

# “This Do In Remembrance of Me”

## *The Institution and the Essence of the Lord’s Supper*

Presented to the Spring Pastors’ Conference of the Wyoming District  
Trinity Lutheran Church, Rock Springs, May 5, 2008

This conference is all about the practice of the Lord’s Supper. These questions, properly focused, simply ask what Jesus intended by saying, “This do.” And this larger question is a prerequisite for every other discussion about the Sacrament. Whether you want to consider the Real Presence, closed communion, church discipline, confirmation or any other aspect of the Lord’s Supper, it is necessary first to ensure that it is, in fact, the Lord’s Supper. For if it is somebody else’s supper, then we forfeit any biblical grounding to make assertions about either what is present there, what power it has or to whom it should be given.

I have been asked to review some pertinent material from church history which will give us a sense of how Christ’s Church in times past has understood Jesus’ command, “This do.” This historical background is vital for several reasons. First, it gives us an opportunity to sit at the feet of our fathers to learn from them, thus allowing us to rise above our own cultural myopia by standing on the shoulders of giants to see farther and more clearly than we otherwise could. Second, by understanding not only the judgments of our fathers, but also their argumentation, we can address contemporary questions without re-inventing the wheel on the one hand, or unwittingly undermining the foundations of our practice on the other. Finally, and most important, it will outline an objective way of judging any sacramental practice, thus removing human judgments and the consequent enthusiasms and power struggles out of the realm of the Sacrament.

### *The Institution as Rule*

We begin in the apostolic era with Corinth. There, Paul related a variety of issues to the understanding and use of the Sacrament. All these disparate topics, ranging from the consumption of sacrificial meat to seating at love feasts, are addressed by re-asserting the Lord’s Institution of His Holy Supper.

<sup>23</sup> For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; <sup>24</sup> and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” <sup>25</sup> In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” (1 Corinthians 11:23-25)

Here, the Apostle set an example that has been followed by the universal Church ever since. Not only does he supply apostolic answers to the practical problems of the Corinthian Christians, but he also

teaches the Church to address all controversies touching the Sacrament by returning to the basics—the Words of Institution themselves. This mode of argumentation was reasserted in every generation and is clearly echoed every time Martin Luther pulled back the tablecloth at the Marburg Colloquy to reveal the chalked words, “*Hoc est corpus meum.*” Our task now is to survey the intervening centuries.

During the Ante-Nicene period, a novel sacramental practice arose among the Encratite and Ebionite sects. These 2<sup>nd</sup> century Gnostics observed such extreme asceticism that they prohibited wine even from the Sacrament, substituting water instead. Thus they were dubbed *Hydroparastatae* (“water supporters”) and *Aquarii* (“water-carriers”).<sup>1</sup> Their practice drew contemporary responses from Irenæus,<sup>2</sup> Clement of Alexandria,<sup>3</sup> Hippolytus<sup>4</sup> and Cyprian of Carthage among others.<sup>5</sup>

Cyprian’s is the most noteworthy since it is the most comprehensive contemporary answer to the challenge, and also because it continued to be cited prominently in later generations. Responding to this novel practice, He wrote to Cæcilius that they, “do not do that which Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, the founder of this sacrifice, did and taught.”<sup>6</sup> He then articulates the rule that, “when anything is prescribed by the inspiration and command of God, it is necessary that a faithful servant should obey the Lord, acquitted by all of assuming anything arrogantly to himself.”<sup>7</sup> Clarifying what is prescribed by the institution and command of God, he writes that, “in offering the cup, the tradition of the Lord must be observed, and that nothing must be done by us but what the Lord first did on our behalf.”<sup>8</sup>

In the paragraphs that follow, Cyprian discusses a number of Old Testament types: Noah, Melchizedek, Solomon, Judah, and Isaiah. Ultimately, however, he returns to the institution where Jesus Himself indicates the contents of the cup. From this he concludes, “the blood of Christ is not offered if there be no wine in the cup, nor the Lord’s sacrifice celebrated with a legitimate consecration unless our oblation and sacrifice respond to His passion.”<sup>9</sup> After showing from 1 Corinthians 11 how Paul both delivers and confirms exactly what Jesus did, he concludes “that we must not at all depart from the evangelical precepts, and that disciples ought also to observe and do the same things which the master both did and taught.”<sup>10</sup> Finally, in a blanket condemnation of every possible departure, he writes:

---

<sup>1</sup> Everett Ferguson, editor, *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity*, (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1990), 287, 298.

<sup>2</sup> Irenæus, *Against Heresies* (ca. 185), Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson, eds., Ante-Nicene Fathers, [ANF] Vol. I, (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1994) 527 §3.

<sup>3</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata* (ca. 194), ANF II:322

<sup>4</sup> Hippolytus, *The Refutation of All Heresies* (ca. 230), ANF V:124

<sup>5</sup> Cyprian, *Epistle LXII: On the Sacrament of the Cup of the Lord*, ANF 5:358ff. cf. John Chrysostom, Homily on Matthew 26:29 (ca. 390), Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, [NPNF] (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 1994) I:10:492.

<sup>6</sup> Cyprian, ANF V:359 §1

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* §2

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 361 §9

That Christ alone ought to be heard, the Father also testifies from heaven, saying, “This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.” Wherefore, if Christ alone must be heard, we ought not to give heed to what another before us may have thought was to be done, but what Christ, who is before all, first did.<sup>11</sup>

Thus Cyprian of Carthage follows Paul by upholding the *verba* as normative for the Church’s conduct of the Sacrament. Apparently, this was sufficient to answer the Encratites. For the first councils of the early fourth century pass over them in silence.

Early in the Post-Nicene period, a different novelty came to the attention of Julius I (340). His response to intinction includes a summary of numerous strange practices and a re-articulation of Cyprian’s maxim.

Although every crime and sin is blotted out by the sacrifices offered to God, what else will be given to the Lord in expiation, when the defects are committed in the very act of offering the sacrifice? For we have heard that some, occupied by ambition, contrary to the divine commands and apostolic custom, offer milk instead of wine at the divine sacrifice. Also others, for the fulfillment of communion, give the people Eucharist that has been intincted. And still others, in the Sacrament of the Lord’s chalice, offer pressed wine; others even reserve linen rags soaked in fresh grape juice for an entire year and, in the time of sacrifice, dip a part of it in water and thus offer. That this is contrary to the evangelical and apostolic teaching and against ecclesiastical custom will be proven without difficulty by the very source from which the ordained sacramental mysteries themselves came forth. For when the Teacher of truth entrusts the true sacrifice of our salvation to His disciples, we know that he gave not milk, but only bread and chalice in this Sacrament. For the gospel truth says, “Jesus took bread and cup, and blessing them, gave them to his disciples (Matt. 26).” Therefore it is remiss to offer milk in the sacrifice because it makes sport of the manifest and evident example of evangelical truth which does not permit anything other than bread and wine to be offered. But their practice of giving the people intincted Eucharist for the fulfillment of communion is not received from the gospel witness, where, when he gave the apostles his body and blood, giving the bread separately and the chalice separately is recorded.<sup>12</sup>

Here Julius uses the same rationale that Cyprian had to condemn other substitutions for the liquid in the chalice.<sup>13</sup> He considers Christ’s institution enough to prove the “evangelical and apostolic teaching [and]

---

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* §10

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 362 §14

<sup>12</sup> “Cum omne crimen atque peccatum oblatis Deo sacrificiis deleatur, quid de cætero pro expiatione delictorum Domino dabitur, quando in ipsa sacrificii oblatione erratur? Audivimus enim quosdam schismatica ambitione detentos, contra divinos ordines et apostolicas institutiones lac pro vino in divinis sacrificiis dedicare; alios quoque intinctam eucharistiam populis pro complemento communionis porrigere; quosdam etiam expressum vinum in sacramento Domini calicis offerre; alios vero pannum lineum musto intinctum per totum annum reservare, et in tempore sacrificii partem ejus aqua lavare, et sic offerre; quod quam sit evangelicæ et apostolicæ doctrinæ contrarium, et consuetudini ecclesiasticæ adversum, non difficile ab ipso fonte mysteria processerunt. Cum enim magister veritatis verum salutis nostræ sacrificium suis commendaret discipulis, nulli lac, sed panem tantum et calicem sub hoc sacramento cognoscimus dedisse. Legitur enim in evangelica veritate: ‘Accepit Jesus panem et calicem, et benedicens dedit discipulis suis (Matt. 26).’ Cesset ergo lac sacrificando (al. in sacrificio) offerri, quia manifestum et evidens exemplum veritatis evangelicæ illuxit, quod præter panem et vinum aliud offerri non liceat. Illud vero, quod pro complemento communionis intinctam tradunt eucharistiam populis, nec hoc prolatum ex Evangelio testimonium receperunt, ubi apostolis corpus suum commendavit et sanguinem. Seorsum enim panis, et seorsum calicis commendatio memoratur.” “*Decreta Julii Papae I decem Juxta Gratiam et Ivonem*” Migne, *Patrologia Latinae*, Vol. 8, 969-70; (cf. *Examination*, 352-3, 363, 422.)

ecclesiastical custom.” Julius’ rejection of intinction<sup>14</sup> is especially noteworthy since he applies Cyprian’s maxim beyond the material elements and extends it also to govern the mode of distribution. The approach shared by Cyprian and Julius I received conciliar imprimatur in 675 when the Fourth Council of Braga reiterated Julius’ seventh decretal nearly verbatim.<sup>15</sup>

While the Encratite challenge and the intinction innovation prompted these classic responses from Cyprian and Julius, numerous lesser-known innovations were also answered in keeping with the rule. When a fourth century grass-roots movement led some to drink of the Lord’s cup at the altar but to carry the host home for later consumption, it was prohibited both at the Council of Saragossa (380) and Toledo (400).<sup>16</sup> Little more than a century later, priests from Thessalonika confected enormous quantities of the Sacrament, distributing baskets of it to everyone in case persecution kept them from the church; Pope Hormisdas (519) called them heretics.<sup>17</sup> Five centuries after that, Humbert of the Romans (1000-61) criticized a similar Greek custom of his day saying, “We read that the Lord did not teach His disciples an imperfect but a perfect commemoration, blessing the bread and at once distributing it. For He did not just bless it and then reserve it to be broken the next day.”<sup>18</sup> This argument was approvingly cited by Martin

---

<sup>13</sup> P. E. Kretzmann reports that brandy and raisin juice may also be added to this list, “When certain congregations of the Orient used a form of brandy, called *σίκερα* or *μέθυσμα*, made of dates, fruit, grain and other ingredients, this action was decidedly condemned. It was chiefly on account of this practice that one of the early councils passed the resolution: ‘*Non licet in sacrificio divino MELLITUM, quod mulsum appellatur, nec ullum aliud proculum extra vinum cum aqua mixtum offerre.*’ The situation in the orthodox Church is brought about by the *Apostolic Constitutions*, which forbid ‘strong drink’ (*σίκερα*) and all substitutes (*ἐπιτήδευτα*) in the oblation. Among the less flagrant offenders against the accepted usage were the Syrian Jacobites and the Nestorians, who used the juice of either fresh or of dried grapes and sought therein a special significance and an extraordinary perfection. But their practise was also condemned by the Church.” (P. E. Kretzmann, “The Archeology of the Sacraments,” *Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. X, No. 5 (May, 1939), 328); Possibly also honey was used. cf. *The Apostolic Constitutions*, Canon III, (NPNF II:14.594).

<sup>14</sup> Due to fears that Christ’s blood could be spilled by very small children or by the sick, some places introduced the practice of dipping the host into the chalice and thus distributing both kinds together (cf. *Excursus on Communing the Sick*, NPNF 14:31). In the centuries after Julius, what began as a questionable practice for infants and the sick was increasingly promoted for all people as the fears of spilling the blood of Christ became disproportionate. From the ninth century on, the evidence for communion via intinction becomes more consistent, especially in the East. For a history of its development, see: Robert F. Taft, S.J., “Communion via Intinction” *Studia Liturgica*, Vol. 26 (1996), 225 ff. and Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part II, [Examination] Trans. Fred Kramer, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), 421-3.

<sup>15</sup> The only alteration to his text is an additional phrase which clarifies what he meant with the mention of *expressum vinum*, namely, he is rejecting certain others who “*non expressum vinum in sacramento dominici calicis offerre, sed oblatiis uvis populos communicare* (do not offer pressed wine but communicate the people with the offered grapes instead).” Canon II of the *Fourth Council of Braga* (675), Johannes Dominicus Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, Vol. 11, (Florentæ: Antonii Zatta, 1765), 155-6; cited in Taft, 228.

<sup>16</sup> Council of Sargossa, Canon III (Mansi, III:634); Concil of Toledo, Canon XIV (Ibid., II:1000). cf. Taft, 234; and *Examination*, 420.

<sup>17</sup> Pope Hormisdas: Epistle 102, (Andreas Thiel, ed., *Epistulae Romanorum Pontificum genuinae et quae ad eos scriptae sunt a S. Hilario usque ad Pelagium II*, vol. I, (Brunsbergae: Eduard Peter, 1868), 902).

<sup>18</sup> *Examination*, 298. Ten centuries later Dr. Balduin similarly condemned the idea that a Lutheran preacher could consecrate elements beforehand for a layman to distribute in his absence (George Dedekennus, editor, *Thesauri Consiliorum et Decisionum*, (Jenae: In Verlegung Zachariao Hertels, Büchhandlers in Hamburg, Gedruckt bei

Chemnitz five centuries later. What Christ did and taught according to the original institution remained the litmus test of orthodox sacramental practice throughout the ancient Church.

The same rule was applied by Gregory II (715-731) in answer to a question posed by Boniface of Mainz. Concerning celebrations that included large numbers of participants, Boniface asked: “whether...it is licet to consecrate two or three chalices at the same time.”<sup>19</sup> Gregory answered, that since Jesus “took the cup saying, ‘this is the cup of the New Testament in My blood’ (Luke 22) ‘this do as often as ye take’ (1 Cor. 11), it does not agree to place two or three cups on the altar while the solemn mass is being celebrated.”<sup>20</sup> For Gregory, Jesus’ use of a single cup was enough to establish the rule for every altar. Therefore, as an alternative to Boniface’s suggestion of multiple chalices, Gregory championed the use of a *fistula*.<sup>21</sup> This silver tube was designed to assist in drinking out of a single, large chalice. Presumably, it was necessary only when either the vessel’s size or the communicant’s incapacity made a direct drink difficult. Accordingly, the wide-spread use of the *fistula* indicates also the wide-spread acceptance of Gregory’s answer to Boniface. In fact, the *fistula* was used in the Roman Church throughout the middle ages and at least to the threshold of this century.<sup>22</sup>

Use of the *fistula* was received and continued in the Lutheran Church as well. It was discussed without contention at the Diet of Augsburg<sup>23</sup> and continued to be used in Lutheran congregations even after it largely declined in Roman Catholic churches.<sup>24</sup> The Reformed were the first to depart from this ancient use.<sup>25</sup> As early as 1550, London’s church order introduced the use of multiple chalices.<sup>26</sup> It is

---

Johann Nisio, 1671), 567-8.

<sup>19</sup> Martin Gerbertus, *Vetus Liturgia alemannica*, Vol. I (S. Blas. 1776), 221.

<sup>20</sup> “*In missarum solemnii illud observandum est, quod Dominus noster Jesus Christus sanctis suis tribuit discipulis. Accepit namque calicem dicens: Hic est calix Novi Testamenti in meo sanguine (Luc. xxii), hoc facite quotiescunque sumetis (I Cor. xi). Unde congruum non est duos vel tres calices in altario ponere cum missarum solemnia celebrantur.*” “*Epistola XIV: Gregorii Papæ II ad Bonifacium Episcopum*” Migne, *Patralogia Latinae*, Vol. 89, 525.

<sup>21</sup> Also called: “*canna, pugillaris, calamus, virgula, arundo, tubus, tubulus, sumptorius (suctorius?), canalis, canola, siphon [and] pipa.*” Julius Smend, *Kelchversagung und Kelchspendung in der abendländischen Kirche*, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1898), 17. cf. Gerbertus, 224.

<sup>22</sup> The *fistula* was mentioned by Paschius Radbertus who was born in the eighth century and it was known in France as early as the ninth. “The calamus [*fistula*] was mentioned frequently in the *Ordines Romani*.” Gerbertus, 226; Both Innocent III (1198) and Benedict XIV (1740) speak of it and it was still customary in the papal mass as recently as 1898. cf. Smend, 17-18.

<sup>23</sup> David Chytraeus, *History of the Augsburg Confession*, (Rosteck: Gedruckt durch Jacobum Lucium Siebenburger, 1576), 164.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 19. cf. Drach, 573. Apparently, after the cup was withdrawn from the laity, concelebrations which required a vessel large enough for a *fistula* were rare.

<sup>25</sup> Although the 1530 Church order for the Lutheran Church in Riga stipulates the use of three separate chalices, only one chalice was used on the altar at the Divine Service. The other two chalices were used for communing ordinary invalids and contagious invalids respectively. cf. Emil Sehling, *Die Evangelischen Kirchenordnungen Des XVI Jahrhunderts*, Vol. 5 (Leipzig: O. R. Reiland, 1913), 17.

<sup>26</sup> Aemelius Ludwig Richter, *Die Evangelischen Kirchenordnungen Des Sechzehnten Jahrhunderts*, Vol. II (Weimar: Verlag des Landes-Industriecomptoirs, 1846), 108.

unclear exactly when multiple chalices entered Lutheran communion practice. However, it seems that in Altona and Brandenburg, at least, use of a single chalice with a *fistula* continued into the eighteenth century. At that time, pietistic objections to the *fistula* prompted royal edicts against it.<sup>27</sup>

Lutheran acceptance of Cyprian's argument, while implied by a wide-spread use of the *fistula*, is made explicit in Chemnitz' *Examination of the Council of Trent*. There he cites the epistle to Cæcilius more often and more extensively than any other writing of the fathers.<sup>28</sup> Summarizing Cyprian, he writes:

In consecrating the cup of the Lord and administering it to the people the manner of evangelical truth and of the tradition of the Lord must be held fast; there is to be no departing through a human and new institution from what Christ, the teacher, both commanded and did. He declares that those err who, in consecrating the cup of the Lord and administering it to the people, do not do what Christ, the author and teacher of this sacrament, did and taught. He says that when men have fallen into this error, they must return to the guide and origin of the Dominical tradition so that nothing other is done by us than what the Lord did for us first.<sup>29</sup>

Chemnitz draws extensively from Cyprian's letter to Cæcilius, endorsing particularly those portions where he makes his case from the *verba*.<sup>30</sup> However, he consistently omits Cyprian's use of types and symbols to bolster the argument. When the Church observes and does what Christ expressly taught and did, it is quite enough. Chemnitz needed no additional proof that these usages are significant.

Chemnitz considers these arguments so "solid (*solidae rationes*)," "general and universal,"<sup>31</sup> that even though originally penned in the midst of an altogether different controversy, he finds them perfectly appropriate to address every question of

what must be done in consecrating the cup of the Lord and administering it to the people in order that the tradition of the Lord may be preserved. Arguing from the lesser to the greater, these arguments of Cyprian are rightly applied to the present controversy. For if he battles so sharply with the weightiest arguments against the water-dispensers, who left the cup itself and the words about the cup (*ipsum calicem et verba calicis*) to the people, and only changed something of the element, how much more sharply, do you think, he would have risen up on the same basis if someone at that time had wanted to take away and forbid the whole cup of the Lord, and the words concerning the cup (*totum calicem Dominum, et verba calicis*), to the faithful people?<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> "Für Altona hat ein Edikt des dänischen Königs Friedrich IV. (18 September 1705), für Brandenburg noch später königlich preußische Orders der *fistula* den Geraus gemacht." Smend, 19.

<sup>28</sup> Chemnitz' cites one passage of Cyprian's letter five times: "That Christ alone ought to be heard, the Father also testifies from heaven, saying, 'This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.' Wherefore, if Christ alone must be heard, we ought not to give heed to what another before us may have thought was to be done, but what Christ, who is before all, first did. Neither is it becoming to follow the practice of man, but the truth of God; since God speaks by Isaiah the prophet, and says, 'In vain do they worship me, teaching the commandments and doctrines of men.'" ANF 5:362.14 (*Examination*, 251, 294, 295, 362 and 374). Under Topics 4, 5 and 6 Chemnitz cites other parts of this epistle 8 more times. (*Ibid.*, 295-7, 342, 351-2, 367, 463, 538-9) with his longest citation of any material from the fathers being that on pages 351-2 of the *Examination*.

<sup>29</sup> *Examination*, 351; cf. ANF 5:359.

<sup>30</sup> *Examination*, 352.

<sup>31</sup> *Examination*, 351-2; Preuss, ed., *Examini Concilii Tridentum*, [Examini] (Berolini: Sumptibus Gust. Schlawitz, 1861), 348.

<sup>32</sup> *Examination*, 352; Examini, 348-9.

The general and universal arguments used by Cyprian apply not just to questions of sacramental substance, but to all questions of sacramental practice. It is never permitted to depart from Christ's usage or His words about the usage.

Chemnitz also cites Julius' seventh decretal to discuss the importance of determining sacramental usage on the proper grounds.

It is worth the effort to consider on what grounds [Julius] refutes [intinction]. He says that it is contrary to the divine order (*divinum ordinem*), contrary to the apostolic institutions (*Apostolicas institutiones*), likewise it is contrary to the evangelical and apostolic teaching (*Evangelicae institutiones*) and ecclesiastical custom (*consuetudini Ecclesiasticae*). He also shows (and this must be especially noted) from where the proofs in this matter must be sought and taken. For he says, "It will not be difficult to prove this from the fountain of truth itself, from which the ordained mysteries of the sacraments have come forth."<sup>33</sup>

These four grounds—divine order, apostolic constitutions, evangelical and apostolic teaching and ecclesiastical custom—all derive from one single source, namely, the *verba*.

The Lutheran Symbols use this same mode of argumentation.

Among us both kinds of the sacrament are given to the laity for the following reason (*aus dieser Ursach*). There is a clear order and command of Christ in Matthew 26: "Drink from it, all of you." Concerning the cup Christ here commands with clear words that all should drink from it (AC XXII.1).<sup>34</sup>

The *Augustana* argues for the use of both kinds with one singular reason: Christ did and taught it in the institution. This is the primary argument of the Apology as well. "There can be no doubt that it is godly and in accordance with the institution of Christ and the words of Paul to use both elements in the Lord's Supper. For Christ instituted both elements..." (Ap XXII.1). While Melancthon does take the time to refute some papistic arguments, he finds it wholly unnecessary to support with any additional arguments a strict adherence to the *Verba*.

This simple reliance on what Christ did and taught remained the normative authority for sacramental conduct through the Post-Reformation era and up to the present. A few random examples might illustrate this point. In August of 1655, the Leipzig theological faculty addressed the case of a priest who inverted the distribution and gave the cup before the host.<sup>35</sup> They wrote,

when we well consider such troublesome behavior and clumsy error we find that such an inverted *Administration* of the Holy Supper runs completely contrary to the institution of Christ... And we consider that the proper Sacrament can be given to the parish only so long as such a Holy

<sup>33</sup> *Examination*, 422; Examini, 376. "The reader notices that the Roman church at that time used far different bases in controversies about the Communion of the Lord's Supper than are used now. For the divine order, the apostolic institutions, the evangelical and apostolic teaching, and ancient ecclesiastical custom are named. To these we are now appealing. But opposed to us are the power of the church, later custom, and arguments from reason." (*Ibid.*)

<sup>34</sup> Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds. *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 362. Unless otherwise noted, confessional citations are from this source.

<sup>35</sup> "Wie sich zu verhalten wenn ein Priester ex errore den gesegneten Kelch vor dem gesegneten Brodt austheilet?" Dedekennus, 409.

Sacrament is distributed, not only in the *material* and *substantial parts*, but the *form*, *i.e.* the mode and arrangement, in which Christ has distributed it and that we, too, should and must *administer* it—namely, that the blessed bread must go first and the blessed cup follow thereafter to have its intended end as is the Lord’s desire.<sup>36</sup>

The weight of their judgment rests upon the mode and arrangement of Christ’s institution. From this, they derive its intended end and even the Lord’s own desire.<sup>37</sup> This was not an isolated opinion but echoed the 1557 opinion of Andreas Hyperius.<sup>38</sup> Also, it found its way into subsequent Pastoral Theologies of Christoph Seidel (1769) and C. F. W. Walther (1872).<sup>39</sup>

With the same arguments as the Leipzig theologians, the L.C.M.S. has maintained Julius’ position on intinction. In 1944, the Missouri Synod resolved,

We definitely reject intinction, because while distributing the bread, the Savior said, “Take, eat!” Matt. 26:25; Mark 14:22; and while giving the wine, He said, “Drink ye all of it!” Matt. 26:27; Mark 14:23. Intinction would be a direct violation of the words of institution.<sup>40</sup>

Here again, not only is intinction rejected but it is proscribed because of what Christ Himself said and did in instituting the Sacrament—the self same argument of Cyprian, Julius and the universal Church.

In 1869, Dr. Thomas Welch, patented a process to pasteurize grape juice and forestall the fermentation process.<sup>41</sup> For the first time in history, this afforded teetotalers a new option for the contents of the chalice without going so far as to substitute water—as had the Encratites and Ebionites centuries before and Mormons only decades prior. Walther responded to this innovation in his *Pastoral Theology*:

It is an error...when the Reformed Beza, following Calvin, wanted to permit the holy Supper to be celebrated with any substituted elements similar to the bread and wine; or when the Gnostic Encratites from the second to the fourth centuries forbade wine and used only water in its place, even in the holy Supper, in which they have recently been followed in America by certain temperance fanatics (*Abstinenz-Schwärmer*).<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* Italics indicate that the original switches from German to Latin.

<sup>37</sup> As a remedy for this error, the Leipzig faculty says that the people who received the Chalice before the host should receive the chalice again. “*und uns überschickte Frage unsere Meynung diese dass der Sachen hätte leicht können gerathen werden wenn der Pfarrer so bald er seines Irrthums inne worden den Kelch ferner zu reichen hätte nachgelassen es Gemeine angezeigt wie er wegen seines schwindelsüchtigen Kopffs geirret hätte und das gesegnete Brodt auszutheilen angefangen auch die 7. Personen so allbereit den Kelch empfahen dahin bescheiden das sie nochmals weil er mit anticipirung des Kelchs geirret hätte*” (*Ibid.*).

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 571

<sup>39</sup> C.F.W. Walther, *Pastoral Theology*, (New Haven: Lutheran News, Inc., 1995), 143; C.F.W. Walther, *Americanish-Lutherische Pastoraltheologie*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1906), 187.

<sup>40</sup> Saginaw Convention Proceedings, 1944, 254-5. Note also: “We cannot but look upon this practice as an improper use of the Sacrament. If Christ took bread and gave it, no one has the right to change the procedure. If the church or the celebrant should decide how the Sacrament be used, Christ’s “This do” may just as well be abolished entirely.” A.E. Krause, “The Proper Use of Holy Communion” *The Abiding Word*, vol. III, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1960), 499.

<sup>41</sup> “1869-Dr. Thomas Bramwell Welch, a physician and dentist by profession, successfully pasteurizes Concord grape juice to produce an ‘unfermented sacramental wine’ for fellow parishioners at his church in Vineland, N.J., where he is communion steward. His achievement marks the beginning of the processed fruit juice industry.” <[http://www.welchs.com/company/company\\_history.html](http://www.welchs.com/company/company_history.html)>

<sup>42</sup> *Pastoral Theology*, 130; *Pastoraltheologie*, 168-9. (cf. Franz Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. III. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 354 note 94).

Likewise, both seminaries of our Synod have issued opinions against grape juice that argue nearly identically.<sup>43</sup> Namely, the institution accounts indicate that the contents of the cup are γέννημα τῆς ἀμπέλου and this must be understood according to *sensus literalis* of first century Palestine—not what a similar phrase could mean today since Welch’s invention.

In July of 2001, the L.C.M.S. incorporated these opinions into a formal resolution which reasons, “Since Christ used and sanctified no other element for this Sacrament;...therefore be it *Resolved*, That the congregations be encouraged to use only wine for the Sacrament.”<sup>44</sup> While it is troubling that the wine is encouraged but not required, the mode of argumentation remains consistent. The maxim of Cyprian serves as an adequate bulwark against sacramental innovation.

### ***The Institution as Limit***

Proper conduct of the Sacrament is based solely on what Christ did and taught in the institution. Lutheranism has never based her sacramental practice either upon what Christ probably did or upon how he might have done it differently in a different context. Fears that this posture might necessitate the imitation of every historical circumstance are unfounded. In fact, the legalism which adds ceremonial requirements to the Sacrament arises from *laxity* in the reading of the *verba* not from *strictness*. Historical inferences and symbolic argumentation become the focus only when the actual words of Jesus are left behind. It is precisely a strict adherence to the words of Jesus that has prevented the Lutheran Church from allowing additional requirements to be laid on the institution of Christ.

This is seen especially in deliberations about the type of bread to be used. Since our Lord instituted the Supper during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, it is virtually certain that such bread was used in the institution. Nevertheless, “the earliest churches used...ordinary leavened bread.”<sup>45</sup> In fact, the first controversy concerning the bread arose when Greek polemicists argued from history, etymology, philology and symbolism that *leavened* bread is not only allowed but required in the Sacrament.

---

<sup>43</sup> cf. “Opinion of the Department of Systematic Theology: The Fruit of the Vine in the Sacrament of the Altar,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 45:1/2 [Jan./Apr., 1981], 77-80; “Is ‘Non-Alcoholic Wine’ Really Wine?” (Theological Observer) *Concordia Journal* 17:1 [Jan. 1991], 4-6.

<sup>44</sup> “To Encourage Use of Only Wine in Administration of the Lord’s Supper” *Convention Proceedings: 61<sup>st</sup> Regular Convention, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*, July 14-20, 2001, 141 (Res. 3-16). It is worthy of mention here that a substitute resolution, “To Encourage Use of Fruit of the Vine in the Lord’s Supper” was defeated. Apparently this was seen an attempt to blunt the force of the resolution by allowing modern etymological interpretations of Christ’s words.

<sup>45</sup> Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, (London & Philadelphia: SCM Press & Trinity Press International, 1966), 63. “Unleavened bread was hardly at hand in everyday life” (*Ibid.*, note 5). “The different customs that figured in the medieval debates between the eastern and western churches about the bread in the eucharist (leavened in the Orthodox church and unleavened in the Roman Catholic church) appear not to have been a matter of discussion in ancient Christianity” (Ferguson, 160).

The Latin Church might have argued back, mandating the use of *unleavened* bread. But they did not. Rather, the focus remained on the word used in the institution: ἄρτος. By His actions, Jesus indicated that unleavened bread is certainly one of the allowable varieties. But by this word, Jesus indicated that any variety of bread might be used. Again, Cyprian’s maxim ruled the day. Only the *verba* can determine the limits of “this do.”

Although some Greeks sought ways to prove that Christ Himself used leavened bread, their positions were abandoned as untenable.<sup>46</sup> Once forced back to Cyprian’s maxim, the sacramental freedom instituted by Christ was restored and strengthened. To this day, Lutheranism affirms the arguments of Rome over Constantinople because Rome here maintained the position of St. Paul, Cyprian and Julius. Walther writes in his *Pastoral Theology*:

It is an adiaphoran whether the bread is leavened or unleavened; whether it is rye, wheat, [corn], barley, or oat bread, (*Roggen-, Weizen-, Korn-, Gersten- oder Haferbrod*) whether it has this or that form; as long as it is baked from water and the flour of some grain (*Getreidemehl*).<sup>47</sup>

Ἄρτος includes every kind of grain bread and excludes only non-grain breads.

Just as certain as Jesus’ use of unleavened bread, so also is His use of *krama* (wine mixed with water).<sup>48</sup> For this reason, the Council of Carthage (397) decrees, “In the Sacrament of the body and blood of the Lord, nothing other is to be offered than what the Lord Himself handed down, that is, bread and wine mixed with water.”<sup>49</sup> But even conciliar approval and 1100 years of custom were not enough to overturn Lutheran reliance on the *verba*. In his *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Martin Chemnitz opposes Rome’s insistence on *krama* with Christ’s institution: “the evangelists write expressly of the wine, or of the fruit of the vine, which was in the Dominical cup, but make no mention of water.”<sup>50</sup> The Reformers refused to prescribe anything in the conduct of the Sacrament which Christ’s words themselves do not—even when the proposed rule is historically certain.

From this, a number of other questions may be laid to rest. Must the Sacrament take place in an upper room, or with thirteen men around the table, or in the evening or in a reclining position? All of

<sup>46</sup> John H. Erickson, “Leavened and Unleavened: Some Theological Implications of the Schism of 1054,” *St. Vladimir’s Theological Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (1970), 173; cf. 155-176.

<sup>47</sup> *Pastoral Theology*, 130; *Pastoraltheologie*, 168.

<sup>48</sup> cf. Ferguson, 940 and Jeremias, 110 and 221 n. 1.

<sup>49</sup> “*Ut in sacramentis corporis et sanguinis Domini nihil amplius offeratur, quam ipse Dominus tradidit, hoc est, panis et vinum aqua mixtum.* Augusti lists five other councils which passed almost the same resolutions” Kretzmann, 328. cf. *The Council of Quinisext* (692) Canon xxxii (NPNF II:14.379-80) and *The African Code*, Canon xxxvii (NPNF II:14.460).

<sup>50</sup> *Examination*, 540. Likewise, C.F.W. Walther writes in his *Pastoral Theology*: “It is also an adiaphoron whether the wine is red or white; whether it is totally pure (*ganz reiner / merum*) or is mixed with water (such as the Lord probably used according to the custom in that country); as long as it is from the fruit of the vine (γέννημα τῆς ἀμπέλου) according to Matt. 26:29. It is an error when the Greek and Roman churches want the holy Supper celebrated only with *Krama* (οἶνος ὕδατι κεκραμμένος—wine mixed with water).” *Pastoral Theology*, 130; *Pastoraltheologie*, 168-9.

these attendant circumstances are true enough, but none of them is said or done by Christ during His institution.<sup>51</sup> If they had been, the Church would certainly have observed them. So writes, St. Augustine: “if the Lord had not prescribed it, but only admonished that the Eucharist should always be dispensed and received after supper, I believe that no one would have changed that custom.”<sup>52</sup>

When, during the Reformation, some began to argue that a valid celebration of the Lord’s Supper required the celebrant to break a single loaf into pieces, Christ’s institution remained the sole answer.<sup>53</sup>

Both Chemnitz and Luther address the argument by denying that the word *κλάειν* means “to break.”

Rather, they hold that the verb properly “means to distribute bread.”<sup>54</sup> Chemnitz writes,

according to Hebrew custom it was not necessary in speaking about something being broken that it actually be torn to pieces or broken into small parts, but whatever was offered, distributed, obtained, and received at a meal (even if the action took place without any crumbling or breaking) was said to be “broken.”<sup>55</sup>

They argued this, first, from the Scriptural use of the word when it is applied to food<sup>56</sup> and, second, from Paul’s use of *κλώμενον* as a synonym for Luke’s *διδόμενον* (given).<sup>57</sup>

Thus, Luther and Chemnitz rejected the *fractio panis* and affirmed the propriety of communion wafers (in use since the fourth century). Far from ignoring the force of the Greek word *κλάειν*,<sup>58</sup> they insisted, rather, on the proper rendering of it.<sup>59</sup> The *verba* simply do not say that He broke the bread in the course of the action—He might or might not have done so. They say only that He distributed the

---

<sup>51</sup> The words, “while they were eating,” and “after supper,” are not those of Jesus during the institution but are historical circumstances noted by the evangelists. “There is a vast difference between the things that pertain to the substance of the sacraments (*ea quae ad substantiam Sacramentorum pertinent*), which have the institution, precept, and command of God, and the external circumstances (*externas circumstantias*), which do not have the precept and command of God but are freely observed for the sake of edification. Such circumstance is whether this sacrament is to be received after eating or, indeed, by those who have fasted...For it is beyond debate that the substance of the sacraments consists in matter and form, that is, in the Word of God and the external element divinely instituted for this purpose (*substantiam Sacramentorum constare materia et forma, hoc est, verbo Dei, et externo elemento divinitus ad hoc instituto*).” *Examination*, 363-4; *Examin*, 353.

<sup>52</sup> *Examination*, 391.

<sup>53</sup> The Reformed argument is not driven by strict adherence to Christ’s words. Rather it is a liturgical expression of how the Reformed understood the words of Jesus, “This is my body broken for you” (1 Cor. 11:24). Here they saw a direct reference to the passion of Christ’s corporeal body so that the “broken body” was not understood of Christ’s sacramental distribution in the bread but of Jesus’ crucifixion. (cf. Martin Chemnitz, *The Lord’s Supper*, trans. J.A.O. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1979), 122 and *Pastoral Theology*, 130)

<sup>54</sup> *Great Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper*, AE 37:266.

<sup>55</sup> *Lord’s Supper*, 123.

<sup>56</sup> In fact, every single occurrence of the word in the New Testament clearly supports this understanding. (Matthew 14:19; 15:36; 26:26; Mark 8:6, 19; 14:22; Luke 22:19; 24:30; Acts 2:46; 20:7, 11; 27:35; 1 Corinthians 10:16 and 11:24).

<sup>57</sup> *Lord’s Supper*, 123-4; *This Is My Body*, AE 37:43; *Great Confession Concerning Christ’s Supper*, AE 37:266, 332-3; *Against the Heavenly Prophets*, AE 40:177-8, 208-10.

<sup>58</sup> They insisted upon its application against the Roman Private Mass which did not consider the distribution and giving as part of the Sacrament’s essence.

<sup>59</sup> cf. *Against the Heavenly Prophets*, AE 37:178. On these very same grounds, Chemnitz also argues against the necessity of submersion in baptism. (See, *Examination*, 394.)

bread during the course of the action. For this reason Reformed insistence on the fracture is an additional requirement foreign to Christ's institution.

By this approach to the question of the fracture, Luther and Chemnitz maintained absolute deference to the words of institution. They, like Augustine, give every reason to believe that if ἔκλασεν did, in fact, indicate that Jesus fractured a loaf in the institution, they too, would have insisted on the fracture and disapproved of the wafers regardless of how old the practice. The *verba* alone both establish the dominical usage as well as guard against human additions. Nothing else was needed.

This definitive clarity would not long survive the passing of the Reformers. Scarcely four decades after Chemnitz wrote against the fracture, Johann Gerhardt would again take up the question in his *Comprehensive Explanation of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper*. There, in an about face, he admits that ἔκλασεν means that the bread was fractured. But, this notwithstanding, he avers that it is incidental and "not necessary for the completion of the Sacrament."<sup>60</sup> Thus Gerhardt abandoned the argument of Luther and Chemnitz, both rejecting their understanding of ἔκλασεν and, more significantly, inserting a wedge between the *verba* and the essentials of the Sacrament.

The repercussions of this reversal would not be felt immediately. Only the argument was changed, while Lutheran opposition to the fracture remained intact. Even though Gerhardt's new approach was adopted by subsequent generations,<sup>61</sup> the momentum of Lutheran tradition prevented it from being used to overturn those judgments already rendered by the Reformers. It was not until a pair of developments in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century that Gerhardt's argument would need to stand alone—unaided by the fathers. "Dr. Thomas Welch's Unfermented Sacramental Wine" and the hygienic push begun in 1882 to use one chalice per communicant<sup>62</sup> put his rule to the test.

---

<sup>60</sup> "Christ obviously broke the bread in the holy Supper, and such breaking was also practiced by the early church, 1 Cor. 10:16; yet, it is not necessary for the completion of this Sacrament that the bread first be broken after the consecration. Rather, it is sufficient that the bread be prepared for distribution, whether this occurs before, during or after the consecration. The only reason the Lord Christ [had to break the bread] was that the bread at hand was in a whole piece [loaf], and by this means [He] prepared it for distribution." *Ibid.* Gerhard argues this conclusion by the following points: 1) If breaking is essential, there must be a corresponding action with the chalice. 2) Christ broke the bread "solely for the purpose that" it might be distributed. 3) We must maintain a distinction between the distribution itself and the mode of distribution. 4) Whatever is *adiaphora* should not be made a matter of conscience. 5) Something good in itself becomes perverted by false delusion. (*Ibid.*, 314-16). Johann Gerhardt, *A Comprehensive Explanation of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper*, trans. Elmer Hohle (Malone, Texas: Repristination Press, 2000), 314.

<sup>61</sup> e.g. "So breaking the bread is not an essential part of this action (*kein wesentliches Stück dieser Handlung*)." *Pastoraltheologie*, 169. Also, "They [the Reformed] insist that Jesus broke the bread and that we must do likewise. But Jesus simply broke the bread in order to give it to each of His disciples, and His injunction 'This do' does not include the breaking of the bread as an essential feature of the distribution." John H. C. Fritz, D. D., *Pastoral Theology*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1945), 122.

<sup>62</sup> Rev. J.D. Krout, "The Individual Communion Cup," *United Brethren Review* 17:2 (March-April 1906), 101. <<http://www.materialreligion.org/documents/may98doc.html>>

In so doing, they simultaneously re-opened the possibility of intinction and even communion in one kind<sup>63</sup> as responses to hygienic concerns. If Gerhardt's rule was to rise to the challenge, it would have to prove with dominical certainty: whether a shared cup and fermentation were necessary or only incidental to the sacrament. Then, it would need to address the same questions we regard to the separate giving of body and blood and the very giving of the blood itself. Notice that the very question itself has no precedent in the first 16 centuries of sacramental deliberations. That is not to say that it was a new question to ecclesiastical history. It had been posed before, but not by Lutherans.

### ***The Institution as Essence***

Through 1750 years of pronouncements against intinction, it had remained quite enough to say that it directly violated Jesus' command. Neither Julius I nor any churchman following him, hung their argument upon the judgment that a separate host and cup were somehow "necessary."<sup>64</sup> The Leipzig faculty judged similarly in the 1655 *gutachten* referenced above.

In [the inverted Sacrament], admittedly, the *essence of the Sacrament* is present but not according to such manner and in such arrangement as Christ ordained it and has prescribed it to be administered by us in the institution of the Holy Supper. Furthermore, we consider it no true Sacrament. And we consider that the proper Sacrament can be given to the parish only so long as such a Holy Sacrament is distributed, not only in the *material* and *substantial parts*, but the *form*, *i.e.* the mode and arrangement.<sup>65</sup>

Here their condemnation of the inverted order of distribution comes despite their opinion that the essence of the Sacrament was unimpaired.<sup>66</sup>

It was scholastic theologians who first divided the essence of the Sacrament from the Institution of Christ. This distinction became their main argument to defend communion in one kind against the Hussites at Constance and later against the Lutherans at Trent.<sup>67</sup> They conceded both that Christ

---

<sup>63</sup> "While people in America clamor for the individual cup for each communicant, in England in some places people want to get rid of the chalice completely. It is reported from Bradford, that a congregation: The Greenfield Congregational Church, has decided to celebrate communion only under one form; without the chalice." *Der Lutheraner*, July 1, 1905, Vol. 59, Issue 14.

<sup>64</sup> Taft, 228-233.

<sup>65</sup> "...in dem zwar die *substantialia Sacramenti* vorhanden gewesen aber solche Stücke so zum Abendmahl gehören nicht auff solche Weise und in solcher Ordnung wie Christus bey der Einsetzung das H. Nachmahls haben will und uns vorgeschrieben gereicht worden. Dannhero auch wir es für kein richtig Sacrament halten und dem Pferr recht geben können weil bey solchem H. Sacrament nicht allein auff das materiale und partes *substantiales*, sondern auff das formale die Weise und Ordnung in welcher es Christus ausgetheilet hat und von uns auch soll und muß *administrirt* werden..." Dedekennus, 409. Italics indicate that the original switches from German to Latin.

<sup>66</sup> The truth of their assumption that "the essence of the Sacrament (*substantialia Sacramenti*) is present," is, of course, debatable. But we are here examining their mode of argument.

<sup>67</sup> Eventually, the introduction of intinction led into the most infamous of alterations to Sacramental usage. It was a small step from offering the dipped host to offering the host undipped. That the Council of Tours needed to address the matter with a decree gives reason to suspect that as early as 675 some priests had neglected to dip the host before giving it. "The wafer should be dipped in the blood of Christ in order that the presbyter may be able to say truly: 'May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ benefit you for the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.'" (Examine, 423; cf. Excursus on the Communion of the Sick, NPNF II:14:31) The first open mention of

instituted the Sacrament in both kinds and that this remained the practice in the apostolic era, as well as the Ante-Nicene and Post-Nicene eras.<sup>68</sup> But Rome consistently argued that “this notwithstanding (*hoc non obstante*)”,<sup>69</sup> the mode of distributing Christ’s body and blood—be it separately in host and cup, or concomitant in the host alone—is adiaphorous.<sup>70</sup> The Council of Trent thundered, “that this power has always been in the Church, that in the dispensation of the sacraments, provided their essence is preserved (*salve illorum substantia*), she may order and change whatever she judges.”<sup>71</sup> Underlying and supporting the Tridentine assertion that the cup is non-essential to the Sacrament, the synod likewise held that it is unnecessary: “If anyone says that by God’s command, or because it is necessary for salvation, each and every believer in Christ ought to receive both kinds of the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, let him be anathema.”<sup>72</sup> This decretal is based on the theory of concomitance which had been set forth at Constance in 1415.

Faced with the notion that what is essential and necessary must be determined independently from the actual institution of Christ, Luther might have set about to prove the necessity of both kinds by some logical or theological consideration. But, as is seen in the Smalcald Articles, he does not take the bait.

Nor do we need the lofty learning which teaches us that there is as much under one kind as under both. This is how the sophists and the Council of Constance teach. Even if it were true that there is as much under one kind as under both, one kind is still not the complete order and institution as established and commanded by Christ. (SA III.vi.2-3)

Leaving the sophists to argue among themselves, Luther simply reasserts the sacramental rule of Cyprian.

communicating people under one kind is seen in the scholastic writers, about A.D. 1250. During the period between 1200 and 1415, the practice of communion in one kind gradually became the norm in the Roman Church. But it was not until the Council of Constance that the cup was canonically forbidden and the last remnants of communion in both kinds were suppressed. (Examination, 423-26.)

<sup>68</sup> They did, however, assert that on other occasions the apostles celebrated in one kind.

<sup>69</sup> In his *Examination* (361-382), Chemnitz returns almost a dozen times to lambaste this phrase from the Council of Constance, *hoc non obstante*. He then shows that although Trent dropped the phrase they still retained its force. “The Council of Constance...decreed that, the Dominical institution notwithstanding, recent custom must be considered as law.” “[Trent asserts:] Although Christ instituted this sacrament and handed it down to the apostles under the forms of bread and wine, the lay people, and clergy who are not confecting, are bound by no divine precept to receive both kinds.” Chemnitz calls it an excellent example of begging the question: “Although absolutely no reason has been shown, brought forward, and explained, they nevertheless declare and proclaim nakedly and simply...that although Christ instituted the use of both kinds, lay people are nevertheless obligated by no divine precept to receive both kinds.” (*Examination*, 396-7.)

<sup>70</sup> “The fact that laypeople today can, in certain circumstances, receive the chalice in the Roman mass changes nothing in the controversy which has existed between Lutheranism and Roman Catholicism for centuries. The controversy has always been about the question of whether the chalice *has* to be distributed at mass, not if it *may* be distributed” (Tom G. A. Hardt, *On the Sacrament of the Altar: A Book of the Lutheran Doctrine of the Lord’s Supper* (Fort Wayne: C.T.S. Press, 1984), 29, note 2). Trent even stipulated that the cup may be granted to the laity—as long as the people who receive it first admit that one kind is both laudable and in keeping with divine law. (“CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH IT SEEMS THE USE OF THE CUP COULD BE GRANTED,” *Examination*, 433.)

<sup>71</sup> *Examination*, 338; *Examin*, 342.

<sup>72</sup> *Examination*, 338-9. “Those who receive one kind only are not defrauded of any grace necessary for salvation.” *Ibid.* (cf. p. 427 ff.)

Later, Martin Chemnitz takes exactly the same approach in his *Examination of the Council of Trent*. He first admits the church's power to change incidentals saying, "We do not deny that with respect to such arrangements the church has power." But having said this, Chemnitz writes,

However, the papalists stretch this power beyond its proper bounds, as if the church could, by a similar power, change, mutilate, prohibit, and take away also those things which the Son of God instituted, ordained, prescribed, commanded, and taught in the institution of the Supper. This we deny because it cannot be proved."<sup>73</sup>

Since what is essential and necessary to the Sacrament is unprovable apart from the *verba*,<sup>74</sup> Chemnitz sets forth an altogether different ground: "The papalists say that the same thing [as partaking of the cup] is accomplished in the taking of the bread. But we know that the efficacy of the sacraments must be judged from the Word."<sup>75</sup>

Accordingly, Chemnitz holds that, "The essence of the Supper (*ad substantiam coenae Dominicae*) must be learned and determined not from human argumentations but from the testamentary institution of the Son of God."<sup>76</sup> And "the essential things in the sacraments are [both] the matter and the form (*substantia Sacramentorum affirmant esse materiam et formam*)." By defining *essence* this way, Chemnitz echoes the Catechism where the "essence (*Wesen / substantiam*) of this Sacrament" is simply Christ's institution (LC V.20).<sup>77</sup> Thus, the language of "essence" or "chief thing" designates the Words of Institution themselves—not only select elements and actions distilled therefrom.

Luther consistently maintains, "Nothing is omitted [in the *verba*] that pertains to the completeness, the use, and the blessing of this sacrament; and nothing is included that is superfluous and not necessary for us to know."<sup>78</sup> Thus, every word of Christ's institution "depends on each other and makes one sacramental essence."<sup>79</sup> There simply can be no division between the institution of Christ and

---

<sup>73</sup> *Examination*, 412. "The church cannot assume to itself the liberty of making Christ's ordinances matters left to human choice (*res indifferentia*)." (Ap XXII.15).

<sup>74</sup> Chemnitz calls the attempt to prove the essence apart from the *verba* nothing other than "to be wiser than Christ." *Examination*, 428.

<sup>75</sup> *Examination*, 429. The entire exchange here is helpful (*Examination*, 428-9). While arguing against Reformed symbolism, which finds the essence of the Sacrament in the capacity of the elements themselves, Chemnitz writes to the contrary, "'This cup is the new covenant,' not because of the cup or its material (*materiam*) or its form (*formam*), nor because its content was the fruit of the vine, but 'in My blood,' Christ says." (De Coene, 34; cf. *Lord's Supper*, 116). Luther speaks similarly about the institution of Baptism: "*Gottes Ordnung ist...welchs allein gnung wäre, ob es gleich ganz äußerlich Ding ist* (It is God's ordinance...which alone would be enough, even if it were entirely an external thing)." (BKS 698.41-3; LC IV.38) cf. AE 3:170-3

<sup>76</sup> *Examination*, 413; *Examin*, 373.

<sup>77</sup> Also, the Small Catechism calls the Words of Institution "the chief thing (*häuptstück / caput et summa*) in the Sacrament" Triglotta SC VI.8. The Kolb/Wengert translation renders *häuptstück* as "essential thing." Furthermore, this manner of speaking is consistent with Luther's treatment of Baptism. "All on account of the Word...also it derives its essence (*Wesen / essentiam*) as a Sacrament" (LC IV.18; cf. 22 and 59-60).

<sup>78</sup> AE 36:37

<sup>79</sup> "*in einander hangt und Ein sacramentlich Wesen ist*" (StL XX:1071.451). "For in that word, and in that word alone, reside the power, the nature, and the whole essence (*das ganze Wesen*) of the mass." (StL XIX:31; cf. AE 36:36)

the essence of the Sacrament. And what Luther said in 1520, Chemnitz reasserts fifty years later against Trent. “The one and only way of administering, dispensing, and using the sacraments—so far as their essence is concerned (*quod ad substantiam ipsorum attinet*), the best, most correct, and safest way—is the one which was taught by the Son of God Himself in the institution.”<sup>80</sup>

## ***Conclusion***

In light of Rome’s “this notwithstanding (*hoc non obstante*),” it is clear why the Reformers refused to distill the essence of the Sacrament from its institution. For they saw that if any extra-biblical rationale can disqualify one word of the *verba*, others were sure to follow. Rome sought to disqualify the word “all.” Gerhardt disqualified the word “break.” Intinctionists disqualify “drink” and there is no certain rationale to distinguish one from the other. If the *verba* themselves are unreliable to determine the essence, what other argument can make it sure? What external authority can give dominical certainty that it remains the Lord’s Supper while omitting something of the Lord’s institution? The problem is not that this or that judgment is wrong. The problem is that sacramental certainty is left to human judgment at all. Apart from the water-tight certainty of Christ’s institution, we are adrift in a sea of uncertainty, clinging to the flotsam of personal preference, human reason and ecclesiastical authority. None of these can hope to supply the certainty necessary to create and sustain faith. Only the *verba* can do that.

jonathan g lange

---

<sup>80</sup> *Examination*, 340; *Examin*, 343.