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Martin Luther's Revision of the Eucharistic Canon in the *Formula Missae* of 1523

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Martin Luther was the most conservative of the Reformers when it came to the work of liturgical revision. This was nowhere more evident than in his first effort at revising the Mass for evangelical usage: the *Formula missae et communionis* of 1523. He retained the use of the Latin language along with the optional use of lights, incense, and vestments. On the whole, the *Formula missae* faithfully followed the traditional Western structure, sequence, and content of the Mass. It is characterized not by what Luther added to the traditional Mass, but by what he deleted. His *Deutsche Messe* of 1526 was a much more creative undertaking because of Luther's concern that the German text and music must "grow out of the true mother tongue."¹ Hence, he rendered parts of the Latin ordinary into German verse and set these verses to chorale and folk tunes. The German Mass was intended for use primarily among the largely unlearned village folk. It was a kind of 16th-century Folk Mass. Its greatest value was the impetus it gave to the development of the chorale, which was to become the most important cultural contribution of the Lutheran cult. Its greatest fault was its excessive didacticism, which squeezed the juices of celebration out of the worship experience. While the *Deutsche Messe* served a useful catechetical purpose in helping to reorient spirituality, its didactic

quality rendered it incapable of providing the kind of enduring structural guidance afforded by the *Formula missae*. Moreover, as Luther wrote concerning his Latin Mass in the preface to the *Deutsche Messe*: "It is not my intention now to abrogate or change this service."²

Louis Bouyer asserts that "the best of the Lutheran liturgies down to our day" are derived from the *Formula missae*. "Its undeniable literary merit," in Bouyer's opinion, "resulted from having adapted, more ably and more daringly than anything that had been attempted previously, the old eucharist to the eucharistic piety and theology of the Middle Ages in what was most foreign there to the original tradition."³ Bouyer is suggesting that the type of Eucharistic celebration occasioned by the *Formula missae* represents a loss rather than a recovery of the primitive Eucharist as a result of bringing the most medieval of the Mass formularies to their logical conclusion. The result was that in some crucial instances Luther and the other Reformers retained what was most recent and secondary in the liturgical tradition and discarded what was the most original. It is the revision of the Eucharistic Canon which Bouyer thinks most clearly bears out his accusation. We shall investigate his assertion by subjecting the *Formula*

² LW 53, 63; *D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe* 19 (Weimar, 1883 f.), 72 [hereafter cited as WA].

³ Louis Bouyer, *Eucharist*, trans. Charles U. Quinn (University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), p. 387.

¹ Martin Luther, "Against the Heavenly Prophets," *Luther's Works* 40 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), 141 [hereafter cited as LW].

missae to the critical analysis of modern liturgical scholarship. Since "the best of the Lutheran liturgies" are derived from the *Formula missae*—a judgment with which we are in agreement with Bouyer—we shall be simultaneously submitting the classical Lutheran Eucharistic tradition to this critical analysis.

I. THE THEOLOGICAL PREMISES OF LUTHER'S CANON REVISIONS

A. *The Assault on the Mass as Sacrifice*

The Roman Mass was not the first of the Roman institutions to come under Luther's attack. However, as Yngve Brilioth has remarked, "at no point was Luther so violently opposed to the medieval system as in his repudiation of the Roman doctrine of the mass. That was the spear-point of his assault. . . ."⁴ This was not so much an assault on official theology as it was on popular piety.⁵ The comment of Joseph Lortz that Luther did not think theoretically but rather that he acted with religious zeal is too one-sided; but it does point to the fact that Luther was motivated by pastoral concern for a more evangelically oriented piety.

Lortz has characterized the piety of the late Middle Ages as dominated by *Erregtheit* (agitation or excitement). Normal religious ideas which had a recognizable place in traditional Catholic piety were blown up out of proportion and isolated from tradi-

tional spirituality. It would be a mistake to think that people in those days were in a perpetual state of anguish over their sins or that they were constantly terror-stricken at the prospects of the Last Judgment, but agitation did exist and people were driven to seek larger and larger doses of divine grace and in proportions which ceased to make sense, especially when indulgences were counted in millions of years or when normal pilgrimages turned into epidemics of pilgrimages. "The somewhat insubstantial character of such piety," wrote Lortz, "was demonstrated both by the craze for miracles and visions, which accompanied the enthusiasm for pilgrimages, and by the numerous restraining prohibitions and warnings issued by German synods and theologians during the whole of the fifteenth century."⁶

The number of miracles associated with the Eucharist is phenomenal. Bleeding host stories abounded. Missals contained instructions on what the priest should do in the event that the Host appeared as a child or as living flesh during the consecration. Detailed instructions were also issued concerning the procedure to be followed in the event of a Host being dropped on the floor or the precious blood being spilled. This intensification of belief in Eucharistic realism resulted in the removal of the cup from the laity. It was even considered sacrilegious for a layman to touch the chalice.

When Luther searched for the roots of this superstition, he discovered that "the Mass dominated everything." In the Smalcald Articles of 1537 Luther called the Mass "the greatest and most horrible abomination," "the supreme and most precious of the papal idolatries," for which "no con-

⁴ Yngve Brilioth, *Eucharistic Faith and Practice, Evangelical and Catholic*, trans. A. G. Hebert (London: S.P.C.K., 1965), p. 137.

⁵ Cf. the evidence amassed in F. Clark, *Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformation* (London, 1960), that pre-Reformation theology did not teach a crass doctrine of the daily slaying of Christ on the altar. Nor did the Reformers make such a claim early in the controversy over the Mass. Clark also demonstrates, in the face of previous Catholic accusations, that the Reformers *did* understand pre-Reformation teachings concerning the Eucharistic sacrifice. The charge of incompetence cannot be laid against some of the most acute minds of the age.

⁶ Joseph Lortz, *The Reformation in Germany*, I, trans. Ronald Walls (New York: Herder and Herder, 1939), 115.

cession or compromise" can be made.⁷ The Mass was the "dragon's tail" (*dieser Trachen schwantz*) which has engendered all of the vermin and idolatry which plagues the life of the church.⁸ It had brought forth the business of purgatory, introduced the manifestations of departed spirits, fostered pilgrimages, fraternities of monks obligated to offer prayers and engage in works of piety in behalf of deceased monks, the veneration of relics ("so much nonsense has been invented about the bones of dogs and horses that even the devil has laughed at such knavery"), and the buying and selling of indulgences. The very economic exploitation of the people could be associated with the Mass.

In Luther's view it was the idea of the Mass as a sacrifice which promoted this false religiosity because the idea of sacrifice presupposes an angry God who needs to be placated. Luther's rethinking of the meaning of the Mass can be related to his own contrasting experience of God as an angry, demanding Judge and God as a merciful, forgiving Father. The liberating Word of the Gospel frees one from the necessity of trying to placate a wrathful God, yet this was precisely what the papists thought they had to do. In *De abroganda missa privata* (1521) Luther asserted that those who do not believe in the promise of God contained in the Eucharist differ in no way from the Gentiles or the Jews.⁹ Such

⁷ The Smalcald Articles, II. *The Book of Concord*, ed. and trans. T. G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), pp. 293–96.

⁸ Ibid. WA 50, 204. "Über das alles hat dieser Trachen schwantz die Messe viel unzifers und geschmeis mancherley Abgottereie gezeüget."

⁹ WA 8, 442. "Et tu, insane et impie papistie, tuo sacrificio alium tibi fingis deum in Eucharistia! Nonne iam dudum vides omnes sacrifices idolatras esse et toties idolatrium perficere, quoties sacrificant? Non enim vere deum cogitant, sed idolum sui cordis format cogitantes et credentes esse hic deum aliquem iratum et placandum, qui plane in Eucharistia nec est, nec esse potest. Atque vere iratus tibi est

persons are not intent upon thanking God for His saving gift in Christ. That they "despise His goodness" is evident in the fact that they presume to offer their own gifts to God instead of thankfully receiving the gift which He has already given. Luther therefore emphasized the gift-character of the Communion.

Vilmos Vajta has demonstrated how Luther contrasted *testamentum*, God's gift to man, with *sacrificium*, man's gift to God.¹⁰ This testament-idea is derived from the Words of Institution, and it was extensively used in the polemical writings of 1520–21. Under the heading of the "third captivity" of the sacrament in *De captivitate babylonica* Luther defines "testament" as "a promise made by one about to die, in which he designates his bequest and appoints his heirs."¹¹ The gift which God gives is the forgiveness of sins. Brilioth criticized the concept of *testamentum* as a legalistic and forensic idea which depreciated the meaning of the Eucharist because it lost sight of the Communion-aspect.¹² By "Communion" Brilioth does not mean the act of receiving the elements of the Sacrament; he means *koinonia* or fellowship, the *communio sanctorum*. Brilioth felt that Luther's use of the testament-idea blinded him to other aspects of the Eucharist; therefore "the legal metaphor is quite unfit to express the meaning of the sacrificial death of Christ."¹³ Luther's use of a legal term, however, does not necessarily

et manet, sicuti credis, quia extra Eucharistiae fidem es et promissioni eius non credis nihil differens ab Ethnico et Iudaeo."

¹⁰ Vilmos Vajta, *Luther on Worship*, trans. U. S. Leupold (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958), p. 39.

¹¹ WA 6, 513. "Testamentum absque dubio Est promissio morituri, qua nuncupat haereditatem suam et instituit haeredes."

¹² Brilioth, p. 101.

¹³ Ibid., p. 102.

imply a legalistic understanding of it. Indeed, Brilioth's objection loses some of its force in the light of the use which Luther did make of this idea. A testament without heirs is unthinkable. It is equally unthinkable that the heirs would not take possession of their inheritance. Thus the testament-idea at least impressed upon Luther the importance of *receiving* Communion. It also preserved the objectivity of the Sacrament. The inheritance is real even if it is unworthily received or not received at all.

If the Mass is the gift of God, it must be received in faith. Each person stands over against God's promise with his faith or his unbelief. In *De captivitate babilonica* Luther asserted that the gift of the Mass could be received by men *fide sola sine ullis operibus aut meritis*. Popular piety regarded the Mass as a good work, but good works must be excluded on the principle of faith. Even such customs as fasting in preparation for Communion to make oneself worthy to receive the Sacrament can lead to hypocrisy, despair, or a false sense of religious security because they lead one to believe that he can worthily commune with Christ or that he merits the gift of Communion. The result of regarding the Mass as a "good work" is "works righteousness." Men strive to attain something which God wills to give freely. This kind of piety is a sin against the First Commandment.¹⁴ Acts of piety are idolatrous when they are set up in the place of Christ, who was crucified for our sins and raised for our justification.

Carl Wisløff has pointed out, however, that Luther not only attacked the Mass as a "good work"; he also attacked it as a "sacrifice." Vajta holds that the terms *opus bonum* and *sacrificium* are used interchangeably by Luther and should be treated as syno-

¹⁴ *De abroganda missa privata* (1521); WA 8, 417. "Missas vero, quas sacrificia vocant, esse summam idolatriam et impietatem."

nymy. But Wisløff holds that Luther intended two things here: "(1) The Mass is not an *opus*, and (2) it is not a *sacrificium*."¹⁵ Wisløff suggests that there is an essential difference between the Roman Catholic and Luther's definition of sacrifice. Roman Catholics defined sacrifice in an active sense as a yielding or resignation, whereas Luther defined sacrifice in a passive sense as essentially the death of the victim.

Behind these different conceptions of sacrifice are totally incompatible ideas of the Atonement. Latin theology regarded Christ's atoning death as "compensation"; Luther considered it Christ's substitutionary suffering of the punishment for that sin for which no one could render a satisfactory compensation. Thus, there is at least a "quantitative" difference between the once-for-all sacrifice of Calvary and the daily sacrifice of the Mass. The doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice can therefore be related to Luther's doctrine of sin and grace and to the whole "justification-atonement axis of Reformation theology."¹⁶ As Wisløff suggests, "If the realities of both sin and wrath are recognized as being so enormous that a compensation is impossible and inconceivable, then every mention of a renewed offering of Christ's sacrifice will not only be logically impossible but, theologically viewed, blasphemous. One can renew a sacrifice which consists of an active effort, but one cannot renew a sacrifice which consists of the death of the Son of God under God's wrath."¹⁷

Thus Luther, like Zwingli and Calvin, bound Christ's sacrifice to His

¹⁵ Carl F. Wisløff, *The Gift of Communion*, trans. Joseph M. Shaw (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1964), p. 41.

¹⁶ Aidan Kavanagh, *The Concept of Eucharistic Memorial in the Canon Revisions of Thomas Cranmer* (St. Meinrad: Abbey Press, 1964), pp. 49 ff.

¹⁷ Wisløff, p. 113.

atoning and redeeming death. He contended against the sacrifice of the Mass because there the priests claim to crucify Christ anew *so vil in inen ist*.¹⁸ Only in his *Sermon von dem neuen Testament* (1520) did Luther attempt a positive reinterpretation of the Mass as a sacrifice. There he admitted that there is a "sacrifice of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving" which we may lay upon Christ so that He, our only Mediator and Advocate, may present it to the Father. As "priest forever after the order of Melchizedek," He intercedes for us in heaven and makes our sacrifice acceptable to the Father. In this sense, however, we do not offer Christ; He offers us. In this treatise Luther also discusses the continuous benefits of the one sacrifice of Christ. Christ not only presents our prayer and praise to the Father; He also gives Himself for us in heaven. Gustav Aulén has suggested that any appearance of a contradiction between such statements and Luther's belief in the once-for-all character of the atoning sacrifice of the cross is only an apparent one. He interpreted Luther as saying that "the redemptive work of Christ continues through all ages and generations. This activity rests on the finished act of reconciliation and involves a continuous realization of the reconciliation which has been won."¹⁹

Luther's doctrine of the Real Presence should have allowed him to develop the idea of the continuous sacramental presence of the sacrifice of the cross. This would have enabled him to break through the otherwise either/or polemic of the once-for-all sacrifice of Calvary versus the need for the daily sacrifice of the Mass to

¹⁸ WA 15, 766. "So nun die ellenden Papisten Christum understond zu opffern, so fahend sy an, in wider zu erwürgen und Creüzigen, so vil in inen ist, was schendlicher gewel das ist, wollen wir sehen inn iren Canon."

¹⁹ Gustav Aulén, *Eucharist and Sacrifice*, trans. Eric H. Wahlstrom (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958), pp. 99–100.

atone for daily sins. The pressure of polemics prohibited such a positive patristic conception of the Eucharistic sacrifice from being integrated by Luther into his Eucharistic formularies. The most he could make out of the Eucharistic sacrifice was the "sacrifice of thanksgiving" as man's proper response to the gift of forgiveness. In this Luther stood as much within the late medieval tradition as over against it. The best medieval commentaries on the Mass, including the one by Gabriel Biel, with which Luther was familiar,²⁰ had reduced the patristic "thanksgiving" for the whole *mirabilia Dei* to an expression of gratitude for the "fruits" of Communion, which no one grew tired of enumerating. The idea of "thanksgiving" as an *anamnesis* or reactualization of the whole mystery of Christ's work of redemption (His Passion and death, resurrection and ascension, and the promise of His coming again) gave way in the medieval *expositiones missae* to a consideration of what man receives in the act of Communion.

Since Luther regarded the idea of the sacrifice of the Mass as an umbrella covering a multitude of abuses, his only course of action was to eliminate anything in the Mass which spoke of or even suggested the idea of sacrifice. This meant the total deletion of the Offertory and Eucharistic prayers. This radical surgery was intended to undercut Mass piety at its profoundest roots. Only the *Verba*, which in the Roman Mass had been enclosed within the prayers of the Canon, would be left standing. Since Luther believed that the Words of Institution were in the nature of proclamation, they had to be spoken or sung aloud. By means of the *Verba Christi* Luther hoped to reorient Eucharistic meaning and practice in order to bring it into conformity with evangelical doctrine.

²⁰ *Gabrielis Biel Canonis Misse expositio*, ed. Heiko A. Oberman and William J. Courtenay (Wiesbaden, 1965).

B. *The Sole Sufficiency of the Verba*

Carl Wisløff has written that "Luther finds the key to a proper understanding of the Lord's Supper in the Words of Institution."²¹ The *Verba* are a summary of the Gospel, and they are therefore to be the sole means by which the Sacrament is interpreted. Luther's use of the *Verba* as a starting point for interpreting the Mass not only brought his Eucharistic teaching into conformity with the formal principle of *Sola Scriptura*; it was also a blatant attack on "those who are now expounding the Mass . . . with allegories of human ceremonies. . . ." ²²

It is not difficult to discover what Luther is referring to: It is the kind of allegorical interpretation common in the medieval *expositiones missae*, which represented the Mass as a bloodless repetition of Calvary. The commentaries understood *repraesentatio* not in a sacramental sense but in the sense of a devotional play or a chancel drama. An arbitrary interpretation was assigned to every action, every gesture, every vestment. The chasuble represented the cross; the alb was the gown given to Christ after His scourging; the amice was the crown of thorns. The movement from the Epistle to the Gospel side was the movement of Christ from Pilate to Herod. The lavabo represented Pilate washing his hands before the Jews. The paten was held under the corporal to symbolize Christ's humiliation and self-abasement. Within the Canon the priest bowed his head during the *Memento* to signify Christ's death, and he read the *Nobis quoque peccatoribus* with lifted voice to represent the captain of the guard at Calvary. By holding his hands over the chalice and stretching his arms, the priest portrayed Christ suffering in the garden

²¹ Wisløff, p. 22.

²² *De captivitate babilonica*, WA 6, 526. "At qui nunc missam exponunt, in allegoriis humanorum ceremoniarum ludunt et illudunt."

and on the cross. Luther's intention was to set this kind of instruction aside in favor of a more actual and historical interpretation of the Lord's Supper, derived solely from the words of Christ.

It was this "new hermeneutic" of the Word as the sole interpreter of the Mass that led Luther to reject the Roman Canon. The sacrifice of the Mass cannot be held simply because the Canon speaks of it; the words of Christ speak of something else. They speak of the testament or the gift of God. As early as his *Sermon von dem neuen Testament* in 1520 Luther contrasted the Words of Institution with the prayers of the Canon.²³ The Words of Institution point to the promises of God, not to the works of man.

Again, however, Luther must be seen as standing within the medieval development as well as over against it. The emphasis on the *Verba consecrationes* in the Western church can be traced back to Ambrose of Milan. In *De mysteriis* 9 and *De sacramentis* IV Ambrose placed the weight of the consecration on the Words of Institution.²⁴ This emphasis developed in Carolingian Gaul, where Paschasius Radbertus (died after 856) contrasted Christ's all-authoritative Words of Institution with all other words and authorities. "All else spoken by the priest or sung by the clergy is nothing other than laudation and thanksgiving, or pertains to invocations, prayers, and supplications of the believers."²⁵

²³ WA 6, 356.

²⁴ Ambrose, *De mysteriis*, 9; J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae Latinorum* [PL] 16: 406-407. "Nam sacramentum istud quod accipis, Christi sermone conficitur . . . Ipse clamat Dominus Jesus: Hoc est corpus meum. Ante benedictionem verborum coelestium alia species nominatur, post consecrationem corpus significatur. Ipse dicit sanguinem suum. Ante benedictionem aliud dicitur, post consecrationem sanguis nuncupatur." Cf. also *De sacramentis*, IV, 4; PL 16: 439-440. "Ergo sermo Christi hoc conficit sacramentum."

²⁵ Paschasius Radbertus, *De corpore et sanguine Christi*, 15; PL 120: 1522. "Reliqua vero

The fully developed doctrine of transubstantiation tended to put full weight on the consecratory importance of the *Verba*. For Thomas Aquinas, just as all the prayers can be foregone in an emergency baptism and the baptism must still be considered valid, so too the Sacrament of the Altar may be validly administered if all else in the Canon is omitted but the Words of Institution are recited. The omission of the prayers of the Canon is an infraction of the normal ritual of the church, and therefore a grave sin; but it does not annul the validity of the Sacrament.²⁶ Luther, therefore, was only bringing the Western Eucharistic tradition to its logical conclusion when he said: "We must detach the Mass entirely and completely from the prayers and gestures, which were added to them by the holy fathers, and separate these as far as heaven is from the earth, so that this Mass really remains nothing more than the testament and sacrament comprehended in the words of Christ."²⁷

The "nothing more" of the testament of Christ is the promise of the forgiveness of sins. Luther's emphasis on the gift of forgiveness in the Sacrament unfortunately obscured other

omnia quae sacerdos dicit, aut clerus canit, nihil aliud quam laudes et gratiarum actiones sunt, aut certe obsecrationes fideliam, postulationes, petitiones. Verba autem Christi sicut divina sunt, ita efficacia . . ."

²⁶ *Summa Theologica*, III, q. 78, a. 1, obj. 4, ad. 4. "Unde dicendum est quod, si sacerdos sola verba praedicta proferret cum intentione conficiendi hoc sacramentum, perficeretur hoc sacramentum: quia intentio faceret ut haec verba intelligerentur quasi ex persona Christi prolata, etiam si verbis praecedentibus hoc non recitaretur. Graviter tamen peccaret sacerdos sic conficiens hoc sacramentum, utpote ritum Ecclesiae non servans."

²⁷ *WA* 6, 367. "Drumb müssen wir die mess bloss und lautter absondern von den gepeeten und geperden, die dazzu than seyn von den heyligen vettern, und diselben beyde so weyt von eynander scheid, als hymel und erden, das die mess eygentlich mit anders bleybe, denn das testament und sacrament in den worten Christi begriffen."

aspects of the believer's relationship to the mystery of Christ and other fruits of Communion, such as those which were focused upon in the Roman Canon. But because of the strongly sacrificial conceptions found in the Canon it had to be exorcized from the Mass just as the devil had to be exorcized at Baptism. "Yield, O Canon, to the Gospel, and give place to the Holy Spirit, since you are a human word."²⁸ Exorcism was not too farfetched a comparison in Luther's mind, for as he confessed on another occasion, "*Ich glaub, der teuffel hab den Canon selb gemacht. . .*"²⁹

The radical revision of the Eucharistic prayer so as to leave the *Verba Christi* in isolation became the dominant characteristic of Lutheran Eucharistic formularies.³⁰ Among the German Lutheran church orders of the 16th century, only the Pfaltz-Neuburg liturgy of 1543 had a Eucharistic prayer.³¹ It was an unusual type of prayer because, first, it was addressed to Christ and, second, it was placed before the Preface dialog. This made it more an Offertory Prayer. But it did contain an anamnesis of the Passion and Death of Christ and an epiclesis asking the Holy Spirit to ordain (*schaffen*) the bread and wine to be (*sei*) the body and blood of Christ. The liturgy of King John III of Sweden, the so-called "Red Book" published in 1576, contained an actual

²⁸ *WA* 8, 448. "Cede, Canon, Evangelio et da locum spiritui sancto, cum sis verbum humanum."

²⁹ *WA* 15, 768.

³⁰ One is at first astounded that such Reformers as Martin Bucer and Thomas Cranmer, who held less realistic views of the Sacramental Presence than did Luther, would retain some form of Eucharistic prayer in their liturgical rites. On second thought, however, it becomes evident that they would not dare allow the literal words of Christ, "This is My body, this is My blood," to stand uninterpreted.

³¹ For the text cf. Luther D. Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 753.

reworking of the Roman Canon.³² It followed more closely than any other Lutheran liturgy the Roman Institution Narrative, and it revised the part of the Roman Canon which follows the Narrative (the *Unde et memores*, the *Supra quae*, the *Supplices te*, the *Nobis quoque peccatoribus*, and the *Per quem*). This was recited by the celebrant while the choir sang the *Sanctus*.

Every Lutheran liturgy, however, emphasized the Words of Institution and thus brought to a conclusion the scholastic specification of the *Verba* as the "moment of consecration." The concern to identify the "moment of consecration" can perhaps be traced back to the fourth century. We have seen that Ambrose was the father of the Western church's teaching that the Word of Christ effects the consecration. Cyril of Jerusalem, in his *Mystagogic catecheses* (A. D. 348), spoke of the operation of the Holy Spirit in the conversion of the elements from bread and wine to body and blood. Thus an epiclesis consecration became manifest in the West Syrian-Byzantine liturgies of St. James, St. Basil, and St. John Chrysostom.

But if we go back further into history, to the development of the Christian Eucharistic prayer out of the genre of the Jewish *berakah*,³³ it will

³² Eric Yelverton, *The Mass in Sweden*, Henry Bradshaw Society, Vol. LVII (London: Harrison and Sons, 1920), pp. 103–10. Reed quotes from the "Red Book" Mass (pp. 753–54) but, unfortunately, the section he quotes is the Offertory, not the Eucharistic prayer. King John transferred the *Te igitur clementissime Pater* of the Roman Canon from the post-Sanctus section to the Offertory, probably because of its intercessory character.

³³ Studies on the evolution of the Christian *eucharistia* from the Jewish *berakah*: Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1945); Jean-Paul Audet, "Literary Forms and Contents of a Normal *eucharistia* in the First Century," *Studia Evangelica: Papers Presented to the International Congress on 'The Four Gospels' in 1957*, eds. K. Aland and others; *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* 73 (Berlin, 1959),

be seen that the whole act of thanksgiving was regarded as consecratory. We read in 1 Tim. 4:4-5: "For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving; for then it is consecrated by the Word of God and prayer." Thanksgiving serves to consecrate everything created by God. As Paul Tillich said so simply, "Thanksgiving is consecration; it transfers something that belongs to the secular world into the sphere of the holy."³⁴

In this light it would seem that in the primitive Eucharistic celebration, which probably had as its setting an actual community meal comparable to the Jewish Seder, the Institution Narrative took the place of the *haggadah* as an explanation of what was happening. When the Eucharist was celebrated apart from the setting of a community meal, the new Christian *haggadah* was inserted into the Christian *berakah* or prayer of thanksgiving said over the bread and wine.³⁵ It would seem, therefore, that the Lutherans discarded what was most

643–62; Louis Bouyer, *Liturgical Piety* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1956), especially pp. 115–28; *Eucharist*, op. cit., pp. 15–135.

³⁴ Paul Tillich, *The Eternal Now* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), p. 179.

³⁵ The Institution Narrative is not included in the Eucharistic prayers of the Didache. It is debated whether it was present in the most primitive version of the East Syrian Anaphora of Addai and Mari, which represents a Semitic survival. E. C. Ratcliff, "The Original Form of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari," *Journal of Theological Studies* 30 (1929), 23 ff., asserted that the Words of Institution were not included in it; nor was there an epiclesis. If this is so, there was no "moment of consecration" in this anaphora; the act of thanksgiving itself was consecratory. Dom Bernard Botte, however, in "L'Anaphore chaldéenne des Apôtres," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 15 (1949), 259 ff., casts some doubts on this on the basis of the anamnesis formularies in some later Nestorian anaphoras which are similar to the anamnesis in Addai and Mari and which do contain an Institution Narrative. Botte's procedure, however, may be methodologically questionable. A prior problem is not solved by the witness of a later text.

primitive in the Eucharistic tradition, namely, the act of thanksgiving, and retained what was secondary. The Institution Narrative was a secondary element in the development of the Eucharistic prayer. When it was added to the prayer, it was linked with the anamnesis on the basis of the text, "Do this as the memorial of Me."³⁶ Clearly the element of anamnesis, as a memorial or reactualization of the saving events of God in Christ, was primary. The remembrance of what was done "on the night on which He was betrayed" took its place as one of the events to be memorialized before God. In the Lutheran practice, however, this relationship between the anamnesis and the Institution Narrative has been reversed. The whole anamnesis has become primarily a memorial of the Last Supper. Only secondarily and indirectly can the Eucharistic memorial in the Lutheran tradition be conceived of as an anamnesis of the salvatory work of God through the death and resurrection of Christ.

II. THE MATERIALIZATION OF THE EUCHARISTIC FORM

Luther began his attack on the Roman Mass in 1520, but it was not until 1523 that he finally offered his own example of an "evangelical service."³⁷ He was reluctant to make any radical liturgical changes. As a pastor, he realized the difficulty of effecting liturgical change in a congregation. At the same time he was aware that liturgical revision was a job which needed to be done and that others

were doing it badly. Therefore, in spite of "the weak in faith, who cannot suddenly exchange an old and accustomed order of worship for a new and unusual one," and against "the fickle and fastidious spirits who rush in like unclean swine without faith or reason, and who delight only in novelty and tire of it as quickly, when it has worn off," he finally "dared something in the name of Christ."³⁸

The *Formula missae et communionis* was drawn up to offer an example of what was being done in Wittenberg. Others were free to imitate it if they wished, but Luther, unlike Thomas Cranmer, had neither the inclination nor the ecclesiastical position to legislate a general order for the whole church. The *Formula missae* would have to make its mark solely on the basis of its intrinsic merit. Evangelical freedom thus became the first principle of Lutheran liturgical life.

The Service of the Word in the *Formula missae* followed closely the structure and sequence of the Roman order, with a few exceptions. Luther did not indicate any kind of preparatory office for the ministers or for the people. The medieval Mass had been preceded by the *Confiteor*, a penitential act performed by the celebrant and his assistants at the foot of the altar. There had been no comparable penitential act for the people. Since Luther retained private confession and absolution as the standard preparation for Holy Communion, no public penitential office was necessary. He provided no general confession of sins in either the *Formula missae* or in the *Deutsche Messe*. The German Mass of Diebold Schwartz, prepared for use at Strassburg in 1524, revised the *Confiteor* into a public confession of sins. Olavus Petri, in his Swedish Mass of 1531, also provided an extended congregational form of confession and absolution. Most of the German Lutheran

³⁶ *Touto poieite eis ten emen anamnesin*, Luke 22:19b; 1 Cor. 11:24b, 25b. Cf. the presentation of the anamnesis in Max Thurian, *The Eucharistic Memorial*, II (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1961), 34-42.

³⁷ Critical editions of the *Formula Missae et Communionis*: WA 12, 205-220; Emil Sehling, ed., *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts*, I (Leipzig: O. R. Reiland, 1902), 4-9; trans. P. Z. Strodach, rev. Ulrich S. Leupold, *Luther's Works* 53, 19-40.

³⁸ LW 53, 19; Sehling, I, 4.

liturgies up until the middle of the 16th century simply did without it. A few orders revised the *Confiteor* and retained it as a private preparatory prayer for the celebrant.

The Introit, Kyrie, Gloria in Excelsis, Collect, and Scripture readings of the Roman Mass were retained in the *Formula missae*. A Gospel procession with lights and incense could also be retained if it was desired. Luther stated his ceremonial principle quite simply: *Esto hoc liberum*. The Nicene Creed could be sung. The Sermon could be preached either before the Introit of the Day or after the Creed. The most significant change made by Luther in the Mass was the elimination of the Offertory. "From here on," he wrote, "almost everything smacks and savors of sacrifice."³⁹ It was at the Offertory, said Luther, that the notion of the propitiatory sacrifice was most noticeable. This was because the offerings of the people, which originally had consisted of gifts "in kind" (that is, bread, wine, oil, wax, and so forth, for use in sacramental rites), became Mass stipends (usually money), used to buy votive masses. As Eugene Brand has pointed out, "The concept of sacrifice had become tied up with the sacrifice offered by the priest for special intention."⁴⁰ In *De captivitate babylonica* Luther demonstrated his awareness of the fact that the offertory procession of the faithful in the early church was the origin of the sacrificial concepts embedded in the Offertory Rite. In his *Sermon von dem neuen Testament* he urged the replacement of the material offerings with "spiritual sacrifices." We should offer "ourselves, and all that we have, with constant prayer," so that God "may make of us what he will, according to his own pleasure.

³⁹ LW 53, 26; Sehling, I, 5.

⁴⁰ Eugene L. Brand, "Luther's Liturgical Surgery," *Interpreting Luther's Legacy*, ed. Fred W. Meuser and Stanley D. Schneider (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1969), p. 113.

In addition, we are to offer him praise and thanksgiving with our whole heart. . . ." ⁴¹ Luther accordingly made no provision in the *Formula missae* for an Offertory rite other than the simple preparation of the bread and wine for use in the Sacrament.

In a sense Luther here returned to the practice of the primitive church. The ritual splendor of the medieval Latin and Greek liturgies was a far cry from the simplicity of the primitive offertory. Most primitive liturgies had no real offertory. Bread and wine were essential to the action. They had to be presented and arranged on the table in some way. Justin Martyr provides the earliest description of such an act in his *Apology*: "After finishing the prayers, we greet each other with a kiss. Then bread and a cup of water and mixed wine are brought to the one presiding over the brethren. He takes it, gives praise and glory to the Father of all in the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and gives thanks at length for the gifts we were worthy to receive from him."⁴² The Offertory described here is quite simple. The mention of the cup of water may indicate that this was a Eucharist following a baptism (the water symbolizing the interior cleansing of the neophyte who had just been outwardly cleansed in the "bath"). In a later chapter Justin describes a more normal Eucharistic celebration. After the readings, the sermon, and the intercessory prayers, "the bread and wine mixed with water are brought, and the president offers up prayers and thanksgiving, as much as he is able."⁴³

As Robert Taft has pointed out, "We should not consider this ritual bareness merely a sign of primitiveness. The early Christians were at pains to stress the difference between their *logike*

⁴¹ LW 53, 98.

⁴² Justin Martyr, *Apology*, I, 65, text in Anton Hänggi and Irmgard Pohl, *Prex Eucharistica* (Freibourg, 1968), p. 68.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, I, 67; Hänggi-Pohl, p. 70.

thusia and the highly ritualized worship of the pagans and Jews."⁴⁴ Minucius Felix, writing at the end of the second century, asked: "Do you think we hide the object of our worship because we have no shrines and altars? What image am I to contrive of God, since logical reasoning tells you that man himself is an image of God? What temple am I to build for him, since this whole world, fashioned by his hand, cannot hold him? Am I to confine so vast and majestic a power to one little shrine, while I, a mere man, live in a larger place? Are our mind and heart not better places to be dedicated to him?"⁴⁵

The idea of spiritual dedication seems to have been popular in the first few centuries. In the third and fourth centuries, however, we enter a new period of liturgical development. Actual written formulae replace the older, more or less extemporaneous Eucharistic prayers. There was also a development in liturgical ceremonial. This was largely in reaction to the spiritualism of Hellenistic Gnosticism. In the face of Gnostic devaluation of the material creation, the church defended it.

This is especially evident in the writings of Irenaeus of Lyons, ca. A.D. 185, who felt compelled to defend the value of the material offerings. "It behooves us to make an oblation to God, and in all things to be found grateful to God our Maker, in a pure mind, and in faith without hypocrisy, in a well-founded hope, in fervent love, offering the firstfruits of His own created things. The church alone offers this pure oblation to the Creator, offering to Him, with thanksgiving, from His

creation."⁴⁶ The world is not created by some evil spirit or malignant aeon; it has been created by the Father of Jesus Christ—that is, through the *Logos*. Therefore, when Christ came into this world He took possession of what was His, and when He instituted His Supper He took bread and wine from His creation. Thus, said Irenaeus, "the Eucharist consists of two elements, one the earthly one, the other a heavenly one." For the Lord taught His disciples "to offer God the firstfruits of creation—not as if He Himself had need of them, but in order that they be not ungrateful and unfruitful." Irenaeus then proceeds to relate the institution narrative, and he declares that the church ". . . offers Him to God, Him who is nourishing us; these are the firstfruits of His gift in the New Covenant" ("quam Ecclesia . . . offert Deo, ei qui alimenta nobis praestat, primitias suorum munerum in novo testamento").⁴⁷

Here is a marked change in the understanding of the Eucharist as a result of the threat of Gnosticism. It cannot be accidental that it is in Tertullian and Hippolytus, at the beginning of the third century, that we find the first traces of an offertory procession of the faithful, a ritual which was to flourish in the Western church for over a thousand years. It is also at this time that we find a shift in terminology. The term *eucharistia* was preferred in the first two centuries; in the third century the terms *oblatio* and *sacrificium* were regularly used. Joseph Jungmann has stressed that since this time "Bread and wine are not only brought to the altar (as in Justin) but they are *offered*—offered to God. The sacrifice, therefore, is already begun with the Offertory."⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Robert Taft, "Toward the Origins of the Offertory Procession in the Syro-Byzantine East," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 36 (1970), 74–75.

⁴⁵ PL 3:353. Note the question, "Putatis autem nos occultare quod colimus, si delubra et aras non habemus?"

⁴⁶ *Adversus haereses*, IV, 18; Migne, *Patrologiae Graecorum* [PG] 7:1026-7.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, IV, 17, 5; PG 7:1023.

⁴⁸ Joseph Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1965), p. 116.

It would seem, therefore, that Luther was right when he detected the savor of sacrifice already in the Offertory. However, he knew the Offertory as a rite deprived of its primitive interpretation and overburdened with medieval (and especially Gallican) accretions. Gallican material added to the Roman Mass included the intrusion of private prayers said by the priest into the Offertory and at the Communion.

Lutheran liturgical work today must do at the Offertory what Luther was not able to do because of his polemic against the idea of the Mass as a propitiatory sacrifice. There ought to be restored to Lutheran liturgies an Offertory of the primitive type, which includes the presentation of all sorts of gifts by the laity while a psalm or some other type of song is sung to "cover" the action of the procession with the gifts. While a prayer over the gifts apart from the Eucharistic prayer itself is not primitive, such a prayer today would serve the purpose of celebrating the self-offering of the church. The Offertory prayer in the *Service of Holy Communion* prepared by the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship serves such a purpose. The restoration of such an Offertory rite in Lutheran practice is necessary today for the same reason that a ceremonial Offertory developed in the first place: to combat the "gnosticism" or "spiritualism" which is latent in much Protestant piety. This "gnosticism" is manifested in the tendency to "spiritualize" and thereby devalue the material creation. Such a piety also fosters an antisacramental hybris.

In the structure of the *Formula missae*, the celebrant begins the *Canon missae* as soon as the gifts have been made ready. It is not entirely correct to say that Luther discarded the Canon; rather, he drastically revised it. He retained the preface dialog and common preface, which, strictly speaking, is the beginning of the Canon.

Praefatio does not mean "preface" as much as "speaking a word of prayer in a loud voice," from *praefari*. There is no indication whether Luther retained any of the "Proper Prefaces." Many of the later Lutheran liturgies which followed the tradition of the *Formula missae* did retain them for major festivals and seasons of the church year. Luther proceeds in the *Vere dignum* as far as *per Christum dominum nostrum*. Then, by a turn of phrase, *Qui pridie quam pateretur*, he introduces the Words of Institution. The Sanctus is displaced until after the *Verba*. The host and chalice are elevated during the singing of the Sanctus at the *Benedictus qui venit* (a ceremony which, in outward appearance, was not unlike the Solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament so popular in Baroque Catholicism).

The elevation at the *Benedictus qui venit* is a curious retention of Medieval Mass ceremony. During the Middle Ages the celebrant began to recite the post-Sanctus section of the Canon (*Te igitur clementissime pater*) at the same time that the choir began to sing the Sanctus. The elevation coincided with the "Benedictus" of the Sanctus. Luther eliminated all of the prayers of the Canon between the Sanctus and the *Qui pridie*, but he retained the elevation at the same point at which it would have occurred in the Roman Mass.

The use of the elevation is an impressive example of Luther's liturgical conservatism. It had been the most conspicuous moment in the late medieval Mass. It was signaled by the ringing of the "Sanctus bell." The bell summoned the faithful to venerate the sacramentally present Christ. This practice can be traced back to the 12th century, the same time during which the doctrine of transubstantiation was being defined. The popularity of this act can be seen in the eyewitness report given by Thomas Cranmer: "What made the people run from their seats

to the altar, and from altar to altar, and from sacring to sacring, peeping, tooting and gazing at that thing which the priest held up in his hands, if they thought not to honour the thing which they saw? What moved the priests to lift up the sacrament so high over their heads? Or the people to say to the priest 'Hold up! Hold up!' or one man to say to another, 'Stoop down before'; or to say 'This day have I seen my Maker'; and 'I cannot be quiet except I see my Maker once a day?'"⁴⁹

The elevation had become subject to the abuses of medieval enthusiasm. The people waited outside the church for the Sanctus bell to ring, and then they dashed into the sanctuary in time to witness the elevation. Priests were known to receive larger stipends for holding the host up longer. For these reasons some of the Reformers advocated that the elevation be abolished. Luther, however, regarded it as a fine witness to the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament. As he wrote in the *Deutsche Messe*, "We do not want to abolish the elevation, but retain it because it goes well with the German Sanctus and signifies that Christ has commanded us to remember him."⁵⁰

The unique sequence of the Eucharistic Canon in the *Formula missae—Vere dignum, Verba, Sanctus*—was followed by some other Lutheran Church Orders including Andreas Döber's Nürnberg Mass of 1525 (the progenitor of the important Nürnberg family of German church orders) and Olavus Petri's Swedish Mass of 1531 (the structure of which served as the form of the Swedish *Hoegmaessa* until the 1942 revision). The Sanctus has followed the Preface in practically all the classical Eucharistic prayers since the fourth century. Only in such archaic

anaphoras as those of Addai and Mari (East Syrian) and Hippolytus is there any evidence that the initial act of thanksgiving did not lead to the Sanctus. The late English liturgiologist E. C. Ratcliff has suggested that the Sanctus in the early Roman tradition may originally have followed the Eucharistic prayer as a concluding doxology.⁵¹ This well-worked-out hypothesis has not yet commanded widespread acceptance; nor has it been widely controverted. If there is anything to Ratcliff's hypothesis, this would provide an interesting ancient parallel with the classical Lutheran Eucharistic structure.

Many of the Lutheran church orders retained the pre-Reformation sequence of Preface-Sanctus with the *Verba* extracted from the "*Qui pridie*" of the Canon but following the Sanctus.⁵² Other church orders eliminated the Preface altogether. In the *Deutsche Messe* Luther replaced it with a paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer and an exhortation to the communicants. The cause of this divergence in the Preface-Sanctus structure is the positioning of the *Verba* and the Lord's Prayer. In the *Formula missae* Luther placed the Lord's Prayer after the *Verba* and Sanctus. This sequence was followed by Bugenhagen (who produced seven church orders), the Nürnberg and Brandenburg church orders, the Pfaltz-Neuburg church order (1543), and some others. Edward T. Horn, however, adduced some 60

⁵¹ E. C. Ratcliff, "The Sanctus and the Pattern of the Early Anaphora," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 1 (1950), 29–36, 125–34.

⁵² Wittenberg, 1533 (if desired); Halle, 1541; *The Reformation of Cologne* (prepared by Bucer and Melanchthon), 1543; Austria, 1571; Stralsund, 1555; Fevers, 1562; Pomerania, 1563; Bremen, 1569 and 1615; Regensburg, 1630. The Mark Brandenburg of 1540 retains the Preface-Sanctus sequence and directs the celebrant to offer quietly four German prayers during the singing of the Sanctus: for the emperor and civil rulers, for the clergy, for unity, and for the forgiveness of sins.

⁴⁹ Dix, op. cit., p. 620, cites this passage from Thomas Cranmer's *A Defense of the True and Catholic Doctrine*, IV, 9.

⁵⁰ LW 53, 82. The elevation was abolished in Wittenberg in 1542.

church orders which placed the *Verba* after the Lord's Prayer, thus establishing what has to be accepted as the more usual Lutheran sequence.⁵³

The form of the Institution Narrative varied widely in the early Lutheran church orders. The one which finally prevailed more than any other was that composed by Luther in the *Deutsche Messe*, a harmony of the four Biblical accounts of the institution with some degree of balance between the two paragraphs. A few of the Lutheran orders retained the *Verba* substantially the same as they were found in the Roman Canon. The Roman form of the Institution Narrative has many embellishments on the basic Biblical texts, which served to give the Narrative greater symmetry and balance. It also served to heighten the sense of reverence and awe which came to attend the Eucharistic celebration during and after the fourth century. In this the Roman Canon is similar to some of the other traditions (East Syrian, West Syrian, Egyptian) which were maturing during that era.

The version of the Institution Narrative from the Roman Canon with which Luther worked is found in his own German translation in his polemical sermon, *Vom Greuel der Stillmesse*. Luther used the form of the Canon in his Augustinian Missal, but it follows the classical Roman text quite faithfully. The formula which he himself composed for the *Formula missae* is a drastic simplification of the Roman formula. It is as follows:

Qui pridie quam pateretur, accepit panem gratias agens, fregit deditque discipulis suis dicens: Accipite, comedite, hoc est corpus meum, quod pro vobis datur. Similiter et calicem, postquam caenavit, dicens: Hic calix est novi testamenti in meo sanguine, qui pro vobis et pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum.

⁵³ Edward T. Horn, "The Lutheran Sources of the Common Service," *Lutheran Quarterly* 21 (1891), 239–68.

*Haec quotiescunque feceritis, in mei memoriam faciatis.*⁵⁴

In *Vom Greuel der Stillmesse* Luther complained that the papists scribbled their own words into the text of the Eucharistic narrative but left out what Christ added: "which is given for you" (Luke 22:19). He further complained that they added "which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20) "for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt. 26:28) over the cup, which they denied to the laity. In the *Formula missae* he worked over the Institution Narrative and tried to reconstruct it so that it would exclude all of the papists' additions and include only the actual Scriptural words of Christ and those of the evangelists. Therefore he deleted in the first paragraph: "in His holy and venerable hands and lifting up His eyes toward heaven" (*in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas elevatis oculis in caelum*), "to You, O God, His almighty Father" (*ad te deum patrem suum omnipotentem tibi*), "blessed" (*benedixit*), and "all of you" (*ex hoc omnes*). He added to the Roman Canon "which is given for you" (*quod pro vobis datur*), a phrase which underscored the testament or gift-character of the Sacrament.

In the second paragraph he deleted from the Roman Canon: the adjective "excellent" (*herlichen, praeclarum*) modifying "cup"; "in His holy and venerable hands, and gave you thanks again, blessed and gave it to His disciples" (*in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas item tibi gratias agens benedixit dedit discipulis suis*); "take and drink of it, all of you" (*accipite et bibite ex eo omnes*); "and eternal" (*et*

⁵⁴ Sehling I, 6; LW 53, 27–28. "Who the day before he suffered, took bread, and when he had given thanks, brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take, eat; this is my body, which is given for you. After the same manner also the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins; this do, as often as ye do it, in remembrance of me."

aeterni, which was not even included in his German translation of the *Canon missae*, and "a mystery of faith" (*mysterium fidei*).

It is interesting that in the list of actions over the bread Luther omitted *benedixit*, which is mentioned in both Matt. 26:26 and Mark 14:22. However, it is not found in Luke 22:19 or 1 Cor. 11:24. Luther does not repeat the list of actions over the cup; the *similiter* at the beginning of the second paragraph can be regarded as referring to the same actions mentioned in the first paragraph. Luther apparently felt no need to repeat the actions of Christ since they were already stated once. Moreover, these actions are not repeated in the Lucan and Pauline narratives. It would seem that Luther generally preferred to follow the Lucan-Pauline tradition rather than the Marcan-Matthean tradition. The one exception is Luther's addition of the Marcan-Matthean "for many" to the Lucan "for you" in the words over the cup. Paul does not mention the idea of the "forgiveness of sins" at all. The last phrase over the cup, "Do this, as often as you do it, in remembrance of Me," is identical with the Roman version of the Narrative. It derives from 1 Cor. 11:25.

We have seen that the Institution Narrative is followed by the Sanctus, which serves as a doxology to the Eucharistic consecration. The Sanctus is followed by the Lord's Prayer, which is introduced with the traditional formula, *Praeceptis salutaribus moniti et divina institutione formati audemus dicere*. Luther omits the embolism which follows the last petition of the Lord's Prayer in the Roman Canon, the *Libera nos quaesumus*, "together with all the signs they were accustomed to make over the host and with the host over the chalice." Thus, the *fractio* and *commixtio* are discontinued.

The discontinuance of the fraction was a drastic move on Luther's part. The fraction had always been one of

the traditional elements of the Eucharistic celebration. In the early church, of course, the symbolism attached to this act was minimal. But it was important. Indeed, "the breaking of bread" (*fractio panis*) was one of the earliest names given to the Eucharistic celebration: *te klasei tou artou* (Acts 2:42). The broken loaf (*to klasma*, Didache 9:3) has always conveyed the idea of the oneness of the scattered church. "The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the same loaf." (1 Cor. 10:16-17)

Perhaps the most exciting ritual enactment of this idea is found in the practice of the Roman Church expressed in *Ordo romanus primus*. When the bread for the Communion had been broken by the bishop and his clergy at the pontifical celebration, pieces of it (called *fermentum*) were carried by acolytes to the parish churches (*tituli*), where they were included in the presbyterial celebrations as a visible sign of the church's oneness in Christ. The fraction conveys the idea of a Eucharistic ecclesiology.

In the course of time, however, with the decline in the number of communicants, the fraction became merely a symbolic act to which an allegorical interpretation was attached. Duchesne identifies this allegorizing with the Gallican practice. "The particles of the host were arranged upon a paten in such a manner as to represent the human form. The Council of Tours (567) denounced this practice and decreed that the portions should be arranged in the form of a cross."⁵⁵

Conciliar decrees, however, could not contain allegorism once it had gotten started; nor could it curb the

⁵⁵ Louis Duchesne, *Christian Worship: Its Origin and Evolution*, trans. M. L. McClure (London: S.P.C.K., 1910), p. 219.

superstition attached to these symbolic acts. Thus Durandus regarded the breaking of the consecrated host as a signification of the death of Christ at the hands of His executioners. Joseph Jungmann discusses an interpretation whereby the broken pieces were regarded as a triform figure of the *Corpus Christi*.⁵⁶ The piece which was lowered into the chalice signified Christ's resurrection body; the piece which was consumed by the priest signified Christ's body on earth; the third piece was Christ's body in the grave. A later interpretation explained the three pieces of the host as signifying the militant church on earth, the suffering church in purgatory, and the triumphant church in heaven. Luther was aware of this interpretation, and he repudiated it.⁵⁷ Thus the only fraction he acknowledged was the *fractio ad distribuendum*.⁵⁸ The fraction in the *Formula missae*, therefore, like the Offertory, served a purely functional purpose.⁵⁹

In *Vom Gneuel der Stillmesse*, Luther quotes the prayer of the *commixtio*.⁶⁰ He complained concerning this prayer that the body and blood are one Christ and that Christ does not need to be consecrated. He also objects that "the commingling shall nourish those who partake unto eternal life. That is to say,

⁵⁶ Joseph Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, II, trans. F. Brunner (New York: Benziger, 1951), 385.

⁵⁷ WA 8, 438. "Quid faciunt? Simulant hanc fractionem, dum in tres hostiam partiuntur et unam viventibus, unam defunctis, unam beatis deputant. . . ."

⁵⁸ Ibid. "quis enim est 'frangere,' nisi in multa partiri."

⁵⁹ In *Wider die Himmlischen Propheten* (1525), WA 18, 168, Luther argues against the symbolic interpretation of the fraction given by the Enthusiasts: "Merck zum andern, das Paulus ja redet vom brod ym Sacrament, wilchs Christus brach, und hernachmals die Apostoln auch brachen."

⁶⁰ WA 18, 33. The prayer reads: "May this commingling and consecration of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ nourish us who receive it unto eternal life."

the work itself is supposed to do it. What becomes of the words in which that life resides?"⁶¹

The *Pax domini* immediately follows the Lord's Prayer. There is no public confession of sins and absolution provided in the *Formula missae*. Private confession remained at this time the normal Lutheran penitential practice. But Luther interprets the *Pax* as "a public absolution of the sins of the communicants, a true voice of the gospel announcing remission of sins, and therefore the one and most worthy preparation for the Lord's Table, if faith holds on to these words as coming from the mouth of Christ himself. On this account I would like to have it pronounced facing the people, as the bishops are accustomed to do, which is the only custom of the ancient bishops that is left among our bishops."⁶²

Brilioth has charged that Luther's interpretation of the *Pax* is a "violent importation of his favorite idea into a phrase which was originally intended to convey a different meaning."⁶³ Perhaps the original meaning Brilioth had in mind is the Kiss of Peace to which Justin refers in his *Apology*: "We salute one another with a kiss, when we have concluded the prayers."⁶⁴ In all of the classical liturgies except the Roman Mass, the greeting of peace preceded the Offertory. It was an expression of fellowship and unity which recalled the words of Jesus, "If therefore you offer your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you . . ." (Matt. 5:23). St. John Chrysostom gave it such an interpretation. The Roman Mass is unique among the family of rites in placing the *Pax* after the

⁶¹ Ibid. "Und sagt dazu, Die vermengung solle gedeyen denen, so sie nemen, zum ewigen leben, Das ist, das werck soll er thun, Wo bleyben die wort, daryhn das leben stehet?"

⁶² LW 53, 28; Sehling, I, 6.

⁶³ Brilioth, p. 117.

⁶⁴ Justin Martyr, *Apology*, I, 65; Hänggi-Pohl, p. 68.

consecration and just before the Communion. When it was spoken by the celebrant, it could be regarded as the reconciling and absolving word of Christ Himself. The sacramentally present Christ alone effects reconciliation between man and God. To be sure, Luther did imbue the *Pax* with his own "favorite idea" in order to relate it to the deepest meaning of the Eucharist, but this is certainly not a "violent importation" in terms of the understanding of the *Pax* in the Roman rite.

The Communion follows the word of peace. Luther allowed the celebrant to use one of the silent collects from the Missal in preparation for Communion, the *Domine Jhesu Christi fili dei vivi . . .* The only stipulation was that the pronouns had to be changed from the singular *meis* and *me* to the plural *nostris* and *nos*. By this change of grammar Luther underscored the fellowship-aspect of the Communion. The *Agnus dei* was retained as a Communion hymn, as it was in practically all of the Lutheran church orders. The Communion psalm verses could also be sung. Luther retained the Roman distribution formula, but this was eliminated in the *Deutsche Messe*, the 1533 Wittenberg church order, and the 1539 order of Duke Henry of Saxony. Luther directed the celebrant to commune himself first, then the people. Later Lutheran dogmatic Biblicism brought about a discontinuance of this practice. More than one minister would have to be present at the Communion so that they could commune one another.⁶⁵

The post-Communion is very brief.

⁶⁵ The Smalcald Articles forbid self-communication only when this involves reception apart from the congregation (Part II, Art. II). Martin Chemnitz, in *Examen decretorum concilii Tridentini*, Part II, sect. 4, canon 9, holds that the minister includes himself in the confession and absolution and therefore may include himself in the Communion. 17th-century church orders, however, by and large forbade self-communication at any time.

The Missal Collect, *Corpus tuum, domine*, is retained; but again the pronouns must be changed from singular to plural. The Mass ends with the salutation. But instead of using the *Ite missa est*, the *Benedicamus domino* is sung, "adding Alleluia according to its own melodies where and when it is desired. Or the *Benedicamus* may be borrowed from Vespers."⁶⁶ The form of benediction may be the Roman *Benedicat vos*; but Luther preferred the Aaronic blessing. This latter benediction probably commended itself to Luther because it was the only blessing ever commanded by God. It became a fixed feature of Lutheran liturgies.

The *Formula missae* represents a return to the simplicity and sobriety of the early Roman Mass. Edmund Bishop attributed six characteristics to the primitive Roman rite: simplicity, sobriety, practicality, self-control, gravity, and dignity.⁶⁷ These attributes characterize the *Formula missae* in a way which is not true of later Lutheran rites, even some of those which are derived from it. The elimination of the *Confiteor* made the Entrance rite clear and direct. The introduction of hymns and an extended congregational confession of sins and absolution eventually cluttered the Entrance rite of the typical Lutheran Mass. The deletion of the Offertory rite, except for the practical act of preparing the bread and wine on the altar, can also be viewed as a return to primitive simplicity. We have offered reasons in this article for the restoration of the Offertory rite in Lutheran practice, but it remains a fact that there were no actual offertory prayers before the fifth century. The elaborate *Offertorium* of the Western rites and the "Great Entrance" of the Byzantine rites is far removed from the simple presentation of the gifts. We might also note that

⁶⁶ LW 53, 30; Sehling, I, 6.

⁶⁷ Edmund Bishop, "The Genius of the Early Roman Rite," *Liturgica Historica* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1918), pp. 1-19.

Luther, unlike Martin Bucer and Ulrich Zwingli, resisted the temptation to compose lengthy, wordy, and doctrinaire prayers to replace the traditional Mass prayers. Luther preferred the concise statement of the traditional Roman Collects.

The most severe treatment Luther accorded the Roman Mass was the limitation of the Canon to the Preface, the Sanctus, and the Institution Narrative. The attachment of the Institution Narrative to the Preface also displaced the Sanctus from its historic position. Luther's consecration theology, however, remained within the Western tradition established by Ambrose of Milan. The words of Christ consecrate the bread and wine. This in itself may be removed from the Biblical idea that the act of thanksgiving consecrates the things of creation. Nevertheless, Luther's Eucharistic Canon can be correlated with the statement of Saint Paul (1 Tim. 4:4-5) that every creature of God (including, therefore, bread and wine) can be "sanctified by the Word of God and prayer" if it is "accepted with thanksgiving."

The kind of thanksgiving to which Paul refers is the *berakah*, the classic example of which is Nehemiah 9. This prayer offers thanksgiving for the continuous creative and salvatory activity of God, particularly as this work is manifested in the life of His own people. Second, this thanksgiving serves to dedicate the whole life of the people to their Creator and Redeemer through a sacrificial act. Finally,

the prayer ends on an eschatological note: a plea that God will continue His gracious intervention in the life of the people and bring to fulfillment what He has already begun. These three themes are evident in the classical forms of the Christian Eucharistic prayer.

The first aspect of the thanksgiving is evident in the Preface to the Eucharistic prayer. This much Luther retained. However, a fuller Eucharistic prayer is needed to cover the second and third aspects of the *berakah*: the dedication of the people through the self-oblation of the church and the eschatological orientation. The truncating of the Canon, therefore, is the most serious defect of Luther's Eucharistic revision. But to say this is to indulge in hindsight. This Biblical grounding of the Eucharistic prayer was as unknown to Roman Catholics during the late Middle Ages as it was unknown to Luther. Whatever defects we may find in Luther's liturgical work, they were primarily medieval defects. On the other hand, we must also credit Luther with preserving and enriching the best aspects of medieval Eucharistic piety: both the sense of adoration in the presence of the *totus vivus Christus* and devotion to the saving work of the crucified Christ in a petition for forgiveness centered around frequent Communion, which was restored to its central place as the climax of the Eucharistic celebration.

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