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## Luther's Position on the Lord's Supper

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### **Luther's Position on the Lord's Supper**

Excerpts Mainly from Luther's Great Treatise on the Lord's Supper

From times immemorial heirs and beneficiaries have made havoc with the last wills and testaments of their benefactors. They have disquieted and disrupted families which otherwise had been peaceful and loving. And this havoc has often defied amelioration or removal. Even so in the case of our Lord's last will and testament. The Christian Church, the family of the saints on earth, stands before the world rent asunder also by reason of its divergent interpretations of our Lord's testament of love, His last will, in which He has given Himself to His disciples. In the hands of men this testament has become the divider of Protestant churches on earth into the so-called Lutheran and the Reformed sectors, the Lutheran Church insisting historically on the literal interpretation of the testament and the Reformed Church on a figurative understanding.

It is historically correct to affirm that the position of the Lutheran Church in the Lord's Supper is in harmony with its traditional attitude toward the Bible as the Word of God. Luther grounded his entire teaching, his theology, on the Bible as the Word of God; and the Church which rightfully bears his name confessionally declares that "the sole rule and standard according to which all dogmas together with all teachers should be estimated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and of the New Testament alone." (*Triglotta*, 777.) Luther would have sacrificed his historical position toward the Word of God if he had deviated from that Word in the case of any doctrine. Consistency in his position to that Word, the Scriptures, the Word of God, decided also his position on the Lord's Supper.

Accordingly Luther in his great treatise on the Lord's Supper writes: "Now we want to take up before us the passages of the



evangelists and of St. Paul in order that we may strengthen our conscience. And first you shall take note of the Sacramentarians' own confession. For they confess, and must confess, that our understanding is as the words themselves naturally read and that, if one speaks in accord with the words as they read, our understanding is right without a doubt. However, they contend that the words should not be understood as they read. Their confession I urge you to accept and consider. For this indeed is as much as, yes, more than, one half to win. For since they now confess that, if the words were to be taken as they read, then our understanding would be correct, they therewith free us by their own testimony, so that, first, we do not have to prove our understanding any further than to relate the words as they there stand and read. This is the one thing, mark it well. And, furthermore, they thereby load themselves and bind themselves with two great burdens and labors; the one, that they should and must prove why these words are not to be understood as they read but must be understood otherwise; the other, that they, instead of such words, must give us other words and text which would be sure, upon which one could stand. Of these two things they have until now done neither, and especially the second they have never yet undertaken to do, all of which we have told and proved above; whereby they really force us to abide by the sense which the words give as they read, and so they put themselves to shame by means of their uncertain lying." (XX:1036.)

In the same vein Luther continues: "Next you know, and indeed should know, that our text, 'This is My body,' is spoken and fixed with such letters and words not by man but by God Himself, out of His own mouth. But the texts of the Sacramentarians, 'This signifies My body,' or, 'This is the symbol of My body,' etc., is not spoken by God Himself with such words and letters but by man alone." (XX:1036.)

"Thirdly, you have heard above that they themselves are indeed uncertain as to their text, and no one until now has been willing consistently to prove that his text should and must stand so as they pretend; and indeed they nevermore can bring forth a sure one. But our text is certain, so that it should and must stand so as the words read; for God Himself has fixed it so, and no one dare take a letter either from it or add one to it." (XX:1037.)

"Fourthly, you know that they are disunited and make many kinds of conflicting texts out of the words, so that they are not only uncertain (which itself would be devilish enough) but are also against one another and must rebuke themselves and one another of lies. But our text is not only certain, but it is also a unit and simple and harmonious among us all." (XX:1037.)



"Fifthly, let it be said right here that, if our text and understanding were also uncertain and dark (which it is not) as well as their text and understanding, then you have nevertheless the glorious, bold advantage that you can stand with a good conscience upon our text and speak in this fashion: If I should then and must have an uncertain dark text and understanding, then I will rather have that one which has been spoken out of the divine mouth itself than such a one as has been spoken out of a human mouth. And if I should be deceived, I would rather be deceived by God (if that were possible) than by man; for if God deceives me, then He will answer for it and make restitution to me. But man can make no restitution to me when they have deceived me and led me into hell. Such boldness the Sacramentarians cannot have; for they cannot say: I will rather stand upon the text which Zwingli and Oecolampadius spoke in contradiction with one another than upon that which Christ Himself spoke uniformly." (XX:1037.)

"Therefore you can joyfully speak to Christ both when you die and at the final Judgment in this manner: My dear Lord Jesus Christ, a dispute has arisen *concerning Thy words* in the Communion; some insist that they must be understood differently from the way they read. However, since they teach me nothing certain but only confuse me and make me uncertain and neither want nor are able to prove their text in any way, therefore I have remained upon *Thy text as the words read*. If there is something dark in them, Thou didst want to have it thus dark; for Thou hast given no other explanation about it nor commanded to give such. Besides, one finds in no scripture or speech that 'is' should mean 'signifies' or that 'My body' should mean 'the body's sign.'" (XX:1037 f.)

"If there should be any darkness therein, Thou wilt no doubt make allowance for me on that account that I did not understand it, as Thou madest allowance for Thy apostles when they did not understand Thee in many points, such as when Thou didst prophesy concerning Thy suffering and resurrection, and they had *held to the words* that they read and did not make anything else of them. Just as also Thy dear mother did not understand it when Thou saidst to her, Luke 2:49, 'I must be about My Father's business'; and she nevertheless kept these words in all simplicity in her heart and did not make anything else out of them. So also I have remained with these *Thy words*: 'This is My body,' etc., and have not wanted nor permitted any other words to be made of them but have committed it to Thee and left it to Thee whether anything dark should be therein, and I have kept them as they read, especially since I see that they do not conflict with any article of faith. Behold, so no Sacramentarian can dare to talk



with Christ; that I know well; for they are uncertain and at odds about their text." (XX:1038.)

Then Luther takes up separately the several Scripture-texts which make record of our Lord's institution of this Sacrament and shows their evident meaning. We continue with Luther's expositions.

"St. Matthew is the first, and he says in chapter 26:26, 27: 'And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed it and brake 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.'" (XX:1039.)

"These words are spoken by the mouth of God, even though the Sacramentarians do not honor them more highly than if they had been spoken by a loafer or by a drunkard. For Zwingli also at one place is equally wroth against us and complains because we hold so firmly to five poor and miserable words." (XX:1039 f.)

"However, with such speech they testify against themselves as to what spirit they have and as to how highly they honor God's Word, so that they scold against these precious words as against five poor miserable words, which shows, that they do not believe that they are God's words. For if they believed that they are God's words, they would not call them miserable poor words but would honor even one tittle and letter more highly than the whole world and would tremble before them and fear them as God Himself. For whoever despises one single word of God of course honors none of them highly. If they would merely rebuke our understanding or improper mind and not the words of God themselves, it could be endured." (XX:1040.)

"We must therefore adhere to these words and cling to them as to the clearest, most certain, and surest words of God which do not deceive us nor leave us in the lurch; for it is spoken in the simplest manner, 'This is My body, this is My blood of the new testament,' so that, if one should bring together the languages of all the world, one could not choose therefrom or take therefrom simpler speech or words. Christ cannot speak more simply about His body and blood than thus: 'My body,' or 'This is My body,' 'This is My blood.'" (XX:1041.)

Taking up the second text, Luther says: "St. Mark is the other text, which says, chapter 14:22-24: 'And as they did eat, Jesus took bread and blessed and brake it and gave it 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.'" (XX:1042 f.)

"From this text Carlstadt drew his first thoughts concerning



the *touto*, because Mark here reads as if the disciples had first all drunk out of the cup before Christ said, 'This is My blood,' so that He immediately thereafter should point to His sitting blood, because the cup had now already been emptied. But all this has long ago been disposed of and put to naught. For not only do the other evangelists and St. Paul write differently, but he himself also, St. Mark, when he speaks of the other part of the Sacrament, does not write that the disciples had eaten the bread and that afterwards Christ had said, 'This is My body.' Therefore the expression concerning the drinking must adjust itself according to the word which the other evangelists and Paul—and St. Mark himself—maintain in their assertion concerning the eating; for he cannot be against himself and against all the rest." (XX:1043.)

"But I wonder nevertheless how it is that St. Mark alone records this point so: 'And they all drank of it.' . . . I hold that, when Matthew alone above all of the rest writes, 'Drink ye all of it,' and when Mark relates, 'They all drank of it,' this is written for this reason, that the two evangelists wanted to show how the disciples all drank out of this cup; not on account of thirst, as other drinks perhaps were taken, when one had to pour in more than once before it had passed around; but that they had to let this cup pass around and drink of it in such moderate measure that they all drank of it; as Luke also writes that the Lord gave the final drink *before* the Sacrament in such a manner that they all drank out of one cup, when he says: 'Take this and divide it among yourselves,' Luke 22:17. As if he wished to say: There were indeed more cups at the table out of which every one drank for himself, or one cup was filled more than once; but this cup at the last was given that they all should drink out of the same, therewith to give a farewell to the old paschal lamb." (XX:1044.)

"So, of course, by these actions He desired to distinguish notably His Supper from the old supper, first, by giving to them the farewell drink, as Luke writes. Therewith He indeed moved the disciples' minds so that they had to think: What is His intention in giving us the farewell drink out of His own cup? He never did this at table before; and particularly because St. Luke (22:18) writes that He had also expressed such farewell with words by saying: 'For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come.'" (XX:1044.)

"Secondly, by this, that He takes a special piece of bread from among all other pieces of bread into His hands, gives thanks, and breaks it after such farewell drink, then they indeed had to think: How? Will He now eat another time? We thought He just now gave us the farewell drink. Then they, of course, took special notice of what He was doing and listened to what He was



speaking. For so He had not done at the table and at the evening meal of the paschal lamb with the other bread, and He now begins, after the farewell drink and the evening meal, a new thing and says it is His body. Here they maintain silence and simply believe; no one asks how bread might be body." (XX:1045.)

"Thirdly, by this that He gives them His cup and tells them all to drink out of it. This also had to make them reflect since He had not done so with any other cup, and, in addition, says it is His blood. They again are silent and believe. For they undoubtedly thought that what He says must be true. When they see such new action after the farewell that He begins anew, gives thanks anew, expresses the blessing anew, and, in addition, takes a special piece of bread, which He divides among them and also divides among all of them His cup and concludes such supper with one bread and one cup, they very naturally think that He knew well what He was doing and saying, that there was no need of any questioning, although they perceive very well that it was a new, another supper." (XX:1045.)

"To sum up, they ate the paschal lamb in such a way that He did not tell them to eat or to drink nor laid or set anything before any one; but every one ate and drank for himself as it lay and stood before him, as also Matthew and Mark say: 'As they did eat, Jesus took bread,' etc. But here He proceeds in a new way: He takes and designates a certain special bread, blesses it, Himself breaks it, and divides it among them and lays it before them and tells them to eat and, in addition, says: 'This is My body, which is given for you.' After the same manner He does also with the cup, designates and gives a special drink for all of them. Of the other bread He does not tell them to eat nor to drink from the other cup nor lays and sets anything before any one as He does here. By all of this He indeed shows that this bread and wine are not common bread and wine, as was received in the paschal feast, but an altogether different one, a special one, a higher one, namely, as He Himself declares, that it is His body and blood." (XX:1045.)

"So we have it that Matthew and Mark agree and that both speak in the simplest way, using almost the same words, except that Matthew at the end adds the words 'for the remission of sins.' Again, Mark, when speaking of the bread, says, 'He blessed it,' whereas the others always say, 'He gave thanks,' just as Mark himself also does in connection with the cup, so that it seems to me that He wants to have us understand that blessing and giving of thanks are one and the same thing. Nevertheless I leave this matter to those who find pleasure in concerning themselves with it." (XX:1046.)



"It is undoubtedly more profitable to take note of the fact that, since the evangelists, all of them, so uniformly and in the simplest way make use of these words, 'This is My body,' one can gather from this that it is of course no figurative expression and that no trope is found therein. For if there were some trope therein, surely one of them would have touched upon it with some syllable to show that some other text or understanding is possible. Just as they indeed do in other matters, where one states what another one leaves out or says with other words, as when Matthew (12:28) writes that Christ said: 'If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God,' etc., Luke, however, says: 'If I with the finger of God cast out devils,' Luke 11:20, and when Mark says that one seed bore fruit thirty-, another sixty-, another a hundredfold, and Luke says simply, 'And it bore fruit a hundredfold'; and there are many such instances where one explains the other or expresses himself differently." (XX:1046.)

"Here, however, they are all most simply alike and not one, by a single letter, permits himself to appear different from the other, as if all of them would say: No one can speak of it differently, more simply, and more surely than so: 'This is My body,' although Luke and Paul, in connection with the cup, speak much differently from Matthew and Mark, as we shall hear. Since, then, four witnesses stand there and agree thoroughly in their words, we may joyfully and surely rely upon their testimony and upon the basis of it conclude and believe what we do. For if God says: 'In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established,' Matt. 18:16, how much more shall the testimony of these four witnesses be stronger to us than all the Sacramentarians' crying and palavering! They indeed dare not say that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Paul were not so learned, holy, pious, and spiritual as they and theirs are. But if they make such witnesses' testimony doubtful, then the Sacramentarians' sayings shall be justly more doubtful, especially since they disagree with one another and no one is certain of his own text nor can become so; but these four witnesses agree in the very letters of the text." (XX:1046 f.)

Taking up the third text, Luther says: "St. Luke is the third, chapter 22:19, 20: '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 you.'" (XX:1047.)

"Whoever is willing to be instructed would be satisfied with what Luke says in this matter; so clearly and so excellently does he speak of the Lord's Supper. First he describes the farewell drink of Christ, as we have said above, and says: 'He took the



cup and gave thanks and said, Take this, divide it among yourselves; for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God shall come.' Here Christ testifies that this would be His last drink of wine on earth with His disciples. Soon thereafter, however, He gives the cup of wine of the new supper, etc. If, now, there is only ordinary wine in the new Supper, how, then, can it be true that this was to be the last drink, that He would drink no more wine? If it is the last drink of wine, then that which He thereafter gives to drink cannot be wine. If it is not wine, then it must be that which he calls it, namely, 'His blood,' or 'the new testament in His blood.' So Luke here testifies mightily that there cannot be mere wine in Christ's supper." (XX:1047.)

"Here one might say: But who knows whether such words were spoken about the farewell drink of Christ before or after the Supper? For Luke writes that He had spoken such words before the Supper; but Matthew and Mark write as if he had spoken them after the Supper. Well and good; then the matter depends upon which evangelist maintained the proper order in his writing. If Luke does this, then the matter is clear, and our understanding is right, and the Sacramentarians are lost; about this there can be no doubt. Or if the Sacramentarians entertain a doubt about this, we are nevertheless certain that we are right, and that suffices us." (XX:1047 f.)

"Now let us learn the evangelists' own words and work which of them records the proper sequence of events. St. Luke, in the beginning of his gospel, testifies (Luke 1:3) that it seemed good to him, 'having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write in order,' and this he also proves throughout; for his gospel proceeds nicely in order unto the end, to which the whole world bears witness. But neither Matthew nor Mark has given such a promise, nor do they follow this method, as may be shown in many instances; for instance, when Matthew describes the temptation of Christ, chap. 4:1 ff., and the appearances of Christ after His resurrection, etc., he does not at all 'write in order.' . . . Mark neither maintains the proper order when writing about the Supper; he puts the words 'and they drank all of it' before the words 'and He said unto them, This is My blood,' etc., whereas it naturally should follow after." (XX:1048.)

"Since, then, there is no doubt that Matthew and Mark do not follow the strict order, whereas Luke pledges himself to follow it and also maintains this order, the writings of Matthew and Mark must be adjusted according to St. Luke's order and not otherwise. Then we must say that Matthew and Mark have placed after the new Supper that which was done and must be placed after the



old supper; for they did not concern themselves much with the order [sequence] but were satisfied to write the story and the truth; whereas Luke, who wrote later than they, declares that one of the reasons why he wrote his gospel was that many others had written the history regardless of the order and that therefore he had undertaken to write 'in order.' And many are of the opinion, and it is almost believable, that St. Paul meant St. Luke when he wrote to the Corinthians, praising [Luke] and saying: 'And we have sent with him the brother whose praise is in the Gospel throughout all the churches' 2 Cor. 8:18. Also this tends to convince us that Luke was intent upon maintaining the proper order, that he not only writes about the farewell drink but also previously records the whole final paschal feast, saying: 'When the hour was come, He sat down and the twelve apostles with Him. And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer; for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And He took the cup,' etc. Here you see that everything is spoken in one text in order, one after the other, concerning the final passover, both in respect to the eating and the drinking, which Matthew and Mark do not do. Since, then, the final eating stands properly before the new Supper, and must so stand, so also the final drinking must indeed stand before the new Supper; for both of them are final, and they are not to be separated from one another." (XX:1048 f.)

"Having settled this matter, we now come again to the aforementioned ground and conclusion. If Luke maintains the right order (as has been proved), then Christ takes the farewell drink of wine before the new Supper; if, however, he takes the farewell drink of wine before the new Supper, then mere ordinary wine cannot be drunk in the Supper; for His words are clear when He says that after this drink He would no more drink of the fruit of the vine." (XX:1049.)

"However, some one will rejoin: you yourself contend that wine remains in the new Supper; and this your statement ought to be indeed very much to the liking of the papists, who believe no wine to be in the Supper. I answer: That does not concern me much. For, as I have often enough confessed, there will be no strife with me whether the wine remains there or not; it is enough for me that Christ's blood is there; may it go with the wine as God will. And sooner than have wine only, like the Sacramentarians, I would rather, like the Pope, have blood only." (XX:1049.)

"I have also said above: If the wine has become Christ's blood, then it is no more ordinary wine but blood-wine, so that I may point to it and say: This is Christ's blood. About this Christ is



also not silent when He says: 'I will not drink of the fruit of the vine.' Why does He not say wine but fruit of the vine? Without doubt, because the drink which is in the Holy Supper is not of the vine, as the ordinary wine; and even though it is also wine, it did not grow so as it is now." (XX:1050.)

The question whether Christ Himself partook of the cup in Holy Communion, Luther pronounced a foolish one. He thinks that Christ partook of the final drinking of the passover. It is not expressly so written, yet Luther believes that Christ partook of it. He likewise thinks that, whilst nothing is expressly written to that effect, Christ also partook of the cup in the Sacrament. (XX:1050.)

"Thirdly comes this text of St. Luke, 'This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you.'" This text has had to suffer much, and Sacramentarians even today yet are not agreed as to how they can martyr and distort it enough. (XX:1051.)

"We, too, will treat it. First, Luke and St. Paul alone record these words, 'This do in remembrance of Me,' and both place them when they speak of the bread and not when they speak of the cup. For they consider it sufficient to have placed them once, although they undoubtedly apply to both parts of the Sacrament and therefore to the whole Last Supper, as St. Paul further emphasizes and says: 'as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death,' etc., 1 Cor. 11:26. This they do for the reason that they may indicate the cause and the fruit of this Supper, namely, that we should praise and thank God for this deliverance from sin and death, just as the Jews had to thank and praise for their deliverance out of Egypt." (XX:1051 f.)

"Both also, Luke and Paul, use these words concerning the cup: 'likewise also the cup after Supper,' or 'when He had supped.' Why this? I think truly that it is on account of the future Sacramentarians, as if Luke wanted to point back with these words, as with a finger, and remind of the final passover. As if he wished to say: Remember what I have said above about the final drinking of the passover, that Christ will no more drink of the fruit of the vine, in order that you may know that I am here speaking of another drinking, which took place after the evening supper, when they [the disciples] indeed had ceased to drink of the fruit of the vine, in order that you might by no means understand this as the final drinking, but of a drink at the beginning of the new Supper. And Luke and Paul mention this especially in connection with the cup and not with the bread; since it is more opportune and more necessary in connection with the cup, because one is not accustomed to eat at the end but to drink, in order that what He says might not be understood as spoken of the final cup of the passover;



although it [i. e. the clause "When they had supped"] refers indeed to both and to the entire supper, just as above, the words concerning the remembrance, etc." (XX:1052.)

"We truly are certain that Luke with this text, 'This cup is the new testament in My blood,' desires to say nothing else than what St. Matthew and Mark have said in this text: 'This is My blood of the new testament.' For they cannot be against one another but must be of one meaning with one another. Make, therefore, the text of Luke what you will, the meaning must be the same as what Mark and Matthew say: 'This is My blood of the new testament.' If we understand Luke's words so that they give us Christ's blood in the Supper, as Mark and Matthew do, then we surely have their right meaning. Whoever, however, construes or martyrs the text otherwise does not understand it rightly. For then it would not agree with the others." (XX:1052.)

"Luke, however, speaks, as he often does, after the manner of the Hebrew language. . . . So Luke wants to say here, too: This cup is the testament in the blood of Christ, that is, through the blood or with the blood, or on account of the blood, etc. Just as Matthew says: 'This is My blood of the new testament.' For the cup indeed cannot be the new testament in silver or through the silver or on account of the silver. Speak these words, 'This cup is the new testament in My blood,' therefore in whatever way you wish, as long as you do not speak contrary to Matthew and Mark." (XX:1053 f.)

"For while St. Matthew speaks after the manner of the Greeks: 'This is My blood of the new testament,' St. Luke speaks after the manner of the Hebrews: 'This is the new testament in My blood.' These expressions, 'the new testament in My blood' and 'My blood of the new testament,' are not in contradiction with each other but have the same meaning. . . . And in order that we may avoid all error, I translate the text of Luke in the clearest and shortest way so: 'This cup is the new testament in My blood.'" (XX:1054.)

Concerning the *touto* in the words "This is My body" Luther says in his treatise against Carlstadt: "Now we want to point out the reason why Christ says *touto*, or 'this' (neuter), and not *houtos* (masculine), in agreement with the antecedent bread." Luther shows that, as in the German language, which has a special neuter article and special neuter pronouns, so also in the Greek it is an *usus loquendi* to refer to an antecedent either masculine or feminine by the neuter demonstrative. (XX:221.)

Moreover, with reference to the interpretation of *touto* as referring not to the bread but to the present, sitting or reclining body of Christ, which was there with the disciples, Luther says: "Tell me, . . . to what does the other *touto*, which soon follows



upon this one, refer? Luke, 22:20, and Paul, 1 Cor. 11:25, say of the other part of the Sacrament thus: 'Likewise also the cup after the supper, saying, *touto*, or *this* cup, is the new testament in My blood.' Here the word *touto* is expressed and refers in the text to the cup which He offers and not to the blood which was sitting there. . . . Tell us, if the *touto* should and must point to Christ, and yet here in the text it is used of the cup, whether your faith considers or calls Christ's blood or Christ Himself a cup." (XX:222.)

"You, too, must . . . confess that, just as the *touto* in connection with the cup does not point to the sitting Christ but to the cup and the blood which Christ offers to His disciples and asks them to drink, saying, 'This is a new testament in His blood,' so also the *touto* in connection with the bread does not point to Christ's body but to the bread which He hands them and tells them to eat." (XX:223.)<sup>1)</sup>

Luther maintains also that just as they overthrow Carlstadt's *touto*, which referred the *touto* (this) to Christ's sitting body, so Luke and Paul also destroy the so-called Silesian<sup>2)</sup> *touto*, which, placed at the end of Christ's words, was made to say: "My body, which is given for you," is *touto*, namely, a spiritual nourishment. Luther says:

"Well, then, since Luke here sets the *touto* with the cup and says, 'This cup,' let us turn this text around and say: 'The new testament in My blood, which is shed for you,' is this cup, namely, a spiritual drink. What do you think of this? A bodily cup is a spiritual drink." (XX:1055.)

"Thus the heedless spirits fare." (XX:1055.) Luther calls attention to the fact that, taking advantage of Mark and Matthew where the *touto* stands alone, the Sacramentarians did not consider Luke, who puts them to shame. He concludes this point by saying: "If, however, the *touto* with the cup cannot be distorted and made into a spiritual *touto*, then, of course, the *touto* with the bread can just as little be so treated, and so the Silesian *touto* lies as deeply in the dust as Carlstadt's *touto*." (XX:1056.)

"Oecolampadius also must come before St. Luke's bar of judgment with his symbolism. Body and blood, says he, are tropes in the Supper and are called the symbol of the body, symbol of the

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1) This point is discussed more fully by Luther in the great treatise mainly drawn on in this article. (Cf. XX, 1034.) Luther there shows that the words "This is My body" involve a synecdoche, as does the sentence "This is wine," which, strictly speaking, should read, "This is a bottle, and wine." — Ed. Note.

2) A view sponsored by Krautwald and Schwenkfeld, who hailed from Silesia (Schlesien). — Ed. Note.



blood. If that is true, then without doubt the blood in Luke's text must also be a trope, that is, the blood's symbol; for he verily speaks of the same blood as do Matthew and Mark; no one can deny that. Well, then, according to Oecolampadius, Luke's text must contain the meaning: This cup is a new testament in My blood's symbol, namely, in ordinary wine. This threatens to become a reckless thing if the new testament is no more than a drink of wine, or that a drink of wine has the power of making this cup into a new testament; for this is the meaning and intention of such an Oecolampadian text." (XX:1056.)

"Besides it is not to be endured that 'new testament' should be a trope, a figurative expression. How would one prove this? Where is there an example of such usage? Yes, where would common speech remain with which I might want to, or perhaps should, speak of the new testament if one would have a sign or a figure understood as often as I mentioned the new testament? In such a way the new testament would *not* be the Gospel, or the promise of the Spirit or of eternal life, but an old figure, or picture, of the coming new testament. And in short, the trope does not adapt itself anywhere in the words 'new testament,' and much less can it be proved with any reason." (XX:1058 f.)

"For 'new testament' is promise, yes, rather the gift of grace and of the forgiveness of sins, that is, the real Gospel, etc. For, although the cup is a bodily thing, yet, since it becomes a sacramental thing with the blood of Christ or with the new testament, therefore it is meetly called a new testament, or the blood, so that we may point to it and say: This is a new testament, this is Christ's blood, just as in the foregoing the bodily flame of fire is a spiritual thing, namely, the angel, and is so called, and the dove the Holy Spirit. Therefore, whoever drinks of this cup verily drinks the real blood of Christ and the forgiveness of sins, or the spirit of Christ, which are received in and with the cup, and no mere figure, or sign, of the new testament or of the blood of Christ is received here; for that was fitting for the Jews in the Old Testament." (XX:1059.)

"Just as Oecolampadius lies prostrate here with his trope, or symbolism, so also Zwingli with his signifying. For that which argues against the symbolizing argues also against the signifying; for they mean almost the same. For Zwingli's text would have to read so: This cup signifies the new testament in My blood; that would be equivalent to: This cup, by means of the blood which is in it, has so much value that thereby it signifies the new testament; and so Christ's blood would have to be only a signification, as I have proved concerning Oecolampadius's symbolism." (XX:1060.)



"Luke, however, in this text has one point which no other evangelist has, neither has Paul, namely: 'The cup which is shed for you,' and not, 'The blood which is shed for you'; for in Greek the word *which* refers to the cup and not to the blood, as no one can deny: *touto to poterion*, etc., *ekchunomenon*, and not *en to haimati*, etc., *ekchunomeno*. In Latin one cannot notice this. . . . Of this a fine learned rector reminded me about three or four years ago in a certain village, and submitted his opinion to me, that Luke should be understood in this way: This cup is the new testament in My blood, which cup is poured out for you, that is, given to you, across the table and set before you to drink, as one otherwise pours wine for the guests out of a can. And one of his reasons for this opinion was the fact that Luke, as previously said, asserts the *ekchunomenon* about the cup and not of the blood (as Matthew and Mark do). He added to this the text of Paul: 'This is My body, which is broken for you,' that is, distributed and offered to you at the table." (XX:1060 f.)

"Since, then, Paul's text which speaks of the bread or the body of Christ is understood concerning the distribution at the table and not concerning the giving upon the cross, the text concerning the cup can of course also be understood in the same sense. And so also Matthew and Mark would be found, namely, 'This is My body'; in connection with which they say nothing about giving, since it is easily noted that He is giving His body when He says: 'This is My body,' 'There you have My body.' So also concerning the cup, 'This is My blood, which is shed for you,' that, distributed at the table, and shed before, for the forgiveness of sins. I see nothing in these words that is opposed to such an understanding. For also St. Paul, in connection with the cup, leaves out the words 'which is shed for you,' as though he considered that he had said enough; since the bread is broken for them, so would also the cup be distributed." (XX:1061.)

"Although this understanding has not been held hitherto, every one rather having understood the text concerning the giving into suffering, and concerning the shedding of the cross, it would yet have been no injurious mistake and is not now; for no one does wrong by considering Christ's body and blood given and shed for us upon the cross, even though he does it at a place where nothing is said or read about it, and with which it is not in conflict or contradiction, just as otherwise the dear Fathers have often done without danger with the Scriptures at an inappropriate place but in a good and useful intention; so it also appears to me as if some of the ancient Fathers had also had this understanding, as when they say that Christ's blood is shed as often as one celebrates the Sacrament; and especially Ambrose,



when he says: Because the blood of Christ, as often as it is shed, is shed for sin, I should meetly receive it daily because I sin daily. For the word *funditur* of course means not only to shed, but also to pour and to present. Likewise Gregory: The blood of Christ is poured into the mouth of the believers, etc." (XX:1062.)

"This I say not because I would contend for it as one convinced; for that of which I am not certain I will teach to no one; but I would gladly have it that it were so; . . . for then none of the Sacramentarians would have any aid or pretext when opposing our interpretation. They would have to confess that Christ's body and blood is distributed across the table, His body eaten and drunk in the bread and in the cup." (XX:1062.)

"True, it may seem as though Matthew and Mark were against this interpretation when they say, 'This is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many,' Matt. 26:28. This sounds as if Christ spoke concerning many who also were not present at the table. . . . Whoever, therefore, inclines to the interpretation above might answer—thus or in a similar manner—that Luke and Paul spoke concerning the pouring and the giving over the table, but indicated also therewith the shedding upon the cross, saying that one should do this in remembrance of Him or should make known His death; speaking more exactly and more clearly than Matthew and Mark." (XX:1063.)

"Again, Matthew and Mark speak of the shedding upon the cross and are silent concerning the shedding at the table." (XX:1063.)

"Whoever, however, does not incline to this interpretation, replying to the fact that Luke says: 'The cup is shed for us,' may say: Since cup and blood and new testament are sacramentally united, the cup is shed on account of such unity (synecdochically), though only the blood is shed, as we have said above that it is proper to say of the Son of God that He died although only His humanity died, and that the Holy Ghost is seen although only the dove is seen, and that the angel is seen although only a brilliant form is seen, etc. If any one considers this too shallow or silly, let him present something better or let him permit the aforementioned opinion to stand. I hold the reply sufficient; for we also so see, and drink of, the cup, that is, Christ's blood. For us there is no danger but only advantage, whichever opinion of the two we retain, both of them being good and right; for both are in fact true, namely, that Christ's body is given both at the table and at the cross; even if we do not find it at the right place in the Scriptures (as has happened to many saints), we do not expound Scripture incorrectly. To the Sacramentarians it is a matter of great con-



cern, for if this is not the true meaning of this text, they have nevertheless not improved their case; but if it is, then they lie completely in the ash-heap." (XX:1063 f.)

Taking up the fourth text specifically, Luther says:

"The fourth and last is St. Paul who says, 1 Cor. 11:23-25: "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." (XX:1064.)

"If I were as learned as Carlstadt or Zwingli in the Greek language, I would prove mightily from this text that in the bread the true body of Christ is eaten. For Erasmus shows that no 'is' stands with the bread, but so: *phagete; touto emou soma*, which I would translate thus: 'Take, eat this My body, which is broken for you.' This would be a word-for-word translation, without my skipping one little dot, and so I would nicely and easily have won. But since I am not so learned, I must let that go, lest I also use an article for a pronoun or invent an alloecosis and use one case for another." (XX:1064.)

"Paul is the real teacher and apostle sent among us Gentiles, and he speaks out freely and sufficiently and says: 'Take, eat; this is My body, which is broken for you.'" (XX:1065.)

"For he sets the word 'my' hard after the word *touto*, or 'this,' which none of the rest do. In addition, as some texts are said to read, he leaves out the little word 'is,' just as Luke leaves it out in connection with the cup. These two little bits the Holy Spirit offers us for our strengthening that we might be certain that Christ's body is in the bread. For although it means the same among us when I say: 'This is My body,' and, 'This My body,' or 'Here my body'; yet the presence of the body is expressed more clearly and more certainly when I say: 'This My body,' or 'Here My body,' and the spirits of dissension, together with the Sacramentarians, cannot so easily disport themselves therein as in the expression 'This is My body.'" (XX:1065.)

"Now, there is no doubt that Christ speaks such words over against the old paschal lamb, which He is herewith abrogating, as if He should say: 'Hitherto you have eaten the lamb and an animal's body; but here now, in the place of it, there is My body; 'My, My,' I say most discriminatingly. Therefore Paul stresses the word 'My' so industriously, so that he, in a new manner, sets it soon after the word 'this' and says: 'This My,' as if he wanted



to bind it to it in such a manner that it would become one word with 'this,' whereas 'My' and 'body' belong more closely together. All of this he does in order that he might express as clearly as possible the presence of the body of Christ in the Sacrament." (XX:1065 f.)

"Which is broken for you.' Of this we have said much above, that the Scriptures do not permit 'broken' to mean Christ's suffering. The Sacramentarians may say it, as they say other things also; but they can never prove it; for, we must not interpret or use the word 'broken' according to our wilfulness but according to the usage of Scripture. Now, 'broken' in the Scriptures means, especially where it is used concerning bread or eating, as much as to break into pieces and to distribute, in such a way as also such broken bread in the Greek, in the Latin, and in the German language is designated as a fragment. . . . Hence this text strongly asserts that Christ's body is 'broken' at the table and parted into pieces, bitten, crunched, and eaten, as other bread is, yet in the form of bread or in the bread, etc." (XX:1066.)

"This cup, the new testament, is in My blood.' Now it may be that this text means just the same as when I say: 'This cup is the new testament in My blood.' Still St. Paul surely did not place the 'is' in vain after the word 'new testament,' and not before. The Holy Spirit wanted to guard against the future dissensionists. For St. Paul sets his text so as to read that this cup, which is a new testament, is such in Christ's blood; and so he calls the cup explicitly the new testament. If the Sacramentarians had as much text for themselves as we have, how they would defy us and boast! Now, then, the new testament cannot be ordinary wine or cup." (XX:1066 f.)

"Their argument that 'new testament' here means a sign, or figure, of the new testament has been sufficiently and mightily answered above. For they say it and do not prove it." (XX:1067.)

"In conclusion, when we compare the evangelists and Paul, so that they stand together as one man, they suffer no tutoists, no tropists, and no significationists. Whenever the tropists want to get at Matthew and Mark, claiming that blood must be called the symbol of the blood, then Luke and Paul rush forth and overthrow the tropists with might, and they show by means of their text that blood cannot mean symbol of blood or be a trope, because the Sacramentarians themselves neither make, nor are able to make, a blood symbol in this text, 'This cup is the new testament in My blood'; therefore, of course, in Matthew and Mark the same blood must also be without a trope because it is one and the same blood about which all four of them speak." (XX:1069 f.)

"If, however, they undertake to get at Luke and Paul and



make a trope out of the words 'new testament,' that is, a symbol of the new testament, then Matthew and Mark rush forth together with Luke and Paul and again overthrow them and show them that 'new testament' cannot be a trope. And the Sacramentarians also themselves do not make, and cannot make, the words 'new testament' in Matthew and Mark a trope, as little as they can do this in Luke and in Paul. For it cannot be tolerated that I should say in Matthew and Mark, 'This is My blood of a figurative new testament.' For Christ's blood is not a blood of a figurative testament or of an old testament blood, but of the new, which consists in His blood; and the same new testament must indeed be understood in Luke and in Paul as in Matthew and in Mark, since, of course, all four of them spoke of one and the same testament. So Matthew and Mark hold the words 'new testament' fast, purely and simply, without any trope. Luke and Paul hold the blood fast, purely and simply, without any trope." (XX:1070.)

"Therefore the text must remain standing for us as the words read. This, I hope, has been mightily fought out and has well secured our conscience, that our understanding is right and that of the Sacramentarians is not only uncertain but also false." (XX:1070.)

"Of course, it is a miraculous thing that Christ's body and blood are in the Sacrament; indeed, it is not visibly there; it is enough for us, however, that we conceive through the Word and faith that it is there." (XX, 1070.)

"And where are all the rest who palaver that there is no forgiveness of sins in the Sacrament? St. Paul and Luke say that the new testament is in the Supper and not the sign or the figure of the new testament. . . . For Christians should have the new testament itself, without figure or sign. They may indeed have it hidden in a strange [foreign] form; but they must have it truly and really [now]. If, then, the new testament is in the Supper, then forgiveness of sins, Spirit, grace, life, and eternal salvation must be therein. And all this is comprehended in the Word; for who would know what is in the Supper if the words did not announce it?" (XX:1071.)

"Therefore see what a beautiful, great, wonderful thing it is, how it is all interwoven, the one with the other, and is one Sacrament. The words are the first; for without words the cup and the bread would be nothing. Further, without bread and the cup the body and the blood would not be there. Without the body and the blood of Christ the new testament would not be there. Without the new testament the forgiveness of sins would not be there. Without forgiveness of sins life and eternal salvation would not be there. Thus the words first comprehended the bread and the cup



with the Sacrament. Bread and cup comprehend the body and the blood of Christ. Body and blood of Christ comprehend the new testament. The new testament comprehends forgiveness of sins. Forgiveness of sins comprehends eternal life and salvation. Behold, all of this the words of the Supper offer and convey to us, and we grasp it by faith. Should not the devil, then, be inimical to such a Supper and awaken Sacramentarians against it?" (XX:1071 f.)

"Since, now, all of this forms one sacramental entity, one can well and properly say of each part of it as of the cup: This is Christ's blood, this is the new testament, there is forgiveness of sins, there is life and salvation, just as I point to Christ and say: This is God, this is the Truth, the Life, Salvation, Wisdom, etc." (XX:1072.)

"Paul says, 1 Cor. 11:26: 'As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come.' . . . Because the cup has become one entity with the drink, therefore the cup here means the drink in the cup. This is the usage of speech in all languages." (XX:1072.)

"However, the Sacramentarians hop over the word 'this,' yes, put it out of their eyes and glare alone at the words 'bread' and 'cup.' . . . When they now cry: Paul does not say here: 'As often as ye eat the body of Christ,' etc., then you shall say: Nevertheless he does say it here. Where? With what text? Then say: By means of the word 'this.' Look at this word, and you will find therein the text: 'This is My body, this is the new testament in My blood'; for the word 'this' repeats this text and lays it before your very nose." (XX:1074.)

"Paul says, 1 Cor. 10:27: '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.' . . . We praise God as we see how Paul by means of the word 'this' ever again repeats and introduces this text, 'This is My body,' as we have said above, and, in addition thereto, emphasizes this fact all the more clearly when he says: 'Whosoever shall eat this bread unworthily, he is guilty,' not against mere bread, nor against the sign of the body of Christ, but 'of the body of the Lord.'" (XX:1075 f.)

. . . "Here St. Paul says: One sins against the parts of a person as against the body and the blood of Christ; that is more precise and more exact than against the majesty or the rule of Christ." (XX:1080.)

Paul says, 1 Cor. 11:29: "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

. . . "We understand this passage according to the words as



they read, that the Corinthians had eaten the bread with such a lack of understanding or reason as if it were mere bread and held that there was no difference between this bread and other bread; this is indeed to eat the body of Christ unworthily. Therefore he admonished them that they should examine themselves and find out who they are and what they hold of this bread. For if they do not believe it to be Christ's body, or if they use it as if it were not the body of Christ, then they do not discern the body of Christ, which would not remain unpunished." (XX:1081.)

"Now we will also see the text of Paul, 1 Cor. 10:16: '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?' This text I have praised, and I still praise it, as my heart's joy and my crown. For it not only says: 'This is Christ's body,' as is said in the Supper, but it names the bread which is broken and says: 'This bread is Christ's body'; yes, 'the bread which we break' is not only the body of Christ but the distributed body." (XX:1082 f.)

"Here you must note first that he is speaking of the bodily bread, which we break in the Lord's Supper; no one can deny that. Then it is also certain that in such a bodily breaking, or supper, there must be not only saints and worthy ones but also unworthy ones like Judas and his kind. You have also heard that 'is' cannot and may not mean 'signify' in any language on earth but that it speaks of the nature of a thing wherever it stands. Finally, 'communion' here means the common good, of which many are partakers and which many enjoy, as the thing which is given among them to all in general. The same may be received in a twofold manner, bodily and spiritually. For a common thing means a thing of which many in general partake, as a common spring, common streets, a common acre, meadows, wood, fire, etc. For it cannot here mean the communion of faith in the heart; for the text here speaks of such common property, which one should receive and enjoy, such as bread and the cup. For he says: 'The bread which we break, the cup which we bless,' and afterward: 'For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread,' 1 Cor. 10:17. Therefore it is now certain that *koinonia*, the communion of the body of Christ, is nothing else than the body of Christ, distributed as a common property among many and given to partake of." (XX:1087.)

"Paul then says: 'The bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ'; that is, whoever partakes of this broken bread partakes of the body of Christ, as of a common good, distributed among many; for the bread is such a common body of Christ, says Paul. This is said clearly and ruggedly, so



that no one can understand it otherwise unless he change the words. And not only the worthy partake of this bread but also Judas and the unworthy; for the breaking of the bread takes place for good and bad alike. Moreover, it is impossible that the bad receive it spiritually; for they have neither Spirit nor faith; and Christ also has no more than one body." (XX:1087 f.)

"If, now, the unworthy partake of Christ's body and receive it in common, then it must be in a bodily and not in a spiritual way, since there is no partaking except either bodily or spiritually. . . . Therefore of necessity the real, true body of Christ must be bodily in the bread which we break in order that the unworthy may partake of it bodily, since they cannot partake of it spiritually, as this passage of Paul reads: 'The bread which we break is the communion,' that is, the common body, 'of Christ,' distributed among those who receive the broken bread." (XX:1088.)

"The bread here also cannot be a spiritual bread; for St. Paul indeed speaks of the same bread of which he has spoken before: 'The bread which we break.' Such bread is 'one' bread; therefore, also, it makes a special group and body of those who are partakers of it; not one body of Christ, but straightway one body." (XX:1089.)

"In sum, Paul speaks here at this entire place of no spiritual or figurative but only of a bodily communion, or communion of a common bodily thing, which is distributed. This you shall see in all the passages and examples which he uses. First in this: 'We . . . are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread,' 1 Cor. 10:17. In order that you would have to understand the communion here as bodily, he says that it is one bread, namely, that of which he speaks in the text: 'The bread which we break,' of which we are all partakers. Now, the broken bread cannot be a spiritual bread; therefore also its distribution, its breaking or its communion, is not spiritual." (XX:1090.)

"Consider the other passage: 'Behold Israel after the flesh; are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar' (in communion with the altar)? 1 Cor. 10:18. Here indeed there is no spiritual or figurative communion; for 'to eat of the sacrifices' is to partake bodily of the altar or to be bodily a partaker of the altar. And the altar with its sacrifice is indeed also a bodily thing, bodily common and distributed among the eaters of the sacrifices. So is also our bread a bodily communion, distributed among us. If, however, the bread is broken, distributed, and received by us bodily among all, then also the body of Christ is broken, distributed, and received. For the broken bread is the common or distributed body of Christ, as Paul says: 'The bread



which we break is the communion of the body of Christ,' 1 Cor. 10:16." (XX:1090.)<sup>3)</sup>

"So we have this strong text still fast and pure over against the naked, miserable glosses of the Sacramentarians. Even though they do not accept nor believe all of this, we have therewith shown reason and cause enough why we are forced to hold to our understanding. For even if I were a Turk, Jew, or heathen who held nothing of the Christian faith and yet heard or read such scripture concerning the Sacrament, I would have to say: I indeed do not believe in the Christian doctrine; but this I must say: If they want to be Christians and adhere to their doctrine, then they must believe that Christ's body and blood are eaten and drunk bodily in the bread and wine." (XX:1093.)

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## Kleine Prophetenstudien

### Die Zeit und das Buch Joel

Der nächste der kleinen Propheten, den wir in den Kreis dieser kleinen Studien ziehen wollen, ist der Prophet Joel, *יוֹאֵל*, das heißt, Jehovah ist Gott; und dieselben Schwierigkeiten, die uns zunächst bei Obadja entgegentraten, wiederholen sich hier. Sofort entsteht die Frage: Wann hat denn Joel gewirkt und geweissagt? Der Überschrift können wir nichts entnehmen. Sonst werden gewöhnlich in den Überschriften neben dem Namen und der Herkunft des Propheten auch die Könige genannt, unter denen er lebte und wirkte; so schon bei dem bald folgenden Amos, wo Jerobeam II. von Israel ausdrücklich genannt wird; ebenso bei Hosea, wo wiederum Jerobeam von Israel und Ussia von Juda genannt werden; und dann bei Jesaja, wo die vier Könige im Reiche Juda Ussia, Jotham, Ahas und Hiskia aufgeführt werden. Aber die Überschrift des Buches Joel ist ganz schlicht und einfach: „Dies ist das Wort des Herrn, das geschehen ist zu Joel, dem Sohn Pethuels“, B. 1. Hier ist zum ersten Male auch der Name des Vaters genannt, Pethuel, freilich ohne daß dies uns viel hilft, da dieser Pethuel uns eben sonst ganz unbekannt ist. Aber gerade diese einfache Überschrift zeigt wieder wie bei Obadja das hohe Alter dieses prophetischen Buches an. Wir halten uns nun gegenwärtig, was wir schon bei Obadja erkannt haben (Augustheft, S. 600), daß nämlich Joel offenbar auch eine Katastrophe, die über das Königreich Juda ergangen ist, im Auge hat, daß er dieselben Feinde nennt, von denen wir bei Obadja hörten.

3) Luther's tremendous emphasis on the Real Presence is scriptural. However, to say that the body of Christ is broken in Holy Communion is not warranted by the text. — Ed. Note.