the Obolisci : "The sacraments of the new law effect that which they signify," Luther replied in the Asterisci :³

The sacraments of the new law do not effect the grace which they signify, but faith is required before the sacrament. Moreover, faith is grace. Therefore, grace always precedes the sacrament, according to the well-known saying, "Not the sacrament, but faith in the sacrament justifies" (*Non sacramentum, sed fides sacramenti justificat*); and as Augustine says; "Not because a work is done, but because faith is exercised" (*Non quia fit, sed quia creditur*).

He also calls the sentiment of Eck "a most shocking heresy" and "an infernal poison which mocks and subverts all the sacraments of the church."

In the same year (1518) he preached a sermon on "The worthy preparation of the heart for the reception of the Eucharist."⁴ He declares that "he is worthy who feels most miserable and destitute of grace," for then only is he fit for and capable of grace.

Faith alone, the highest and most immediate preparation, makes us worthy, because it does not depend upon works, but upon the word of Christ.....It is faith alone which justifies, purifies, renders worthy.

It is a great and pernicious error to come to the sacrament relying simply on confession and on our prayers. Mortal sins should be confessed ; but as already stated in the sermon *De Poenitentia*,⁵ "all sins are mortal, should God enter into judg-

³ *Opera Latina*, Jen. I., p. 34.

⁴ *Opera Lat.* Jen. I., p. 174.

⁵ *Op. Lat.* Jen. I., p. 14.

ment with us." The sin most opposed to this sacrament is discord, which is opposed to the very name and to the nature of the sacrament. The name is *Communion*; the nature, a union of hearts. As Christ did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, repentance is performed more properly after the sacrament than before it. The blessing received in the sacrament does not differ in kind from that which is conveyed by the Word,—a principle which has always been emphasized in the Lutheran system. The sacraments are a surer and more impressive sign and testimony of grace,—but the grace in either case is the forgiveness of sins.

The year 1519 marks a new phase of development. Towards the close of this year Luther preached a sermon on the Sacrament of the Altar.⁶ Here he takes the position that both species (bread and wine) are to be used as instituted by Christ, and that whoever wishes to profess Christ must receive both species. "The treasure in the sacrament is the remission of sins." The eye must be fixed on this treasure, and must have no anxiety as to how the body of Christ can be present in so small a piece of bread. "When we eat the bread, we all, one as much as another, receive, not bread merely, but also the body of Christ,"—which implies the doctrine that the unworthy also in the Supper receive the body of the Lord; "for Luther," says Köstlin (*Luther's Theologie*, II. p. 108), "had, without doubt, already associated them (the unworthy) with his firm faith in the presence of the body, although he had not especially declared it." But the sacrament is poison and death to those who do not realize their sinful condition, and do not exercise faith in the words of Christ, "Done and shed for you."

When Christ says "This is my body which is given for thee," he means, I am he who am given for thee. I give thee this treasure, viz., to possess all that I have. My righteousness, life, eternal bliss I bestow upon thee, that thou mayest never yield to sin, nor to death, nor to any other evil, but mayest overcome all things.

He lays special stress upon charity and the willingness to do good to others.

⁶ *Op. Lat. Jen.*, p. 346 *et seq.*

This is the fruit of the sacrament, that as we eat the body of Christ and drink his blood, so we should suffer ourselves to be eaten and drunk for others, that is, we should devote all our actions and our whole life to doing good to our neighbor.

The bread is the body of Christ given for us, and the cup the blood of Christ shed for us, and we are commanded to do all in commemoration of him. When we receive the sacrament two external things concur: The word which falls on the ear and the transaction which meets the eye—in which we find the germs of the principle which afterwards become confessionally fixed in the Lutheran doctrine, that nothing has the nature of the sacrament apart from the actual use of the consecrated bread and wine with the words of institution.

In this discourse, as in that of the preceding year, there is no dogmatic discussion and no inquiry into the nature of Christ's presence, and neither the assertion nor the denial of the dogma of transubstantiation. As the mode of celebrating the Mass (the Lord's Supper) had remained unchanged, transubstantiation was still a part of Luther's faith. It was a venerable doctrine of the church, and he as pastor and preacher had had no occasion to call it in question. Up to this time he had laid the chief emphasis on faith. This is especially prominent in his sermon on the Sacrament of Penance of November, 1518.⁷

All is at once given in faith, which alone makes the sacraments effect what they signify, and everything to be true which the priest says; for as thou believest, so it is done unto thee. Without this faith all absolution, all sacraments are vain; yea, they do more hurt than good.

Indeed, Luther's dogmatic conception of the Sacrament of the Altar was still that of the Church of Rome. But the doctrine of transubstantiation he had elevated to an ethical significance, and had regarded the Mass as an objective representation of the sufferings and death of Christ for us—that is, mainly as *significative*. The elevation and adoration of the changed bread and wine were designed to impress upon the worshipper the great truth of the atonement and to draw forth his gratitude and worship. This was the end of the miracle

⁷ See *Gieseler*, Ec. Hist. IV., p. 33, note 36. See also *Assertio omnium Articulorum*, Op. Lat. Jen. II., p. 319.

of transubstantiation, the reality of which had not yet been questioned.

"With this conception," says Dorner, *Hist. Prot. Theol.* I., p. 154, "in which the relation between means and end was so perverted, Luther naturally could not long rest content, especially as the Word had already succeeded in controlling his representation." He had denounced the *opus operatum*, had ventured to propose the cup for the laity,⁸ and had discovered in the sacrament a communion and a bond of love. Now, compelled by his enemies to search the Scriptures and to "become more learned every day," whether he would or not, he begins to break rapidly with the whole elaborate sacramental system of the Church of Rome. Viewed by the light of the Word he sees in that system much more than the Scriptures require; yea, many superstitions and idolatries which the Scriptures positively condemn. And now, when "a more than most learned friar" of Leipzig began to play at "schooling him concerning communion in both kinds," he set about a reexamination of the entire subject of the sacraments. His conclusions are found in the *Babylonish Captivity of the Church*,⁹ published in 1520. *Opera Lat.* Jen., p. 273 *et seq.*

He begins with "the sacrament of the bread, the first of all sacraments." He gives "the result of my meditations in the ministry of this sacrament." He now asserts in the most positive terms the right of the laity to the cup, based on the words of institution and on I Cor. xi. There are three irrefutable arguments: (a) "The words and example of Christ who says—not by way of permission, but of commandment, 'Drink ye all of this.' For if all are to drink of it, and this

⁸ In the year 1519 Luther proposed that the church should decide by a general council that the cup should be given to the laity not less than to the priests. This sermon was inhibited by the bishop of Misnia. Luther defended his position and became confirmed in it. See Seckendorf, I. 27, 64. Luther's *Opera Lat.* Jen. I. p. 492 *et seq.*; also Bab. Cap. *ad initium*.

⁹ This, together with the "Address to the German Nobility" and "Christian Liberty," is published in an excellent English translation by the Lutheran Publication Society, 42 N. Ninth street, Philadelphia,

cannot be understood as said to the presbyters alone, then it is certainly an impious deed to debar the laity from it when they seek it, were it even an angel from heaven who did it." (b) "But what strikes me most forcibly of all, and thoroughly convinces me, is that saying of Christ: 'This is my blood which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins.' Here you see most clearly that the blood is given to all for whose sins it is shed. Now who will dare to say that it was not shed for the laity? The blood is shed for 'you' and for 'many.' The 'many' cannot be the priest, and yet the command is, 'Drink ye all of it.'" (c) The words of Paul, I. Cor. xi, "must close every mouth." The priests are not lords but servants, whose duty it is to give the cup to all who seek it. If they snatch this right from the laity they are tyrants, and the laity will be saved by their faith and by their desire for a complete sacrament, according to the dictum of Augustine, "Believe and thou hast eaten."¹⁰

The second tyranny is transubstantiation, which has no foundation in the Scriptures. The Evangelists write that Christ took bread and blessed it. Acts and Paul call it bread. Therefore real bread and wine must be understood. "These men do not say that the cup is transubstantiated." "Transubstantiation is a figment of human opinion, and rests on no support of Scripture or of reason." For more than twelve centuries the church kept the right faith and knew nothing about this portentous word and dream. The real presence of the body and blood does not depend upon transubstantiation,¹¹ but upon the Word and the Christological truth.

¹⁰ Here already was gained for the Lutheran theology the Augustinian principle that not the loss of a sacrament, but the contempt of a sacrament condemns; that is, no sacrament is *absolutely necessary* to salvation. When the Augs. Con., Art. IX. says of baptism, "*Quod sit necessarius ad salutem*," it means, and was intended to mean, and is still interpreted as meaning, only an *ordinary* necessity, which binds us to use the proffered means of grace, but does not bind God, or hinder him from bestowing his grace without baptism.

¹¹ Notwithstanding these strong words it is quite certain that Luther had not yet fully abandoned the figment of transubstantiation. In the treatise next to be noticed he still speaks of the changed bread and wine. The fact is that up to this time neither the practical demands of religion nor the sharp spur of controversy had compelled him to make a thorough scriptural examination of this point. He knows that the body and blood of Christ are present in the Eucharist, but the relation they bear to the bread and wine has not yet been considered. He is still too subjective in some of his views. See *Kurts*, Ch. Hist. Sec. III. § ix, Vol. ii.

Mass, and an earnest plea for the simplicity of the Eucharist as it was instituted by Christ, in which Luther sees simply a *beneficium* FOR man, and not an *officium* OF man. Christ is not *sacrificed* in the Eucharist. He is *given* and *applied*. The Mass, therefore, that is, the Romish Mass, is a complete subversion of the design of the Sacrament; yea, it is terror to pious consciences, because they can never know whether they have properly performed the work required. But the Eucharist is a thanksgiving and a joy to the pious, for it assures and gives the pardon of sins.

And now, having completely renounced this third tyranny, "the most impious" of all, he is prepared to renounce the second tyranny, that on which the third stands. So long and in so far as the Romish Mass is held, so long and in so far must the Romish transubstantiation be held, for the latter is the miracle which prepares the way for the former, by changing the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. But when the Mass is demolished, there is no need of transubstantiation. But the circumstance which led to Luther's formal and final abandonment of the last vestige of the Romish superstition and idolatry in the matter of the sacraments, was the writing of a book by Henry VIII. of England on the seven sacraments, against the *Babylonish Captivity of the Church*. Luther replies, July 15, 1522,¹⁸ and directs his strength mainly against the three tyrannies refuted in the *Babylonish Captivity*, and uses the same arguments. But he is far more positive and decided against transubstantiation. He now declares the body is present *in* and *with* the bread. "I am able therefore to say that the body of Christ is present with the unchanged bread in the sacrament, as fire is in the iron without changing the substance of the iron, as God is in man without the human nature being changed; and in both cases its own work and nature remain in each, and yet they constitute *unum aliquid*. Paul stands invincible against the transubstantiations, when he says: 'The bread which we break.' " Farther, he declares that transubstantiation is a

¹⁸ *Opera Lat.* Jen. II, p. 546 *et seq.*

pure figment of the blind and wicked Thomists, and that he is now confirmed against it by the lies, follies and blasphemies of the papists. In regard to the Mass, he declares that the priests do not do what Christ did in the Supper, but what the Jews did to Christ on the cross, that is, they pervert and extinguish the work of God and change the truth of God into a lie.

We now pause to contemplate the steps by which Luther advanced rapidly, but consistently, from the errors and corruptions of Rome to clear and distinct conceptions of evangelical truth in regard to one of the most important articles of the Christian faith. He started with the Word of God as his guide, and adapted as a fundamental principle, that the gospel in all of its offices and appointments is a *promise*, a *gift* of God to man, and not a work or sacrifice of man to God. But the operations and appointments of God do not effect *per se* what they signify. They must be apprehended by man, that is, laid hold of by an act of faith. Hence faith becomes a prime condition of salvation, because as an instrument it appropriates the blessing contained in the divine promise. Hence in the Eucharist Luther's first step is the denial of the *opus operatum*. *Quia fit* is not sufficient. *Quia creditur* is required before the sacrament can be efficacious. But, inasmuch as salvation is intended for all, and as all need the sign and seal, all must have the full sacrament. Therefore the cup belongs to the laity as much as to the priests. This is the second step in progress. If now the Eucharist contains a promise, and is a promise, then it is not a work, a something to be done, an offering to God. It is a benefit bestowed, a consolation. Hence the Romish Mass which sacrifices Christ and tortures consciences is an abomination. This conclusion marks the third step in reform. And now that the Mass is abrogated, there is no need of transubstantiation, as there is no scriptural warrant for it; it falls to the ground, as it were, of its own accord. The separation is complete. Luther's mind has advanced in logical order from one position to another; and yet,—such is the strength and tenacity

of inveterate error,—as a matter of fact, it required the sharpest kind of controversy, principally “the lies and follies” of his enemies to drive him to that thorough examination of the divine Word through which he reached his conclusions. The time required for this was about five years. At first he was impelled by a pastor’s anxious care for the spiritual edification of his flock, but was still involved, as he tells us in the *Babylonish Captivity*, in “the common custom,” and did not trouble himself about the correctness of the current dogmatical conception: But pressed by the arguments of his enemies to study the Scriptures, he was led step by step to renounce the entire distinctive Roman system of the sacrament, and to contend for the simplicity of the Supper as it had been instituted by Christ.

But up to this time, as was natural in a reaction against a powerful tyranny, he had inclined rather unduly to the subjective aspect of the sacrament, and, as will hereafter appear, had actually longed for a figurative interpretation of the words, in order that he might the more easily overthrow the prevalent objectivism of the Romish view, but was held back by the simple force of the text. Nor had he, at the conclusion of this revolt from Rome, constructed a doctrine of the Lord’s Supper in any strictly dogmatic or confessional sense; nor had he made even a thorough examination and exegesis of the words of institution. But he had gone far enough to assert and to reiterate every distinctive principle which subsequently entered into the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord’s Supper, as that doctrine now appears in the Lutheran symbols, and as it has been most elaborately stated and defended by the Lutheran dogmatists, viz., that the words of institution are to be interpreted as they sound; that faith is required in order to the efficacy of the sacrament; that the body and blood of Christ are truly present in the sacrament, and are administered to the communicant, in, with, and under the bread and wine, but without any change in the substance of bread or body, wine or blood, as to their nature and power.

Here, Luther, who had now come out completely from the Romish superstition, and had been placed under the ban, and who all along had sought practical and ethical ends, and not those of dogma, would doubtless have been content to have left the whole subject of the sacrament. But from a quarter wholly unsuspected an attack was made upon him that started a controversy which has not yet been settled.

SECOND PERIOD OF DEVELOPMENT: THE SACRAMENTARIAN CONTROVERSY.

A.—Andrew Bodenstein¹⁴ (Carlstadt), a factious and turbulent spirit had been driven from Wittenberg because of his fanatical excesses. He then forced himself into Orlamund as pastor. Here again he created disturbance. Compelled to leave this place, he next took up his abode at Basle, whence he poured forth his indignation against the Wittenberg Reformation, and particularly against Luther's doctrine of the Lord's Supper. See Gieseler, IV. p. 107; Kurtz II. p. 43.

Carlstadt's explanation of the words of institution (which he claimed had been revealed to him from heaven) and his doctrine of the Lord's Supper, are thus given by Cotta in his Gerhard, X. p. 134: "Carlstadt maintained especially that in the words of institution, the pronoun *this* must be referred not to the bread which the Saviour gave to the disciples, nor to the whole complex resulting from the union of body and bread, but only to the body of Christ which was reclining at the table. That as it were with the finger, he had pointed to

¹⁴ His character is thus sketched in a letter of Melanchthon to Frederick Myconius: "Caristadius excitavit primum hunc tumultum, homo ferus sine ingenio, sine doctrina, sine sensu communi, quem nullum unquam humanitatis officium aut intelligere aut facere animadvertisimus, tantum abest, ut ab eo significatio aliqua Spiritus Sancti animadverta sit, imo extant manifesta signa impietatis, in tota doctrina solebat *el&dai;cev xai; orao; déev*, damnabat omnes leges ethnicis conditas. Controversiam de coena Domini tantum odio Lutheri, non aliqua pietatis opinione movit. Etenim cum *el&xovouaxia* ipsius a Luthero improbata esset, coepit iste, inflammatus immani cupiditate vindicare quærere causam vendibilem, qua Lutheri existimationem prorsus obruerit." Zwingli said: "Caristadius majus offendit, quam sedificat. Caristadii oratio non adsequitur, quod res postulat."

this (body), as if to say : ‘*Take, eat this bread in memory of me : for here sits my body which was given for you.*’ Moreover, he denied that the Eucharist as instituted by Christ is a pledge, an earnest, a guaranty of our redemption wrought out by Christ. Nor did he admit that in the Holy Supper the body of Christ is truly present and administered to the communicants, but he contended that there was celebrated only the memory of the body given and the blood shed for us.”

This fanatical onset of Carlstadt called forth Luther’s celebrated writing against the heavenly prophets,¹⁸ the first part of which, written in January, 1525, is devoted to pictures and the Mass. The second part, Of the Sacrament, written in February of the same year, is thus summarized by Gerhard, X. (Cotta), p. 134: (1.) “Since every article of faith is delivered in unbroken order of speech, it is impious to turn away from the literal and grammatical interpretation to that which is absurd. (2.) If in the former part of the words of institution, such an interpretation be admitted, in the latter part, of the blood, either no interpretation at all can be given, or one that is manifestly absurd. (3.) What confusion there would be in the speech of Christ, if, in the course of his address, at one and the same time, while speaking of things most diverse in character, viz., the eating of the disciples and the sitting of his own body, he should turn suddenly and say parenthetically, that the eating must be done in remembrance of himself! (4.) When Christ gave the bread to his disciples and commanded them to eat what he gave them, he said it was his body ; when he gave them the cup and commanded them to drink what he gave them, he said it was his blood. What connection would the command to eat and to drink have with the words, ‘This is my body, This is my blood,’ if he had not given his body to be eaten and his blood to be drunk ?”

Here Luther begins that more thorough and positive exegesis of the words of institution and of I. Cor. x. 16 and xi.

¹⁸ Luther’s writings against the Sacramentarians, in the Leipzig edition of his works, from which we quote during this period, are found, XIX. pp. 372–528.

23-29, which three years later culminated in the definite determination and formal confession of his doctrine of the Lord's Supper. In this writing against Carlstadt he distinctly declares what was clearly implied in his former writings, that in the Supper, the worthy and the unworthy receive with the mouth the same thing, viz., the bread and body, the wine and blood; but with this fundamental difference in the effect, that the former eat unto salvation and the latter unto condemnation. This conclusion, namely, that the worthy and the unworthy eat the same thing, follows logically from Luther's interpretation of *τοῦτο, this*, which as a neuter cannot have *ἄρτος, bread*, a masculine noun, as its antecedent, but must be taken *synecdochically*; that is, the bread which I give you embraces within itself or has connected with itself the body of Christ. Hence the bread is the body of Christ, or the communion of the body of Christ. Therefore without distinction whoever receives the bread, receives at the same time the body; for "this," *τοῦτο, bread and body*, is what Christ gives, is what the communicant eats.

But the great aim of the argument is to prove that in the sacrament there is present the true body and blood of Christ. "This my body given for you, is no other body than that which I give you here in the bread to eat." "This cup is a New Testament, not in itself, for probably it is glass or silver, but because my blood is there. Through this blood it is a New Testament. For whoever receives the cup, save he receive there the blood of Christ which was shed for us, receives not the New Testament, that is, the forgiveness of sins and eternal life." "The speech of Luke and of Paul is clearer than the sun and mightier than thunder. First, none can deny that he speaks of the cup, because he says this is the cup. Secondly, he calls it the cup of the New Testament, which is incontrovertible. But it cannot be that by and on account of the mere wine he would have it to be the New Testament. Is it the New Testament otherwise than that forgiveness of sins and eternal life are acquired for us, and bestowed in the sacrament? If now the cup be the New Testa-

ment there must be something in it equivalent to the New Testament. Is not that Christ's blood? as he says, 'In my blood.' " " Da stehet nu unser text, beist, frest, spottet, lastert nu getrost, seid böse liebe himmlischen Propheten. Ye cannot take away the cup, because it is the New Testament, not in and through its own nature, but in and through the blood of Christ. The blood, the blood of Christ, causes this cup to be the New Testament. The cup and the blood must here be one thing, as we have already said, because he who has or receives the cup, also has and receives the blood of Christ." But these really were not new conclusions reached now for the first time by Luther in his controversy with Carlstadt. Says Gieseler, a Reformed historian, (*Ec. Hist.* IV. p. 108, note):

As early as his work on the Adoration of the Sacrament,¹⁶ addressed to the Bohemian brethren in 1523 (Walch, XIX. 1593), Luther refuted all the different opinions which were afterwards brought forward in the Sacramentarian Controversy, viz.: 1. That bread signifies body; 2. That a participation of the spiritual body takes place; 3. The doctrine of transubstantiation; 4. That the sacrament is a sacrifice and a good work. " The third error is, that no bread remains in the sacrament, but only the figure of bread. But this error has not much force, if it be only allowed that the body and blood of Christ are there with the Word. Although the papists have fought stoutly, and still fight, for this new article of theirs, though they reproach every man as a heretic who does not hold with them as necessary truth this monkish dream, upheld by Thomas Aquinas and sanctioned by popes, that no bread remains. But since they press this point so strongly, of their own wanton will, without Scripture, we will only maintain, in opposition to and defiance of them, that actual bread and wine remain, together with the body and blood of Christ, and will gladly be reproached as heretics before such dreamy Christians and undisguised sophists, for the gospel calls the sacrament bread; thus the bread is the body of Christ. By this we stand; truly it is enough for us against all sophistical dreams, that that should be bread which Scripture calls bread."

Nor had Luther reached these conclusions without the most painful struggles and the most careful examination of the various texts of Scripture bearing on the subject, nor without strong temptation to adopt a more subjective view, as already intimated. For in his letter to the Strasburgers, December 15, 1524 (de Wette II. 577),¹⁷ he said:

¹⁶ Anbeten Des Sacraments, Leipzig, XVIII. p. 415 *et seq.*

¹⁷ Also in Seckendorf, I. 61, 175; translated in part in Gieseler IV. pp. 108-9.

I confess that if Dr. Carlstadt, or anyone else, could have informed me five years ago that there was nothing in the sacrament but bread and wine, he would have done me a great service. I have here, indeed, suffered such hard attacks, and been so wrung and wounded, that I would gladly have escaped from it, for I saw plainly that I could thus have dealt the papacy the heaviest cuff (*den groessten Puff*). I have also had two men write me on this subject more skillfully than Dr. Carlstadt, without torturing the Word so much after their own notions. But I am bound—I cannot escape; the text is too strong there, and will not bear to be twisted out of its meaning with words. Yea, if even at this day it might happen that a man should prove with sound arguments, that mere bread and wine were present, there would be no need to assail me with so much wrath. I am, alas, all too much inclined to this view, so much of the old Adam do I feel within. But Carlstadt's fanaticism on this subject is so far from convincing me that my opinion is only strengthened thereby. And if I had not entertained it before, I should have concluded at once, from such lame and foolish trickery, without any Scripture, founded only upon reason and reflection, that this view could not be true.

Here it will be seen how absolutely Luther was bound by the Word—not because he had espoused a certain theory of interpretation, but because the Word really possessed him and held him its prisoner. He longed for a figurative interpretation that he might thereby give the stunning blow to the papacy. But it was not in the words and he would not put it there. He could endure agony and torture and phials of fanatical wrath, but he could not brook trifling with the Word, nor could he allow that reason could make articles of faith; as he said in this very controversy with Carlstadt:

There would be no article if I should follow Reason. I would say of God, Why must he become man? Why must I believe so difficult a thing? Why didn't the apostles worship him in the Supper? Why should such Majesty be crucified by wicked villains? A flesh God, a blood God, a dead God, and the like!¹⁸

B. But the controversy did not cease with the reply to Carlstadt. Zwingli now comes upon the stage. He had accepted Carlstadt's view in the main, although he did not think Carlstadt had been very happy in his interpretation of *τοῦτο*. Zwingli himself finds the figure in *ἐστι* (is) which he thinks without doubt means *significat*, signifies, is the symbol of my body.¹⁹ (*De Vera et Falsa Religione*. Opera, 1832, III. 257, *et seq.*) Further:

¹⁸ Leipzig Ed., XIX. p. 402.

¹⁹ It seems that both Carlstadt and Zwingli adopted their views from Honius, a Hollander, who, about the year 1521, sent into Germany his book *De Eucharistia*.

In the Eucharist there is nothing but a commemoration. This cup is a symbol, or signifies my blood shed for you. Do we not eat Christ's body spiritually when we believe that he was slain for us? Christ's body is present only to the contemplation of faith.²⁰

This view of Zwingli was first answered by Bugenhagen in his work: *Contra Novum Errorem de Sacramento Corporis et Sanguinis Christi*. Zwingli replied, and was soon joined by Ecolampadius, who was opposed by John Brentz and Erhard Schnepf, in the *Swabian Sungamma*, which, translated into German, was sent out by Luther with a preface.²¹ But neither in this preface nor in his Sermon on the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, 1526 (Leip. Ed. XIX. p. 377 *et seq.*), nor in his treatise, "That These Words of Christ (This is my Body), Still Stand Fast Against the Fanatics," does Luther develop anything especially new, that is, anything which was not already fairly implied in his previous sacramental writings. He refutes Zwingli's *significat* and Ecolampadius' *signum corporis* by the plain words of Scripture: Zwingli and Ecolampadius, though differing in words, agree in sense:

(See Gieseler, IV. p. 108, note; p. 109, note 27). Zwingli thus gives an account of the growth of his own theory: "I saw that the words, 'This is my body,' are figurative, but I did not see in which word the figure lay. At this point, by the grace of God, it happened that two learned and pious men came to consult on this matter; and when they heard our opinion (for they had concealed their own, for it was not then safe to express opinions on the subject freely), they thanked God, and gave me an untied package, the letter of a learned and pious Hollander. In it I found this precious pearl, that *is* here means '*signifies*'." It thus appears that Zwingli first constructed *a theory*; then he sought an interpretation to support his theory. Again: How could he see that the words are figurative without seeing in which word the figure lay? Further, Zwingli, like Carlstadt, claimed that his view was supernaturally communicated by an adviser let down from heaven in a theatrical machine, whether white or black he could not tell. *Works*, 1832, III. p. 606. Says Gieseler, IV. p. 111, n. 30: "The anxiety with which he opposes the publication of his opinion is unmistakable: 'I adjure thee by Christ Jesus, who shall judge the quick and dead, not to deliver this letter to any one, unless it be certain that he is in the faith of the same Lord.'" No one can fail to contrast the method by which Luther arrived at his conclusions, with the methods used by Carlstadt and Zwingli in reaching their conclusions. The one plants himself upon the revealed word; the other two rely upon dreams and apparitions. Is there any wonder that Luther should class them with Munzer, and call them all together *himmlische Propheten* and *Schwarzgeister*?

²⁰ See Hagenbach, *Hist. Doct.*, II. p. 312.

²¹ Leipzig Ed., XIX. p. 387.

When Zwingli says, "It signifies my body," he means the same that *Œcolampadius* does when he says it is a sign of my body. But if *is* means *signifies*, or is a sign of, they ought to produce such a meaning from the Scriptures. This they do not do. Therefore their case goes to the ground. If we should put on all the spectacles in the world, we cannot find that "This is my body" means *signifies* my body, or is a sign of my body. But without spectacles we find what every child may read, "Take, eat, this is my body." The real presence of Christ depends upon the almighty power of God, who can execute his word of promise. A body may be present in heaven and in the Supper through the power of God because the power of God is without limit or number or any such thing as reason comprehends. It must be received purely by faith. When Christ says this is my body, I comfort myself with the thought that God has ways and power, by which he can execute his Word. And although a body cannot be visible in many places, He has methods of making a body present invisibly in many places. "We poor sinners are not so demented as to believe that Christ's body is in the bread as the bread is in the basket, or the wine in the cup, as the fanatics charge against us. But we believe that his body is there where the words sound, 'This is my body.' When the fathers and we say that Christ's body is in the bread, the meaning is that our faith confesses that Christ's body is there. He is the bread, he is in the bread, he is wherever the bread is, or wherever he wills to be."

In these treatises Luther maintains with the utmost tenacity (a) the literal meaning of *էօτι*, (b) that *τοῦτο* is that which Christ gives, and not bread only, but also body, (c) the reality of the bread and wine, (d) the presence of the true body and blood, (e) the reception of bread and body, of wine and blood, at the same time by the mouth, (f) that the right hand of God is not a place, but is the power of God.

But when Zwingli and *Œcolampadius* made reply to these treatises, Luther now (1528) put forth his Greater Confession of the Lord's Supper (*Das Grosse Bekentniss vom Abenmahl*). In this he treats the entire subject of the Sacrament with greater fullness and positiveness than ever before.²² He proposes three things: 1. To convince his adherents that the fanatics have not made answer to his principles of reasoning. 2. To examine the passages having reference to the Sacrament. 3. To acknowledge every article of his faith in a confession which may stand as an answer to his opponents both during his lifetime and after his death.

²² "We mean, namely, the opposition to the figurative explanation of the words of the Supper, which Luther from an exegetical standpoint renders sharper and more emphatic than before, also the more positive vindication of the presence of the body on the ground of the union of the human and divine in Christ." Kœstlin's Luth. Theol. II. p. 167.

The first proposition he sustains by reference to the variety of views and the contradictions among the Sacramentarian Carlstadt says: "τοῦτο refers to the sitting body." Zwingli says: "τοῦτο refers to the bread." Zwingli says: "ἐστι means significat." Ecolampadius says it means. Ecolampadius says: "My body means sign of body." Zwingli says it means simply body. This contradiction is evidence that they have all gone astray. Zw. brings in an *alloiosis* by which he separates the nature of Christ and destroys the personal union. Luke says, xxiv. "'Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to have entered into his glory.' Here he prates, that Christ is taken for his human nature. Guard yourself, guard yourself, against these *alloioses*. They are the work of Satan."

And now to support the doctrine of the real presence lays down these four fundamental propositions drawn from the Word of God: 1. "Jesus Christ is essential, natural, true and perfect God and man in one person, inseparable and undivided." 2. "The right hand of God is everywhere." 3. "The Word of God is neither false nor defective." 4. "God knows and has within his power various ways, in which he can at any time be present in a place, not in the one only, about which the Fanatics trifle, which the philosophers call *local*." There are three modes of being present, the *local* or *circumscribed*, the *uncircumscribed*, the *replete* or *full*. Christ has all three modes of being present, the *local*, as when he worked on earth, before and after his resurrection; the *divine* or *replete* mode according to which as God he exists in all the works of nature and at the same time is far above them; the *uncircumscribed* mode, by which he takes up no space, but pervades all creatures, as sight and sound pass through the air but occupy no room. By this mode he is present in the bread.

²² Luther knew of seven conflicting interpretations. By the beginning of the seventeenth century no less than twenty-eight different interpretations had been reported by the Calvinists. Vorstius declared: "I hardly know whether the figure in the copula or in the predicate."

wine of the Eucharist. This presence is effected without expansion or contraction, since we cannot apply these terms of natural philosophy to God who is a supernatural and inscrutable being.

Nor is the presence of Christ in the bread and wine (*illoca,* *uncircumscribed*), based upon the fact that the body of Christ is *glorified*, much less upon the doctrine of the ubiquity of the body of Christ, but upon the simple declaration of the word of God, and upon the Christological principle of the personal union, viz., that the divine and the human in Christ constitute one person, "unseparated and undivided." It is true, Luther does in this treatise discuss the omnipresence or ubiquity of Christ's body by virtue of the personal union, but he does so with the declared purpose of showing Zwingli that there is at least one way in which Christ can be present; and yet he distinctly affirms that in the matter of the Lord's Supper, we must not dispute about the body of Christ, "nor must the controversy be placed in this ubiquity. But because we have the expressed word of Christ, 'This is my body,' 'This is my blood.' The axiom is sufficient for us, viz., it cannot be denied that Christ by his own body can do whatsoever he will and can be wherever he will." Hence, as a matter of fact, it is not true, as Dr. Schaff asserts (*Creeds of Christendom*, I. p. 232, note), that the Lutheran doctrine of the Real Presence has its philosophical foundation in the ubiquity of Christ's body. Luther expressly repudiates such a foundation, and excludes all philosophy from seeking to enter into this article of faith; and when, forty-one years later (1569), Martin Chemnitz wrote his great work, *Fundamenta Coenæ Sacrae*, he emphasizes Luther's position, that the Real Presence must be determined alone by the words of institution, and not by the ubiquity of the body of Christ.²⁴

²⁴ Chemnitz (*Loci*, Pars Tertia, p. 166) says: "The words of institution ought to be and to remain the foundation, service and rule, of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. No foundation ought to be sought or admitted except the words, 'This is my body,' 'this is my blood.' But when we discuss in this controversy the hypostolic union of the two natures in Christ, his ascension into heaven, his session at the right of the father, it is not done for the purpose of placing the foundation and seat

Hence it would be just as fair to charge that the church's doctrine of the incarnation has a "philosophical foundation," as to charge that the Lutheran doctrine of the Real Presence is based upon the ubiquity of the body of Christ, when as a fact definitely known such a foundation not only was not sought, but was especially declined in favor of the simple word of God, and because, as Luther says in this Confession (171):

God is not a Being expanded so long, broad, thick, high, deep, but a being supernatural and inscrutable; one who is capable of existing in every little grain of sand, full and entire, and at the same time extends into all, over all, and beyond all creation. Therefore, there is no need of diminution or contraction here.

And as to the bearing of the personal union in the premises, he says:

If the God and the man constitute one person, and the two natures are thus united with each other, so as to adhere more intimately than soul and body, Christ must also be man wherever he is God.

That is, wherever one nature is, there *per virtutem unionis personalis*, the other nature must be. The divine nature is capable of being present by virtue of its own essence; it renders the human nature present wherever it wishes by virtue of the personal union. But the manner in which this is done transcends all the power of comprehension. The body of Christ is everywhere, because the right hand of God is everywhere.²⁵ But "Christ neither in heaven nor in the Eucha-

of this doctrine in those articles, but because the Sacramentarians oppose to the simple meaning of the institution various arguments from these articles, it is necessary to show in refutation that the proper meaning of the words of institution not only are not overturned by these articles, but rather are thereby confirmed."

In its ultimate ground the difference between the Lutheran doctrine and that of the Sacramentarians is this. The former is based upon the words of institution. The latter includes from the very start other articles of faith, and especially the spiritual eating of John vi. 54 *et seq.* Luther's four fundamental principles were called in to meet Zwingli's objection that a body cannot occupy more than one place at a time. Zwingli applied his argument to a *human* body. Luther applied his principles to the *person* of Christ, who must be man wherever he is God.

²⁵ "It does not do to say that this presence is only spiritual, because that phrase is ambiguous. If it means that the presence of Christ is not something objective to us, but simply a mental apprehension or idea of him subjectively present to our consciousness, then the phrase is false. Christ as an objective fact is as really present and active in the sacrament as are the bread and wine, or the minister, or our fellow-

rist is present in a visible manner as human eyes judge a thing to be here or there." "Neither do we say that the body of Christ is in the Eucharist in the same form in which he was given for us; for who would say so?—but that it is the same body which was given for us, not in the same form or mode, but in the same essence or nature. Now it can readily happen that an individual essence can be visible at one place and invisible at another." Here is a real and true distinction. Zwingli had maintained that the body of Christ could not be present in the same form in which it was given for us, that is, in a visible and tangible form. But as the body of Christ does not now exist in such a form, of course it can not be present in such a form, nor had Luther ever claimed for it such a mode of presence, for time and again had he declared that the presence was *spiritual*, that is, immaterial, supernatural, incomprehensible. Mainly he had simply asserted the *fact* of the presence on the authority of the Word, and had left the mode to Christ, who knows how to be present in heaven and in the Eucharist at one and the same time. Nor would he at all admit philosophy as an ally in this doctrine, any more than he would admit it in the incarnation. And this is the position of the Lutheran theology to-day. For itself, it never asks the question, How is the body of Christ present in the Eucharist? and when the question is asked by others, the answer which the Lutheran theology gives, is, "It is an inscrutable mystery. We know nothing about the mode. We are concerned with the fact only. We call it sacramental presence in order (a) to distinguish it from every other mode of presence, (b) to assert our ignorance of the mode itself."²⁶

communicants by our side. It does not do to say that the divinity of Christ is present while his humanity is absent, because it is the entire indivisible divine-human Person of Christ which is present." *Popular Lectures on Theological Themes*, p. 408, 1886. By Dr. A. A. Hodge. The objection urged by Zwingli and by many since him against the Lutheran doctrine, viz., that the body of Christ being in heaven, cannot be present in the Supper, is simply ignored by Dr. Hodge, who, in the strongest possible manner, asserts the fulness of the human presence of Christ with his people, not only in the Supper, but wherever they call upon him. Pp. 231, 232.

²⁶ Condensed from Baier's *Compend*, and from Mosheim's *Elements*.

In the second part of the Confession Luther explains more fully than ever before the meaning of the words of the Evangelists and of Paul in regard to the Supper, and refutes, with great elaborateness of statement and with masterly exegetical tact, Zwingli's *significat* and Ecolampadius' *signum corporis*.²⁷

In the third part of this Confession Luther says :

In this dissertation I wish to confess my faith before God and the whole world, from article to article, in which faith I expect to persevere till my death ; with the help of God to depart from the world in it, and to appear before the judgment seat of our Lord Jesus Christ. And I see the necessity of doing this in order that no one after my death may say, "If Luther were living now, he would maintain and teach this or that article differently ; for he did not sufficiently meditate on the subject."

The article on the Lord's Supper is simply the summing up of the explanations and principles of the former facts of the treatise :

I would also make the same confession (as in baptism) in reference to the Sacrament of the Altar, that the true body and blood of Christ are eaten and drunk in it orally, although the priests who administer it, or those who receive it, do not believe, or misuse it otherwise. For it does not depend upon the belief or unbelief of man, but upon the Word and order of God. In this belief I must continue, unless they should first change the Word and order of God, and construe it differently, as the present enemies of the Sacrament pretend, who certainly have nothing but bread and wine, for they do not possess the words and instituted order of God, but pervert and corrupt them according to their own fancy.

For ten years Luther had studied this subject of the Lord's Supper. His own wants as a Christian, his observations of the wants of others, his deep intuition into the nature and design of the gospel, had led him to see in the Eucharist a promise and pledge of redemption, a *verbum visible*, which must be grasped and appropriated by faith. The fanaticism of Carlstadt, and the vagaries of Zwingli and Ecolampadius, had driven him to a thorough examination of the Word of God in the institution of the Supper. Here he saw, as almost the entire Christian Church has ever seen, more than mere bread and wine, more than a memorial, more than an imaginary presence of Christ, but with the bread and wine

²⁷ It is a fact, noted even by Reformed writers (see Dr. J. J. Herzog, Real Ency., Vol. i. pp. 38-47, ad Ed.), that no Reformed Confession has adopted the definitions of either Zwingli or of Ecolampadius; nor has Dr. Heppe in his Dogmatic of the Evan. Ref. Ch. even quoted their definitions or views on the Eucharist.

visibly and sensibly present, also the true body and blood of Christ invisibly and insensibly present—a truth which must be grasped wholly by faith in defiance of philosophy, since philosophy cannot attain to such sublime subjects. Also Luther saw in Zwingli's and Oecolampadius' mode of interpretation that which, if carried out and applied to the Scriptures as a whole, would overthrow every article of the Christian faith. It would make Christ the figure of a vine, the figure of a good shepherd, the figure of the way, the figure of the truth, the figure of the resurrection and the life. Moreover, reason is not the test of revealed truth. It cannot decide what God can do and what he cannot do. Reason must bow to the Word. Faith must receive what God declares, for God can execute his word of promise. In this he will abide, and, as a matter of fact, in this he did abide, until, in his own words, he went to appear before the judgment seat of our Lord Jesus.²⁸

C. In this period also, though not as a part of the Sacramenterian controversy, belong the Saxon Visitation Articles and the Small and Large Catechisms of Luther. The former²⁹ were written in Latin by Melanchthon in 1527, and, translated by him into German, were published in that language also, with a preface by Luther. The little book contains a summary of Christian doctrine which the pastors of the Electorate of Saxony were to teach their people. It has been called the first Protestant confession of faith. It was so mild and conciliatory in tone that it exposed Melanchthon to assaults from some over-zealous reformers, on the ground that it had conceded too much to the Romanists. The book is of such historical and confessional importance, that we feel justified in giving in literal translation³⁰ from the Latin, the entire article on the Lord's Supper:

²⁸ In the Shorter Confession of the Lord's Supper (1544), Luther confesses the same doctrine. In his Reply to the Louvain Theologians (1545) the year before his death, he says: "In the venerable and blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist, the body and blood of Christ are truly offered to and taken by the worthy and the unworthy."

²⁹ Kurtz, Ch. Hist. II. Sec. III. § 7.

³⁰ Original in *Corpus Reformatorum*, XXVI. p. 19.

First. Let them teach according to the word of Christ, that the true body of Christ is with the bread, the true blood with the cup, because Christ has so declared. And as Paul says: The body of Christ must be discerned. Likewise Christ: This cup is the New Testament, the New Testament founded in my blood, not in the sign of blood. Again: The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ, not the communion of the spirit. The views of the ancient writers agree herewith.

Secondly. Let them teach that as Christ has appointed that they use both species, therefore both species should be received. Cyprian says that we must not depart in the least from the command and precept of Christ. But, nevertheless, should any still be weak and not sufficiently instructed, for the sake of their consciences, these must be permitted to use only one kind. And thus men must be taught that one should not judge another.

Thirdly. That men are not to be justified by bodily eating, but that the eating is a sign which admonishes us to believe. Augustine calls the Sacrament a *verbum visibile*, because it is not different from the *corporale verbum*. For as the Word itself enters the ear that it may admonish us, so the Sacrament enters the eyes that it may admonish us of the divine promises, and excite us to believe. Further: The promise joined to this Sacrament is this: The body of the Lord given for us. Likewise: This is the cup of the New Testament, that is, of the new promise, viz., of promised grace and all spiritual blessings.

This, be it emphasized, is the first symbolical statement of the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper, for this little book of instructions was given out by public authority and was to be the basis for pastoral teaching throughout the Electorate of Saxony, that is, it was to become the faith of the churches and was to distinguish those churches from the Romanists on the one hand, and from the Zwinglians on the other. It contains (a) a clear and emphatic statement of the doctrine of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist; (b) it enjoins the use of both kinds, but in accordance with its conciliatory and non-controversial design, it makes provision for weak consciences and for those still partially imprisoned by the Romish tyranny; (c) it opposes the *opus operatum* and points out the true design of the Sacrament. Moreover, it shows that Melanchthon is in full sympathy with Luther, as already in 1520 he had asserted the presence of the humanity⁸¹ of Christ in the Eucharist, and in the first draft of the *Loci*, 1521, had pointed out that the sacraments are rightly used and are salutary only when received by faith.⁸²

⁸¹ Seckendorf, I. 61, p. 303.

⁸² *Corpus Ref.* XXI. pp. 42-3.

Of the two Catechisms of Luther, written (1529) to supply the need of religious instruction revealed by the Visitation, it is sufficient to say that they contain no other doctrine than that already declared in the Larger Confession and in the Visitation Articles. Luther's view here is expressed as follows :

What, then, is the Sacrament of the Altar? Answer : It is the true body and blood of Christ our Lord, in and with bread and wine, commanded, through the words of Christ, for us Christians to eat and drink. And as we have said concerning Baptism, that it is not simply water, so we also say here, this Sacrament is bread and wine, but not mere bread and wine, as taken to the table on other occasions, but bread and wine comprehended in the Word of God and connected with it.³³ *Large Catechism*, Part V.

³³ In the words, "Comprehended in the Word and connected with it" the Lutheran church has the first symbolical statement of a principle which she regards as fundamental and of chief importance in a sacrament, viz., the WORD. In the Large Cat. V., it is further expressed : "The Word appropriates the element to the Sacrament ; if this is not done, it remains a mere element." "*Accedat verbum ad elementum, et sit sacramentum.*" Augustine.

[TO BE CONCLUDED.]