

The Augsburg Confession

Article 22

Disputed Articles

Beginning with Article XXII the Lutherans deal with those issues that they knew were at variance with the teachings of the Roman Church. These issues include the Lord's Supper (Articles XXII, and XXIV), the Priesthood (Articles XXIII and XXVII), Confession (Article XXV), Fasting and foods (Article XXVI) and the power of the church and bishops (Article XXVIII). While the first twenty-one articles have a more conciliatory tone, these final articles are more bold, defensive, and even accusatory as they point out errors concerning Roman teaching and practice.

In the introduction to these articles the Lutherans state: *"From the above it is manifest that nothing is taught in our churches concerning articles of faith that is contrary to the Holy Scriptures or what is common to the Christian church. However, inasmuch as some abuses have been corrected... we are obliged by our circumstances to give an account of them and to indicate our reasons for permitting changes in these cases in order that Your Imperial Majesty may perceive that we have not acted in an unchristian and frivolous manner but have been compelled by God's command (which is rightly to be regarded as above all custom) to allow such changes."*

Concerning both kinds in the Sacrament

When the Romans replied to the Lutheran teaching concerning the bodily presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper (Article X) they stated: *"The tenth article gives no offense in its words, because they confess that in the Eucharist, after the consecration lawfully made, the Body and Blood of Christ are substantially and truly present, if only they believe that the entire Christ is present under each form, so that the Blood of Christ is no less present under the form of bread by concomitance than it is under the form of the wine, and the reverse"* (Roman Confutation - To Article X).

While the Romans stated their agreement with the Lutheran's teaching on the presence of Christ in the Sacrament, they clarified their agreement: *"the tenth article gives no offense... if only they believe that the entire Christ is present under each form, so that*

the Blood of Christ is no less present under the form of bread by concomitance than it is under the form of the wine, and the reverse.”

Concomitance

Note: The word concomitance means: “an existence together or in connection with one another”. In this context concomitance describes the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church that in the Lord’s Supper, both the body and the blood of Christ are present in each of the consecrated elements of bread and wine.

The doctrine of concomitance was developed over a long period of time in connection with the doctrine of transubstantiation. It brought about the custom of “communion under one kind” which spread widely during the 12th century.

Already in the seventh century the practice of intinction (dipping the consecrated wafer into the consecrated wine) began to grow popular. This started because some lay people were reluctant to receive the blood of Christ for fear of spillage. It is interesting that this practice was motivated by the lay people and not the church. In fact the church forbid the practice of intinction at the Third Council of Braga (675). It regained popularity again in the eleventh century, only to be forbidden as an “incomplete communion” practice by the church again (Council of Clermont - 1095). But the practice continued to spread until the Council of Constance (1415) decreed that Holy Communion under the form of bread alone would be distributed to the people. This was reaffirmed by the Council of Trent in 1545. So, because of “practical” reasons and out of fear of spillage, the Church began the custom of offering communion under one kind only.

Article XXII

In 1963, the Second Vatican Council urged the Roman Catholic Church to restore the celebration of Holy Communion under both kinds, which has now become the norm in the Church once again.

This was the situation at the time of Martin Luther and the Diet of Augsburg. So here in this article the Lutherans present their practice of giving the Lord’s Supper, and offer support for their practice: *“Among us both kinds are given to laymen in the sacrament. The reason is that there is a clear command and order of Christ, ‘**Drink of it, all of you**’ (Matthew 26:27). Concerning the chalice Christ here commands with clear words that all should drink of it. In order that no one might question these words and interpret them*

as if they apply only to priests, Paul shows in 1 Cor 11:20ff. that the whole assembly of the congregation in Corinth received both kinds.” In addition to the words of Scripture, they demonstrate that this was also the practice throughout the early centuries of the church and that the practice of distributing only the bread was only a recent invention.

The Roman Defense

In their response to the censure of the Lutherans, the Romans replied in the Confutation with support for their distribution of only the bread to the laity: *“For under the one form of bread the saints communed in the primitive Church, of whom Luke says: ‘**They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread.**’ Acts 2:42. Here Luke mentions bread alone. Likewise Acts 20:7 says: ‘**Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread.**’ Yea, Christ, the institutor of this most holy sacrament, rising again from the dead, administered the Eucharist only under one form to the disciples going to Emmaus, where he took bread and blessed it, and brake and gave to them, and they recognized him in the breaking of bread. Luke 24:30, 31.... Christ also (John 6) very frequently mentions bread alone.”*

They differentiate between clergy and lay communion: *“There has always been a distinction in the Church between lay communion under one form and priestly communion under both forms.”*

Finally, they describe the dangers of distributing the wine to the laity: *“Although, however, both forms were of old administered in many churches to laymen (for then it was free to commune under one or under both forms), yet on account of many dangers the custom of administering both forms has ceased. For when the multitude of the people is considered where there are old and young, tremulous and weak and inept, if great care be not employed and injury is done the Sacrament by the spilling of the liquid. Because of the great multitude there would be difficulty also in giving the chalice cautiously for the form of wine, which also when kept for a long time would sour and cause nausea or vomition to those who would receive it; neither could it be readily taken to the sick without danger of spilling. For these reasons and others the churches... give thereafter but one form, from the consideration chiefly that the entire Christ is under each form, and is received no less under one form than under two.”*

The Romans assert: *“It is rather an abuse and disobedience to administer to laymen both forms,”* and *“it is nowhere found in the Gospel that he [Christ] enjoined that both*

forms be received by the laity. ...the custom never existed throughout the entire Church that both forms were given to laymen.”

Summary

The issue discussed in this article was the practice of giving only the bread of the Lord's Supper to the laity. Jesus Christ instituted the Lord's Supper and distributed both the bread and the wine to His disciples. The apostle Paul directed the believers in Corinth to do the same. This sacrament was instituted to comfort and strengthen those who believe that here Christ gives His body and blood, with bread and wine, for the forgiveness of their sins.