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BRIEF STUDIES

THE ISSUE INVOLVED IN THE LUTHERAN REJECTION OF CONSUBSTANTIATION

It is well known that the Lutherans vigorously deny the charge preferred against them by the Reformed, that in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper they teach a sort of modified Romanism, called consubstantiation. But less known perhaps is the issue involved in the Lutheran repudiation of consubstantiation and the weighty significance that attaches to the issue.

Lutherans of course have never objected to the term "consubstantiation" *per se*, though they have not regarded it as adequate to express what more fittingly they designate by *Real Presence*. From medieval scholasticism Lutheran dogmaticians have borrowed many theological terms which, while not *per se* adequate, were used by them to set forth thoughts and doctrines clearly taught in Scripture. Thus the term *aseitas*, describing God's being of Himself and independent of anyone or anything outside Himself, was employed to stress the Scriptural truth that God from all eternity is forever of and in Himself, there being no creative cause outside the divine, eternal Creative Cause. The term is subject to debate, but not the Scripture doctrine which it declares. Even the expression *trinitas* did not escape criticism, and none other than Luther remarked that it does not "sound good" (*koestlich lauten*; cf. Pieper, *Christl. Dogm.*, I, 495). Nevertheless, both Luther and the Lutheran dogmaticians used *trinitas* no less than the far more inadequate term *Dreifaltigkeit*. So also the Lutheran dogmaticians did not object to the term "consubstantiation," provided it was understood in the sense of Real Presence. The question was therefore not one of terminology, but of theology.

The Reformed themselves have sensed this. Charles Hodge, for example, sums up the matter very nicely in his *Systematic Theology*. He writes: "This presence of the body and blood of Christ in, with, and under the bread and wine has been generally expressed by non-Lutherans by the word consubstantiation, as distinguished from the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation. The propriety of this word to express the doctrine of Luther is admitted by Philippi, if it be understood to mean, what in fact is meant by it when used by the Reformed {sic?}, '*das reale Zusammensein beider Substanzen*,' i. e., the real coexistence of the two substances, the earthly and the heavenly. But Lutherans generally object to the word, because it is often used to express the

idea of the mixing [of the] two substances so as to form a third, or the local inclusion of the one substance by the other." (Vol. III, 672.)

Hodge obviously is wrong when he says that by the term "consubstantiation" there was usually understood no more than the "real co-existence of the two substances." But he is right in stating that the Lutherans did not object so much to the term as rather to the implication of the term, namely, that in the Holy Supper the earthly and the heavenly elements, according to Lutheran doctrine, are mingled into a new substance, or that there is a local inclusion of Christ's body in the consecrated bread (impanation).

The attitude of the Lutherans to the term "consubstantiation" is well shown in Meusel's *Kirchliches Handlexikon*: "It would not be wrong *per se* to call the doctrine of the Lutheran Church regarding the presence of the body and blood of Christ and their connection with the earthly elements of the bread and wine a consubstantiation over against the Romish transubstantiation, as also Philippi (*Kirchl. Glaubensl.*, Bd. V, 2, S. 356) acknowledges.

"In fact, it [the Real Presence] has indeed often been so called; for while the Romish Church lets the substance of the bread and wine pass into and become transformed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ, the Lutheran Church teaches that the substance of the earthly elements remains, and there is united with it the substance of the body and blood of Christ in a mysterious, unique manner.

"Nevertheless, our older Lutheran dogmaticians deny that they affirmed a consubstantiation in the Lord's Supper, namely, in the sense in which the Reformed understood this expression and used it in criticism of the Lutheran conception of the doctrine. They understood by it either the physical commingling of two substances into a third (*in unam massam physicam coalitio*) or a local inclusion of the one in the other (cf. *impanatio*).

"The Lutheran Church rejects both, when it teaches a real presence of the body and blood of Christ and then a distribution 'in, with, and under the bread and wine.' According to it [the Lutheran Church], the union of the heavenly and earthly matter in the Lord's Supper is like the union of the Holy Spirit with the water of Baptism, or like the relation of the angel to a flame of fire, or that of the Holy Ghost to a dove. 'I would not know how to call it' (Luther) . . . John Gerhard (*Loci Theol.*, edid. Preuss, Vol. V, p. 66): 'We declare not an absence (*apousian*), not an inclusion (*enousian*), not a mingling (*synousian*), not a transubstantiation (*metousian*), but a presence (*parousian*) of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper.'"

A comprehensive study of the history of the controversy on the Real Presence seems to show that originally the Reformed, when charging the Lutherans with teaching consubstantiation, accused them, directly or by implication, that they were advocating either a "commixture of substances so as to form a third" or a local inclusion of Christ's body in the consecrated host.

Later Reformed writers took notice of the rejection of the term "consubstantiation" by the Lutherans and admitted that they taught neither a commingling of substances nor an impanation. But they then applied the term "consubstantiation" to the Lutheran doctrine of the Real Presence, and so today Reformed and some Lutheran writers often ascribe to Lutheranism the teaching of consubstantiation, this of course in the sense of the "in, with, and under."

The majority of Lutherans, however, do not desire to have their doctrine of the Real Presence represented as consubstantiation, and so they reject the term since historically it has a connotation that identifies it in a general way with Romanism. That is the issue involved in the Lutheran controversy with the Reformed: the Lutheran *realis praesentia* does not mean a mingling of the body with the bread and of the wine with the blood, just as little as it means a conversion of the bread into the body and of the wine into the blood of Christ. In other words, the Lutheran doctrine of the Real Presence is not merely a modification of the Roman Catholic transubstantiation, but it is a renunciation of that doctrine *in toto*, just as it is a total renunciation of Calvinistic symbolism in the Eucharist. Viewed in this way, the repudiation of consubstantiation is a shibboleth of true Lutheranism so far as the Eucharist is concerned.

In his *Biblical Dogmatics* Prof. A. G. Voigt puts the matter very perspicuously when he writes: "In the Lord's Supper there is an earthly material, bread and wine, and a celestial material, the body and blood of Christ. The doctrine of transubstantiation identifies these. That of consubstantiation, or impanation, confuses and mingles them. The symbolic doctrine [Calvinism] separates them. The Lutheran doctrine of the real presence unites them. The Lutheran Church holds to a sacramental union, unique in its nature, of the terrestrial and the celestial, but only in the sacramental act of eating and drinking" (p. 214 f.).

Perhaps no one has contributed more toward the rejection of consubstantiation in the Lutheran Church in America than Charles Porterfield Krauth, who, in his great polemical work *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology*, has treated the subject at great length and with convincing clarity and force. The Lutheran student of dogma will

do well to study his enlightening chapters on the subject, with grateful recognition of the profound theological learning which was put into this remarkable study.

The value of proper theological terms is apparent. Systematic theology cannot do without them. Nevertheless, there lurks a danger in the very theological terminology which often proves itself so very serviceable. It is subject not only to misunderstanding, but also to abuse. Terms may be used to label a doctrine, or the teacher of a doctrine, in such a way that it is impossible to escape the charge of heresy, even if the doctrine or the teacher of a doctrine is far from heretical. If, for example, a Lutheran is branded a consubstantiationist for teaching the Real Presence, or if he is called a liberal for departing from a tradition, or if he is denominated a unionist for doing something which is interpreted as unionism, even though the Christian truth is confessed, then theological terms may become terrific liabilities. Consubstantiation has proved itself a liability to Lutheranism many a time. It is also for this reason that Lutherans should disavow it.

In many respects Article VII of the Formula of Concord is perhaps the grandest of all the twelve articles of that great historical and doctrinal document. One of its undeniable virtues is the fact that it reduces theological terminology to a minimum, teaching the profoundest truths in simple, lucid language. The clearest statement of the Real Presence, directed against both the Reformed and the Romanist errors, is no doubt found toward the close of the Seventh Article. In the homely, precious words with which the Epitome closes its presentation of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper there is a grandeur of expression and an inherent persuasiveness which is far more effective than all scholastic parlance that ever has been deposited in a systematic disquisition. We refer to the stirring, appealing words:

"We maintain and believe, according to the simple words of the testament of Christ, the true, yet supernatural eating of the body of Christ, as also the drinking of His blood, which human senses and reason do not comprehend, but as in all other articles of faith our reason is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and this mystery is not apprehended otherwise than by faith alone and revealed in the Word alone" (Art. VII, Epit., 42).

In this unpretentious paragraph there is summarized the whole issue involved in the controversy between the Lutherans and the Reformed on the Real Presence, and this in language which does not only do justice to the thesis, but also does away with the antithesis.

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'ΑΛΛ' IN MATTHEW 20:23 AND MARK 10:40

Almost all interpretations and translations of Matthew 20:23 and Mark 10:40 take ἄλλ' as the adversative conjunction meaning "but" and as introducing an independent clause—which isn't there. Mark 10:40 (A. V.): "But to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give; but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared"; the italics are those of the Authorized Version. The text is broken in two by a semicolon, which also is not there and which makes the preceding statement more absolute than it was intended to be: Jesus cannot give the places of honor to anyone. If we omit everything which the translation adds, we get the opposite meaning: Jesus does assign the places of honor. The italics should have given us scruples long ago, however unanimous commentators and translators have been in their support of the italicized words.

Can we legitimately add the words "it shall be given to them"? To answer that question, I have with the help of Hatch and Redpath's concordance checked each of the 556 cases of ἀλλά in Rahlfs' Septuagint and with Moulton and Geden's concordance each of the 636 cases in the New Testament. There are in the Old Testament 110 instances and in the New Testament 114 instances where ἀλλά, meaning "but," "however," introduces only words or phrases. But that which has to be supplied to complete the meaning in these 224 instances is regularly taken from the rest of the sentence. I could find no case where the supplementary idea is so freely added from the imagination as has been done in Matt. 20:23 and Mark 10:40; the common assumption that the Father assigns the places of honor ought to be traceable to some point in the context, but at least in Mark's words the Father is not mentioned. In many of the ἀλλά passages some form of εἰμί has to be supplied (Is. 7:8; 5:25; 9:11, 16, 20; 10:4; 53:3; 63:16; Wisdom 16:12; Mark 13:7; Luke 5:38; 21:9; Rom. 5:15; 7:13; 9:16, 32; 11:11; 14:20; 15:3, 21; 1 Cor. 2:9; 8:7; 15:39, 40, 46; 2 Cor. 3:5; 5:12; 7:5; 8:13, 19; Heb. 10:3), but adding ἐστίν to the words in Matthew and Mark does not solve their problem. In Mark 14:36 we may supply γενήσεται, and in Mark 6:9 we may supply πορεύεσθαι and admit an anacoluthon, but the meaning of these passages is simple, and there is an intrinsic urgency to supplement them in these specific ways; that is not true of Matthew 20:23 and Mark 10:40. The best defense of the commonly accepted interpretation of these passages, I believe, would be based on John 7:16 (all but the first three words are repeated in 14:24): ἡ ἐμὴ διδαχὴ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμὴ ἀλλὰ τοῦ πέμψαντός με. However, if you will compare this with the words of Mark:

τὸ καθίσαι . . . οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμὸν δοῦναι ἀλλ' οἷς ἠτοίμασται, you will find three vital differences: (1) In John 7:16 there is a sharp contrast between the Son and the Father, which quickly establishes the meaning of ἀλλά. Mark 10:40 presents no such contrast but states that while Jesus has much to give, there is a limitation or an exception; it is this context which determines the meaning of ἀλλά. (2) If the passage in Mark were really parallel to that of John, there ought to be a τούτων before οἷς (Robertson's *Grammar*, p. 721). But τούτων, far from filling the gap, is hardly a better solution than setting ἐμὸν directly parallel to οἷς as a possessive; both solutions, unless you suppress δοῦναι, really mean that those for whom the places of honor are prepared have the power to assign them; Jesus did not mean to say that. (3) The passage in Mark is distinguished by δοῦναι, which, only slightly interrupted by the intervening ἀλλ', forms a phrase with (τούτοις) οἷς. There is a remarkable illustration of such a tie between the words before and after ἀλλά in 1 Chronicles 15:2: Οὐκ ἔστιν ἄρα τὴν κιβωτὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλ' ἢ τοὺς Λευίτας. Here we have an infinitive-with-the-accusative construction, but the infinitive is before the ἀλλά and the accusative is after it. The bond is very much like that between δοῦναι and its indirect object οἷς; this bond cannot be broken in order to form two independent clauses. (It is interesting to note how the subjective bias can enter into a fine text like Nestle's: While there is no comma before ἀλλά in John 7:16, there is a comma before it in Matthew 20:23 and in Mark 10:40; these texts should be read without the comma.)

Robertson (*Grammar*, p. 1187) says, "Both Winer and W. F. Moulton (W.-M., p. 566) felt certain that ἀλλά never equals εἰ μή." But Liddell and Scott point out that ἀλλά with the meaning "except" occurs even in Homer's *Odyssey*. We may quote another instance from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (Loeb edition, pp. 604—6): ἡδέα δ' οὐκ ἔστιν ἀλλ' ἢ τούτοις καὶ οὕτω διακειμένοις, pleasures are "only pleasant to these particular persons who are in a condition to think them so."

The evidence for ἀλλά="except" would be considerably reduced if ἀλλά were different from ἀλλ' ἢ. But while ἀλλ' ἢ much more frequently than ἀλλά means "except," it does not seem possible to distinguish the two. What P. Bachmann (Zahn's commentary on 2 Cor. 1:13) says, "H verbindet sich vielmehr nach altem und allgemeinem Sprachgebrauch mit der Konjunktion ἀλλά und schliesst sich an das οὐκ ἄλλα an in dem Sinne: nichts anderes als," could also be said of ἀλλά without ἢ. 'Αλλ' ἢ is the common rendering of

kī 'im, and the LXX translators were happy to find an idiomatic equivalent of *'im* in ἤ as they had found one for *kī 'im* in ἄλλ'. 'Ἄλλ' ἤ is also used to translate just *kī*, "but" (Deut. 20:17), and it means "but" in the LXX more often than "except." Liddell and Scott cite classical cases where ἄλλά means ἤ. 'Ἄλλά means "except" (Num. 35:33) and is used to translate *raq*, "only" (Num. 20:19; Josh. 11:22; 13:6). We must take ἄλλ' ἤ simply as a strengthened form of ἄλλά.

Since the Hebrew *kī 'im* and the Aramaic *'illā* (Blass-Debrunner, § 448:8) have two meanings, "but" and "except," it would be an inherited habit for a New Testament writer to use ἄλλά in any one of its two meanings "but" and "except." To be most thoroughly convinced that ἄλλ' in Matt. 20:23 and Mark 10:40 means "except," we need to read each of the forty instances where ἄλλά means "except" first in the Hebrew and then in the Greek: 'Ἄλλά—Num. 35:33; Job 40:8 (A. V.); Dan. 6:13 (Theodotion adds ἤ). 'Ἄλλ' ἤ—Gen. 21:26, *bilti*; 28:17, *kī 'im*; 47:18, *bilti 'im*; Ex. 33:16, *b'lo'*; Lev. 21:2; Num. 23:13, *epbes*; Deut. 4:12, *zūlāthi*; 10:12; Josh. 14:4; Judg. 7:14; 1 Kings 21:7; 2 Kings 12:3; 3 Kings 22:31; 4 Kings 13:7; 1 Chron. 15:2; 2 Chron. 18:30; 21:17; Esther 5:12; 1 Macc. 9:6; 10:38; Ps. 132:1; Sirach 22:14; Micah 6:8; Mal. 2:15; Is. 42:19 (bis); 66:2; Jer. 51:14; Dan. 2:11 (Theodotion), *lābēn*; 6:8; 10:21. "Οτι ἄλλ' ἤ—1 Kings 30:17; 4 Kings 4:2; 5:15; Eccl. 5:10. 'Ἄλλ' ἤ ὅτι—2 Kings 19:29. 'Ἄλλά πλὴν—Joshua 11:22, *raq*.

Moulton-Milligan cite several cases from papyri (dated 240 B. C., 200 B. C., and 84 A. D.) where ἄλλ' ἤ means "except." We quote from them only one case (dated 92 B. C.) which shows that ἄλλά without ἤ means "except": μὴ ἐξέστω Φιλίσκωι γυναῖκα ἄλλην ἐπαγαγέσθαι ἄλλά 'Απολλωνίαν, "any other wife but A." There is an example of this meaning of ἄλλά in I Clement (dated 90—100 A. D.) LI:5: οὐ δι' ἄλλην τινὰ αἰτίαν ἐβυθίσθησαν εἰς θάλασσαν ἐρυθρὰν καὶ ἀπώλοντο, ἄλλὰ διὰ τὸ σκληρυνθῆναι αὐτῶν τὰς ἀσυνέτους καρδίας, "they were sunk in the Red Sea, and perished for no other cause than that their foolish hearts were hardened." And another in the Didache (from the first and second century, A. D.) IX:5: μηδεὶς δὲ φαγέτω μηδὲ πιέτω ἀπὸ τῆς εὐχαριστίας ὑμῶν, ἄλλ' οἱ βαπτισθέντες εἰς ὄνομα κυρίου, "but let none eat or drink of your Eucharist except those who have been baptized in the Lord's name."

The common New Testament term for "except" is εἰ μή (e. g., Luke 4:26-27). But ἄλλ' ἤ may have the same meaning (Blass-Debrunner, § 448:8), as we see from 2 Cor. 1:13: οὐ γὰρ ἄλλα γράφομεν ὑμῖν ἄλλ' ἤ ἃ ἀναγινώσκατε, "for we write to you only what you read."

(Meyer, Zahn, and Blass-DeBrunner, § 448:8, say that we have a similar case in Luke 12:51. But there we have εἰρήνην sharply contrasted with διαμερισμόν, and usage — Gen. 18:15; 19:2; 42:12; Num. 13:30; Josh. 24:21; Judg. 15:13; 1 Kings 8:19; 10:19; 12:12; 17:43; 2 Kings 16:18; 24:24; 3 Kings 3:22, 23; 4 Kings 20:10; Tobit 10:9; Luke 1:60; 13:3, 5; 16:30; John 7:12; 9:9; Acts 16:37; Rom. 3:27 — shows that the meaning is “No, but.”)

Coming home to Mark, we find ἀλλ’ with the meaning “except” and parallel to εἰ μὴ in Mark 4:22: οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν τι κρυπτόν, εἰ μὴ ἵνα φανερωθῆ; οὐδὲ ἐγένετο ἀπόκρυφον, ἀλλ’ ἵνα ἔλθῃ εἰς φανερόν, “nothing is secret except for the purpose that it may be made known; nothing is hidden except that it may be brought to light.” In Mark 9:8 Nestle, following \aleph BDN 36, 61 Latt. Memph., adopts εἰ μὴ, while the *Expositor's Greek Testament*, following C \aleph Θ ρ m; Th, retains ἀλλά and comments, “ἀλλά=εἰ μὴ after a negative.” Allen in the ICC also accepts the reading ἀλλά. It is significant that ἀλλά and εἰ μὴ are so easily interchangeable in Mark. (We have similar parallel readings in Judg. 7:14, where A has ἀλλ’ ἦ and B has εἰ μὴ, and in Dan. 2:11, where the LXX has εἰ μήτι and Theodotion, has ἀλλ’ ἦ, all with the meaning “except.”)

James Kleist (*The Gospel of Saint Mark*, Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1936, p. 218) says: “After ἀλλ’ οἷς ἠτοίμασται supply τὸ ἐμὲ δοῦναι. . . . Our Lord assigns special places to none for carnal considerations, but always in due conformity with the will of the Father; *He* does the actual assigning.” Kleist states the meaning of the verse correctly, but he tries to rescue the *sed* of the Vulgate by supplying three Greek words. Nothing, however, needs to be supplied. According to Greek usage οὐκ . . . ἀλλά in Matt. 20:23 and Mark 10:40 means “non . . . nisi,” “not . . . except,” or “only.” J. H. Moulton (*A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, I, p. 241; II, p. 468) was on the right track, but he stopped short of the goal. It seems to have passed unnoticed that in its seventh edition Blass-Debrunner, § 448:8, says that ἀλλά = εἰ μὴ in Matthew 20:23. *The Bible Commentary* (N. Y.: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899) says on Matthew 20:23: “*it shall be given*. These words are not in the original, and this clause may be more literally translated ‘is not mine to give, except to those,’ &c. Christ is the giver, not, however, by way of favour to any one who asks, but according to the eternal purpose of the Father.” And on Mark 10:40: “*but it shall be given to them*. Or, omitting these words, ‘save to them for whom it is prepared.’”

James and John came to Jesus to ask Him, "Let one of us sit at Your right and the other at Your left in Your glory" (Mark 10:37). Had Jesus answered, "I have no right to give you that," we would have to assume He was referring to His humiliation (Lenski), which would be little short of an evasion after the two disciples had said, "in your glory." The Authorized Version "seems to make our Lord repudiate the right to assign to each of His people his place in the kingdom of glory; a thing which He nowhere else does, but rather the contrary. It is true that He says their place is 'prepared for them by His Father.' But that is true of their admission to heaven at all; and yet from His great white throne Jesus will Himself adjudicate the kingdom, and authoritatively invite into it those on His right hand, calling them the 'blessed of His Father.'" (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown on Mark 10:40.) When the sons of Zebedee went to Jesus as the executor of their heavenly inheritance, they were more correct in thinking that He had that authority than many who have tried to explain His answer. He had told His disciples (John 5:22), "The Father does not judge anyone, but has turned the judgment entirely over to the Son, in order that all may honor the Son as they honor the Father." James and John came with their request to Jesus shortly before the Passover which Jesus ate with His disciples in the Upper Room. In that Upper Room, Jesus told them (Luke 22:29-30): "As My Father has assigned My kingdom to Me, so I appoint you to eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, to sit on thrones, and to judge the twelve tribes of Israel." Paul says (2 Tim. 4:8), "Now there is waiting for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day; not only to me, but to all who love to see Him come again." Jesus will lay the garland of glory on the head of His Apostle. While the Father has from the beginning of the world (Matt. 25:34) prepared special glories for certain individuals (Matt. 20:23) and has determined how these glories are to be distributed, that same Father has appointed His Son to assign the places at His right and at His left.

I would suggest that Mark 10:40 be translated: "But to sit at My right or at My left is something I can give only to those for whom it has been prepared."

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