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A STUDY OF GERMAN LUTHERAN COMMUNION HYMNODY

THE EARLY YEARS

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Practical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
Chapter	
I. COMMUNION HYMNODY OF MARTIN LUTHER	4
Underlying Principles of Communion Hymnody	4
Luther's Communion Hymns From the Mass	8
Luther's General Communion Hymns	14
II. COMMUNION HYMNODY IN THE AGE OF CONFSSIONALISM	26
III. COMMUNION HYMNODY IN THE AGE OF PIETISM	71
Communion Hymnody From Parul Gerhardt	72
Johann Heermann's Communion Hymns	107
Johannes Rist's Communion Hymns	115
Conclusion	118
IV. CONTEMPORARY COMMUNION HYMNODY IN LIGHT OF THE EARLY YEARS	120
Survey of Lutheran Congregations	135
Conclusions	143
BIBLIOGRAPHY	145

INTRODUCTION

And when they had sung a hymn,
they went out to the Mount of Olives.¹

The Lutheran Reformers of the sixteenth century celebrated their rediscovery of the Gospel by writing and singing new hymns. That this held true especially for Martin Luther can be seen in his Preface to the Babst Hymnal of 1545.

Thus there is now in the New Testament a better service of God of which the Psalm (96:1) here says: "Sing to the Lord a new song. Sing to the Lord all the earth." For God has cheered our hearts and minds through his dear Son, whom he gave for us to redeem us from sin, death and the devil. He who believes this earnestly cannot be quiet about it. But he must gladly and willingly sing and speak about it so that others also may come and hear it. And whoever does not want to sing and speak of it shows that he does not believe and that he does not belong under the new and joyful testament, but under the old, lazy, and tedious testament.²

This fresh discovery of the Gospel created a new zeal in presenting the means of grace to the people, especially preaching and the Sacrament of the Altar. As evangelical pastors began to teach and preach a scriptural understanding of the sacraments, a new appreciation for them grew up. Consistent with Luther's view that people should both speak and sing the Gospel, the need for hymns concerning the Eucharist became apparent. Under Luther's influence, the practice

¹Matt 26:30 and Mark 14:26. (NKJV)

²Martin Luther, Luther's Works, vol. 53, Liturgy and Hymns, ed. Ulrich S. Leupold (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), 333.

of singing communion hymns in the vernacular during the Eucharist blossomed.³

The goal of this thesis is to demonstrate that in the early years of Lutheranism, what the faithful sang and confessed about the Sacrament of the Altar is dangerously close to being forgotten by American Lutherans in the latter half of the twentieth century. What Christians sing about as they are given the body and blood of their risen Lord reveals both their confessional stance and their piety. By digging into the treasure-store of German Lutheran Communion hymnody, the theology of the Sacrament as confessed in the early years of Lutheranism will be brought to light and offered to the contemporary Church for the renewal of her own confession and piety.

Chapter one will examine what Luther said about hymnody in general and communion hymnody in particular. The general principles that governed his thinking on communion hymnody will be elucidated. The hymns Luther composed to be sung during the Eucharist will be analyzed.

Chapter two will consider the confessional nature of hymnody. The communion hymns of the post-theologians of the latter half of the sixteenth century, the direct heirs of Luther, will be studied.

Chapter three will uncover several heretofore untranslated communion hymns of three seventeenth century post-theologians: Paul Gerhardt, Johann Rist and Johann Heermann. Hymns of all three men are included in contemporary English Lutheran hymnals, but a number of their hymns remain hidden in the German language. By closely

³Ibid., 36.

examining these communion hymns, a better understanding of how Pietism viewed the Eucharist, as well as the impact of Pietism on what is confessed about the Eucharist, will be gained. The points at which the confessional principles of the previous century held true in the seventeenth will be pointed out.

The final chapter will offer an analysis of the communion hymnody of both Lutheran Worship and Lutheran Book of Worship, in light of the preceding chapters. The selection of communion hymnody in these two hymnals will be tested as to how the communion hymns contribute to both a strong confession of the Sacrament and a warm, lively Eucharistic piety.

CHAPTER I

COMMUNION HYMNODY OF MARTIN LUTHER

Underlying Principles of Communion Hymnody

"Holy Communion is the heart of the worship of the congregation assembled in the name of Jesus."¹ This theological statement echoes the thought of Martin Luther who said that this Sacrament (Holy Communion) is the Gospel. (Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 310). It was both for the Gospel's sake and for the sake of those who need to hear it that Luther undertook the composition of communion hymnody. Two questions will limit the scope of this chapter. What theological principles are involved in Luther's statements on communion hymnody? How well do the communion hymns of Luther support and express these principles?

Communion hymns, in the broad sense, have always been part of the church's life and worship. Our Lord and his disciples went up to the Garden of Gethsemane "after they had sung a hymn." The singing of Psalms, often the verse, "O taste and see" from Psalm 34, during the distribution of the Communion, is attested to from the Early Christian centuries.² The question arises whether these beautiful, Latin, Gregorian chants were really a part of the people's participation in

¹Peter Brunner, Worship in the Name of Jesus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), 157.

²Stanley Sadie, ed., The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 20 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1980), 4:592.

the church's life and worship in Luther's day, since the majority did not understand Latin. According to Luther, this was not the case.

I also wish that we had as many songs as possible in the vernacular [italics mine] which the people could sing during the mass. immediately after the gradual and also after the Sanctus and Agnus Dei. For who doubts that originally the people sang these which now only the choir sings or responds to while the Bishop is consecrating? . . . But the poets are lacking among us, or not yet known, who could compose evangelical and spiritual songs, as Paul calls them, worthy to be used in the church of God. . . . For few are found that are written in a proper devotional style. I mention this to encourage any German poets to compose evangelical hymns for us.³

From this brief excerpt, we can identify three principles for Christian hymnody. First, hymns should be sung in the vernacular by the people. Indeed, Luther composed the German Mass of 1526 "for the sake of the unlearned lay folks."⁴ His primary concern was for faith to be driven home to the heart, something which demanded communication in an understood language. "The orders must serve for the promotion of faith and love and not be to the detriment of faith. As soon as they fail to do this, they are invalid, dead and gone."⁵ Luther formulated a principle long familiar in the Orthodox Church, yet accepted by the Roman Church only after Vatican II.

Second, hymns should be evangelical. They should be controlled by the Gospel and clearly communicate the Gospel. Only gospel-oriented, evangelical hymns are worthy to be used in the house of God. In his Admonition of 1530 and his commentary on Psalm 111, Luther both guards

³Martin Luther, Luther's Works, 55 vols., gen. eds. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehman (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House and Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1955-- , 53:333. Hereafter cited as AE (American Edition).

⁴Ibid., 53:63.

⁵Ibid., 53:90.

the evangelical principle and develops a theological basis for communion hymnody.

In order to safeguard this evangelical principle, Luther states that our Lord clearly separated the two matters of sacrament and anamnesis by saying "Do this in remembrance of me."

The remembrance is indeed supposed to be a sacrifice of thanksgiving; but the sacrament itself should not be a sacrifice but a gift of God *[italics mine]* which he has given to us and which we should take and receive with thanks.⁶

Luther elaborates on the idea of "remembrance" in order to safeguard the gospel's gift.

In order that we might point this out in part, let us consider first of all that he has instituted this sacrament in his memory, as he says: "Do this in remembrance of me" I Cor. 11:24. Carefully ponder and consider this word "remembrance"; it will say much to you and appeal to you greatly. . . . But what does it mean to remember him other than to praise, listen to, proclaim, laud, thank, and honor the grace and mercy which he has shown us in Christ?

Who remembers God sufficiently? Who can praise him too much? Who can thank him too much? Who can honor Christ's Passion too much?
.....

Learn to remember him, that is, as has been said, by preaching, praising, honoring, listening and giving thanks for the grace revealed in Christ. . . . This kind of a remembrance, confession, and glory he deserves to have.⁸

By thanking, praising and glorifying God he the believer performs the most beautiful sacrifice, the supreme worship of God, and the most glorious work, namely, a thank offering. With his confession before men he does as much as if he preached and taught people to believe in Christ. Thereby he assists in augmenting and preserving Christianity, in confirming the gospel and the sacrament, in converting sinners and in assaulting the devil's kingdom.⁹

For Christ completely separates the two matters, sacrament and remembrance, when he says: "Do this in remembrance of me." The sacrament is one matter, the remembrance is another matter. He says that we should use and practice the sacrament and, in addition, remember him, that is, teach, believe, and give thanks.

⁶AE., 38:122.

⁷Ibid., 38:105.

⁸Ibid., 38:106-07.

⁹Ibid., 38:111-12.

¹⁰Ibid., 38:122.

Luther spoke of Psalm 111 as the instruction of the Holy Spirit to us on the matter and language in which we ought to thank and praise God for his grace, especially for the Holy Sacrament. Luther desired this Psalm to be sung intelligently at the Eucharist. Luther defines "remembrance" as the active response of faith:

Now what is remembrance? And what are the wonderful works of God we should remember at our Easter festival? We are to publish, praise, preach and confess the indescribable wonders God has done for us through Christ. We were damned in sin, lost in death, and enslaved under the devil. From this he delivered us by his blood and death, and brought us out of ¹¹sin to righteousness, out of death to life, from the devil to God.

From Luther's point of view, we can have our "remembrance" only because God has remembered us and made an eternal covenant with us in Christ.

God is to be praised because he has not based his gracious covenant of forgiveness of sin on our merit but on his word and because he still commands that it should stand firm and eternal, not falling when we sin, nor becoming valid when we are pious. It stands by itself on the command of God, so that at every moment we must go to him and constantly obtain forgiveness of sin. For since there is endless sin in our flesh as long as we live on earth and there ~~is~~ no end of blundering and erring, we must surely have an eternal and everlasting forgiveness for it. Then we cannot live under wrath because of sin, but under grace because of forgiveness. Behold, this is his eternal covenant, which he steadfastly maintains and which does not waver, so that our heart may be sure its sin will not condemn it. ¹²Because of this we should praise and thank him in all the churches.

Lutheran communion hymns, therefore, should express the proper distinction between sacrament and anamnesis, neither confusing nor entirely separating the two. For while sacrament and anamnesis are distinct, nevertheless they are part of the same institution of Christ and should not be torn apart. We would expect to hear plenty of "gift" language in these hymns, as well as thanksgiving and praise for receiving the free gift.

¹¹AE, 13:372.

¹²Ibid., 13:383-84.

Third, hymns should be written in a proper devotional style. The word "devotional" points out that what Christians do in the Mass is consecrated, holy and set apart. It implies giving ourselves to the Lord with all seriousness and earnestness. A proper devotional style shows reverence to God in a sincere, heartfelt way. Devotional communion hymns will express our loyalty and deep affection toward God. Lest the above be misconstrued as favoring a somber, silent Eucharist, listen again to Luther's Admonition of 1530.

For it is not a small thing when someone is gladly in the midst of the multitude among whom God is praised and thanked; it is something for which the ancient fathers longed with deep sighs, as Psalm 42 says: "I would gladly go with the multitude and go with them to the house of God, with the sound of praise and thanks among the multitude keeping festival"; and in the beautiful Confitemini (Psalm 118:15) we read: "Hark, glad songs of victory in the tents of the righteous"; and many similar passages. . . . In fact, you should be quite willing to walk to the end of the world if you knew you would find there such a multitude among whom God is praised and glorified and you could thus share in the sacred fellowship.¹³

Luther intended the Sacrament to be received with joy and thanksgiving. Lutheran communion hymns, therefore, should be full of joy. People keeping a festival have something important to celebrate. They need glad songs of victory to give expression to their devotional, yet festive, mood.

Luther's Communion Hymns From the Mass

Luther's own communion hymns express concisely in poetic form the principles he expounded at length in theological treatises. The hymns are four in number: the German Sanctus, the German Agnus Dei. "Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior" and "O Lord, We Praise You." The

¹³ AE, 38:109.

first two hymns are substitutions for their respective parts of the historic ordinary of the Mass. These two hymns returned popular access to these important parts of the Liturgy. Because of Luther's general reluctance to introduce sweeping changes in the Mass, these German hymns did not appear immediately.

Luther's first liturgical reform, the Formula Missae of 1523 retains the use of Latin. It was not until the later Deutsche Messe of 1526 that the Ordinary and Propers of the Mass were rendered in the native language. In the Formula Missae of 1523, the choir sings the Sanctus immediately following the Verba. The elevation is kept at the point where the words are sung, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." Then follow the Our Father and the Pax Domini. The Agnus Dei is given as the first communion distribution hymn. The choir may also chant a Psalm (communio) at this point, but Luther preferred more congregational hymns. He suggested his own hymn, "O Lord, We Praise You."¹⁴ In the German Mass of 1526, Luther made a suggestion to separate the blessing of the bread and the cup.

It seems to me that it would accord with [the institution of] the Lord's Supper to administer the sacrament immediately after the consecration of the bread, before the cup is blessed. . . . Meanwhile, the German Sanctus or the hymn, "Let God Be Blest," or the hymn of John Huss, "Jesus Christ, Our God and Savior," could be sung. Then shall the cup be blessed and administered, while the remainder of these hymns are sung, or the German Agnus Dei.¹⁵

In both liturgies, Luther places the Sanctus after the Verba, whereas in the Roman rite it precedes the Verba. This may reflect his desire to maintain a proper distinction between sacrament and anamnesis. "In these various parts (Sanctus and Agnus Dei) you find nothing about a sacrifice

¹⁴Ibid., 53:36-7.

¹⁵Ibid., 53:81-2.

but only praise and thanks. Therefore we have also kept them in our mass."¹⁶

In the Formula Missae, the choir was to chant the Sanctus. Luther's German Sanctus was first sung in 1526. With the German hymn version of the Sanctus, Luther gave the people access to the Ordinary of the Mass again and provided them with an intelligent and devout response to the consecration of the elements.

Jesaia, dem Propheten, das geschah
 Dass er im Geist den Herren sitzen sah
 Auf einem hohen Thron im hellem Glanz
 Seines Kleides Saum den Chor füllet' ganz.
 Es stunden zween Seraph bei ihm daran
 Sechs Flügel sah er einen jeden han:
 Mit zween verbargen sie ihr Antlitz klar
 Mit zween bedeckten sie die Füsse gar
 Und mit den andern zween sie flogen frei
 Genander riefen sie mit grossem G'schrei
 Heilig ist Gott, der Herre Zebaoth!
 Heilig ist Gott, der Herre Zebaoth!
 Heilig ist Gott, der Herre Zebaoth!
 Sein Ehr' die ganze Welt erfüllet hat.
 Von dem G'schrei zittert' Schwell' und Balken gar
 Das Haus auch ganz voll Rauchs und Nebels war.¹⁷

Isaiah, mighty seer, in spirit soared
 And saw enthroned in majesty the Lord,
 Around whose throne shone glory from his face,
 Whose robe of light filled all the holy place.
 Beside the throne two six-winged seraphim,
 Who with their wings showed reverence to him.
 With two each hid his face in holy awe,
 With two his feet, these angels without flaw,
 And with the third wing pair ascended high
 To span the heavens with their mighty cry:
 "Holy is God, the Lord of Sabaoth!
 Holy is God, the Lord of Sabaoth!
 Holy is God, the Lord of Sabaoth!

¹⁶AE., 38:123.

¹⁷W. G. Polack, The Handbook to the Lutheran Hymnal (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1942), 183.

His grace and might and glory fill the earth!"
Then shook the roof beam and the lintel stone,¹⁸
And smoke of incense swirled around the throne.

Luther D. Reed, an authority on the Lutheran Liturgy, held a definite opinion about this hymn-text.

Luther in his German Mass (1526) with a sense of hymnological rather than of liturgical values, paraphrased the Sanctus in the form of a German hymn, to be sung by the congregation during the distribution. Unfortunately, in point of literary and poetic values, this was the least happy of Luther's liturgical and hymnological endeavors. Apart from that, it gives only the story of¹⁹ Isaiah 6:1 and does not include the praise of the congregation.

In Luther's German Sanctus, (with all due respect to Dr. Reed), it must be pointed out that the congregation does not merely recount the history of Isaiah 6:1, but participates in the angelic praise of God by singing the thrice-holy hymn. By making the hymn of the seraphim our own, we join in spirit with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven in the mystery of worship that evades rational explanations. The impact on the congregations of the day must have been considerable as they sang for the first time in their own tongue, "Holy is God, the Lord of Sabaoth!" As Dr. Reed says, it must have been "a solemn act of adoration and thanksgiving in the spirit of holy awe."²⁰ This hymn continues to be a valuable addition to the church's Liturgy because of the strong imagery from the sixth chapter of Isaiah that it calls to mind. Isaiah saw himself as a man of unclean lips, and was cleansed by

¹⁸The Commission on Worship of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Lutheran Worship (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982), Hymn 214.

¹⁹Luther D. Reed, The Lutheran Liturgy (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1947), 332.

²⁰Ibid., 330.

means of a coal from the altar. We, too, see our impurity and sinfulness cleansed as we rejoice in the assurance of Holy Absolution, which qualifies us to join in the doxology of the Holy, Triune God.

In both settings of the Mass, the Latin and the German, Luther directed the Agnus Dei to be sung as a communion distribution hymn. In 1523, he kept the traditional Latin text. In 1526, he gave this hymn to the faithful in their own language. The Sanctus lifts the congregation to the courts of heaven and shouts of angelic praise. In contrast, the Agnus Dei invites adoration of the crucified Lamb. A comparison of the Latin, German and English texts follows.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
 Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
 Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

Christe, du Lamm Gottes, der du trágst die Sünd' der
 Welt, erbarm dich unser!
 Christe, du Lamm Gottes, der du trágst die Sünd' der
 Welt, erbarm dich unser!
 Christe, du Lamm Gottes, der du trágst die Sünd' der
 Welt, gib uns dein'n Frieden!²¹

O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin
 of the world, have mercy upon us!
 O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin
 of the world, have mercy upon us!
 O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin
 of the world, grant us Thy peace! Amen.²²

The German translation is literal, except for the added appellative "Christe." This change adds a warm, personal quality to the hymn. Concerning the origins of the German Agnus Dei, Ulrich Leupold writes:

²¹Polack, The Handbook to the Lutheran Hymnal, 115.

²²The Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America, The Lutheran Hymnal (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), Hymn 147.

The earliest source for this hymn is a Braunschweig church order of 1528, but it may have been known in Wittenberg a few years earlier. Luther's good friend and co-worker Johann Bugenhagen was the author of the Braunschweig church order, and it was printed in Wittenberg. In fact, it is not unlikely that Luther himself had a hand in arranging this hymn, for its melody is strongly reminiscent of the Kyrie in the German Mass.²³

Reed tells us that this hymn originated in the Eastern Church. In the liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, the host or loaf is referred to as the lamb of God.²⁴ As this hymn personally addresses Christ, the lamb of God, the Savior's real presence in the elements is acknowledged with reverent awe. The phrase "dona nobis pacem" was apparently added in the twelfth century "because of the wars and general disorder of that time,"²⁵ and thus is a prayer for both temporal and spiritual peace.

Luther's inclusion of the German Agnus Dei in the Liturgy of 1526 demonstrates his conviction that this hymn belongs to the catholic church at all times. The prayer for mercy and peace in this hymn reminds the communicants of the sin that clings to their flesh and their constant need for the Sacrament, "a pure, wholesome, soothing medicine which aids and quickens us in both soul and body."²⁶ Whoever sings the Agnus Dei as a sincere prayer for mercy, peace and forgiveness will receive the body and blood of Christ in a worthy manner. As Luther says, "Therefore they alone are unworthy who neither feel their infirmities,

²³AE, 53:53.

²⁴Reed, The Lutheran Liturgy, 369.

²⁵Ibid., 370.

²⁶Martin Luther, "The Large Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther," in The Book of Concord, ed. by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 454.

nor admit to being sinners."²⁷ This comment of Luther about the Agnus Dei may help explain its enduring popularity in our churches.

Particularly the Agnus Dei, above all songs, serves well for the sacrament, for it clearly sings about and praises Christ for having borne our sins and in beautiful, brief words powerfully and sweetly teaches the remembrance of Christ.²⁸

Luther's General Communion Hymns

In addition to the Sanctus and Agnus Dei, Luther specifically suggested the singing of other hymns as the people received the sacrament. One of these, Luther referred to as "the hymn of John Huss, 'Jesus Christ, Our God and Savior'." In the earliest editions the caption above this hymn reads, "Das Lied S. Johannis Hus gebessert" (the hymn of St. John Hus, revised). There is a Latin hymn attributed to John Hus, "Jesus Christus, nostra salus" ("Jesus Christ, Our Salvation"), which Luther apparently knew. Luther's hymn, however, bears little resemblance to the Hus text and should be attributed to Luther, not Hus.

Luther's use of the word "gebessert" (revised) with reference to his treatment of Hus' poem is rather weak and falls quite short of describing what Luther did with it. . . . Here Luther kept what was worthwhile and "gebessert" (revised) that which was heretical, although he and Rome undoubtedly disagreed on that point also. The two hymns are unlike in approach, doctrine, purpose, and, of course, language. . . . There is scarcely enough of a relationship between the two to call the latter a translation [even a "gebessert" (revised) one] or even an adaptation.²⁹

²⁷ Ibid., 455.

²⁸ AE, 35:123.

²⁹ Luther T. Engelbrecht, "Martin Luther's Hymn Texts, with special reference to their use in some hymnals commonly used in England and America" (unpublished S.T.M. thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1954), 90.

Leupold also argues that the hymn should be attributed to Luther.

The latter has little in common with its Latin counterpart. The word "revised" evidently refers to a complete theological revision. Where Huss speaks of the bread and food, Luther adds wine and drink. Where the Latin hymn is an encomium on the sacrament along the familiar lines of medieval mysticism, Luther presents the eucharist as the token of God's love and mercy, which requires no other preparation than faith and no other fruit than love.³⁰

With these arguments in mind, one is puzzled by the decision in Lutheran Worship (236, 237) to give credit for the text to Hus, and not to Luther. An examination of the complete hymn text will provide insight into the practical side of Luther's theology of the sacrament, in words the laity could both sing and understand.

1. Jesus Christ, our blessed Savior,
Turned away God's wrath forever;
By his bitter grief and woe
He saved us from the evil foe.
2. He, to pledge his love undying,
Spreads this table, grace supplying,
Gives his body with the bread,
And with the wine the blood he shed.
3. Banquet gifts God here is sharing;
Take them--after well preparing;
For if one does not believe,
Then death for life he shall receive.
4. Praise the Father, who from heaven
To his Own this food has given,
Who, to mend what we have done,
Gave into death his only Son.
5. Firmly hold with faith unshaken
That this food is to be taken
By the sick who are distressed,
By hearts that long for peace and rest.
6. Agony and bitter labor
Were the cost of God's high favor;

³⁰AE, 53:249.

Do not come if you suppose
 You need not him who died and rose.

7. Christ says: "Come, all you that labor,
 And receive my grace and favor:
 They that feel no want nor ill
 Need no physician's help or skill."
8. If your heart this truth professes
 And your mouth your sin confesses,
 You will be your Savior's guest,
 Be at his banquet truly blest.
9. Let this food your faith so nourish
 That by love its fruit may flourish
 And your neighbor learn from you
 How much God's wondrous love can do.³¹

Contemplation of the Lord's Supper necessarily begins with what took place on Calvary. On Calvary, the original German of stanza one states, God's wrath was turned away "von uns" (from us), who deserve so richly what Christ suffered in our place, even "der Holle Pein" (hell's torment). This stanza reminds us that our Eucharist should include both proclamation and contemplation of that central event in salvation history, the scandal of particularity, the crucifixion of our Lord. The crucifixion reminds communicants that Jesus died to save sinners, to give them the forgiveness of sins. The inspired letter to the Hebrews reaffirms this central truth:

By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God."³²

³¹Lutheran Worship, Hymns 236 and 237.

³²Heb. 10:10-12. (NKJV)

In the second stanza, Luther distinguishes between the place where the gift was purchased and the place where it is distributed. The English translation does capture what Luther said in German very well. However, the German text includes the specific concept of eating and drinking Christ's body and blood: "Gab er seinen Leib zu essen" (He gave His body to eat), "Und zu trinken sein Blut im Wein" (and to drink His blood in the wine). Luther's first line brings out a completely different idea, too: "Dass wir nimmer des vergessen" (that we never forget this), that is, his bitter passion. The third line, "Verborgen im Brot so klein" (hidden in this bread so small), expresses the similarity and connection with the Incarnation when the splendor of God was "hidden" in human flesh. The fact that God chooses to hide Himself in small pieces of bread was a stumbling block for Zwingli and remains so today for all children of the "Enlightenment." To affirm the sacramental presence of Jesus Christ in bread and wine is to confess the mystery of the Incarnation and, in essence, the Gospel. Thus, Luther says to those who cannot freely confess this truth, "you have a different spirit." God continues to involve Himself in the mundane realities of daily life through water, bread and wine.

The phrase "Banquet gifts" in stanza three echoes the parable of the marriage feast in Matthew 22. Just as the man without a wedding garment was cast into the outer darkness (Matthew 22:13), so St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 11 tells us that whoever eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself. The theological term manducatio indignorum follows Christ's teaching and promise of real presence. Those Protestants who spiritualize the sacrament must also

spiritualize 1 Corinthians 11:27 which speaks of "sinning against the body and blood of the Lord." Lutherans, having recognized the solemn and awesome reality of the Sacrament, seriously prepare themselves, sometimes through fasting and often by strengthening their faith through confession and absolution. Today, like Luther, our pastors urge the communicants to have faith and confidence in the words "given and shed for you."

Since Calvary and Easter have accomplished the work of salvation, all we can do is receive it in faith, and praise the Father with the fruit of our lips and the living sacrifice of our lives. Even as we receive the body and blood of the Son, in stanza four Luther draws our attention to the Father. Since the Father sent His Son, it follows that the Father also sends us His Son in the sacrament. The Church expresses this facet of the divine plan in her Liturgy (Lutheran Worship) by placing the Our Father immediately before the Verba. One obvious improvement in the new hymnals over The Lutheran Hymnal (1941) is the inclusion of all God's children in speaking and praying the Lord's Prayer. Only through Jesus dare we address or praise almighty God as "Father." Praise will take a central place in the Eucharist when we recognize what God has done and what He has given us.

Luther describes the communicants as "the sick" who are troubled by "Angst" and "Sunden" (anxiety and sins). Luther never forgot that because the Christian has Satan as an enemy, "Anfechtungen" (temptations) are the order of the day. The tentatio that no child of God is without increases our hunger for the Sacrament. As long as we live in this sinful body, we say with St. Paul: "O wretched man that I am! Who

will deliver me from this body of death?"³³ Each communicant, each forgiven sinner confesses his personal, continuing need for the medicine only the Great Physician can give. To those whose hearts no longer long for peace and rest, Luther says:

Therefore, as long as I am in the world, I need to go to the sacrament so that I might cling to my Savior and strengthen my faith, and in this way be enabled to resist this evil world and be protected against sin and vices. For although Christ has indeed overcome the world so that it cannot force us to sin, it has nevertheless so far remained at hand to tempt, plague, and persecute us and thus exercise us in our faith.³⁴

God seeks "ein Herz in grosser Arbeit" (a heart in great labor), that is, a heart that works against the devil, the world and its own sinful flesh. Luther continues his theme in stanza six that distress and difficulty are no strangers to hearts that belong to God. These hearts are the objects of His mercy and grace. Those who imagine that they are completely well, says Luther, should stay away from the Sacrament, lest they receive it for an evil effect instead of a blessing. The Eucharist, thus properly understood, guards against triumphalism and self-righteous pride. Good preaching will reflect the concern of recognizing this individual condition and need.

It was His knowledge of our need that prompted Christ's invitation, as found in stanza seven: "Come, all you that labor." The first line in the original German reads: "Kommt, ihr Armen" (come, you poor), which refers to the poor in spirit mentioned by our Lord in Matthew 5. The poor in spirit are those who realize their continual need of and dependence upon the grace and favor of God. If, on the

³³Rom. 7:24. (NKJV).

³⁴AE, 35:130.

other hand, there is no desire for growth in sanctification, no hatred of sin, then salvation is in danger and repentance is in order. At the same time, one must see that the punishment for each and every sin has been nailed to Jesus' cross, and thus Jesus' body and blood free us from the burden and curse of sin.

Stanza eight reflects this passage of scripture: "For with the heart one believes to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation."³⁵ All are invited, but only those will receive the blessing who come with faith in the heart and confession on the lips. In our day, we must guard against the increasing popularity of "faith in the heart" that has no need for spoken and written creeds or confessions of faith. Whenever the inner "creed" is divorced from the external, or vice-versa, the kingdom of God is poorly served. Christians also trust that the outward life, itself a form of confession, will not contradict the confession of the mouth.

The final stanza creates a bridge from the transcendence of the Sacrament to the realities of daily life. We pray, as did Luther in the German Mass of 1526, that the benefits of the Eucharist will spill into every area of our lives. "We implore you that of your mercy you would strengthen us through the same in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another."³⁶ Our neighbors will see what God's love has done for us. This unmistakable connection between receiving the gracious gift of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist and the dominical command "Deinen Nächsten sollst du lieben" (You should love your neighbor),

³⁵Rom. 10:10. (NKJV).

³⁶Lutheran Worship, 194.

answers the frequent charge that Luther (and Lutherans) emphasized justification at the expense of sanctification. Jesus promised: "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain."³⁷

"Jesus Christ Our Blessed Savior" was seminal for a genre of didactic communion hymns that would flourish in the remainder of the sixteenth century. Each stanza is concerned with either an exposition of the Gospel and the Sacrament, or an exhortation to the communicant based on what has been revealed. Luther's pastoral concern for his flock saturates every stanza.

He (Luther) shows the comfort, the prerequisites, the obligation of the Eucharist; his approach is more didactic than laudatory. This is truly a "catechism" hymn and fits in perfectly with the sixth chief part. . . . His purpose, in following the Catechism outline, is to present the entire doctrine of the Eucharist in rhymed form, beginning with a simple statement of the Gospel and going on to the purpose of the sacrament, the danger of receiving it unworthily, the proper approach to its mysteries, its value, and the obligation it places upon the partaker.³⁸

Luther's practical, pastoral heart is evident also in his choice of a popular, old German spiritual folk tune, "Gott sei gelobet" (God be praised) as the basis of a new communion hymn. He retained the well-known first stanza and added two new ones, thus crafting one of the church's best-loved communion hymns. It was and is both pastoral and practical to select a well-known, spiritual tune with which to compose a new communion hymn.

1. Gott sei gelobet und gebenedeiet
Der uns selber hat gespeiset
Mit seinem Fleische und mit seinem Blute

³⁷John 15:16 (NKJV).

³⁸Engelbrecht, "Martin Luther's Hymn Texts," 91-2.

Das gib uns, Herr Gott, zugute!
 Kyrieleison!
 Herr, durch deinen heiligen Leichnam,
 Der von deiner Mutter Maria kam
 Und das heilige Blut
 Hilf uns, Herr, aus aller Not!
 Kyrieleison!

2. Der heilige Leichnam ist für uns gegeben
 Zum Tod, das wir dadurch leben
 Nicht grössre Güte konnt' er uns geschenken
 Dabei wir sein soll'n gedenken
 Kyrieleison!
 Herr, dein Lieb so gross dich zwungen hat
 Das dein Blut an uns gross' Wunder tat
 Und bezahlt' unser Schuld
 Dass uns Gott ist worden hold.
 Kyrieleison!

3. Gott geb' uns alle seiner Gnade Segen
 Das wir gehn auf seinen Wegen
 In rechter Lieb' und brüderlicher Treue
 Dass uns die Speis' nicht gereue.
 Kyrieleison!
 Herr, dein Heiliger Geist uns nimmer lass'
 Der uns geb' zu halten rechte Mass
 Dass dein' arm' Christenheit
 Leb' in Fried' und Einigkeit!
 Kyrieleison!

1. O Lord, we praise Thee, bless Thee and adore Thee
 In thanksgiving bow before you.
 Here with your body and your blood you nourish
 Our weak souls that they may flourish.
 O Lord, have mercy!
 May your body, Lord, born of Mary
 That our sins and sorrows did carry,
 And your blood for us plead
 In all trial, fear, and need:
 O Lord, have mercy!

2. Your holy body into death was given
 Life to win for us in heaven.
 No greater love than this to you could bind us,
 May this feast of that remind us.
 O Lord, have mercy!
 Lord, your kindness so much did move you
 That your blood now moves us to love you.
 All our debt you have paid,
 Peace with God once more is made,
 O Lord, have mercy!

3. May God bestow on us his grace and favor
 To please him with our behavior;
 And live together here in love and union,
 Nor repent this blest communion.
 O Lord, have mercy!
 Let not your good Spirit forsake us,
 But that heavenly minded he make us;
 Give your church, Lord, to see
 Days of peace and unity.
 O Lord, have mercy!³⁹

t The first stanza Luther had simply taken over from a popular pre-Reformation Corpus Christi leise, which the congregation sang between the verses of the Latin sequence hymn, Lauda Sion Salvatore.⁴⁰ Polack indicates that this first stanza was "sung by the people as a post-communion hymn during the Mass."⁴¹ The people are giving God their praise, blessing, adoration and thanksgiving in response to a heavenly gift, the Lord's body and blood. The specific mention of the Virgin Mary as mother of God in the Eucharistic context is noteworthy. The body and blood that we receive in the Eucharist is the same body and blood that was born of the blessed Virgin Mary, not a spiritualized, non-corporeal body that cannot be located in bread and wine. The only blood that can plead for us is the blood that was born of Mutter Maria" (mother Mary). We have in this very proper mention of Mary a focus on the Incarnation that is vital to a correct understanding and appreciation of the Eucharist, and is without parallel in Lutheran communion hymnody.

In the second stanza, gift language: "Nicht grössere Güte konnt' er uns geschenken" (no greater gifts could he give us) and the remembrance

³⁹Polack, The Handbook to the Lutheran Hymnal, 224-25.

⁴⁰AE, 53:252.

⁴¹Polack, The Handbook to the Lutheran Hymnal, 225.

theme: "Dabei wir sein soll'n gedenken" (may this feast of that remind us) are accented. Jesus' blood "an uns gross' Wunder tat" (has done great miracles for us). This stanza also stresses the perfection of Christ's atoning sacrifice: "und bezahlt' unsere Schuld" (all our debt you have paid). Peace with God moves us to love him in return who loved us "zum Tod" (unto death).

The final stanza states that it is the Holy Spirit "der uns geb' zu halten rechte Mass" (who enables us to keep a true Mass). Luther recognizes the essential role of the Holy Spirit even in our Sunday worship. The same Spirit gives us the blessing of grace "to please Him with our behavior." Prayer for peace and unity in the Church completes the hymn. Regular participation in the Sacrament should increase the desire for true and God-pleasing unity of confession in the Church. A Christian's vision is not limited to a local congregation, but includes the catholic Church, "dein arm' Christenheit" (your poor ~~Christenheit~~ Christendom).

This hymn holds before the Church many facets of the Eucharist. Familiarity with this hymn will practically assure a right understanding of the Sacrament of the Altar. With one stroke, Luther set the standard for future efforts at composing evangelical Lutheran communion hymns. Luther faithfully followed his own principles by composing in the vernacular, by focusing on the Gospel and sustaining a proper devotional style. His expression of the Gospel is always drawn to the Incarnation and Passion of our Lord. Luther's devotional style reflects a reverent awe and joy in sharing the Savior's body and blood. His concerns as a pastor and teacher are abundantly evident. In his communion hymns,

Luther sees participation in the Eucharist as a major aspect of Christian spirituality, faith and life. It is both for the Gospel's sake and for the sake of those who need to hear it that the Church today includes these hymns in her hymnals and sings them with joy.

CHAPTER II

COMMUNION HYMNODY IN THE AGE OF CONFSSIONALISM

While considering the communion hymnody of Luther's contemporaries and immediate successors, it will be helpful to remember that they wrote in an age of controversy and strong confessionalism, as even a casual study of the "Formula of Concord" will demonstrate. Well aware of the principle lex orandi, lex credendi, the Lutherans revised the Hauptgottesdienst along evangelical lines. They also wrote hymns and produced hymnals. They were sensitive to the power of hymnody to shape the confession of a congregation. As Peter Brunner points out, "Luther displays a very fine understanding of the original association between confessio and hymnus when he proposed to admit the Te Deum to the early church's confession."¹ Luther's understanding of hymnody as the sung confession of the church, albeit in poetic and musical form, was shared by his contemporaries in the sixteenth century. It was for the gospel's sake, for the love of their common salvation, that these men took up their pens in the service of confessional hymnody. They had heard and responded to the exhortation ". . . to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."² Brunner explains the unique nature of hymnody and its power in a confessional movement.

¹Peter Brunner, Worship in the Name of Jesus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), 139.

²Jude 3. (NKJV).

The hymn is still sung "intelligibly". It does not become the language of angels or of tongues, but its form of expression stands on the boundary line of rapture. At this very boundary line speech achieves its greatest force, its most lucid purity, its brightest radiance, its profoundest beauty. The fact that language endures this tractive force without breaking up over it, is the miracle of the pneumatic inspiration from which the hymn is born. . . .

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In its hymnic culmination, poetry in worship is the sign which the coming eschatological transformation of all things already stamps upon speech without destroying it as such. Hymns are not born in a church which is ignorant of the on-rushing impact of the last things and of the rapturous force of the Spirit. . . .³

As the church sings these songs with its lips and its heart it itself becomes the Preacher Zion on the mountaintop. Here the Pentecostal prophecy of Joel, quoted in Acts 2:17, is fulfilled. This proclamation of God's great deeds in hymns at times approaches the New Testament charismatic-prophetic service even more closely than the sermon of the pastor.⁴

Erik Routely, the famous teacher and champion of hymns also comments on the confessional nature of hymnody:

But hymn-singing is, as a matter of fact, the most insistent and clamorous of all the ways in which the Christian faith and worship makes impact on the world around it. The reason is very simple. You can close your eyes; you can stay away from the church and so neither taste nor see that the Lord is good. But you cannot close your ears, and if a group of Christian people choose to sing a hymn under your window, you are defenseless.

.
A hymn, basically, is an opportunity for a congregation to declare its experience and to rejoice in Christian doctrine corporately. . . . A hymn, then, uses words in order to help a congregation speak its mind corporately, and uses music in order to enhance that corporateness . . . but nonetheless, a congregation's general temper, its disposition toward right belief or away from it, is subtly influenced by the habitual use of hymns. Therefore it is right to call for caution in their use and choice, because there is no single influence in public worship that can so surely condition a congregation to self-deception, to fugitive follies, to religious perversities, as thoughtlessly chosen hymns.⁵

³Brunner, Worship, 270.

⁴Ibid., 138.

⁵Erik Routely, Hymns and Human Life (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1952), 2-3.

The task of this particular chapter is to examine a sampling of communion hymnody from the latter half of the sixteenth century, the age of controversy and confessionalism, the generation that produced the Book of Concord. The question we will be asking is this: were these subsequent generations faithful to Luther's view of the sacrament? How well did they guard against the "fugitive follies" and religious perversities of the Middle Ages? How did they develop, defend and celebrate Luther's clear and hard-won view of the Sacrament as gift and Gospel? Did they see, as Hans Preuss says,

Luther's work was a call to the heart of the matter. He freed the sacrament from everything that was not of its essence, especially from the chains of the concept of sacrifice. . . . While the Eastern Church saw the Eucharist as the gift of eternal life and the Western Church saw the Eucharist as the imperfect gift of the church to her Lord, (but in communion only a portion of daily sins would be forgiven, not mortal sins, not to detract from the sacrament of Penance), while the mystics enjoyed in communion a secret, blessed flowing together with Jesus, Luther planted the forgiveness of sins as the Alpha and Omega of the sacrament, exactly as Christ had ordered it. Forgiveness of sins is the beginning and the goal, the chief matter, the matter itself.⁶

Preuss' description of early Lutheran communion hymnody as a confession of faith captures the thrust of this chapter: "What our fathers in those days managed to sing about the body and blood of our lord and about the

⁶Hans Preuss, Die Geschichte der Abendmahlsfrömmigkeit in Zeugnissen und Berichten (Gutersloh, Deutschland: C. Berterlmann Verlag, 1949), 15-16. "Luthers Werk war ein Ruf zur Sache. So befreit er auch das Sakrament von allem, was nicht sein Wesen ist, besonders von den Fesseln der Opferidee. . . . Wenn der Osten in der Eucharistie die Gabe des unsterblichen Lebens sah und der Westen die entschuldigende Gabe der Kirche an ihren Herrn in der Kommunion aber nur ein Anhängsel zur Vergebung all täglicher Sünden, nicht der Todsünden, um das Busssakrament nicht zu entwerten; wenn die Myskik im Abendmahl das geheimnisvoll selige Ineinanderfliessen mit Jesus genoss, so pflanzte Luther Die Vergebung der Sünden als das A und O der heiligen Handlung auf, genau wie es Christus angeordnet hatte. Vergebung der Sunden ist Anfang und Ziel, die Hauptsache, die Sache selbst.

blessedness they bring is simply indispensable for us today."⁷ The burden of this chapter is to demonstrate by various examples what it was our fathers sang about the body and blood of our Lord and why their songs are indispensable for us today.

The primary source for the research presented in this chapter is Das Deutsche Kirchenlied (The German Church Song), an anthology of old German hymn texts, edited by Philipp Wackernagel and published in 1870. The selection of hymns was guided by two factors: 1. The author's confessional orthodoxy (hymns of the 'Reformed' churches are not considered here) and 2. a desire to represent fairly the three types of communion hymns that were written in early Lutheranism: the didactic, the laudatory and the prayerful.

Pastors who wrote hymns in the latter half of the sixteenth century saw them as opportunities for teaching. Such a man was Veit Dietrich. He came to Wittenberg in 1522, and became Luther's trusted secretary. In 1535 he became a preacher at Saint Sebald's in Nürnberg. He was involved in publishing a number of Luther's Hauspostille as well. In 1547, he composed this didactic communion hymn, "Bedenck, O Mensch" ("Consider, O Man").⁸

1. Bedenck, O Mensch, wie grosse Gnad
Gott imm Himmel bewiesen hat
Uns Armen hie auf erden.
Denn durch die Sünd der ewig Tod
Uns Menschen all gefangen hat
Niemand konnt selig werden

⁷Ibid., 19.

⁸The German spelling is reproduced here as found in Das Deutsche Kirchenlied, ed. P. Wackernagel. This accounts for the discrepancies with modern German spelling.

Solch Ungnad auf uns all hat geerbt:
 Herz, Sinn und Mut ist alls verderbt,
 Was von Fleisch wird geboren.
 B'halt solch Unart und bleibt entwicht.
 Hie hillft kein freier Wille nicht,
 Es ist mit uns verloren.

2. Solch elend, Gott nicht leiden konnt
 Hat derhalb seinen Sohn gesandt
 Und ihm Mensch lassen werden,
 Auff dass er litt für uns den Tod
 Und hülf uns aus der Sünden Noth
 Und dem Verderben wehret.
 Das hat Christus treulich geleist
 Und uns dem Weg zum Leben g'weist
 Durch sein heilsames Worte,
 Darin er lehret Busze thun
 Und glauben, er sei Gottes Sohn;
 Hab z'stört der Hellen Pforten.
3. Solch Zuversicht dass sie sei g'wiss,
 Uns Christen all verordnet ist
 Von ihm die selig Taufe,
 Da durch wir werden wiedergeboren
 Zu Gottes Reich wol auserkorn
 Dem Satan zu entlaufen.
 Wer glaubet und getaufet ist
 Wird selig, spricht Herr Jesu Christ;
 Den Trost sollt du wol mercken
 Und dich in Anfechtung und Noth
 Wider die Sünd und ewig Tod
 Mit solchem Wörtlin stärke.
4. Ob aber wir durch Schwachheit viel
 Fallen und sündigen ohn Ziel,
 Und derhalb zaghaft werden,
 Als halten wir die Tauff verschütt
 Und Gottes Verheissung verrütt;
 Da hat Christus auf Erden
 Verordnet seine Diener werth
 Dass, wer es von Herzen begehrt,
 Man Sünde soll vergeben.
 Was ihr bindet, soll gebunden sein;
 Was ihr löst, ist gelöset fein,
 Spricht Christus, merk gar eben.
5. Über das ordnet er am End
 Das neu und selig Testament
 Durch sein Wort also helle.
 Er nimmt das Brod, spricht: Esst davon;
 Das ist, sag Ich, mein Leichnam fron,

Soll für euch geben werden.
 Darnach theilt er den Kelch aus,
 Und spricht: nehmt hin, trinkt alle draus:
 Dies ist mein Blut so reine
 Das für euch all vergossen wird
 Und euch mit Unschuld wieder ziert
 Solchen Schatz ich euch meine.

6. Darumb, O mensch, sei wol bedacht,
 Und diese Wohlthat recht betracht.
 Dank Gott von Herzen Gründe,
 Dass er durch seinen Sohne her
 Die Sacrament und rechte Lehr
 Hat g'ordnet für die Sünder,
 Dass ihn dadurch geholfen war
 Wider den Tod und all Beschwer
 So uns ewig kann schaden.
 Wenn du nur glaubst dem Worte sein
 Dein Herz auf sein Gnad setzt allein,
 So ist der Seel gerathen.⁹

1. Consider, O man what great grace
 God in heaven has demonstrated to us poor
 ones here on earth.
 For through sin eternal death had captured
 us all,
 And no one could be saved;
 Such a curse had fallen on us all.
 Heart, mind and sense are all condemned;
 Whatever is born of flesh, holds such a con-
 dition and remains apart.
 No free will will help here, we are completely
 lost.

2. Such sorrow God could not endure.
 Therefore he sent his Son and let him become man,
 And that he suffered death for us,
 Helped us from our sinful state, shielded us
 from damnation.
 This has Christ faithfully done,
 And shown the way to life through his saving
 word,
 Wherein he teaches repentance and faith.
 He is God's Son and has destroyed the gates of
 hell.

⁸Philipp Wackernagel, ed., Das Deutsche Kirchenlied, 8 vols,
 (Leipzig, Germany: B. C. Teubner, 1870), 3:563.

3. Such confidence that we should all be sure
For us Christians is ordered Holy Baptism,
Through which we are born again,
Come into God's kingdom and flee from Satan.
Whoever believes and is baptized
Will be saved, says Christ the Lord.
This comfort you should mark well
Against sin and eternal death with this little
word.
4. But if we through much weakness fall
And sin without measure, and thereby despair,
If we hold Baptism to be void and despise God's
promises,
Therefore Christ has ordered here on earth for
his servants' good
What whoever desires it from the heart
Should be forgiven his sin.
What you bind shall be bound;
What you loose is loosed well, says Christ,
mark it well.
5. Beyond that he ordered at the end
The new and blessed Testament through his
clear Word.
He took the bread, saying, eat thereof;
This is, I say, my body, which is given for you.
Afterwards he shared the cup, and said,
Take and drink it, all of you, this is my blood
so pure
That will be shed for you all and adorn you again
with innocence
Such a treasure I give you.
6. Therefore, O man, think carefully
And consider this great deed properly.
Thank God with all your heart, that he through
his Son
Has ordered for sinners this Sacrament and true
doctrine.
We through this are helped against death
And all evil that could harm us in eternity.
If you only believe his Word
And set your heart on his grace alone, so is
your soul redeemed.

The subtitle for this hymn reads "Von der Einsetzung und rechtes
Gebrauch der Sacramente" ("Of the institution and Proper Use of the
Sacrament"). In a purely didactic and hortatory fashion, in six

stanzas, the doctrines of sin and redemption, baptism, absolution and the Lord's Supper have been presented. The force of the hymn is that if man properly considers his true condition, he will see that he is bound for eternal death and is powerless to help himself. Therefore, because God is so gracious, he sent his Son, who in turn instituted the Sacraments for our confidence and comfort in the face of Satan and our own weakness. Bread and wine are specified as body and blood, which we are to eat and drink in order to be adorned again with innocence.

The first stanza reviews the curse of sin and urges us to consider the grace of God. A sober consideration of our lost condition should awaken a true hunger and thirst for the sacraments. In stanza two, the perfect work of Christ is considered: he has "shown the way of life through His saving word," and has "destroyed the gates of hell." Stanza three extols the blessings of Baptism and calls it a confidence and comfort against sin and eternal death. The fourth stanza takes into account that even the baptized may stumble and fall again, and points them to absolution which is for whoever desires it from the heart." Stanza five records the institution of the Eucharist and calls it a treasure, "the new and blessed testament." Stanza six urges us to be thankful for these marvelous gifts of God, to "believe his Word and set your heart on his grace alone." Finally, we are exhorted to thank God with all our hearts for establishing the sacraments against all that would rob us of what grace has given us. Like Jesus Christus, unser Heiland, Bedenck, O Mensch, wie grosse Gnad does not include a purely doxological stanza, although every stanza is designed to stimulate such a response.

Dietrich sings of the Lord's body and blood not as a solo aria, but rather as polyphony, with all the means of grace God offers us tied into one composition. In this hymn, eating the body of Christ and drinking His blood are the essence of the new testament, the center of the mystery of our faith. Each stanza drives home the demonstration of God's grace in Christ to sinful men, that pearl of great price which the sixteenth century confessors were so eager to share with the world.

Another man who belonged to this company was Bartholomaeus Ringwald.

Ringwald was born on November 28, 1532. He was ordained in 1557 and was pastor of two parishes before he settled in 1565 as pastor of Langenwald near Sonnenburg in Brandenburg. He was still there in 1597, but seems to have died there in 1599 or at least not later than 1600. After 1577 he published various didactic poems giving a mirror of the times and of the morals of the people. He was one of the most prolific hymn writers of the sixteenth century. P. Wackernagel in Das Deutsche Kirchenlied gives 208 pieces under his name, about 165 of which may be called hymns. He is perhaps best known for his hymn "Es ist gewisslich an der Zeit" ("The Day Is Surely Drawing Near").¹⁰

The following hymn exemplifies Ringwald's treatment of the Lord's Supper:

1. Als Jesus unser HERR vernam
 Das er nun solt abscheiden
 Und als das ware Osterlamm
 Fur alle Menschen leiden;
 Er sich zuletzt zu Tische setzt
 Mit seinen Jüngern alle,
 Und hielt das Pasch nach alter mass
 Auff einem grossen Sale.

2. Und als das Lemblein war verzert
 Im stehn das wolt man reisen
 Er diesen Gesetzs brauch verkehrt;

¹⁰W. G. Polack, Handbook to the Lutheran Hymnal (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1942), 568.

Thet ab den schein und ordnet sein
 Das rechte Lamb zu niessen;
 Welchs für die Bürd der Menschen würd
 Am Kreuz sein Blut vergiessen.

3. Nam uber Tisch bei licht das brod
 Für seinen zwölff Legaten;
 In welcher nacht er bis in tod
 Von Juda ward verraten:
 Danckt und dz bracht gabs in und sprach
 "Nempt, esst und wisst darneben
 Das es gar frei mein Leichnam sei
 Der für euch wird gegeben.
4. "Und wenn ihr dieses Brotes esst
 Solt ihr an mich gedencken;
 Und als geliebtge, danckbar Gest
 Von meinem Wort nicht lencken;
 Ich habs gesagt, nicht darnach fragt
 Wis mein Leib sie vorhande;
 Der Glaub allein nimpt solches ein
 Vernunfft wird hier zuschanden."
5. Darnach hub er mit henden auf
 Als nun das Brod was gessen,
 Im Kelch den Wein, und danckt darauff
 Thet sich doch mer vermessen;
 Reicht den auch hin und sprach zu ihn
 "Nempt hin und trincket alle;
 Es ist mein Blut welchs heilen thut
 Die Gift in Adams falle.
6. "Unds wenn ir dieses Tranck genist
 Nach meinem Testament,
 Schaut, das ihr die vernunfft beschlist
 Halte für ein Sacramente;
 Und gleubet schlecht ich habe recht
 Und nicht unwar gesprochen
 Denn meine wort gehn allzeit fort
 Und werden nicht gebrochen.
7. "Es ist mein Leib, es ist mein Blut,
 Bei diesen worten bleibet;
 Und nicht aus eignem frevelmut
 Sündhaftig forschung treibet;
 Lasts also sein im Brod und Wein
 Wird euch zugleich verreichet
 Mein Leib und Blut solchs gleuben thut
 Und davon nimmer weichet.
8. "Wie aber solches mag geschen
 Das kundt ir nicht ergründen;

Mit augen kan man das nicht sehn,
 Noch mit dem Mund empfinden:
 Sondern es mus ohn ergernus
 In sittigen geberden
 Fein alber hin im stillem Sinn
 Von euch geGLEUBET werden.

9. "Doch macht der Glaub kein Sacrament;
 Unglaub thuts auch nicht schwechen;
 Ich giess die Krafft ins Element
 Mit meinem starcken sprechen
 Meins wortes Krafft dis alles schafft
 Im Brod und auch im Weine,
 Die ganze sach ich selber mach
 Und wirck darin alleine.

10. "Doch wird der nutz und auch die frucht
 So da inn diesem essen.
 Von menschen Kindern wird gesucht
 Nicht alle zugemessen;
 Denn wer mit busz mir felt zu fus
 Getrauet meinen wunden;
 Und sich gar fest darauf verlest,
 Der hat den Kern gefunden.

11. "Wer aber one busz hingent
 Und bleibt im argen leben
 Und dise wort nit wol versteht
 (Für eure Sünd gegeben),
 Der trinckt und isst mit böser list
 Wie Judas ohn glauben,
 Und in seim mut sich selbest thut
 Der Seligkeit berauben.

12. "Darumb brauchts mit gut bedacht,
 Das Herz zuvor wol prüfet,
 Und schaut das ihr euch tag und nacht
 Inn glaubens fruchten übet;
 Vermeid^{et} zanck sampt anderm stanck
 Der sunders widers gwissen;
 So werdet ihr der speis in mir
 Nach ihrer krafft geniessen."¹¹

1. When Jesus our Lord knew
 That he should now depart,
 And suffer for all men
 As the true Paschal Lamb,
 At the last he sat at table
 with all his disciples

¹¹Wackernagel, ed., Das Deutsche Kirchenlied, 4:936.

And held the Pasch according to ancient
 custom
 In a large hall.

2. And as the lamb was prepared
 And they all were ready to travel,
 He changed the use of this law
 For a much better one.
 Did away with the bill,
 And ordered them to enjoy the true lamb
 Which for the burden of men
 Would shed his blood on the cross.

3. Over the table by a light
 He took bread for his twelve disciples,
 In which night he was betrayed
 Into death by Judas.
 He gave thanks, broke
 And gave it to them saying:
 "Take, eat, and know by this:
 That my body is freely given for you.

4. "And when you eat this bread,
 You should remember me,
 And as a beloved, thankful guest
 Not be led from my word;
 I have said it, do not ask
 How my body is at hand.
 Faith alone receives it;
 Reason here will ruin."

5. After this he lifted up in his hands;
 Now the bread was eaten.
 He poured the wine, enough to give them all.
 Gave thanks,
 Reached out also and said to them,
 "Take and drink, all of you.
 It is my blood which heals
 The poison in Adam's fall.

6. "And when according to my testament,
 You enjoy this drink,
 See that your senses
 Hold this as a sacrament.
 Simply believe that I am right
 And have not spoken falsely
 Since my Word goes forth forever
 And will not be broken.

7. "It is my body, it is my blood;
 Remain by these words.

Do not of your own wickedness
 Urge a sinful inquiry.
 Let it be in bread and wine
 For you in equal measure
 My body and blood,
 Received in faith and never yield this
 treasure.

8. "If anyone wonders
 How this happens
 He'll never find it out,
 One cannot see it with the eyes,
 Nor with the mouth perceive it
 It must without offence
 In modest behavior be believed,
 By you in a quiet mind.
9. "Yet faith does not make the sacrament;
 Unbelief does not unmake it either.
 I pour the power in the element
 With my strong words.
 The strength of my words
 Creates all this in bread and also wine.
 I do it all myself;
 It is I who work alone.
10. "The use and the fruit
 Will be in this eating.
 Among the children of men
 It will not be desired by all alike.
 The one who repents and falls at my feet,
 Trusting in my wounds,
 And abandons himself completely there,
 He has found the kernel.
11. "But he who comes without repentance
 And stays in an evil life
 And does not well understand the word.
 (Given for your sins),
 He eats and drinks with ugly cunning,
 As did faithless Judas;
 And in his daring
 Robs himself of salvation
12. "Therefore use this with good intent,
 And test your heart before;
 And see that night and day
 You practice the fruits of faith.
 Avoid quarrels and other stink,
 The sins against the conscience.

So you will enjoy the meal in me
For your strengthening."

This hymn is almost evenly divided between a narrative of the institution of the Eucharist and a hortatory/didactic section. Stanzas one and two give the setting of the Passover meal (das Pasch), and the order "to enjoy the true lamb." Stanzas three to seven contain the Verba in a slightly varied, poetic form: "It is my blood which heals the poison in Adam's fall." Other words of exhortation are put in the Lord's mouth that are not attributed to him in the Gospels, yet follow the analogy of faith: for example, "see that your sense hold this as a sacrament," "do not ask how my body is at hand," and "Simply believe that I am right, and have not spoken falsely, since my Word goes forth forever and will not be broken." Ringwald puts Jesus in the position of defending the real presence and refuting "sinful inquiries" about how this can be true.

In these twelve stanzas, the bread and wine are again specified as Jesus' body and blood which we are to eat and drink. Jesus himself speaks to us in the first person. He encourages us to exercise faith and set reason aside as we come to the sacrament. It all happens by the power of the Word. The final two stanzas are a warning not to come without examining our hearts and believing the words "given for your sins." There is no mention of thanksgiving, only an exhortation to bring forth the fruits of faith.

Although some attention is given in this hymn to the effects of rationalism over against the Sacrament, the central and dominant subject remains the body and blood of Christ given for us to eat and drink.

The creative device of our Lord speaking in the first person to the congregation highlights the concern that Jesus not be misunderstood in this great matter of his own last will and testament. Ringwald's evident concern for a proper understanding and use of the Sacrament marks him as a faithful confessor of the Gospel.

Another confessor of the Gospel was Sebald Heiden, who was born in 1499 and died in 1561. He was a writer, teacher, and music theorist, best known for his three treatises on music theory.

Heiden's enthusiasm for the new church led him to produce numerous theological and educational essays and to attempt to supply an appropriate repertory of hymn texts for use in church services. He encouraged hymn writing, and frequently included in his publications hymns of his own and by others, such as Senfl.¹²

This communion hymn by Heiden is a clear confession of the Gospel.

1. Als Jesus Christus unser Herr
West das sein zeit nu komen wer,
Das weg von hinn solt scheiden
Zu tisch er mit sein Jüngern sass,
Mit in das Osterlemblein ass
Zu letzt vor seinem leiden.
Er sprach, mich hat herzlich begert,
Mit euch, ehe ich getödtet werdt,
Essen diss Osterlämme,
Dann ich sag euch, das ich hinfür
Von disem nicht mehr essen würd,
Biss das Reich Gottes komme.
2. Als er nun also mit ihm ass,
Er sonderlich betrachtet
Das ihr herz und glaub nicht zaget,
Setzt darumb ein das Sacrament,
Nam dz brot mit danck in sein handt,
Brachs, Gab ihn das und saget,
"Nembt hin, esst, ez ist mein Leichnam,
Der für euch an des Kreuzesstam
Sol dargegeben werden:

¹²Stanley Sadie, ed., The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 20 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1980), 8:255.

Solchs thut, dz ir mein denckt dabei
 Das ich euer Herr und Heiland sei
 All die ir glaubt auff erden."

3. Desselben gleichen, als nun gar
 Solchs Abendmahl volendet war,
 Sterckt er sein Jüngern schwache,
 Und machet ganz diss Sacrament,
 Nam auch die Kelch in sein hendt,
 Danckt, gab in den und sprache,
 "Nembt hin, trinckt all, dz ist mein blut
 Des Neues Testamentes gut
 Welchs ich ans Kreuz geschencket,
 Vergiessen wiedt für eure Sünd,
 Solchs thut, so offt ir davon trinckt,
 Das ir mein dabei dencket.

4. Gleich wie Gott in Egipten thet,
 Wo er all Erst Gebüter tödt,
 Im Land in einer nachte,
 Den könig Pharaon ertrenckt
 Im Roten Meer, zu grund versenckt,
 Mit all seiner machte,
 So setzt er ein das Osterfest
 Das sein volck dabei dacht un west
 Sein grosse wunderthaten;
 Durch welcher er geführet auss
 Mit starker hand auss de dinsthaus
 Durchs Rot Meer trücken tratten.

5. Also auch, da Christus der Herr
 Durch sein blut in der Taufe mehr
 All unser Sünd versenket
 Den Todt gewürgt, die Hell zerstört,
 Die Handschrift die ez wissen mort
 Mit sich ans Kreuz gehencket.
 Das sein kirch solchs alzeit betracht
 Er selb zum Osterlamb sich macht
 Im Testament, und schaffte sein Leib
 Zu essen inn dem brodt,
 Im Wein zu trincken sein Blut rot,
 Durch seines wortes Kraffte.

6. We nu dies brodt nach dem befelch isst,
 Und trinckt von des Herren kelch,
 Der sol sein Todt verkünden.
 Nemlich das Christus Gottes Sohn
 Am Kreuz bezalt und gnug hat thon
 Für aller unser Sünden;
 Und das uns Gott nun gnedig sei
 So wir solchs glauben und dabei

Uns an die Tauff starck halten
 So sollen wir Gottes Kinder sein
 Und das himlisch Erb nemen ein,
 Das wil Gott ewig walten.

7. So pruff nu d'mensch sich selb recht
 Ehe er diss Sacrament empfecht,
 Das er sein herz erkenne,
 Ob er inn rechten Glauben steh
 Und inn warer lieb hin zu geh,
 Das ihn kein unbusz brenne.
 Das er ihm nicht ess das Gericht
 Drumb das er unterschendet nicht
 Den Leib Christi des Herren,
 Das er der Sunder Sawerteig
 Durch hulff des heilige geists aussfeg,
 Christo dem Lamb zu ehren.
8. Darumb so last uns alle gleich
 Got den Vater im Himmelreich
 Von ganzen herzen bitten.
 Durch Jesum Christum seine Son
 Weil er für uns all gnug hat thon,
 Den Tod für uns gelitten.
 Das er uns durch den heiligen geist
 Sein gnad zu starckem glauben leist
 Nach seinem Wort zu leben,
 Inn rechter lieb und einigkeit
 Und das er uns nach dieser zeit
 Die ewig freud geb, Amen.¹³
1. When Jesus Christ our Lord
 Knew that his time had now come,
 That he should go from here,
 He sat at table with his disciples
 And ate the Paschal Lamb with them
 At last before his Passion.
 He spoke, "I have greatly desired
 To eat the paschal lamb with you before I
 am killed;
 Therefore I say to you, that from hence-
 forth
 I will not eat this meal until God's king-
 dom comes."
2. When he now also ate with them,
 He especially considered that their heart
 and faith not shrink.
 Therefore He instituted the sacrament;

¹³Wackernagel, ed., Das Deutsche Kirchenlied, 3:557.

Took bread with thanks in his hand,
 Broke it, gave it to them and said:
 "Take, eat, this is my body,
 That for you on the tree of the cross will
 be given:
 This do, remember me thereby,
 I am your Lord and Savior,
 All who believe on earth."

3. In the same way,
 Now that the supper was ended,
 He strengthens his disciples' weakness
 And makes the sacrament complete;
 He took also the cup in his hand,
 Gave thanks, gave it to them and said,
 "Take, drink all, this is my blood,
 Which is shed for your sins;
 This do, as often as you drink of it,
 In remembrance of me."
4. Just as God did in Egypt,
 Where he killed all the first born,
 In the land in one night,
 Drowning Pharoah in the Red Sea,
 Sunk to the ground with all his host;
 So he instituted the Passover,
 That his people should thank
 And know his great and miraculous deeds,
 Through which he led out with strong hand
 From the slave house through the Red Sea,
 with dry feet.
5. Thus also as Christ the Lord
 Through his blood in baptism more sank all
 our sins;
 Throttled death, destroyed hell,
 The document that was certain death
 Was hung with him on the cross;
 That his church should always consider
 He made himself the Passover lamb in a
 testament,
 And gave his body to eat in the bread,
 In wine to drink his red blood,
 Through the power of his Word.
6. Whoever eats this bread according to the
 command
 And drinks the Lord's cup proclaims his
 death.
 Namely, that Christ, God's Son
 Has paid and done enough on the cross

For all our sins;
 And that God is now gracious to us,
 That we believe and firmly cling to baptism,
 So shall we be God's children
 And receive the heavenly prize;
 God grant it thus forever!

7. Now let a man truly test himself
 Before he receives this sacrament.
 He should discern his heart
 Whether he stands in true faith
 And goes in true love,
 That no unrepentance burns him.
 So that he does not eat judgement,
 Not discerning the body of Christ the Lord,
 He sweep out sin's leaven with the Holy
 Spirit's help
 To honor Christ the lamb.

8. So let us all pray
 To God the Father in heaven,
 Through Jesus Christ his Son with all our
 hearts.
 He has done enough for us,
 Suffered death for us.
 He gives us through the Holy Ghost
 His grace to strengthen faith,
 To live according to his Word
 In true love and unity.
 He gives us after this time eternal joy,
 Amen.

In these eight stanzas, the bread and wine are again specified as Jesus' body and blood which we are to eat and drink; "Take, eat, this is my body, . . ." "Take, drink all, this is my blood." According to Heiden, the Sacrament has been instituted for several reasons. First, for our faith and weakness, that we may not shrink back but be strengthened. "He especially considered that their heart and faith not shrink . . ." "He strengthens His disciples' weakness." Secondly, that we should know Jesus as the fulfiller of the Old Testament Passover and thank God that through Baptism, we have been saved from death and hell. "Christ the Lord through his blood in Baptism more than

sank all our sins." Heiden ties the two sacraments together beautifully, saying that the Eucharist will make us cling more firmly to our baptism: "That we believe and firmly cling to baptism."

One could not ask for a clearer Gospel statement than is found in stanza six: "Christ, God's Son has paid and done enough on the cross for all our sins; and God is now gracious to us." This line shows that Heiden's concern with the Sacrament was ultimately a concern for the gospel. The seventh stanza brings a mild warning for self-examination; "Now let a man test himself," "whether he stands in true faith and goes in true love, that no unrepentance burns in him." Stanza eight concludes with a prayerful, thankful statement for grace, faith and eternal joy because God has suffered death for us. "He gives us through the Holy Ghost his grace to strengthen faith."

Again by setting in poetic form the Words of Institution, Heiden shows that these words of Christ are the chief matter in the Sacrament, not some sort of "action," "shape," or "prayer." The comparison with the Old Testament Passover reassures us that Christ is not inventing fairy tales here, but fulfilling in his own person God's story and plan of salvation. The securing of this salvation motivates the poet to exhort the Church to true prayer and repentance. The final emphasis, however, is on the grace of Christ that comes to us through the Holy Ghost who enables us to live according to the Word of God. This hymn gives us a thorough and balanced teaching of the Sacrament.

In addition to the didactic hymn, the laudatory, praise hymns enjoyed quite a broad usage in this period as well. Valentin Triller (? - 1573) wrote several hymns in this fashion. Triller was pastor

who compiled the first Lutheran hymnal in the region of Silesia. He used many older, traditional melodies, both Latin and German. His influence is important because other hymnal editors copied his work. He based many of his hymns directly on certain passages of Scripture.¹⁴

One of Triller's communion hymns is subtitled, "Eine Prosa vom Sacrament, auff die noten 'Lauda Sion Salvatorem', auf dem iii Psalm." (A Hymn for the Sacrament, from the Music 'Zion, Praise Your Savior,' from the 111th Psalm).

1. Ich will herzlich lobesingen,
Mit freuden danck opffer bringen
Dem waren und treuen Gott.
Im radt seiner ausserwelten
Inn den Christlichen gezelten,
Ich will dancken früh und spät.
2. Aller ursprung solches lobens
Ist der handel unsers glaubens
Und des Herren grosse werck,
So wir all sein thun betrachten
Seine treu gut erachten,
Dazu seine macht und sterck.
3. Dankes werdt seind seine thaten,
Dies uns auch zu gut geraten
So wir darinn haben lust.
Über alle seine herrliche werck
Ist das höchste, das uns givt heil
und sterck,
Erstatet unser verlust.
4. Als wir armen Creaturen
Seind verterbet von naturen
Gefallen in Sünd und todt,
Ist Gottes ewige gerechtigkeit,
Sampt der veterlichen langmüttigkeit,
Und hillft uns aus aller not.
5. Solcher seiner grossen wunder
Ja der wohltate besonder
Ein gedechtnis hat gemacht,
Zu dem Christus voler gnaden

¹⁴Sadie, ed., New Grove Dictionary, 19:145.

Alle s^under hat geladen,
Der nu sein elend betracht.

6. Jesus, unser hoher priester,
Unser Herr und treuer meister
Richtet uns auff diesen bundet,
Stiftt uns eine reiche malzeit,
Davon felt des Teufels stolzheit
Und alle macht gar zu grundt.
7. Diese malzeit hat er geben
Alle so zu fürchten leben
In demut und blödigkeit;
Auff das sie ja nicht verzagen
Wenn das gesetz sie thut beklagen
Und dreuet ihn alles leidt.
8. Wie herzlich that ihn verlangen
Als der feind uns hilt gefangen,
Das er uns möcht hülffe thun!
Bald vor seinem bitterm leiden
Hat er uns sein gut bescheiden,
Dem Satan zu trost und hon.
9. Er nam brodt in seine hende,
Gab uns da ein reiche spende,
Seinen leib zur edlen kost;
Das ist eine theure speise
Dabei sollen wir beweisen
Das wir an ihm haben lust.
10. Wie gar mild thut er uns schencken
Und mit seinem blutte trencken
Das wir wollen oft gehen ken
Seiner grossen lieb und treu;
Das wir ihm da sollen dancken
Und imn Glauben gar nichts wancken,
Den die speise sol den krancken
Die ihr Sund fühlen mit reu.
11. Schau, wie thut er uns anzeigen
Seine werck lieblich und eigen
Welchs dem Sathan ist entkeigen
Der uns plagt ohn' unterlass:
Solchs sagt uns mit heller klarheit:
Gottes wort und rechte wahrheit:
Obs die welt gleich acht für thorheit,
So ists ein geheimnis gros.
12. Nu last uns für allen dingen
Jhesu Christo lobesingen,

Und des fleisches lusten zwingen;
 Das die speis uns mag gelingen
 Zu gut und zur seligkeit.
 O Herr, hilf in unsern tagen
 Das uns deine werck behagen
 Und dich stetz im herzen tragen
 Deinem todt herzlich danck sagen,
 Hier und dort in ewigkeit.¹⁵

1. I will heartily sing praise,
 With joy bring thank offerings
 To the true and faithful God.
 In the company of his elect,
 In the tents of the righteous
 I will give thanks early and late.
2. Every source of such praise
 Is the action of our faith
 And the Lord's great work.
 So we all consider his deeds,
 Consider his faithfulness and goodness,
 Then also his power and strength.
3. There will be thanks for his deeds.
 They have also well advised us
 To have pleasure therein.
 Over all his splendid work is the highest,
 That gives us strength and salvation,
 Restores our loss.
4. Since we poor creatures
 Are condemned by nature
 And fallen in sin and death,
 God's eternal righteousness comes
 Along with fatherly forbearance
 And helps us from every need.
5. For such of his great miracles,
 Yes, especially the good deed,
 He made a memorial,
 To which Christ, full of grace,
 Has invited all sinners
 Only to consider his passion
6. Jesus, our high priest,
 Our Lord and faithful master

¹⁵Wackernagel, ed., Das Deutsche Kirchenlied, 4:30.

Has set us right on this covenant.
 He established a rich meal
 Which felled the devil's pride
 And every power to the ground.

7. He has given this meal
 So that all might fear Him,
 And live in humility and simplicity.
 This meal will keep them from despair
 If the law accuses them,
 And turns them to sorrow.
8. How heartfelt was his desire,
 Once the enemy held us captive,
 To help us!
 Soon before his bitter passion,
 He showed us his plan,
 Satan's power to overthrow.
9. He took break in his hands,
 Gave us there a rich gift,
 His body as a noble food.
 That is a costly meal;
 Thereby we should demonstrate
 We desire to be with him.
10. How gently he give us
 To drink his blood.
 That we should often remember
 His great love and faithfulness,
 That we should also thank him
 And in faith never stagger.
 That this meal is for the sick
 Who feel their sin and repent.
11. Look, how Christ notifies us
 Of his dear and proper work,
 Which strips Satan of his power,
 Who troubles us unceasingly.
 Jesus speaks to us with bright clarity
 God's word and the rightful truth,
 While the world thinks it foolishness.
 It remains a great mystery.
12. Now let us for all things
 Sing praise to Jesus Christ,
 And control our fleshly lusts,
 That this meal will in us
 Succeed to good and to salvation.
 O Lord, help us in our days
 To find pleasure in your work

Help us firmly carry you in our hearts,
 And express both now and in eternity
 Heartfelt thanks for your death.

This text begins by quoting Psalm 111 in free form: "Praise the Lord! I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright and in the congregation."¹⁶ Even in this paraphrase of Psalm 111, there is reference to eating Jesus' body and drinking his blood. "He took bread in his hands, gave us there a rich gift, his body as a noble food. . . ." "How gently he gives us to drink his blood." The hymn mentions how our great need provoked God to action on our behalf, lest we despair because of many sorrows. "How heartfelt was his desire, once the enemy held us captive, to help us!" Although the phrase "forgiveness of sins" is not found, the meal is clearly for the sick who repent of their sins: "This meal is for the sick who feel their sin and repent."

The hymn closes with a strong expression of thanks and praise, and a prayer for the gift to bear its proper fruit. "O Lord, help us in our days to find pleasure in your work."

Triller saw nothing out of place in linking Psalm 111 to the Sacrament of the New Testament. Christians have even more reason to praise the Lord with their whole heart, since they have seen the victory of Calvary as an accomplished fact. Several references to 'the old evil foe' as a defeated enemy add a dimension to communion hymnody that we have not observed before. This, too, stirs up a spirit of praise to God and highlights the celebrative aspect of the Eucharist, without ignoring Satan's power to trouble us and our need for repentance.

¹⁶Psalm 111:1. (NKJV)

This hymn of praise maintains the tension of the now and not yet in a positive way which captures the joy of encountering the Savior.

Triller added several pieces to the praise genre of communion hymnody. The following example demonstrates his skill of capturing in a few lines the Christian's heartfelt praise.

1. Last uns alle fröhlich loben
Gott den Herrn von ewigkeit;
Der uns reichlich thut begaben
Mit seiner Barmherzigkeit.
2. Der uns armen hie auff Erden
In grosser gebrechlichkeit;
Seinen Son lies auch mensch werden
Aus rechter lieb und wahrheit.
3. Das er sie das brod zum leben
In unser notturfftigkeit;
Hat er sich in todt gegeben,
Uns allen zur seligkeit;
4. Und sein blut für uns vergossen
Zur vergebung alle schuldt;
Das wir auch ganz unnerdrossen
Ihm dienen aus lieb und huldt.
5. Und das er oft mit seim leiden
Ergetzet unser elendt,
Hat er uns zuletzt bescheiden
Gar ein edles testament.
6. Seinem leichnam sampt dem blutte
Unsers glaubes speis und tranck
So uns sein todt geht zu mute
Und fühlen uns geistlich dranck.
7. Wer sich mit dem Leib und Blutte
Jhesu also speiset wol,
Dem gedeiet solche zu gutte,
Das er ewig leben sol.
8. O Herr Christe, wolst verleihen
Uns durch deine göttigkeit;
Das die speise mag gedeien
Uns zur rechten frömickeit.¹⁸

¹⁸Wackernagel, ed., Das Deutsche Kirchenlied, 4:31.

1. Let us all gladly praise God
The Lord from eternity,
Who has richly blessed us
With his mercy.
2. For us poor men on earth
In great infirmity,
He allowed his Son to become a man
In real love and truth.
3. Since he is the bread of life,
In our need and poverty
He gave himself in death,
To save us all.
4. For us His blood was poured,
For the forgiveness of all guilt,
That we also willingly serve him
With love and grace.
5. We know he often, by his passion,
Turns our sorrow into joy;
At the last he ordered for us
A precious testament:
6. His body with the blood,
Our faith's meat and drink.
So we take courage from his death
And feel strengthened spiritually.
7. Whoever feeds himself
With Jesus' body and blood,
He prospers and does well
And will live forever.
8. O Lord Christ,
Grant through your goodness,
That the meal
Will prosper in us true piety.

Here also is specific mention of eating and drinking Jesus' body and blood, by faith, in the elements: "His body with the blood; faith's meat and drink." Our great infirmity and need cause His incarnation and passion. The forgiveness of guilt is clearly linked to the shedding of blood in stanza four: "For us His blood was poured for the forgiveness of all guilt." The hymn of praise ends with a brief prayer

for true godliness/piety as a result of the sacrament.

Triller expresses the conviction that there can be no genuine expression of praise at the Eucharist apart from the presence of the true body and blood of Christ. The true prompting of praise is found in the Gospel events: God becomes man; the God-man dies, shedding His blood; the Savior institutes the new testament of His body and blood as a pledge or seal of eternal life. The prayer for "rechten frömickeit" (true piety) reflects the fact that our new lifestyle of Christian sanctification and obedience to the Gospel is Gospel-motivated, sustained and enlivened by our faithful participation in the Eucharist.

Therefore, it is appropriately called the food of the soul since it nourishes and strengthens the new man. . . . The Lord's Supper is given as a daily food and sustenance so that our faith may refresh and strengthen itself and not weaken in the struggle but grow continually stronger. For the new life should be one that continually develops and progresses.¹⁹

The Eucharist reminds us that for a Christian all of life is doxology and praise to the Triune God.

Triller was not alone in focusing on the aspect of praise. Another writer of praise hymns was Erasmus Alberus, who gave us this hymn in the year 1549. It is subtitled: "Of Christ's victory, at the Lord's Supper, in German, that one sings at the Lord's Supper."

1. Nun last uns Christum loben fein
Und mit einander fröhlich sein!
Der Tyrann ist mit seinem herr
Ersoffen in dem roten meer.
2. Wir stunden all in grosser far,
Das er uns wolt vertilgen gar;

¹⁹Martin Luther, "The Large Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther," in The Book of Concord, ed. by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 449.

Da halff Christ unser lieber Herr
Und furt uns durch das rote meer.

3. Das Lamm mit seinem blut und todt
Halff uns bald aus der grossen not;
Da für uns streit der Herre Christ,
Der böse feind ersoffen ist.
 4. Dies ist das rechte Osterlamm
Gebraten an des Kreuzes stamm;
Davon niedlich zu essen ist,
Das ist der lieb Herr Jesu Christ.
 5. Dies ist das rechte susse brodt,
Welchs von uns treibt den ewigen todt;
Das Lamms blut trincken wir dabei,
So sind wir fürm Tyrannen frei.
 6. Ach, lieber Gott wie können wir
Für solch opffer voldancken dir,
Dadurch wir von dem wuterich
Erlöset sind gewaltiglich!
 7. Du Lamm bist aller ehren werdt,
Darumb man dich billich rühmt und ehrt,
Es sagt dir deine Christenheit
Lob, ehr und danck in ewigkeit.²⁰
1. Now let us gladly praise the Christ
And be joyful with each other;
The tyrant is, with all his host,
Completely lost in the Red Sea!
 2. We all stood in great danger-
There he would consume us;
But Christ our dear Lord helped
And let us through the Red Sea.
 3. The Lamb with his blood and death
Helped us soon from our great distress;
There the Lord Christ fought for us,
The evil foe destroyed.
 4. This is the true Passover Lamb
Roasted on the tree of the cross;
From there it is sweet to eat,
That is the dear Lord Jesus Christ,

²⁰Wackernagel, ed., Das Deutsche Kirchenlied, 3:883.

5. This is the right sweet bread
That drives from us eternal death;
We drink the Lamb's blood there
And thus are freed from tyrants.
6. Ah, dear God how can we
For such sacrifice fully thank you?
Through it we are from the foe
Powerfully redeemed.
7. You, Lamb, are worthy of all glory;
Therefore one poorly praises and honors you;
Your Christendom speaks to you praise,
Honor and thanks eternally.

The first two stanzas of this creative hymn of praise present the strong image of the Exodus, and apply it typologically to us in the Church. Christ, not Moses, has led us through the "red sea" of our baptism and drowned the tyrant, sin. The blood and death of the lamb, Jesus, save us, just as the slaughtered lambs and their blood caused the angel of death to pass over the homes of the Israelites. The true Passover lamb, Jesus, "roasted" on the tree of the cross, has given his body also for us to eat and his blood for us to drink. The final two stanzas express our inability to thank and praise God sufficiently now, but are confident that the redeemed will praise the Lamb in eternity.

This hymn portrays the passion of our Lord in terms of a contest and a fierce struggle with a tyrant. Other hymn writers have been struck by this theme and approach. In both "Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands" (LW 123) and "At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing" (LW 126), struggle followed by victory is combined with Passover/Exodus imagery. The congregation is led in spirit to the shores of the Red Sea, to exult with Moses and Miriam in the salvation of God. Then, in an instant, Christians are brought to the cross as the perfect,

complete and final Passover/Exodus from the tyranny of sin, Satan and death. The connection between the Passover and the Lord's Supper also demonstrates the incarnational reality of the Eucharist, the located and specific nature of God's act of salvation.

That God's gifts in the Eucharist he specifically located and received by eating and drinking was also a concern for Nicholas Selnecker (1528-1592) one of the foremost hymn writers of the sixteenth century.

As early as 1540, Selnecker became the organist at the castle chapel in Nurnberg. He studied in Wittenberg beginning in 1549 and lived in Melanchthon's home. In 1558, he became second preacher in the Dresden court, but through his involvement in religious quarrels between Lutherans and Philippists, was dismissed in 1564. He obtained an appointment as a professor at Jena in 1565, but was again dismissed after only two years. A move to Leipzig followed, where he taught at the university, became a minister in the Thomas-kirche, and was later city superintendent. Selnecker is known for a large corpus of theological writings and a work for liturgical use, "Christliche Psalmen, Lieder und Kirchengesänge" (Leipzig, 1587) which places him among the foremost hymn writers of the late sixteenth century.²¹

A Selnecker hymn worth noting was written in 1572, during his years in Leipzig.

1. Wir dancken dir, O Jesu Christ,
Das du das Lemblein worden bist;
Und tregst all unser sünd und schuld,
Hillf, das wir rühmen deine huld.
2. Dein allerheiligst Abendmal
Erhalt bei uns, Herr, überall;
Dein Leib und Rosenfarbes Blut
Komm unsern leib und seel zu gut.
3. Den Bund du selbst gestiftet hast gesagt,
"Euch fröhlich drauff verlast:
Nim hin und ess, das ist mein Leib,
Trinck da mein Blut und dabei bleib."

²¹Sadie, ed., New Grove Dictionary, 17:121.

4. Ich iss dein Leib und trinck dein Blut
Dadurch werd ich erquickt an mut,
An seel, am Leib, am gwissen gar,
Wider die sund und todesgefahr.
5. Wenn ich gleich sterb, so stirb ich dir,
Dein Leib und Blut kompt nicht von mir;
Und wo du bist, da wil ich sein;
Hilff, Herr, dem schwachen Glauben mein.
6. Verflucht sei aller Ketzter rot,
Die meistern wollen ihren Gott;
Ich bin dein Schefleⁱⁿ, Jhesu Christ;
Dein Stimm hor ich zu jeder frist.
7. Las mich sein in der frommen saal,
Wirdig zu deinem Abendmal.
Verlas Mich nicht, mein Gott und Herr,
Dein ist die Kraft, macht, lob und ehr.
8. Hilff uns durchs bitter Leiden dein,
Das wir allzeit dir ghorsam sein;
Und halten uns an deinen End,
An dein verheissung und wahrheit.²²
1. We thank you, O Jesus Christ,
That you became the little lamb;
And carry all our sin and guilt:
Help us to praise your favor.
2. Your all holy supper
Keep by us, Lord:
Above all, your body and rose-colored blood
Benefit our body and soul.
3. The covenant you yourself have given said:
"Abandon yourselves gladly here;
Take and eat, this is my body, drink my blood
And say with me."
4. I eat your body and drink your blood;
Through them I will be refreshed
In courage, in soul, in body and in certainty
Against sin and danger of death.
5. And when I die, I die to you;
Your body and blood remain with me;
And where you are, there will I be:
Help, Lord, my weak faith

²²Wackernagel, ed., Das Deutsche Kirchenlied, 4:121.

6. Cursed be all stink of heretics,
That would master their God,
I am your little sheep, Jesus Christ,
I hear your voice at all times.
7. Let me be in the tent of the righteous
And come worthy to your supper.
Leave me not, my God and Lord;
Yours is the power, strength, praise and glory.
8. Help us through your bitter passion
To always obey you;
Keep us on your death,
Your promises and truth.

This text was inspired in part by the 111th Psalm. The hymn opens with praise and thanks to Christ the Lamb, for taking all our sin and guilt upon himself. Stanza two marks a transition to prayer, with a request to keep the Sacrament always near. This stanza significantly mentions the blessing and benefit occurring to both soul and body, "leib und seel." Eating and drinking the Lord's body and blood is stressed in stanzas three and four, as are the blessings of protection from sin and death. The cursing of heretics in stanza six comes as a surprize to our ears, at least in a hymn setting. The closing prayer touches on the life of sanctification and new obedience, which is gospel-motivated; "through your bitter passion always to obey you."

The blessings of such eating and drinking encompass a life of obedience and a blessed death in the Lord. Linking these concerns of Christian obedience and Christian death to the Eucharist strengthens Christian piety and supports a gospel-motivated growth in sanctification. When these ultimate concerns of life and death are in question, we can accept the polemic against heresy as a valid prayer for ourselves as well.

In the hymns that were written as prayers and petitions, a common pattern emerges, one that touches all of life's concerns. Since the medicine of the sacrament can touch and heal any part of life, the faithful are moved to come boldly to the throne of grace to find help in time of need. Requests and intercessions, then, become as much a part of the Lord's Supper as praise and thanksgiving are. The hymn example written in 1581 by Bartholomaeus Ringwald which follows illustrates the point about prayer just made.

1. Herr Christ, der du die deinen
 Liebste von ganzem Herzen reine
 Und ihnen zu genießen gibst
 Im Brod und auch im Weine
 Das höchste gut, dein Leib und Blut
 Das sie auf dieser Erden
 Dir eingeleibet werden;
 Und mit dir fein vereinigt sein
 Und deine Zier zu theil auch hier
 Was schmecken und erlangen:
 Hilf uns mit fleisch das wir
 Die Speis auch auf die Art empfangen.

2. Gib das wir durch deins Tisches krafft
 Mit himmlischen geberden
 In dieser armen Pilgerschafft
 Etwas bekleidet werden
 Und mit dem Sinn auch denken hin
 Wo du, Herr Christ, regierest
 Und herlich triumphierest;
 Das wir die Welt mit ihrem Geld
 Ansehn und Ehr und andern mehr
 Fein lernen übergeben,
 Und gflissen sein eins wandels rein,
 Wie Gottes Kinder leben.

3. O Herr, sterck unser Glauben schwach
 Durch dis hoch Sacramente;
 Und unser Herz gewisse mach
 Auf dein war Testamente;
 Das wir im Tod aus aller Noth
 In deine Wunden schaue,
 Car künstlich darauf bauen,
 Auch jeder Zeit bald sein bereit
 Ehr, hab und gut, ja Leib und Blut
 Deinthalben zuerlassen,

Und also recht als dein Geschlecht
Gehn auf der schmalen strassen.

4. Hilff auch durch dieser Speiss gebrauch
Das wir dich höchlich preisen.
Und wir so wol einander auch
All brüder-treu beweisen:
Zu aller stund aus herzen-grund
Und wie ein tranck
Und kuchen einander fein besuchen,
Und jederzeit in lieb und leid
Wie fromme Kind die gleubig sind
Erheben deinen Namen;
Bis wir zugleich im Himmelreich
Dich werden loben, Amen.²³

1. Lord Christ, you love your own
With a whole, pure heart.
You give them to enjoy in bread
And also in wine the highest good,
Your body and blood.
They on this earth
Will be one body with you;
And be well united with you.
They also here in part taste
And obtain your grace.
Help us with diligence
To receive the meal in this way.
2. Help us through your table's strength
With heavenly behavior
To be somewhat clothed
In this poor pilgrimage.
Help us with our mind also
Think where you, Lord Christ,
Rule and triumph in splendor.
May we learn well
To give up the world's regard
For money and glory
And to deliberately pursue a pure walk,
As God's children live.
3. O Lord, strengthen our weak faith
Through this great sacrament.
Make our hearts certain
On your true testament,
That in death and every need
We look in your wounds
And boldly build upon them.

²³Ibid., 4:937.

In every time help us to be prepared
 To give up for your sake
 Honor, goods and yes; body and blood;
 And also properly as your family,
 Go on the narrow path.

4. Help us through the use of this meal
 To highly praise you.
 We all will demonstrate to each other
 All brotherly faithfulness.
 At all times with sincere hearts
 And like a drink and cake,
 We shall gladly visit one another
 And at all times in love and sorrow,
 As a pious child who believes,
 Lift up your name;
 Until we together will praise
 You in heaven, Amen.

Here again the bread and wine are specified as Jesus' body and blood which unite us with him. "Give then to enjoy in bread and also in wine the highest good, your body and blood . . ." "And be well united with you." The beauty of this hymn lies in the specific areas of sanctification it addresses: a disregard for worldly wealth and glory, a bold confidence in Jesus' wounds in every need and in the hour of death, a life of praise, and a life of devoted service to our neighbor. This hymn attempts to show the connection of the Lord's Supper with all of life. The author knew well Jesus' words, "Abide in me. . . ." "Without Me you can do nothing,"²⁴ and the importance of the Sacrament in understanding and applying these words from John 15.

The basis of this communion prayer is the gift of the Lord's body and blood, and Christ's love for His own that prompted His perfect sacrifice. This prayer comes from one who has been given to, from one who knows and has received the gift of God, the highest good (das

²⁴John 15:4-5. (RSV).

höchste Gut). The first request concerns how the gift will be received, that is, in accord with the intentions and purpose of God. Realizing that God is acting and giving here, the Christians primary concern is to receive the gift. Subsequently, concern is expressed for purity of life, a firm faith-relationship with God, a demonstrable concern for others, all of which amounts to a life of praise to God.

Concern for a proper and beneficial reception of the Lord's Supper was common in the early years of Lutheranism. This concern produced hymns that can be categorized as pre-communion prayers. The Augsburger Gesangbuchlein of 1557 provides an example of a hymn that serves as a pre-communion prayer. The subtitle reads "Ein Gsang zwischen der Predig und des Herren Nachtmal" ("a hymn between the sermon and the Lord's Supper").

Mit dein leib, Herr, speiss unser Seel,
 Tranck sie mit deinem blute;
 Mach sie ledig von hungers queel,
 Dein speiss dien uns zu gutt.
 Dass wir bleiben, O Herr, in dir,
 Nach deinem willen streben,
 Und du in uns, das bitten wir,
 Bis in das ewig leben;
 O Herr, das wolst uns geben.²⁵

With your body, Lord, feed our soul.
 Let us drink your blood.
 Make our soul free
 From the source of hunger,
 That the meal serve for our good.
 Grant that we remain, in you, O Lord,
 And seek your will, and you in us, we pray,
 Until life eternal;
 O Lord, be pleased to give us.

In this hymn/prayer, Jesus' body and blood are identified as the food that satisfies our hunger. His body and blood unite us with

²⁵Wackernagel, ed., Das Deutsche Kirchenlied, 4:89.

God and prompt us to pray "thy will be done." The significance of this hymn being sung after the sermon and before the Eucharist (see subtitle above) should not be underestimated. It tells us that the author had a clear understanding of the unity of Word and Sacrament. This hymn expresses the thought well: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."²⁶ Only one food can set us free from "hunger's queel" (hunger's source), that is, the body and blood of Christ. The congregation has been fed in the holy absolution and the sermon, yet they sing of "hunger's source" as if to say, only with the Eucharist will our souls be filled and satisfied.

Martin Chemnitz (1522-1586), a contemporary of the hymn-writers under consideration in this chapter and a recognized spokesman for confessional Lutheranism, increases our understanding of how sixteenth century Lutherans understood the Eucharist.

Because in the Eucharist we receive that body of Christ which has been given for us, and the blood of the New Testament which has been shed for the remission of sins, who will deny that believers there receive the whole treasury of the benefits of Christ? For they receive that through which sins are remitted, by which death is abolished, by which life is communicated to us, by which Christ unites us to Himself as members, so that He is in us and we are in Him. . . .

Therefore we receive in the Eucharist the most certain and most excellent pledge of our reconciliation with God, of the forgiveness of sins, of immortality and future glorification. And in truth, in this sacrament Christ richly pours out the treasures of His divine love toward men. For in His Supper He gives us as food that body which He gave into death for us, in order that from it, as solid, divine, and life-giving food we may live, be nourished, grow, be comforted, and so transformed into Him that we can never be separated from Him, as Augustine affectionately says, speaking for Christ: "You will not transform Me into you, but you will be transformed into Me." . . .

²⁶Matt. 5:6. (RSV).

Beautiful is the statement of Ignatius, which is found in his Epistle to the Ephesians, where he calls the Eucharist . . . , "a medicine of immortality, an antidote, that we may not die but live in God through Jesus Christ, a cleansing remedy through warding off and driving out evils."

Very fitting is this statement of Bernard: "The body of Christ is to the sick a medicine, to pilgrims a way; it strengthens the weak, delights the strong, heals weariness, preserves health. Through it man becomes more gentle under reproof, more patient under labor, more ardent for love, wiser for caution, more ready to obey, more devoted to giving of thanks."

Chrysostom says: "If those who touched the hem of His garment were properly healed, how much more shall we be strengthened if we have Him in us whole? He will quiet in us the savage law of our members, He will quench the perturbations of the mind, drive out All sicknesses, raise us up from every fall, and, when the power of the enemy has been overcome, He will incite us to true piety and indeed will transform us into His own image."²⁷

The subtitle, "to be sung after the sermon and before the Eucharist" hints at the whole issue of the frequency of the Eucharist and suggests that sermon and Sacrament are both included in the divine service. Martin Chemnitz sheds light on this question as well.

Nevertheless, He did not want to permit believers to use Communion arbitrarily, so that it would make no difference whether they used it occasionally or not at all or when they pleased, as one does in matters indifferent. For He does not say: "When it pleases you," as in indifferent matters, but says: "As often as you do this." . . .

On this basis people are to be taught, admonished, and exhorted to more diligent and frequent use of the Eucharist. For because Christ says: "As often as you do this," it is wholly His will that those who are His disciples should do this frequently. Therefore those are not true and faithful ministers of Christ who in any manner whatever lead or frighten people away from more frequent use and reception of the Eucharist.

There are beautiful examples of frequent use of the Eucharist from the true antiquity. Some had the custom of receiving the Eucharist daily, some twice a week, some on the Lord's day, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, some only on the Lord's Day.²⁸

²⁷Martin Chemnitz, Examination of the Council of Trent Part II, trans. by Fred Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), 233-34.

²⁸Ibid., 330-31.

This obvious concern for frequent use of the Sacrament prompted others to write hymns that anticipate participation in the Eucharist. The Strassburger Gesangbuch, 1562, gives us another example of a hymn serving as a precommunion prayer. The subtitle reads: "Ein alt Christlich Gebett, ehe man das h. Abendmal empfähet, zu Gott Vater, Son und h. Geist, umb vergebung des sünden, friden und trost" ("An old Christian prayer, before one receives the Lord's Supper, to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for forgiveness of sins, peace and comfort").

1. Nun mach uns heilig, Herre Gott
Und sieh an unsere grosse noth;
Sei jetzt und deinem Volck genedig
Von sünden mach sie ganz ledig.
2. O Gottes Lamb, Herr Jesu Christ
Der du für uns gestorben bist;
Wir bitten dich sehr fleissiglich
Gib uns dein friden stehtiglich.
3. O milder Gott, heiliger Geist,
Dein Gnad uns allzeit reichlich leist;
Trost unser schwach und blöd gemuth
Durch dein gros überschwenglich gut.
4. O heilige Dreifältigkeit
Und ewig gleich Allmechtigkeit
Wir bitten dich ganz inniglich
Erhör uns allzeit gnediglich.²⁹
1. Now make us holy, Lord God,
And look on our great need.
Be gracious now to your people;
And make them free from sin.
2. O Lamb of God, Lord Jesus Christ,
You who have died for us,
We diligently pray
You give us your peace constantly.

²⁹Wackernagel, ed., Das Deutsche Kirchenlied, 4:204.

3. O gentle God, Holy Spirit,
 Always and richly give us your grace.
 Comfort our weak and dull minds
 Through your great, effusive goodness.

4. O holy Trinity,
 And eternally omnipotent God,
 We make our prayer most fervently;
 Hear us always graciously.

This communion hymn was clearly structured according to the pattern of the Holy Trinity. The desire for good preparation and worthy participation in the Eucharist is evident in this hymn. In stanza one, the primary concern is to be free from sin by God's grace. This is the central gift of the Sacrament and the basis of Christian prayer as well. Jesus is sought for peace, the Holy Spirit for comfort. Each person of the Trinity is addressed in this hymn/prayer, which broadens the usual focus on the Lord Jesus to include the Father and the Spirit. At the Sacrament, it would be salutary to meditate on the holy and life-giving Trinity. In a way we cannot understand, in the sacramental mystery, each person of the Trinity is active in the giving of gifts to God's people. The trinitarian structure reminds us of our baptism also, which is the basis of our sharing in the New Testament of the Savior's body and blood. This anonymous text from a 1562 hymnal is atypical of its period in the omission of a specific reference to Jesus' body and blood. The trinitarian emphasis, however, is a thoroughly confessional one.

The majority of hymn writers from this period, however, including Ludwig Helmbold (1532-1598) focused on the body and blood of Christ and the benefits of the Sacrament. This final example also appears to have been written to be sung after the sermon and before

receiving the Sacrament, as a pre-communion hymn. Toward the end of his life, Helmbold wrote the following poem, which again anticipates in enthusiastic terms, participation in the Sacrament.

1. Wir haben Gottes Wort gehört
Wie man von Sünden selig wird;
Nun gehn wir auch zum tisch des Herrn,
Er wil uns ewiglich ernehn.
(Jeder stroph folget der Nachgesang):
Des freuet euch, ir Christen all!
Wir sind noch in des Herren Saal.
So wol als sein Aposteln warn:
Was könt uns bessers widerfarn?
2. Sehet, was nimt er in die Hand?
Brod und Wein, der Natur bekant.
Hört zu, was saget er dabei?
Wunder, sein Leib und Blut es sei.
(Nachgesang)
3. Sein Leib heist er nemen und essen;
Sein Blut, im Kelch reichlich gemessen;
Heist er uns trincken alle gleich,
Zu seim gedechtnis stetiglich.
(Nachgesang)
4. Was geht uns an sein Leib und Blut?
Es ist für uns geben in Todt;
Für uns vergossen, das man hab
Der sünd vergebung aus genad.
(Nachgesang)
5. O welch ein Speiss, o welch ein Tranck!
Kein Tischgenoss hier bleibet kranck:
Der Glaub wird alles übel löss:
Die Lieb bringt frucht mit überfluss.
(Nachgesang)³⁰
1. We have heard from God's Word
How to be saved from sin.
Now we go to the Lord's table.
He will nourish us eternally.
(the refrain follows each stanza):
This brings much joy to all Christians!
We are in the Lord's hall,
As well as his apostles were.
How could we have any better?

³⁰Ibid., 675.

2. Look what does he take in his hand?
Bread and wine known by nature.
Listen, what does he say of them?
Miracle, it is his body and blood.
Refrain.
3. He bids us take and eat his body and his blood,
In the cup richly measured.
He bids us all to drink alike,
To his remembrance constantly.
Refrain.
4. What takes root in us with his body and blood?
It is given for us in death;
For us poured out.
From grace you have the forgiveness of sins.
Refrain.
5. O what a meal, O what a drink!
None who enjoy your table remain sick here,
Faith shall loose all evil;
Love brings fruit abundantly.
Refrain.

The note of joy at the Eucharist, "This brings much joy to all Christians!," is sounded repeatedly as the refrain comes back again and again. Typically, Helbold rehearses the institution narrative, albeit in a minimized fashion. This hymn speaks of the real presence in a powerful way. We are brought in spirit to the first Lord's Supper. What the pastor says in the consecration is as though Christ himself were speaking to his apostles. "We are in the Lord's hall. . . ." "Look, what does he take in his hand? . . ." "He bids us take and eat . . ." "He bids us all to drink." The content of the meal is again specified as Jesus' body and blood, which are mentioned three times in stanzas two through four.

The cause of this repeated rejoicing is simply the forgiveness of sins by grace. The early Lutheran confessors never tired of celebrating and singing this simple yet powerful Gospel message,

which they saw at the heart and center of every Eucharist. Stanza five again makes the vital connection to the rest of life by speaking of a faith that sets us free from evil and a love that bears abundant fruit. The writer's joyous and positive attitude toward the Sacrament serves as an abiding and challenging testimony to Christians in the latter years of the twentieth century.

Communion hymnody in the age of confessionalism exhibits remarkable consistency and similarity of thematic material. The eating of Christ's body and the drinking of His blood remain the chief matter in the Eucharist for the poet-theologians of the sixteenth century. Luther's spiritual heirs did indeed defend and celebrate in their hymns his view of the Sacrament as beneficium. The choice of either the didactic, laudatory or prayerful approach did not divert them from attending to the core and center of the Eucharist, the forgiveness of sins given in the body and blood of Christ. A didactic style and concern pervades many of their hymns. Thus we find many references to the original Eucharist on the night our Lord was betrayed, as well as listing of benefits, centering on the forgiveness of sins and all that entails. Theirs was an intellectual, objective approach to the Sacrament that nevertheless focused on Jesus and his real presence, his benefits and blessings. Such an outpouring of hymnody as this, built on Jesus' gift of himself, could only have resulted from a vibrant faith in the Savior, confidence in his gospel, and a genuine concern for the people to be taught and to receive this gift. By such faith, the church in any

age would be well-served. Luther's wish of 1523 was gloriously fulfilled.³¹

³¹I also wish that we had as many songs as possible in the vernacular which the people could sing during mass, immediately after the gradual and also after the Sanctus and Agnus Dei. . . . I mention this to encourage any German poets to compose evangelical hymns for us. AE, 53:36-7.

S.D.G.

CHAPTER III

COMMUNION HYMNODY IN THE AGE OF PIETISM

In the study of Lutheran communion hymnody, we leave behind now the era of orthodoxy and enter the age of Pietism. No assumptions about Pietism will be made in this chapter. The original documents will be allowed to speak for themselves. By examining the communion hymnody of Pietism, we will determine whether or not these hymns flow in the same stream of sixteenth century, confessional Eucharistic piety, or if they are breaking new ground.

In this chapter, we will examine the communion hymns of three men: Paul Gerhardt, Johann Heermann, and Johann Rist, all both poets and pastors. Each man's work is represented in contemporary English hymnals, but many of their hymns have never been translated into English or published in English Lutheran hymnals. The hymns presented here are brought to the English speaking audience for the first time. We hope to discover how Gerhardt, Heermann and Rist understood the Eucharist. We will observe how closely Gerhard, Heermann and Rist held to the confessional principles of the previous century as well. The communion hymns of Paul Gerhardt (1607-1676) will be of special interest to those familiar with his other hymns. Gerhardt's communion hymns are scarcely found in English hymnals. At first glance, this seems to be a peculiar omission for a hymnist of his caliber, especially in light of the fact that many of his other hymns have been included in English hymnals. Rather than speculate on the possible reasons for this phenomenon, we

shall examine his communion hymns in order to evaluate their practical value for the church today, as well as their adherence to confessional standards.

Communion Hymnody From Paul Gerhardt

The following text is from a 1723 hymnal published in Wittenberg and was sung to the melody "Nun lob, mein Seel."

1. Herr Jesu, meine Liebe, ich hätte nimmer Ruh und Rast,
Wo nicht fest in mir bliebe, was du für mich geleistet hast,
Es muss in meinen Sünden, die sich sehr hoch erhöhn,
All meine Krafft verschwinden, und wie ein Rauch vergehn,
Wenn sich mein Herz nicht hielte zu dir und deinem Tod,
Und ich nicht stets mich kühlte an deines Leidens Noth.
2. Nun weist du meine Plagen, und Satans meines Findes List,
Wenn meinen Geist zu nagen er emsig und bemühet ist,
Da hat er tausend Künste von dir mich abzuziehn,
Bald treibt er mir die Dünste, des Zweifels in der Sinn;
Bald nimmt er mir dein Meinen und Wollen aus der Acht,
Und lehrt mich ganz verneinen, was du doch fest gemacht.
3. Solch Unheil abzuweisen, hast du, HERR, deinen Tisch gesetzt,
Da lässtest du mich speisen, so, dass sich Mark und Bein
ergetzt.
Du reichest mir zugeniesen dein theures Fleisch und Blut,
Und lässtest Worte fliessen da all mein Herz auf ruht.
Komm, sprichst du, komm und nahe dich ungescheut zu mir,
Was ich dir geb, empfähe, und nims getrost zu dir.
4. Hier ist beim Brod verhanden mein Leib, der dargegeben wird
Zum Tod und Kreuzes-Banden für dich, der sich von mir verirrt:
Beim Wein ist, was geflossen zur Tilgung deiner Schuld,
Mein Blut, das ich vergossen in Sanfftmuth und Gedult.
Nimms beides mit dein Munde, und denck auch mit dabei,
Wie fromm, in Herzen-Grunde, ich dein Erlöser sei.
5. HERR, ich will dein gedencken; so lang ich Lust und Leben hab;
Und bis man wird mich senken, an meinem End, ins finstre Grab.
Ich sehe dein Verlangen nach meinen ewigen Heil;
Am Holz bist du gehangen, und hast so manchen Pfeil
Des Trübsals lassen dringen in dein unschuldigs Herz,
Auff dass ich möcht entspringen des Todes Pein und Schmerz.

6. So hast du auch befohlen, dass, was den Glauben starcken kan,
 Ich bei dir sollte holen, und soll doch ja nicht zweiffeln dran,
 Du habst für alle Sünden, die in der ganzen Welt
 Bei Menschen je zu finden, ein völlig Löse Geld
 Und Opfer, das bestehet vor dem, der alles trägt,
 In dem auch alles gehet, bezahlet und erlegt.
7. Und dass ja mein Gedancke, der voller Falschheit und Betrug,
 Nicht im geringsten wancke als war es dir nicht Ernst genug.
 So neigst du dein Gemüthe zusammt der rechten Hand,
 Und gibst mir grösser Güte, mir das hochwerthe Pfand
 Zu essen und zu trincken; Ist das nicht Trost und Licht
 Dem, der sich lasst beduncken, du wollest seiner nicht?
8. Ach! HERR! du willst uns alle, das sagt uns unser Herze zu.
 Die, so der Feind zu Falle gebracht, ruffst du zu deiner Ruh.
 Ach! Hilff, HERR, hilff uns eilen zu dir, der jederzeit
 Und allesamt zu heilen, geneigt ist und bereit.
 Gieb Lust und heiliges Dürsten nach deinem Abendmahl,
 Und dort mach uns zu Fürsten, im güldnen Himmels-Saal.¹
1. Lord Jesus my love, I would never be at peace
 Unless what you achieved for me remains firm in me.
 Because of my sins which have so much increased,
 My strength all must fade and as smoke disappear
 Unless my heart clings to you and your death
 And in your great Passion obtains relief.
2. Now you know my troubles and the tricks of Satan, my enemy.
 He is excited and busy to gnaw at my spirit.
 There he has a thousand arts to draw me away from you.
 Soon he brings to me a haze of doubts in the mind;
 Soon he takes from me your thoughts and will from my regard
 And teaches me to completely deny what you have made firm.
3. To turn away such disaster, you have, Lord, set your table.
 There you nourish me, so that marrow and bone rejoice.
 You give me to enjoy your precious flesh and blood,
 And let words flow that quiet all my heart.
 Come, you say, come and approach boldly to me.
 What I give you receive, and take comfort to yourself.
4. Here is given out with bread my body, which is given out
 Unto death and the bands of a cross for you, who goes astray
 From me. With the wine is what was poured out to cancel
 Your debt, my blood, which I shed in gentleness and patience.

¹Gottfried Zimmermann, Pauli Gerhardi Geistreiche Hauss und Kirchen Lieder (Wittenberg: Gruendonnerstag, 1723).

Take both with your mouth and think also thereby,
How pious, in the hearts-ground, I am your redeemer.

5. Lord, I want to think of you, as long as I have
Strength and life, and until they will lay me, at my death,
In the dark grave. I see your longing for my eternal
salvation,
On the tree you were hanged. You have allowed so many
Arrows of affliction to press upon your innocent heart,
That I might spring away from the pain and hurt of death.
6. So also you have commanded that which is able to strengthen
Faith. I should fetch it from you, and should not doubt
There at all. You have for all my sins, which in all the
world
By mankind are found, paid a complete payment and sacrifice,
Which conquers because of him who carries all
And in whom all proceeds.
7. May my thoughts, so full of lies and deception,
Not in the slightest waver. As it were not serious enough
For you, you bow your disposition together with your
Right hand, and give to me great blessing, to me the pledge
Of highest worth, to eat and to drink. Is it not comfort
and
Light to him who lets himself consider -
You would not take his gift?
8. O Lord, you desire us all, so say our hearts to us.
He who brought the enemy's collapse calls you to your rest.
O Lord, help - help us to hasten to you, who at all times
And in every way are both inclined and prepared to heal.
Give us desire and a holy thirst for your supper,
And there make us to be princes, in the golden, heavenly hall.

This example from Gerhardt's pen is found in the section for Gruendonnerstag, Maundy Thursday. Gerhardt's communion hymns are in the subjective mood, first person, and often employ direct discourse between the believer and the Lord Jesus. The first stanza is a fine example of this. In it, the singer expresses the mystical union between Christ and himself. He acknowledges that his strength would disappear like smoke because of his sins unless he holds fast to Jesus, his death and bitter Passion. In the last line, Gerhardt uses the image of "cooling"; "And did not cool myself on your bitter Passion" implying

that apart from the peace of forgiveness there is only a prolepsis of hell's fiery and burning pain.

The second stanza speaks of the thousand arts that Satan uses to bring about the Christian's downfall. The believer would be filled with doubts, despise God's will and deny his Lord if the evil foe prevailed; "Soon he brings to me a haze of doubts in the mind." To prevent this, stanza three announces, the Lord has set his table and gives us his body and blood to enjoy. His words of comfort flow into our hearts as we receive the gift. The gift is described in stanza four by Jesus as his body for us and his blood for our guilt. He urges us to receive both in our mouth - eating and drinking are important - and know what a great Redeemer he is.

Next, the singer promises to think of these things until he is laid into the dark grave. His object of contemplation is the crucified Savior whose innocent suffering released us from the pain of death. In the sixth stanza, the singer reminds himself to remain close to the Savior - this will banish all doubts. The words "für alle Sünden" (for all sins) and "der ganzen Welt" (the whole world) refer to the universal aspect of the atonement, the comforting doctrine of objective justification. In the seventh stanza, the believer recalls again his false and deceptive thoughts, and the remedy given: to eat and drink from the Savior's own right hand. The final stanza celebrates the Lord's love and desire for all people. The singer asks for help to hurry at all times to Jesus where healing is found. He requests a desire and thirst for the Sacrament which gives the anticipation and assurance of being princes in heaven with our Lord.

This hymn reflects an extremely personalized view of the Sacrament. Attention is focused on the personal struggle with sin and the individual remedy, the Lord's body and blood. The benefit is spoken of as that which heals an illness, almost as a medicine. Only in the final stanza does the first person plural appear, recognizing the corporate aspect of the Eucharist. While the benefits are applied in a very personal way, they are essentially the same blessings that were found in the sixteenth century communion hymnody. The malady is sin and the guilt and doubts it produces. The remedy is the same body and blood, the same incontrovertible assurance of forgiveness and comfort.

The personal struggle with sin and the quest for grace seen in "Lord Jesus, my love" takes center stage in the following Gerhardt hymn from a Leipzig hymnal of 1740. This hymn was sung to the tune, "Freu dich sehr, O meine."

1. O du Schöpfer aller Dinge
Höre, höre mein Gebet
Das ich itzund vor dir bringe,
Weil mein Herz in Aengsten steht.
Angst die Sünde machet mir,
Darum komm ich auch zu dir,
Und bekenne meine Sünden,
Ach! lass mich doch Gnade finden.
2. Weil du heissest alle kommen,
Die beladen sind, zu dir
Bin ich auch nicht ausgenommen,
Noch gestossen von der Thur
Deiner Gnaden, sondern du
Willst und wirst mich nach dazu
Von den Sünden die mich drücken,
Ganz entbinden und erquicken.
3. Dein wort bleibet ungebrochen,
Was du einmal hast geredt.
Nun hast du ein Wort gesprochen;
Such mein Antlitz mit Gebeth;
Darum komm ich auch für dich

Such dein Antlitz, ach! lass mich
Vor dir, Herr, jetzt Gnade finden,
Sprich mich los von meines Sunden.

4. Sieh, die Handschrift, die ich gebe
Dir in deine Hand! O Gott!
Hier sprichst du: so wahr ich lebe,
Ich will nicht des Sunders Tod,
Sondern, dass er sich bekehr
Von dem Sunden, und begehrt
Ewiglich nur mir zu leben,
So will ich die Sünd vergeben.
5. Nun wohlan! du wirst nicht lügen,
Ich halt mich an deine Wort,
Will darauf in Demuth biegen
Meine Knie an diesem Ort;
Und bekennen meine Sünd:
Ich bin das verlorne Kind,
Das vom Satan oft, verblindet,
Deine Güter hat verschwendet.
6. Nun was soll ich weiter sagen?
Ich will nun an meine Brust
Mit den armen Zöllner schlagen,
Denn es ist dir wohl bewusst,
Dass ich hab' gesündigt dir,
Ach! mein Gott, sei gnädig mir;
Ich fall dir in deine Arme,
Ach! dich über mich er barme.
7. Ich verleugne nicht die Sunden,
Ich verleugne nicht die Schuld;
Aber lass mich Gnade finden,
Trage nur mit mir Geduld,
Alles, was ich schuldig bin,
Will ich zahlen, nimm nur hin
Die Bezahlung meines Bürgen,
Der sich liess für mich erwürgen.
8. Nun, O Vater aller Gnaden,
Siehe dessen Leiden an,
Dieser hat ersetzt den Schaden
Und für mich genug gethan;
Sein Tod, da er für mich
Sich hat geopfert, tröstet mich
Und in seinen tiefen Wunden
Hab ich Fried und Ruh gefunden.
9. Hierauf will ich nun geniessen,
Jesu, deinen Leib und Blut,

Mir zur Trostung imm Gewissen,
 Weil michs macht gerecht und gut.
 Gieb, dass wirdig ich geniess
 Dich, O Herr, und schmeck, wie süß
 Und wie freundlich du bist denen,
 Die sich, Jesu, nach dir sehnen.²

1. O Creator of all things, listen,
 Hear my prayer that I now bring before you,
 Since my heart in anxiety stands.
 Sins make me fearful.
 Therefore I also come to you and confess my sins.
 Oh, let me yet find grace.
2. Since you call all to come to you who are burdened,
 I too am not exempted,
 Nor thrust from the door of your grace.
 Rather you desire and will completely release and
 refresh me
 From the sins which oppress me.
3. Your word remains unbroken, what you once have spoken.
 Now you have spoken a word:
 Seek my face with prayer. Thus I come also for you,
 And seek your face. Oh, let me from you, Lord,
 Now find grace. Absolve me of my sins.
4. See the document which I give you
 In my hand, O God! Here you say: as truly as I live,
 I do not desire the sinner's death; rather,
 That he turns himself away from sin,
 And desires eternally only to live with me.
 So I will forgive the sin.
5. Now, well then! You will not lie.
 I cling to your Word. There in humility
 I want to bend my knee in this place
 And confess my sins. I am the lost child,
 Who, often deluded by Satan, have squandered your
 gifts.
6. Now what more shall I say?
 From now on I want to beat my breast
 With the poor publican, for it is well-known to you
 That I have sinned against you. Oh!
 My God, be gracious to me, I fall in your arms.
 Oh! Have mercy on me.

²Sebastian Heinrich Barnbeck, ed., Das privilegirte vollstaendige und vermehrte Leipziger Gesang-Buch (Leipzig: 1740), hymn no. 483.

7. I do not deny the sins. I do not deny the guilt.
 Let me find grace. Be patient with me,
 What I owe, that will I pay. Only remove
 The payment of my bond that allows me to be strangled.
8. Now, O Father of all grace, see that passion.
 This One has repaired the injuries
 And done enough for me.
 His death, in which he sacrificed himself for me,
 Comforts me, and in his deep wounds
 I have found peace and rest.
9. Here and now I take with pleasure, Jesus,
 Your body and blood, for my consolation of conscience,
 Because it makes me just and good.
 Grant that worthily I enjoy you, O Lord,
 And taste how sweet and how friendly you are
 To those, who themselves, Jesus, long for you.

This hymn begins with an acknowledgement of the anxious and fearful condition brought about by sin. The universal invitation of Jesus is then called to mind. The hope is expressed of being released from these tormenting sins. God's Word which cannot be broken gives the penitent sinner confidence that he will indeed find and receive absolution. The singer literally confronts God with his own Word and promise that those who turn from their sin will not die, but live and be forgiven. Stanzas five, six and seven use powerful imagery for repentance - falling to one's knees, beating the breast, and falling in the arms of God. These are images of pleading for grace. Finally in stanza eight, the singer points to Jesus, his death and sacrifice. In Jesus' wounds are found comfort, peace and rest. The substitutionary atonement of Christ is the sinner's only hope. In the final stanza, we hear the only reference to the Eucharist in the hymn. Jesus' body and blood are enjoyed by those who long for him. They justify us and console our conscience.

This hymn demonstrates that hymns of confession and penitence were also written for the Lord's Supper in the seventeenth century. This type of hymn promotes the understanding that the chief benefit in the Sacrament is the forgiveness of sins. The hymn speaks highly of God's Word, and of his grace and mercy in Christ. It accurately describes our miserable condition as sinners who would be literally strangled by their sins if God were not gracious to us. Such a hymn could well be substituted for the general confession of sin in the Liturgy. It would also serve well in the season of Lent, since it heightens the perception of our sinfulness and our desperate need for forgiveness.

Not every Gerhardt communion hymn, however, follows such a powerful, penitential theme. The next Gerhardt poem, set to the tune "Nun lob' mein Seel," shows a different emphasis.

1. Merk auf, O mein Gemüthe,
 Merk auf des Herren milde Hand,
 Der dir aus lauter Güte
 Aufsetzet ein unschatzbar Pfand;
 Und dich jetzt speisst aus Gnaden
 Mit seinem Leib und Blut,
 Als das für allen Schaden
 Den frommen Seelen Gut,
 Weil die in Jesu bleiben,
 Die so gespeiset sind,
 Und sie nicht mag vertreiben
 Das höllische Gesind.

2. O treffliches Erbarmen
 Was bin ich Staub und Erdenkloss,
 Dass sich jetzt giebt mir ein Herr,
 Der mächtig, reich und gross;
 Was bin ich Asch und Erde,
 Dass so ein grosser Schatz
 Mir vorgetragen werde,
 Und in mir suche Platz,
 O Lieb, O Liebesflammen,
 Wie lodert ihr herfur,

Und schlägt mich zusammen,
Dass ich schon brenn in mir.

3. Es lernet zwar die Seele
In mir durch deines Geistes Trieb,
Dass Gott mich ihm vermähle,
Und dass ich ihn sei herzlich lieb;
Doch seh ich hier viel besser,
Dass du mir seist verwandt,
Die Liebe scheint ja grosser,
Je grösser ist das Pfand;
Dein Leib, dein Blut, mein Leben,
Wird mir zu Speiss und Trank;
Drum ist die Schuld vergeben,
Die mich stets machet krank.
4. Was soll ich nun verzagen,
Und bis zum Tode traurig sein,
Mich mit Verzweiflung plagen,
Und in der Trübsaal gehen ein;
Mein Herr ist ja gestorben
Und hat das Leben mir
Durch seinen Tod erworben,
Er hat der Höllen Thür
Wie Simson, weggetragen;
Drum poch ich auf dein Blut,
Und fass in trüben Tagen
Durch Jesum einem Muth.
5. Doch lehre mich debenccken,
Mein Gott, mit was für Demuth ich
Mich billig sollte lenken
An diesen Tisch zu nehmen dich,
Ich bin ja nirgend reine,
Und dir ist keiner gleich;
Mir fehlts an Tugendscheine,
Und du bist tugendreich;
Drum, was ich noch nicht habe,
Das borg ich jetzt allhier,
An dieser grossen Sache,
Hängt meiner Seelen Zier.
6. Ach! lass auch im Gemuthe
Der wahren Andacht Licht ausgehen:
Lass auch nach deiner Güte
Des Glaubens Glanz in mir entstehen:
Dass Liebe wachs' und blühe,
Dass Demut fruchtbar sei,
Die Hoffnung aufwärts fliehe,
Und ich fort werde frei
Vom Fallstrick eitler Dinge,
Die manches Herz verführt,

Und nach dem Schatze ringe,
Der Zions Bürger ziert.

7. Dein Fleisch und Blut ist meine,
Drauf leb und sterb ich, wenn du willst;
Mein Fleisch und Blut ist deine,
Drum werd dein Will in ihm erfüllt,
Regier es, dass nicht Sünde
Und Laster nisteln drein,
Gleichwie es sonst geschwinde
Zum Argen pflegt zu sein,
Du aber kannst es starken,
Dass es thu Widerstand
Des Teufels List und Werken,
Durch dieses theure Pfand.

8. Verleih auch durch die Speise
Dass ich in Widerwärtigkeit
Mich allzeit stark erweise,
Dass ich in unglückhafter Zeit
Geduldig mich erzeige,
Dass nicht im Kreuz an mir
Verzagung sich ereige,
Ja dass ich künftig dir
Beständiglich anhänge,
Bis dass das Kleinod ich
Nach meinem Laug erlange,
Dass bitt ich fleissig dich.³

1. Behold, O my thoughts, behold the Lord's gentle hand,
Who sets on you from pure goodness a priceless pledge.
He feeds you from grace with his body and blood,
As that is good for all hurts of pious souls.
For they remain in Jesus, those who are so fed,
And the hellish rabble is not able to drive them away.
2. O excellent mercy: I who am but dust and a piece of dirt
Am given a Lord who is powerful, rich and great.
Who am I but ash and earth, that such great treasure
Has been brought to me and seeks in me a place.
O Love, O flame of love, how you blaze about and beat
Together around me, so that I already burn in myself.
3. My soul learns indeed through your Spirit's power,
That God is wedded to it, that I am heartily loved by him.
Yet here I see much better, that you are kin to me.
Love appears even greater, even greater is the pledge,
Your body, your blood, my life, is food and drink to me.
Therefore guilt is forgiven, which constantly made me ill.

³Leipziger Gesang-Buch, 1740, no. 484.

4. Why should I now despair, and be sorrowful unto death,
Torment myself with doubts and enter into distress?
My Lord has truly died and gained life for me
Through His death. He has carried off the gates of hell
Like Samson. Therefore I boast in your blood
And take courage in troubled days through Jesus.
5. Teach me to consider, My God, with what humility
I should be guided, to take you at this table.
I am surely far from pure. No one is like you.
I fail to show virtue, you are rich in virtue.
Therefore, what I do not have I borrow here.
On these great things hangs my soul's ornament.
6. Ah! let also in my thoughts the true light of devotion
Proceed. Let also according to your gifts the beam of faith
Arise in me, so that love may grow and bloom,
And humility be fruitful, hope fly upwards, and I from hence
Be free of the snare of empty things that lead many hearts
Astray. I struggle for the treasure that adorns
The inhabitants of Zion.
7. Your flesh and blood are mine, on them I live and die,
As you please. My flesh and blood are yours, thus your will
Shall be in them fulfilled. So rule, that sin and vice
Not rest therein, since so quickly it becomes accustomed
To wicked things. But you can strengthen it, that it may
Offer resistance to the devil's tricks and deeds,
Through this precious pledge.
8. Grant also through this meal, that I'm watchful,
Waiting to show myself always strong. That I in calamitous
Times prove myself patient. That in the cross,
Despair does not show itself in me; that in the future
I may constantly cling to you, until I receive the jewel
After my course. This I diligently, earnestly pray you.

This hymn is primarily concerned with the proper attitude one should adopt at the Eucharist, and the fruits thereof. In the first stanza, Jesus' body and blood are mentioned as the cure or medicine for hurts of pious souls. The aspect of grace and pure gift is stressed. The singer expresses the confidence that all the powers of hell cannot separate from Jesus one who is so fed and nourished. The second stanza contrasts the lowliness of the sinner, who is described as dust, dirt and ashes, with the heavenly treasure that condescends to his level.

This experience is described in mystical terms as flames of love burning within. The theme of mystical union appears again, brought about by Jesus' body and blood, which we eat and drink. Again, guilt is compared to illness, whose only remedy is forgiveness.

In the fourth stanza, the singer exhorts himself not to despair any longer. Samson is seen as a type of Christ, carrying off the gates of hell in triumph. The attitude of humility follows appropriately. Since the believer has no virtue of his own, he must come and borrow Christ's alien righteousness. True devotion, faith and love are the fruits of the Eucharist, along with humility and hope. Life is seen as a struggle between the desire for empty things and the heavenly treasure. In the seventh stanza, a blessed exchange appears: Jesus' flesh and blood are mine and my flesh and blood are his. Only thus am I able to experience victory over the devil and my own sinful flesh. The final stanza is a prayer for constancy in the face of calamity, cross and an unknown future. The Lord's Supper enables us to cling to the Savior, come what may.

Merk au, O mein Gemuthe expresses a depth of feeling and emotion that sixteenth century writers never approached. The common thread continues to be an unshakeable confidence in the body and blood of Christ as a remedy and cure for all evil in the Christian life. Sacramental devotion evolves in an extremely personal, individualistic direction. There is an unmistakable sense that something happens at the Lord's Supper to each participant; a unique, personal encounter between the believer and his Lord. There is danger in singing of specific, personal experiences at the Eucharist. A risk is taken of sacrificing

catholicity for the sake of personal testimony in hymnody. The fact that several hymns from this period, written in the first person, have been included in contemporary hymnals, indicates that the risk is worth taking. The next example from the same 1740 hymnal was sung to the tune "O Traurigkeit."

1. Ich trete frisch zu Gottes Tisch
Hilf, Vater, hilf mit Gnaden,
Dass mir keine Missethat
Heirzu möge schaden.
2. Ich leugne nicht was mir gebrichth,
Ich beichte meine Schulden;
Reu fur Sunden pflegst du ja,
Frommer Gott, zu dulden.
3. Wenn's nöthig fällt, durch Losegeld
Die Handschrift zu vernichten,
Wird der Herr der Herrlichkeit
Diess für mich entrichten.
4. Drauf stell ich dir mich, Jesu für
In kindlichem Vertrauen,
Jesu, den die Seraphim
Lustet anzuschauen.
5. Dein Leib und Blut, so mir zu gut,
Gebrochen und vergossen,
Wird, o tiefe Wunderthat,
Hier am Tisch genossen.
6. Ich soll iztund mit Seel und Mund,
Kein Wiss kan das ermessen,
Jesu Christ werthes Fleisch
Übergreiflich essen.
7. O grüble nicht! wie diss geschicht,
Noch ob es mag geschehen,
Gott kann überschwenglich thun,
Das wir nicht verstehen.
8. Vernunft und Sinn lass immerhin
Was möglich scheint, vergleichen,
Ich will nun und nimmermehr
Von den Buchstab weichen.

9. Der diess verspricht, betreugt mich nicht,
Und kann mich nicht betrügen.
Gott ist keines Menschen Kind,
Dass er könne lügen.
10. Verleih, o Gott, durch Christi Tod,
Dass weder Tod noch Teufel,
Mir in diesem Glaubenspunkt
Rege neuen Zweifel.
11. So will ich nie noch spät, noch früh,
Ermuden sondern Wanken
Für dein theurvergossnes Blut
Dir, mein Gott, zu danken.⁴
1. I walk briskly to God's table.
Help, Father, help me with grace
That no transgression here may harm me.
2. I do not deny what makes me frail.
I confess my faults. Remorse for sins
You are accustomed, pious God, to bear.
3. If it becomes necessary, through a ransom
To destroy the document,
The Lord of glory will pay this for me.
4. Therefore I place myself in you, Jesus,
In a childlike trust:
Jesus, whom the Seraphim desire to look upon.
5. Your body and blood to my good
were broken and poured out. They will be,
O deep miracle, enjoyed at the table.
6. I should now with soul and mouth, no wisdom
can judge it,
Eat the worthy flesh of Jesus Christ,
Incomprehensibly.
7. Do not brood! how this is sent, yet whether
it can happen.
God can do incredible things
That we do not understand.

⁴Leipziger Gesang-Buch, 1740, no. 485. This hymn is attributed to Gerhard W. Molanus, 1673 in The Lutheran Hymnal 1941. The 1740 Leipziger Gesang-Buch attributes it to Gerhardt, hence its inclusion in this chapter.

8. Reason and mind leave all behind, comparing with
 what
 Appears possible. I will now and henceforth
 Never retreat from the letter of the Word.
9. Who promises this deceives me not, nor is able
 to deceive me.
 God is not a human child
 That He could lie.
10. Grant, O God, through Christ's death
 That neither death nor devil
 Stir new doubts in me about this article of
 faith.
11. So will I never, either late or early, tire or
 falter
 To thank you, my God,
 For your costly shed blood.

In the first two stanzas we see an awareness of sin and the consequent frailty that puts us in constant need of grace: "I do not deny what makes me frail." The third stanza refers to the record of our sins that was destroyed as Jesus suffered for us on the cross. The result of this life-changing event is a child-like faith and trust in Jesus, whom we know in a way that the angels long to know. With soul and mouth we eat Jesus' body and blood, which is an incomprehensible miracle. Stanzas seven through nine recognize the fact that reason will be tempted to unravel this mystery. The believer is urged to leave reason behind and hold fast to God's Word. Because it is God's Word, it cannot deceive us as a human word might.

The tenth stanza brings in an eschatological element by mentioning the hour of death, praying that it might not arouse doubts about the promises of God. The final stanza sounds a note of eucharistic devotion for the precious blood of Christ. In this hymn, participation in the body and blood of Christ brings God's grace and delivers from the

dangers of sin. Eating and drinking in faith effects the happy union between a believer and his Savior. Gerhardt underscores again the importance of emphasizing the reality of this sacramental encounter with God.

Such an encounter with God always evokes the realization of the presence of sin, as does the hymn "Ich komm jetzt eingeladen," set to the tune, "In allen meinen Thaten."

1. Ich komm jetzt eingeladen
Zu deinen grossen Gnaden,
Mein Heiland Jesu Christ!
Doch scheu ich mich zu treten
Von meinem Gott zu beten,
Weil ich mit Sünd berüst.
2. Ich bin ein armer Sünder
Wie alle Menschenkinder
Gestehe meine Sünd;
Und weil ich ausgesprochen,
So hilf, O Jesu, bitten
Damit ich Gnade find.
3. Ich will nun wiederkehren,
Hilf allem Unfall wehren,
Vergieb mir alle Schuld,
Du bist für mich gestorben,
Hast mir das Heil erworben,
Drum habe doch Geduld.
4. In deine blütge Wunden
Hab ich mich nun gefunden,
Und bin dadurch getrost;
Hilf mir in deinem Namen,
O Jesu, sprich das Amen,
Du Sünder bist erlöst.
5. Drauf will ich nun empfangen
Mit gläubigem Verlangen
Den wahren Leib und Blut,
So für mich ist gegeben,
Hilf, dass mirs sei das Leben
Und meiner Seelen gut.⁵

⁵Leipziger Gesang-Buch, 1740, no. 486.

1. I come now invited to your great grace,
My Savior, Jesus Christ!
Yet here I am shy to walk before my God to pray,
Since I am armed with sin.
2. I am a poor sinner, like all human children.
I confess my sins and since I can do nothing,
Help, O Jesus. I pray that I might find grace.
3. Now I want to return. Keep me from stumbling
Forgive me every wrong. You have died for me.
Have gained salvation for me, therefore, still have
patience.
4. In your bloody wounds I have now found myself,
And am comforted through them. Help me in your Name,
O Jesus; say the Amen: You, a sinner, are redeemed.
5. I want now to receive with believing desire
The true body and blood, which is given for me.
Help that it be life for me and blessing for my soul.

Having heard the gracious invitation of Jesus, "Come to Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," the singer immediately becomes conscious of his sin and helplessness in all spiritual matters. The prayer for forgiveness, "Vergieb mir alle schuld" (Forgive me every wrong) is based on Jesus' death "for me." The image of Jesus' "bloody wounds" appears in this text, a popular image of the day.

Only after the experience of confession and absolution does the singer feel prepared to receive the body and blood of the Lord. A deep personal awareness of one's own sinfulness pervades the communion hymnody of Gerhardt. The chief benefit remains healing and deliverance from the disastrous consequences of sin.

A personal hunger for grace and thirst for God recurs in Gerhardt's communion hymns. Statements such as "mit gläubigen Verlangen" (with believing desire or longing) challenge a complacent and

self-satisfied Christianity that has lost its zeal for the Eucharist. These hymns challenge the Church to shape her spirituality according to the pattern and institution of Christ, not whatever the spirit of the time dictates.

Gerhardt expands his repertoire of communion imagery in the hymn, "Jetzt kommt, mein Gott, ein armer Gast," which was sung in Leipzig to the tune "An Wasserflüssen Babylon."

1. Jetzt kommt, mein Gott, ein armer Gast,
 Ein Ton zu seinem Topfer,
 Der drückt hart der Sunden Last,
 Er ist dein Kind, mein Schöpfer,
 Dafür gestorben ist dein Sohn,
 Das du auch hast getauft schon,
 Und jetztund eingeladen,
 Zu deinem Tisch komm ich, dein Kind,
 Bin elend, kranck, unrein und blind,
 Und nicht werth deiner Gnaden.
2. Ich bringe aber Jesum her,
 Mit seinem Tod und Schmerzen;
 Wie für mich sehr geblutet der,
 Das nimm, mein Gott, zu herzen.
 Ach! siehe diesen Wundermann,
 Dein Kind und meinen Jesum an,
 Und sei darumb mir gnädig,
 Du willst in ihm mein Vater sein,
 In ihm bin ich dein Kind allein,
 Sprich mich von Sunden ledig.
3. Mein Glaube siehet Jesum hier,
 Und mich zu seinen Füßen,
 Er zeigt als ein Mensch sich mir,
 Lasst sein Blut auf sich fließen,
 Gott hänget an des Kreuzes Joch,
 Da bluten alle Wunden noch;
 Auch reichenseine Hände
 Mir seinen Leib im Brodte sein,
 Wie auch sein wahres Blut im Wein.
 O wer recht danken könnte!
4. Ich höre, wie mich deuchtet, laut
 Jetzt mein Bräutigam schreien;
 Nimm diesen Mahlschatz, meine Braut,
 Es soll dich nicht gereuen,

Iss meinen Leib und trink mein Blut:
 Also hast du das grösste Gut,
 Mich ganz mit meinem Leiden.
 Ach! kriech doch in mein Herz hinein,
 Das isst und stets soll offen sein,
 Und ruh in meine Seiten.

5. Ich weiss auch, dass die Engel mich
 Wie Mauern stets umringen,
 So, dass der Satan trotziglich
 Gar nicht hindurch kann dringen;
 Ich habe den, der Beistand leist,
 Es ist der werthe heilige Geist,
 Der über sich thut schweben.
 Nun richte du, Dreieinigkeit,
 Mein Thun zu deiner Herrlichkeit,
 Und mir zum ewig'n Leben.
6. Dir öff'n ich auch mein Herz und Mund,
 Und was sich in mir reget;
 Jetzt mache würdig und gesund,
 Worein sich Jesus leget.
 Ach! reinige durch deine Gut:
 Leib, Seele, Herz, Geist und Gemuth,
 Und gieb mir, was mich zieret;
 Mit Glauben, Liebe und Andacht
 Lass werden dieses Werk vollbracht,
 Und wie es sich gebühret.
7. So will ich, trauter Jesu, nun
 Dein Leib und Blut empfangen,
 Jetzt komme, Jesu, komme du
 Mit Speiss und Trank gegangen.
 Ich will in dich: Ach! komm in mich;
 Ich schmecke auch schon, Jesu, dich;
 Ich fühle, du bist kommen.
 Es weiche mein Angst, Noth und Schmerz,
 Mein und dein Herze ist ein Herz,
 In dich bin ich genommen.
8. Ach! habe, frommer Jesu, dank
 Für deines Leibes Speise
 Für deines edlen Blutes Trank;
 Und dass ich deine heisse;
 Ach! zeig auch mir zur Sterbenszeit
 Gleichwie ich dich gesehen heut,
 Dein Bluten und dein Sterben.
 Ich weis nun, dass du meine bist,

Nun bin ich dein, Herr Jesu Christ,
Dein Bund kann nicht verderben.⁶

1. Now comes, my God, a poor guest, as clay to his potter;
Whom the load of sin presses hard. It is your child,
My creator, for this your Son has died,
Whom you already baptized. Now invited to your table I come,
Your child, miserable, sick, impure and blind,
Not worthy of your grace.
2. But I bring Jesus along, with his death and passion.
Now for me He bled so much: my God, take that to your heart.
Ah! see this man of wonder, your child and my Jesus.
Be gracious therefore to me. You desire in him to be
My Father; in Him I am your child alone.
Set me free from sins.
3. My faith sees Jesus here, and me at his feet.
He shows himself as a man to me, and lets his blood
Flow upon me. God hangs upon the yoke of the cross,
There all wounds still bleed. His hands also pass to me
His body to be in the bread, as also his true blood
In the wine. O, who can truly thank Him!
4. I hear, it seems to me, my bridegroom loudly crying:
Take this treasure-meal, my bride,
It will not give you remorse. Eat my body
And drink my blood: thus you have the greatest good,
Myself complete, with my passion. Ah! creep yet into my heart
That now and always shall be open, and rest at my side.
5. I know also, that the angels always surround me like a wall,
So that Satan deliberately can by no means press through.
I have him, who lends assistance. He is the worthy
Holy Ghost, who soars above me. Now govern, holy Trinity,
My deeds to your glory,
And me to life eternal.
6. To you also I open my heart and mouth, and what moves in me.
Now make worthy and healthy that to which Jesus comes.
Ah! purify through your gift: body, soul, heart, spirit and
Thought, and give me what adorns me. With faith, love and
Devotion let this work be perfected,
As properly becomes it.
7. I desire, dearest Jesus, now to receive your body and blood.
Now come, Jesus, come with food and drink. I want to be
In you, Oh, come in me. Already I taste you, Jesus,
I feel that you have come. My sorrow, need and pain depart.

⁶Leipziger Gesang-Buch, 1740, no. 487.

My heart and yours are now one heart.
In you I have been taken.

8. Ah! receive my thanks, dear Jesus, for your body's food
And for your noble blood's drink, and that I am called
Your own. Ah! show me also at death's hour.
Just as I have seen today, your blood and your death.
I know that you are mine. Now I am yours, Lord Jesus Christ,
Your covenant cannot condemn.

The first stanza repeats Gerhardt's opening idea of confession and self-deprecation. He also ties in the biblical imagery of the potter and his clay: "But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand."⁷ Gerhardt also captures the image of the father-child relationship expressed in Isaiah 64. Our God is not a capricious artist, but a tender-hearted, caring father whose greatest concern is the well-being of his children. In the second stanza, the alien righteousness of Christ is tenderly expressed in the words: "Ich bringe aber Jesum her" (but I bring Jesus along). Only in Jesus do we know the Father. Only in Christ can we hope to be free of sins. The relationship between God and the Christian is located and focused in the person of Jesus, "diesen Wundermann" (this man of miracles).

At the Eucharist, in faith, the singer sees himself on Calvary at the foot of the cross. There Jesus' open wounds pour their saving blood over the repentant sinner. It is truly God that died on the cursed tree, and the God-man himself gives us his body in bread and his blood in wine to eat and drink. The exclamation, "Who can truly thank Him!" implies that no one can do this. The gift exceeds our best attempts to respond in thanks and praise. In the fourth stanza, the believer hears Jesus speaking in the image of a wedding where Jesus is the bridegroom

⁷ Isaiah 64:8. (KJV).

and the singer is the bride. This eating and drinking is the greatest good. All of Jesus comes to us in the Holy Communion. In this mystical union, the believer finds rest in Jesus' heart.

In the Lord's Supper we are surrounded by the holy angels as we acknowledge in the words "together with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven." We are assisted by the Holy Spirit and led by the Holy Trinity. In such a setting, Satan, the evil foe, is thwarted. In the sixth stanza, the singer prays for the benefits of this gift: purity, faith, love and devotion. Wherever Jesus enters, the place becomes worthy, healthy and lovely.

Stanza seven highlights the moment of reception, an experience deeply desired and felt. Jesus' heart is united with the believer's heart, which offers a foretaste of heaven where "sorrow, need and pain depart." The final stanza looks back with thanks on the Sacrament just received. It looks forward also to the hour of death and prays for the same heavenly vision that today was seen in the Sacrament - Jesus' blood and death - to give the assurance that "dein Bund kann nicht verderben" (your covenant cannot condemn). The use of the word "Bund" (covenant) is noteworthy because it indicates familiarity with the Eucharistic overtones of Psalm 111: "He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant forever: holy and reverend is his name."⁸

"Jetzt kommt, mein Gott" abounds with scriptural imagery and sound doctrine. It also includes warm expressions of the personal faith relationship between the believer and his Savior. It is interesting to note that while the hymn probably would be sung during distribution, it

⁸Psalm 111:9. (KJV).

describes the experience of the entire Divine Service, before, during and after Communion. Four out of the eight stanzas mention the body and blood of Christ in connection with bread and wine, eating and drinking. The conclusion appears to be inescapable that this eating and drinking was for Gerhardt the chief matter of the Eucharist. A strong belief in the Real Presence would account for this point of view, which demonstrates a connection to Luther and the orthodox theologians of the sixteenth century. Gerhardt also turned to the Psalms for inspiration, as this following hymn demonstrates. "Der Herr, der aller Enden" was sung to the tune "Nun lasst uns Gott dem. . . ."

1. Der Herr, der aller Enden
Regiert, mit seinen Händen,
Der Brunn der ewigen Güter,
Der ist mein Hirt und Hüter.
2. So lang ich diesen habe,
Fehlt mirs an keiner Gabe,
Der Reichtum seiner Fülle
Giebt mir die Füll und Hülle.
3. Er lässt mich mit Freuden
Auf grüner Auen weiden,
Führt mich zur frischen Quellen,
Schafft Rath in schweren Fallen.
4. Wenn meine Seele zaget
Und sich mit Sorgen plaget,
Weis er sie zu erquicken,
Aus aller Noth zu rücken.
5. Er lehrt mich thun und lassen,
Führt mich auf rechter Strassen,
Lasst Furcht und Angst sich stillen,
Um seines Namens willen.
6. Und ob ich gleich für andern
Im finstern Thal muss wandern,
Furcht ich doch keine Tücke,
Bin frei fürm Ungelücke.

7. Denn du stehst mir zur Seiten,
Schützt mich für bösen Leuten,
Dein Stab, Herr, und dein Stecken
Benimmt mir all mein Schrecken.
 8. Du setztest mir zu Tische,
Machst, dass ich mich erfrische,
Wenn mir mein Feind viel Schmerzen
Erweckt in meinen Herzen.
 9. Du salbst mein Haupt mit Oele,
Und füllest meine Seele,
Die leer und dürstig sasse,
Mit vollgeschenktem Maase.
 10. Barmherzkeit und Gutes
Wird mein Herz gutes Muthes,
Voll Lust, voll Freud und Lachen,
So lang ich lebe, machen.
 11. Ich will dein Diener bleiben,
Und dein Lob herrlich treiben
Im Hause, da du wohnest,
Und fromm sein wohl belohnest.
 12. Ich will dich hier auf Erden
Und dort, da wir dich werden
Selbst schauen im Himmel droben,
Hoch rühmen, sing'n und loben.⁹
1. The Lord who governs every ending
with his hands,
The fountain of eternal goodness,
Is my shepherd and protector.
 2. So long as I have this, I shall lack
no gift,
The wealth of his fulness
Gives me abundance and plenty.
 3. He lets me graze with joy in green
pastures.
He leads me to fresh springs,
Gives counsel in difficult places.
 4. If my soul doubts and torments itself
with cares,
He knows how to refresh me,
From every trouble move me.

⁹Leipziger Gesang-Buch, 1740, no. 504.

5. He teaches me to do and suffer.
He leads me on the right paths,
He quiets fear and anxious care for
His name's sake.
6. And whether I, the same as another,
Must wander in a dark valley, yet I
fear no malice.
I am free from misfortune.
7. For you stand by my side and protect me
from evil people.
Your staff, Lord, and your staves
Take from me all my terrors.
8. You seat me at a table and cause me to
be refreshed,
When my enemy awakens
Many pains in my heart.
9. You anoint my head with oil, and fill
my soul,
That sat empty and thirsty,
With a hearty meal.
10. Mercy and goodness will make my heart
of good courage,
And full of desire, joy and laughter,
As long as I live.
11. I want to remain your servant, and
gladly further your praise,
In the house where you dwell
And well reward your servants.
12. I want to offer highest praise, song
and worship
To you while here on earth
And there where we ourselves will
see you in heaven.

Although this paraphrase of Psalm 23 does not appear to be a communion hymn in and of itself, it is included in the section of hymns for the Lord's Supper in the 1740 Leipzig hymnal. This paraphrase follows the tradition of the Church Fathers who interpreted Psalm 23 in light of the Eucharist. Jean Danielou informs us:

We find it in the sacramental catecheses: --In St. Paul of Jerusalem: "If you wish to know the effect of the sacrament, ask blessed David, who says: 'Thou has prepared a table before me, in the face of those who persecute me .' See what he wishes to say. Before Your coming, the demons prepared for men filthy tables, full of diabolic powers. But when You came, O Lord, You prepared a table before me, which is none other than the sacramental and spiritual table which God has prepared for us." As we have seen, St. Ambrose puts this same verse on the lips of the newly baptized coming from the altar to assist at Mass for the first time: "He comes near, and, seeing the holy altar made ready, he cries out: 'Thou hast prepared a table before me'." In the same way, St. Gregory of Nyssa says: "He prepares the sacramental table" . . . St. Cyril makes it more precise: "The sacramental table is the flesh of the Lord, which fortifies us against our passions and the demons. Indeed Satan fears those who take part with reverence in the mysteries." And for Theodore of Mopsuestia, "it is the sacramental nourishment that He offers to us. He who has been established as our Shepherd."¹⁰

Since this hymn, "The Lord Who Governs Every Ending," is a paraphrase of Psalm 23, it does not follow the above-mentioned pattern of Gerhardt's communion hymns. It follows the Psalm text and highlights the blessings that come to the faithful at the table of the Lord. The last two stanzas particularly emphasize praise, song and worship. These are important elements in the Eucharist that might tend to be overshadowed by the favored penitential strain. This hymn, based on Psalm 23, demonstrates that although Gerhardt played a role in the evolution of the language of communion hymnody, he remained in the main stream of orthodox theology with the early church fathers. Both Gerhardt and the orthodox fathers see Christ shepherding his people chiefly through the means of grace, especially the Sacrament of the Altar. Singing the Twenty-third Psalm or a metrical setting thereof at the Eucharist reminds the Church that the psalter is her first book of hymns and

¹⁰Jean Danielou, S.J., The Bible and the Liturgy (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1956), 182-83.

prayers. The absence of a specific reference to the body and blood of Christ in a Gerhardt communion hymn is surprising. However, it is at the Lord's table that the singer is refreshed and strengthened for the new life.

The Savior's body and blood were ever in the center of Gerhardt's thoughts on spiritual matters, as the following hymn makes plain. It is set to the tune, "O Gott, du frommer Gott."

1. Ach Gott! du grosser Gott, ich klage dir mit Schmerzen,
Dass ich verwundet bin sehr tief in meinem Herzen
Durch meine Missethat, die also gross und schwer,
Dass ich nicht weis, wo aus, und muss mich fürchten sehr.
2. Mein Leben durch und durch ist lauter Sünd und Schande,
Ich trag des Satans Joch, der Höllen Strick und Bande,
Darinnen stehe ich vor Gottes Angesicht,
Bin ein verdammter Mensch, wenn er das Urteil spricht.
3. Wo soll ich fliehen hin? wo soll ich denn nun bleiben?
O weh der schweren Sünd, zur Höllen sich mich treiben.
Die hab ich wohl verdient, dass ich in Ewigkeit
Soll leiden Pein und Quaal und alles Herzeleid.
4. Doch was verzage ich in meinen schweren Sünden,
Ist doch Barmherzigkeit bei dir, O Gott, zu finden,
Wenn man bei dir sucht durch wahre Busz und Reu,
So hat sie gar kein End, ist alle Morgen neu.
5. Drum, Herr, ich suche sie durch Christi Blut und Wunden,
Im Christi Wunden roth hab ich mich eingefunden;
Darein verkriech ich mich, die wirst du sehen an,
Dass mir des Satans Zorn und Grimm noch schaden kann.
6. Und weil ich denn nun jutz den wahren Leib genossen
Wie auch dein theures Blut das du für mich vergossen;
So will ich nun forthin dir allzeit dankbar sein,
Dass ich in Ewigkeit leb mit den Engeln dein.
7. Ich sterbe, wenn ich will, gleich heute oder morgen,
So wirst du, frommer Gott, die Seele wohl versorgen;
Die ich dir anbefehl in deine treue hand,
Ach Gott! steh mir fest bei, gieb mir ein selig End.¹¹

¹¹Leipziger Gesang-Buch, 1740, no. 505.

1. O God, almighty God, I cry to you with terrors.
For deep within my heart, lie wickedness and errors,
And all my many sins, that grievously increase,
I fear, I know not where I ever shall find peace.
2. My life in every way is full of shame and sinning.
I carry Satan's yoke, the bonds of hell are binding.
In these I helpless stand before the face of God.
I'm lost and fully damned if judgement now were heard.
3. Where shall I flee away? Where could I hide in safety?
The pain, the heavy sins, to hell itself would drive me.
This I have well deserved, that in eternity
I suffer anguish sore and deepest misery.
4. Yet why do I despair because of my transgressions.
Your mercy I shall find, O God of great compassion.
If one should seek for you and with repentance true,
Your grace which has no end is every morning new.
5. I seek your mercy, Lord, through Jesus' passion and his blood.
In his deep wounds so red I now have found my highest good.
I hide myself in them, in them you will behold
That Satan's fiercest wrath is empty, weak and cold.
6. Since I your body true in faith am now enjoying,
Likewise your precious blood that you for me are pouring;
I shall from this day forth give you all thanks and praise,
And with the angel host eternal anthems raise.
7. My hour of death may come today or on the morrow,
O faithful God you shall take from my soul all sorrow;
Since I commend myself to your dear, faithful hand,
O God, stand firm with me, grant me a blessed end.

This hymn exposes the human heart relentlessly. In the first three stanzas, Gerhardt not only confesses his sin, but gives expression to what can only be called total depravity. He describes in frightening terms the damnation that even a baptized Christian would experience were God to remove His grace and mercy from us. While the average worshipper might not be filled with terrors at the thought of his sins or feel burdened with Satan's yoke and bound with the cords of hell, it is salutary for the communicants to be reminded that without Jesus, they would indeed face the judgment of God with no place to

flee or hide. If nothing else, even brief contemplation of these stanzas ought to produce a hunger and thirst for the Sacrament.

Stanza four quickly asserts that while a Christian may properly contemplate these things, despair has no place since the mercy of God is always available to those who turn from their sins to God. Stanza five stresses that God may be found only in Jesus' passion and death. The image of Christ's wounds returns and the believer actually "creeps" inside them. In these wounds the vaccine for Satan's venom has been found. Stanza six and seven echo the eschatological note of praise. Eternity has begun in the Eucharist and therefore death becomes a blessing to those who have placed themselves in the faithful hand of God.

The body and blood of Christ are mentioned in only one of the seven stanzas, yet that brief moment creates an attitude in the final stanza of confident hope even in the hour of death. Gerhardt speaks to the spiritual maladies of mankind, which are timeless, and appeals directly to the cross and passion of Christ for solutions. The benefits of that cross and passion are always found in the Savior's true body and precious blood, given in the Eucharist. These factors establish this as a hymn for the church of all time.

However Gerhardt approached the Eucharist, he spoke of it in a way that transcends his own generation, as the following hymn demonstrates. It is set to the tune "Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier."

1. Guter Hirte, Jesu Christ, dir sei Lob und Dank gegeben
Für dein theures Abendmahl, das uns dient zum Himmelsleben;
Und frei macht von allen Sünden, so oft wir uns dazu finden.

2. Siehe, Jesu, diesesmal sind wir auch allhie verhanden,
Deinen wahren Leib und Blut wider unsere Sündenschanden
Zu geniessen, und dein Leiden zu verkündigen mit Freuden.
 3. Ach! Herr Jesu, schenke uns deines guten Geistes Gaben,
Dass wir allesamt dazu mögen rechte Herze haben,
Dich mit Glauben zu empfangen, und dir emsig anzuhängen.
 4. Schaff uns neu durch diese Kost, dass wir alle Böse lassen,
Und nur dich und dein Geheis, und, was himmlisch ist, erfassen;
Ach! gieb es durch deinen Namen, Jesu, liebster Jesu, Amen.¹²
1. O Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, praise and thanks to you be
given
For this precious Sacrament, that leads us to life in heaven.
And from all our sins it frees us, often as we will receive it.
 2. Look now, Jesus, at this time we are here all gladly gathered,
Your true body and true blood from our shameful sinning saved;
That on earth we might enjoy you, and with joy proclaim your
passion.
 3. O Lord Jesus, give to us all the good gifts of your Spirit.
That we one and all thereby have and hold within a true heart;
That we might with faith receive you, with determination keep
you.
 4. Make us new, Lord, through this meal, that we leave behind
all evil.
Grasping firmly your command, in you have the things of heaven.
Through your name grant us this treasure, Jesus, dearest
Jesus, Amen.

Here is none of the terror of sin, only deliverance from shameful sinning. Here is no anxiety of conscience, only a prayer to have and hold within a true heart. The first stanza begins by referring again to Psalm 23:1, "Guter Hirte" (Good Shepherd). Frequent reception is pointed to in the phrase, "often as we will receive it" and encouraged by recalling that the Sacrament frees us from sin and opens heaven. Stanza two also mentions deliverance from shame and sinning by means of the true body and blood of Christ. The fruit of this deliverance is a

¹²Leipziger Gesang-Buch, 1740, no. 506.

joyful lifestyle of witnessing to God's love in Jesus. Stanza three prays for all good gifts of the Holy Spirit and for a true heart. These will enable the child of God to grow in sanctification and be faithful unto death. The final stanza again refers to abandoning all evil as a result of partaking of the Sacrament. The heavenly treasure comes through Jesus' name, the name into which we were baptized, which ties the two sacraments together nicely.

Two things stand out in this brief hymn. First, the first person plural, not singular, is used. Gerhardt also gave voice to the corporate, objective aspect of the Eucharist. He speaks as if victory over sin were an accomplished fact that we have been freed to enjoy. This leads to a second significant item. A spirit of thanksgiving which pervades the entire hymn reminds one of Luther's hymn "Gott sei gelobet." Christians go out with joy from the Eucharist, witnessing to the faith and hope in their lives. The phrase "und dein Leiden zu verkündigen mit Freuden" (and your passion to proclaim with joy) establishes a link between the Lord's Supper and evangelism, a link the church does well to remember.

The blood of Jesus is not only an important link between the Lord's Supper and evangelism; it occupied a central place in Gerhardt's faith and theology, as the following example testifies. It is set to the tune "Singen wir auf Herzensgründe."

1. Jesu Blut komm über mich,
 So, so ruf ich dürstiglich,
 Jesu Blut das komm und bleib
 Über mich mein Seel und Leib,
 Über mich mein Hab' und Gut,
 Über mein Herz, Sinn und Muth,
 Komm und bleibe Jesu Blut.

2. Jesu Blut, ich sehe dich.
Auch im Glauben sehe ich
Jesum an dem Kreuze hoch
Hangen und da bluten noch,
Jesu Blut, ach lauf!
Mein Herz freuet sich darauf,
Willig dich zu fangen auf.
3. Jesus Seite thut sich weit
Zu mir auf, sein Blut das schreit:
Wer da dürstet, komme her!
Jesu, ach! mich dürstet sehr,
Tranke aus der Seiten höhl
Und der Wunden dein die Seel,
Die ich deinem Blut befehl.
4. Jesu Blut, das ganz allein
Mich von Sunden machet rein,
Da mir Gottes Gnade bracht,
Mich gekrönet und gemacht
Hat zu einen Gotteskind,
Und mit Gott mich fest verbindt,
Das komm über mich geschwind.
5. Jesu Blut mich selbst bereit't
Würdiglich zu nehmen heut
In dem heiligen Abendmahl,
Gott zum Lob, mir zum Labsal,
Dass durch diesen edlen Saft
Des Verdienstes Jesu Kraft
Ich auch werde ganz theilhaftig.
6. Jesu Blut, ach! stärke mir
Meinen Glauben für und für,
Meiner Gottes Huld und Gnad
Mir erhalte früh und spät,
Auch mich mach Tugend voll
Dass ich thue, was ich soll,
Und Gott stets gefalle wohl.
7. Jesus Blut komm allzeit
Über mich in Leid und Freud,
Wenn ich bin in Kreuzesnoth
Wenn ich ringe mit dem Tod,
Wenn die falsch Welt mich sticht,
Sünd, Tod, Teufel mich ansicht,
Und mein Herz in Leide bricht.
8. Komm und bleibe, Jesus Blut,
Über mein Herz, Sinn und Muth;
Über mich, mein Seel und Leib,

Jesus Blut das komm und bleib,
 Mein Herz nach dir sehnet sich,
 So, so ruf ich d'ürstiglich,¹³
 Jesus Blut komm uber mich.

1. Jesus' blood come over me, thus, so I call thirstingly.
 Jesus' blood, come and remain over me, my soul and body,
 Over me, my house and home, over my heart,
 Mind and courage. Come and stay, Jesus' blood.
2. Jesus' blood, I see you. Also in faith I see Jesus
 Hanging high on the cross and there still bleeding.
 Jesus' blood, O run, O run! My heart rejoices here,
 Gladly to intercept you.
3. Jesus' side opens wide for me, his blood that cries:
 Whoever is thirsty, come! Jesus, Oh! I'm very thirsty,
 My soul, which I commend to your blood, would drink
 From the hollow of the side and your wounds.
4. Jesus' blood, which alone makes me completely pure of sin,
 This God's grace has bought, crowned me and made me to be
 A child of God, and binds me firmly with God.
 That come over me quickly.
5. Jesus' blood itself prepares me worthily to take today
 In the holy Lord's Supper; to God's praise and my refreshment.
 Through this costly drink the earnings of Jesus' power
 I also shall completely share.
6. Jesus' blood, Oh! strengthen for me my faith constantly.
 The favor and grace of my God obtain for me early and late.
 Also make me full of virtue that I do what I ought,
 And always well please God.
7. Jesus' blood always come over me in sorrow and joy;
 When I am in deep distress, when I struggle with death,
 When the false world deserts me, sin, death and devil
 Attack me, and my heart in sorrow breaks.
8. Come and stay, Jesus' blood, over my heart, mind and senses;
 Over me, soul and body. Jesus' blood, come and stay.
 My heart longs for you, thus, thus I call thirstingly:
 Jesus' blood come over me.

This rather unusual apostrophe to the blood of Christ concludes our study of Gerhardt communion hymns. The first stanza pleads that

¹³Leipziger Gesang-Buch, 1740, no. 507.

the Savior's blood would wash over and remain over the whole person, a striking image indeed. The second stanza expresses the urgency of the believer to run to the foot of the cross and there receive the benefits of Jesus' death. The thirsty soul in stanza three literally drinks the blood that flows from the Savior's wounds, the only reference to drinking the Lord's blood in the Eucharist in this hymn. In stanzas four through seven, the benefits of Jesus' blood are presented. It purifies from sin and crowns us children of God. It prepares us to receive the Sacrament which gives all the benefits of Jesus' passion. It strengthens faith, obtains the grace of God at all times so that we are enabled to do what pleases God. The blood of Christ sustains us in all the changes and chances of this life, in our struggles with sin, the world and the devil, and especially in times of deep, personal sorrow. The final stanza rephrases almost identically the first stanza. The repetition provides opportunity to meditate and reflect in a deeper way on the mystery of Jesus' blood and the benefits it brings to the believer.

This hymn is unusual, too, in that it only addresses the thirst and the drinking, not the hunger and eating of our Lord's body. This could be a confessional response to the Roman abuse, confirmed by the Council of Trent, of withholding the chalice from the laity. All of Gerhardt's communion hymns bespeak a high and pure adherence to the Confessions and to the very words of Jesus that give what has been promised. Gerhardt's age saw the realities of life and death, sin and grace quite plainly, without many of the comforts we today use to disguise them. Thus, for Gerhardt, the blessed reality of the body and blood in the Eucharist serves the very purpose for which the Lord gave

it: to forgive sin, strengthen faith and grow closer to God in life and in death. In the Eucharist, he experienced this vital and essential relationship by sharing in Jesus' body and blood.

In his communion hymns, Gerhardt helps us distinguish between what men would like to make of the Eucharist and what treasure is being given to us by God. As Werner Elert points out, "For Schleiermacher fellowship 'is created by the voluntary action of men.'"¹⁴ For this reason, his communion hymns deserve a place in contemporary, English Lutheran hymnals.

Johann Heermann's Communion Hymns

An important contemporary of Gerhardt was Johann Heermann (1585-1647), who wrote the familiar hymn texts "Herzliebster Jesu" (Ah, Holy Jesus) and "O Gott, du frommer Gott" (O God, Thou Faithful God). Neither Lutheran Worship nor Lutheran Book of Worship include examples of Heermann's communion hymns. Heermann speaks with eloquence and rich, biblical imagery of the Eucharist, as in the following hymn. It is set to the tune "O Jesu Christ, meins."

1. O Jesu, du mein Bräutigam
Der du aus Lieb am Kreuzesstamm
Für mich den Tod gelitten hast,
Genommen weg der Sünden Last.
2. Ich komm' zu deinem Abendmahl,
Verderbt durch manchen Sündenfall,
Ich bin krank, unrein, nackt und bloss,
Blind und arm, ach! mich nicht verstoss.
3. Du bist der Arzt, du bist das Licht,
Du bist der Herr, dem nichts gebricht,

¹⁴Werner Elert, Eucharist and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966), 5.

Du bist der Brunn der Heiligkeit,
Du bist das rechte Hochzeitleid.

4. Drum, O Herr Jesu, bitt ich dich
In meiner Schwachheit heile mich,
Was unrein ist, das mache rein,
Durch deinen hellen Gnadenschein.
5. Erleuchte mein verfinstert Herz,
Zünd an die schöne Glaubenskerz,
Mein Armuth in Reichthum verkehr,
Und meinem Fleische steur und wehr.
6. Auff dass ich dich, du wahres Brodt
Des Lebens, wahrer Mensch und Gott,
Mit solcher Ehrerbietung nehm,
Wie dir das rühmlich, mir bequem.
7. Lösch alle Laster aus in mir,
Mein Herz mit Lieb und Glauben zier,
Und was sonst ist von Tugend mehr,
Das pflanz in mir zu deiner Ehr.
8. Gieb, was mir nutzt an Seel und Leib;
Was schädlich ist, fern von mir treib,
Komm in mein Herz, lass mich mit dir
Vereinigt bleiben für und für.
9. Hilf, dass durch deiner Mahlzeit Kraft
Das Bö's' in mir werd abgeschafft,
Erlassen alle Sünd und Schuld,
Erlangt des Vater Lieb und Huld.
10. Vertreibe alle meine Feind,
Die sichtbar und unsichtbar seind;
Den guten varsatz, den ich führ,
Durch deinen Geist fest mach in mir.
11. Mein Leben, Bitten, Sinn and Pflicht
Nach deinem heiligen Willen richt,
Ach! lass mich meine Tag in Ruh
Und Friede christlich bringen zu.
12. Bis du mich, O du Lebensfürst,
Zu dir in Himmel nehmen wirst,
Dass ich bei dir dort ewiglich
An deiner Tafel freue mich.¹⁵

¹⁵Leipziger Gesang-Buch, 1740, no. 475.

1. Jesus, my bridegroom, you gave salvation
From your love upon the cross, You took away
My load of sin, our full redemption there did win.
2. I come the Supper to receive. Oh how my sins
Your heart must grieve. I am impure, sick, naked
Blind; do not reject me, dearest friend.
3. You are the healer, you the light. You are the Lord
Of strength and might. You are salvation's
Fountain clear, you are the wedding garment pure.
4. Jesus, my Lord, I pray to you. In my great weakness
Heal me now. Take my impurity away
With your bright beam of grace today.
5. Brighten O Lord, my darkened heart. Let burn faith's
Lovely candlelight. My poverty to wealth convert,
Guard and defend from any hurt.
6. I take you Jesus, living bread, true man and God,
No longer dead; with reverence such as praises you,
And gives me lasting comfort, too.
7. Crush and remove each evil thorn, with faith and love
My heart adorn. Whatever virtue there may be,
That for your glory plant in me.
8. Give soul and body what they need. From harmful deeds
May I be freed. Come in my heart, Oh let me be
One with you, Lord, eternally.
9. Help Lord, that through your Supper's strength,
Evil in me be gone at length; from every guilty sin
Released, the Father's love and grace increased.
10. Drive all my enemies away, those seen and those
Unseen, I pray. Establish through your Spirit's might,
Actions well pleasing in your sight.
11. My life and senses always fill with grace
To know and do your will. Oh, let me end my days
In rest, in Christ-like peace forever blessed.
12. The Prince of Life will surely come, and take me
To my heavenly home. There at his table I'll hear
His voice, with him forevermore rejoice.

This hymn begins with a positive Gospel statement describing the atonement. "Upon the cross . . . you took away the load of sin."

In stanzas two through five, Heermann acknowledges sin in vivid terms (sick, impure, naked, blind, poor), but also mixes it with Gospel images: the fountain of salvation, the wedding garment, the bright beam of grace. Stanza six serves a pivotal role in the hymn, as it describes the moment of reception. "I take you, Jesus, living bread." The stanzas following comment on the fruit and results of receiving the Sacrament. The prayer is that evil will be extinguished. The heart is adorned with the gifts of God. Our enemies, both human and demonic, are banished. Our habits and sense of duty are ordered according to God's will. The last two stanzas sound the joyful, eschatological theme: the hour of death ushers the Christian to the heavenly banqueting table to be with Jesus forever.

Although Heermann does not specify the body and blood of Christ, it is the Lord's Supper he has come to receive, and the "Supper's strength" (Mahlzeit Kraft) that triumphs over evil and guilt. For Heermann, the Eucharist is not an isolated, spiritual experience. The Eucharist is connected to the struggle with evil, with good works and with the final passage through death to life eternal. The primary concern is neither didactic nor polemical, but practical and personal application of the gift being given.

This personal concern is clearly heard in the following hymn as well. It comes from a 1752 Leipzig edition and is set to the tune "Gott sei gelobet."

1. Herr Jesu Christe, mein getreuer Hirte,
Komm, mit Gnaden mich bewirthe.
Bei dir alleine find ich Heil und Leben,
Was ich bedarf, kannst du mir geben, Kyrie Eleison!

Dein arm Schäfflein wollst du weiden
 Auf Israels Bergen mit Freuden,
 Und zum frischen Wasser führen,
 Da das Leben her thut rühren. Kyrie Eleison!

2. All' andere Speis und Trank is ganz vergebens,
 Du bist selbst das Brodt des Lebens.
 Kein Hunger plaget den, der von dir isset;
 Alles Jammers er vergisset. Kyrie Eleison!
 Du bist die lebendige Quelle,
 Zu dir ich mein Herzkrüglein stelle;
 Lass mit Trost es fliessen voll;
 So wird meiner Seelen wohl. Kyrie Eleison!
3. Lass mich recht trauren über meine Sunde
 Doch den Glauben auch anzünde;
 Dem wahren Glauben mit dem ich dich fasse,
 Mich auf dein Verdienst verlasse. Kyrie Eleison!
 Gieb mir ein recht bussfertig Herze,
 Dass ich mit der Sund nicht scherze,
 Noch durch meine Sicherheit
 Mich bring um die Seeligkeit, Kyrie Eleison!
4. Mir ist befleckt sehr graulich mein Gewissen,
 Ach! lass ein Bluts tröpflein fliessen
 Aus deinen Wunden, welche du empfangen,
 Da du bist am Kreuz gegangen. Kyrie Eleison!
 Wird damit mein Herz berührt,
 Wirds von Stund an rein gezieret
 Durch dein Blut mit Glauben schon,
 Kann in dir vor Gott bestehn. Kyrie Eleison!
5. Der darf des Arztes, den die Krankheit plaget,
 Mit Begier nach ihm fraget.
 O süsser Jesu! schau, wie tiefe Wunden
 Auch in mir gefunden. Kyrie Eleison!
 Du bist ja der Arzt, den ich rufe,
 Auf den mit Verlangen ich hoffe.
 Hilf, O wahrer Mensch und Gott!
 Hilfst du nicht, so bin ich todt. Kyrie Eleison!
6. Du rufest alle zu dir in Genaden,
 Die mühselig und beladen;
 All' ihre Missethat willst du verzeihen,
 Ihrer Burden sie befreien. Kyrie Eleison!
 Ach, komm selbst, leg an deine Hände
 Und die schwere Last von mir vende!
 Mach mich von den Sünden frei,
 Dir zu dienen Kraft verleih. Kyrie Eleison!
7. Du wollest Geist und Herze zu dir neigen,
 Nimm mich mir, gieb mich dir eigen.

Du bist der Weinstock, ich dein Rebe,
 Nimm mich in dich dass ich lebe. Kyrie Eleison!
 Ach! in mir find ich eitel Sünden,
 In dir müssen sie bald verschwinden.
 In mir find ich Höllenpein;
 In dir muss ich selig sein. Kyrie Eleison!

8. Komm, mein Freund, o komm, du schönster Krone.
 Jesu! komm, und in mir wohne.
 In mir will ich dich mit Gebet oft grussen,
 Ja mit Lieb und Glauben küssen. Kyrie Eleison!
 Komm, und schenk mir deine Liebe,
 So wird nichts sein, das mich betrube:
 Deine Sanftmuth und Geduld,
 Die Frucht deiner Gnad und Hulf. Kyrie Eleison!
9. Diess sind die Bluhmlein, die mich können heilen,
 Und mir Lebenssaft ertheilen:
 Dass ich aus mir nun all' Untugend reisse,
 Dir zu dienen mich befleisse. Kyrie Eleison!
 In dir hab ich was ich soll haben:
 Deiner Gnaden Brunnlein mich laben.
 Lass mich ewig sein in dir,
 Und bleib ewig auch in mir. Kyrie Eleison!¹⁶

1. Lord Jesus Christ, my ever faithful Shepherd,
 Come with grace now to sustain me,
 With you alone I find life and salvation,
 What I need, that you can give me. O Lord have mercy.
 Your poor lambs do lead to good pasture
 On the hills of Israel with joy;
 And to fresh water guide,
 There a quiet life beside. O Lord have mercy.
2. All other food and drink is vainly given
 Not the bread of life from heaven.
 No hunger torments him who eats of you,
 Every misery fades like morning dew. O Lord have mercy.
 You are the source, the life-giving fountain,
 Before you I place my empty heart.
 Pour your great comfort 'til
 My soul knows you made it well. O Lord have mercy.
3. Give me true sorrow for my sins, so many;
 Kindle also faith within me,
 Which holy faith enables me to grasp you,
 Leaves me gladly in your service. O Lord have mercy.
 Give me a heart that's truly repentant,
 That I trifle not with any sin.

¹⁶ Leipziger Gesang-Buch, 1752, no. 494.

Through this blessed certainty
Bring me full salvation. O Lord have mercy.

4. My conscience is polluted, that I know.
O, let one small drop of blood flow
From your deep wounds and stripes which you received
As you hung for me upon the cross. O Lord have mercy.
With this gift my heart will be moved,
From this hour be graced with purity;
Through your blood, faith so fair,
Before God in you appear. O Lord have mercy.
5. Call the physician when a sickness troubles
Send for him with haste, without delay,
O sweetest Jesus! look upon the deep wounds
Which in me are burning like a fire. O Lord have mercy.
You are the physician I'm calling,
Whom I hope for with intense longing.
Help, O true man and God.
If you help not, I shall die. O Lord have mercy.
6. All to yourself you graciously have called
Who are tired and heavy laden.
All their transgressions you desire to pardon,
Free them from their load and burden. O Lord have mercy.
Come, lay your hands on me, O God,
Take from me the heavy weight and load.
Make me free from all sin.
Grant me strength to serve you well. O Lord have mercy.
7. Now shall my heart and spirit bow before you,
Take my all and make me your own child.
You are the vine, Lord, I am your dear branch;
May I live no longer lost and wild. O Lord have mercy.
In myself I find futile sinning,
In you it must quickly disappear.
In me are pains of hell,
In you I am saved right well. O Lord have mercy.
8. Come, O my friend, O come most lovely crown.
Jesus! come and dwell in me today.
With inner prayer shall I ever greet you,
And give you the kiss of love and faith. O Lord have mercy.
Come and give me all of your love,
So shall be naught all that troubles me;
Kindness shown, patiently,
These the fruits are of your grace. O Lord have mercy.
9. This is the flowerlet that can bring me healing,
Share with me the precious drink of life.
All wickedness from me is torn away;
May I serve you henceforth carefully. O Lord have mercy.

In you all my needs are now well-supplied,
 For this living fount of grace you died.
 Let me be yours always,
 And your life within me stay. O Lord have mercy.

Overall, this hymn expresses a deep, personal awareness of sin, particularly in the recurrent refrain "Kyrie eleison." The first stanza brings out images from the Twenty-third Psalm. It begins on a joyous, positive note. In the second stanza, Jesus is described as the bread of life and the life-giving fountain, which together imply the bread and wine of the Eucharist. Stanzas three through five deal with the self-awareness of sin. The singer sincerely desires to be rid of this polluting sin, to be given true repentance. Just one small drop of Jesus' blood will restore purity and enable us to stand before God.

Stanza six rehearses the Savior's gracious invitation and asks him to come and give the needed strength. Stanza seven expresses the image of the vine and the branches and the fact that we are simul justus et peccator. When we look to ourselves, all we can see are sins and the pains of hell, but in Christ, they both disappear. Such awareness of our true condition is a prerequisite for a true, constant hunger and thirst for the Sacrament. The final two stanzas deal with the intimate, personal union between Jesus and the believer. Inner prayer and the kiss of faith are two images that express the quality of that relationship. The Sacrament enables us to tear out everything that is not virtuous and serve the Lord whole-heartedly. The hymn closes with a prayer for Jesus to remain "ewig" (eternally) in me and I in Him.

All of these blessings are given as a result of eating and drinking Christ's body and blood in faith. Just as a patient entrusts

himself to a physician's care and follows his words, so also the Christian turns to Christ for spiritual medicine and healing only He can give. Heermann expresses in very strong terms both our sin: "the deep wounds which in me are burning like a fire," and the salvation of God: "no hunger torments him who eats of you." In the Eucharist, both our sin and God's salvation are perceived with unusual clarity as we remember and proclaim His death. By singing Heermann's hymn, this clarity is brought to bear on the individual Christian in an undeniable way. Our own age cries out for such clarity in what we confess in our communion hymnody.

Johannes Rist's Communion Hymns

Johannes Rist (1607-1667), a contemporary of Gerhardt and Heermann, also spoke with unmistakable clarity about the Lord's Supper. Two of his communion hymns are included in The Lutheran Hymnal, "Lord Jesus Christ, Thou Living Bread" and "O Living Bread From Heaven." "O Jesu meine Wonne" was sung to the tune "Nun lasst uns Gott dem Herren."

1. O Jesu meine Wonne, du meiner Seelen Sonne,
Du Freundlichster auf Erden, lass mich dir dankbar werden.
2. Wie kann ich gnugsam schätzen diess himmelsuss Ergötzen
Und diese theure Gaben, welchs uns gestärket haben?
3. Wie soll ich dir verdanken, O Herr, dass du mich kranken
Gespeisset und getränkt, ja selbst dich mir geschenkt.
4. Ich lobe dich von Herzen für alle deine Schmerzen
Für deine Schlag und Wunden der du so viel empfunden.
5. Dir dank ich für dein Leiden, den Ursprung meiner Freuden;
Dir dank ich für dein Sehnen und heiss vergossne Thränen.

6. Dir dank ich für dein Lieben, das standhaft ist geblieben,
Dir dank ich für dein Sterben, das mich dein Reich lasst erben.
 7. Jetzt schmecket mein Gemüthe dein übergrosse Güte,
Diess theures Pfand der Gnaden tilge allen meinen Schaden.
 8. Herr, lass michs nicht vergessen, dass du mir zugemessen
Die kräftige Himmelspeise, wofür mein Herz dich preise.
 9. Du wollest ja die Sünde welch ich dennoch empfinde
Aus meinem Fleische treiben, und kräftig in mir bleiben.
 10. Nun bin ich losgezahlet von Sünden, und vermählet mit dir,
Mein liebstes Leben, was kannst du werthers geben?
 11. Lass, Schönster, meine Seele doch stets in dieser Hölle
Des Leibes mit Verlangen an deiner Liebe hangen.
 12. Lass mich die Sünde meiden, lass mich geduldig leiden,
Lass mich mit Andacht beten, und von der Welt abtreten.
 13. Im Handeln, Wandeln, Essen, lass nimmer mich vergessen
Wie trefflich ich beglucket, und himmlisch bin erquicket.
 14. Nun kann ich nicht verderben, drauf will ich selig sterben,
Und freudig auferstehen, O Jesu, dich zu sehen.¹⁷
1. Jesus Christ, my highest joy, you're the sunshine of my soul.
You, my greatest friend on earth, thank-you for the heavenly
birth.
 2. How can I this treasure hold, sweet delights of heav'n unfold,
These are costly gifts, I know, strength and life for us below.
 3. How can I give thanks, O Lord, that you have fed me on your
Word;
Given me to drink, though ill, given me yourself right well?
 4. Praise, O praise the Lord, my heart, for his pain, he took
your part;
For his stripes and bloody wounds which for us to heaven redound.
 5. For your passion's darkest hour, source of all my joy and pow'r;
For your longing through the years, for your pleading, ardent
tears;
 6. For your love upon the cross, that stands firm in every loss;
For your death that set me free, heaven's child with thanks
to be.

¹⁷Leipziger Gesang-Buch, 1740, no. 500.

7. Now my mind and senses haste, your surpassing goodness taste;
Now this costly seal of grace shall my sin and hurt efface.
8. Never, Lord, let me forget this life-giving Sacrament;
Heaven's gift and mighty food, stirs our praise to you, O God.
9. You shall drive away the sin that I know and feel within;
To my flesh it tightly clings, and my soul with sorrow stings.
10. Now I am redeemed from sin, to you wedded, with you one.
In you, dearest Life, I live. What else better could you give?
11. O dearest Jesus, may my soul, while it must live in this hell,
Place my body with desire in your love, and your love's fire.
12. Help me turn from sin away, to endure, with patience, pray;
With devotion seek your face, flee the world, my Lord embrace.
13. In my life, in all I do, may I still remember you.
All my guilt has been removed, Jesus has my life renewed.
14. Now I cannot be condemned. I shall have a blessed end.
After death with joy arise; see you, Jesus, with my eyes.

This hymn shows a spirit of eucharistic joy and praise. Only one stanza, stanza nine, mentions the sin that clings to us, and stings our souls with sorrow. All other references to sin and guilt speak of them as conquered, beaten enemies. Several stanzas reflect a desire to live a God-pleasing life in this world, a possibility only for those who are united with Jesus through His body and blood. The world is spoken of in negative terms, as a hell, as something that we should flee from. Again, the hymn ends on an eschatological note, speaking of death and resurrection, in which the chief joy will be to see Jesus with our eyes, whom we have now in this life by faith.

Rist does not mention Jesus' body and blood per se, but images of eating and drinking are not lacking either. He calls the Sacrament "mighty food." The Lord has "fed me" and "given me to drink." This gift effects a personal union with Christ that prompts and stimulates praise for all that Christ has done.

This hymn can be considered a love song to Jesus from a ransomed captive and a redeemed sinner. Jesus is "my greatest friend" and "dearest Life" whom I embrace now in faith and after the resurrection will see with joy. Rist expresses a sense of "sober inebriation" from sharing in the Eucharist. He has a deep sense of appreciation for the gift of the Sacrament. The Church in each generation would do well to learn such a love song to her Lord.

Conclusion

These three hymn writers, Gerhardt, Heermann and Rist, were beyond a doubt confessional, orthodox Lutheran Christians. Their view of the Eucharist was generally an extremely personal one, a vital encounter between the believer and his Lord. They are quite consistent in their view of the terrible, damning nature of sin, and its remedy in the Lord's Supper. They express the benefits of the holy meal, especially as it pertains to the life of sanctification.

Finally, all three men ended their hymns with the thought of a blessed death and a glorious life thereafter with Jesus.

While they do not use the language of the previous century, with its polemical concerns, they nevertheless express a high view of the Real Presence, the profound reality of Christ's body and blood in the bread and wine. In addition, they demonstrate with greater honesty a more realistic view of life; life as it is plagued with sin, conflict with the devil and the world, and fear of death. In the face of terrors within and dangers without, the Christian may turn only to the One who has triumphed over them all, the Lord Jesus. These profoundly personal expressions are not out of place in the public worship

of God's people. Used in balance with other hymns, they would enhance the divine service. They would remind the faithful of their individual relationship with the Lord, and guard against the tendency to lapse into a comfortable Christianity, a false security of "church membership" instead of a daily return to Baptism through contrition and repentance. These hymns are part and parcel of the tradition of the church which we today are privileged to receive with joy and use with discernment.

S.D.G.

CHAPTER IV

CONTEMPORARY COMMUNION HYMNODY IN LIGHT OF THE EARLY YEARS

Since the thesis has been advanced that the hymns our confessional ancestors sang during the Eucharist have enduring significance for the contemporary church, at least three questions arise. First, are these hymns well-represented in our current hymnals? Second, how well does the communion hymnody in Lutheran Worship (LW) and Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW) measure up to the standard set by early German Lutheran communion hymnody? Third, which hymns are being sung by congregations today during the Eucharist? In seeking to answer these questions, practical suggestions for the contemporary church in the area of communion hymnody will be proposed as well.

The hymnal committees of both LBW and LW succeeded in including classic German Lutheran communion hymns from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Both hymnals include Luther's "Gott sei gelobet" (O Lord, We Praise You) and the German Sanctus. LBW includes the German Agnus Dei (LBW 103) while it is omitted in LW. LW includes "Jesus Christ, Our Blessed Savior" (LW 236, 237), dividing nine stanzas between two tunes. For some reason, the text is attributed to John Hus instead of Martin Luther (see arguments on authorship in chapter one). Luther's hymns are very well represented in both hymnals, while the efforts of later sixteenth century poets are completely neglected. The hymns of

Triller, Selnecker, Helmbold and Ringwald, among others, deserve to be remembered, sung and appreciated by the contemporary church.

Both LBW and LW do better when it comes to seventeenth century hymns. LBW includes these six hymns:

- 197 "O Living Bread From Heaven" Johann Rist
- 208 "Lord Jesus Christ, You Have Prepared" Samuel Kinner
- 210 "At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing" office hymn
- 220 "O Jesus, Blessed Lord" Thomas H. Kingo
- 222 "O Bread of Life From Heaven" Latin hymn
- 224 "Soul, Adorn Yourself With Gladness" Johann Franck

LW includes all of the above except "O Bread of Life From Heaven" (LBW 222), and lists "At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing" under "Easter" (LW 126). LW also includes "Your Table I Approach" and "Lord Jesus Christ, Life-Giving Bread" (LW 249 and LW 248 respectively). From a total of fourteen (14) communion hymns in LW, six are from the seventeenth century. The tally in LBW is also six seventeenth century hymns out of a total of thirty-one. More than one-half of the communion hymns in LW are from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The impact of these hymns on contemporary Lutheran hymnody is considerable. Unfortunately, the communion hymns of Paul Gerhardt and Johann Heermann are not represented in either LW or LBW. These hymns are worthy of being sung today along with the more familiar hymns of Johann Rist. Happily, the communion hymns of early German Lutheranism are quite well represented in both LW and LBW.

We turn now to communion hymnody in LW and LBW from other than the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to see how well LW and LBW communion hymns adhere to the standards set in those early years. First we consider the hymns that are common to both hymnals.

LW 240 and LBW 226 offer almost identical translations of a seventh century Latin hymn, "Draw Near and Take the Body of the Lord." Christ's body and blood are mentioned in the first stanza, for us to eat and drink "with faithful hearts sincere." Other stanzas stress the gift of eternal life and how the Lord satisfies our hungering and thirsting souls. LBW 226 includes two stanzas unfortunately omitted in LW 240 that sharpen and broaden our appreciation of what is given us in the Eucharist.

3. Salvation's giver, Christ, the only Son,
By his dear cross and blood the vict'ry won.
8. The Judge eternal, unto whom shall bow
All nations at the last, is with us now.

These two stanzas offer a more complete picture of Christ that the church will absorb to her benefit.

LW 241 and LBW 198 present identical versions of a selection from the ancient Liturgy of St. James, believed to have been composed by St. James the Less, first Bishop of Jerusalem. "Let All Mortal Flesh" expresses awe and wonder in the presence of "Christ our God to earth descending." Christ is portrayed as the King of kings and Lord of lords who gives his own self, his body and blood, for heavenly food. The splendor, power and majesty of God are concealed here and adored by the faithful who join the angelic host in ceaseless "Alleluias."

There is no mention in "Let All Mortal Flesh" of the cross, the Savior or the gift of forgiveness. This hymn expresses a piety and feeling that is not found in sixteenth and seventeenth century communion hymnody. A sacred mystery is portrayed which mortals can participate in only with fear and trembling. The thought of approaching God with

fear and trembling is incompatible with Lutheran delight in our gracious, heavenly Father. A spirit of reverence, which "Let All Mortal Flesh" elicits, should be welcomed. This hymn can remind us that we are but God's creatures and humble servants, unworthy of him who comes "with blessing in his hand."

LW 242 and LBW 213, "I Come, O Savior, to Your Table," offer selected stanzas from the fifteen included in The Lutheran Hymnal. By conserving space on the page, LW was able to include a total of six stanzas compared with four in LBW. This early eighteenth century hymn combines the best elements of sixteenth and seventeenth century communion hymnody. Its personal expressions are balanced with plenty of references to "gift," "sure mercy" and "body crucified." In years past this was understandably a favorite communion hymn in different parts of the United States. It is hoped that it will retain its appeal until the parousia. The simple, yet profound prayer of the refrain: "Lord, may your body and you blood be for my soul the highest good," speaks for all the faithful and is loved for that reason.

LW 243 and LBW 211, "Here, O My Lord, I See You Face to Face," offer identical versions of a nineteenth century text by Horatius Bonar. The Real Presence is affirmed in the line, "I see you face to face." Eating and drinking are stressed, as is forgiveness which is the key to grace and fellowship with God: "here taste afresh the calm of sin forgiven." Stanzas four and five witness to the blessed exchange that transpires between the believer and God: our sin for his righteousness, our guilt for his cleansing, and our weakness for his strength. A note of eschatological joy is sounded throughout the hymn. The opening line

speaks of an encounter with God that is "not yet" but also "now" by virtue of Christ's presence, witnessed to also by the repeated phrase "O my Lord" and "O Lord, my God." This hymn measures up quite well to the standard set by the early years of Lutheran communion hymnody.

LW 247 and LBW 221 offer identical versions of "Sent Forth By God's Blessing," a 1964 text by Roman Catholic Omer Westendorf. Nothing is said in this hymn about the body and blood of Christ, nothing about forgiveness. Eating and drinking do receive notice in the lines "the supper ended" and "with your feast you feed us." The themes are centered on the actions and good works that are expected to blossom in the people of God. Praise and thanksgiving are mentioned twice. Being united in love with all people is a major concern. Sharing one's faith and caring for all people in love are indeed laudable activities. Prayer for "all the living" to "give honor to Christ," however, is ambiguous and possibly misleading. It hints of universalism and "anonymous Christianity," especially in the absence of any mention of what prompts our Eucharist, our praise and thanksgiving, namely the suffering and death of Christ and his precious body and blood. The reported popularity of this hymn and in its inclusion in both LW and LBW supports the thesis that we today are dangerously close to forgetting what it was our confessional ancestors sang about as they received the body and blood of their Lord. A greater desire for "celebration" in the Eucharist dare not eclipse the specificity of the very gifts we are celebrating, as in the case in "Sent Forth By God's Blessing."

LW 250 and LBW 225 offer slightly varied versions of Henry E. Jacob's 1910 text "Lord Jesus Christ, We Humbly Pray." Jacob captured

the essence of communion hymnody as defined in this thesis: eating and drinking Jesus' body and blood gives to us "the chastened peace of sins forgiven." LW's alteration to "the grateful peace" is most helpful. The Real Presence is joyfully confessed in the phrase "all that you are we here receive." LW changes the original phrase "United by our life in Thee" to "Rejoicing in our unity." This change probably reflects the Missouri Synod's position on fellowship and "close communion." "United by our life in Thee" could be read to mean that by participating in the one bread and one cup, the "scattered loved ones" are brought into a unity that centers on their common life in Christ, while doctrinal differences or theological distinctives are seemingly forgotten. This interpretation has support from a contemporary liturgical scholar, Geoffrey Wainwright.

To celebrate the eucharist together clearly requires some measure of existing unity. Complete disunity makes a common celebration improper if not unthinkable. . . . On the other hand, the relation between history and eschatology is such that it would be quite unrealistic to expect Christians to be already in perfect harmony with one another. Christian truth can only be perceived in love, and an increase in mutual love is necessary if Christians are to come closer to one another in the truth. That is where the productive function of the eucharist comes into play. The eucharist not only seals an existing unity brought forward from the past, it also 'leads forward' the communicants into a future where the unity will be greater. The eucharist effects. It is a means of grace. . . . Granted the final superiority of exchatology over history, the eucharist is more important for what it makes of us than for what it expresses as being true of us. . . . We should be ready to let common participation in the eucharist promote reconciliation among partially disunited communities which are seeking to overcome existing differences and so come to a closer companionship in the progress towards the kingdom. As a 'projection' of the Lord's final parousia, the eucharist is an occasion when the Lord may exercise his eschatological functions of casting out from us in judgment what is amiss in us, of united us closer to himself in divine fellowship, and of joining us together in common enjoyment of his presence and gifts. It is when it is celebrated ecumenically that the eucharist can most

truly fulfill its character as an effective sacrament of reconciliation and renewal.¹

In light of this trend by some modern theologians, LW confesses and rejoices in the unity that has already been given. The hymnal committee for LW was clearly not pleased with a definition of "means of grace" that turns the Lord's Supper into a means of attaining greater unity among "partially divided" communities, as Wainwright suggests.

A comparison of LBW and LW reveals that LBW includes an additional nineteen hymns not found in LW from other than the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The vast majority of these are from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The desire of the LBW hymnal committee to include contemporary hymnody is certainly commendable. Such a large cross-section of recent communion hymnody can serve also as a general indicator of how well the heirs of the Lutheran Reformation have managed their heritage.

LBW 196, "Praise the Lord, Rise Up Rejoicing" was written by the Anglican clergyman H. C. A. Gaunt.² As the first line indicates, this was most likely intended to be sung as a post-communion hymn. This hymn includes several key points that have been stressed in the thesis: we share in the passion and cross of Christ and receive new life in his blood. Our faith is strengthened by sharing in his body. Forgiveness is identified as the cause of sanctification and new life in the Spirit. The adjectives "alert," "strong," "free" and "faithful" express a

¹Geoffrey Wainwright, Doxology: The Praise of God in Worship, Doctrine and Life (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 318.

²Marilyn Kay Stulken, Hymnal Companion to the Lutheran Book of Worship (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 280-306. All data in this chapter on LBW hymns are from this source.

positive vision of Christian life anchored in the Eucharist. "Praise the Lord, Rise Up Rejoicing" captures and exemplifies the spirit of early German Lutheran communion hymnody.

LBW 199, "Thee We Adore, O Hidden Savior" was written by Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century, probably in connection with his work for the festival of Corpus Christi. Stanza one offers a clear confession of the Real Presence, "here thy presence we devoutly hail." "Living bread" designates the body of Christ while the eating and drinking is vaguely referred to: "may our souls forever feed on on Thee." The prayer "cleanse us, unclean, with thy most precious blood," implies participation in the cup by the laity as well as clergy. The fourth stanza connects the present Eucharist with the blessed hope, the appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. The emphasis in this hymn seems to be more on what is seen and adored and less on what is given, what benefits are bestowed. Nevertheless, because of the positive points mentioned above, this hymn may be sung in good conscience in our churches today.

LBW 200, "For the Bread Which You Have Broken" was written in 1924 by Louis F. Benson, a Presbyterian Minister. There are no references to the body and blood of Christ in this hymn. "Your gift of peace restored" speaks of the Absolution and forgiveness, but the sacramental connection is nebulous at best. Stanza three celebrates our ties with "the saints who now adore you." The hymn concludes with prayer for the communicants and the world to which they go. This hymn cannot be faulted for what it says as much as for what it fails to confess concerning the Sacrament and its effect in our lives. Here is a

hymn that is not part of the tradition of communion hymnody set forth in this thesis. When Lutheran hymnal committees decide to borrow from Reformed hymnody, our confession of Christ and the Gospel is weakened.

LBW 201, "O God of Life's Great Mystery" was written by Royce J. Scherf, a twentieth century poet. Our thoughts are focused on the mysterious quality of life. The Real Presence is hinted at in the phrase "the joyful sense of things unseen." The ambiguity of stanza two makes this hymn an unlikely choice for most congregations today. What is meant by the line "beneath the forms of flesh and bone . . . show us the wonder of your face"? The body and blood of Christ with their gift of forgiveness are conspicuously absent from this text. The thought, "with eucharistic bread and wine bring us the gift of life divine" sounds nice, but lacks specific content. Communion hymnody must say more than this and say it more clearly to deserve the name "Lutheran."

LBW 202, "Victim Divine, Your Grace We Claim" was written by Charles Wesley in the eighteenth century. This is an improvement over the previous example. Wesley's hymn focuses on the death of Christ, his blood and the universal atonement. Stanza three clearly teaches that Christ comes down to us, not the reverse, as one often hears in Reformed theology. Christ is given now. Christ shows his "very presence here." No specific link is made, however, between the Atonement and the Lord's Supper. No mention is made of the eating and drinking. Instead, the Savior is petitioned: "to every faithful soul appear," which appears to say that only faithful Christians share the "Victim Divine"; an unsatisfactory confession of the Eucharist to Lutheran ears. A thorough

study of Wesley's Hymns on the Lord's Supper, 1745 from a Lutheran perspective would be most helpful to the contemporary church.

LBW 203, "Now We Join in Celebration" was written by Joel Lundeen in the twentieth century. Lundeen's hymn does show some marks of Lutheran theology and piety. The first phrases echo the hymn of Johann Franck, "Soul, Adorn Yourself With Gladness." At the Eucharist, by Jesus' invitation, we lay aside our "spirit somber." Incarnation is expressed in the simple phrase, "stoops again in love to meet us." Stanza two refers to the bread and cup, not to the body and blood of Christ. Yet the bread and cup "are for us the sure possessing of your loving deed on Calvary." Through this deed we are reconciled with the Father. Contemporary influence is felt in the final prayer for grace to be "seeking justice, love and mercy." One wonders how the Great Commission was translated by the church into a quest for "justice." Such slogans seem out of place in the church's communion hymnody.

LBW 204, "Cup of Blessing That We Share" was written in 1966 by Bernard Mischke, a Roman Catholic priest. Mischke creatively deals first with the cup, then the bread. Christ's body and blood are clearly confessed through rhetorical questions: "Is it not the blood of Christ?" The cup of blessing proclaims the grace of God. However, the love and unity of God's people occupy "center stage" in this hymn. For a congregation that shares a common confession, this hymn would be most appropriate at the Eucharist.

LBW 205, "Now the Silence" was written by the Missouri Synod's own Jaroslav J. Vajda. It first appeared in 1968 and was intended to be sung as the opening hymn, immediately before the pastor chants the

Invocation. Vajda gives us not only the body and blood, but also "the heart forgiven leaping." This hymn proves that contemporary communion hymnody can retain the key elements we saw in the early years and at the same time offer a fresh approach to the gift. Vajda masterfully combines several different images--wedding, embrace, pouring--to tell us that more is being celebrated and given than can be contained, humanly speaking. By repeating the vocable "Now," we are persuaded that God is truly present according to his promise. He is present as the Triune God, Spirit, Son and Father. The trinitarian emphasis also demonstrates the vital connection to the early years of German Lutheran communion hymnody, a connection the church must protect and hold fast.

LBW 206, "Lord, Who the Night You Were Betrayed" was written in 1881 by William Henry Turton, a layman. The unmistakable theme of this hymn is unity, a unity that comes to pass or is effected by or "through this blest sacrament of unity." There is no mention of Christ's body and blood here, nor of the gift of forgiveness that Christ spoke of at the Institution. Turton overlooks the fact that all believers in Christ are already "one bread, one body," a common error among those who ardently pursue the unity of the Church. The author's obvious suggestion is that "our sad division" will fade as we draw closer to each other by drawing closer to Christ through the Sacrament. If, as the hymn also suggests, we are drawn "back to the faith your saints confessed of old" at the same time, there would be a genuine basis for concord and not merely an agreement to disagree. Unfortunately, the confessions of old have little appeal to many moderns bent on outward unity at any cost. In such a context, this hymn would be better left alone.

LBW 207, "We Who Once Were Dead" was written in 1961 by Klass Hanzen Heeroma. The text raises several questions. What, for example, is meant by the assertion "He became our bread"? Why do we pray "Let us share the pain you endured in dying" as a condition of our own resurrection? Finally, what is being confessed about the Sacrament when we sing "This is your design . . . this shall be our sign"? There is no reflection of the Verba Christi and no breath of forgiveness, only vague sentiments about "giving life." Heeroma's hymn is either a poor attempt at creativity, bad theology, or both. The overall theme of rising from death to life is spoiled by a hazy confession of the Eucharist and the benefits of Christ that are given and received. One is left wondering why a Lutheran hymnal was made to carry such strange freight.

LBW 209, "Come, Risen Lord" was written in 1931 by George Wallace Briggs, a minister in the Church of England. Briggs based his hymn on the account of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24. The Real Presence is confessed in stanza one: "Thyself at thine own board make manifest." Stanza two transports us in faith to the upper room on the night Christ was betrayed, and describes the Eucharist as a reenactment of the Institution. Stanzas three and four focus on unity while neglecting the forgiveness of sins. This hymn holds up as the highest good "One Church united in communion blest . . . with all thy saints on earth and saints at rest." It is not, as the hymn asserts, in the breaking of the bread that Christ is made known, but in the words of promise: "given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." The action of breaking bread gives nothing; but the words pro nobis give everything.

"Come, Risen Lord" supplies further evidence in support of the thesis that we today are in danger of forgetting the chief matter in the Eucharist which our ancestors sang of continuously. Unity built on the least common denominator makes shipwreck both of the Gospel and our saving faith.

LBW 212, "Let Us Break Bread Together" is identified as a negro spiritual. The text relates the the Eucharist only by the outward action of breaking bread and drinking wine "together on our knees." The actions of kneeling and facing east would not in and of themselves remind one of the Lord's Supper. The rising sun, however, has been associated with Christ in Christian tradition and hymnody. The sacrifice of praise in stanza three, "Let us praise God together," links this hymn with early years, but the absence of any reference to the body and blood of Christ leave this hymn handicapped. The best one can say is that it fosters a spirit of humble praise and balances the corporate and individual aspects of the Sacrament well: "let us . . . when I."

LBW 214, "Come, Let Us Eat" was written in the 1960's by Billema Kwillia, a Liberian evangelist. Stanza four was provided by Gilbert E. Doan. The simplicity of this folk-hymn highlights the clear confession of the Eucharist it delivers. It is not bread and wine that have drawn us together, but "our Lord's body" and "Jesus' blood poured." The statement, "In his presence now we meet and rest" expresses both the Real Presence and the forgiveness of sins. We can rest in God's presence only as our sins are covered and our guilt removed. From an African evangelist comes this contemporary hymn that honors the Gospel and rejoices in the full gift of Christ. Perhaps those who treasure the

words of Jesus in the Great Commission also delight in His words in the Lord's Supper, more than those who prize their own vision of what the Church should be doing.

LBW 216, "For Perfect Love So Freely Spent" was written by Louise Marshall McDowell, the wife of a Presbyterian minister. She does not confess the Real Presence of Jesus' body and blood. She does, however, get to forgiveness of sin in the line "and find our lives made whole." "Refreshment for the soul" sums up the benefits of the Eucharist in this hymn, a benefit one might just as well receive by listening to a beautiful piece of music. Celebration and praise are the other themes that receive attention. When Lutherans borrow from Presbyterian hymnals our confession of the Eucharist suffers. There remains to this day a considerable gap between the Lutheran and Reformed confession of the Sacrament, as this hymn demonstrates.

LBW 217, "We Place Upon Your Table, Lord" was written by Maurice Frank Campbell Wilson. The astonishing anthropocentricity of this hymn, consistent throughout, is marked by such phrases as "we place," "we take," "we offer up." This hymn can be understood in light of the Offertory procession which precedes the Consecration. The question still presses: what purpose is served by dwelling on all these human actions and attributes? The main concern in the Eucharist is not what "we offer up," but what God brings down incarnationally and gives to us. It is not clear what place this hymn would have in the Divine Service that rejoices in what God says and gives to his people.

LBW 218, "Strengthen for Service, Lord" is adapted from the ancient Syriac Liturgy of Malabar, part of the Nestorian rite used

by Christians of the St. Thomas Church of South India. The deacons spoke this prayer while the people communed. The only mention of the Eucharist is in the phrase "the hands that holy things have taken." As a prayer for sanctification, this hymn mentions specifically the hands, ears, tongue, eyes and feet of the communicants. The spiritual food of the Eucharist should have a practical effect in the lives of the faithful who have been "nourished here." This fine hymn from the early church would serve as a fitting post-communion prayer, sung by the choir.

LBW 219. "Come With Us, O Blessed Jesus" was written by the Anglican John Henry Hopkins, Jr. as a recessional for Christmas Day. Although one assumes that the Lord's Supper had been celebrated on the Nativity of our Word, the omission of any reference to the Sacrament in this hymn weakens its identity as a Lutheran communion hymn. Hopkins has, however, given the church a lovely post communion prayer which asks for a continuous, close fellowship with the Savior even after leaving the church building. Echos of Christmas are heard in the phrases "bright celestial chorus" and "peace, good will to men." Of such gifts the church delights to sing.

LBW 222, "O Bread of Life From Heaven" is a composite translation of Latin hymn that first appeared in 1661. A strong confession of the Real Presence is offered in the creative phrase, "your divine completeness." The blood of Christ is not specified by name, but is intimated by a vivid illustration: "O River ever streaming from Jesus wounded side." Significantly, the gift in the Eucharist is "your love," mentioned twice. In Article IV of the Apology, Melanchthon writes:

Selecting love, which is only one of these effects of faith, our opponents teach that love justifies. From this it is clear that

they teach only the law. They do not teach that we must first receive the forgiveness of sins by faith, nor that on account of Christ, the mediator, we have a gracious God.³

Fidelity to the Lutheran Confessions, therefore, would make one uncomfortable with a hymn that speaks of the Sacrament's gift as "God's love." The confession of "God's love" would be vacuous unless forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake was specified as the content of that love.

LBW 223, "In The Quiet Consecration" was written in 1910 by Constance Coote. Mrs. Coote draws out the themes of divine rest, love and power that we taste and touch in the Eucharist, "this glad communion hour." Stanza two describes the eating and drinking, by faith, of Christ's body and blood. The Real Presence is celebrated in the phrase, "in this feast on you we feed." Jesus' death and resurrection are identified as the empowering means that "nerve us for the strife." The final stanza looks ahead to eschatological glory and the feast that comes only "after conflict, toil and testing." The standards of early Lutheran communion hymnody are met in this hymn. The Eucharist is described three times in this hymn as "the feast," an image that implies the celebration of a rich and extravagant banquet. Truly, the Lord's Supper is a feast of forgiveness and of all the benefits of Jesus' cross. Passion and resurrection.

Survey of Lutheran Congregations

In order to determine what hymns are being sung during the distribution of the Eucharist by Lutheran congregations today, a survey was

³Philip Melanchthon, "Apology of the Augsburg Confession," in The Book of Concord, ed. by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 127.

taken of Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod congregations in the state of Georgia. Each congregation was asked to list which hymns had been sung during 1987 at the Lord's Supper, which hymnal they were selected from, and how many times the hymn was sung in the course of one year. Eighteen out of thirty congregations responded to the survey, Only one indicated that no hymns had been sung during the distribution of the Eucharist in 1987. The results of the survey are given below.

Congregation #1. LW

sung once

How Great Thou Art
 Draw Near and Take the Body of the Lord
 Beautiful Savior
 Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me
 At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing
 I Know That My Redeemer Lives
 Creator Spirit, Heavenly Dove
 Amazing Grace
 The God of Abraham Praise
 The Church's One Foundation
 O God, My Faithful God
 Lord Jesus Christ, the Children's Friend
 Blest Be the Tie That Binds
 Oh, Love, How Deep
 Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence
 Lo, He Comes With Clouds Descending
 Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel
 My Soul Now Magnifies the Lord

sung twice

I Come, O Savior, to
 Your Table

sung three times

Just As I Am, Without One
 Plea

Congregation # 2. LBW

sung twice

He Leadeth Me, Oh, Blessed Thought!
 Children of the Heavenly Father
 Blessed Be the Tie that Binds
 The Church's One Foundation
 Come, Let Us Eat
 Thine is the Glory

sung three times

Just as I am, Without One
 Plea
 Come With U, O Blessed Jesus
 O Lord, We Praise You
 Now We Join in Celebration

sung four times +

I Come, O Savior, to Your
Table
Let Us Break Bread Together
O Living Bread from Heaven
Sent Forth by God's Blessing

Congregation #3. TLH

sung four times +

An awe-full Mystery Is Here
Lord Jesus Christ, We Humbly Pray
Draw Nigh and Take the Body of the Lord
Thy Table I approach
Invited Lord by Boundless Grace
O Thou That Hear'st When Sinners Cry
"Let Us Break Bread Together"
"Break Thou the Bread of Life"
"Sons of God"
"They'll Know We Are Christians"⁴

Congregation #4. LBW

sung once

Come, Let Us Eat
Draw Near and Take the Body of the Lord

sung twice

Here, O My Lord, I See Thee
Lord Jesus Christ, We Humbly Pray

sung three times

O Lord, We Praise You
O Bread of Life From Heaven
Soul, Adorn Yourself With Gladness

sung four times +

At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing
Let Us Break Bread Together
I Come, O Savior, To Your Table
Sent Forth By God's Blessing

⁴Hymns in quotation marks were not found in TLH, LW, or LBW.

Congregation #5. LW

sung twice

O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright
 Lord, Dismiss Us With Your Blessing
 O Lord, We Praise You
 Soul, Adorn Yourself With Gladness
 Draw Near and Take the Body of the Lord
 Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence
 Abide With Us, Our Savior
 You Will I Love, My Strength

Congregation #6. LBW

sung twice

Ride On, Ride On in Majesty!
 O Jesus, Blessed Lord
 I Am Trusting You, Lord Jesus

sung three times

Draw Near and Take the Body of the Lord

sung four times +

Let Us Break Bread Together

Congregation #7. LW

sung twice

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence
 Amazing Grace

sung three times

O Lord, We Praise You
 Soul, Adorn Yourself With Gladness
 Draw Near and Take the Body of the Lord
 Oh, For a Thousand Tongues to Sing
 Just As I Am, Without One Plea
 Jesus, Your Blood and Righteousness
 Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways
 There Stands a Fountain Where for Sin

sung four times +

Your Table I Approach
 Lord Jesus Christ, We Humbly Pray

Congregation #8. LBWsung twice

Beautiful Savior
 Just As I Am, Without One Plea
 Take My Life, That I May Be

O Bread of Life From Heaven
 In the Quiet Consecration
 He Leadeth Me, O Blessed Thought

sung three times

Soul, Adorn Yourself with Glad-
 ness
 How Great Thou Art
 Praise and Thanksgiving

Spirit of God, descend Upon My
 Heart
 When Peace, Like a River
 What a Friend We Have in Jesus

sung four times +

Thee We Adore, O Hidden Savior
 Let Us Break Bread Together
 For the Bread Which You Have
 Broken
 Come With Us, O Blessed Jesus
 I Come, O Savior, to Your Table

In Heaven Above
 Praise the Lord, Rise Up Rejoicing
 O Lord, We Praise You
 Now We Join in Celebration
 Amazing Grace

Congregation #9. TLHSung three times

"Sons of God"

sung four times +

"Let Us Break Bread Together"

Congregation #10. LWsung once

The People That in Darkness Sat
 Your Table I Approach
 Before You, Lord, We Bow

sung twice

Draw Near and Take the Body of the
 Lord
 Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

sung three times

O Jesus, Blessed Lord, My Praise

Congregation #11. LWsung once

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

sung four times +

Draw Near and Take the Body of the Lord
 O Lord, We Praise You
 I Come, O Savior, to Your Table
 Sent Forth By God's Blessing
 Your Table I Approach

Congregation #12, LBW

sung twice

How Great Thou Art
 For Perfect Love So Freely
 Spent
 You Are The Way
 Praise the Lord, Rise Up Re-
 joicing
 Come, Risen Lord
 Lord Jesus Christ, You Have
 Prepared

Amazing Grace
 Come With Us, O Blessed Jesus
 Just As I Am, Without One Plea
 O Lord, We Praise You
 O God of Mercy, God of Light
 There is a Green Hill Far Away

sung three times

Let Us Break Bread Together
 For the Bread Which You Have
 Broken

I Come, O Savior, to Your Table
 Sent Forth by God's Blessing

sung four times +

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep
 Silence
 O Living Bread From Heaven

O Bread of Life From Heaven
 Now We Join in Celebration

Congregation #13, TLH

sung twice

Lord Jesus Christ, We Humbly
 Pray
 Draw Nigh and Take the Body
 of the Lord
 A Mighty Fortress Is Our God
 Amazing Grace

Soul, Adorn Thyself with Gladness
 Savior, I follow On
 I Come, O Savior to Thy Table
 Beneath the Cross of Jesus

sung three times

Thy Table I Approach
 Drawn to the Cross, Which Thou
 Hast Blest

Just As I Am, Without One Plea
 "The Old Rugged Cross"

Congregation #14. TLHsung once

I Come, O Savior, to Your Table

sung three timesO Lord, We Praise Thee
"Seek Ye First"Thy Table I Approach
"Praise the Name of Jesus"sung four times +"Alleluia"
"Let Us Break Bread Together"

"God Is So Good"

Congregation #15. LBWsung onceJoy To the World
With High Delight Let Us Unite
Dear Christians One and All
Rejoice
The Church's One Foundation
I am Trusting You, Lord JesusHow Good, Lord, to be Here!
Now We Join in Celebration
I Know That My Redeemer Lives
Whatever God Ordains Is Right
God, My Lord, My Strengthsung twice

At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing

Congregation #16. LBWsung onceCome With Us, O Blessed Jesus
I Lay My Sins on Jesus
Lord Jesus Christ, You Have
Prepared
Now We Join in Celebration
Rejoice, Rejoice, BelieversWhat Wondrous Love Is This
Jesus Lives! The Victory's Won!
Come, Let Us Eat
At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing
"We Are One in the Spirit"sung twice

Let Us Break Bread Together

I Come, O Savior, to Your Table

sung three times

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

Congregation #17. LW

sung twice

O Lord, We Praise You Soul, Adorn Yourself With Gladness
Feed Your Children, God Most Holy

sung three times

At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing I Come, O Savior to Your Table
Your Table I Approach Lord Jesus Christ, We Humbly Pray

sung four times +

Draw Near and Take the Body of the Lord
Sent Forth by God's Blessing
Just As I Am, Without One Plea

Of the seventeen congregations that responded to the survey, six use LW, seven use LBW and four use TLH. Several congregations supplement these hymnals with other spiritual songs. Following is a list of the hymns that were sung three times or more by the seventeen congregations that responded to this survey.

Hymns sung three time or more

Just As I Am	Come With Us, O Blessed Jesus
O Living Bread From Heaven	Sent Forth by God's Blessing
O Lord, We Praise You	Now We Join in Celebration
An Awe-full Mystery Is Here	Lord Jesus Christ, We Humbly Pray
I Come, O Savior, to Your Table	Let Us Break Bread Together
Draw Near and Take	Thy Table I Approach
Invited Lord By Boundless Grace	O Thou that Hear'st
"Break Thou the Bread of Life"	"Sons of God"
"They'll Know We Are Christians	O Bread of Life From Heaven
Soul, Adorn Yourself With	At the Lamb's High Feast
Gladness	Jesus, Your Blood and Righteousness
O, For a Thousand Tongues	There Stands a Fountain
O, That the Lord would guide	Praise and Thanksgiving
my ways	When Peace, Like a River
How Great Thou Art	Thee We Adore, O Hidden Savior
Spirit of God, Descend Upon	In Heaven Above
My Heart	O Jesus, Blessed Lord, My Praise
What a Friend We Have in Jesus	Drawn to the Cross
For the Bread Which You Have	"Seek Ye First"
Broken	"Alleluia"

Praise the Lord, Rise Up Re-	Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence
joicing	"The Old Rugged Cross"
"Praise The Name of Jesus"	"God is so good"

Following is a list of those hymns that were sung at least twice by three or more congregations. These data will tell us which hymns are sung by most congregations in the survey.

3 Congregations:	At the Lamb's High Feast We Sing O Bread of Life From Heaven Now We Join in Celebration
4 Congregations:	Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence
5 Congregations:	Lord Jesus Christ, We Humbly Pray Your Table I Approach Sent Forth by God's Blessing
7 Congregations:	Just As I Am
8 Congregations:	O Lord, We Praise You Draw Near and Take the Body of the Lord Let Us Break Bread Together
6 Congregations:	Soul, Adorn Yourself With Gladness
9 Congregations:	I Come, O Savior, to Your Table

Conclusion

One would hesitate to draw conclusions about the practice of the entire Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in this area from the data presented here. Nevertheless, the majority of LCMS congregations in Georgia did respond to the survey. Therefore, tentative conclusions may be safely drawn. The hymnal of choice did not seem to affect which hymns were sung during the Eucharist. As the analysis above indicates, some of the best German Lutheran communion hymns are among those sung frequently by a significant number of congregations. Also, many hymns were reported that are either seasonal or "old favorites" and not communion hymnody, per se. Even in the South, the light from the early years of German Lutheran communion hymnody has not been completely extinguished.

Nor is that light burning as brightly as we would hope. There is lacking in the majority of congregations surveyed an observable intentionality in the choice of communion hymnody. One should not prescribe or fall prey to incorrect conclusions, but the evidence supports our claim that we today are in danger of forgetting what it was our ancestors sang about as they received their Savior's body and blood. To remember what they sang about is to remember the Gospel, the cross and resurrection, the true body and blood of Jesus Christ, given and shed for the forgiveness of our sins. If our communion hymnody is not normed by the words and gift of Christ, then it will fall into the pit of popularism and fadism.

Work needs to be done on the Sminary level and by the Synodical and District Worship Commissions in the area of communion hymnody. Those preparing for the Ministry need to learn how to discern by confessional and biblical standards the quality of communion hymnody. The composition and performance of organ and choral music on communion hymns from the early years should be encouraged. New communion hymn texts and music should be forthcoming in a church body that holds high the means of grace. When the time comes to publish a new Lutheran hymnal, may we say with St. Paul: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you."⁵

⁵1 Cor. 11:23a.

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