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THE DOCTRINE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ITS BENEFITS

A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of Concordia Seminary
Department of Systematic Theology

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Divinity

by
Roland Karl Lemke

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Approved by: John Theodore Mueller
J. E. May Jr

THE DOCTRINE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ITS BENEFITS

(Outline)

Introduction: Denial of the Lord's Supper as an ordinance for and of benefit to Christians today by the Quakers, some modern "critical" theologians, some Unitarians, the Salvation Army, the Temple Society, and Christian Science.

- I. What benefits are derived from this Sacrament.
 - A. By the individual.
 1. Forgiveness of sin.
 - a. This is offered, given, sealed.
 - b. Consequently also life and salvation.
 2. Other benefits.
 - a. Strengthening and maintenance of faith.
 - b. Preservation and furtherance of the union mystica.
 - c. Preservation and furtherance of the union with the spiritual body of Christ, the Church.
 - d. Furtherance of sanctified living.
 - e. Increase in patience in trial and tribulation and the hope of eternal life.
 - f. Distinguishing the Christian from the heterodox and unbelieving and serving as a confession of faith.
 - g. As a memorial of honor, respect, praise and thanksgiving to Christ.
 - h. As an individualized Gospel.
 - B. By the Church.
 1. It unifies and strengthens it.
 2. It serves as a confession of faith.
- II. What benefits are not derived from this Sacrament.
 - A. Not the evangelization of the world.
 - B. Not physical and material benefits.
 - C. Not any benefit as a meritorious work.
- III. Why these benefits are derived from this Sacrament.
 - A. Because of the power of the Word of Christ.
 - B. Because of the pledge of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament.
- IV. When these benefits are derived from this Sacrament.
 - A. When it is received correctly.
 1. Necessary worthiness of the communicant.
 - a. This Sacrament does not work ex opere operate.

- b. The benefits are received through faith in the Gospel promise.
- 2. Necessary preparation for such worthiness.
- B. When it is administered correctly.
 - 1. Only when the real essence of the Lord's Supper is there in its celebration.
 - a. The proper elements.
 - b. The proper consecration.
 - c. The proper distribution and reception.
 - 2. The Church's duty over against the communicant in this respect.
 - a. To aid the communicant in preparation for worthy partaking of the Lord's Supper.
 - aa. Close Communion.
 - bb. Proper instruction.
 - cc. Announcement for Communion.
 - dd. The Confessional Service.
 - b. Care in administering the Lord's Supper properly.
 - aa. Avoidance of distracting influences.
 - bb. Frequency.

to its logical conclusion, contrary to Scripture, reject the Lord's Supper as a divine institution and refuse to be celebrated by us to the end of time and say that the benefits are received through it. With other Scriptural evidences they not only repudiate the oral reception of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament, basing their claim on a misapplication of John 6, 51: "The flesh profiteth nothing," but say that Christ did not intend to institute a rite, but celebrated it only for the benefit of His "flesh-eaters," commending them thereby to repentance. His, "the gift" of His body and blood the presence." John 6, 51, however, is not a reference to the

1. Robert Barclay, A Declaration and Exposition of the Christian's Duty, pp. 100-101, 103; also Dr. H. B. Swete, The Christian's Duty, pp. 100-101, 103; and John Calvin's Institutes, pp. 400-401.

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Carrying the Calvinistic doctrine on the means of grace to its logical conclusion, the Quakers, contrary to Scripture, reject the Lord's Supper as a divine institution and ordinance to be celebrated by us to the end of time and deny that any benefits are received through it. With other Calvinistic enthusiasts they not only repudiate the oral reception of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament, basing their claim on a misapplication of John 6, 63: "The flesh profiteth nothing," but say that Christ did not intend to institute a rite, but celebrated it only for the benefit of His "weak disciples," admonishing them thereby to remember Him, "as oft" as they celebrated the passover.¹ John 6, 63, however, is not a reference to Christ's

1. Robert Barclay, A Catechism and Confession of Faith, pp. 5689.90.102.103; also Th. Engelder, W. Arndt, Th. Craebner, and F. E. Mayer, Popular Symbolics, p. 384; Franz Pieper, Christliche Dogmatik, Vol. III, p. 340f.; and John Theodore Mueller, Christian Dogmatics, p. 506.

body; Christ here emphasizes the fact that not our earthly physical existence is of prime importance, but rather the spiritual and eternal.

They base their rejection of the Lord's Supper as a Sacrament for us on Rom. 14,17: "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink," and Col. 2,16: "Let no man judge you therefore in meat or in drink." They say that the true Lord's Supper is therefore eaten and drunk in the heart in accordance with Rev. 3,20: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with Me." Christ indeed wants to enter every human heart and dwell there, the individual believing in Him as his only Savior, but that certainly is not a keeping of Christ's command to celebrate the Lord's Supper: "This do in remembrance of Me."² Col. 2,16 shows that Christ has set aside the Old Testament Ceremonial Law and denies man-made Church-Laws on eating and drinking, but that certainly does not exempt anyone from the explicit command of Christ to celebrate His Holy Supper. In Rom. 14,17 Paul tells the Romans it would be well that they forego the Christian liberty of eating certain meats, if some take offense thereby, for such eating and drinking is not necessary for salvation. This, however, has no possible connection with the Lord's Supper.

2. Luke 22,19. 1 Cor. 11,24.25.

Likewise some modern "critical" theologians³ have denied that the Lord commanded His Holy Supper to be celebrated by Christians after the Apostles, saying that only Paul and Luke record the words: "This do in remembrance of Me." That of course would be sufficient from our point of view, but besides this already the words of Matthew and Mark: "blood of the new testament, which is shed for many," show that it was not meant merely for the disciples present at its institution.⁴ Bernard Weiss, to cite an example, says: "Eben darum hat er bestimmte aeussere Ordnungen, welche diese zusammenhaelt (der Gemeinde) sichern sollten, nicht eingesetzt.... Eben so wenig besass sie (die aelteste Ueberlieferung) einen ausdruecklichen Befehl (Jesu) zur Wiederholung des Brodbrechens und der Kelchweihe, die Jesus beim Abschiedsmahle vollzogen hatte."⁵

In like manner do also some Unitarians reject the Lord's Supper, claiming they are "nearer to God than to any human ordinances."⁶ So also does the Salvation Army reject it as by no means necessary to salvation and therefore not to be observed unless people demand it.⁷

3. B. Weiss, Juelicher, Spitta: Cf. Mueller, op. cit., p. 506; Pieper, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 341f.

4. Cf. Theodore Engelder, Dogmatic Notes on The Lord's Supper, par. 2.

5. Lehrbuch der Biblischen Theologie des Neuen Testaments, p. 100.

6. Cf. E. Emerton, "Unitarian Thought," p. 301, as quoted in Popular Symbolics, p. 405.

7. Cf. William Booth, Doctrines and Disciplines of the Salvation Army, p. 84; also "The Salvation Army Handbook of

Similarly does the Temple Society reject the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, saying that it is even harmful. Hoffmann's statements on this are fantastic indeed: "Wer also nach dem Reich Gottes trachtet, der kann nicht an Sakramente glauben, in denen man das Reich Gottes schon hat, und wer an die Sakramente glaubt, der kann nicht nach dem Reich Gottes trachten, weil er es ja seiner Meinung nach schon hat. Die Sakramente sind also nicht, wie es vielleicht manchen bisher vorgekommen ist, die Vorbereitungs- und Foerderungsmittel zum Reiche Gottes, sondern die Hauptbollwerke und Hindernisse, welche dem Trachten nach dem Reich Gottes im Wege stehen." He mistakenly quotes John 6,35 in support, and his error is evident when he states that 1 Cor. 11 shows Paul warning against the Lord's Supper. His claim is that Christ meant His Church by His body, that it would be impossible to distribute Christ's body as of then, because it is now glorified, and it would be impossible to cut it into so many pieces; rather all Christian fellowship, especially Church dinners, are a following of Christ's command here.⁸ However, making common eating and drinking out of the Lord's Supper is what Paul specifically condemns in 1 Cor. 10 and 11. And Christ

Doctrine," Appendix, pp. 3.10.14, as alluded to in Popular Symbolics, p. 329.

8. Cf. Christoph Hoffmann, Sendschreiben ueber den Tempel und die Sakramente, das Dogma von der Dreieinigkeit und von der Gottheit Christi sowie ueber die Versoehnung der Menschen mit Gott, pp. 8ff. 15ff. Also Popular Symbolics, p. 411.

can give His body and blood as He chooses, and for the forgiveness of sins, as He states explicitly in the words of institution, for "with God nothing shall be impossible" and "In Him [Christ] dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head bodily."⁹

Likewise does Christian Science reject the celebration of Holy Communion. Its founder, Mary Baker Eddy, says: "The true sense is spiritually lost, if the sacrament is confined to the use of bread and wine...If Christ, Truth, has come to us in demonstration, no other commemoration is requisite, for demonstration is Immanuel, or God with us; and if a friend be with us, why need we memorials of that friend?... Our Eucharist is spiritual communion with the one God. Our bread, 'which cometh down from heaven,' is Truth. Our cup is the cross. Our wine the inspiration of Love, the draught our Master drank and commanded to his followers."¹⁰ Though it is indeed true that there dare not be only an external celebration of the Lord's Supper, but that faith in Christ and the real presence is mandatory for a worthy partaking thereof, yet it is also true that it cannot be celebrated in the heart alone, but that the external observance is equally necessary, as Christ commanded: "This do in remembrance of Me."¹¹ The construction in the original Greek

9. Luke 1, 37. Col. 2, 9.

10. Mary Baker Eddy, Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures, pp. 32.34.35; also Popular Symbolics, pp. 453f.

11. Luke 22, 19. 1 Cor. 11, 24.25.

here shows that the *τοῦτο* includes the act and the accompanying words, without which the *ἁγιασμα* is incomplete.¹²

Nothing is, however, better established than that the Lord's Supper is a divine ordinance, instituted by Christ Himself (and commanded by Him to be observed by Christians till the end of time.) That Jesus Himself instituted this Sacrament is clear from all the accounts of the institution. In Matthew 26, 26-29 it is written: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and break it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My body. And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." In Mark 14, 22-25 it is recorded: "And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is My body. And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And He said unto them, This is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God." In Luke 22,

12. Cf. Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. II, p. 881

19 and 20 we read: "And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for many." And in 1 Cor. 11, 23-26 St. Paul says by inspiration: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said; Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come."

From earliest times it was regarded by the Christians as instituted by Christ and to be celebrated by them till Judgment Day. In 1 Cor. 10, 16. 21. we read: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion [a joint partaking of] of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread....Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." And in 1 Cor. 11, 20. 27-29 it reads: "When ye come together therefore into

one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper....Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." And in Acts 2, 42 we are told: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.") When Christ says: "Take, eat: This is My body which is given ("broken") for you,"¹³ He already thereby indicates that it is for Christians till the end of time, for His body was not given for the disciples only, but for all men, This is emphasized by His words: "This do in remembrance of Me,"¹⁴ and the tense of the verb in the original Greek shows that the Lord here demands this to be a sustained, a continuous action.¹⁵ This is again made clear when our Lord speaks of the cup, saying: "Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins,"¹⁶ for Christ's blood was shed for all men and He would have all receive the forgiveness of sins won thereby, and the new testament (covenant, agreement, will) is one which was made possible by the

13. Luke 22, 19. 1 Cor. 11, 24.

14. Luke 22, 19. 1 Cor. 11, 24.

15. Cf. Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol II, p. 881.

16. Matthew 26, 28.

shedding of Christ's blood for all men, and that new covenant, which He here confirms with His blood as a pledge (seal, confirmation), He wants to establish with all men. This fact that Christ wants this Sacrament repeated by Christians throughout the New Testament era is again emphasized by the words: "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it [The construction of the original Greek here shows the frequency of this action taken for granted],¹⁷ in remembrance of me." That this is indeed Christ's will is very evident from the words of St. Paul: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew [better translated by the command: "proclaim!"] the Lord's death till He come."¹⁸

Furthermore the Lord has commanded: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."¹⁹ The Lord's Supper is the visible Gospel word. And again Christ commands: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations....Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."²⁰ And part of this is the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

That the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ, and that as a permanent ordinance, to be observed till the end of time, is brought out clearly in the confessions of our Church. The Formula of Concord says: "Since, now, this true,

17. Cf. Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. II, p. 881; also Joseph Henry Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 456.

18. 1 Cor. 11, 26.

19. Mark 16, 15.

20. Matthew 28, 19. 20.

almighty Lord, our Creator and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, after the Last Supper, when He is just beginning His bitter suffering and death for our sins, in those sad last moments, with great consideration and solemnity, in the institution of this most venerable Sacrament, which was to be used until the end of the world with great reverence and obedience [and humility], and was to be an abiding memorial of His bitter suffering and death and all His benefits, a sealing [and confirmation of the New Testament], a consolation of all distressed hearts, and a firm bond of union of Christians with Christ, their Head, and with one another, in the ordaining and institution of the holy Supper spake these words concerning the bread which He blessed and gave [to His disciples]: Take, eat: this is My body, which is given for you, and concerning the cup, or wine: This is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins;---...For the true and almighty words of Jesus Christ which He spake at the first institution were efficacious not only at the first Supper, but they endure, are valid, operate, and are still efficacious."²¹

21. "The Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration," VII, par. 44 and 75, Concordia Triglotta, pp. 987 and 999. Cf. also "Apology of the Augsburg Confession," III, par. 89, and "Large Catechism," V, par. 1ff., Concordia Triglotta, pp. 179 and 753f.

I. What Benefits are Derived from this Sacrament

It is therefore clear from Holy Scripture that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ Himself to be celebrated till the end of time. Definite benefits can be and are therefore received through it. The principal benefit, a most glorious one indeed, the attainment of which for man was the whole purpose of Christ's redemptive work, which the worthy communicant (cf. IV) receives through this Sacrament, is the forgiveness of sins, all other benefits therein being only concomitants of it.

The Lord's Supper is therefore of the greatest benefit to the worthy communicant because of the forgiveness of sins which he receives through it. The Christian, feeling keenly the weight of his burden of sin, and encompassed, surrounded and in daily contact with the results of sin, as he is in this world, finds in the Lord's Supper a wondrous oasis in a dry and arid land, where he may drink freely and find refreshment and strength to go on. For it is through this Sacrament that he is shown most effectively what Christ has done for the complete expiation of his sins, having by His vicarious atonement completely taken away the guilt, punishment and power of his sins.

That the Lord's Supper actually offers and gives forgiveness of sins is clearly shown by the words of institution: "Take eat: this is My body, which is given ("broken") for

you,"²² and "Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."²³ Here Christ Himself tells the individual communicant in effect: "Here, take and eat and drink My body and My blood, which was given and shed for you and all men, and with it take and receive that which was won for you by their being given and shed, namely the forgiveness of your sins."

That the forgiveness of sins is offered and given through this Sacrament is furthermore shown by the words: "This do in remembrance of Me."²⁴ These words mean, in the first place, that we are to partake of this Sacrament so as to remember Christ and all that He has done for us. And who can take this Sacrament worthily in true faith and remember Christ, remember His atonement for his sins, and not realize that thereby he has forgiveness of sins? God's Holy Spirit, working this remembrance of Christ in the communicant's heart, thereby assures him of, offers and gives to him the forgiveness of his sins.

This forgiveness is sealed, confirmed, to the individual in the Lord's Supper, for when Christ says: "This is My blood of the new testament,"²⁵ and "This cup is the new testament in My blood,"²⁶ He is saying in effect: "Here is My blood, by the shedding of which the new testament (covenant, agree-

22. Luke 22, 19 and 1 Cor. 11, 24.

23. Matthew 26, 28.

24. Luke 22, 19 and 1 Cor. 11, 24.25.

25. Matthew 26, 28 and Mark 14, 24.

26. 1 Cor. 11, 25 and Luke 22, 20.

ment, will) was made for you for the remission of sins."

The new covenant that is offered, given and sealed to us through this Sacrament is the forgiveness of sins, as defined by Holy Scripture. In Jeremiah we read:

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with^{the} house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.²⁷

In Hebrews this passage is quoted and there is added:

For finding fault with them, He saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.... This is the covenant that I will make with them

27. Jeremiah 31, 31-34.

after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.²⁸

In Romans the statement is made: "For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins."²⁹ And in 2 Corinthians we are told: "For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory."³⁰

Our symbols also describe the forgiveness of sins as the chief benefit of the Lord's Supper. Thus our Catechism says in answer to the question: "What is the benefit of such eating and drinking? That is shown us by these words, 'Given, and shed for you for the remission of sins;' namely, that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation."³¹ The Augsburg Confession says: "For to remember Christ is to remember His benefits, and to realize that they are truly offered unto us."³² The Apology of the Augsburg Confession says:

Thus in the Church the Lord's Supper was instituted that by remembrance of the promises of Christ, of which we are admonished in this sign, faith might be strengthened in us, and we might publicly confess our faith, and proclaim the benefits of Christ, as

28. Hebrews 8, 8-12.

29. Romans 11, 27.

30. 2 Corinthians 3, 9.

31. Schwan, Luther's Small Catechism, p. 145, Quest. 334.

32. "Augsburg Confession," XXIV, 30, Concordia Triglotta, p. 67.

Paul says, 1 Cor. 11,26: As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death, etc. But our adversaries contend that the mass is a work that justifies us ex opere operato, and removes the guilt and liability to punishment in those for whom it is celebrated: For thus writes Gabriel.... Because this is a Sacrament of the New Testament, as Christ clearly says, he ought for this very reason to be confident that what is promised in the New Testament, namely, the free remission of sins, is offered him.... For men are taught concerning the true use of the Sacrament that it was instituted for the purpose of being a seal and testimony of the free remission of sins, and that, accordingly, it ought to admonish alarmed consciences to be truly confident and believe that their sins are freely remitted.... The Sacraments are signs of God's will toward us, and not merely signs of men among each other; and they are right in defining that Sacraments in the New Testament are signs of grace. And because in a sacrament there are two things, a sign and the Word, the Word, in the New Testament, is the promise of grace added. The promise of the New Testament is the promise of the remission of sins.... We shall only present this in opposition: It is certain that the Lord's Supper was instituted on account of the remission of sins, where it is necessary that guilt be truly understood.³³

The Large Catechism says:

Briefly that is as much as to say: For this reason we go to the Sacrament because there we receive such a treasure by and in which we obtain forgiveness of sins.... For here in the Sacrament you are to receive from the lips of Christ forgiveness of sins, which contains and brings with it the grace of God and the Spirit with all His gifts, protection, shelter, and power against death and the devil and all misfortune.³⁴

The Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration, says:

Since, now, this true, almighty Lord, our Creator

33. "Apology of the Augsburg Confession," III, 89; XIII, 20; XXIV, 49.69.90; Concordia Triglotta, pp. 179.313.401.409.415.

34. "Large Catechism," V, 22.70, Concordia Triglotta, pp. 757 and 769.

and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, after the Last Supper, when He is just beginning His bitter suffering and death for our sins, in those sad last moments, with great consideration and solemnity, in the institution of this most venerable Sacrament, which was to be used until the end of the world with great reverence and obedience [and humility], and was to be an abiding memorial of His bitter suffering and death and all His benefits, a sealing [and confirmation] of the New Testament, a consolation of all distressed hearts, and a firm bond of union of Christians with Christ, their Head, and with one another, in the ordaining and institution of the Holy Supper spake these words concerning the bread which He blessed and gave [to His disciples].... Therefore there is no doubt that also concerning the other part of the Sacrament these words of Luke and Paul: This cup is the new testament in My blood, can have no other meaning than that which St. Matthew and St. Mark give: This namely, that which you orally drink out of the cup is My blood of the new testament, whereby I establish, seal, and confirm with you men this My testament and new covenant, namely, the forgiveness of sins.³⁵

Thus Luther states: "Wegen des Blutes Christi ist in und mit dem Kelch die Vergebung der Sunden vorhanden und wird vermittelst des Kelches mitgeteilt."³⁶

Since forgiveness of sins is dispensed through this Sacrament, it naturally follows that salvation is a benefit flowing from it, as well as life eternal. For forgiveness of sins and salvation from sin are synonymous. And since sins are forgiven, the sins being removed as an obstacle to eternal life, eternal life naturally also follows as a concomitant of forgiveness of sins. This is expressed

35. "Formula of Concord, Thorough Declaration," VII, 44 and 53, Concordia Triglotta, pp. 987 and 991.

36. Martin Luther, Saemtliche Schriften, XX, p. 278f.

very well in the Small Catechism: "That is shown us by these words, 'Given, and shed for you for the remission of sins'; namely, that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation."³⁷ Holy Scripture attests to this fact, for in Romans 5,1.2.21. we read: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ, our Lord."³⁸

The Roman Catholic Church rejects the forgiveness of sins as the principal benefit of the Lord's Supper as is attested by the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent: "If any one saith, either that the principal fruit of the most holy Eucharist is the remission of sins, or that other effects do not result therefrom; let him be anathema."³⁹ And according to its Catechism the Eucharist viewed as a Sacrament removes only venial sins.⁴⁰ However, this is only a natural result of their rejection of Christ's redemption as a full atonement for all sins. They therefore regard this Sacrament more as a means whereby man may be assisted to

37. Schwan, Luther's Small Catechism, p. 145.

38. Cf. also Titus 3,7; Romans 8,30; 2 Timothy 2,10.

39. J. Waterworth's translation, Sess. XIII, Can. 5, p. 89.

40. Catechismus Romanus, II, C, IV, Quest. 41.

acquire his own righteousness.

So also the Reformed deny that the forgiveness of sins may be obtained through the Sacrament of the Altar, for Zwingli writes: "Coena dominica, ut eam Paulus appellat, mortis Christi commemoratio est, non peccatorum remissio."⁴¹ So also Calvin claims that faith is worked by the Holy Ghost immediately and not through any external means,⁴² and Hodge says in his Systematic Theology, Vol. II, p. 684: "Efficacious grace acts immediately."

But there is no basis in Holy Scripture for the denial of the Lord's Supper as a means whereby forgiveness is dispensed. On the contrary, as set forth above, this Sacrament is a wondrous means whereby our Lord offers, gives and seals such forgiveness.

Our Lutheran Church rightly regards the Lord's Supper most highly, primarily because it transmits and confirms the forgiveness of sins, "Which is its most necessary part."⁴³ The forgiveness of sins, together with life and salvation, is the first and foremost gift of this Sacrament. All other benefits are subordinate and dependent upon this one chief blessing, are only concomitants of this. Among these we may mention the strengthening and maintaining of faith, the union

41. Opp., III, 258, as quoted by Pieper, op. cit., footnote 1389, p. 438.

42. Institutes, IV, 14.17. Consensus Tigurinus, XVII, as quoted by Pieper, op. cit., footnote 1392, p. 439.

43. "Large Catechism", V, 20, Concordia Triglotta, p. 757.

with Christ, the unio mystica, the union with the spiritual body of Christ, the Church, progress in a sanctified walk of life of great love to God and fellowman, increased patience in the trials and tribulations of life, joy in Christian living, through this Sacrament also giving a confession of faith and a proclamation of the Gospel of Christ before the world, as well as honoring our God and Savior. Dr. Pieper brings this out wonderfully when he says:

Alle andere Wirkungen des Abendmahls sind der Darbietung der Vergebung der Sunden nicht koordiniert, sondern subordiniert. Als Wirkungen des Abendmahls werden mit Recht genannt: die Staerkung des Glaubens, die Vereinigung mit Christo, die Vereinigung mit dem geistlichen Leibe Christi, der Kirche, die Foerderung der Heiligung, die Entzuendung der Liebe zu Gott und dem Naechsten, die Mehrung der Geduld und der Hoffnung des ewigen Lebens. Aber alle diese Wirkungen beruhen nicht nur teilweise, sondern ganz auf der Tatsache, dass das Abendmahl Mittel der Suendenvergebung ist. Der christliche Glaube ist ja seinem Wesen nach der Glaube an die durch Christi stellvertretende Genugtuung vorhandene Vergebung der Suenden. Daher kann auch der christliche Glaube nur in der Weise gestaerkt werden, dass sein Object, durch das er entsteht und besteht, naemlich die Zusage der Vergebung der Suenden, durch die von Gott geordneten Gnadenmittel ihm gegenuebertritt. Es gibt auch keine andere Gemeinschaft mit Christo als die, welche durch den Glauben an die von ihm erworbene Vergebung der Suenden vermittelt wird. Alle, die dafuer mit Rom und mit Zwingli und mit Calvin eine gratia infusa substituieren wollen, fallen unter das Urteil: 'Ihr habt Christum verloren, die ihr durch das Gesetz gerecht werden wollt, und seid von der Gnade gefallen.' (Footnote 1396. Gal. 5,4.) Es gibt auch keine andere Gemeinschaft mit dem geistlichen Leibe Christi, der Kirche, als die, welche durch den Glauben an das Evangelium von der Vergebung der Suenden um Christi willen sowohl erstmalig bewirkt als auch fortdauernd erhalten wird. Alle, welche andere Verbindungsmittel mit der Kirche suchen, verlieren dadurch, wie die Gemeinschaft mit Christo, so auch die Gemeinschaft mit seinem geistlichen Leibe, der

Kirche. Es gibt auch kein anderes Mittel, christliche Heiligung zu bewirken, als den Glauben an die Barmherzigkeit Gottes, nach welcher Gott uns um Christi willen die Sunden vergibt. Wie der Apostel schreibt: 'Ich ermahne euch durch die Barmherzigkeit Gottes, dass ihr eure Leiber begeben zum Opfer' usw. (Footnote 1397. Roem. 12.1, [sic]) Es gibt auch kein anderes Mittel, die Liebe zu Gott und dem Naechsten in einem Menschenherzen zu entfachen and zu staerken, als den Glauben an die Liebe, mit der uns Gott geliebt hat, dass er uns Unwuerdigen allein um Christi satisfactio vicaria willen die Sunden vergibt. 'Lasset uns ihn lieben, denn er hat uns erst geliebet!' (Footnote 1398. 1 Joh. 4,19.) und: 'Hat uns Gott also geliebet, so sollen wir uns auch untereinander lieben.' (Footnote 1399. 1 Joh. 4,11.) Ebenso setzt Paulus die freudige Hoffnung des ewigen Lebens und die Geduld unter dem Kreuz lediglich in Abfolge zu der Rechtfertigung, das ist, der Vergebung der Sunden, aus dem Glauben (*δικαιοσύνης οὐν ἐκ πίστεως κτλ.*). (Footnote 1400. Roem. 5,1ff.) Weiß nun im Abendmahl die Vergebung der Sunden, durch Leib und Blut Christi versiegelt, also in besonders eindringlicher und troestlicher Weise dargeboten wird, so geschieht es, dass dem Abendmahl die genannten geistlichen Wirkungen in besonderem Masse eigen sind. Alle, welche mit Rom, Zwingli, Calvin und neueren Theologen das Abendmahl nicht primo loco Sundenvergebungsmittel sein lassen, machen tatsaechlich saemtliche Wirkungen des Abendmahls unmoeglich. Sie machen, sofern sie konsequent bleiben, aus dem Abendmahl ein menschliches Werk, das sie von der Gnade Gottes in Christo scheidet. 44

The strengthening and maintenance of a true faith in Christ as the only Savior from sin is a benefit which the Lord graciously bestows upon the worthy communicant in abundant measure through the Lord's Supper. "This do in remembrance of Me." He says. Who can remember Christ in true faith in Him, who can remember His body, which was given for Him, and His blood shed for him for the remission of sins,

44. op. cit., Vol III, p. 442f.

which he receives in this Sacrament, without having his faith, his trust and confidence in the redeeming power of Christ and His vicarious atonement strengthened. Christ in effect here tells the communicant: "Here is My body and blood, that same body and blood by which I completely atoned for your sins; receive it as a pledge of the forgiveness I have won for you, and trust in Me always and fully as your Savior, for you see here that I am truly your Redeemer. I have made a covenant with you; receive here My blood, which is the ground on which God can and does grant and you may accept this covenant."⁴⁵ Especially the weak in faith are to be encouraged to receive the Sacrament frequently. And who is not weak in faith in a greater or lesser degree? Luther therefore correctly advises:

Fuehlest du im Herzen, dass du es nicht dafuer haeltst noch glaubst, und doch gerne wolltest, dass du glauben koenntest, so muessst du dennoch nicht verzagen und vor dem Sakrament fliehen, sondern eben daselbst Huelfe suchen, dass sich dein Glaube anzuende und zunehme. Denn obgleich etliche greulich gestraft sind worden, darum dass sie das Sakrament unwuerdig und ohne Glauben empfangen haben, so sind es doch allein diese, welche wir oben erzehlt haben, die verstockten und ruchlosen Herzen. Also solist du aber tun und denken: Herr, siehe, da ist das Wort, hier is mein Gebrechen und Krankheit; so hast du selbst gesagt: 'Kommt her zu mir alle, die ihr Muehselig und beladen seid, ich will euch erquickken,' Matth. 11, 28. Meinst du, dass er solches denen habe gesagt, so da schon brennen und stark sind im glauben? Sein Reich ist nicht dahin gestellt, dass er die gerechten foerdere, sondern dass er den Suendern helfe und dieselbigen

45. 1 Cor. 11, 25. Cf. Expositors' Greek Testament, Vol. II, p. 391.

auch fromm mache; darum wer gebrechlich ist und
 fuehlt es, der gehe hinzu und lasse sich helfen.⁴⁶

And again he says: "Das ist Christi Gedaechnis, so man die
 Kraft und Frucht seines Leidens lehrt und glaubt."⁴⁷

In effect, the worthy communicant, when he partakes of
 the Sacrament, tells himself: "I believe in Christ as My
 Savior. He has won for me forgiveness of my sins by His
 suffering and death on the cross. Here he gives me His own
 body and blood, that same body and blood which He gave and
 shed for the remission of my sins on the cross, as a pledge
 of the sufficiency of that atonement and of my forgiveness.
 He is indeed my Savior! He gives them to me as an individual
 with the message that they are a seal that my own sins are
 indeed and fully covered. He is indeed My Savior! How can
 I help but trust and put my every confidence in Him, who
 not only in distant time and far off land laid down His life,
 but now even comes to me personally and assures me that this
 was all for me and gives me His body and blood as a sure
 witness to convince beyond the shadow of a doubt that I am
 completely redeemed. He is indeed My Savior! How can I
 help but believe it?"

Our Catechism states well in the "Christian Questions,"
 No. 18: "Finally why do you wish to go to the Sacrament?
 Answer: That I may learn to believe that Christ died for my

⁴⁶. Luther op. cit., XI, p. 654f.

⁴⁷. Luther op. cit., X, p. 2188.

sin out of great love,"⁴⁸ and No. 16: "Why ought we to remember and show His death? Answer: That we may learn to believe that no creature could make satisfaction for our sins but Christ, true God and Man."⁴⁹ Our Catechism furthermore states in answer to the question: "For what purpose, then, do we approach the Lord's Table? Chiefly for the strengthening of our faith in the forgiveness of our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ."⁵⁰

The Apology also rightly states: "For men are taught concerning the true use of the Sacrament that it was instituted for the purpose of being a seal and testimony of the free remission of sins, and that, accordingly, it ought to admonish alarmed consciences to be truly confident and believe that their sins are freely remitted."⁵¹

The Reformed bodies lay great stress on the spiritual eating and drinking in the Lord's Supper. They themselves, however, make such spiritual eating and drinking by faith impossible by their own doctrine, for they not only deny the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament and that it is a means whereby forgiveness is dispensed, but also deny that the Holy Spirit works through the Lord's Supper, saying He works only immediately, never

48. Schwan, op. cit., p. 37.

49. Schwan, op. cit., p. 37.

50. Schwan, op. cit., p. 146.

51. "Apology of the Augsburg Confession", XXIV, 49, Concordia Triglotta, p. 401.

through means. By their denial of universal grace they furthermore make of the Lord's Supper a meal of doubt, not a memorial or means whereby faith is increased. Their position is clearly against the word and spirit of Christ's own word attendant upon this Sacrament.

The Lord's Supper also serves as a means for the preservation and furtherance of the unio mystica, since this mystical union of the believer with Christ takes place through faith, which is strengthened through this Sacrament. Here Christ deals directly with the individual, offering, giving and sealing to him personally the forgiveness of his sins, giving to him His own body and blood. Being thus personally dealt with, receiving from Christ His very body and blood with his own mouth, the believer can feel himself as close to Christ, in as close communion with his Savior as anywhere this side of heaven itself.

In this connection Chemnitz writes truly:

Die eigentliche, einfache und urspruengliche Bedeutung der Worte der Einsetzung aber lehrt, dass Christus in der Handlung des Abendmahls sowohl nach seiner Gottheit, als auch nach seinem Fleische, unter uns zugegen sei und zu uns komme, dass er uns ergreife, Phil. 3, 12, und mit sich auf das festeste vereinige. Das ist ein ueberaus suesser Trost. Denn die Ergreifung Christi, des Gottmenschen, ist nothwendig, dass die Vereinigung zwischen Christo und uns eine gegenseitige sei. Aber wir, mit der Last der Suende beschwert, und von der Groesse unserer Schwachheit gedrueckt, koennen noch nicht das Verborgene des Himmels betreten, Col. 2, 18, und zu ihm in die Herrlichkeit durchdringen. Daher kommt er selbst zu uns, in dem er uns nach der Natur ergreift, nach welcher er unser Bruder ist. Und weil unsere Gebrechlichkeit die Glorie seiner Majestaet in diesem Leben

nicht tragen kann, Matth. 17, 6, Act. 9, 4, so ist daher sein Leib und Blut unter Brot und Wein gegenwaertig, wird dargeboten und genommen. Und er will nicht, dass wir um den Mittelpunkt des Himmels herumirren, ungewis, in welcher Himmelsgegend wir Christum in seiner menschlichen Natur entweder suchen sollen, oder finden koennen, sondern im Abendmahl bezeichnet er selbst durch eine aeuesserliche Handlung und sichtbar Zeichen, wo er mit seinem Leibe und Blute gegenwaertig sein wolle. Und da suchen wir ihn sicher und finden ihn gewiss, denn da reicht er selbst durch das Amt den Communicanten seinen Leib und sein Blut dar. Dieser ueberaus suesse und nothwendige Trost wird uns gaenzlich entrissen, wenn die wesentliche Gegenwart, Darreichung und Empfang des Leibes und Blutes Christi im Abendmahle hinweggenommen wird.⁵²

Gerhard comes out with a fine example of this when he states:

Dem Sohn Gottes ist nichts naeher und inniger verbunden, als seine angenommene menschliche Natur, die er mit sich persoendlich vereinigt hat; wiederum wird mit uns nichts naeher vereinigt, als was wir essen und trinken, indem es in das Wesen unseres Fleisches verwandelt wird. Christus hat daher, indem er sich mit uns und uns mit sich auf das innigste vereinigen wollte, dieses Sacrament eingesetzt, in welchem wir vermittelst des gesegneten Weines sein Blut trinken. Doch ist zu erinnern, dass zwischen der natuerlichen Speise des Leibes und zwischen der geistlichen Speise des inwendigen Menschen ein Unterschied ist. Die natuerliche Speise wird durch eine Veraenderung und Verwandlung in die Substanz des Leibes verwandelt, aber diese geistliche Speise wird nicht in uns verwandelt und veraendert, sondern vielmehr verwandelt und veraendert sie uns, dass wir der goettlichen Natur theilhaftig und Glieder des geistlichen Leibes werden, dessen Haupt Christus ist.⁵³

52. M. Chemnitz, "Ex. Conc. Trid. de SS. Coena," Cap. XI, as quoted in Erster Synodal-Bericht des Illinois-Districts, p. 63.

53. Gerhard as quoted in Erster Synodal-Bericht des Illinois-Districts, p. 64.

Oh, what joy does this not provide for us lost and condemned sinners when we can thus be united, yea drawn closer through the Lord's Supper in this union with our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ, that we too might have sonship with our heavenly Father and be co-heirs with Christ of the many temporal and eternal blessings which He has won for us by His vicarious atonement, as we read in Romans: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."⁵⁴

Since the Lord's Supper strengthens faith and dispenses grace, it also preserves and furthers the union with the spiritual body of Christ, the Church. St. Paul teaches this close fellowship wrought through this Sacrament when he says: "For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread."⁵⁵ This is also already shown by the previous verse: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"⁵⁶ Here the word *κοινωνία* has the meaning of "a joint partaking of," asserting the fellowship of persons with others in the same object, the body and blood of Christ.⁵⁷ Thus this Sacrament is a powerful unify-

54. Romans 8, 16. 17.

55. 1 Cor. 10, 17.

56. 1 Cor. 10, 16.

57. Cf. Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. II, p. 863f.

ing force, a means whereby the saints in Christ are nourished and strengthened in their corporate unity. It forms a bond for the individual believer with the communion of saints, the one holy Christian Church, the invisible Church, of which Christ is the one Head. And through this one Head, Christ, it also serves as a means of union between the Church militant and the Church triumphant. Our Catechism expresses this briefly, when in part it answers the question: "For what purpose, then, do we approach the Lord's Table? and also in testimony of the communion of faith."⁵⁸ The Didache likewise speaks of this: "Even as this broken bread was scattered over the hills, and was gathered together and became one, so let Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy Kingdom, for Thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever."⁵⁹

The Holy Supper also, particularly because of its strengthening of faith and giving of forgiveness, serves to further sanctification. Most vividly does the Lord's Supper bring the message of Romans 12, 1. 2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, that ye

Also Thayer op. cit., p. 352.

58. Schwan, op. cit., Question 338, p. 146.

59. "The Didache" as quoted in An Explanation of the Common Service, p. 60.

may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Our Catechism answers in part to the question: "For what purpose, then, do we approach the Lord's Table? For our futherance in holiness of life."⁶⁰ This is also asserted in the "Christian Questions": "Why ought we to remember and show His death?...and that we may learn to look with terror at our sins, and to regard them as great indeed and to find joy and comfort in Him alone, and thus be saved through such faith,"⁶¹ and "Finally, why do you wish to go to the Sacrament?... and that I may also learn of Him to love God and my neighbor."⁶²

When partaking worthily of Holy Communion, we cannot help but declare: "We love Him, because He first loved us,"⁶³ and "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."⁶⁴ If we come worthily to His Holy Table, we cannot help but renew our vow ever more firmly with His help to live as He would have us. The worthy communicant says, as it were, to himself: "See, here is Christ's body and blood which He gave and shed in atonement for my sins; see what it cost Him to win forgiveness for me; surely I don't want to increase His burden which He is bearing for me; surely I don't want, by my further sinning, if I can help it, to tread this sacred

60. Schwan, op. cit., Question 338, p. 146.

61. "Christian Questions" No.16 in Schwan, op. cit., p.37.

62. "Christian Questions" No.18 in Schwan, op. cit., p.18.

63. 1 John 4, 19.

64. 1 John 4, 11.

blood underfoot in a mire of transgression and shame. Look how much He loved me; I'll do all in my power, with His help, to love Him in return; since I call myself a follower of Him, I'll try to show it by my life. Look how He gave His life for the brethren; likewise I'll seek to show love to my fellowman."

Since here he has again tasted of forgiveness, the worthy communicant will not again seek to return to the vomit of sin, but will be encouraged and empowered to shun sin more and more as the very antithesis of forgiveness. He will have been made cognizant of the statement of Holy Scripture: "Christ died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."⁶⁵ The unspotted dress of Christ's righteousness, which through the Lord's Supper He has just again put on, the Christian does not want to make filthy with sin. And through the Lord's Supper he is strengthened in a sanctified walk of life, the power of God making him strong where inherently he is weak.

"This do in remembrance of Me." Through the Sacrament the Lord instills in the worthy partaker the spirit of unselfish, self-denying service, which was the characteristic of His own life.

65. 2 Cor. 5, 15.

We are furthermore here reminded that we are not our own, but now the property of Christ, bought at the price of His life's blood, and so are duty-bound to live as He wants us to.

In order to partake of the Sacrament with blessing, the sinner comes with penitent and contrite heart and leaves with the resolve with the help of God henceforth to mend his sinful life.

Being reminded of Christ's great sacrifice for them, the communicants are encouraged to sacrifice themselves to Him by fulfilling His will in their relationships to God and to each other. The Lord's Supper pleads with them to set their face against sin, sin which it shows is so deadly, destroying, killing, crucifying. Thus it summons them to holiness, leading them away from sin. The memory of the cross of Christ is a reminder to stir and drive them from sin to service, moving their lives and being an impelling controlling force in their conduct, arousing in them fires of emotion, a sacred passion of a new consecration to their blessed Lord. Christ, through His body and blood, imparts in the Sacrament, as the vine does to the branch, His wondrous sanctifying power to the believing participant.

Whereas he who shuns the Sacrament grows cold and indifferent and lax in his love of God and man, the worthy communicant is fervent in his desire to have no more to do with sin. For Holy Communion acts as a tonic for the Christian

to confess Christ by word and deed. That too we see from the words: "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come,"⁶⁶ and "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils."⁶⁷

This holy Sacrament furthermore serves to increase patience in trial and tribulation and the hope of eternal life. The Christian whose spirit is raised by the knowledge of sins forgiven, which he receives in Holy Communion together with a strengthened faith, is thus equipped to face the trials, temptations and tribulations of life with joy and strength to bear and overcome them. In Communion he is assured that He who can raise him from the abyss of sin can also "keep that which has been committed unto Him against that day." Being made fully aware of his divine sonship, he can realize that "if God be for us, who can be against us." Being at peace with God, what else matters? This is vividly described to us in Romans: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only

66. 1 Cor. 11, 26.

67. 1 Cor. 10, 20f.

so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."⁶⁸ Thus does Holy Communion lead the Christian into all the Christian graces and their fruits, as the result of the gracious justification by faith in Christ Jesus.

Another benefit of the Lord's Supper is that it serves as a means whereby the Christian is distinguished from the heterodox and unbelieving. Whereas the unbeliever and heterodox shows a contempt for the pure Sacrament, either not observing it at all or else a perversion of it, the Christian shows his respect for his Lord by observing it according to His command and promise. It thus serves as a mark of a Christian. Our Catechism speaks of this in Question 350: "To whom must the Lord's Supper be denied? 1. to the heterodox, since the Holy Supper is a token and testimony of the unity of faith."⁶⁹ Thus does our celebration of this Sacrament and partaking of it form a confession of our faith before God and the world. We see this first of all from 1 Cor. 10, 20, 21: "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with

68. Romans 5, 1-6.

69. Schwan, op. cit., p. 149.

devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's Table, and the table of devils." We see this further from the words of our Lord Himself: "This do in remembrance of Me." Not only are we to partake of this Sacrament so that by it we are caused to remember Christ and all that He is to mean to us,⁷⁰ but also so that it may be a memorial of Christ in the sight of others, that they too may see what we think of Him by our observance of His Sacrament.

This confession which we give of Christ by our communing then also serves as a proclamation of the visible Gospel Word of Christ to others. Also in this respect is it a Memorial Feast. Also thus do we do it in remembrance of Him. We see this still more clearly from the words: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew [proclaim ye] the Lord's death till He come."⁷¹

It is furthermore of benefit as a memorial of our Lord in this respect that by it we show honor, respect and praise to Him, namely by observing it in obedience to His command according to His will. Also in this respect do we observe the command of our Lord: "This do in remembrance of Me." This is also primarily the manner in which it is a Feast of Thanksgiving for us.

Because Christ gave thanks when He distributed the

70. Cf. Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. II, p. 881 and Thayer, op. cit., p. 40.

71. 1 Cor. 11, 26.

elements to the disciples, the Sacrament of the Altar has been given the name "Eucharist," the Thanksgiving or Feast of Thanksgiving. And we indeed should be thankful for this Sacrament and all that Christ has done for us and receive the heavenly food and drink He here gives us with thanksgiving. Rightly therefore in our Communion Liturgy do we have prayers of thanksgiving before and after the celebration and partaking at His Table. However, when we properly observe the Lord's Supper, that very act in itself is a Thanksgiving to our Lord. It is an act of obedience whereby we show Him due honor, respect, praise and thanksgiving. If we are to speak of this Sacrament as a sacrifice at all, it is only in this respect that we ought to speak of it. The sacrifice of obedience to God that we owe to Him by all that we desire, think, say or do, is the sacrifice that we bring here, a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, of honor and respect. In no way is it to be regarded as anything whereby we merit or earn anything, but simply an act of faith which we owe to Him.

Von Schenk in his recent book on the Sacrament of the Altar writes most confusedly in this connection when he states:

We cannot repeat the sacrifice which Jesus offered on Calvary, but in the Communion we plead this sacrifice, 'ye do show the Lord's death,' as Paul has it. This sacrifice is a solemn memorial offered to God, the Father 'according to His Son our Savior Jesus Christ's holy institution,' of the sacrifice which was offered upon the Cross. There is no new immolation of the Body of Christ, but a re-presentation of that immolation once for all accomplished at Calvary, a showing - kataggelia or anamnesis, a proclamation or memorial - of the Lord's death until He come. When we can understand how the

elements become the Body and Blood of Christ by Consecration, then we may understand in what manner the offering of these consecrated elements to God the Father is a re-presentation of the Sacrifice of the Cross.... We not only show forth His death, but we offer with our alms the bread and wine, and they are the Body and Blood of Christ. This sacrifice we offer, pleading the fact of the one complete atonement. Christ is 'Forever a priest after the order of Melchizadek.' Heb. 6:20. He passed into the heavens, the Holy of Holies, bearing His own Blood, and He perpetually presents His life and death to the Father. And as our Lord is forever the priest, and is ever presenting His Sacrifice, so we plead that same sacrifice through our High Priest in the Holy Eucharist.⁷²

In the Old Testament the victim was sacrificed, i.e. killed and prepared for offering, and then its blood or flesh was offered or presented to God, i.e. the priest pleaded its acceptance. Von Schenk clearly and rightly states that Jesus' sacrifice of Himself on Calvary is not repeated in the Lord's Supper. However, he seems to indicate in the above quoted words that in the Lord's Supper we again offer or present this sacrifice of Christ to God for its acceptance, or plead its acceptance by Him. We are told nowhere in Holy Scripture that we should or can do this, or that the Lord's Supper is given us for this purpose. Nor does Christ continue to present His sacrifice to God. He offered Himself once. Once did he present His blood in the true Holy of Holies for acceptance for the full and complete atonement of all sin. That it was accepted as such by God the Father is testified to especially by His Resurrection, as well as His Ascension and Session at the right hand of the Father. Scripture repeatedly assures us of a fully accomplished justification. We see this clearly

72.B. von Schenk, The Presence, p. 18f.

from Hebrews:

By His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.... Nor yet that He should offer Himself often [i.e. offer Himself to God, present or plead His sacrifice, bringing His blood into the Holy of Holies]⁷³ ...For then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.... By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: but this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that He had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.⁷⁴

So Christ no longer pleads for the acceptance of His sacrifice; nor need anyone else do so. It has been accepted. Now Christ only pleads that we may be brought to that faith whereby we may accept the benefits which He has won for us through His accepted sacrifice.

In speaking of the Lord's Supper as a proclamation of the Gospel von Schenk places overemphasis on the Lord's Supper in this respect. It does not depict the Incarnation, the Resurrection, the Ascension, Pentecost, etc. as vividly as he

73. Cf. Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. IV, p. 339.
74. Hebrews 9, 12. 25. 26. 10, 10-18.

states. Nor are we to see in it a great means for the evangelization of the world or the creation of a veritable paradise on earth, as some of his quotations indicate.⁷⁵

The Plymouth Brethren hold their meetings for Communion as well as for other purposes only in private homes, claiming that "the very thought of an earthly sanctuary is foreign to the genius of Christianity."⁷⁶ In Acts we indeed read: "And they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking of bread from house to house."⁷⁷ However, nowhere does the Lord command us where or where not we must celebrate this Sacrament. Wherever the Lord's Supper is properly administered and received, there it is well-pleasing to the Lord, is a valid Sacrament and dispenses its benefits. God makes no restriction as to place. When a Christian congregation dedicates a special building to the service of God, that there in proper surroundings it may do its duties in dispensing the sacred ordinances, among them Holy Communion, certainly this is well-pleasing to the Lord.

Reformed Churches, on the other hand do not sanction private communion or sick communion. W. Walther writes of this:

Weil nun allen Reformierten die leichtverstaendliche Auffassung des Abendmahls als eines Bekenntnisses vor der Gemeinde gemeinsam ist und die durch die Kirchengenossenschaft eingeschaenkte Zulassung zum Abend-

⁷⁵. von Schenk, op. cit., passim.

⁷⁶. S. Ridcut, "The Church according to Scripture," p. 111, as quoted in Popular Symbolics, p. 309f.

⁷⁷. Acts 2, 46.

mahl eine Anerkennung der Zugehoerigkeit zur Gemeinde ausspricht, gestaltete sich die Feier vorwiegend als Gemeindefeier. Daher beschraenkte man sie auf bestimmte Sonntage, und Calvins Wunsch haeufiger Abendmahlsfeier (J IV, 17, 44ff.) ging nicht in Erfuellung. Ebenso wurden Privat- und Krankencommunion untersagt.⁷⁸

Strong, in speaking of this Sacrament, writes in his Systematic Theology: "It is to be celebrated by the assembled Church. It is not a solitary observance on the part of individuals. No 'showing forth' is possible except in company."⁷⁹ The Moravians also indicate this when they say of sick Communion: "Der Charackter des Gemeinschaftsmahles findet am schoensten seinen Ausdruck, wenn einige Glieder der Gemeine bei einer solchen Abendmahlsfeier gegenwaertig sind."⁸⁰

Likewise does the former Evangelical Synod teach concerning sick and private Communion: "The Lord's Supper should be celebrated with the congregation, and even when it is given to the sick relatives, friends or church officers should take part besides the sick person. The private communion of pastors is not in order, and is contrary to the spirit and purpose of Christ."⁸¹ The spirit and purpose of Christ is, however, certainly fulfilled in the Lord's Supper wherever it is rightly administered and received, be that the communing of one or more. Nowhere does Christ say that

78. Wilhelm Walther, Lehrbuch der Symbolik, p. 237.

79. Augustus Hopkins Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 540.

80. Corpus Confessionum 10, p. 23.

81. Evangelical Fundamentals, Part 2, p. 139.

we are not to administer private Communion. Nor does He in any way restrict the benefits of this Sacrament when it is administered rightly and worthily received.

This Sacrament is in fact an individualized Gospel for the individual Christian. Whereas by the preaching of the Gospel and General Absolution the forgiveness of sins is pronounced to the whole congregation in rather a general way, in the Lord's Supper it is directed to the individual. It is very personal. Christ says to each one here: "Take, eat; this is My body which was given for you: this do in remembrance of Me.... This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you." Individual preparation is to precede it for worthy reception. Each one must have the proper worthiness to receive it with blessing. Each one receives the bread and wine and with these the body and blood of Christ personally and individually. Each one who receives it worthily receives the benefits at this Holy Table individually and personally. Here Christ seeks out especially the individual in order to offer and give and seal to him personally the forgiveness of sins and gives His own body and blood into the individual's mouth to assure him personally that his own sins are truly forgiven. The individual can say at the Lord's Table: "Here I come to personal communion with my personal Savior. He Himself is here forgiving me my very own sins. He is speaking to me personally. He is giving to me personally His own body and

blood, which He gave and shed on the cross for the full atonement of all my sins, to reassure me that I personally am truly forgiven."

Luther expresses this very well when he writes:

Es ist aber ein Unterschied da: wenn ich seinen Tod predige, das ist eine öffentliche Predigt in der Gemeinde, darin ich niemand sonderlich gebe, wer es fasst, der fasst's; aber wenn ich das Sakrament reiche, so eigene ich solches dem sonderlich zu, der es nimmt, schenke ihm Christi Leib und Blut, dass er habe Vergebung der Sünden, durch seinen Tod erworben, und in der Gemeinde gepredigt. Das ist etwas mehr denn die gemeine Predigt.⁸²

Since in the Lord's Supper Christians have fellowship in partaking of Christ's body and blood together,⁸³ and since it thus preserves and furthers the union with the spiritual body of Christ, the Church, as St. Paul says: "For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread,"⁸⁴ it follows that the Church benefits from it. The local congregation benefits. The Lord's Supper serves to bind them together. It shows that they have one faith, which they confess here together; that they have one heavenly food, one forgiveness, one Lord, and one hope, which all have together here in common. It shows that they as a group are distinguished from other, heterodox,

82. Luther, op. cit., Vol. XX, p. 750.

83. 1 Cor. 10, 16.

84. 1 Cor. 10, 17.

Churches and unbelievers. Thus the Lord's Supper serves to draw them together, to weld them into a single unit, making the congregation a more effective agency in carrying out the commands of the Lord enjoined upon them. In the same measure, furthermore, that the individuals of a congregation are strengthened in their faith and sanctified living, in that same measure will the congregation increase in fervency and efficiency in the exercise of its powers and the performance of its duties, as ordained by its Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. And what is here true of the local congregation, is also true of the larger group, the Church body of which the congregation is a member.

As the Lord's Supper is of benefit as a confession of faith for the individual, so it is also of benefit as a confession of faith for the Church. How it administers the Sacrament, what it teaches about it, how highly it regards it, shows how closely that Church follows God's Word, how truly it is a Church, and distinguishes it from other Churches.

26. p. 156, as quoted in von Schenk, p. 211, p. 23.
 27. p. 11, 27-29.
 28. p. 22-23, Vol. III, p. 242.

II. What Benefits are not Derived from this Sacrament

Dr. Scott Francis Brenner writes in his recent book,
The Way to Worship:

The Sacraments constitute the Church's most effective agency in the creation of a better world, wherein the blessings of life will be shared according to life's needs. That world-community will be rich with an abundance of material things, but beyond and above all that will be an equality of justice, and earnestness in the pursuit of righteousness, and never-failing faith, hope, and charity.... Not only the unity and the revitalization of the Church, but the very salvation of the whole world await the recovery of the eucharistic Sacrament with all its social significance and dynamic."⁸⁵

If Brenner means here that the Sacrament is the most effective means for the evangelization of the world, he is certainly wrong. In order that a communicant receive the Lord's Supper worthily, and so receive benefit instead of damnation through it, he must already have faith in Christ as His Redeemer.

St. Paul warns:

"Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."⁸⁶

Therefore the dogmaticians of our Church have rightly and consistently termed the Lord's Supper "sacramentum confirmationis," and Baptism "sacramentum initiationis."⁸⁷

No direct physical benefits can be obtained from the

85. p. 152, as quoted in von Schenk, op. cit., p. 23

86. 1 Cor. 11, 27-29.

87. Pieper, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 342.

Lord's Supper. We have observed pious Christians, however, who, in their eagerness to be such, have ascribed an improvement in their physical condition as a direct benefit of Holy Communion after receiving it on the sick-bed. It is indeed true, that, when a Christian worthily partakes of this Sacrament during illness, since it gives him the assurance of the forgiveness of sins, his spirits are raised and he finds joy even in sickness, as has previously been shown, and this more cheerful outlook in turn naturally may then also have a good effect on the physical condition of the individual. However, no direct physical benefits may be ascribed to or can be derived from the Lord's Supper. Holy Scripture knows of none such.

Scripture notwithstanding, however, Sartorius speaks of another physical benefit as directly attributable to the Sacrament of the Altar: "Es wirkt des Menschen ewiges Leben auch dadurch, dass es gegen alles Kranke und Todte und insbedondere auch gegen den Unglauben in ihm reagiert,"⁸⁸ and again: "Die sinnliche Natur, das leibliche Leben soll dadurch geheiligt, vergeistigt, fuer die dereinstige Herrlichkeit zubereitet werden."⁸⁹

In like manner Martensen writes:

Das Abendmahl ist die Vereinigung mit Christo als dem Prinzip der heiligen Vermahlung des Geistes

88. Ernst Sartorius, Meditationen ueber die Offenbarungen der Herrlichkeit Gottes, p. 238.

89. Sartorius, op. cit., p. 222.

der Natur, welche das Endziel der Schöpfung ist, daher, eine Nahrung fuer den ganzen neuen Menschen, also auch fuer den kuenftigen Menschen der Auferstehung, der im Verborgenen schon keimt und sich entwickelt.⁹⁰

Hodge writes of other modern theologians of the school of realizm, from Schleiermacher through Ebrard to Lange, who teach:

Communication of his divine humanity or theanthropic life to his people to be in them the germ of a new life, noetic and somatic, to be historically developed as was the nature derived from Adam, until it issues in the resurrection and final consummation.

This is then further described as a gracious infusion of the entire Christ in our life-center, causing this to develop naturally, as a seed develops into a plant or flower. We agree with Hodge, that all such theorizing on direct physical benefits of the Lord's Supper is only speculative philosophy, which St. Paul, in writing to the Colossians, calls a "vain deceit,"⁹¹ and that no philosophy has the right to control or modify the exposition of the doctrines of the Bible, except the philosophy of the Bible itself.⁹²

The Apostolic Faith Mission, in emphasizing the

90. Martensen, Par. 265, p. 412, as quoted in Joh. Giulielmi Baier, Compendium Theologiae Positivae, Vol. III, p. 528. Neve also writes in his History of Christian Thought that the early Church fathers spoke of the Lord's Supper as a "spiritual food for eternal life", "a remedy for immortality," and "an antidote against death (*φάρμακον ἀθανασίας*)."

91. Col. 2, 8.

92. Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, Vol. III, pp. 650-661.

doctrine of divine healing, claims that such healing takes place by "discerning the Lord's body" in the Lord's Supper.⁹³

Von Schenk writes in his recent book, The Presence: "I think I should mention especially my friend and former parishioner, Dr. Josef Daikeler, who found in the Sacramental Life not only help, comfort, and strength, but the solution to all his business problems. His record in the business world shows that he is right."⁹⁴ If von Schenk here means to state by this that the solution of all the business problems of this man was a direct benefit of the Lord's Supper, we cannot agree with him. Scripture knows of nothing like this.

Jesus said: "My Kingdom is not of this world."⁹⁵ His Kingdom is a spiritual Kingdom. Since Jesus gave the means of grace for the building of this Kingdom, it follows that the benefits flowing from these means are of a spiritual nature. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the Bible nowhere speaks of any direct material or physical benefits of the Lord's Supper. We must therefore reject such notions as pure speculation, without basis in God's Word.

The great value of the Lord's Supper lies in its being a beneficial work of God upon us, as has previously

93. Popular Symbolics, p. 344.

94. Von Schenk, op. cit., p. 32.

95. John 18, 36.

been shown. Both the Reformed Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, however, try to make of it a means which is of benefit as a human work for God.

The Reformed teach that it is of value merely as a memorial of Christ's death, of value to the believer when a spiritual eating and drinking performed by faith takes place and unites the believer with Christ, and of value to remind the believer of the accomplishments of Christ's death and proclaim this to the world. Though they vary considerably in the details of their doctrine on this point, these are essentially the salient features.

Zwingli's doctrine is shown in the "Confession of the Ministers of the Church at Zurich:" "We teach that the memory of the body offered by Christ for us and of the blood shed for the remission of our sins is the chief thing, the beginning and end, toward which the entire ceremony of the Eucharist is directed."⁹⁶

We see Calvin's view from the words of the Geneva Catechism:

"Why is the body of Christ represented by bread and His blood by wine? This teaches us that the same power which bread possesses, to nourish our bodies for the sustenance of the present life, is exerted by the body of our Lord to nourish our souls in a spiritual way; and again, that, just as wine delights the heart of man and renews his strength and fills the whole man with vigor, so a like benefit will come from the blood of the Lord for our souls."⁹⁷

96. Popular Symbolics, p. 220. Cf. also Zwingli, "Fide Ratio", in H. A. Niemeyer, Collectio Confessionum, p. 29ff.

97. Niemeyer, op. cit., p. 164.

Charles Hodge says:

In the Lord's Supper we are said to receive Christ and the benefits of his redemption to our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace. As our natural food imparts life and strength to our bodies, so this sacrament is one of the divinely appointed means to strengthen the principle of life in the soul of the believer, and to confirm his faith in the promises of the gospel. The Apostle teaches that by partaking of the bread and wine, the symbols of Christ's body and blood given for us, we are thereby united to him as our head, and with all our fellow believers as joint members of his mystical body. The union between the head and members of the human body and between the vine and its branches, is a continuous union. There is a constant flow of vital influence from the one to the other. In like manner the union between Christ and his people is continuous. He constantly imparts his life-giving influence to all united to Him by faith and by the indwelling of his Spirit.... As our Lord in addressing the Apostles and through them all his disciples, said this is my body and blood given for you, He says the same in the most impressive manner in this ordinance to every believing communicant: 'This is my body broken for you.' 'This is my blood shed for you.' These words when received by faith fill the heart with joy, confidence, gratitude, love, and devotion; so that such a believer rises from the Lord's Table refreshed by the infusion of a new life.⁹⁸

And then Hodge proceeds to nullify all that he just said by adding immediately:

The efficacy of this sacrament, according to the Reformed doctrine, is not to be referred to any virtue in the ordinance itself, whether in its elements or actions; much less to any virtue in the administrator; not to the mere power of the truths which it signifies; nor to the inherent, divine power in the word or promise by which it is attended; nor to the real presence of the material body and blood of Christ (i.e. of the body born of the Virgin), whether by way of transubstantiation, consubstantiation, or impanation; nor to a super-

98. Hodge, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 647f.

natural life-giving influence emanating from the glorified body of Christ in heaven, not to the communication of the theanthropic nature of Christ, but only to the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that receive the sacrament of his body and blood.⁹⁹

Again Hodge says:

According to the standards of the Reformed Church, therefore: The Lord's Supper is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ; as a memorial of his death, wherein, under the symbols of bread and wine, his body as broken and his blood as shed for the remission of sins, are signified, and, by the power of the Holy Ghost, sealed and applied to believers; whereby their union with Christ and their mutual fellowship are set forth and confirmed, their faith strengthened, and their souls nourished unto eternal life.¹⁰⁰

And again he nullifies even this by immediately adding:

Christ is really present to his people in this sacrament, not bodily, but in spirit, not in the sense of local nearness, but of efficacious operation. They receive Him, not with the mouth but by faith; they receive his flesh and blood, not as flesh, not as particles, not its human life, not the supernatural influence of his glorified body in heaven; but his body as broken and his blood as shed. The union thus signified and effected is not a corporeal union, not a mixture of substance, but a spiritual and mystical union due to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The efficacy of this sacrament, as a means of grace, is not in the signs, nor in the service, nor in the minister, nor in the word, but in the attending influence of the Holy Ghost.¹⁰¹

Strong has this to say of the Lord's Supper:

The communion is a festival of commemoration,-- not simply bringing Christ to our remembrance, but making proclamation of his death to the world.... It is a public proclamation also. Whether it brings perceptible blessing to us or not, it is to be observed as a means of confessing

99. Hodge, op. cit., Vol. III p. 648f.

100. Hodge, op. cit., Vol. III p. 649f.

101. Hodge, op. cit., Vol. III p. 650.

Christ, testifying our faith, and publishing the fact of his death to others.¹⁰²

"The Lord's Supper expresses primarily the fellowship of the believer, not with his brethren, but with Christ, his Lord."¹⁰³

He too nullifies the effects of which he speaks by saying:

"The Lord's Supper, like Baptism, is the symbol of a previous state of grace. It has in itself no regenerating and no sanctifying power, but is the symbol by which the relation of the believer to Christ, his sanctifier, is vividly expressed and strongly confirmed."¹⁰⁴

The Disciples likewise regard the Sacrament of the Altar as a mere memorial. Alexander Campbell writes: "The breaking of the loaf and the drinking of the cup are commemorative of the Lord's death," and then goes on to explain that it is especially symbolic of common faith and fellowship.¹⁰⁵

Similarly is the Lord's Supper said by the Mennonites to "represent to us how Christ's holy body was sacrificed on the cross" and "to remind us of the use of Christ's death and to exhort us to love one another."¹⁰⁶ In like manner do the General Eldership of the Church of God in North America and the Seventh-Day Adventists regard the Lord's Supper as merely commemorative and symbolic of Christ's death.¹⁰⁷

102. Strong, op. cit., p. 543.

103. Strong, op. cit., p. 543.

104. Strong, op. cit., p. 542f.

105. Alexander Campbell, The Christian System, p. 273.

106. "Shorter Catechism", 21, and "Dort Confession", X, as quoted in Popular Symbolics, p. 262.

107. Popular Symbolics, pp. 312. 356.

Even though the Reformed speak of benefits to be obtained through the Lord's Supper, they make such impossible by two points in which they all are in full agreement, namely:

1. Their denial of the Real Presence of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament; and 2. Their denial of the Lord's Supper as a means of grace through which the Holy Spirit operates in the hearts of men.

If Christ's body and blood are not truly present in the Lord's Supper for them, they not only deny the clear word of Christ Himself, "This is My body; This is My blood," but they rob the communicants of this wonderful seal, pledge and confirmation, that their faith in Christ is truly justified, that their sins are truly forgiven, because Christ suffered and died on the cross and gave this body and shed this blood which they here receive for the forgiveness of their sins. What kind of memorial is that which discredits the Word of Him in whose honor it is avowedly made? It dishonors Him both before the communicant and the public, rather than showing Him forth as worthy of regard as the Savior.

What message of Christ as the Savior they still let stand by the foregoing, the Calvinistic Reformed negate by their denial of universal grace. Since they teach the gratia particularis, that Christ died only for the elect, who are then saved by the irresistible will of God, they make the Gospel, in the Lord's Supper or otherwise, unnecessary, as well as in effect the atonement of Christ itself. Hodge is

representative of all the Calvinistic Reformed when he says: "If all men are not saved, God never purposed their salvation and never devised and put into operation means to accomplish that end. We must assume that the result is the interpretation of the purposes of God. If equally designed for all men, it must secure the salvation of all."¹⁰⁸ Such argumentation the Word of God shows as false when, as in other places, so also 1 John 2,2, it teaches: "He [Christ] is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world." This doctrine makes the Lord's Supper of no value for those who according to their teaching are elected to damnation, and for the elect to salvation an unnecessary thing, since according to their doctrine they will be saved anyway. In fact even for the elect to salvation in their system it can only be a means of doubt as to whether they are among those destined for salvation. Thus the Lord's Supper is for their communicants not a confirmation of their faith and forgiveness, but a means of doubt, and for the public not a proclamation of the Gospel that invites and draws to Christ, but repels.

Nor apparently do the Reformed seriously intend that the Lord's Supper should mean more to anyone, for they deny that it is a means of grace. Hodge sums up the position of the Reformed bodies on this point, when he says: "Efficacious

108. Hodge, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 323.

grace acts immediately."¹⁰⁹ That God does truly and graciously dispense benefits through the Lord's Supper was shown in detail in the first part of this thesis. Why the Reformed, after they in effect term it as useless, still inconsistently use this Sacrament and try to ascribe benefits to it is a mystery that we cannot explain.

Since, however, they deny that benefits from God are given through this Sacrament, this denial makes of their "infusion of a new life"¹¹⁰ through this Sacrament nothing less than the "gratia infusa" of the Roman Catholic Church. Thus they actually make of the Lord's Supper a meritorious work on man's part, a human work for God, instead of a beneficial work of God upon us. This, however, Holy Scripture rejects, when it says: "Who [God] hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,"¹¹¹ and "And if by grace, then it is no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace,"¹¹² and "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness,"¹¹³ and "By grace are ye saved

109. Hodge, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 684. Cf. also quotations from Hodge and Strong on immediately preceding pages of this thesis.

110. Hodge, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 648.

111. 2 Tim. 1, 9.

112. Romans 11, 6.

113. Romans 4, 5.

through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast,"¹¹⁴ and "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."¹¹⁵

The Roman Catholic Church goes beyond the express purpose of Christ when it maintains that the consecrated host of its mutilated Mass is of benefit for adoration. Therefore they practice a "reservation" of the consecrated wafer in its special receptacle upon the altar. When the worshipper enters or leaves his pew he genuflects in adoration of this host, or may kneel to pray before it. Not only does the priest adore it on bended knee, but at times elevates it, so that it may be worshiped by the people. Such adoration of the host also takes place and is featured at Eucharistic Congresses and the Corpus Christi Festival, and has led to the worship of the physical heart of Jesus by the Roman Catholic Society of "Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

Similar adoration of the host is also practiced by the Eastern Catholic Churches.¹¹⁶ Anglo-Catholics among the High-Church Episcopalians¹¹⁷ and the Catholic Apostolic Church (Irvingites)¹¹⁸ likewise practise the reservation of the host.

The adoration of the host is a result of the Roman

114. Eph. 2, 8. 9. The same is also taught in Rom. 3, 24-28; Gal. 2, 16; and other passages.

115. Gal. 5, 4.

116. Popular Symbolics, p. 144.

117. Popular Symbolics, p. 236.

118. Popular Symbolics, p. 97.

Catholic doctrines of transubstantiation and concomitance. Transubstantiation is the teaching that by the consecration the bread is changed into the body of Christ, and the wine is changed into the blood of Christ, the earthly elements no longer existing, except for their outward appearance and taste. Thus we read in the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent:

And because that Christ, our Redeemer, declared that which He offered under the species of bread to be truly His own body, therefore has it ever been the firm belief in the Church of God, and this holy Synod doth now declare it anew, that, by the consecration of the bread and of the wine, a conversion is made of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood; which conversion is, by the holy Catholic Church, suitably and properly called Transubstantiation.¹¹⁹

And again:

If any one saith, that, in the sacred and holy sacrament of the Eucharist, the substance of the bread and wine remains conjointly with the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and denieth that wonderful and singular conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the Body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the Blood -- the species only of the bread and wine remaining -- which conversion indeed the Catholic Church most aptly calls Transubstantiation; let him be anathema.¹²⁰

If any one saith, that after the consecration is completed, the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ are not in the admirable sacrament of the Eucharist, but (are there) only during the use, whilst it is being taken, and not either before or after; and that, in the hosts, or consecrated

119. Waterworth, op. cit., Sess. XIII, Chap. IV, p. 78.
 120. Waterworth, op. cit., Sess. XIII, Can. II, p. 82.

particles, which are reserved or which remain after communion, the true Body of the Lord remaineth not; let him be anathema.¹²¹

Closely connected with this is the Roman Catholic teaching of concomitance, that Christ whole and entire, body, blood, soul and divinity, is present in both or either species. And the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent tell us:

Immediately after the consecration, the veritable Body of our Lord, and His veritable Blood, together with His soul and divinity, are under the species of bread and wine; but the Body indeed under the species of bread, and the Blood under the species of wine, by the force of the words; but the body itself under the species of wine, and the blood under the species of bread, and the soul under both, by the force of that natural connexion and concomitancy whereby the parts of Christ our Lord, who hath now risen from the dead, to die no more, are united together; and the divinity, furthermore, on account of the admirable hypostatical union thereof with His body and soul. Wherefore it is most true, that as much is contained under either species as under both; for Christ whole and entire is under the species of bread, and under any part whatsoever of that species; likewise the whole (Christ) is under the species of wine, and under the parts thereof.¹²²

And again:

If any one denieth, that, in the sacrament of the most/holy Eucharist, are contained truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently the whole Christ;... let him be anathema.¹²³

If any one denieth, that, in the venerable sacrament of the Eucharist, the whole Christ is contained

121. Waterworth, op. cit., Sess. XIII, Can. IV, p. 83.

122. Waterworth, op. cit., Sess. XIII, Chap. III, p. 78.

123. Waterworth, op. cit., Sess. XIII, Can. I, p. 82.

under each species, and under every part of each species, when separated; let him be anathema.¹²⁴

In support of these doctrines Gibbons quotes John 6, 48-56, when he says:

Our Lord considered the present a favorable occasion for speaking of the Sacrament of His body and blood, which was to be distributed, not to a few thousands, but to millions of souls; not in one place, but everywhere; not at one time, but for all days, to the end of the world. 'I am,' He says to His hearers, 'the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert and died.... I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread he shall live forever, and the bread which I will give is My flesh for the life of the world. The Jews, therefore, disputed among themselves, saying; How can this man give us His flesh to eat? Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say to you: Unless ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye shall have no life in you. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.'¹²⁵

Then he goes on to say:

From this passage it is evident that whoever partakes of the form of bread partakes of the living flesh of Jesus Christ, which is inseparable from His blood, and which, being now in a glorious state, cannot be divided; for 'Christ rising from the dead, dieth no more.' (Rom. 6, 9.) Our Lord, in His words quoted, makes no reference to the sacramental cup, but only to the Eucharistic bread, to which He ascribes all the efficacy which is attached to communion under two kinds.¹²⁶

However, the passage from Romans does not prove the point Gibbons intends it to. Rather it proves the opposite. Christ's resurrection shows Him to be the Son of God and

124. Waterworth, op. cit., Sess. XIII, Can. III, p. 82f.

125. James Cardinal Gibbons, The Faith of Our Fathers, p. 288f.

126. Gibbons, op. cit., p. 300f.

as such almighty. And as almighty God He certainly can give us His body and blood, each separately, to eat and to drink whenever He chooses.

Furthermore, the passage quoted by Gibbons from John 6 does not refer to the Lord's Supper. When Christ speaks here of eating Him as the living bread, and of eating His flesh and drinking His blood, He means the spiritual eating and drinking of faith in Him as the all-sufficient Savior. That we are not to interpret this literally is demanded by Scripture itself. In 1 Cor. 11, 29 we read: "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body," while John 6, 54 reads: "Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life." John 6, 54 and its context cannot therefore in the light of 1 Cor. 11, 29 and its context refer to the Lord's Supper and must be interpreted figuratively to agree with the rest of Holy Scripture. Nowhere does the Bible say that the Lord's Supper is absolutely necessary. A person who has come to faith and dies before he has an opportunity to commune is saved, as attested to by numerous passages of Holy Writ. Yet here we read: "Except ye eat the flesh of the son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." This too shows that Christ is using figurative language here. Gibbons speaks more truly than he thinks when he says:

The Evangelist tells us that the Jews 'disputed among themselves, saying: How can this man give us His flesh to eat?' Even His disciples, though avoiding the disrespectful language of the multitude, gave expression to their doubt in this milder form: 'This is hard, and who can hear it?' So much were they shocked at our Savior's promise that 'after this many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him.' They evidently implied, by their words and conduct, that they understood Jesus to have spoken literally of His flesh; for, had they interpreted His words in a figurative sense, it would not have been a hard saying, nor have led them to abandon their Master.¹²⁷

Their unbelief is what kept them from understanding it in any but a literal sense, and that is just what Jesus is trying to impress upon them here. Immediately following in John 6 we read: "Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the son of the living God."¹²⁸ Peter here expressed just what Jesus meant to bring out by His discourse. In fact Jesus Himself indicated what He meant when He interspersed His speech by these words:

This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent.... He that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst.... And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.... Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life.¹²⁹ But there are some of you that believe not.

127. Gibbons, *op. cit.*, p. 289f.

128. John 6, 67-69.

129. John 6, 29.35.40.47.64.

In proof of concomitance Gibbons further cites 1 Cor. 11, 27: "So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily, will be held guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." His contention is that the "or" here shows that the body and blood are both present under either species. However, what is emphasized here is the possibility of taking either the bread or the wine unworthily. That it does not indicate the presence of both Christ's body and blood under either species is indicated by the "and" in Vv. 26 and 29. ¹³⁰

The passage just quoted indeed disputes the validity of the doctrine of transubstantiation, for it definitely states that bread and wine are still present in the Lord's Supper. This is also seen from 1 Cor. 10, 16.17: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread," and 1 Cor. 11, 28: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."

In agreement with God's Word the Smalcald Articles therefore rightly state:

As regards transubstantiation, we care nothing about the sophistical subtlety by which they teach that bread and wine leave or lose their own natural substance, and that there remain only the appearance and color of bread, and not true bread. For it is

130. Cf. Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. II, p. 882.

in perfect agreement with Holy Scripture that there is, and remains, bread, as Paul himself calls it, 1 Cor. 10, 16: The bread which we break. ^{And} 1 Cor. 11, 28: Let him so eat of that bread. ¹³¹

The false doctrine of concomitance is likewise without Scripture proof and indeed contrary to God's Word. It is in fact an affront to our Savior, for had He meant to give us Himself whole and entire, body, blood, soul and divinity under the species of bread alone or wine alone in the Lord's Supper, He would have told us so, and not have said with the bread "This is My body" and with the wine "This is My blood".

Christ is indeed present whole and entire everywhere, for He is the omnipresent God. Likewise is He especially present in a most efficacious manner in the means of grace, His Word and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. But in the special sense that His body is present in, with and under the consecrated bread, and His blood in, with and under the consecrated wine in the Lord's Supper, when these are orally received by the communicant, in that same special sense He is not present whole and entire in the bread or wine or elsewhere. We cannot therefore agree with von Schenk when he uses expressions such as:

The Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.... Then wrapped in Mary's arms, now wrapped in bread and wine, ¹³²...The Communicant takes the crucified Savior into Himself as the bread and wine serve as carriers, ¹³³... Under the veils of

131. Part LII, Art. VI, Concordia Triglotta, p. 493.

132. Von Schenk, op. cit., p. 53.

133. Von Schenk, op. cit., p. 90.

bread and wine we have Him who in unveiled glory stands before the throne of heaven,¹³⁴.... Under the veils of bread and wine at the Altar we have Him, Who, unveiled in Glory, is the Lamb on the throne surrounded by the host of heaven,¹³⁵...we worship the same Risen Christ, under the veil of bread and wine at the Altar,¹³⁶

and others of like nature, for this comes dangerously close to the Romanist doctrines of transubstantiation and concomitance.

As a result of the false teachings of transubstantiation and concomitance the Roman Catholics teach and practice the adoration of the host. The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent say:

Wherefore, there is no room left for doubt, that all the faithful of Christ may, according to the custom ever received in the Catholic Church, render in veneration the worship of latria, which is due to the true God, to this most holy sacrament. For not therefore is it less to be adored on this account that it was instituted by Christ, the Lord, in order to be received: for we believe that same God to be present therein, of whom the eternal Father, when introducing him into the world says; And let all the angels of God adore him; whom the Magi falling down, adored; who, in fine, as the Scripture testifies, was adored by the apostles in Galilee. The holy Synod declares, moreover, that very piously and religiously was this custom introduced into the Church, that this sublime and venerable sacrament be, with special veneration and solemnity, celebrated, every year, on a certain day, and that a festival; and that it be borne reverently and with honor in processions through the streets, and public places.¹³⁷

And again:

If any one saith, that, in the holy sacrament of

134. Von Schenk, op. cit., p. 110.

135. Von Schenk, op. cit., p. 122.

136. Von Schenk, op. cit., p. 130.

137. Waterworth, op. cit., Sess. XIII, Chap. V, p. 79.

the Eucharist, Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, is not to be adored with the worship, even external of latria; and is, consequently, neither to be venerated with a special festive solemnity, nor to be solemnly borne about in processions, according to the laudable and universal rite and custom of holy Church; or, is not to be proposed publicly to the people to be adored, and that the adorers thereof are idolators; let him be anathema.¹³⁸

However, with the fall of the doctrines of transubstantiation and concomitance the doctrine of the adoration of the host also is declared false, and those who practise it are idolators. For if the bread is still bread, it certainly is not to be adored, venerated or worshipped, this honor by God's will to be reserved for Him alone. Christ clearly said: "Thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."¹³⁹ Christ furthermore nowhere stated that we are to use this Sacrament for adoration.

The Roman Catholic Church further teaches that the Lord's Supper is of benefit as a sacrifice for the propitiation of sins of the living and dead. In the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent we read:

And forasmuch as, in this divine sacrifice which is celebrated in the mass, that same Christ is contained and imolated in an unbloody manner, who once offered Himself in a bloody manner on the altar of the cross; the holy Synod teaches, that this sacrifice is truly propitiatory [sic] and that by means thereof this is effected, that we obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid, if we draw nigh unto God, contrite and penitent, with a sincere heart and upright faith, with fear and reverence. For the Lord, appeased by the oblation thereof, and granting the grace and gift of penitence, forgives

138. Waterworth, op. cit., Sess. XIII, Can VI, p. 83.

139. Matthew 4, 10.

even heinous crimes and sins. For the victim is one and the same, the same now offering by the ministry of priests, who then offered Himself on the cross, the manner alone of offering being different. The fruits indeed of which oblation, of that bloody one to wit, are received most plentifully through this unbloody one; so far is this (latter) from derogating in any way from that (former oblation). Wherefore, not only for the sins, punishments, satisfactions, and other necessities of the faithful who are living, but also for those who are departed in Christ, and who are not as yet fully purified, is it rightly offered, agreeably to a tradition of the apostles.¹⁴⁰

And again: "If any one saith, that in the mass a true and proper sacrifice is not offered to God; or, that to be offered is nothing else but that Christ is given us to eat; let him be anathema."¹⁴¹ And again:

If any one saith, that the sacrifice of the mass is only a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; or, that it is a bare commemoration of the sacrifice consummated on the cross, but not a propitiatory sacrifice; or, that it profits him only who receives; and that it ought to be offered for the living and the dead for sins, pains, satisfactions, and other necessities; let him be anathema.¹⁴²

The Eastern Catholic Churches teach likewise.¹⁴³

In support of this Gibbons says that sacrifice is the principal act of worship and has been that among all nations.¹⁴⁴ We readily admit that sacrifice for sin is practised by all except true Christians. The conscience of man accusing him of sin, he tries to bring some sacrifice to God in atonement for sin. The true Christian, however, does not, for he knows

140. Waterworth, op. cit., Sess. XXII, Chap. II, p. 154f.

141. Waterworth, op. cit., Sess. XXII, Can. I, p. 158.

142. Waterworth, op. cit., Sess. XXII, Can. III, p. 158f.

143. "Orth. Conf.", 107, as quoted in Popular Symbolics, p. 144.

144. Gibbons, op. cit., pp. 307ff.

that such sacrifice in full atonement for all sin has been brought for him by Christ, his Savior.

Quoting Malachi 1, 10.11:

I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will not receive a gift of your hand. For, from the rising of the sun, even to the going down, My name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean oblation; for My name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts,¹⁴⁵

Gibbons claims this prophecy to be fulfilled in the Roman sacrifice of the mass:

Therefore, it is only in the Catholic Church that is fulfilled this glorious prophecy; for whithersoever you go, you will find the clean oblation offered on Catholic altars....our Priests daily fulfilling the words of the prophets by offering the "clean oblation" of the body and blood of Christ.¹⁴⁶

What the sacrifices of Malachi are is shown by Scripture itself. The true Christian, realizing that Christ has brought all the offering necessary in atonement for sin, thankfully in repentance and faith, without hope of reward, offers himself, a clean oblation since he is cleansed through faith in Christ, to God, in accord with Scripture; "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise,"¹⁴⁷ and: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus

145. Gibbons, op. cit., p. 310.

146. Gibbons, op. cit., p. 311.

147. Psalm 5, 17.

Christ, "148... and: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service,"149... and: "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name,"150... and others.

Gibbons further says:

St. Paul, after David, calls Jesus 'a Priest forever, according to the order of Melchisedech.' (Heb. 5, 6.) He is named a Priest because He offers sacrifice; a Priest forever because His sacrifice is perpetual; according to the order of Melchisedech because He offers up consecrated bread and wine, which were prefigured by the bread and wine offered by "Melchisedech, the Priest of the Most High God."151

We deny that when Melchisedek brought forth bread and wine,152 that this prefigured Christ's institution of the Holy Supper, least of all as a sacrifice. This is nowhere indicated in Holy Scripture. It is not mentioned among the points of comparison between Melchisedek and Christ, for which reason He is called "a priest forever after the order of Melchisedek," which are shown in Hebrews 7. In fact, here it is clearly shown that this shows, among other things, that no further offering in atonement for sin need or should be made by Him or anyone else, since He has brought the one offering that was fully sufficient to atone for all sin and as such accept-

148. 1.Pet. 2, 5.

149. Rom. 12, 1.

150. Heb. 13, 18.

151. Gibbons, op. cit., p. 313.

152. Gen. 14, 18.

able to God, as attested to by His Resurrection, Ascension and Session at the right hand of God. We read:

But this man, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such as high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for His own sins, and then for the people's; for this He did once, when He offered up Himself.¹⁵³

It is therefore clear that any attempt to again offer up Christ, or His body and blood, or anything else for that matter, as a sacrifice in atonement for sin is unnecessary, impossible and forbidden by God.¹⁵⁴ In Hebrews we are told in unmistakable terms: "For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified....Now where remission of these [sins] is, there is no more offering for sin."¹⁵⁵ We therefore reject the Romanist sacrifice of the mass as an abomination in the sight of God and contrary to the clear command of Christ given at His institution of the Lord's Supper.

153. Heb. 7, 24-27.

154. Cf. Heb. 9, 11-15. 24-28. 10, 10-13.

155. Heb. 10, 14.18.

III. How these Benefits are Derived from this Sacrament

The benefits that are derived from the Lord's Supper rest on neither the power or faith of the administrator nor of the communicant, but on the Gospel promise of Christ in the words of institution.

The Roman Catholic Church, and the Eastern Catholic Churches likewise,¹⁵⁶ teaches that the intention of the priest is necessary to make the Sacrament effective. The Cannons and Decrees of the Council of Trent declare: "If any one saith, that, in ministers, when they effect, and confer the sacraments, there is not required the intention at least of doing what the Church does; let him be anathema."¹⁵⁷ However, Christ's word and promise as expressed in the words of institution still stand. The benefits are still there by virtue of that word despite the intention or power or faith of the minister or communicant. Without that word, however, they are not present. We see that Christ consecrated the elements by His Word: "Jesus took bread, and blessed it.... And He took the cup, and gave thanks."¹⁵⁸ This was an act of consecration on His part.¹⁵⁹ In His words: "This do in remembrance of me," the *τοῦτο* includes, besides the act, the accompanying words, without which the *ἀνάμνησις* is imperfect.¹⁶⁰

156. Popular Symbolics, p. 143.

157. Waterworth, op. cit., Sess VII, Can. XI, p. 55.

158. Mat. 26, 26. 28.

159. Cf. Thayer, op. cit., p. 263.

160. Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. II, p. 881.

This is also indicated by the words of St. Paul: "The cup of blessing which we bless, etc."¹⁶¹

Thus Luther rightly says in the Small Catechism:

How can bodily eating and drinking do such great things? It is not the eating and drinking, indeed, that does them, but the words here written, "Given, and shed for you for the remission of sins"; which words, besides the bodily eating and drinking, are as the chief thing in the Sacrament; and he that believes these words has what they say and express, namely, the forgiveness of sins.¹⁶²

And again:

How is it, then, that by bodily eating and drinking forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are obtained? It is because by virtue of these words, 'Given, and shed for you for the remission of sins,' these great things are contained and offered in the Holy Supper. These words, therefore, are, beside the bodily eating and drinking, as the chief thing in the Sacrament.¹⁶³

Since by virtue of the word of Christ the body and blood of our Savior are received in, with and under the bread and wine, this body and blood of Christ acts as a pledge of the benefits Christ has won for us and would give us through this Sacrament. It confirms and seals these blessings to us. Thus we read in our Catechism: "What do these words tell us? That unto everyone who eats and drinks Christ here gives, as a seal of the remission of his sins, that same body and blood wherewith He, upon the cross, earned and procured the forgiveness of sins."¹⁶⁴ The Scriptural proof for this has been given

161. 1 Cor. 10,16. Cf. Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. II, p. 863f, and Thayer, op. cit., p. 352

162. Question 339, Schwan, op. cit., p. 146.

163. Question 341, Schwan, op. cit., p. 147.

164. Question 336, Schwan, op. cit., p. 146.

at length in previous paragraphs.

The importance of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper as a pledge and seal to the individual of the forgiveness of his sins and other attendant benefits of this Sacrament cannot be overemphasized. Here the communicant not only has the testimony of Christ's word, but also the added assurance of His very body and blood. Luther describes this very well, when he says:

Was ist denn nun dies Testament oder was wird uns darinnen beschieden von Christo? Fuerwahr ein grosser, ewiger, unaussprechlicher Schatz, naemlich Vergebung aller Suenden, wie die Worte klar lauten: Dies ist der Kelch eines neuen, ewigen Testaments in meinem Blut, das fuer euch und fuer alle vergossen wird zur vergebung der Suende. Also sollte er sagen: Siehe da, Mensch, ich sage zu dir, und bescheide dir mit diesen Worten Vergebung aller deiner Suende und das ewige Leben. Und dass du gewiss seiest und wissest dass solch Geluebbe dir unwiderruflich bleibe, so will ich darauf sterben und mein Leib und Blut dafuer geben, und beides dir zum Zeichen und Siegel hinter mir lassen, dabei du meiner gedenken sollst, wie er sagt (Luc. 22, 19): 'So oft ihr das tut, so gedenkt an mich.'¹⁶⁵

Luther emphasizes this still more when he says:

Dieser Kelch ist ein neu Testament nicht durch sich selbst, denn er vielleicht ein Glas oder Silber ist, sondern darum, dass mein Blut da ist; durch dasselbige Blut ist er ein Testament. Denn wer den Kelch also empfaehet, dass er da Christus Blut, das fuer uns vergossen ist, empfaehet, der empfaehet das neue Testament, das ist, Vergebung der Suenden und ewiges Leben.¹⁶⁶

Most rightly is the Lord's Supper called the visible Word, for it not only appeals to the communicant through the

165. Luther, op. cit., Vol. XIX, p. 1043.

166. Luther, op. cit., Vol. XX, p. 278f.

sense of hearing, but also through the sense of sight, as well as those of taste and touch. Of this the Apology says:

But just as the Word enters the ear in order to strike the heart, so the rite itself strikes the eye in order to move the heart. The effect of the Word and the rite is the same, as it has been well said by Augustine that the sacrament is a visible word, because the rite is received by the eyes, and is, as it were, a picture of the Word, signifying the same thing as the Word.¹⁶⁷

167. Art. XIII, Concordia Triglotta, p. 309.

[Faint, ghosted text from the reverse side of the page is visible through the paper, including references to the Council of Trent and the Lord's Supper.]

168. Cf. Special Symbolica, p. 145.
169. Cf. Special Symbolica, p. 145.
170. Waterworth, op. cit., Book VII, Can. VIII, p. 75.

IV. When these Benefits are Derived from this Sacrament

The wondrous blessings and benefits of the Lord's Supper are only derived therefrom when it is administered correctly and received correctly.

The true worthiness of the communicant is of absolute necessity for a beneficial reception of this Sacrament. The benefits of the Lord's Supper do not derive upon the communicant *ex opere operato*. This is taught by the Roman Catholic Church (also the Eastern Catholic Churches)¹⁶⁸ and the Irvingites,¹⁶⁹ as we see from the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent: "If any one saith, that by the said sacraments of the New Law grace is not conferred through the act performed, but that faith alone in the divine promises suffices for the obtaining of grace; let him be anathema."¹⁷⁰ This is denied by Holy Scripture when it says: "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." Thus Luther rightly states in the Small Catechism: "Who then receives such Sacrament worthily? Fasting and bodily preparation is indeed fine outward training; but he is truly worthy and well prepared who has faith in these words, 'Given and shed for you for the remission of sins.' But he that does not believe these words, or doubts, is unworthy

168. Cf. Popular Symbolics, p. 143.

169. Cf. Popular Symbolics, p. 326.

170. Waterworth, op. cit., Sess. VII, Can. VIII, p. 55.

or unprepared; for the words, 'For you,' require all hearts to believe."¹⁷¹ This doctrine that the Sacrament saves without faith is contrary to the fundamental teaching of Scripture that we are saved through faith alone, as taught, among other places, in Romans 3, 28: "Wherefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

This proper worthiness of the communicant for beneficial reception of the Lord's Supper consists in faith in Christ as his personal Savior from sin. This is demanded by the words: "Given for you...shed for you....This do in remembrance of Me." Since it is impossible to have such faith without the knowledge of his sins and confession of them before God with a contrite heart, this of course is a *conditio sine qua non* to true faith and consequently to worthy reception of the Lord's Supper. The communicant must truly believe that in the Lord's Supper he is receiving Christ's body and blood, otherwise he takes it to his damnation, "not discerning the Lord's body,"¹⁷² for Holy Scripture says: "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."¹⁷³ The words: "This do in remembrance of Me" and "Given and shed for the remission of sins" also make it mandatory for the worthy communicant by faith to receive the forgiveness here proffered him. A sanctified walk of life and progress therein, and

171. Question 343, Schwan op. cit., p. 148.

172. 1 Cor. 11, 29.

173. 1 Cor. 11, 27.

especially the evident earnest endeavor to amend his sinful life will be indications of the worthiness of the communicant. Also the frequency with which a communicant approaches the Lord's Table will be indicative of this. For he who fully realizes his sinfulness, and the forgiveness won by Christ and dispensed to him through the Lord's Supper, and his constant need of strengthening of his faith, will be a frequent guest indeed at the Holy Supper.

Since it is necessary that the communicant partake of the Lord's Supper worthily in order to receive its benefits and not eat and drink it to his damnation, Holy Scripture earnestly admonishes us: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."¹⁷⁴ In respect to this Luther says in the Small Catechism: "Can a person render himself worthy by his own preparation, thoughts, and works? No; to appear with modesty and reverence at the Lord's Table is, indeed, due decency and a praiseworthy custom, but withal no more than an external thing of which even an unbeliever is capable."¹⁷⁵ It is not the outward demeanor of a person or his external appearance that makes him worthy, but rather the condition of his heart. It is therefore the condition of his heart that the communicant should examine in preparation for worthy reception of the Lord's Supper, namely to see that he finds there knowledge of his sins,

174. 1 Cor. 11, 28.

175. Question 346, Schwan op. cit., p. 146.

contrition therefor, faith in Christ as his personal Savior and faith in the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament. Communicants should therefore be advised to study Holy Scripture for this purpose. It is well that the individual preparing for Communion take his Catechism and review the Ten Commandments, using them as a mirror, comparing himself with them with all frankness, not only looking at the text itself, but particularly at the details of the meanings of the Commandments, as found in the Catechism. Thus he will see where his sins and shortcomings are. A review of the Table of Duties would also help in this. In order that contrition and faith in Christ be further stimulated a review of the Second and Third Articles and Confession would be beneficial. For greater appreciation of the Lord's Supper and its great importance for him it would be well for the communicant also to review the doctrine of the Lord's Supper as presented in the Catechism and study again the Christian Questions. It is of course taken for granted that the communicant has previously been thoroughly instructed, for it is indeed necessary for him to know, believe and follow all the fundamental Christian doctrines, for Christ has said: "If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."¹⁷⁶

Nor only must the Lord's Supper be properly received in

176. John 8, 31f.

order to derive benefits from it, but it must also be properly administered. For such rightful administration of the Sacrament of the Altar the correct elements of bread and wine are to be properly consecrated, distributed and received.

The insistence of the Roman Catholic Church on unleavened wheat bread,¹⁷⁷ and of the Eastern Catholic Churches on leavened wheat bread,¹⁷⁸ and the insistence of some of the Reformed on leavened wheat bread and their objection to wafers¹⁷⁹ we reject as going beyond Holy Scripture and infringing on Christian liberty. We here apply 1 Cor. 7, 23: "Be not ye the servants of men," Gal. 2, 4f.: "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you." and Gal. 5, 1: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Scripture nowhere describes this element more than merely by the general term "bread." It is therefore not essential whether we use leavened or unleavened bread, or whether it be baked with wheat, rye, oats, barley or corn flour, or whether such baked bread of flour and water be in the form of a loaf, sheet or wafer. It is only

177. Popular Symbolics, p. 184.

178. Popular Symbolics, p. 143.

179. Popular Symbolics, p. 218.

necessary that it be made of flour and water and baked.

Matthew 28, 20: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," and Galatians 3, 15: "Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto," forbid the changing of anything in the ordinance. Thus the substitution of water for the wine on the part of the Mormons¹⁸⁰ invalidates the Sacrament, and grape juice for the wine on the part of many Reformed makes it uncertain. It is immaterial what kind of wine is used or whether water is mixed with it, as long as it is grape wine. That it must be made of grapes we see from Christ's own words: "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine."¹⁸¹ That it is to be not merely grape juice, but grape wine we see from St. Paul's denunciation of the unworthy participation by some by getting drunk from it: "For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper; and one is hungry, and another is drunk."¹⁸²

These earthly elements are then to be consecrated by speaking the words of institution of Christ over them. The necessity of this has been treated at length previously. The Formula of Concord brings this out further, when it says:

For the true and almighty words of Jesus Christ which He spake at the first institution were efficacious not only at the first Supper, but

180. Popular Symbolics, p. 445.

181. Matthew 26, 29.

182. 1 Cor. 11, 21.

they endure, are valid, operate, and are still efficacious (their force, power and efficacy endure and avail even to the present), so that in all places where the Supper is celebrated according to the institution of Christ, and His words are used, the body and blood of Christ are truly present, distributed, and received because of the power and efficacy of the words which Christ spake at the first Supper. For where His institution is observed and His words are spoken over the bread and cup (wine), and the consecrated bread and cup (wine) are distributed, Christ Himself, through the spoken words, is still efficacious by virtue of the first institution, through His word, which He wished to be there repeated. As Chrysostom says (in Serm. de Pass.) in his Sermon concerning the Passion: Christ Himself prepares this table and blesses it; for no man makes the bread and wine set before us the body and blood of Christ, but Christ Himself who was crucified for us. The words are spoken by the mouth of the priest, but by God's power and grace, by the word, where He speaks: 'This is My body,' the elements presented are consecrated in the Supper. And just as the declaration, Gen. 1, 28: 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth,' was spoken only once, but is ever efficacious in nature, so that it is fruitful and multiplies, so also this declaration ('This is My body; this is My blood') was spoken once, but even to this day and to His advent it is efficacious, and works so that in the Supper of the Church His true body and blood are present.¹⁸³

These words of institution should be read in their entirety as found in Scripture, and not repeated from memory, in order that no undue omissions may occur. However, the unintentional omission of a word or a mistake made in reading would not invalidate the Sacrament, since the communicants would readily recognize it as an unintentional error.

The words of institution, however, do not consecrate

183. "Thorough Declaration", VII, 75f., Concordia Triglotta, p. 999.

the elements except for the use for which Christ designated them. The sacramental action is therefore not complete without the distribution and reception of the elements, for without such distribution and reception of the consecrated elements the body and blood of Christ are not present and there is no Lord's Supper.

This truth Quenstedt ably defended against Bellarmine's contention that Christ's body must be present by virtue of the consecration even without the distribution, since Christ says: 'This is My body.' He replied that Christ said: 'This is My body' of that bread of which He first had said: 'Take and eat.'¹⁸⁴

The words of Matthew 26, 20 and Galations 3, 15, quoted above, forbid also the substitution of anything else for the body and blood of Christ. We must for this reason, and as previously treated, reject any substitution for the body and blood of Christ as the celestial elements in the Lord's Supper, as for instance, the substitution of the "entire Christ" or "person of Christ" by the Romanists and some of the Reformed, or the benefits or merits of Christ or the efficacy of His body and blood by some of the Reformed, or the Holy Ghost or His supernatural operation by Calvin, or the spiritual fellowship with Christ and the engrafting of the believer into His body, the Church, or the glorified body of Christ or the glorified Christ by some of the Reformed.¹⁸⁵ Christ clearly said: "This is My body; this is

184. Mueller, op. cit., p. 533.

185. Mueller, op. cit., p. 526f.

My blood." Thus the consecrated bread must be distributed and received as having in, with and under it the body of Christ, and the consecrated wine must be distributed as having in, with and under it the blood of Christ. The communion in one kind of the Roman Catholics, based on the doctrine of concomitance, which we have previously rejected, is therefore also contrary to the clear word of Christ.

The breaking of the bread in distributing it, as insisted on by some of the Reformed,¹⁸⁶ is immaterial, it clearly having been merely incidental to the distribution at the institution by Christ. The same is to be said of the use of individual cups or the common cup, as also as to whether to receive it standing, sitting or kneeling, or whether the minister give the bread and wine into the hand or mouth of the communicant. The law of Christian liberty, Gal. 2, 3-5, previously quoted, applies here.

These essential features of the proper consecration of the right elements, together with their proper distribution and reception, as described above, are what make up the Lord's Supper, through which all the benefits derived from it are dispensed. Nothing is to be added to these essentials or taken from them. They form the essence of the Lord's Supper

Though it is to be advised against generally for obvious reasons, a layman may in case of necessity be called to administer the Sacrament; that he is a layman would not

186. Popular Symbolics, p. 218.

invalidate it.

The Church has a grave responsibility over against the communicants in its administration of the Lord's Supper. And this responsibility devolves especially also upon the Christian pastor. He is solemnly charged by the Lord, John 21, 16: "Feed My sheep," and Acts 20, 27.28: "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood," and Matth. 28, 19.20: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations... Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The minister of the Gospel is also to be a shepherd, Eph. 4, 11: "And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers," a bishop, 1 Tim. 3, 1: "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work," a watchman, Heb. 13, 17: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you," and a steward of the Sacrament, 1 Cor. 4, 1.2: "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

If the Christian pastor would properly carry the

responsibilities of his office in obedience to His Lord, he must be given to a practice of close Communion. The nature of the Sacrament demands this of him as seen from Holy Writ. It is indeed the will of God that the Gospel should be administered to all men, be preached to believers and unbelievers alike. The Lord's Supper, on the other hand, has been designated by our Lord only for true believers. In Luke 22, 11 we read: "And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with My disciples?" And in the words of institution we see: "And gave it to the disciples."¹⁸⁷ And in 1 Corinthians 10, 17 we read: "For we being many are one bread, and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread." Luther therefore rightly says: "Die Predigt hat Christus lassen in den Haufen gehen ueber jederman. Aber das Sakrament soll man nicht unter die Leute in den Haufen werfen."¹⁸⁸

The conscientious pastor must therefore deny the Lord's Supper to manifest unbelievers, for faith is an absolute necessity for a worthy partaking of this Sacrament. As has previously been shown in detail, the communicant must believe in Jesus as his personal Savior, being truly penitent, believe that he is truly receiving Christ's body and blood with the bread and wine, and believe that here is offered, given and

187. Matthew 26, 26.

188. Luther, op. cit., Vol. XI, p. 616.

sealed to him the forgiveness of his sins. Whoever does not have this faith, or has it not in its completeness, will not partake of the Sacrament worthily, and hence stakes it to his damnation, as Scripture says:

For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation.¹⁸⁹

The Christian minister is further duty bound to exclude the manifest ungodly and impenitent from Holy Communion because Scripture clearly states: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine,"¹⁹⁰ and "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."¹⁹¹

The heterodox, therefore, who do not in all respects have this faith, must not be allowed at the Lord's Table. They are furthermore to be excluded from Communion because the Lord's Supper is a confession of faith on the part of the communicants, whereby they give expression of a common faith, as previously shown in detail, and as clearly told in

189. 1 Cor. 11, 29-34.

190. Matthew 7, 6.

191. 1 Cor. 11, 27.

Scripture: "For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."¹⁹² The following of Christ's doctrine is prerequisite to worthy communing, as we see from Holy Writ: "They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."¹⁹³

From this it also follows that those living in sin and those who have given offense and not made amends are also to be denied the Lord's Supper until they have repented and made such amends as are necessary. Holy Scripture says:

Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath sought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.¹⁹⁴

It is of course self-evident that the pastor cannot know for certain that everyone has the requisite faith, for only God can look into the heart. But where there are definite evidences of impenitence and unbelief, he must deny the Sacrament. But he must have such definite evidence and not act merely on his own moral conviction. He is not to be a ruler over the consciences of men. Furthermore, even though he is to be a steward of the mysteries of God, he is

192. 1 Cor. 10, 17.

193. Acts 2, 42.

194. Matthew 5, 23-25.

not to be a lord over them. A mere rumor, gossip, suspicion, or even unproven accusation, should not influence the minister to immediately suspend the person from communion. If it is, however, a sin that has become a matter of common knowledge, he must take it up with the person before he permits him to take Communion.

It is further evident that those who cannot examine themselves should not be permitted at the Lord's Table, for the Bible says: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."¹⁹⁵ From this it is clear that children, before they have come to an age of discretion, not being able to sufficiently examine themselves, are not to be given the Sacrament. We must therefore reject the teaching and practice of infant Communion of the Eastern Catholic Churches.¹⁹⁶ These words of Holy Writ also demand that the Lord's Supper be not given to such as are asleep or unconscious or of childish mentality. Care must also be taken with the insane and feeble-minded that they be given the Sacrament only at such times when they are capable of properly examining themselves.

Baptism has always been considered the sacramentum initiationis and the Lord's Supper the sacramentum confirm-

195. 1 Cor. 11, 28. 29.

196. Cf. Popular Symbolics, pp. 100 and 144.

atonis, and rightly so, as we have previously seen. Only baptized persons are therefore to be admitted to the Sacrament of the Altar. On Pentacost Day the people were not invited to the Lord's Supper, but were urged to repentance and Baptism. St. Peter on that day, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."¹⁹⁷

We therefore reject the practice of open Communion by the Reformed and others and its teaching as expressed by Strong: "Whether it brings perceptible blessing to us or not, it is to be observed as a means of confessing Christ, testifying our faith, and publishing the fact of his death to others."¹⁹⁸ We therefore subscribe to as correct the following proposition placed before the General Council in the last century:

Und da Abendmahls und Kanzelgemeinschaft Kirchengemeinschaft ist, muss es als allgemeine Regel feststehen, dass nur lutherische Christen zu lutherischen Altaeren und nur rechtgläubige lutherische Pfarrer zur Predigt auf lutherischen Kanzeln zuzulassen sind.¹⁹⁹

Dr. Fritz speaks correctly and well when he says:

The Sacrament should not be administered to all persons but only to Christians; Matt. 26, 26 (disciples); not to all Christians, however, but only to such as can examine themselves, are penitent, and orthodox (Abendmahlsgemeinschaft is Kirchengemeinschaft), 1 Cor. 11, 28. 29. Says Chrysostom: 'I would rather let my own body be destroyed than permit that the body of the Lord be given to an unworthy person;

197. Acts 2, 38.

198. Strong, op. cit., p. 540.

199. Lehre und Wehre, Vol. 34, 1888, p. 307.

I would rather let my own blood be shed than permit that the most holy blood of the Lord be given to an unworthy person.' Hon. 83. in Matth. In the Twenty-fifth Article of the Augsburg Confession our Church says: 'It is not usual to give the body of the Lord except to them that have been previously examined (nisi antea exploratis) and absolved.' (Diese Gewohnheit wird bei uns gehalten, das Sakrament nicht zu reichen denen, so nicht zuvor verhört und absolviert sind.) The practise of some sectarian ministers of inviting all those present, even such as are members of other denominations and such as are altogether unknown to them, to partake of the Sacrament is contrary to the Scriptures. A conscientious Christian pastor will not become guilty of such an offense. In our Lutheran Church we therefore practise close communion, insisting that only members of the Lutheran Church in good standing be permitted to partake of the Sacrament and that those who wish to commune must previously register their names with the pastor. Occasionally we find that some of our Christian people are not convinced of the necessity of communion registration and insist that a pastor has no right to demand it, while others, whom the pastor cannot at all admit to the Sacrament, will feel that they have been unjustly dealt with and will at times make things very disagreeable for a conscientious servant of the Lord. This, however, dare not dissuade a faithful pastor from doing what the Lord and the pastor's own conscience demand of him. The purpose of the Gospel is not only to sustain faith, but, first of all, to work faith in the hearts of sinners, and therefore we should exclude no one from hearing it lest we deprive him of his salvation. But the Sacrament of the Altar is not given that it may regenerate men, but that the regenerate, after having duly examined themselves, 1 Cor. 11, 28, may be strengthened in their faith. The apostle says: 'He that eateth and drinketh unworthily [that is, without repentance and faith] eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body,' 1 Cor. 11, 29. -- A Christian may listen to the sermon of a preacher of another denomination (perhaps for the purpose of finding out his doctrinal position or when out of respect to a relative or friend or a distinguished citizen he attends a funeral) and thereby not become guilty of entering into fellowship with that particular church and of confessing its faith. But when a person communes at the altar of any church, he thereby, by a public act, confesses the faith of that church and at once enters into fellowship with those with whom he communes. If a Christian in an exceptional case attends the services of any church,

no one will from such act conclude that he is a member of that church or that he agrees with its doctrines, -- It is even likely that he shall at once be spotted as a stranger, -- but if he communes at the altar of any church and thus by such a public outstanding act, presupposing a deliberate determination on his part, lines himself up with the worshipers of that particular church at their own altar, he thereby at once gives to all present sufficient reason to believe that he is not protesting any of the wrong doctrines of that church, but is rather confessing them and has entered into fellowship with the members of that church. All this is apparent from the facts in the case. How could therefore a Lutheran justify his action if he would commune at the altar of such as deny the real presence? He himself would thereby be denying together with others. And how could we justify our action if we would permit those who deny the real presence or who otherwise do not agree with our doctrines or who are unbelievers to commune at our altar, where we confess the real presence and our Christian faith in accordance with the Scriptures? By so doing, we would become partakers of other men's sins. There is no closer fellowship than that of the Communion table. Such texts as the following apply: 1 Tim. 5, 22; Ezek. 3, 17. 18; 2 Tim. 2, 15. 25. 26; Heb. 13, 17; Is. 56, 10; 1 Cor. 4, 1; Matt. 7, 6; 1 Cor. 5, 11. 13; 2 Thess. 3, 6. 14; 2 John 10. 11; Rom. 16, 17; 1 Tim. 6, 3-5; 2 Tim. 3, 1-5; Titus 3, 10. 11; 2 Cor. 6, 14-18. Says Luther: 'Not only do those dishonor the Sacrament who receive it unworthily, but also those who give it to such as are unworthy.' 'Lutheran pulpits for Lutheran ministers only; Lutheran altars for Lutheran communicants only.' (Galesburg Rule.)²⁰⁰

The Christian pastor should, however, not be satisfied merely with administering the Sacrament only to worthy communicants, excluding all others from it. But he should also give as many as possible the necessary instruction, so that they may properly examine themselves, and the Lord's Table thus be furnished with many worthy guest. He should instruct the young in the fundamental teachings of the Bible,

when they come to an age of discretion, so that they may also become the recipients of the wondrous blessings of the Lord's Supper. Such instruction prior to confirmation should be thorough, so that the catechumens thoroughly understand the teachings, and that it flows down into the life stream and they are able to and do apply it to themselves in their daily walk of life. Likewise should adult mission prospects be thoroughly instructed. Though the amount of instruction may vary with the previous knowledge of the catechumen, yet it should never be cut short at the expense of thorough and practical indoctrination, also on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, lest the pastor by such neglect be guilty of permitting some to partake of the Sacrament to their damnation. Such necessary instruction for proper self-examination and worthy partaking of the Sacrament should also be continued after Confirmation in sermons, confessional addresses, Bible Classes, etc.

Another means that the pastor ought to use conscientiously to aid the communicants in proper self-examination and consequent worthy reception of Holy Communion is the personal announcement for Communion. This affords the pastor an excellent opportunity to review with the prospective communicants the salient features of such necessary self-examination and guide them in it, as well as to discuss with them other matters pertaining to their souls' health. Of course the pastor will not conduct this in the manner of an inquisitorial proceeding,

but rather a friendly interview. A pastor may with skill and tact accomplish an examination of the communicant without his realizing it to be such. The communicant will also often welcome this opportunity to discuss his spiritual problems with his pastor and sometimes make a confession of sins, which otherwise he might not do. Registration for Communion also affords the pastor the opportunity to suspend any from Communion as may to his knowledge take it unworthily. Though the custom of announcing for Communion is not commanded in Scripture, yet, since it aids the pastor in carrying out his responsibilities, it should by all means be retained and made full use of as a God-pleasing usage.

Also of great aid to the communicant, so that he might take the Lord's Supper worthily, is the Confession and Absolution in use in our Churches and the Confessional or Preparatory Service. These are not commanded in Scripture, nor are they absolutely necessary as far as the validity of the worthy reception of the Sacrament is concerned. However, they should be retained because of their evident value for preparation for worthy reception of the Lord's body and blood. Of this the Augsburg Confession says: "Confession is of human right only, not commanded by Scripture, but ordained by the Church."²⁰¹ And again: "Of confession they teach that private absolution ought to be retained in the Churches."²⁰²

201. Augsburg Confession, Art. XXV, Concordia Triglotta, p.71.

202. Augsburg Confession, Art. XI, Concordia Triglotta, p.47.

And again the Apology rightly states:

We also retain confession especially on account of the absolution as being the Word of God which, by divine authority, the power of the keys pronounces upon individuals. Therefore it would be wicked to remove private absolution from the Church. Neither do they understand what the remission of sins, or the power of the keys, ²⁰³ is, if there are any who despise private absolution.

The Confession of Sins and Absolution, as found in "The Order of the Holy Communion," of our Church, ²⁰⁴ ought most certainly be retained. Even though a Confessional Service be held for the communicants, these should still be retained, not only for the sake of the communicants, but also for those not having attended the Preparatory Service or are not going to Communion. It is to be heartily deplored that the Confessional Service has fallen into such general disuse in our Church, so many congregations being satisfied with the General Confession and absolution in the regular Communion Service. Not only are the wonderful opportunities for proper preparation for worthy communing through the Confessional Address forgone, but the type of Confession and Absolution used in "The Order of the Confessional Service" of our Church ²⁰⁵ is much more personal, direct and meaningful for the average communicant than the more general and impersonal Confession and Absolution in "The Order of the Holy Communion." What a blessed privilege is it not to kneel and confess one's

²⁰³. "Apology of the Augsburg Confession," Art VI, Concordia Triplotta, p. 281.

²⁰⁴. Cf. Lutheran Hymnal, p. 15f.

²⁰⁵. Cf. Lutheran Hymnal, pp. 46ff.

sins, to personally answer "yes" upon the query of the minister as to the sincerity of one's confession, and then to be told in return that one's sins are truly forgiven!

The Christian pastor should conscientiously see to it that in all ways the Lord's Supper be properly administered and received, as far as he humanly can, as previously described. To this may be added that all distracting influences ought to be scrupulously avoided. Not only should the communicants be trained to come in orderly and worshipful manner, but the pastor too must not personally provide distraction. He should see to it that his general appearance is that of neatness and cleanliness; he should wash his hands thoroughly before serving Communion, have his fingernails clean, have no odor of tobacco clinging to them or his person or clothes, and should take precautions that he does not have bad breath from tobacco or otherwise. He ought to see to it that good quality wine and wafers in good condition and sufficient quantity are on hand, and exercise every care that he drop no wafers or spill any of the wine during the distribution. The Communion ware should be scrupulously clean, of good quality and in good condition. His manner throughout should be reverent. Though he should not unnecessarily drag out the distribution, yet he should also not rush through it too hurriedly, as though it were something distasteful to be done with as quickly as possible. He ought to speak the words of institution clearly and distinctly and not too

hurriedly. If he have not the voice for chanting, he ought not attempt it. The order of service ought to be in the hands of every one present and carefully followed. Sudden changes and innovations should not be made. The whole atmosphere of the Church and its sanctuary, the music, order of service and manner of conducting it, ought to be one that is worshipful, free from outside disturbance, creative of the sense of the nearness of God, that here indeed is our Lord present, dispensing His grace through Word and Sacrament. The Communion Liturgy too should be such as to fulfill this and emphasize the Sacrament as a means of grace. It must be a means to an end and not an end in itself. If the liturgical setting is of such a nature that in its elaborateness it draw more attention to itself than to the Sacrament, yea even detract from the Sacrament as a means of grace, then it is worse than worthless.

A Christian pastor will also urge his people to partake worthily of Communion frequently. Although the spiritual eating and drinking of Christ's body and blood, or faith in Christ as the Savior, is absolutely essential for salvation,²⁰⁶ yet we cannot speak of such an absolute necessity of the Lord's Supper. But this Sacrament, having been given us by our Lord as a wondrous means of grace, should nevertheless be used frequently, so that its benefits, which we are indeed

206. Cf. John 6, 53.

in constant and great need of, may be bestowed upon us. If it is neglected, this bespeaks contempt for it. St. Augustine says: "Not the privation, but the contempt of the Sacrament condemns."²⁰⁷ And the Large Catechism says:

Now, it is true, as we have said, that no one should by any means be coerced or compelled, lest we institute a new murdering of souls. Nevertheless, it must be known that such people as deprive themselves of, and withdraw from the Sacrament so long a time are not to be considered Christians. For Christ has not instituted it to be treated as a show, but has commanded His Christians to eat and drink it, and thereby remember Him.²⁰⁸

Luther says: "If a person does not seek nor desire the Lord's Supper at least some four times a year, it is to be feared that he despises the Sacrament and is not a Christian."²⁰⁹

The Christian pastor, in urging his people to frequent Communion, ought to go ahead with a good example himself. He ought not only partake of Communion at pastoral conferences and in neighboring congregations, but ought also to commune frequently with his congregation. This may be done by having a neighboring pastor assist him with Communion and then administer it to him. Or a layman may be appointed by the congregation to administer it to the pastor, or he may, if necessary, administer it to himself.

The conscientious minister will, seeing to it that truly frequent communion services are provided, also remind his people of the command and promise of Christ, as well as their

207. Cf. Mueller, op. cit., p. 540.

208. "Large Catechism," V, 42, Concordia Triglotta, p. 763.

209. "Luther's Preface to his Small Catechism," Schwan, op. cit., p. 7.

great need for frequent Communion. Christ has definitely promised the worthy communicant forgiveness of sins and other blessings, as before shown. He has also given the definite command: "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me."²¹⁰ The construction here, particularly in the original Greek, shows that frequency is taken for granted, is implied here.²¹¹ The words of our Catechism are also most pertinent here:

What should admonish and incite a Christian to receive the Sacrament frequently? Answer: In respect to God, both the command and the promise of Christ the Lord should move him, and in respect to himself, the trouble that lies heavy on him, on account of which such command, encouragement, and promise are given. But what shall a person do if he be not sensible of such trouble, and feel no hunger and thirst for the Sacrament? Answer: To such a person no better advice can be given than that, in the first place, he put his hand into his bosom, and feel whether he still have flesh and blood, and that he by all means believe what the Scriptures say of it, in Gal. 5 and Rom. 7. Secondly, that he look around to see whether he is still in the world, and keep in mind that there will be no lack of sin and trouble, as the Scriptures say, in John 15 and 16; 1 John 2 and 5. Thirdly, he will certainly have the devil also about him, who with his lying and murdering, day and night, will let him have no peace within or without, as the Scriptures picture him, in John 8 and 16; 1 Pet. 5; Eph. 6; 2 Tim, 2.²¹²

What a wonderful blessing has the Lord not given to us sinners in the Lord's Supper. Thither we can flee frequently from the fast pace of daily living, from the problems, trials

210. 1 Cor. 11, 25.

211. Cf. Expositor's Greek Testament, Vol. II, p. 881.

212. "Christian Questions," Nos. 19 and 20, Schwan, op.

and troubles of life, from the sin and corruption that surrounds us on every hand and there at His table receive refreshment from the fount of His eternal grace, the sweet forgiveness of sins, be strengthened through the wondrous benefits of His Sacrament to go out once more into this evil world and work on according to His will, till He Himself takes us to eternal and full communion with Him in heaven.

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