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LUTHER AND CALVIN ON THE MANNER OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE IN THE LORD'S SUPPER: A Re-examination of Their Teachings With Respect To the Eucharistic Debates of the Sixteenth Century

A Thesis Submitted
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
Master of Arts

Department of Religion

By
The Rev. Clayton Edward Beish Jr.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to provide a critical re-examination of the distinctive teachings of Martin Luther and John Calvin concerning the manner of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper, seen in the context of the sixteenth century eucharistic debates.

Chapter 1 (the **Introduction**) provides general historical and biographical information on Luther and Calvin and their respective roles in the eucharistic debates. Since Luther and Calvin were not direct opponents in these debates, methodological considerations are discussed for comparing their positions in light of the historical context of their writings.

Part One of the thesis (**Chapters 2 - 5**) traces the individual development of Martin Luther's and John Calvin's teachings on the Lord's Supper. **Chapter 2** presents an analysis of Luther's earliest teaching on the eucharist before the outbreak of controversy with the Swiss. **Chapter 3** presents an examination of the further developments in Luther's teachings during the first phase of the eucharistic controversy (in opposition to Zwingli and Oecolampadius). **Chapter 4** traces Calvin's earliest teaching on the Lord's Supper, and later distinctive elements in his thought illustrated in his efforts to develop a mediating position between that espoused by Luther and Zwingli. **Chapter 5** traces Calvin's negotiations first with the Lutherans and then with the Swiss to achieve greater theological consensus, and outlines Calvin's role in the second phase of the eucharistic controversy (in debate with Westphal and Heshus).

Part Two of the thesis (**Chapters 6-10**) presents a thematic comparison of the distinctive teachings of Luther and Calvin on the Lord's Supper on five fundamental points which were especially problematic in the eucharistic debates: **Chapter 6** examines the basic differences in the meaning and use of the terms "substance" by the two reformers. **Chapter 7** examines the disagreement over the terms "sign" and "symbol," the use of "synecdoche" and "metonymy," and Luther's concept of "sacramental union." **Chapter 8** examines the opposing claims that Christ is bodily present in the eucharist, and that his body is confined to a fixed locality in heaven. Calvin's explanation of the function of the Holy Spirit in communicating Christ and his benefits is also analyzed and compared with Luther's understanding of the agency of the Word. **Chapter 9** examines questions regarding the reception of Christ in the Supper -- whether it is an "oral" or a "spiritual" eating, and whether all who partake of the eucharistic elements receive Christ, or only those who possess faith. **Chapter 10** examines the Lutheran teaching of "bodily ubiquity" on the basis of the unity between the divine and human natures in Christ's person, and Calvin's opposition to this claim. The roles of the "communicatio idiomatum" and the "extra-Calvinisticum" are also analyzed in this chapter.

Chapter 11 (the **Conclusion**) presents an assessment of the findings of **Part One** and **Part Two** of the thesis in light of the subsequent confessional developments in the Lutheran and Reformed communions and recent Lutheran - Reformed dialogues on the Lord's Supper. It is argued that the impass in the sixteenth century debate was to a large extend the product of mischaracterizations and misinterpretations of each side's position by the other. The results of the contemporary Lutheran - Reformed dialogues are used to call for a new 'rapprochement' between the two traditions.

in memory of
my father

the Rev. Clayton E. Beish Sr.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CO	Ioannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia
CR	Corpus Reformatorum
LCC	Library of Christian Classics
LW	Luther's Works
NPNF	A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church
OS	Joannis Calvini Opera Selecta
TT	Calvin's Tracts and Treatises
WA	D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe
WB	D. Martin Luthers Werke. Briefwechsel
WT	D. Martin Luthers Werke. Tischreden

PREFACE

I wish to express my appreciation to the members of my Thesis Examining Committee, not only for their thorough reading and critiquing of my manuscript, but also for the personal interest and support which they have shown toward me in the course of my work. My heartfelt thanks is offered to Professor H. Gordon Harland, Professor John M. Badertscher, Professor Eduard H. Schludermann, and especially to my advisor, Professor Egil Grislis, for his patient encouragement and guidance throughout the lengthy course of this project. I also wish to thank Professor Klaus Klostermaier, head of the Department of Religion, for his personal encouragement and the supportive role which he played in seeing this thesis carried to its final stage.

I am also grateful to my former professors at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan for the excellent theological preparation they gave me, and for their encouragement to undertake further studies following my ordination. To Dr. William Hordern, Dr. Roger Nostbakken, Dr. Walter Freitag, Dr. John Kleiner, Dr. Erwin Buck, Dr. Martin Leeseberg, Dr. Wilburn Nelson, and Dr. Walter Koehler, I express my lasting gratitude.

I wish to express my thanks as well to the Reverend G. W. (Lee) Luetkehoelter, Bishop of the Manitoba / Northwestern Ontario Synod of the

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and the Reverend Roy Holm, President of the Manitoba - Saskatchewan District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, for the privilege of serving their church bodies as the Lutheran Chaplain at the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg for the last nine years. It has been both exciting and challenging to work within the university environment for this period in my life, and to have had the opportunity of pursuing my Master of Arts program in Religion during that time.

Finally, I wish to offer a special word of thanks to my wife, Angela, who has patiently stood by me throughout my graduate program and quietly endured many sacrifices.

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

LUTHER AND CALVIN

Martin Luther and John Calvin are widely regarded as the two most notable figures of the Protestant Reformation. They were both men of brilliant intellect, penetrating insight, religious fortitude, and amazing perseverance. They both wrote prodigiously, were strongly committed to pastoral care, and displayed an unshakable firmness of faith. As such, they stood as formative giants of the burgeoning evangelical movement in Europe during the sixteenth century.

As leaders of the emerging Protestant movement in Germany and Switzerland, they shared a basic kinship in their evangelical theology. The proclamation of the Gospel, the authority of scripture, basic reforms in religious practice, and pastoral teaching oriented to the nurturing of faith were emphases common to both Reformers. Yet as each interpreted the scriptures in the light of faith, there also emerged noticeable differences in their theological understanding. As the great eucharistic controversy of the sixteenth century split the German and Swiss into separate communions, the common evangelical purpose was largely forgotten and Luther and Calvin came to be regarded primarily as the founders of different Protestant traditions.

Following the death of each reformer, the dominant concern within the religious movements was that a strict fidelity to their reformer's teachings be maintained. The period of doctrinal orthodoxy which ensued, marked by further systematization, refining, and explication of each reformer's views, served to make the Lutheran and Reformed traditions more distinctive still. As Jaroslav Pelikan, the noted church historian, observes in describing this period:

> . . . in the later Reformation [through the 1600s] . . . various doctrines of the sacraments would become principles of definition for various churches, which would find themselves divided most sharply by that which, they all agreed, had been intended to express the unity of believers with Christ and with one another.[1]

In a period of rather high intolerance to differences in religious doctrine -- particularly as the object of the discussion related to divine truth -- anathemas were proclaimed by each of these religious bodies against the other, thus perpetuating a high degree of mistrust and discouraging cordial and affable dialogue between these two Protestant traditions. But we in a more ecumenical age must ask whether or not the differences between Luther and Calvin portrayed through these two traditions are really indicative of the position of each Reformer with regard to the other. Specifically, we will attempt to ascertain how divided Luther and Calvin actually were with regard to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

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[1] Jaroslav Pelikan, The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine, vol. 4: Reformation of Church and Dogma (1300-1700) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 59.

There are certain difficulties involved in making any direct comparisons between Luther and Calvin. Although they were contemporaries, Calvin and Luther never actually met[2], nor did the two Reformers correspond with each other.[3] Calvin was twenty-six years Luther's junior and came into prominence as a theologian and leader of the Reformation only during the last decade of Luther's life.[4] The evangelical movement which spread into northern and central France during the 1530s and which influenced Calvin during his student years at the University of Orleans, was mainly Lutheran in nature; it was only in southern France that Zwingli's influence predominated. Calvin thus began his career as a Reformer with a decidedly "Lutheran" orientation. Gerrish notes:

> It cannot be too strongly emphasized at the outset that Calvin did not think of himself as "Reformed" in the sense of [later]

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[2] Calvin did, however, make the acquaintance of Philip Melanchthon, Luther's close associate and the author of the Augsburg Confession, in 1539 and they corresponded with each other over a period of twenty years.

[3] Only one letter from Calvin to Luther exists which was sent in care of Philip Melanchthon at the height of the eucharistic disputes. It was returned by the cautious Melanchthon without having been delivered to Luther. No record of any letter from Luther to Calvin exists. See Allan Leonard Farris, "Calvin's Letter to Luther," Canadian Journal of Theology 10 (1964): 124-31.

[4] Wendel places Calvin's conversion to the evangelical movement between August 1533 and May 1534. See François Wendel, Calvin, the Origins and Development of His Religious Thought, trans. Philip Mairet (New York: Harper & Row, 1950), pp. 39-40. Calvin's rise to prominence came with the publication of his first edition of The Institutes of the Christian Religion in 1536 and his arrival in Geneva to serve in the evangelical cause that same year.

> inner-Protestant polemics. Calvin was not a Calvinist but an Evangelical. . . . He identified himself wholly with the common Protestant cause and never faced the Wittenbergers as the sponsor of a rival movement.[5]

The formative influence which Luther's thought had upon Calvin's own ideas as a reformer should not be underestimated. Calvin studied those works of Luther which had been either written in Latin or translated into Latin or French. Scholars have noted that the first edition of Calvin's Institutes (published in 1536) follows the structure of Luther's "Small Catechism." And his understanding of the nature of the sacraments at this stage corresponds closely with Luther's new evangelical treatment given in his 1520 treatise, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church."[6] Calvin was also in broad agreement with Luther on many other doctrinal issues including the fundamental doctrines of justification, original sin, the saving work of Christ, and the role of faith for the believer. August Lang goes so

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[5] Brian A. Gerrish, "The Pathfinder: Calvin's Image of Martin Luther," The Old Protestantism and the New (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 29. This is a revision of an earlier article by Gerrish. See "John Calvin on Luther," Interpreters of Luther: Essays in Honor of Wilhelm Pauck, ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968).

[6] Ibid., pp. 30-31. Other works of Luther which show signs of having been used by Calvin in his earliest edition of the Institutes include "The Freedom of a Christian" (1520), "The Bondage of the Will" (1525), "Sermon on the Body and Blood of Christ, Against the Fanatic Spirits" (1526; Latin trans. 1527), "The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ and the Brotherhoods" (1519; trans. 1524), and Luther's Church Postils on the Gospels (trans. by Bucer). See Wendel, Calvin, pp. 132-33. Cf. Wilhelm Niesel, Calvins Lehre vom Abendmahl (Munich: Kaiser, 1930), pp. 22-24.

far as to say that "the central teaching of Luther on the justification of faith and regeneration by faith was preserved more faithfully and expressed more forcibly by Calvin than by any other dogmatician of the Reform."[7] And Peter Meinhold makes the claim that Calvin was Luther's greatest and, indeed, only true "disciple."[8]

By contrast, Calvin's knowledge of the writings of Zwingli and Oecolampadius during his early career was minimal. There are indications from his writings that he regarded Zwingli as an inferior theologian to Luther,[9] and in his later life he recalled that when as a young man

> I read in Luther that Zwingli and Oecolampadius left nothing in the sacraments but bare and empty figures, I confess I took such a dislike for their writings, that I long refrained from reading them.[10]

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[7] August Lang, "Zwingli und Calvin," Monographien zur Weltgeschichte, fasc. 31 (Bielefeld and Leipzig, 1913), p. 106, cited by Wendel, Calvin, p. 133.

[8] Peter Meinhold, "Calvin und Luther," Lutherische Monatschefte 3 (1964), p. 264, cited in Gerrish, "Calvin's Image of Luther," p. 44; cf. p. 29.

[9] See John Calvin, "Letter to Farel, February 28, 1539," in Letters of John Calvin, 4 vols.,ed. and trans. Jules Bonnet, (New York: Lennox Hill, 1972) 1: 109.

[10] John Calvin, "Second Defense of the Faith Concerning the Sacraments in Answer to Joachim Westphal" (1536), trans. Henry Beveridge, Calvin's Tracts and Treatises, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1958), vol. 2: On the Doctrine and Worship of the Church, :252-53. (Subsequent references to this three volume work shall be noted as TT.) However, there is evidence that Calvin did read some of Zwingli's works, particularly his "Commentary on True and False Religion" (1525)

Accepting Luther's judgment, Calvin carefully avoided Zwingli's teachings during his early years, and as Wendel observes, "Calvin had such a poor opinion of Zwingli that during the time he was writing the first two or three editions of his work [the Institutes], he took good care to avoid even the slightest direct borrowing from him."[11]

Although other contemporary influences on Calvin's thought can also be traced to Philip Melanchthon, particularly through his "Loci Communes," and to Martin Bucer, with whom Calvin spent three very formative years in Strasbourg (1538-1541)[12], Martin Luther's influence on the young Calvin remains noteworthy.

REGARD FOR EACH OTHER

Throughout his life Calvin consistently held Luther in high regard as a theologian and pioneer of the Reformation. Gerrish characterizes Calvin's attitude as that of "a warm admiration for the person and insight of the older man."[13] In 1543 Calvin wrote concerning Martin Luther that "We regard him as a remarkable apostle of Christ, through whose work and ministry,

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even prior to Zwingli's death in 1531. For a fuller discussion of Calvin's knowledge of Zwingli and Oecolampadius, see Wilhelm Niesel, Calvins Lehre vom Abendmahl, pp. 30-33.

[11] Wendel, Calvin, p. 333.

[12] Ibid., pp. 134-44. Cf. Hermann Sasse, This is My Body: Luther's Contention for the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1959), pp. 321-22.

[13] Gerrish, "Calvin's Image of Martin Luther," p. 29.

most of all, the purity of the Gospel has been restored in our time."[14] Even in the face of the violent outbursts by Luther near the end of his life against the Swiss theologians (the Zwinglians and the "sacramentarians," as he called them) over their doctrine of the Lord's Supper, Calvin maintained an amazingly restrained attitude toward censuring Luther in return. Shortly after Luther's invective-laden "Brief Confession Concern-ing the Holy Sacrament" appeared in 1544, Calvin wrote to Henry Bullinger (Zwingli's successor in Zurich) saying:

> I hear that Luther has at last broken out with savage invective, not so much against you as against us all. . . . But I desire you to bear in mind, first, Luther's greatness as a man and his outstanding gifts: the stout heartedness and steadfastness, the skillfulness, and the effectiveness of teaching with which he has labored to destroy the kingdom of antichrist and spread abroad the doctrine of salvation. I often say that even if he should call me a devil, I should still pay him the honor of acknowledging him as an illustrious servant of God, who yet, as he is rich in virtues, so also labors under serious faults. . . .

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[14] John Calvin, "A Defence of the Sound and Orthodox Doctrine of the Bondage and Deliverance of the Human Will Against the False Accusations of Albert Pighius," *Ioannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia*, 59 vols. (Corpus Reformatorum, vols. 29-87), ed. J. W. Baum et al. (Brunswick: C. A. Schwetschke & Son, 1863-1900), 6: 250. (The standard edition of Calvin's works is cited hereafter as CO; figures refer to volume and column.) Passage trans. in Gerrish, "Calvin's Image of Martin Luther," p. 38. Cf. Ernst Walter Zeeden, "Das Bild Martin Luthers in den Briefen Calvins," Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte 49 (1958): 179f. Cf. also Hans Grass, Die Abendmahlslehre bei Luther und Calvin, Eine kritische Untersuchung. Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie, 2d ser., vol. 47, 2d. ed. (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1940), p. 203.

> It is our task so to reprehend whatever is bad in him that we make some allowance for those splendid gifts.[15]

To be sure, Calvin's estimate of Luther took into account these "serious faults" of his.[16] Calvin was not uncritical of Luther's sharp tongue and excesses of speech. He spoke disparagingly of Luther's methods of exegesis and what he considered to be the careless use of unguarded and exaggerated expressions in his teachings concerning Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper. He was particularly offended by what he saw as Luther's stubbornness, obstinacy, lack of self-control, and generally unrefined behaviour.[17] In June of 1545 during the period of Luther's most violent attacks against the sacramentarians, Calvin wrote to Philip Melanchthon:

> I indeed, who revere him from my heart, am violently ashamed of him. . . . I admit we all owe him much. And I am not reluctant to let him be preeminent with the highest authority, provided he knows how to govern his own self.[18]

Even after Luther's death, in the midst of bitter controversy with Joachim Westphal, Calvin writes: "If any defect mingled with the lofty

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[15] Calvin, John. "Letter to Bullinger, November 25, 1544," Letters of John Calvin 1: 432-33. Translation used here by Gerrish from CO 11: 774-75 in "Calvin's Image of Martin Luther," p. 33.

[16] See Grass, Die Abendmahlslehre bei Luther und Calvin, pp. 205 f.

[17] Zeeden, "Das Bild Martin Luthers in den Briefen Calvins," p. 186.

[18] Calvin, John. "Letter to Melanchthon, June 28, 1545," Letters of John Calvin 1: 466-67. Translation used here by Gerrish from CO 12: 99 in "Calvin's Image of Martin Luther," p. 35.

virtues of Luther, I would bury it in oblivion. Whatever it may have been, reverence and love for the gifts with which he was endowed would make me refrain from exposing it. . . ."[19] Fully cognizant of Luther's personal faults, even in the midst of the most heated controversy, Calvin unwaveringly maintained his high estimate of Luther.

Less is known about Luther's attitude toward Calvin,[20] but he also seems to have had a high regard for the Genevan reformer. Before the eruption of Luther's violent outbursts concerning the eucharist in 1544, he had been quite gracious in his praise for Calvin. Writing in 1539 to Martin Bucer, Luther closes his letter with these words: "Farewell and please greet reverently Mr. John Sturm and John Calvin; I have read their books with special pleasure."[21] It is most probable that the book (or one of the books) by

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19 John Calvin, "Last Admonition to Joachim Westphal," trans. Henry Beveridge, TT, 2: 476-77.

20 A thorough discussion of the few passages where Luther mentions Calvin is given in Grass, Die Abendmahlslehre bei Luther und Calvin, pp. 193-95.

21 Martin Luther, "Letter to Martin Bucer, October 14, 1539," trans. and ed. Gottfried G. Krodel, Luther's Works, 55 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House and Philadelphia: Fortress Press and Muhlenberg Press, 1959-), vol. 50: Letters III (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975): 190-91. (Subsequent references to Luther's Works shall be noted as LW.) It may be to this letter that Calvin is referring when he states to Westphal: ". . . . all know the excessive heat which Luther showed in pleading [his] cause. And yet in private so far was he from wishing to be my enemy, that though not ignorant of my opinion, he declined not to address me in his own hand in terms of respect." Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 308.

Calvin being referred to here is the "Reply to Sadolet" published earlier that year, although the 1539 edition of the Institutes has also been suggested.[22] Calvin responded in a letter to Farel saying, "Just think what I say there about the eucharist! Consider Luther's generosity!"[23] In the same letter he also repeats Luther's comments concerning Calvin's criticism of some of his teachings. Luther is reported to have stated: "I certainly hope that he will one day think better of us. Still, it is right for us to be a little tolerant toward such a gifted man."[24]

Testimony also comes not from Luther himself but from two of his associates who both record that in 1545 Luther was presented with a recently published Latin translation of Calvin's "Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper." He was reportedly greatly impressed with Calvin's summary description of the eucharistic controversy among the Protestant factions, and is said to have remarked, "I might have entrusted the whole affair of this controversy to him from the beginning. If my opponents had done the like,

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[22] See the evaluation of the various arguments given by Gerrish in "Calvin's Image of Martin Luther," p. 32. Cf. Grass, Die Abendmahlslehre bei Luther und Calvin, p. 193.

[23] Calvin, John. "Letter to Farel, November 20, 1539," Letters of John Calvin 1: 167. Translation used here by Gerrish from CO 10, 2: 432 in "Calvin's Image of Martin Luther," p. 31.

[24] Ibid. Translation used here by Gerrish, "Calvin's Image of Martin Luther," p. 32. Cf. Joseph N. Tylenda, "The Ecumenical Intention of Calvin's Early Eucharistic Teaching," Reformatio Perennis: Essays on Calvin and the Reformation in Honor of Ford Lewis Battles, ed. B. A. Gerrish et al. (Pittsburgh: The Pickwick Press, 1981), p. 34.

we should soon have been reconciled."[25] Even near the end of his life, when Luther was writing so caustically against the Swiss theologians, two passages from his "Tabletalk" of that period show that his attitude toward Calvin was still one of respect, although somewhat mixed with suspicion.[26] On the whole, it can be said that Luther was much more cordial toward Calvin, and much more tolerant of his teaching on the Lord's Supper, than he was toward the other Swiss theologians.[27]

RESPECTIVE ROLES IN THE EUCHARISTIC DEBATE

From this analysis of Luther's and Calvin's personal regard for each other, we move on to an assessment of their respective theological positions in the eucharistic debate of the sixteenth century. Although the debate was carried out between what has since become the Lutheran and Reformed Churches, it was then basically a debate between the representatives of the German and Swiss evangelical movements, with the Swiss-German states receiving influence from both directions. Even though Martin Luther and John Calvin were the preeminent figures in the Reformation movement, we

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[25] Joseph McLelland, "Lutheran - Reformed Debate on the Eucharist and Christology," Marburg Revisited, ed. Paul C. Empie & James I. McCord (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1966), p. 44. Cf. Gerrish, "Calvin's Image of Martin Luther," p. 287 (n. #53).

[26] D. Martin Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe (Weimar, 1883-), Tischreden 5: 51 (# 5303) and 461 (# 6050). Cf. Gerrish, "Calvin's Image of Martin Luther," p. 287 (n. #53). Cf. also Grass, Die Abendmahls-lehre bei Luther und Calvin, p. 194.

[27] See Gerrish, "Calvin's Image of Martin Luther," pp. 33.

must not imagine that they were the only notable leaders of the reform, nor that they were the chief opponents in the eucharistic debates.

We must also keep in mind the difference in ages between these two reformers and recognize the difference in dates between the Wittenberg and the Geneva Reforms. The relationship between Luther and Calvin is best understood as we distinguish two specific phases of the eucharistic controversy. The first phase took place in the 1520s before Calvin's conversion to the evangelical movement. In this early phase of the controversy the primary debate was between Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli of Zurich (and to a lesser extent Andreas Karlstadt and John Oecolampadius of Basel). Following Zwingli's death in 1531, an interim phase took place in the mid-1530s to 1540s when Calvin came on the scene and tried to establish a mediating position between the German and Swiss factions. Calvin endorsed the Lutheran teaching as set forth in the Augustana Variata of 1540,[28] and later succeeded in uniting the Swiss (including the Zwinglian faction) under his teaching through the negotiation of the Consensus Tigurinus in 1549.[29] After Luther's death the second phase of extended debate over the doctrine of the eucharist came about as Calvin found it necessary to defend his position

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[28] The Augustana Variata is a revised version of Melanchthon's original confessional statement of 1530. It was presented to the Emperor at new talks called to discuss the reunification of the church in 1540-41. Melanchthon altered the wording of the earlier Augustana Confession so as to make it more broadly acceptable to the different parties within the evangelical movement who were represented at the talks.

[29] Calvin's role in the negotiations leading up to the formation of the Consensus Tigurinus is detailed in Chapter Five.

against the accusations of several members of the "Gnesio-Lutheran" party -- first Joachim Westphal, and later Tilemann Heshus -- who tended to link Calvin's position to the earlier, more radical teachings of their Swiss opponents.[30]

Because of the distinctive nature of Luther's and Calvin's involvement in the eucharistic controversy, it is important that we first let them speak from the context of their own roles in the debate before we bring their ideas together in the form of an evaluative "dialogue." Part One of this thesis, then, will focus on the developmental phases of Luther's and Calvin's teachings on the Lord's Supper, noting in particular the fundamental orientations of their thought and the distinctive characteristics of their theological arguments. In Part Two we will systematically examine the major points of contention between them as reflected in the mature phase of their theological writings on the eucharist. In the light of this analysis, the Conclusion will provide a reassessment of the differences and similarities in the teachings of Luther and Calvin on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, with particular reference to recent dialogues between the Lutheran and Reformed Churches.

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[30] The "Gnesio-Lutherans" (or so-called "genuine" Lutherans) were rigid defenders of Luther's teachings, and strongly opposed the more moderate wing within Lutheran circles known as the "Philippists," after Philip Melanchthon. They rigorously opposed any leaning toward Calvinist teachings within the Lutheran ranks, and were dogmatic defenders of what they called the "true" Lutheran position, as opposed to the teachings of those Lutherans whom they regarded as being "crypto-Calvinists." Calvin's lengthy debate with the Gnesio-Lutherans is discussed more fully in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER TWO

LUTHER'S EARLY TEACHING ON THE EUCHARIST

THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR: ITS NATURE AND PURPOSE

Luther's first extended treatment of the Lord's Supper appeared in 1519, the year before he was excommunicated by Rome. His short treatise, entitled "The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ, and the Brotherhoods", was the last in a set of three teaching sermons on the sacraments, each published separately between October and December of that year.[1] In defining the sacrament of the altar, Luther notes that it has three necessary parts:

The first is the sacrament, or sign, The second is the significance of this sacrament. The third is the faith required with each of the first two. These three parts must be found in every sacrament. The sacrament must be

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[1] The other two treatises were "The Sacrament of Penance" and "The Holy and Blessed Sacrament of Baptism." Both are published in English translation in LW 35: Word and Sacrament I, ed. E. Theodore Bachmann (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960).

external and visible, having some material form or appearance.[2] The significance must be internal and spiritual, within the spirit of the person. Faith must make both of them together operative and useful.[3] Although Luther does not explicitly refer to this outline in his other treatises on the eucharist which appear over the next few years, his line of argument does remain consistent with it, and it provides a useful framework for discussing the development of his ideas on this subject in the formative years between 1519 and 1521.

The external and visible sign in the eucharist is "the bread and wine, under which are [Christ's] true body and blood."[4] Other terms which Luther

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[2] Note that Luther later deleted penance from the list of sacraments since its corresponding first element, absolution, could not properly be termed an external (material) sign.

[3] Martin Luther, "The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ, and the Brotherhoods" (1519), trans. Jeremiah J. Schindel et al. LW 35: 49. The distinction between the "sign" and its "signification" goes back to Augustine. See Augustine, "On Christian Doctrine" [I.2], trans. J. F. Shaw, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, ed. Philip Schaff, 1st. ser., 14 vols. (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 2: 523. (Subsequent references to this collection shall be noted as NPNF.) Many principles originally set forth by Augustine were given prominent usage by both Lutheran and Reformed theologians in the Reformation period, particularly with regard to the doctrine of the Eucharist. See the discussion in Pelikan, The Christian Tradition, 4:196-97.

[4] Martin Luther, "A Treatise on the New Testament, that is, the Holy Mass" (1520), trans. Jeremiah J. Schindel, et al. LW 35: 86. In his earlier treatise of 1519, Luther included the qualifier, "the appearance" of bread and wine, since he at this stage had not yet rejected the Roman teaching of transubstantiation. See Luther, "The Blessed Sacrament," LW 35: 49. By 1520,

uses in his early writings to describe this external sign are "seal", "memorial", "token", and "pledge".[5] The outward sign of the sacrament is given, Luther says, to help our weakness of faith:

> For we poor men, living as we do in our five senses, must always have along with the words at least one outward sign to which we may cling and around which we may gather -- in such a way, however, that this sign may be a sacrament, that is, that it may be external and yet contain and signify something spiritual; in order that through the external we may be drawn into the spiritual, comprehending the external with the eyes of the body and the spiritual or inward with the eyes of the heart.[6]

The second part of the sacrament -- its significance -- consists of, as Luther describes it in his treatise of 1519, our incorporation into the body of Christ, the communion of saints. There we bear one another's burdens, find our consolation, and receive the benefits won by Christ's own suffering and death. Luther frequently speaks in this treatise of our union with "Christ and his saints" in a way which clearly indicates that he is speaking of "the church", but without reference to Rome. In this union, our fellowship is two-fold: "on the one hand we partake of Christ and all saints," he says, and

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however, transubstantiation was included with the other errors which he attacked in his treatise, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church."

[5] See Luther, "Treatise on the New Testament," LW 35: 86; Martin Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church" (1520), trans. A. T. W. Steinhauser, et al. LW 36: Word and Sacrament II, ed. Abdel R. Wentz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959) : 40; Martin Luther, "The Misuse of the Mass" (1521), trans. Frederick C. Ahrens, LW 36: 174.

[6] Luther, "Treatise on the New Testament," LW 35: 86. Cf. "The Misuse of the Mass," LW 36: 174.

"on the other hand we permit all Christians to be partakers of us, in whatever way they and we are able."[7] The elements of bread and wine (seen in their natural sense as food for the body) provide a powerful illustration of our union with Christ and his saints:

> For there is no more intimate, deep, and indivisible union than the union of food with him who is fed. For the food enters into and is assimilated by his very nature, and becomes one substance with the person who is fed. . . .Thus in the sacrament we too become united with Christ, and are made one body with all the saints, so that Christ cares for us and acts on our behalf. As if he were what we are, he makes whatever concerns us concern him as well, and even more than it does us. . . . Likewise . . . we are to be united with our neighbors, we in them and they in us.[8]

We must note the focus of Luther's attention here in this early treatise, for in his later writings he does not return to emphasize this point in any systematic way. As his attention becomes drawn toward addressing other matters not discussed in this early treatise (the meaning of the words of Institution, the manner of Christ's bodily presence in the sacrament, and polemical arguments against various practices and teachings), this pastoral instruction concerning the important matter of the believer's communion with Christ and fellowship with the saints in receiving the sacrament, recedes into the background.[9]

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[7] Luther, "The Blessed Sacrament," LW 35: 67.

[8] Ibid., p. 59.

[9] 9. See Heinrich Bornkamm, Luther's World of Thought, trans. Martin H. Bertram (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958), p. 108.

When Luther next addresses the doctrine of the eucharist in his "Treatise on the New Testament, that is, the Holy Mass" (1520), the focus of his argument has already changed. In this treatise he revises his former definition of the significance of the sacrament, now emphasizing that the divine promise which it conveys consists of the forgiveness of sins.[10] From this point on in Luther's treatises, the import of the sacrament of the altar would clearly and consistently be the act and the assurance of the forgiveness of sin.

In this new treatise Luther develops the meaning of the sacrament around the concepts of "promise" and "testament". The promise is that which God imparts to us in the sacrament, and as Luther constructs his explanatory framework, it is made clear that he regards the benefit of the sacrament as

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This is not to say that this focus disappears from Luther's writings, however. As Laskey notes: " If one concentrated attention merely on this polemical material after 1520, one could easily get the impression that indeed *communio* was no longer forcefully expressed by Luther. However, this conclusion would be false. If one turns to Luther's preaching . . . , his pastoral material, and his liturgical writing, one would find his continued advocation of the *communio* theme." Dennis A. Laskey, "The Concern for *Communio* in Luther's Preaching and Liturgical Writing: 1524-1530," Concordia Journal, 12, no. 2 (March 1986): 45; cf. p. 44. Cf. Paul Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 378.

[10] See Ralph W. Quere, "Changes and Constants: Structure in Luther's Understanding of the Real Presence in the 1520's," The Sixteenth Century Journal, 16, no. 1 (1985): 52. It should be noted, however, that both incorporation into the body of Christ (the Christian community) and the forgiveness of sins still remain integral parts of the sacrament of Baptism in Luther's teaching.

totally dependent upon God's initiative. "If man is to deal with God and receive anything from him," Luther says, "it must happen in this manner, not that man lays the first stone, but that God alone -- without any entreaty or desire of man -- must first come and give him a promise."[11] The promise which is declared to us in the observance of the Lord's Supper is the forgiveness of sins, made clear in Christ's words of Institution: "This is the cup of the new eternal testament in my blood, which is poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Luther's paraphrase).[12] Luther focuses upon the word "testament" here, interpreting it in the sense of a "last will and testament" complete with all the necessary elements: the testator (Christ), the named heirs ("we Christians"), the document (the words of Christ), the seal (the physical signs of bread and wine), and the actual bequeathal (the remission of sins and eternal life).[13]

In considering the sign and the promise together, Luther makes it clear that the promise is the more fundamental element of the two.[14] The promise consists of God's own words which give eternal life when received in faith. The sign is given to encourage our faith. Yet if we focus upon the

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[11] Luther, "Treatise on the New Testament," LW 35: 82.

[12] Ibid., p. 85.

[13] Ibid., pp. 86ff. This explanatory model is also restated in "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, published later that same year. See LW 36: 38

[14] See Bornkann, Luther's World of Thought, p. 106.

words and promise of Christ itself, our faith may be nourished and strengthened by them even without the presence of the external sign. He says:

> For the signs might well be lacking, if only one has the words; and thus without [the visible] sacrament, yet not without testament, one might be saved. For I can enjoy the sacrament in the mass every day if only I keep before my eyes the testament, that is, the words and promise of Christ, and feed and strengthen my faith on them.[15]

He repeats this argument in "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," published later that year, and adds in defense of this point, the well known words of Augustine: "Believe and you have eaten."[16] He concludes:

> Therefore I can hold mass every day, indeed, every hour, for I can set the words of Christ before me and with them feed and strengthen my faith as often as I choose. This is a truly spiritual eating and drinking.[17]

The "spiritual" eating and drinking of Christ's body and blood in receiving the eucharist is an important part of Luther's thinking on the Lord's Supper in these early treatises. Although not particularly emphasized, it runs as an undercurrent of thought throughout these early writings. Later on, the precise meaning of this "spiritual" partaking would become an important element in his debates with Zwingli and the other "spiritualizers" of the sacrament.

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[15] Luther, "Treatise on the New Testament," LW 35: 91.

[16] Augustine, "Homilies on the Gospel of John" [25.12], trans. John Gibb and James Innes, NPNF 7: 164.

[17] Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," LW 36: 44

Having heard Luther's description of what God offers us in the sacrament by way of his promise, we turn to faith, the third necessary element of the sacrament, which is what we must offer to God in receiving the sacrament. "These two, promise and faith," he says, "must necessarily go together." For just as "God does not deal, nor has he ever dealt, with man otherwise than through a word of promise," so too "we in turn cannot deal with God otherwise than through faith in the word of his promise."[18]

In Luther's understanding, faith must be present and active if any benefit is to be received in the sacrament. He says, "the mass is nothing else than the divine promise or testament of Christ, sealed with the sacrament of his body and blood. . . ; nobody can possibly do anything in it, neither can it be dealt with in any other way than by faith alone."[19] Here Luther challenges the medieval scholastic argument that the sacraments impart grace by their own inherent virtue as long as the recipient puts up no barrier such as mortal sin or active disbelief. As opposed to a purely "passive receptivity" on the part of the partaker, Luther emphasizes an "active faith" as being necessary

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[18] Ibid., p. 42; cf. p. 39. Also cf. Luther's statement: "We can have no intercourse with God save by the word of him promising and by the faith of man receiving that promise." "Letter from Luther to Margaret, duchess of Brunswick, October 1519," Luther's Correspondence and Other Contemporary Letters, trans. and ed. Preserved Smith and Charles Jacobs, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Publication Society, 1913-1918), 1: 227, (n. #184).

[19] Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," LW 36: 47.

for the sacrament to be received efficaciously.[20] This distinction is made clear in the following passage from "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church":

> It cannot be true, therefore, that there is contained in the sacraments a power efficacious for justification, or that they are "effective signs" of grace. . . . Unless you should call them "effective" in the sense that they certainly and effectively impart grace where faith is unmistakably present.[21]

We note that just as faith plays a crucial role in Luther's doctrine of justification, it is given the same key function in his sacramental theology. In both cases, faith must be actively present for the divine promise to be received.

Luther therefore expresses great concern over the practice of the day whereby the promise of Christ which we are to receive in faith (as presented in the words of Institution), is spoken "secretly" by the priest in Latin so as to be unintelligible to the people. He laments, "they have hidden these words of the testament and have taught that they are not to be spoken to the laity, that these are secret words to be spoken in the mass only by the priest."[22] This practice particularly concerns him because he sees in it an open door for a doctrine of works to supplant faith in the receiving of the sacrament. He solemnly warns that

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[20] See Luther, "The Blessed Sacrament," LW 35:64 (n. #39).

[21] Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," LW 36: 66f.

[22] Luther, "Treatise on the New Testament," LW 35: 90. Cf. "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," LW 36: 41.

> . . . where faith and the word or promise of God decline or are neglected, . . . in their place there arise works and a false, presumptuous trust in them. For where there is no promise of God [proclaimed] there is no faith. Where there is no faith, there everyone presumptuously undertakes to better himself and make himself well pleasing to God by means of works."[23]

Luther's denunciations become strongest on this point. In his various writings of this period he describes as "the very worst abuse", "the most wicked abuse of all", and the one "most heretical", the teaching that the mass is a sacrifice to be performed by the priest as a meritorious good work.[24] He warns that we should "give careful attention to this word 'sacrifice,' so that we do not presume to give God something in the sacrament, when it is he who in it gives us all things."[25] Although we are certainly to offer our "spiritual sacrifices" (our "sacrifice of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving, and of ourselves as well"), we do not thereby offer Christ as our sacrifice. Rather, "by our praise, prayer, and sacrifice we move him and give him occasion to offer himself for us in heaven," and so communicate his benefits to us.[26]

In attacking this conversion of the mass into a good work, Luther condemns the teaching that the mass is *opus gratum opere operato*, that is, "a

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[23] Ibid., p. 92. Cf. "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," LW 36: 47

[24] Luther, "Treatise on the New Testament," LW 35: 94; "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," LW 36: 35; "The Adoration of the Sacrament" (1523), trans. Abdel R. Wentz, LW 36: 288.

[25] Luther, "Treatise on the New Testament," LW 35: 98.

[26] Ibid., p. 99.

work which of itself pleases God."[27] Instead of viewing the sacrament as *opus operatum*, an action which is performed without reference to the doer, Luther maintains that it must be seen as *opus operantis*, an action considered with reference to its doer. (The "doer", as Luther uses the term here, is not the priest acting as officiator, but every participant receiving the sacrament in faith.) He says:

> . . . it is not enough that the sacrament be merely completed (that is, *opus operatum*); it must also be used in faith (that is, *opus operantis*). And we must take care lest with such dangerous interpretations the sacrament's power and virtue be lost on us, and faith perish utterly through the false security of the [outwardly] completed sacrament.[28]

Beneath Luther's argument lies the fundamental distinction that the sacrament must not be seen as *officium* (work or service) at all, but rather as *beneficium* (benefit).[29] Hence, the sacrament must always be viewed as "testament" and "promise" with its benefit resting in God's action rather than human activity.

Later on, when Luther encountered the view of the Lord's Supper represented in the teachings of Karlstadt and then Zwingli, he could not help

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[27] Literally, "a work (that is) acceptable by (virtue of) the work (having been) performed." Luther, "The Blessed Sacrament," LW 35: 63 (see n. #36).

[28] Further, "See to it, then, that for you the sacrament is an *opus operantis*,, that is, a work that is made use of, that is well pleasing to God not because of what it is in itself but because of your faith and your good use of it." Ibid., pp. 63f.

[29] Luther, "Treatise on the New Testament," LW 35: 94.

but see in their "meal of remembrance" a similar conversion of the sacrament from the focus of it being a channel of God's action to it being a human act. Karlstadt has been characterized as a radical Reformer who sought Christian perfection through rigorous spiritual exercises. According to him, humanity is ensnared with earthly, material things, and our salvation lies in rising above them into the spiritual realm. He therefore regarded meditation upon the sacrament and the act of remembrance as a kind of springboard by which a person flies upward with their soul to commune with Christ spiritually in heaven.[30] But as Althaus observes, the meaning of the sacrament for Luther "is not that we lift ourselves up to Christ by our own thoughts but that Christ lowers himself to us."[31] Luther, in commenting on Karlstadt's view, replies:

> Even if I followed the Karlstadtian teaching and preached the remembrance and knowledge of Christ with such passion and seriousness that I sweated blood and became feverish, it would be of no avail and all in vain. For it would be pure work and commandment , but no gift or word of God offered and given to me in the body and blood of Christ.[32]

Faith, then, while it must be active in receiving the sacrament, is not to be understood as a "spiritual exercise". Nor is Luther willing to allow the faith

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[30] See Norman Nagel, "Luther on the Lord's Supper," The Springfielder 27 (Autumn 1963): 43-44.

[31] Paul Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, p. 393.

[32] Martin Luther, "Against the Heavenly Prophets in the Matter of Images and Sacraments" (1525), trans. Bernhard Erling and Conrad Bergendoff, LW 40 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958): 213.

which we bring to overshadow the promise which God offers to us in the sacrament.[33]

When Luther encountered Zwingli's teaching, he found that in it, as in the teaching of Karlstadt, the focal point of the Lord's Supper was not the reception of the body and blood of Christ, but the act of giving thanks. Zwingli, in arguing against the Roman understanding of the mass as a sacrifice, had taken the position that since Christ had offered himself up once and for all as a sacrifice for sin, our present observance could only be seen as a commemoration of that past event. Thus, in his view, a sacrament is not a means for receiving grace; it is a sign of past grace, of accomplished forgiveness. It is not an occasion for Christ to be offered up, but for us to offer ourselves to God.[34] As Luther saw it, however, treating the Lord's Supper as a meal of remembrance means that the divine promise is neglected, and the sacrament ceases to be an efficacious means of receiving God's grace. It becomes, instead, an activity which a person performs rather than a means by

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[33] As David Steinmetz observes in summarizing Luther's position, ". . . while both God's gift and the human response to that gift are in a certain sense equally important, the gift is primary and the response secondary. . . . God is not conjured into the eucharist by human piety. Faith only has a proper object if God is already savingly present." David C. Steinmetz, "Scripture and the Lord's Supper in Luther's Theology," Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology 37 (July 1983): 264.

[34] See Brian A. Gerrish, "Sign and Reality: The Lord's Supper in the Reformed Confessions," The Old Protestantism and the New, p. 119.

which God acts to fulfil his promises and bestow his grace and forgiveness.[35] Whether arguing against the Roman Catholic position or against the "sacramentarians", Luther was adamant that the divine promise not be supplanted by a doctrine of works in any form.

EARLIEST ARGUMENT FOR THE REAL PRESENCE

In his first treatise on the Lord's Supper, "The Blessed Sacrament" (1519), Luther does not yet deny the doctrine of transubstantiation. In fact, he utilizes it to illustrate how we become united and transformed in our partaking of the sacrament in faith, just as the bread loses its identity in becoming the body of Christ:

> For just as the bread in changed into his true natural body and the wine into his natural true blood, so truly we are also drawn and changed into the spiritual body, that is, into the fellowship of Christ and all saints. . .[36]

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[35] See Bornkamm, Luther's World of Thought, p. 110. Cf. Sasse, This Is My Body, pp. 129-30. This critical distinction should not be underestimated. As Locher notes, in Zwingli's teaching "the actor of the celebration is not Christ, but the congregation. It is not the 'This is . . .' but rather the 'Do this . . .' which is emphasised." He concludes that "This difference could well be much more significant than the whole controversy about the elements." Gottfried W. Locher, Zwingli's Thought: New Perspectives (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1981), p. 222.

[36] Luther, "The Blessed Sacrament," LW 35: 59.

But by the following year, Luther's thinking on this matter has undergone a change, and in "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church" he lists it as one of the "three captivities" which he condemns.[37]

The doctrine of transubstantiation was developed from philosophical distinctions based on Aristotelian metaphysics, where a "thing" is defined both in terms of its essential reality ("substance")[38] and its appearance ("accidents"). Transubstantiation, simply put, holds that the substance of the bread and wine in the consecrated sacrament is replaced with the substance of Christ's body and blood -- which is then there as a real presence -- while the external appearance, the accidents, of the bread and wine remain.[39]

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[37] See Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," LW 36: 28

[38] The term "substance" in its common usage today usually denotes a "physical" or "material" object. But as Aristotle uses the term, he explicitly rejects this meaning (Metaphysics,VII.3.7). Rather, substance is the "essence" or "form" of a thing which underlies ("is prior to") every material object (Metaphysics,VII.3.2). Cf. Copleston's phrasing of Aristotle's teaching: "substance is primarily the definable essence or form of a thing, the principle in virtue of which the material element is some definable concrete object." Frederick Copelston, S.J., A History of Philosophy (Westminster: The Newman Press, 1955) 1: 305. See further, Aristotle, Metaphysics,VII.4-6 (1029b-1030a) (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947) 1: 318-337.

[39] The reasoning behind this position is perhaps most clearly stated by Thomas Aquinas. Noting that Christ's body is not there in the eucharist before the consecration, he constructs the following logical argument: "But a thing cannot be where it was not before, except by being brought in locally or by something already there being changed into it." Christ's body cannot be said to "arrive" in the eucharist by local motion, however, since it would then have to "leave" where it was in heaven. Nor can a thing which is locally moved end up at the same time in different places; but the body of Christ does become present simultaneously on many altars as the mass is being

Luther notes that his reading of the medieval theologian Pierre d'Ailly was instrumental in leading him to reject the teaching of transubstantiation. Luther recalls how d'Ailly had remarked in his *Sententiae* "that to hold that real bread and real wine, and not merely their accidents, are present on the altar, would be much more probable and require fewer superfluous miracles -- if only the church had not decreed otherwise."[40] Pierre d'Ailly, like William of Ockham and Duns Scotus, was one of the medieval theologians who while confessing the doctrine of transubstantiation as the church required, nevertheless held forth the possibility that it was not necessary for the substance of the bread and wine to be annihilated or destroyed for it to become the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament. Instead, they proposed that it would be possible for the substance of the bread and wine to remain along with the accidents, and to coexist there with the body and blood of Christ after the consecration of the elements.[41] This

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celebrated. Therefore, "it remains that there is no other way in which the body of Christ can begin to be in the sacrament except through the substance of the bread being changed into it. Now, what is changed into something else is no longer there after the change. The reality of Christ's body in the sacrament demands, then, that the substance of the bread be no longer there after the consecration." Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* [IIIa.75.2], Latin text and English translation., ed. Blackfriars (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1964 -) 58: 60-63.

[40] Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," LW 36: 29

[41] For a more detailed discussion see Pelikan, The Christian Tradition 4: 53-54, 56-58. Cf. Otto W. Heick, "Consubstantiation in Luther's Theology," Canadian Journal of Theology, 7, no. 1 (1966): 6-7. See also William of Ockham, The *'De Sacramento Altaris'*, ed. T. Bruce Birch, English translation (Burlington: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1930),

coexistence rather than transformation of the substance later received the name "consubstantiation."[42]

Luther endorses Peter d'Ailly's proposition in this treatise of 1520, and reflects that

> . . . after floating on a sea of doubts, I at last found rest for my conscience in the above view, namely that it is real bread and real wine, in which Christ's real flesh and real blood are present in no other way and to no less a degree than the others assert them to be under their accidents.[43]

Not content to base his new teaching on a philosophical construct, Luther grounds it by analogy to a basic article of faith: that the divinity and the humanity also coexisted in the Incarnate Christ. He argues:

> Thus what is true in regard to Christ is also true in regard to the sacrament. In order for the divine nature to dwell in him

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pp. 182-87. Cf. Gabriel N. Buescher, The Eucharistic Teaching of William Ockham (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1950), pp. 51, 143.

[42] Luther himself does not use the term "consubstantiation" to describe his position, although it has been argued that this is the term which best expresses his view. See Heick, "Consubstantiation in Luther's Theology," p. 8. Cf. Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 102.

[43] Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," LW 36: 29. Note Grislis' evaluation that "in the review of young Luther's understanding of the eucharistic presence of Christ, the conceptual framework is largely borrowed from the then current theological setting -- and therefore is scholastic in general and Ockhamist in particular. While certainly plowing new ground . . . , the manner of Christ's presence in the eucharist is at first described in a rather traditional Ockhamist fashion." Egil Grislis, "The Manner of Christ's Eucharistic Presence According to Martin Luther," Consensus 7,1 (January 1981): 5.

> bodily [Col. 2:9], it is not necessary for human nature to be transubstantiated and the divine nature contained under the accidents of the human nature. Both natures are simply there in their entirety. . . . In like manner, it is not necessary in the sacrament that the bread and wine be transubstantiated and that Christ be contained under their accidents in order that the real body and the real blood may be present. But both remain there at the same time. . . .[44]

Luther's confession of the "real presence" was to become a major feature in his later debates with the sacramentarians. It is perhaps ironic that as a prelude to this debate, the distinctive position which Luther takes is not to argue for the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament at all, but to argue for the real presence of the bread and wine. We should note, however, that Christ's "real presence" in the Supper was not yet a topic of debate; in fact, it was thought by Luther at this point to be a teaching which was universally accepted within the church.[45] And thus he focuses his attention on other matters in this early period of his writings. Nevertheless, when the later debate does erupt, we will find that his arguments in favour of the real presence in the context of that debate take the same fundamental form there as do his arguments here.

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[44] Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," LW 36: 35; cf. p. 32.

[45] As Robert H. Fischer puts it, Luther followed "the naive realism of the early Fathers" in affirming the real presence. See his "Introduction" to Luther's treatise "That These Words of Christ 'This Is My Body, etc.' Still Stand Firm Against the Fanatics," LW 37: Word and Sacrament III, ed. Robert H. Fischer (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961): 6. Cf. Bornkamm, Luther's World of Thought, p. 108.

In "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," Luther establishes three closely related principles in arguing against the doctrine of transubstantiation. We should take note of these three basic principles which are put forth here for the first time in arguing for the real presence of the bread and wine in the sacrament, because they will provide the basis for his later arguments against the "sacramentarians" as he contends for the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the eucharist. These three principles reappear in every treatise of Luther's dealing with the eucharist throughout the period of that debate.

As he begins the explanation of his own alternative to the doctrine of transubstantiation, Luther sets forth his first and most basic rule:

> . . . above all -- no violence is to be done to the words of God, whether by man or angel. They are to be retained in their simplest meaning so far as possible. Unless the content manifestly compels it, they are not to be understood apart from their grammatical and proper sense, lest we give our adversaries occasion to make a mockery of all the scriptures.[46]

Luther's first concern, then, is that the authority of the Word be recognized; the words of scripture are "the words of God." These words are to be taken and believed without twisting them around to mean what reason might prefer them to mean. "Therefore it is an absurd and unheard of juggling with words to understand 'bread' to mean 'the form or accidents of bread' and 'wine' to mean 'the form or accidents of wine.'"[47]

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[46] Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," LW 36: 30.

[47] Ibid., p. 31.

Luther's second criterion, related to the first, is that while reason is to be employed in interpreting scripture, it must always be kept subject to the authority of the Word.[48] As Gerrish notes, Luther has nothing against the use of reason per se;[49] it is quite valuable in leading us to the best understanding of the text.[50] But the use of reason in interpreting scripture has its limits: Where reason encounters one of the mysteries of the faith, it must bow to faith which is grounded in the authority of the Word.[51] Using the example of the divine and human natures which constitute the one person of Christ, Luther says, "Even though philosophy cannot grasp this, faith grasps it

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[48] Ibid., p. 33.

[49] "Luther does not wish to attack reason *per se*, but only the misuse of it; and reason is being misused when it is set up as the final and supreme judge in matters of theology. Reason is indicted only when caught trespassing." Brian A. Gerrish, Grace and Reason: A Study in the Theology of Luther (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 84.

[50] ". . . reason, when regenerate, is virtually absorbed into faith, becoming faith's cognative and intellectual aspects." Ibid., p. 26.

[51] "If, then, we are to do justice to the complexity of Luther's thought, we must carefully distinguish: (1) natural reason, ruling within its proper domain (the Earthly Kingdom); (2) arrogant reason, trespassing upon the domain of faith (the Heavenly Kingdom); (3) regenerate reason, serving humbly in the household of faith, but always subject to the Word of God. Within the first context, reason is an excellent gift of God; within the second, it is Frau Hulda, the Devil's Whore; within the third, it is the handmaiden of faith." Ibid.

nonetheless. And the authority of God's word is greater than the capacity of our own intellect to grasp it."[52]

Luther is particularly suspicious of employing philosophy to interpret the meaning of scripture. To him, this is but another means by which reason would seek to rise above the authority of the Word.[53] He is adamant in maintaining that philosophy must not become the arbiter of scripture, and he gives more space to arguing this point than any other. He says:

> What shall we say when Aristotle and the doctrines of men are made to be the arbiters of such lofty and divine matters? Why do we not put aside such curiosity and cling simply to the words of Christ, willing to remain in ignorance of what takes

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[52] Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," LW 36: 35. Similarly, "What does it matter if philosophy cannot fathom this? The Holy Spirit is greater than Aristotle." Ibid., p. 34.

[53] See Martin Luther, "Disputation against Scholastic Theology" (theses 43-53), trans. and ed. Harold J. Grimm, LW: 31 Career of the Reformer: I (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), pp. 12-13. Note Steinmetz' conclusion that "In part Luther rejected the philosophical explanation because of a deeply held conviction that the use of Aristotelian philosophy by scholastic theologians had seriously impeded their efforts to understand the mind of the New Testament." Steinmetz, "Scripture and the Lord's Supper in Luther's Theology," p. 254. Cf. Gerrish: "Luther's objections are less to the philosophy of Aristotle itself than to the corrupting influence it has upon theology when the two are confused. . . . Clearly, as long as the distinction between theology and philosophy is kept before the mind, there is nothing to prevent one from passing favourable judgments upon Aristotle -- or at least, giving him fair trial. . . . As soon as we turn to theology, on the other hand, his whole attitude is changed: here Aristotelian philosophy has no validity whatever, but is mere darkness, and Aristotle himself appears as a seducer." Gerrish, Grace and Reason, pp. 34-35.

> place here and content that the real body of Christ is present by virtue of the words?[54]

The third principle used by Luther is that he refuses to speculate on the question of how the bread and wine remain in the sacrament. For him, the most reasonable conclusion based on the authority of the Word is that the bread and wine remain present with the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament. But he will not speculate as to the means by which this happens. It remains a mystery of faith. He says:

> For my part, if I cannot fathom how the bread is the body of Christ, yet I will take my reason captive to the obedience of Christ (II Cor. 10:5), and clinging simply to his words, firmly believe not only that the body of Christ is in the bread but that the bread is the body of Christ.[55]

Despite his strong arguments against transubstantiation, then, Luther refuses to become dogmatic in setting forth an alternative position. In the end he regards both his explanation and that of the Roman Church as matters of opinion only. He says, "I permit other men to follow the other opinion, . . . only let them not press us to accept their opinions as articles of faith"[56] for

> . . . the opinions of the Thomists, whether approved by pope or by council, remain only opinions, and would not become articles of faith even if an angel from heaven were to decree otherwise (Col. 1:18). For what is asserted without the

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[54] Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," LW 36: 33

[55] Ibid., p. 34.

[56] Ibid., p. 35.

> scriptures or proven revelation may be held as an opinion, but need not be believed.[57]

Whether in the end one chooses to believe that the substance of bread and wine remains or disappears in the sacrament, it is important to remember the underlying assumption in Luther's argument that Christ's body and blood are substantially present there. This belief in the miracle of the real presence was accepted by Luther as part of the church's historic confession of faith. While he makes frequent reference to it in his early writings, he does not give it any particular emphasis since he presupposes it to be an uncontested truth.

There would soon be a dramatic reversal in this situation, however. Under the spiritualized interpretation of the Lord's Supper advocated by Karlstadt, Zwingli and others, the belief that the substance of the bread and wine remained in the Lord's Supper was not at issue -- there was no doubt in their minds that it remained real, natural bread and wine. But the supposed substantial presence of Christ's body and blood was something which they rejected outright. Upon encountering their spiritualized view of the sacrament, Luther refocused his argument to again defend the real presence -- this time not of the bread and wine in the eucharist, but of the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament. It was to become the dominant issue of the extensive debates which followed.

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[57] Ibid., p. 29.

CHAPTER THREE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LUTHER'S TEACHING DURING THE INTITIAL EUCHARISTIC CONTROVERSY

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE EUCHARISTIC CONTROVERSY (1523-1525)

We find the first indication of the change in the focus of Luther's argument concerning the real presence, in his treatise on "The Adoration of the Sacrament" addressed to the Bohemian Brethren in 1523. He was aware that there were some among the Brethren who held that Christ was spiritually rather than bodily present in the sacrament, with the elements of bread and wine being efficacious signs of his body and blood for the believer, while others continued to hold to the more traditional belief that the flesh and blood of Christ are bodily present in the sacrament.[1] Luther therefore set out in a

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[1] Luther received several differing representations from the Bohemian Bretheren with regard to their position on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, and it is not precisely clear which factions held the greatest influence. Nevertheless it appears that in general terms they rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation without opting for a merely figurative presence of Christ in the Supper. Barclay sees their position as anticipating the view of Calvin, and notes how Luther dealt cordially with the Bohemians at this stage. See Alexander Barclay, The Protestant Doctrine of the Lord's Supper:

"brotherly fashion" to advise the Bohemians on this article of faith "as we Germans believe it, and as it must be believed according to the gospel."[2]

We shall note how the three principles employed by Luther earlier in "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church" reoccur in his argument here for the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament. He begins by saying:

> Lay hold on the word which Christ speaks: "Take, this is my body, this is my blood." One must not do such violence to the words of God as to give any word a meaning other than its natural one, unless there is clear and definite Scripture to do that. This is what is done by those who without any basis in Scripture take the word "is" and forcibly twist it to mean the same as the word "signifies."[3]

He is also quite firm in saying that reason and intellect must be kept subject to faith and Scripture. With regard to the suggestion that the words "This is my body" should be taken to mean "This is the participation in my body," he remarks:

> Such ideas do seem quite attractive to the reason -- if you want to let them interpret the words of Paul and of Christ as they please! But this is not Christian teaching, when I intrude my own ideas into the Scripture and compel Scripture to accord with them. On the contrary, the Christian way is to make clear

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A Study in the Eucharistic Teaching of Luther, Zwingli and Calvin (Glasgow: Jackson, Wylie and Co., 1927), pp. 34-35.

[2] Luther, "The Adoration of the Sacrament," LW 36:276.

[3] Ibid., p. 279. Also "One should proceed thus: Every single word should be permitted to stand in its natural meaning; no deviation should be allowed unless faith compels it." Ibid., p. 281.

> first what the Scriptures teach and then compel my own ideas to accord with them.[4]

Luther again refrains from speculating on precisely how Christ is present in the eucharist. He advises his hearers to receive the sacrament in faith,

> And say to yourself: I am not commanded to investigate or to know how God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit . . . is in the sacrament. For me it is enough to know that the Word which I hear and the body which I receive are truly the Word and body of my Lord and God.[5]

But one very important point has changed from the previous debate. Whereas with regard to transubstantiation, Luther was willing to let belief in the real presence of the bread and wine stand as a matter of opinion only, he is not willing to entertain any denial of the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament whatsoever.[6] In speaking of the real presence of Christ in the Supper, his opinion is that we are dealing with a fundamental article of faith based upon Scripture and affirmed by the Christian Fathers. There is no room for differing opinions to stand side by side here. If these

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[4] Ibid., p. 283.

[5] Ibid., p. 297.

[6] In the present treatise Luther again deemphasizes the issue of transubstantiation saying of the belief that "in the sacrament no bread remains but only the form of bread," that "this error is not very important if only the body and blood of Christ, together with the Word, are not taken away." Ibid., p. 287. This remained Luther's position throughout the eucharistic debate. In 1528 he wrote: "Now I have taught in the past and still teach that this controversy is unnecessary, and that it is of no great consequence whether the bread remains or not." Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: Word and Sacrament III, trans. and ed. Robert H. Fischer (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961): 296.

spiritualizers wish to refute accepted Christian doctrine, then they will have to prove that it is false and not merely claim that their teaching is more reasonable. Luther therefore sets up a two-fold task for those who would teach a symbolic interpretation of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper: First, he says,

> . . . it is not enough to say such a statement may convey their understanding of it. They must show that it demands and compels such an interpretation. In matters like these, where conscience is involved, one must proceed with certainty. . . . "Might" and "must" are not the same. You have to prove that it must be interpreted in this way and no other.[7]

And secondly, "If they would overthrow our interpretation they must also show that the words simply do not admit of our interpretation." But, he adds confidently, "This they will not do because the words convey our understanding perfectly."[8]

The first major confrontation on the doctrine of the eucharist took place in 1525 with the publication of Luther's treatise, "Against the Heavenly Prophets in the Matter of Images and Sacraments." In this treatise Luther writes against the position of Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, a former colleague of his in Wittenberg who in Luther's opinion was given to excesses in championing the reform, and was finally expelled from Saxony in 1524. That same year Karlstadt, having found refuge in Switzerland, published a series of treatises on the Lord's Supper attacking Luther's view. When these

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[7] Luther, "The Adoration of the Sacrament," LW 36: 284 (emphasis is mine).

[8] Ibid., p. 286.

pamphlets appeared in Strasbourg, seven local pastors (including Martin Bucer who was later to have such an influence on John Calvin) wrote to Luther in November 1524 asking for his advice. Luther replied in December, and in a very significant statement explained why, despite his strong criticism of the Roman Mass, he could not go to the same lengths as Karlstadt in rejecting the real presence:

> I confess that if Dr. Karlstadt, or anyone else, could have convinced me five years ago that only bread and wine were in the sacrament he would have done me a great service. At that time I suffered such severe conflicts and inner strife and torment that I would gladly have been delivered from them. I realized that at this point I could best resist the papacy. There were two who then wrote me, with much more skill than Dr. Karlstadt has, and who did not torture the Word with their own preconceived notions. But I am a captive and cannot free myself. The text is too powerfully present, and will not allow itself to be torn from its meaning by mere verbiage.[9]

The authority of the Word was to continue to hold Luther "captive" to a belief in the real presence of Christ in the sacrament throughout the eucharistic controversy.[10]

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[9] Martin Luther, "Letter to the Christians at Strassburg in Opposition to the Fanatic Spirit" (1524), trans. Conrad Bergendoff, LW 40: 68.

[10] Note Grislis' assessment: "As Luther's thought develops further we may note that he is slowly working his way back, first to St. Augustine, then to the Early Church Fathers, and all the while continuously wrestling with the Bible. This means that the sacramental theology of St. Augustine and the Early Church Fathers which Luther employs has been revised for the use in the Reformation struggles. The overarching attention to the Word is now everywhere made explicit and its priority is heavily underlined." Grislis, "The Manner of Christ's Eucharistic Presence According to Luther," pp. 5-6.

It should be noted that the pastors in Strasbourg also wrote to Zwingli in Zurich at the same time that they approached Luther. Zwingli's reply came first, and on the whole they seemed to favor his interpretation of the sacrament more than that of Luther. Realizing how broad the acceptance of Karlstadt's and Zwingli's teachings was now becoming, Luther hastened to draw up a comprehensive refutation of Karlstadt's contentious teachings, which was completed in January 1525. The language which Luther used in this treatise appears harsh and even excessive, but its forceful tone may have made it that much more effective in raising a barrier to halt the further spread of a spiritualized understanding of the sacrament in the German speaking territories.[11]

In the second half of his treatise, "Against the Heavenly Prophets," Luther focuses specifically on Karlstadt's teachings on the Lord's Supper. He divides his response into two sections which correspond to the first two basic principles discussed above. In the first section, again resting his argument upon the authority of the Word, he rejects at length Karlstadt's subjective interpretation of the words of Institution. As he begins his argument against Karlstadt's rearranging of the words of the text, Luther lays down his familiar rule:

> This then is our basis. Where Holy Scripture is the ground of faith we are not to deviate from the words as they stand nor

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[11] See Conrad Bergendoff, "Introduction" to Luther's "Against the Heavenly Prophets," LW 40: 76.

> from the order in which they stand, unless an express article of faith compels a different interpretation or order.[12]

And he states it again at the conclusion of his argument, saying,

> . . . the natural meaning of the words is queen, transcending all subtle, acute sophistical fancy. From it we may not deviate, unless we are compelled by a clear article of faith.[13]

In the second section Luther deals at length with Karlstadt's use of reason, and berates him for basing his arguments upon reason rather than Scripture.[14] He repeatedly refers to reason as "Frau Hulda" (the leader of a group of elfin creatures in Germanic mythology; hence, a demon), and uses other epithets for it like "the devil's prostitute" and "the devil's bride."[15] As we have seen, Luther is not opposed to reason itself, but he is vigilant in never permitting reason to stand above Scripture. When it does so, it becomes the devil's tool. When reason is properly employed, however, it will concur with the simple and direct meaning of the text. "If only Dr. Karlstadt and his gang could forego their sophistry and rationalism," cries Luther. It will never enable them to understand how the bread is the body. Instead, they ought to do one of two things:

> Either give God honor and let his Word remain right and true, even though they don't understand how it can be that it is right and true, and be satisfied with it and believe it when they hear that God so speaks and wants it this way. Or, if they want to be

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[12] Luther, "Against the Heavenly Prophets," LW 40: 157.

[13] Ibid., p. 190.

[14] Ibid., pp. 192 ff.

[15] Ibid., p. 175.

> really clever, let them follow the customary meaning of Scripture and simple sense of its languages, setting aside the subtleties and craftiness.[16]

Luther views the real presence as an article of faith. And if reason is allowed to reject this article of faith, it will be free to overthrow others as well. He has earlier warned his readers that

> . . . if we are so to treat our faith that we bring our pet ideas into Scripture and deal with Scripture according to our understanding, attending only to what is common to the crowd and generally accepted notions, then no article of faith will remain. For there is none in Scripture that God has not placed beyond the rock of reason.[17]

He now warns that such speculation will in the end destroy even the most basic articles of faith:

> . . . You will see as they progress, that they do not want to honor the Word of God in faith nor receive it according to the simple use of language. Instead, with their sophisticated reason and refined subtlety they want to measure and master it until they finally come to this point where they will deny that Christ is God. For to reason it sounds just as foolish to say "Man is God," as "The bread is the body." And as they deny the one thing they will also soon boldly deny the other. Such is also the aim of the devil, who has led them away from Scripture into their own reason, thereby bringing back all the ancient heresies.[18]

Luther is not just being theatrical here; he is quite sincere in making this statement. As mentioned earlier, Luther sees a strong similarity between the

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[16] Ibid., pp. 195-96.

[17] Ibid., p. 153.

[18] Ibid., p. 197; cf. pp. 153-54.

miracle of the incarnation and Christ's presence in the bread and wine. He is aware, to use Steinmetz' phrase, that "No objection can be alleged against the doctrine of the real presence which cannot equally well be alleged against the incarnation itself."[19] In his writings Luther draws repeated parallels between the incarnation and the real presence.[20] He sees both as being part of the same *modus operandi* which God uses in carrying out his saving activity. As Nagel observes, Luther understands that God reveals himself and comes to us only through concrete realities. We know and encounter God "only as he has put himself into flesh, words, water, wine and bread." This common means by which God comes to us establishes for Luther a strong parallel between the incarnation and the Lord's Supper. To deny the real presence, is, for him, to deny the very means by which God comes to us. And if God does not come to us in physical things, then God did not come to us in the man Jesus. Thus, for Luther, the connection is complete: "When the real presence goes, with it goes the incarnation."[21] And so Luther warns, "All the ridicule that Karlstadt heaps on the sacrament, he has to direct also to the deity of Christ in the flesh, as he also surely will do in time."[22]

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[19] Steinmetz, "Scripture and the Lord's Supper in Luther's Theology," p. 256.

[20] See Norman Nagel, "The Incarnation and the Lord's Supper in Luther," Concordia Theological Monthly 24, no. 9 (September 1953): 634ff.

[21] Ibid., pp. 632-33, 635, 638.

[22] Luther, "Against the Heavenly Prophets," LW 40: 216.

In this discussion Luther also brings into play the third principle mentioned earlier. Once again, he seeks to turn away all speculation as to how Christ becomes present in the sacrament. He says of Karlstadt that

> He reviles us with many scornful and jeering words, asking how we can get Christ into the bread and wine. . . . How Christ is brought into the bread. . . , I do not know. But I know full well that the Word of God cannot lie, and it says that the body and blood of Christ are in the sacrament.[23]

As Sasse has observed,

> On the basis of these words of Christ, Luther believes in the real presence without trying to build up a theory comparable to the theories of impanation, transubstantiation, consubstantiation, or whatever the subtle minds of philosophers and theologians may have devised in order to answer the question: How could the real presence be possible?[24]

Luther maintains to the end that "We are not bidden to search out how it can be that our bread becomes and is the body of Christ. It is the Word of God that says so. We hold to that and believe it."[25]

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[23] Ibid., p. 176.

[24] Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 104. Cf. Grislis: "Although defending neither transubstantiation nor consubstantiation, Luther's adherence to such central scholastic definitions as 'substance' and 'presence' places him in a broad stream of mainline interpreters whose central concern has been the truth of Christ's eucharistic presence. . . . He also leaves no misunderstanding that in the last analysis the eucharistic presence of Christ is a miracle. Hence proper theologizing about it is an exercise of faith. . . ." Grislis, "The Manner of Christ's Eucharistic Presence According to Martin Luther," p. 15.

[25] Luther, "Against the Heavenly Prophets," LW 40: 216.

THE DEBATE WITH ZWINGLI AND OECOLAMPADIUS (1527-1528)

The circulation of Karlstadt's pamphlets on the Lord's Supper among the Swiss now prompted Ulrich Zwingli to address this issue as well. Several basic differences in Luther's and Zwingli's thought should be noted. Zwingli, prior to joining the evangelical movement, was a secular priest who had been educated in Thomistic philosophy and theology during his years of study at Basel and Vienna. This training in the *via antiqua* contrasts strongly with Martin Luther's training as a young man in the *via moderna* of William of Ockham and his school.[26] Whereas Luther learned in the Ockhamist tradition to see the antithesis of reason and revelation, that what is true in philosophy may be false in theology,[27] Zwingli remained of the view throughout his career as a Reformer that although divine truth surpasses the capacity of human reason, it never contradicts it.[28] Accordingly, it is

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[26] See Locher, Zwingli's Thought, p. 59.

[27] Gerrish, Grace and Reason, pp. 52-54. See Martin Luther, "The Disputation Concerning the Passage 'The Word Was Made Flesh' (1539)", LW 38: Word and Sacrament IV, trans. and ed. Martin E. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971): 239-42; "Disputation Against Scholastic Theology (1517)" (theses 43-53), LW 31: 12-13; "Heidelberg Disputation (1518)" (theses 29, 30), trans. Harold H. Grimm, LW 31: 41.

[28] See Thomas Aquinas: "Now, although the truth of the Christian faith which we have discussed surpasses the capacity of the reason, nevertheless that truth that the human reason is naturally endowed to know cannot be opposed to the truth of the Christian faith. . . . No opinion or belief, therefore, is implanted in man by God which is contrary to man's natural knowledge." On the Truth of the Catholic Faith: *Summa Contra Gentiles*

understood that just as philosophy begins with natural fact and arrives at truth through the use of reason, so theology begins with divine revelation and by employing reason proceeds to the knowledge of God. This argument stands in contrast with Luther's understanding that faith does not necessarily follow from a logical train of reasoning since the wisdom of God is foolishness to human understanding and often contradicts reason.

A second key difference between Zwingli and Luther was the Erasmian orientation of Zwingli's theology. As a friend and follower of Erasmus, Zwingli was in the early years of his ministry a promising figure in the humanist Reform, and even after joining the evangelical movement he remained a humanist in many of his concepts.[29] Of particular importance to the discussion here is Zwingli's continued reliance upon the Erasmian teaching of the idealistic separation of matter and mind, body and soul, and of a spiritualistic and moralistic understanding of the gospel.[30] Luther, on the other hand, as we have already seen, was thoroughly incarnational in his theological orientation, repeatedly stressing how God chooses to reveal

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[I.7.1 & 4], trans. Anton C. Pegis, F.R.S.C. (Garden City, New York: Hanover House, 1955) I: 74, 75.

[29] Note Locher's evaluation that "when he [Zwingli] returned from Vienna, he became an enthusiastic reader of the works of Erasmus, whose grateful and devoted student he felt himself for the rest of his life. Even after the painful break with Erasmus, Zwingli remained a humanist." Locher, Zwingli's Thought, p. 233.

[30] Ibid.; see pp. 153, 241.

himself in human form, through physical means, and to act in the concrete events of history.[31]

Shortly before Zwingli came into contact with Karlstadt's teachings on the Lord's Supper, he received a copy of a letter being circulated by the Dutch Humanist Cornelius Hoen (or Honius), who proposed a new spiritualized understanding of the sacrament. When Luther learned of the letter he rejected it outright,[32] while Zwingli embraced Hoen's interpretation wholeheartedly and incorporated these ideas into his own thought.[33] Chief among the concepts which Zwingli adopted from Hoen was the belief that the words "this is my body" must be interpreted figuratively to mean "this signifies (or represents) my body." Another important argument which he appropriated was that of using John 6:63 ("the flesh is of no avail") to prove that only a spiritual eating and drinking of Christ's body and blood (through faith) is required, and not a physical partaking, which would be useless. Karlstadt, in his treatise on the Lord's Supper, had also made use of this interpretation of John 6:63. And in Karlstadt's treatise Zwingli found yet another argument to strengthen his own position: the argument drawn from Augustine's

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[31] See Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, pp. 393-94. For a further discussion of the basic differences between Zwingli and Luther, see Sasse, This Is My Body, pp. 116-20.

[32] Hoen seems to be one of those writing "with much skill" whom Luther referred to in his "Letter to the Christians at Strassburg." See LW 40: 68 (n. #2).

[33] See Robert H. Fischer's "Introduction to Volume 37," LW 37: xii for a full listing of the concepts of Hoen adopted by Zwingli for use in his own writings.

teaching[34] that since Christ's body is located at the right hand of God in heaven, it cannot therefore also be present on earth in the bread of the Supper.[35]

In March of 1525, Zwingli published his "Commentary on True and False Religion" followed a few months later by a supplement concerning the eucharist entitled "Rearguard." His argument in these treatises was chiefly directed against Roman Catholic practice and teachings, but it was evident in these that he considered Luther's understanding of the Lord's Supper to be Roman in nature. From Zurich, belief in the real presence was clearly considered a papist doctrine, and therefore the Wittenberg Reformation could only be interpreted as a half-way Reformation in need of full emancipation from Rome. From Wittenberg, however, Zwingli's ideas were seen to be similar to those of Karlstadt and his radical associates, and Luther could not help but look upon him as merely another dangerous "enthusiast."

In August of 1525, Zwingli's colleague in Basel, John Oecolampadius, published his "Genuine Exposition of the Words of the Lord, 'This Is My Body,' According to the Most Ancient Authorities" in an attempt to win over the south German cities to the teachings of the Swiss. The following year Zwingli's treatise, "A Clear Instruction Concerning Christ's Supper" appeared in German. In all, over two dozen letters and treatises appeared

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[34] See Augustine, "Letter to Dardanus," trans. Sr. Wilfrid Parsons, S.N.D., Fathers of the Church, ed. Roy Joseph Deferrari, et al (New York: Fathers of the Church Inc., 1955), vol. 30: St. Augustin: Letters IV, pp. 254-55.

[35] Note Luther's reply to these two arguments of Karlstadt in "Against the Heavenly Prophets," LW 40: 202-5, 216.

between late 1524 and early 1527 attacking Luther's views on the Lord's Supper either directly or indirectly.[36] With his silent response to this host of writings being interpreted as a sign of weakness, and with some pastors in southern Germany being converted to the Swiss position, Luther finally felt constrained to answer his detractors in a thorough and forceful manner. In the spring of 1527 Luther's reply, "That These Words of Christ, 'This Is My Body,' etc. Still Stand Firm Against the Fanatics," appeared in which he dealt specifically with refuting Zwingli's and Oecolampadius' arguments.

At the same time that Luther's lengthy treatise appeared, Zwingli also published a detailed reply to Luther's arguments contained in previous works, which he entitled a "Friendly Exposition of the Eucharistic Affair, to Martin Luther." The condescending tone of Zwingli's treatise, along with his numerous barbed comments, was angrily received in Wittenberg. By the same token, Luther's harshly worded treatise, "This Is My Body," was received with contempt by the Swiss. By June, Zwingli and Oecolampadius had both penned replies to Luther's treatise,[37] without, however, covering much new ground. Zwingli's chief arguments remained that Christ's ascension to the right hand of God precludes his bodily presence in the Supper, and

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[36] See the listing of published writings given by Robert H. Fischer in his "Introduction" to Luther's treatise, "This Is My Body," in LW 37:8-11.

[37] "That These Words of Jesus Christ, 'This Is My Body Which Is Given For You,' Will Forever Retain Their Ancient, Single Meaning, and Martin Luther With His Latest Book Has By No Means Proved or Established His Own and the Pope's View. Ulrich Zwingli's Christian Answer," and "That Dr. Martin Luther's Misunderstanding of the Everlasting Words, 'This Is My Body,' is Untenable. The Second Reasonable Answer of John Oecolampadius."

that according to John 6:63 the bodily presence of Christ in the Supper is useless. Between December 1527 and February 1528, Luther composed a lengthy reply entitled "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," which he intended to be his final word on the subject, and, indeed, he paid no attention to Zwingli's and Oecolampadius' subsequent replies.[38]

Luther was thus faced with the task of defending the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Supper against two key charges: first, that it is absurd (because Christ's body is in heaven), and secondly, that it is unnecessary (because the flesh is of no avail).[39] To begin with, Luther found it incredible that this spiritualized interpretation of the Lord's Supper with its denial of Christ's real presence in the sacrament would receive such wide acceptance. He says:

> The amazing thing . . . is that of all the Fathers, as many as you can name, not one has ever spoken about the sacrament as these fanatics do. None of them uses such expressions as "It is simply bread and wine," or "Christ's body and blood are not present". . . . Actually, they simply proceed to speak as if no one doubted that Christ's body and blood are present.[40]

Luther also notes:

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[38] The most noteworthy of these forthcoming replies was the book of combined treatises, "Concerning Dr. Martin Luther's Book Entitled 'Confession': Two Answers, by John Oecolampadius and Ulrich Zwingli."

[39] John Stephenson," Martin Luther and the Eucharist," Scottish Journal of Theology 36: 456-57.

[40] Martin Luther, "That These Words of Christ, 'This Is My Body,' etc. Still Stand Firm Against the Fanatics," LW 37: Word and Sacrament III, trans. and ed. Robert H. Fischer (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961): 54.

> For more than a thousand years it has been known that Christ ascended into heaven without all the teachings of this modern spirit, nevertheless it was not denied for that reason that Christ's body was present in the Supper or that Christ's words were true.[41]

Luther here sees himself as standing in the historical tradition of the church which has always affirmed this article of faith. The teaching of the Swiss is seen as a novel doctrine which Luther believes would have been unthinkable to the Church Fathers. Thus he strives to maintain this true, historic article of faith, and rejects outright what he considers to be the vain and novel imaginings of the radicals.[42]

Luther's basic approach here, and in other matters, is to preserve the historic teachings of the church wherever it does not violate Scripture or a basic article of faith. As Sasse notes,

> He was the most conservative among the Reformers and preserved the Catholic heritage as far a possible. This conservatism, however, goes hand in hand with the most serious and unambiguous rejection of everything that contradicts Scripture and is based on tradition only, even the most ancient and venerable tradition.[43]

It should be noted that Luther makes continued and frequent use of the criteria, "it is contrary to no article of faith" and "it is scriptural," as he

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[41] Martin Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 203-4.

[42] For a broader application of Luther's approach to refuting "novel doctrines," see Pelikan, The Christian Tradition 4: 177; see also p. 200.

[43] Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 83.

proceeds to defend the doctrine of Christ's real presence in the Lord's Supper in his treatises of 1527 and 1528.

Before discussing Luther's counter-arguments to the assertions of Zwingli (and to a lesser extent those of Oecolampadius), we should first note the consistency of Luther's basic argumentative position in addressing this issue. We find that the three basic principles used in his earlier treatises on the Lord's Supper are once again employed by him in these two major definitive statements of his, written at the height of the eucharistic controversy with the Swiss.

In his "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," Luther cites his first principle as an established rule which by now should be well known to his readers:

> For our own people, I am sure, I have rendered this text clear enough, and have laid down this rule: In Scripture we should let the words retain their natural force, just as they read, and give no other instruction unless a clear article of faith compels otherwise. This rule is in my book ["Against the Heavenly Prophets"].[44]

For Luther the matter is simple enough: his interpretation flows out of the natural meaning of the text;[45] if the text is to be understood as it reads, then he does not have to defend his interpretation at all -- the text itself defends it. He claims that his opponents "must acknowledge that our interpretation takes the words naturally, just as they read, and that if the literal sense of the words

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[44] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 270. See also Luther's application of this rule in "This Is My Body," LW 37: 32.

[45] See Stephenson, "Martin Luther and the Eucharist," p. 451.

is followed our understanding is correct beyond a doubt.[46] And he again states, as he did in "Against the Heavenly Prophets" that if his opponents wish to challenge this understanding of the text, they will have to both produce other scriptural texts which disprove this clear and simple interpretation of it, as well as show that their alternate interpretation is necessarily true.[47] He reviews the various arguments made by Zwingli and Oecolampadius and concludes that

> Here the word "is" cannot be proved figuratively, nor "my body"; and neither the text, "the flesh is of no avail" and "Christ is seated in heaven," nor any other reasons can be given why the words must be interpreted otherwise than in their natural sense, as we have already heard. Consequently, we must remain content with them and cling to them, as the perfectly clear, certain, sure words of God which can never deceive us or allow us to err.[48]

Luther stakes everything on the words of the text just as they stand, for as he repeatedly reminds his readers, "These are Christ's words."[49] He says,

> . . . our text, "This is my body," etc. comes not from men but from God himself, spoken by his own lips and set down in these very letters and words. . . . Our text is certain; it is

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[46] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 304.

[47] Ibid., cf. "This Is My Body," LW 37:33.

[48] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 308; cf. p. 359.

[49] Ibid., p. 177, pp. 307-8. Cf. "The Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ -- Against the Fanatics" (1526), trans. Frederick C. Ahrens, LW 36:344-45

> plausible and necessary that it should stand as the words read, for God himself has placed it where it is, and no man dare take away or add a single letter.[50]

The second principle comes into play as Luther insists that reason must submit to the authority of these words. Even when faced with what to reason is incomprehensible, we must not abandon God's words for other words which seem more logical to us.

> Since God can do more than we understand, we must not say without qualification, simply on the basis of our own deduction and opinion, that these two propositions are contrary to each other: Christ's body is in heaven, and in the bread. For both are God's words."[51]

Here, faith is more primary than reason. "When we are dealing with the words and works of God," he says, "reason and all human wisdom must submit to being taken captive." We must not seek to change what God himself has declared even if it is beyond our understanding:

> . . . if we take ourselves captive to him and confess that we do not comprehend his words and works, we should be satisfied. We should speak of his works simply using his words as he has pronounced them for us and prescribed that we speak them after him, and not presume to use our own words as if they were better than his.[52]

And once again Luther cautions against speculating on the question of how Christ is present in the bread and wine. It is plainly beyond our

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[50] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 304; cf. p. 308.

[51] Ibid., p. 276; cf. p. 209; "This Is My Body," LW 37: 47.

[52] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 296.

knowledge, and we should not refuse to believe in the real presence merely because it remains a mystery to our intellect. Having God's proclamation in the text that it is so is all the assurance that we need. He says,

> Now here stands the text, stating clearly and lucidly that Christ gives his body to eat when he distributes the bread. On this we take our stand, and we also believe and teach that in the Supper we eat and take to ourselves Christ's body truly and physically. But how this takes place or how he is in the bread, we do not know. God's Word we should believe without setting bounds or measure to it. The bread we see with our eyes, but we hear with our ears that Christ's body is present.[53]

In his treatises on the Lord's Supper of 1527 and 1528, Luther chose to reply systematically to each of the points which his opponents had raised against him. We shall now examine Luther's counter-arguments in detail. We should note, however, that in choosing to address the issue in this manner he was in danger of permitting the grounds for the debate to become defined largely on his opponents' terms. Since the major portion of these two treatises deals with counter arguments to the Swiss position, the focus for the debate often shifts from a positive assertion of the real presence, to a defense against their contention that it is impossible for the body of Christ to be present in the sacrament. Thus, despite Luther's stated avoidance of inquiring into how Christ is present in the Supper, the debate tends to dwell to a great extent on that very question. Nevertheless, these two treatises, along with the treatise of 1525, "Against the Heavenly Prophets," form Luther's most important statements on the doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the Lord's

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[53] Luther, "This Is My Body," LW 37: 28-29, cf. pp. 64, 103, 139. Cf. "The Sacrament -- Against the Fanatics," LW 36: 337.

Supper. They contain broadly ranging, detailed responses to the issues raised in the eucharistic debate, and represent Luther's major polemical works on the eucharist during a critical period of development in his teachings.

Zwingli's basic position, as has already been mentioned, was that revelation does not contradict reason. He was later to proclaim when face to face with Luther that "It is not true that God puts before us many incomprehensible things."[54] And, indeed, the Swiss found many arguments to show that it is unreasonable to hold to a real presence in the sacrament. Fischer notes that it was the Swiss who offered to define what God can and cannot do, and what he does and does not do in the sacrament.[55] Luther, on the other hand, would never have dared to prescribe limits on God's activity.[56]

In response to the argument that Christ's body is physically limited to the right hand of God in heaven, Luther replies in his 1527 treatise,

> How do we become certain, good gentlemen, that a body may not through the power of God be at the same time in heaven and in the Supper, since the power of God has neither measure nor number, and does things which no mind can comprehend but must simply be believed? When he says "This is my body," how shall I calm my heart and convince it that God has no means or power to do what his Word says? . . . [Do you have]

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[54] Said at the Marburg Colloquy. See Sasse's reconstruction of the debate in This Is My Body, p. 241.

[55] Robert H. Fischer, "Luther's Stake in the Lord's Supper Controversy," Dialog 2 (Winter 1963): 52.

[56] See Luther's comments in "Against the Heavenly Prophets": "[We do not] say that he is and must be in particular places and is not free to be in all. Rather we claim that he and the bread and wine are and must be free in regard to all localities, places, times and persons." LW 40: 221.

> proof from the Scriptures that they do not concede this possibility to the omnipotence of God?[57]

Luther then proceeds to argue that it is possible for the body of Christ to be simultaneously in heaven and in the bread of the sacrament. He claims that his opponents are mistaken in thinking that 'the right hand of God' is a "place" somewhere in heaven. "The Scriptures teach us," he says, "that the right hand of God is not a specific place in which a body must or may be, such as on a golden throne, but is the almighty power of God, which at one and the same time can be nowhere and yet must be everywhere."[58] Given this, he concludes his argument with ironclad logic:

> Take note and listen to us. Christ's body is at the right hand of God, that is granted [by us both]. The right hand of God, however, is everywhere. . . . Therefore, it surely is present also in the bread and wine at table. Now where the right hand of God is, there Christ's body and blood must be, for the right hand of God is not divisible into many parts but [is] a single, simple entity.[59]

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[57] Luther, "This Is My Body," LW 37: 47; cf. p. 60; "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 209.

[58] Luther, "This Is My Body," LW 37: 57; cf. p. 63. Cf. Augustine, "Faith and the Creed" [7.14], trans. Robert P. Russell, O.S.A., Fathers of the Church, vol. 27: St. Augustin: Treatises on Marriage and other Subjects, pp. 330-31. Note that Luther misjudges Zwingli on this point, however, for the Swiss Reformer also understands the phrase "the right hand of God" to be a figure of speech denoting power or authority rather than place. He says, "No one denies that 'the right hand of the Father' is infinite. . . ." Huldreich Zwinglis Saemtliche Werke, ed. Emil Egli, et al., 5: 354 (cf.5:480-81); trans. in Locher, Zwingli's Thought, p. 177, (n. #123).

[59] Luther, "This Is My Body," LW 37: 63-64. Cf. "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 214.

As Grass notes, this assertion does not lead Luther to a kind of "pantheistic" view that Christ's body and blood are to be found in all things.[60] Instead, Luther argues that although Christ himself is everywhere present, he is present "for us" only where he declares himself to be found according to his Word. This Christ does in the Holy Supper by stating: "This is my body," so that it is there that we receive his body and nowhere else.[61]

In the "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper" Luther proceeds to show how the possibility of the real presence of Christ's body in the sacrament can even be defended on philosophical grounds. He shows that according to well established constructs (from the Ockhamist tradition, based on Thomas Aquinas) three modes of presence have been defined: a local or circumscriptive presence, a definitive presence, and a repletive presence.[62] The local mode is the usual mode of presence whereby an object and the space it occupies exactly correspond in size and measurement (e.g. a stone in the water displaces exactly the volume of water which is equivalent to its own size). In the definitive mode, an object is not measurable according to the place (or places) it occupies at any given time (e.g. an angel or spirit may be said to be present in a house, a city, or even a nutshell, but its presence cannot be quantitatively measured there). The repletive mode is yet another

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60 Grass, Die Abendmahlslehre bei Luther und Calvin, pp. 62-63.

61 See Luther, "This Is My Body," LW 37: 68-69.

62 Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 215 ff. See Heick, "Consubstantiation in Luther's Theology," p. 7. See also Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* [IIIa.76.5], 58:58, 59; William of Ockham, "*Centiloquium*," [25, 28], *Opera Plurima* (Lyon, 1494-96/1962) 4.AA.7r-v.

supernatural mode of presence whereby an object may be simultaneously present everywhere, whole and entire at every point, without being bounded or circumscribed by any one place. This mode of presence is said to belong to God alone.

Luther considers that it is by the second, or definitive, mode of presence that Christ passed through the sealed tomb and the closed doors to the room where the disciples were gathered. And it is by this mode that he could manifest himself in the bread and wine of the sacrament.[63] It should be noted, however, that the ultimate basis for his argument rests on the testimony of Scripture and not philosophy; philosophy merely helps to articulate what Scripture describes.[64] He continues,

> Because we prove from Scripture, however, that Christ's body can exist in a given place in other modes than this corporeal one, we have by the same token sufficiently argued that the words "This is my body," ought to be believed as they read. For it is contrary to no article of faith, and moreover it is scriptural, in that Christ's body is held to have passed through the sealed stone and the closed door.[65]

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[63] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 216; cf. p. 223.

[64] Note Pelikan's comment that Luther "sought to show, not only that his interpretation of 'This is my Body' was not inconsistent with the orthodox and biblical doctrine of the ascension of Christ, but that a sound exegesis of New Testament texts about the relation between the two natures of Christ actually produced corollaries that made the real presence more plausible." Jaroslav Pelikan, Luther the Expositor (Luther's Works: Companion Volume) (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), p. 139.

[65] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 217; cf. p. 228.

Luther elsewhere argues that Christ manifests himself according to all three modes of presence: the first in his earthly ministry, the second in his resurrection appearances, and the third through his unity in Person with the Godhead.[66] The implications of Luther's teaching of Christ's bodily presence according to this third mode of presence -- called "bodily ubiquity" -- were far reaching. His belief in the substantial presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament, explained by means of ubiquity, became a main point of contention for the duration of the eucharistic debate.[67] But we should not unduly emphasize Luther's explanation of this "mode of presence." As important as it was to the theological debate, Rahner cautions that

> Luther's effort to bring in the doctrine of divine ubiquity to explain the presence of the body of Christ is a theological after-thought, which should not be used as the invariable starting-point to explain and restrict the view which Luther wished to have maintained with regard to the sacrament, because the explanation should be brought into line with what is to be explained, and not vice versa.[68]

Nor should the real thrust of Luther's argument be made dependent upon the use of these philosophical categories of presence. Grislis notes that

> . . . such philosophical models as "substance" or "repletive presence" are not autonomous attempts of secular reason to provide an explanation pleasing to itself, but faithful and

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66 Ibid., pp. 222-23.

67 See Chapter Ten for a more detailed examination of Luther's teaching on ubiquity, and its place in the eucharistic controversy.

68 Karl Rahner, S.J., Theological Investigations (New York: The Seabury Press, 1974), 4: 295. Cf. McLelland, "Lutheran-Reformed Debate on the Eucharist and Christology," p. 50.

> thoughtful confessions as to how the words of Christ, "This is my body," may be meaningfully understood.[69]

In introducing the concept of these different modes of presence into the debate, Luther does not aim to prove that this is how Christ indeed is present in the sacrament. Fischer cautions that "Luther never elevated his view of the modes of presence to the status of necessary doctrine... Luther's theory about modes of presence is simply a philosophical opinion."[70] Instead, his objective here is to use reason and philosophy itself against his opponents to show that philosophically there are other means than just a local mode of presence by which Christ's body can be manifested. He says,

> I prove this much, that the fanatics . . . cannot refute me and prove that this is impossible to the divine power. . . . They should prove, I say, that God knows no other way by which the body of Christ can exist in a given place than corporally and circumscriptively. If they cannot do this, their system stands disgraced.[71]

After dealing with Zwingli's contention that Christ's body cannot be present in the Supper because it is confined to heaven at the right hand of the Father, Luther proceeds in both treatises to deal with the Zuricher's second major argument, that Christ's body would be useless to us even if it were present in the Supper. Zwingli argues that only a spiritual communion with Christ in the Lord's Supper is necessary, and not any reception of his physical

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69 Grislis, "The Manner of Christ's Eucharistic Presence According to Martin Luther," p. 13.

70 Fischer, "Luther's Stake in the Lord's Supper Controversy," p. 53

71 Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 216.

body in the bread and wine. His proof, he says, lies in the text of John 6:63, "It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail."

It should be noted that Luther was of the opinion (held long before the eucharistic controversy broke out) that the references in the sixth chapter of John did not refer to the actual eating of Christ's body in the Lord's Supper, but to faith in Christ in a more general sense.[72] Nevertheless, because there was a larger issue at stake, Luther was, for the time being, willing to argue his case for the efficacious bodily reception of Christ in the sacrament on the basis of this text. The larger issue was that Zwingli was interpreting flesh and spirit in such a way as to discard the bodily presence of Christ from the Supper altogether, with only a radical spiritualization of Christ's presence in the sacrament remaining.

It has been noted that Zwingli, following in the categories of humanist interpretation mentioned earlier, chose to interpret body and spirit in a dualistic sense,[73] akin to the distinction between matter and mind. But Luther, as Althaus observes, realized that in Scripture (and particularly in St. Paul's writings), the opposite of spirit is not flesh in the sense of bodiliness, but flesh in the sense of sinfulness.[74] Therefore, as he did previously with

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72 See Luther's statement in 1520 in "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church": ". . . the sixth chapter of John does not refer to the sacrament in a single syllable," LW 36: 19. Cf. Pelikan, Luther the Expositor, pp. 122-23 and The Christian Tradition, 4: 195; Sasse, This Is My Body, pp. 178-80.

73 See Steinmetz, "Scripture and the Lord's Supper in Luther's Theology," p. 256.

74 Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, p. 395. Cf. Nagel, "Luther on the Lord's Supper," p. 45.

the notion of "the right hand of God," Luther offers an exegetical correction from Scripture to Zwingli's understanding of "flesh" and "spirit."

In his analysis of the Scriptures, Luther finds two distinct meanings of the word "flesh" -- both of which occur in the sixth chapter of John -- and he criticizes his opponents for not noting the distinction. Flesh is sometimes used in a pejorative sense to mean whatever is sinful and opposed to God or devoid of God's Spirit,[75] and as such it can never refer to Christ. But it can also be used in a generic sense to denote humanity, which includes the human nature taken on by Christ in the incarnation.[76] He states his exegetical principle this way:

> Our position is that when the two words "flesh" and "spirit" are placed in opposition to one another in the Scriptures, flesh cannot mean Christ's body but always means the old flesh which is born of the flesh. . . . Now Christ's body and flesh are quite compatible with the Spirit; indeed, he is the Spirit's dwelling place bodily. . . .[77]

Because Christ was born with and lives with a flesh which is untainted by sin, Christ's flesh is not to be confused with sinful flesh. He remarks, "there is a very great difference between Christ's flesh and ordinary flesh." "His flesh is pure spirit, pure holiness, absolute purity." It is "to be distinguished from all flesh and is solely and preeminently a spiritual flesh"; it is "an imperish-

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[75] Luther, "This Is My Body," LW 37: 95-96; "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 237.

[76] See the analysis of Luther's exegesis given in Pelikan, Luther the Expositor, pp. 122 ff., 145 ff.

[77] Luther, "This Is My Body," LW 37: 95; cf. p. 96 and "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 249, 250.

able, immortal, incorruptible flesh" for "God is in this flesh. It is God's flesh, the Spirit's flesh."[78]

In performing his exegesis from Scripture, Luther also redefines the term "spirit." Whereas Zwingli thought of spirit purely in the sense of that which is non-physical,[79] Luther says, "Surely 'spiritual' must mean what the Spirit does and what comes from the Spirit, just as 'fleshly' is what flesh does and what comes from the flesh."[80]

> Thus all that our body does outwardly and physically, if God's Word is attached to it and it is done in faith, is in reality and in name done spiritually. Nothing can be so material, fleshly, or outward, but it becomes spiritual when it is done in the Word and in faith.[81]

As Pelikan says, "What was 'spiritual' about the Lord's Supper, according to Luther's exegesis, was not the food but the eating (in faith)."[82] Thus, in one sense, Luther agrees with his Swiss opponents on the importance

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[78] Luther, "This Is My Body," LW 37: 78-79, 81 (cf. "Against the Heavenly Prophets," LW 40: 203), 99, 124; "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 237.

[79] See Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 236.

[80] Luther, "This Is My Body," LW 37: 94; cf. p. 99. See also Stephenson, "Martin Luther and the Eucharist," p. 459.

[81] Luther, "This Is My Body," LW 37: 92. Luther also states this principle in the form of a maxim: "The object is not always spiritual, but its use must be spiritual." Ibid., p. 89.

[82] Pelikan, Luther the Expositor, p. 150.

of spiritually partaking of Christ in the Lord's Supper.[83] But he does not agree with them that this excludes a physical eating as well. Luther asks the question:

> What if I eat Christ's flesh physically in the Supper in such a way that I also eat it spiritually at the same time; would you not concede then that Christ's flesh in the Supper avails very much? "But how can this be?" you say. Precisely this: I shall eat his body with the bread physically, and yet at the same time believe in my heart that this is the body which was given for me for the forgiveness of sins . . . which you yourselves call the spiritual eating. Now if the spiritual eating is there, the physical eating cannot be harmful but must also be useful on account of the spiritual eating.[84]

Luther would also agree with his opponents that mere physical eating, apart from faith, is of no avail just as they say.[85] Therefore, a partaking in faith along with the physical eating is absolutely necessary if any benefit is to be found in receiving the sacrament. It should be noted that in Luther's early treatises on the Lord's Supper written before the eucharistic controversy broke out with the Swiss, he emphasized the spiritual aspect of communion

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[83] Note Luther's comment: ". . . it is not wrong or false that there is a spiritual participation, a spiritual discerning of the body of Christ, a spiritual unworthy eating, a spiritual guilt of the body of Christ. Generally all such allegories and interpretations are in fact true and very attractive and fine." Luther, "Against the Heavenly Prophets", LW 40: 189.

[84] Luther, "This Is My Body," LW 37: 85; cf. pp. 88, 95.

[85] Ibid., p. 86; cf. "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 238.

much more than the physical eating of the elements.[86] In a pastoral sense, writing to encourage the faith and devotional life of his readers, he saw the matter of properly receiving the sacrament in faith to be more important than dwelling on the external nature of the sacrament itself. But once he was faced with a radical spiritualizing of the sacrament which would deny the presence of Christ's body and blood, he felt compelled to forego his former emphasis and to give all his effort to defending the objective nature of the sacrament and the real presence of Christ in it.[87]

In the present discussion, Luther shows that he still solidly affirms the importance of spiritual eating in the partaking of the sacrament, but he is adamant in insisting that the physical eating not be done away with. He returns to the text, "This is my body," and emphatically states that we cannot ignore or set aside God's Word where Christ himself has declared that his body is present in the sacrament. The words of the text are all important and cannot be dispensed with, "for without the words the cup and the bread would be nothing [and] the body and blood of Christ would not be there."[88] He accuses his opponents of severing the Word from the body of Christ in the Supper and falsely dividing the spiritual and the physical eating. He says, God has

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[86] See Luther, "The Blessed Sacrament," LW 35: 59-60, 62 and "Treatise on the New Testament," LW 35: 86, 91.

[87] See Luther's comments at the beginning of "The Sacrament -- Against the Fanatics," LW 36: 335. Cf. "This Is My Body," LW 37: 86 (n. #147).

[88] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 338.

"joined both together, the Word and his body, to be eaten spiritually with the heart and physically with the mouth."[89]

It can be fairly said that the Swiss did not appreciate Luther's argument on this point. For them it was sufficient that Christ be spiritually received in the sacrament; a bodily reception was not only unnecessary, but created too many conceptual and philosophical problems to be reasonably held. Luther, after all, in "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church" had concluded with respect to the doctrine of transubstantiation, that "Since it is not necessary, therefore, to assume a transubstantiation affected by divine power, it must be regarded as a figment of the human mind, for it rests neither on the Scriptures nor on reason."[90] They could not understand why he did not apply this same rule with respect to the bodily presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. It was not necessary to hold something so contrary to reason, and they had their scriptural basis in Christ's words that the flesh is of no avail. The easiest, most reasonable, and thus the most desirous solution, therefore, was to maintain a spiritual presence of Christ in the Supper and to abandon all conjecture about a bodily presence.

But Luther saw other matters at stake: the words of Christ say quite clearly, "This is my body," and these words cannot be disregarded. He argues that where Christ is present, the entire Christ is present -- with both

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[89] Luther, "This Is My Body," LW 37: 88.

[90] Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," LW 36: 31.

his spirit and his body.[91] Underlying this statement is a concept which is basic to Luther's christological thought. Throughout his writings Luther constantly maintains that any encounter with Christ must be a real, historical encounter, and therefore must include a physical presence as well as a spiritual one; otherwise the historical person of Christ (consisting of body and spirit) is not present at all.[92] Just as Christ willed to be physically touched and handled by Mary, Simeon, and others during his earthly sojourn, so also in the Supper "he is just as near to us physically as he was to them, except that it had [sic] to be by another mode in order that he might be equally near everywhere in the world."[93] This basic understanding holds him to the opposite conclusion from his opponents regarding the nature of this "spiritual" presence of Christ in the Sacrament. "Our fanatics," he says, "think nothing spiritual can be present where there is anything material and physical, and assert that flesh is of no avail. Actually the opposite is true. The Spirit cannot be with us except in material and physical things such as the Word, water, and Christ's body, and in his saints on earth.[94]

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[91] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 218; cf. 223, 229.

[92] Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, pp. 393-94. Cf. Barclay's assessment: "The important thing for which he contends is, that Christ the historical Redeemer, is present, and that we are not merely to think of him as present by an effort of the imagination or by the contemplation of faith." Barclay, Protestant Doctrine of the Lord's Supper, p. 81.

[93] Luther, "This Is My Body," LW 37: 94.

[94] Ibid., p. 95; cf. pp. 135-36.

Thus Luther argues forcefully against what he calls "the two cardinal points and cornerstones of the fanatics": 1) that "Christ is seated at the right hand of God," and 2) that the "flesh is of no avail."[95] His argument, as always, is based on retaining the words, "This is my body," in their simple, natural sense. "What we fight for with all our power," he says, is "that these words, 'This is my body,' shall be interpreted as they stand and as they read in the simplest possible say."[96] Satisfied that he has given his utmost in performing this task, he claims that he can "boldly address Christ in the hour of death and at the Last Judgment," saying:

> [I have] kept to these words, 'This is my body,' and I have neither tried nor permitted anyone else to make other words out of them, but have committed and commended to thee anything obscure in them. I have kept them just as they read, especially because I do not find that they conflict with any article of faith.[97]

THE MARBURG COLLOQUY (1529)

As mentioned above, Luther's treatise of 1528, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," was intended to be his final word on the eucharistic controversy. But the following year Philip of Hesse called for a colloquy between the leaders of the two parties to be held in Marburg, with the objective of forming a common confession of faith which could be used to unite the German and Swiss-German Protestants against the Emperor and the Papacy.

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[95] Ibid., p. 101.

[96] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 166.

[97] Ibid., pp. 305-6.

Philip's objectives were political in nature; it was expedient that an alliance be formed between the two factions, even if the agreement worked out between the two had to be based upon a theological compromise. Zwingli, who was quite politically oriented himself, saw the clear advantages of having a unified church to stand against the Papacy, and was quite prepared to tolerate Luther's teaching even though he personally was convinced that it was scripturally in error. Therefore, he made it known to the Landgrave of Hesse that he was willing to regard Luther as a Christian brother, provided that Luther would do the same for him.

But Luther was not at all optimistic about the results of such a colloquy. He at first declined to attend, sensing the political nature of the meeting. It was only at the insistence of his Elector, John of Saxony, that he finally agreed to attend. In his letter to the Landgrave accepting the invitation, Luther still expressed his misgivings over the possible outcome. He asked the Landgrave to

> . . . inquire of them whether they would be willing to abandon their opinion, so that in the long run the matter does not become worse. For Your Sovereign Grace can easily see that all discussions are futile and the meeting vain, if both parties come with the intention of conceding nothing. Thus far I have found nothing other than that they want to insist on their position, though they have become very familiar with the basis of our position. On the other hand, having also become familiar with the basis of their position, I certainly know that I am unable to yield, just as I know that they are wrong.[98]

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[98] Luther, "Letter to Landgrave Philip of Hesse, June 23 1529," trans. and ed. Gottfried G. Krodel, LW 49: Letters II (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972): 231.

We should not understand from this that Luther was intransigent in his view. He too, as we shall see from his proposal for the final statement of the colloquy, was willing to let differences remain on some points and to extend the hand of friendship to Zwingli and his party. But he came to the meeting convinced beforehand of two things: First, that Zwingli was not about to yield on his theological position; if such was to be the case, then he himself was not about to step back from his own position. And second, that although a difference of opinion could be accepted on some matters, the real presence of Christ in the Supper was a clear article of faith taught by Scripture, and on this fundamental article no compromise could be made. As Sasse states it, "Luther went to Marburg, not as a negotiator, but as a confessor. Not a confessor of some private opinion, but of the Word of God. This Word was for him *extra controversiam*."[99]

At the colloquy,[100] the ground covered in the debate remained much the same as that so thoroughly plowed in the recent treatises published by both sides. In Luther's opening comments, he summarizes the basic principles which he sees as underlying his opponents' arguments:

1) They desire to prove their case by way of logical conclusions;
2) They hold that a body cannot be in two places at the same time and that it cannot be infinite;

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[99] Sasse, This Is My Body," pp. 214-15.

[100] No official minutes were taken at the Marburg Colloquy, but seven different accounts have been assembled based upon notes taken by some of those in attendance. These accounts have been critically edited into one continuous text by Sasse in This Is My Body, pp. 223-72.

3) They appeal to human reason.

He then gives what it to be his own basic line of argument in the debate:

> I do not ask how [this can be] . . . for God is able to do more than anything we can imagine. We must submit to the Word of God. They themselves must prove that the body of Christ is not there [when Christ himself says]: 'This is my body.'[101]

The debate is cast, then, just as it was before, in the form of arguing points based upon human reason over and against the authority of the Word.

The debate first of all focuses upon a spiritual versus a carnal eating of Christ's body in the Lord's Supper. Luther once again argues that a physical eating of Christ's body in faith is a spiritual eating and not a carnal eating,[102] and asks his opponents to prove that a spiritual eating excludes a bodily eating.[103] Zwingli replies with a logical argument based upon his dichotomous understanding of flesh and spirit saying, "I marvel greatly at your words that the body is eaten orally. If he is present, he is not there for the comfort of the body but the soul. Would he ever join disparate things?"[104]

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[101] "The Marburg Colloquy and the Marburg Articles" (1529), trans. Martin E. Lehmann, LW 38: Word and Sacrament IV, ed. Martin E. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971):16 (Hedio's account). Cf. Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 231.

[102] "The Marburg Colloquy," LW 38: 18 (Hedio's account); cf. p. 53 (Collin's report) and p. 38 (Anonymous). Cf. Sasse, This Is My Body, pp. 234-35.

[103] "The Marburg Colloquy," LW 38: 16-17 (Hedio's account); cf. p. 37 (Anonymous). Cf. Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 233.

[104] "The Marburg Colloquy," LW 38: 23 (Hedio's account). Cf. Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 241.

and "The soul is spirit; the soul does not eat flesh, but spirit eats spirit."[105] Luther answers on the basis of the authority of the Word saying,

> As to the soul's eating the body (of Christ) it can be said: Where the word of God is, there must be a spiritual eating because faith is required. . . . The body is present bodily in the word. The sum of faith is this: It does not behoove us to add marginal notes to what the word of our dear God says, unless an absurdity that contradicts the faith or articles of faith compels us.[106]

Therefore, "By faith we eat this body which is given for us. The mouth receives the body of Christ, the soul believes the words that it is eating the body."[107]

Oecolampadius later returns to this point, saying that since Christ had a physical body capable of suffering and death, surely that body cannot be profitable to us in the sacrament. Luther once again replies:

> It is plain that the eating of Christ's body is profitable because it is connected with the promise of the forgiveness of sins. Because every promise requires faith, faith is a spiritual knowledge. Therefore, the bodily eating itself, when it takes place in faith, must also become a spiritual matter. It is sufficient

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105 "The Marburg Colloquy," LW 38: 21 (Hedio's account); cf. p. 55 (Collin's report) and p. 83 (Summary report). Cf. Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 239.

106 "The Marburg Colloquy," LW 38: 25 (Hedio's account). Cf. Sasse, This Is My Body, pp. 242-43.

107 "The Marburg Colloquy," LW 38: 55 (Collin's report); cf. p. 21 (Hedio's account). Cf. Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 239.

> for me that such a profitable body is set before me to be eaten.[108]

Thus Luther remains steadfast in his conviction that a bodily eating remains along with a spiritual eating of Christ in the Supper. He does not disdain the spiritual eating so much emphasized by Zwingli's party, in fact he affirms it to be particularly necessary in receiving the sacrament's benefits. But from this "it does not follow that the bodily eating, instituted and commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ, is useless." Nor does it follow that "the body of Christ cannot be present at all in the Lord's Supper. It is there," Luther says, "and it is useful."[109]

In the second section of the colloquy, Zwingli introduces the argument into the discussion that Christ's body, being human and therefore finite, cannot possibly be in two places at the same time. "It would be a great incongruity," he claims, "if when Christ says he is in heaven, we should seek him in the Supper. For one and the same body can in no way be in several places at the same time."[110] But Luther casts aside this attempt to define doctrine in terms of what logic and philosophy deem possible. He says, "I confess that the body is in heaven, I also confess that it is in the sacrament. I am not concerned about what is contrary to nature but only about what is contrary to

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108 "The Marburg Colloquy," LW 38: 46-47 (Anonymous). Cf. Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 253.

109 "The Marburg Colloquy," LW 38: 40 (Anonymous). Cf. Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 244.

110 "The Marburg Colloquy," LW 38: 43 (Anonymous). Cf. Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 248.

faith."[111] He maintains that "the debate concerning space and its nature belongs to the realm of mathematics [or geometry and philosophy]; theology, however, deals with the omnipotence of God which is above all mathematics."[112]

At the third session the next morning, Zwingli mounts his best logical arguments to refute Luther's insistence on the real presence of Christ's body in the sacrament. He cites Augustine (to back up his philosophical argument) saying, "Whatever exists in a certain place is a body," and "Take away space from bodies and you will have taken away the bodies."[113] Therefore, if the body of Christ is a natural body it must be in a certain place -- either in heaven or in the sacrament. Since Scripture explicitly teaches that Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven, his body cannot therefore also be located in the Supper. Or if Luther wishes to argue that Christ is not present in the sacrament as in a place, then according to the second statement of Augustine, a bodily presence there is not possible. Either way Luther

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[111] "The Marburg Colloquy," LW 38: 58 (Collin's report); cf.p. 29 (Hedio's account) and pp. 44-45 (Anonymous). Cf. Sasse, This Is My Body, pp. 250-51. See also McLelland, "Lutheran-Reformed Debate on the Eucharist and Christology," pp. 42-43.

[112] "The Marburg Colloquy," LW 38: 75 (Brentz' report), 45 (Anonymous) and 80-81 (Rhapsodies); cf. p. 82 (Rhapsodies) and p. 49 (Anonymous). Cf. Sasse, This Is My Body, pp. 251, 225, 257.

[113] "The Marburg Colloquy," LW 38: 50 (Anonymous). Cf. Sasse, This Is My Body, pp. 258-59. Cf. Augustine, "Letter to Dardanus," Fathers of the Church, 30: 234.

must concede that Christ's body is not present in the Supper.[114] But Luther will not be hemmed in by philosophical arguments. He reminds Zwingli once more that he is not interested in debating "mathematical" concepts:

> I have said that [Christ's body] can be in a place and not in a place. God can even arrange my body so that it is not in a place. In this text there is no room for mathematics. "Place" is a mathematical consideration, . . . Who am I to measure the power of God?[115]

And, "I leave it to God whether the body of Christ is in a place or not. For me this is enough: 'This is my body.'"[116]

At the fourth and final session of the colloquy, we find Luther attempting to change the subject from the discussion over whether or not Christ's body occupies a "place" -- which he felt to be rather fruitless -- to a more promising discussion concerning the nature of a sacrament. On this, at least, he felt some agreement might be reached. And it is here that we find some indication of what Luther is willing to concede to the Swiss. He asks if a "middle ground" cannot be found on which both parties agree, and notes that agreement already exists between them on other major articles of faith. Responding to Zwingli's argument that the bread in the Lord's Supper is a

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114 "The Marburg Colloquy," LW 38: 32-34 (Hedio's account), 49-50, 52 (Anonymous), 60-61 (Collin's report) and 84-85 (Summary report). Cf. Sasse, This Is My Body, pp. 258-59, 261-62.

115 "The Marburg Colloquy," LW 38: 32 (Hedio's account); cf. p. 49 (Anonymous) and p. 60 (Collin's report). Cf. Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 258.

116 "The Marburg Colloquy," LW 38: 68 (Collin's report). Cf. Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 261.

sign of the body and blood of Christ,[117] Luther declares that he is willing to admit "that the sacrament is called a sign of a holy thing" and that "the sacraments are also sacred symbols and that as such they signify and represent something which is beyond them and which transcends the intellect." But he will not agree to any statement that the body of Christ is present in the sacrament only in a symbolic, figurative way.[118] Oecolampadius, in turn, says that he concedes that the sacrament "is not a mere sign, but through faith the true body [of Christ] is there."[119] Oecolampadius' use of the term "true" body here is significant, since previously at the colloquy he had used the term to mean the real, natural, physical body of Christ.[120]

Luther incorporates this term in a final conciliatory statement at the conclusion of the colloquy which he hopes both sides will find acceptable.

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117 "The Marburg Colloquy," LW 38: 68 (Osiander's report). Not referred to by Sasse.

118 "The Marburg Colloquy," LW 38: 34 (Hedio's account); cf. p. 62 (Collin's report). Cf. Sasse, This Is My Body, pp. 262-63.

119 "The Marburg Colloquy," LW 38: 35 (Hedio's account). Cf. Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 263. Although Zwingli did not respond with a similar admission at the Marburg Colloquy of a "true" presence of Christ's body in the Lord's Supper, we find in his Confession to King Francis I shortly before his death two years later, the following statement: "We believe that Christ is truly present in the Lord's Supper; yea, that there is no communion without such presence. We believe that the true body of Christ is eaten in the Communion, not in a gross and carnal manner, but in a sacramental and spiritual manner, by the religious, believing, and pious heart." A. H. Hiemeyer, *Collectio Confessionum* (Leipzig, 1840), pp. 71-72, cited in Barclay, The Protestant Doctrine of the Lord's Supper, p. 230.

120 "The Marburg Colloquy," LW 38: 34 (Hedio's account). Cf. Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 262.

His definition of the presence of Christ in the Supper carefully avoids all reference to "place" and "mode" of presence, and says only: "We confess that by virtue of the words 'This is my body, this is my blood' the body and blood are truly -- that is, substantively and essentially but not quantitatively or qualitatively or locally -- present and distributed in the Lord's Supper."[121] This formula combines Luther's insistence on a substantive and essential presence rather than a merely figurative presence of Christ's body in the sacrament, with the insistence on the part of the Swiss that it is not a carnal presence in the sense that the body is present in a local or circumscribed manner.

Although this formula was not adopted at Marburg, and another was substituted for it which affirms a spiritual presence of Christ's body and blood and leaves the bodily presence as a point upon which no agreement has been reached, this formula nevertheless shows the true essence of Luther's position. Here we find a firm indication of those points on which he was prepared to yield, and those points on which there could be no compromise at all: Luther insisted throughout the eucharistic debates that by virtue of the words "This is my body" -- which are Christ's own infallible words and are not to be tampered with -- Christ's body is simply, essentially, and substantively present in the Supper. This presence is not to be carnally understood, but is a truly spiritual, holy, and salvific presence. It need not be interpreted as a local presence, or be qualitatively or quantitatively (i.e. geometrically or

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[121] Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 267. The Latin text reads "*hoc est: substantive et essentialiter, non autem quantitative vel qualitative vel localiter.*"

philosophically) defined. Further speculation on the question of how Christ's body is present in the Supper is unproductive. Ultimately our knowledge must yield to a divine mystery. We must trust the words of Christ and believe them in their simple, straightforward meaning, believing that his body is present in the sacrament.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CALVIN'S TEACHING DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD BETWEEN THE FIRST AND SECOND STAGES OF THE EUCHARISTIC CONTROVERSY

CALVIN'S ORIENTATION AS A MEDIATOR

Despite the opportunity for face-to-face negotiations between the Swiss and the German leaders of the evangelical reform, the impasse over the doctrine of the Lord's Supper reached at the Marburg Colloquy only reinforced the breach between them. Even though initial promises were made by both parties to henceforth act toward one another in a more friendly manner, the outcome did little to soften the mistrust which the two factions felt toward each other.[1]

When Calvin joined the evangelical movement, it was in the midst of an atmosphere of repeated attempts to strike accord between the various religious factions which were emerging. Often the formal talks were called

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[1] See Sasse, This Is My Body, pp. 273 ff. for an evaluation of both the immediate consequences and the long term results of the Marburg Colloquy.

into being for purely political reasons. A restructuring of alliances was made necessary as princes and rulers sympathetic to the Reform began exercising greater political autonomy from Rome and the Emperor. There was also the hope on the part of many of the Reform theologians that it might still be possible to reach an accord with Rome, and to this end it was advantageous for the evangelical movement to band together in a solid and united voice. It should be noted that several of Calvin's contemporaries whom he greatly respected and admired -- Martin Bucer in Strasbourg and Philip Melanchthon in Wittenberg -- spent a considerable amount of their energies trying to foster theological accords within the evangelical movement. Throughout the 1530s and 1540s a number of such agreements would be signed,[2] and more would be attempted.

It was into this theological environment of hope and challenge that Calvin stepped when he came to the Swiss provinces as a religious exile from France in 1535. Joseph Tylenda argues that the failure of the Marburg negotiations to make peace between the Swiss and the German factions of the Reform movement "served as an incentive to Calvin to try his best to achieve what Luther and Zwingli could not achieve."[3] Whether one agrees with Tylenda's assertion or not, it should not be surprising to find, considering this theological climate, that Calvin soon set out to devote his own energies

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[2] E.g. the Augsburg Confession (1530), the Tetrapolitan Confession (1530), the Wittenberg Concord (1536), the Confessio Helvetic Prior (1536), and the Consensus Tigurinus (1549).

[3] Joseph N. Tylenda,"The Ecumenical Intention of Calvin's Early Eucharistic Teaching," p. 28.

toward reconciling the differences between the Swiss and the German theological camps.

Calvin, for all his youth and relative inexperience, displayed considerable skills from the very beginning of his activity in the Reform movement. And the theological insights which he develops in the first edition of the Institutes, completed when he was only twenty-six years old, are quite remarkable for such a young theologian. In only a few short years between his conversion to the evangelical cause and the publication of the Institutes, Calvin was able to set forth a definitive evangelical theology based on a broad reading of the theological works of his contemporaries in the Reform and a thorough study of the writings of the early Church Fathers.

Although indebted to the theological insights of others, Calvin was not one to borrow their ideas in a wholesale or superficial fashion. While the influences of his older contemporaries and of the Church Fathers can be seen in his writings, they can often be identified only by detailed and careful study.[4] While the theological models, terms, and figures of speech which he uses are often those of his predecessors, few direct quotations are offered (except in the case of Augustine -- his favorite of the Church Fathers). Even in his early writings, Calvin displays a remarkable ability for synthesizing the ideas of others into his own unique form of expression. On no occasion does he feel bound to reproduce the teachings of his predecessors; instead, he consistently expresses a freedom and a confidence to define his own form of Christian

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[4] For an extended discussion on the influences in Calvin's thought, see Wendel, Calvin, pp. 122-44.

doctrine based upon his study of Scripture, the historic witness of the church, and those ideas of contemporary theologians whose insights he respects.

Wendel notes that with regard to the doctrine of the eucharist we find a particularly determined effort on Calvin's part to set up an original theological formulation. He was certainly aware of the differences between the teachings of the Lutherans and the Zwinglians on the Lord's Supper despite his inability to follow those portions of the debate which were carried out only in German. On his own part, he sincerely felt that he could overcome the impasse between the two parties by formulating a doctrine which while recognizing the differences which existed, would nevertheless provide a common ground for bringing both parties to a mutual understanding. As McDonnell observes, "That he acted as a mediator between the two groups did not arise out of his desire to stand in the middle. Rather, because he was in the middle, he desired to mediate."[5]

Despite his attempt, it soon became evident that his doctrinal formulation was unacceptable to either the Lutherans or the Zwinglians. With this development, the unique character of Calvin's teaching on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper became even more accentuated in his subsequent writings until, forged by ensuing debate, it took on its own permanent distinctive identity.[6] We shall now attempt to trace both the mediatory themes and the

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[5] Kilian McDonnell, John Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 224.

[6] Wendel, Calvin, pp. 329-30.

distinctive nature of Calvin's doctrine of the eucharist through an examination of his successive writings on the subject.

THE FIRST AND SECOND EDITIONS OF THE INSTITUTES (1536,1539)

Calvin completed his first edition of the Institutes of the Christian Religion in 1535 while living in Basel after being exiled from France, and the first printing was completed in March 1536. It was organized in the form of a catechism with the first four sections following the order set forth in Luther's catechisms explaining the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. To this were added two further chapters dealing respectively with the Roman Catholic sacramental system and the liberty of the Christian. The Institutes was revised and expanded shortly afterwards in a second edition in 1539. It is in these writings that we find Calvin's first systematic treatment of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. As we prepare to examine these early editions of the Institutes in detail, we should note Meyer's assessment that the first two editions of Calvin's Institutes "contain substantially the corpus of his [eucharistic] theology," and that "the later editions add very little to the content of this eucharistic theology except by way of embellishment."[7]

As Calvin sets forth his teaching on the eucharist in the first edition of the Institutes, one of his aims is to refute what he considers to be unsound Roman Catholic teaching. In performing this task, Calvin's arguments show

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[7] Boniface Meyer, "Calvin's Eucharistic Doctrine: 1536-1539," Journal of Ecumenical Studies 4, no. 1 (1967): 63.

the unmistakable influence of Luther's early writings on the eucharist. We find him, for example, defining the Lord's Supper as a testament and as a covenant, using the terminology of sign and promise, and emphasizing the role of faith in receiving the sacrament as Luther had done in his early treatises.[8] At the same time Calvin sharpens some of Luther's ideas, expressing these concepts with greater clarity and conciseness than Luther had managed in his writings.

Calvin begins by defining a sacrament as "an outward sign by which the Lord represents and attests to us his good will toward us to sustain the weakness of our faith," or even more succinctly put, it is "a testimony of God's grace declared to us by an outward sign."[9] The fundamental characteristic of a sacrament for Calvin then, is that it is a means by which God confirms his divine promises to us and thereby strengthens our faith in these promises. "[God] nourishes faith spiritually through the sacraments," he says, "whose one function is to set God's promises before our eyes to be looked upon."[10]

The promise which is attested to in the sacrament is described in various ways by Calvin. In the most general sense, the promise consists of

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[8] See Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," LW 36: 37-45.

[9] John Calvin, Institution of the Christian Religion Embracing almost the Whole Sum of Piety and Whatever is Necesary to Know the Doctrine of Salvation: A Work most Worthy to be Read by All Persons Zealous for Piety, and Recently Published (1536), trans. Lewis Ford Battles (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975), p. 118.

[10] Ibid., p. 122.

"God's grace" or "God's good will toward us."[11] As applied specifically to the Lord's Supper, the promise focuses on our redemption.[12] But this is still speaking too generally. As Calvin begins addressing the subject of the Lord's Supper in particular, two closely related themes emerge which describe the significance of the promise conveyed to us in the eucharist: The first theme is our union, or incorporation, into Christ in receiving the sacrament. The second is our participation in Christ's benefits. He says:

> Great indeed is the fruit of sweetness and comfort our souls can gather from this sacrament: because we recognize Christ to have been so engrafted in us as we, in turn, have been engrafted in him, so whatever is his we are permitted to call ours, whatever is ours to reckon as his. As a consequence, we may dare assure ourselves that eternal life is ours, that the kingdom of Heaven can no more be cut off from us than from Christ himself; on the contrary, that we cannot be condemned for our sins any more than can he, because they are now not ours, but his.[13]

And:

> When he says, "This is my body given for you," "This is my blood shed for you," he teaches that these are not so much his as ours, which he took up and laid down, not for his own advantage but for our sake and benefit.[14]

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[11] These terms recur frequently as Calvin discusses the import of the sacraments both in general and in particular.

[12] Calvin, Institution (1536), p. 127.

[13] Ibid., p. 139; cf. p. 149.

[14] Ibid., p. 140.

We should note the subtle difference here between Calvin's thought and that of Luther. For Luther, the significance of the sacrament was epitomized by two things: in his earliest writing it is our being united with Christ and the saints, and in all his later writings it is the forgiveness of sins -- both seen as something enacted by God and effected in us through partaking of the sacrament in faith. For Calvin, the significance of the sacrament lies rather in it confirming God's promises to us so as to be more easily grasped by faith, with the chief function of the sacrament being to assure us of God's good will toward us.[15]

We recall that for Luther it was of cardinal importance that the sacrament be received in faith. The issue for him was one of faith contrasted with works,[16] and he vehemently rejected any interpretation of the sacrament which would treat it as a meritorious work performed by a priest. Calvin also strongly denounces any understanding of the sacraments which would divorce them from faith.[17] But for him the issue is not one of faith versus works, but whether in receiving the sacraments faith is exercised or ignored. He describes the sacraments as being fundamentally "exercises which make us more certain of the trustworthiness of God's word,"[18] and he protests "the

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[15] E.g. Calvin states: ". . . their sole office is to attest and confirm for us God's good will toward us." Ibid., p. 124; cf. p. 164.

[16] See Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," LW 26: 47f.

[17] Calvin, Institution (1536), p. 124.

[18] Ibid., p. 119.

error of those who have dared deny that sacraments are exercises of faith, given to protect, arouse and increase it."[19] Here his language is closer to that of Zwingli; although on the side of Luther he also condemns the Roman teaching that the sacraments of their own inherent virtue "justify and confer grace, provided we do not set up a barrier of mortal sin," because "in promising a righteousness apart from faith, it hurls souls headlong to confusion and judgment."[20]

But whose opinion does he favor more: Luther's or Zwingli's? In the final analysis, while emphasizing the requirement of faith in receiving the sacrament, Calvin rejects any interpretation which would so emphasize our own exercise of faith as to lose sight of the divine promises inherent in the sacrament. Thus he repudiates Zwingli's view of the Lord's Supper as only a commemorative meal, and the conclusion that the sole importance of our partaking of the sacraments lies in our making a public testimony of faith.[21] This would be to "weaken the force of the sacraments and completely overthrow their use,"[22] he says, by robbing them of the divine promises which they bestow. While not in complete agreement with Luther, we may still say that for Calvin, like Luther, the heart of the sacrament consists in the divine promise it conveys.

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[19] Ibid., p. 139; cf. p. 120.

[20] Ibid., p. 123.

[21] See Brian A. Gerrish, "Gospel and Eucharist: John Calvin on the Lord's Supper," The Old Protestantism and the New, pp. 112-13.

[22] Calvin, Institution (1536), p. 123; cf. pp. 122f.

The counterpart of the divine promise in the sacrament is the external sign which is given to aid our frailty of faith. Calvin describes the sacramental sign as being joined to the promise as a sort of appendix

> . . . to confirm and seal the promise itself, and to make it as it were more evident to us. Thus God provides for the ignorance of our mind and for the weakness of our flesh. . . . [For] as our faith is slight and feeble unless it be propped on all sides and sustained by every means, it trembles, wavers, totters. Here our merciful Lord so tempers himself to our capacity that (since we are creatures who always creep on the ground, cleave to the flesh, and do not think about or even conceive of anything spiritual) he leads us to himself even by these earthly elements, and in the flesh itself causes us to contemplate the things that are of his spirit.[23]

The sign, Calvin notes, effects nothing in itself, but exists as the "seal" of the promise to confirm its power and to bolster our faith in that promise.[24] It is the divine promise rather than the physical sign which must be the focus of our attention. Throughout his discusson of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, Calvin stresses the cardinal importance of the divine promise which we receive by faith under the physical sign. That is, in partaking of the bread and wine we receive the spiritual benefits promised us by Christ as he offers his body and blood for us there.

Like Luther, Calvin emphasizes the importance of the words of institution. "Indeed," he claims, "we must carefully observe that the entire force of the sacrament lies in these words: 'which is given for you,' 'which is shed

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[23] Ibid., p. 118; cf. p. 119.

[24] Ibid., pp. 118-19.

for you.'"[25] But this conviction does not lead him to the same conclusion as Luther. Rather than the words of institution strengthening the belief that Christ's body and blood are present and given for us in the sacrament, for Calvin, the words reinforce his belief in the reality of the promises which are offered to us there.[26] He says,

> It is not, therefore, the chief function of the sacrament simply to exhibit to us the body of Christ. Rather, it is, I say, to seal and confirm that promise by which he testifies that his flesh is food indeed and his blood is drink, feeding us unto eternal life. . . . [27]

Calvin is convinced that the current controversy over the eucharist has focused on the wrong question, and he tries to shift the debate to new and hopefully reconciling ground. One should not be asking how it is that we eat Christ's body in the Supper, he says, but rather how Christ's body as it is given for us in the sacrament becomes ours.[28] If this distinction were properly understood, Calvin claims, then "these frightful contentions would not have arisen which of old, and even within our memory have miserably

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[25] Ibid., p. 140; cf. Luther's statement: "I do not doubt, but in true faith hold firmly that the body and blood of Christ is given for me, for me, for me (I repeat), in order to take away my sins, as the word of the sacrament affirms, 'This is my body, given for you.'" Luther, "Against the Heavenly Prophets," LW 40: 206.

[26] This distinction is dramatically expressed where Calvin states: "Although you shout this is body and blood, I on the other hand will contend this is the testament in body and blood." Calvin, Institution (1536), p. 146.

[27] Ibid., pp. 140-41.

[28] Ibid., p. 142.

troubled the church when men in their curiosity endeavored to define how Christ's body is present in the bread."[29] He lists a number of such opinions put forth from various sides, all of which he condemns: He denounces the Roman Catholic teaching that Christ's body is "really" and "substantially" present in the Supper[30] (a teaching which Luther, however, affirms), the doctrine of transubstantiation,[31] the Scholastic teaching that Christ's body is present with the same dimensions in which he hung on the cross,[32] and the teaching of impanation.[33] He also rejects Luther's explanation that Christ's body is under the bread.[34] But we should note that in this same list he rejects as well Zwingli's view that only a sign and figure of Christ's body is present in the Supper.[35]

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[29] Ibid., p. 141.

[30] See Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologie [IIIa.76.5], 58: 108, 109.

[31] Affirmed by the 4th Lateran Council (1215). See *"Decreta Generalis Concilii Lateranensis quarti sub Innocentio Papa III (De fide catholica)"*, Sacorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio , 53 vols., ed. J. D. Mansi, (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck - U. Verlagsanstalt, 1960-61), 22: 982.

[32] The teaching of Paschasius Radbertus (c.785-c.860).

[33] By contrast, cf. Luther's distinctive affirmation that "the bread is the body" in "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church," LW 36: 34.

[34] See Luther, "The Blessed Sacrament," LW 35: 60.

[35] See Zwingli, "Commentary on True and False Religion," 18; an English translation of the passage is given in LW 37: 237.

All of these teachings have come about, Calvin says, because people have "added to the simplicity of Scripture."[36] He claims that the simple meaning of the text does not warrant such conclusions as transubstantiation, impanation, etc. We note that the principle is the same one argued so forcibly by Luther, and yet it leads the two Reformers to different conclusions. Whereas they would both agree in opposition to Zwingli that to treat the bread as only a symbol of the body is to add to the wording and meaning of the text, they do not agree on the claim regarding a substantial presence of Christ's body in the Supper. For Luther, the substantial presence is what the simple, literal meaning of the text implies. Remove that presence and you have done violence to the text. For Calvin, however, the claim for a substantial presence is an unwarranted addition to the basic text, on par with all of the other unnecessary additions.

As Calvin sets forth his own distinctive teaching on the Lord's Supper, it might seem to some that despite his rebuff of Zwingli's views, he nevertheless adopts a spiritualized view of the sacrament in opposing the "realism" of Roman teaching (and also that of Luther). The language he uses is very close to Zwingli's concept of a "symbolic" representation of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament. He uses phrases like "the body and blood of the Lord . . . are therefore <u>represented</u> under bread and wine," and "we must certainly consider him truly shown to us, just <u>as if</u> Christ himself present were set before our gaze and touched by our hands."[37]

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[36] Calvin, <u>Institution</u> (1536), p. 142.

[37] Ibid., p. 140 (emphasis is mine).

We also note that in presenting his own positive teaching on the Lord's Supper (in contrast with the errors he has just listed), Calvin puts his prime emphasis on the spiritual significance of the sacrament. He says,

> First, let us ponder what sort of spiritual thing the sacrament is, whereby the Lord willed to feed not only our bellies but our souls, and let us seek Christ in it, not for our body, nor as it can be understood by the senses of our flesh; but in such a way that the soul recognizes it as it were present and shown forth. In short, we have enough to obtain him spiritually.[38]

But a closer inspection of Calvin's thought shows that although he regards the eucharistic meal as primarily food for the soul, and focuses upon the spiritual benefit of the sacrament, he by no means denies a true and efficacious presence of Christ in the Supper.

The key to understanding the kind of presence which Calvin sees Christ manifesting in the eucharist is found in examining precisely what he means when he says that "the body and blood of Christ are shown to us in the sacrament."[39] (Note that this word also appears in the last two quotations above.)[40] The Latin word which Calvin uses here in writing the Institutes is *exhibere*. It does not denote a mere symbolic or figurative presence, and, as

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[38] Ibid., p. 142; cf. p. 140.

[39] Ibid., p. 145

[40] Calvin uses this term throughout the course of his writings on the eucharist. It apprears, e.g., seventeen times in the section of the Lord's Supper (IV,17) in the 1559 Institutes. See Ford Lewis Battles, A Computerized Concordance to the *Institutio Christianae Religionis* 1559 of *Johannes Calvinus* (Pittsburgh: Clifford E. Barbour Library, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 1972).

seen above, Calvin clearly opposes Zwingli on this point.[41] But neither does it denote a real substantial presence as Luther understood it. Calvin chooses to describe it as a "true" presence. To say that Christ is "exhibited" in the sacrament presupposes that he must be truly present if he is to be manifested there,[42] but declines from further speculation.

In choosing this word, and in using it consistently to describe the manner of Christ's presence in the Supper, Calvin deliberately strikes a middle road between Luther's and Zwingli's understanding of either a "real" or a "figurative" presence. This distinction is demonstrated with particular clarity in Calvin's letter to Cardinal Sadolet in 1539 in which he defends his Reformed teaching. There he says:

> We emphatically proclaim the communion of flesh and blood which is exhibited to believers in the Supper; and we distinctly show that this flesh is truly meat and this blood is truly drink -- that the soul, not contented with an imaginary conception, enjoys them in very truth. That presence of Christ, by which we are ingrafted in him, we by no means exclude from the Supper. . . .[43]

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[41] Gerrish describes Calvin's view as one of "symbolic instrumentalism" as opposed to Zwingli's "symbolic memorialism." I.e., for Calvin, the sign presents the reality in an efficacious manner, rather than merely calling it to memory. See Brian A. Gerrish, "Sign and Reality: The Lord's Supper in the Reformed Confessions," The Old Protestantism and the New, p. 128.

[42] See Tylenda, "The Ecumenical Intention of Calvin's Early Eucharistic Teaching," pp. 31f.; cf. Meyer, "Calvin's Eucharistic Doctrine: 1536-1539," p. 52, n. 11.

[43] John Calvin, "Reply to Sadolet" (1539), trans. J. K. S. Reid, Calvin: Theological Treatises, The Library of Christian Classics, vol. 22

As McDonnell states in summarizing Calvin's position,

> . . . in assuming the difficult task of explaining how the mystery [of Christ's presence in the Lord' Supper] is accomplished, he wishes from the beginning to declare in unmistakable terms that there is more than a spiritual relationship between Christ and ourselves, that it goes beyond some supposed psychological moment in which we apprehend what Christ has done for us and what Christ has given us. The insistence here is upon bodily involvement. The eucharistic mystery involves the body and blood of Christ, that body in which he suffered and died and rose again, and that blood which he shed for us. It is this body which is exhibited to us in the sign, and is, in fact, given to us to be really eaten.[44]

Through his careful usage of this terminology throughout his writings, Calvin consistently attempts to turn his readers' attention away from any speculation on how Christ's body and blood are present in the sacrament, so that they may arrive at the more important knowledge that his benefits are truly presented and received there. His hope is that

> After anyone deeply grasps this thought and meditates upon it, he will readily understand how the body of Christ is offered to us in the sacrament, namely truly and effectively. And he will not be at all anxious over the nature of the body.[45]

Despite the new framework which Calvin provides for the eucharistic debate in his attempt to resolve it, he nevertheless becomes drawn into the contentious issues of the controversy. As he speaks about the manner of

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(London: SCM Press Ltd., 1954): 238. (Subsequent references to the Library of Christian Classics will be notes as LCC.)

[44] McDonnell, Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist, p. 255.

[45] Calvin, Institution (1536), p. 142.

Christ's presence in the eucharist, he is quite clear in firmly rejecting the Ockhamist notion of bodily ubiquity (which Luther had affirmed). He derides those who would hold that Christ's flesh, because of his divinity, extends "as far and wide as heaven and earth," or who contend that "this body which is set forth in the sacrament is glorious and immortal [and that] therefore there is nothing absurd if under the sacrament it is contained in several places, in no place, or in no form."[46] He refers to the heresy of Marcion condemned by the ancient church that Christ took on only the appearance of flesh in his incarnation,[47] and says: "What is this but to raise Marcion from hell? For who will doubt that if Christ's body existed in this state, it was a phantasm?"[48] Calvin continues to press his point that such a "body" is no body at all, using some of the most castigating language to appear in this edition of the Institutes:

> Only let them answer me on this glorious body: Was it not nevertheless a body? It is, they say, but without place, in several places, without form, without measure. But that is, not in one word indeed, but by circumlocution to call it "spirit." . . . What is the nature of our flesh? Is it not something that has its own fixed dimension, is contained in a place, is touched, is seen? And why (they say) cannot God make the same flesh occupy many and divers places, be contained in no place, or

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[46] Ibid., p. 143. See Gabriel Biel, "Epitome" [4 dist. 11 q. 1 D], regarding this scholastic teaching. Cf. Luther, "The Sacrament - Against the Fanatics," LW 36:342-43.

[47] See Tertullian, "Against Marcion" [3.8], trans. Dr. Holmes, Ante-Nicene Fathers, 10 vols., vol. 3: Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian (reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964): 327 f.

[48] Calvin, Institution (1536), p. 143; cf. p. 144.

> lack measure and form? Madman, why do you demand of God's power that he cause flesh to be and not to be flesh at the same time! . . . Flesh must therefore be flesh; spirit, spirit -- each thing in the state and condition wherein God created it. But such is the condition of the flesh that it must subsist in one definite place, with its own size and form. With this condition Christ took flesh, giving to it incorruption and glory, and not taking away from it nature and truth.[49]

We should note that it is not just the teaching of the Scholastics which Calvin is attacking here. As we shall see, Calvin in this section replies point for point to the arguments Luther had used to defend the notion of bodily ubiquity in his debate with Zwingli. In his treatises of 1527 ("That These Words of Christ, 'This Is My Body,' etc. Still Stand Firm Against the Fanatics") and 1528 ("Confession Concerning Christ's Supper") Luther had argued three main points in defense of Christ's bodily presence in the eucharist:

First, he said, his opponents must prove that it is not within God's omnipotent power to make Christ's body present in heaven (at the right hand of the Father) and at the same time in the Supper. Calvin, in turn, states that "here it is not a question of what God could do, but what he willed to do." And the clear testimony of Scripture is that "it pleased him that Christ be made like his bretheren in all things except sin," that is, that Christ take on our human flesh with all of its physical limitations.[50]

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[49] Ibid., pp. 144-45.

[50] Ibid., p. 144. It should be noted that this argument which bases the presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament upon "what God wills" also has its counterpart in Luther, where he uses it to defend the possibility of a ubiquitous presence. This line of argument was earlier emphasized

Luther's second argument is that Christ, in being seated at the right hand of God, is not confined as in a local place. For "God's right hand" is an expression which denotes the rule of God, and since God reigns in his Kingdom everywhere, the right hand of God extends everywhere. Christ is therefore omnipresent, and consequently, he is certainly present in the Supper. Calvin, however, conceives of heaven in spatial terms as a place far removed and distant from the earth.[51] It is there that the ascended Christ dwells,

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by Peter Lombard and William of Ockham. See Heick, "Consubstantiation in Luther's Theology," p. 5-6; Pelikan, The Christian Tradition, 4: 57.

[51] Note the following definitive statement by Calvin: "And so that no ambiguity may remain when we say that Christ is to be sought in heaven, the expression implies and is understood by us to intimate distance of place. For though philosophically speaking there is no place above the skies, yet as the body of Christ, bearing the nature and mode of a human body, is finite and contained in heaven as its place, it is necessarily as distant from us in point of space as heaven is from earth." Calvin, "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments (Heads of Agreement, Article 25), trans. Henry Beveridge, TT 2: 220. However, Calvin also warns against any vain speculation as to the spatial location of heaven (See John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion (IV,17.26), trans. and indexed Ford Lewis Battles, ed. John T. McNeill, LCC vols. 20 & 21 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 21: 1394). Christ's dwelling is not to be regarded as some place "among the spheres," for in speaking of heaven, "all the circumference beneath the sun and the stars, and thus beneath the whole frame of the visible world, is excluded." Recognizing the limitations of language, that we cannot speak of heaven in other than ordinary terms, Calvin struggles to express the idea that heaven is "infinitely removed" from this world, "far outstripping all this world's fabric." (Calvin's Commentaries: The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians [Ephesians 4:10], trans. T. H. L. Parker, ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), pp. 176-77; cf. Calvin's Commentaries: The Acts of the Apostles [Acts 3:21], trans. John W. Fraser and W. J. G. McDonald, ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F.

retaining his human form and physical limitations. He agrees with Luther that the reign of Christ at the right hand of God extends everywhere.[52] But this principle rather than showing how a bodily presence of Christ in the Supper is made possible, demonstrates for Calvin why such a presence is

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Torrance (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), 1: 102; "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 290.) Perhaps Calvin's real intention is to describe heaven as being conceptually "beyond the world," although whenever referring to the necessary separation between the realms of the divine and the human, Calvin never departs from his spatial terminology. Note Willis' conclusion that in Calvin's understanding, ". . . heaven is not primarily a geographical entity. Those passages of Scripture about God's dwelling in heaven or heaven's being the throne of God do not betoken that he lives in a place 'up there.' They rather stress the majesty and power and immeasurable essence of God which cannot be comprehended or enclosed in anything earthly. By telling us that God's dwelling place is heaven, the Scriptures . . . remind us that God is far above our ability to grasp him, far above our carnal reason and language." Willis, Calvin's Catholic Christology: The Function of the So-Called Extra Calvinisticum in Calvin's Theology (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), p. 75.

52 "[The right hand of God] does not mean some particular place, but the power which the Father bestowed on Christ, that in his name, he might administer the government of heaven and earth. . . . Since the right hand of God fills heaven and earth, it follows that the Kingdom and power of Christ are everywhere diffused." Commentary on Ephesians [Eph. 1:20], pp. 136-37; cf. [Eph. 4:10], pp. 176-77; cf. Calvin's Commentaries: The Gospel according to St. John [John 20:17], trans. T. H. L. Parker, ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1959), 2: 200; Institutes (IV,17.18), LCC 21: 1381.

unnecessary.[53] With his focus remaining on our reception of the benefits of Christ in the sacrament rather than Christ's bodily presence being manifested there, Calvin shows how by virtue of this unbounded reign,

> Christ can exert his power wherever he pleases, in heaven and on earth; he can show his presence in power and strength; he is always able to be among his own people to live in them, sustain them, quicken, keep them, as if he were present in the body.[54]

Luther's third point was to cite the philosophical arguments that there are other modes of bodily presence beside the common "local" mode of presence. And since Luther is not one to argue from human reason alone, but rather tests all such opinions in the light of God's Word, he shows from Scripture how Christ's post-resurrection appearance to his disciples in which he passes through the closed doors of the room where they were gathered illustrates how Christ is able to manifest himself bodily according to such an alternative mode of presence. But Calvin refuses to entertain such a definition of a bodily presence, and argues that "it is the unchanging true nature of a body to be contained in a place, to possess its own dimension and to have its own shape."[55] Calvin's exegesis of the same miraculous appearance by Christ argues that it is an unwarranted conclusion to maintain that, in

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[53] As Willis observes, having said that "Christ's power to govern is everywhere diffused" does not necessarily imply that therefore "Christ is ubiquitous in his human nature." Edward D. Willis, Calvin's Catholic Christology, p. 94. Thus for Calvin, the belief in Christ's bodily ubiquity is both an unwarrented and an unnecessary conclusion. Cf. Wendel, Calvin, p. 346.

[54] Calvin, Institution (1536), p. 145.

[55] Ibid., p. 142.

entering the room, Christ's body actually passed through the doors according to some miraculous mode of presence. The miracle, in his opinion, consisted of Christ creating an opening for himself to pass through (which presumably was afterward sealed behind him by the same divine power). He says,

> It supports them not a trifle to be objecting over and over again that Christ entered in the place where the disciples were through closed doors. He surely did enter, by a wonderful manner of entry. For he did not break them by force, or wait until they were opened by a man's hand, but by his power caused every obstacle to fall.[56]

Having dealt with these arguments, Calvin summarizes his position regarding the presence of Christ in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper:

> For purposes of instruction we say that the body and blood of Christ are presented to us truly and effectively, but not naturally. By that we mean that this is not the substance itself of the body, nor the true and natural body of the Christ that is given us there, but all the benefits that Christ offers us in his body.[57]

With these words, Calvin explicitly rejects Luther's concept of a substantive presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament, even quoting Luther's own phrasing in doing so.[58] Moreover, he maintains that nothing is thereby lost regarding either the power and efficacy of the sacrament or our

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56 Ibid., p. 144.

57 Ibid., p. 145 (alternate translation by Wendel, Calvin, p. 341 used; emphasis is mine). Cf. Calvin, " Two Discourses on the [Lausanne] Articles", trans. J. K. S. Reid, LCC 22:44.

58 ". . . he gave his true natural flesh in the bread, and his natural true blood in the wine . . . ." Luther, "The Blessed Sacrament," LW 35: 59.

communion with Christ there. He claims that "with this partaking of the body which we have declared, we feed faith just as sumptuously and elegantly as those who draw Christ himself away from heaven."[59]

Calvin sees another benefit in teaching that Christ remains bodily in heaven while communicating his benefits to us in the Supper here below. From a pastoral perspective he is greatly concerned by the common practice of the adoration of the host[60] in the mass,[61] a point which he emphasizes in other writings on the Lord's Supper from this early period.[62] Calvin strongly fears that a belief in the substantial presence of Christ's body in the sacrament can (out of pious response) directly lead to the reinstitution of this practice. Beginning with the precept that the bread is the body of Christ, he says others have "reasoned as follows: if it is the body, then both soul and

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[59] Calvin, Institution (1536), p. 146 (alternate translation in LCC 21: 1404 used).

[60] Affirmed by Pope Urban IV in the papal bull "*Transiturus de hoc*" (1264) concerning the feast of "Corpus Christi."

[61] We should note the different ways in which Luther and Calvin refer to "the mass" itself. For Luther, the mass is practically synonymous with the sacrament of the altar. In speaking of the "abuse of the mass" he means errors in the observance of the sacramental meal, which if rectified, would restore the mass to its proper use. For Calvin, however, the mass itself is the symbol of error and the perversion of the true sacrament. Thus he says, "the Sacred Supper . . . has been taken away, destroyed, and abolished by the raising up of the Mass." Calvin, Institution (1536), p. 160. Cf. the complete section on the errors of the mass, pp. 156-66.

[62] See John Calvin, "Reply to Sadolet," LCC 22: 238 and "Short Treatise on the Holy Supper of our Lord and only Saviour Jesus Christ," trans. J. K. S. Reid, LCC 22: 159.

divinity are together with the body and cannot be separated from it: consequently, we must adore Christ there."[63] But, he maintains, this practice is tantamount to idolatry whereby "they have worshiped the gifts instead of the Giver."[64] To guard against falling into this error we must not allow ourselves to think that Christ is bodily present in the bread and wine. He says:

> . . . inasmuch as Scripture carefully recounted to us the ascension of Christ, by which he withdrew the presence of his body from our sight and company, to shake from us all carnal thinking of him and whenever it recalls Christ, to warn our minds to be raised up, and seek him in heaven, seated at the right hand of the Father, we ought rather to have adored him spiritually in heavenly glory than to have devised some dangerous kind of adoration, replete with a carnal and crass conception of God and Christ.[65]

OTHER WRITINGS THROUGH THE STRASBOURG PERIOD (1538-1541)

In his first edition of the Institutes Calvin does not offer much in the way of explaining how we can receive Christ's benefits in partaking of the

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[63] Calvin, Institution (1536), p. 146. Stephenson argues that Luther himself was not opposed to reverencing the consecrated elements, and states that "Luther had always defended the appropriateness of adoration of the eucharistic Christ." Stephenson, "Martin Luther and the Eucharist," p. 449; cf. examples on pp. 448-49. This is not to say that Luther approved of the adoration of the host itself, however.

[64] Calvin, Institution (1536), p. 148.

[65] Ibid., p. 147.

sacrament when Christ himself remains bodily in heaven. A hint of an answer is given in his statement previously quoted that in exercising his divine reign "Christ can exert his power wherever he pleases, in heaven and on earth . . . [and so] he is always able to be among his own people . . . as if he were present in the body."[66] But no elaboration is given beyond that point. Two statements made soon after the publication of the Institutes, however, show Calvin beginning to articulate a more complete answer, possibly drawing from an idea he found in a sermon attributed to St. John Chrysostom which was published by Erasmus in 1530.[67] In these statements we can also see the influence which two of his associates, Guillaume Farel and Martin Bucer, had upon Calvin's emerging ideas.

In October 1536, Calvin was one of the participants in a colloquy held between Roman Catholic and Reformed churchmen in Lausanne which was to pave the way for the canton of Vaud to be brought into the evangelical alliance. Farel, then the senior Reformer in Geneva, had prepared Ten Articles for debate at the colloquy, and Calvin attended as a "junior" representative, silent for most of the time, and speaking to the assembly on only two occasions. When he first ventured to speak out, it was in defense of Farel's statement (Article III) that "the Word, which, having withdrawn from us in corporeal presence, nevertheless by virtue of his Holy Spirit fills,

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66 Ibid., p. 145.

67 See Niesel, Calvins Lehre vom Abendmahl, p. 92.

sustains, governs, and vivifies all things."[68] Calvin explains that even though Christ remains bodily in heaven, we on earth can commune with him in the sacrament nevertheless. For our reception of Christ in the sacrament consists of "a spiritual communion by which he makes us truly participant of his body and blood, but wholly spiritually, that is, by the bond of his Spirit."[69] Here for the first time we find Calvin naming the Spirit of Christ as the agent of this intercommunion.

The following January Calvin drafted a joint statement with Farel and Pierre Viret which he presented to Bucer and Wolfgang Capito, the two Reformers at Strasbourg, representing a consensus of opinion between them on the subject of the eucharist.[70] Wendel claims that the consensus statement which Calvin drew up "reproduced Bucer's point of view,"[71] and we should note that as a colleague in ministry with Bucer in Strasbourg at this time, Calvin's public stance was one of agreement with Bucer's teaching. Here, building upon the ideas of both Farel and Bucer, Calvin develops his explanation of the role of the Holy Spirit in communicating Christ to us in the Lord's Supper even further. We read:

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68 Guillaume Farel, "The Lausanne Articles," trans. J. K. S. Reid, LCC 22: 35 (emphasis is mine).

69 Calvin, "Two Discourses on the [Lausanne] Articles," LCC 22: 44 (emphasis is mine).

70 Note that the statement was subscribed to by Bucer and Capito, and bears their signatures rather than Calvin's.

71 Wendel, Calvin, p. 138; cf. p. 332.

> . . . [Christ's] Spirit makes us participants in the virtue of his vivifying body, by which participation we are fed on eternal life. . . . For though we as pilgrims in mortality are neither included nor contained in the same space with him, yet the efficacy of his Spirit is limited by no bounds, but is able really to unite and bring together into one things that are disjoined in local space. Hence we acknowledge that his Spirit is the bond of our participation in him, but in such manner that he really feeds us with the substance of the body and blood of the Lord to everlasting life, and vivifies us by participation in them.[72]

We should emphasize that this new teaching that Christ's Spirit (or the Holy Spirit)[73] is "the bond of our participation" in truly receiving his body and blood in the sacrament does not represent a change of doctrine for Calvin. Rather, it demonstrates a new stage in the development of a position wholly consistent with that taken in the 1536 edition of the Institutes. There, the seeds for this teaching are contained in two separate ideas which it did not occur to Calvin at that time to bring together: In discussing the sacraments (Chapter 4), Calvin sets forth the definition that the sacrament is a "testimony of God's grace" toward us. And in discussing the third article of the Apostles' Creed (Chapter 2), he comments on the Spirit's function saying that "there is no grace from God, save through the Holy Spirit."[74] This new formulation which spells out the link between the two is incorporated into

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72 Martin Bucer et al. "Confession of Faith Concerning the Eucharist" (1537), trans. J. K. S. Reid, LCC 22: 168.

73 Calvin, on the basis of Romans 8:9 does not differentiate between the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of God; in his usage these are but different names for the same Spirit, namely the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity. See Institution (1536), p. 61; cf. Institutes (III,1.2), LCC 20: 539.

74 Calvin, Institution (1536), p. 118 and p. 77.

Calvin's second edition of the Institutes written in 1538 and published in August 1539 while he was assisting Bucer in the Reform movement in Strasbourg. There, this principle is used to give new force to his argument against the teaching of Christ's bodily presence in the sacrament. We now read:

> For as we do not doubt that Christ's body is limited by the general characteristics common to all human bodies, and is contained in heaven (where it was once received) until Christ return in judgment, so we deem it utterly unlawful to draw it back under these corruptible elements or to imagine it to be present everywhere.
>
> And there is no need of this for us to enjoy a participation in it, since the Lord bestows this benefit upon us through his Spirit so that we may be made one in body, spirit, and soul with him. The bond of this connection is therefore the Spirit of Christ, with whom we are joined in unity, and is like a channel through which all that Christ himself is and has is conveyed to us.[75]

Wendel notes that by naming the Holy Spirit as the agent in establishing this union between Christ and the believer, Calvin was able to develop a symmetry between his doctrine of Baptism and that of the eucharist.[76] Indeed, the following passage which also appears for the first time in the 1539 edition of the Institutes shows how equally disposed the function of the Holy Spirit is in making either of the sacraments efficacious for the recipient. Calvin writes:

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[75] Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.2), LCC 21: 1373. The successive editions of the Institutes each consist of additions to the earlier versions with some revisions. Many passages from the earlier editions remain intact in the later ones, and where this has been clearly indicated by the editor, the English translation of the passage as it appears in the 1559 text will be used.

[76] Wendel, Calvin, p. 354.

> I make such a division between Spirit and sacraments that the power to act rests with the former, and the ministry alone is left to the latter -- a ministry empty and trifling apart from the action of the Spirit, but charged with great effect when the Spirit works within and manifests his power.[77]

The agency of the Spirit in communicating Christ to us in receiving the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was to remain a key argument for Calvin in the successive editions of the Institutes and reappears throughout his later writings on the eucharist.

Another distinction which was to be of importance in later debate also appears for the first time in Calvin's defense of the Lausanne Articles. There he sets down the principle that "what is said of the divine essence ought not to be understood to apply to the humanity of Christ, which has properties distinct from the divinity." This point is made to counteract the claim that Christ is able to be bodily present in the sacrament because he is, after all, divine, and God is omnipresent. Calvin continues:

> If you object to me that all that is said of God pertains to Jesus Christ in whom humanity and divinity are not separated, the answer is easy: . . . this union is without confusion, as the Athanasian Creed teaches. Thus it does not follow that, if the divinity of Christ is infinite, hence his body must also be so. In speaking thus, we are not to divide Christ, but only distinguish the properties of his two natures which are entire in him, as without dividing a man one may point to difference between soul and body."[78]

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77 Calvin, Institutes (IV,14.9), LCC 21: 1284.

78 Calvin, "Two Discourses on the [Lausanne] Articles," LCC 22: 42f.

We should note that in the 1536 Institutes, in Chapter 2, Section 13 where Calvin discusses the two natures of Christ, he uses the same language. He speaks there of a "unity of person" and not a "confusion of substance," of Christ being "God and man, but with natures united, not commingled," and of not dividing the two natures ("tearing them apart") but "distinguishing" them.[79] The terminology comes from the Athanasian and Chalcedonian Creeds, and he uses it to counter the opinions of certain unnamed contemporaries and their ideas on the divinity and humanity of Christ.[80] It should be noted that these phrases are employed in the 1536 Institutes in the context of a christological debate, and Calvin has not yet connected their use to the discussion of Christ's presence in the eucharist. After 1537, however, this principle of "unity without confusion - distinction without separation" becomes a featured part of Calvin's argument against the bodily presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. And although originally used against the Roman Catholic position, it soon becomes applied to the controversy with the Lutherans as well.

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[79] Calvin, Institution (1536), pp. 70-73.

[80] However, note the following passage in Calvin's Commentary on John's Gospel: "Today Servetus and the Anabaptists invent a Christ who is a confused compound of the twofold nature, as if he were a divine man." John Calvin, Commentary on the Gospel of John [John 1:14], 1: 20. Ford Lewis Battles in his extensive footnoting on the 1536 Institutes, identifies these as the parties being alluded to by Calvin. See Calvin, Institution (1536), pp. 345-47.

THE "SHORT TREATISE ON THE LORD'S SUPPER" (1541)

A major writing of the Strasbourg period is Calvin's "Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper," written in 1540 but published only after his return to Geneva in 1541. Here Calvin's determination to articulate a middle path in the eucharistic debate is again clearly seen. The "Short Treatise" was first published in French, and only translated into Latin in 1545. Appearing first in the language of the people, it was meant to give basic teaching on the doctrine of the eucharist, to appeal for calm in the midst of the divisive debates which were assailing the church, and to indicate a common ground on which the theologians could meet to resolve the dispute.[81] Because of its importance to the theological debate on the eucharist, it is appropriate here to examine the "Short Treatise" in detail.

The work is divided into five parts: The first part deals with the reason for which the sacrament of the Lord's Supper has been instituted. Its chief purpose, Calvin says, is to provide spiritual food for the nourishment of our souls. This is normally done through our hearing and receiving the

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[81] Note Calvin's own introduction to the treatise: "Because the holy sacrament of the Supper of our Lord Jesus Christ has been for long entangled in several major errors, and during these past years involved anew in diverse opinions and contentious disputes, it is no wonder if weak consciences are unable rightly to resolve what view they ought to hold, but remain in doubt and perplexity, waiting until, all contentions being laid aside, the servants of God come to some agreement in the matter. . . . [Therefore] I have thought that it would be a very useful labor to try briefly and yet clearly to extract the chief substance of what it is necessary to learn of the matter." Calvin, "Short Treatise on the Holy Supper", LCC 22: 142.

Word, for "[God] has ordained his Word as [the] instrument by which Jesus Christ, with all his benefits, is dispensed to us."[82] But

> . . . seeing we are so foolish, that we cannot receive him with true confidence of heart, when he is presented by simple teaching and preaching, the Father, of his mercy, not at all disdaining to condescend in this matter to our infirmity, has desired to attach to his Word a visible sign, by which he represents the substance of his promises, to confirm and fortify us, as to deliver us from all doubt and uncertainty. . . . For this reason, the Lord instituted for us his Supper, in order to sign and seal in our consciences the promises contained in his gospel concerning our being made partakers of his body and blood; and to give us certainty and assurance that in this consists our true spiritual nourishment.[83]

In the second part Calvin discusses the benefits obtained in the sacrament. Here, as in the 1536 Institutes before, the direct benefit is described not so much as regeneration, the forgiveness of sins and eternal life, but the assurance of these things. He writes:

> Now the effect of the Supper is to confirm for us the reconciliation which we have with God through his death and passion; the washing of our souls which we have by the shedding of his blood; the righteousness we have in his obedience; in short the hope of salvation which we have from all he has done for us.[84]

Calvin at this point introduces one of the contentious issues of the eucharistic debate, namely whether Christ is substantially or only figuratively present in the Supper. Here Calvin attempts to bridge the differences between

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[82] Ibid., p. 143.

[83] Ibid., p. 144.

[84] Ibid., pp. 145-46.

the Lutheran and Zwinglian positions by affirming the language of each, and drawing from that language a common middle ground on which both sets of ideas can meet. We should note, however, that although Calvin adopts the terminology of both parties in this treatise, he uses it with his own distinctive set of meanings. His strategy, therefore, seems to be to offer each of the disputants the familiar phrases which they have sworn to defend, but to draw new meaning from them which will lead to some measure of reconciliation.

Calvin begins by affirming the presence of Christ in the Supper in a manner which echoes the Lutheran substantialist terminology. He explains,

> I am accustomed to say that the matter and substance of the sacraments is the Lord Jesus Christ, and the efficacy of them are the gifts and blessings which we have by means of him. . . . [Thus] all benefit which we ought to seek from the Supper is annulled, unless Jesus Christ be there given to us as substance and foundation of all.[85]

But on the other side, Calvin also affirms that instead of saying that the bread and wine "are" the body and blood of Christ, one ought rather to say that they are "signs" which "represent" it.

> Now if it be asked nevertheless whether the bread is the body of Christ, and the wine his blood, we should reply that the bread and wine are visible signs, which represent to us the body and the blood. . . .[86]

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[85] Ibid., p. 146.

[86] Ibid., p. 147.

Calvin never goes so far as to say, however, that it is "mere" sign, and on this point he is consistent in all his writings.[87] The sacrament is "symbolized by visible signs," he explains, "but in such a way that it is not a bare figure, but joined to its reality and substance. It is therefore with good reason that the bread is called the body, since not only does it represent it to us, but also presents it to us."[88]

What is most surprising in this treatise, is that Calvin has up to now steadily rejected Luther's terminology of "realism" in favor of saying that we "truly" receive Christ in the Supper. But here, in what appears to be a very purposeful move, Calvin adopts Luther's wording, saying that "Jesus Christ gives us in the Supper the real substance of his body and his blood."[89] This is

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[87] See Institutes (IV,17.10), LCC 21: 1371 (note that this passage first appears in the 1539 edition); "Catechism of the Church of Geneva (1541/1545)", trans. J. K. S. Reid, LCC 22: 137; "Brief form of a Confesion of Faith," trans. Henry Beveridge, TT 2: 135; Calvin's Commentaries: A Harmony of the Gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke, trans. A. W. Morrison, ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1972), 3: 135-36; "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments (Exposition of the Heads of Agreement) (1554)," trans. Henry Beveridge, TT 2: 227, 238; "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 274 ff., 292, 307; "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 401, 445; "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper" (1562), trans. J. K. S. Reid, LCC 22: 268; "Confession of Faith in Name of the Reformed Churches in France" (1562), trans. Henry Beveridge, TT 2: 152, 162.

[88] Calvin, "Short Treatise on the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 142 (emphasis is mine).

[89] Ibid., p. 148. Note, however, that the term "substance" must be interpreted here in the sense in which Calvin has redefined it, namely, as "the internal substance of the sacrament."

perhaps the most daring element in Calvin's attempt to demonstrate a bridging between the two parties. In a similar passage he begins with Zwingli's phraseology and concludes with Luther's, bringing both concepts under one roof, so to speak. We read:

> The bread is given to symbolize the body of Jesus Christ, with [the] command that we eat it; and it is given us by God who is certain and immutable truth. If God cannot deceive or lie, it follows that he performs all that it signifies. We must then really receive in the Supper the body and blood of Jesus Christ, since the Lord there represents to us the communion of both.[90]

In spite of Calvin's qualified use of Luther's realist terminology, a subtle but significant difference persists, which should be noted here. What Luther affirms so strongly is the real and substantial presence of Christ's body and blood in the eucharist. What Calvin strongly affirms, as indicated in the above quotation, is a real and substantial communion with Christ's body and blood in the Supper. On this distinction the two remain divided.[91]

In section three of the treatise Calvin discusses how the sacrament is to be rightly received, namely in "true repentance" and in "true faith."[92] Here Calvin gives counsel on the "worthy" reception of the sacrament and advises the practice to be established in the churches "of celebrating the Supper as frequently as the capacity of the people will allow."[93]

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[90] Ibid.; cf. p. 163 (emphasis is mine).

[91] This distinction will be explored in more detail in Chapter Six.

[92] Ibid., p. 150.

[93] Ibid., p. 153.

The fourth section is the longest and occupies nearly half the length of the treatise. In it, Calvin attacks the Roman teaching concerning the sacrament on a number of points. He assails the belief that it is a sacrifice performed by the priest, the doctrines of transubstantiation and of a local presence of Christ being contained in or under the elements, the practices of adoration of the host and withholding the cup from the laity, and the substitution of ceremony in the mass for sound teaching of doctrine. It should be noted in this section, however, that all of Calvin's arguments and strong condemnation are aimed exclusively at Roman teaching and practice. Although he disagrees with Luther on the presence of Christ in the Supper, he does not mention the Lutheran position at all in discussing the various aspects of the claim for a localized presence. Calvin's silence on this matter again demonstrates his attempt to forego debate with the other Reformers so as to create a common united front in opposing the Church of Rome.

In this section Calvin also establishes two criteria to be used in explaining the presence of Christ in the Supper which will thereafter be incorporated into the Institutes. Throughout the successive editions they will occupy a key position in the defense of his own particular teaching. In arguing against a localized presence of Christ's body and blood in the bread and wine, he says that it is

> . . . a damnable error, contradicting the glory of Christ, and destructive of what we ought to hold concerning his human nature. For Scripture teaches everywhere, that as our Lord Jesus Christ on earth took our humanity, so he has exalted it to heaven, withdrawing it from its mortal condition, but not changing its nature. So we have two things to consider when we speak of our Lord's humanity. We may not destroy the reality of his nature, nor derogate at all from its glorious estate. . . . For if we wish to abase him under the corruptible

> elements of this world, besides subverting what Scripture declares concerning his human nature, we annihilate the glory of his ascension.[94]

In the third edition of the Institutes, published in 1543, Calvin would restate these criteria as follows: "I reject only absurd things which appear to be either unworthy of Christ's heavenly majesty, or incompatible with the reality of his human nature, since they are in necessary conflict with God's Word."[95] And in the final edition of the Institutes from 1559, this two-fold principle is given prominent status:

> Let us never (I say) allow these two limitations to be taken away from us: (1) Let nothing be withdrawn from Christ's heavenly glory -- as happens when he is brought under the corruptible elements of this world, or bound to any earthly creatures. (2) Let nothing inappropriate to human nature be ascribed to his body, as happens when it is said either to be infinite or to be put in a number of places at once.[96]

These become for Calvin the grounds for discussing the presence of Christ in the Supper. He adds in the final edition of the Institutes a thought which is implicit from the beginning when he first sets up these criteria in the "Small Treatise on the Lord's Supper." He says,

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[94] Ibid., p. 159 (emphasis is mine). Cf. an earlier expression of Calvin's second concern: ". . . we hold that . . . the glorious body of Christ must not be degraded to earthly elements. . . ." Calvin, "Reply to Sadolet" (1539), LCC 22: 238. Both points are later repeated almost verbatim in Calvin's "Last Admonition to Joachim Westphal" TT 2: 411.

[95] Trans. used from Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.32), LCC 21: 1404.

[96] Ibid., (IV,17.19), pp. 1381-82; cf. (IV,17.32), p. 1404.

> But when these absurdities have been set aside, I freely accept whatever can be made to express the true and substantial partaking of the body and blood of the Lord, which is shown to believers under the sacred symbols of the Supper -- and so to express it that they may be understood not to receive it solely by imagination or understanding of mind, but to enjoy the thing itself as nourishment of eternal life.[97]

In Part Two we shall analyze in some detail Calvin's use of this principle in his arguments concerning the manner of Christ's presence in the Supper, along with the principles noted in the previous Chapter which define Luther's approach to the same question.

In the final section of the treatise, Calvin gives his assessment of the present dispute as it has been carried on between Luther on the one hand and Zwingli and Oecolampadius on the other. Here, while he cannot ignore the differences between the two parties, he nevertheless endeavors to bridge their differences and describe an appropriate means for bringing the dispute to an end. Although, he says, there is not yet any published formula in which agreement has been framed, as would be expedient,"[98] he does not hesitate to describe what he considers to be the proper grounds for approaching such an agreement. Though much younger than the principle players in the dispute, and without their reputations, Calvin nevertheless formally presents himself as a mediator, describing "what seems to me to be necessary advice for showing them how they ought to decide."[99]

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[97] Ibid. (IV,17.19), p. 1382.

[98] Calvin, "Short Treatise on the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 166.

[99] Ibid., p. 164.

His approach as a mediator is extremely tactful. He is generous in his estimate of the other Reformers, not laying blame on any of them for what he considers to be their errors in teaching, but rather praising the measure of truth which has been revealed to each of them. He says:

> . . . if we consider in what an abyss of darkness the world was, when those who have shared in this controversy began to elicit the truth for us, we shall not wonder at all that they did not know everything at the outset. It is rather to be wondered at that our Lord in so short a time has illumined them, that they have themselves escaped from the slime of error, and thus drawn others out of it who had been plunged in it for so long.[100]

He describes Luther's teaching first of all in positive terms. He notes approvingly that Luther condemned the doctrine of transubstantiation, and excuses his views on Christ's bodily presence in the Supper by explaining that "with respect to the corporal presence of Christ he appeared ready to leave it as the world generally conceived it." While he disagrees with some of the similes Luther uses to explain his position, he is willing to overlook these, saying that "it is difficult to give an explanation of so high a matter, without using some impropriety of speech."[101]

On the other hand, he commends Zwingli and Oecolampadius for properly opposing the adoration of the host, and emphasizing that the body of Christ is not locally contained in the elements but is in heaven at the right hand of God. However, he says, they are also to be faulted, for "While they

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[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid.

were so absorbed with this point, they forgot to define what is the presence of Christ in the Supper in which one ought to believe, and what communication of his body and blood one there received."[102] As a result, he explains, Luther concluded that "they intended to leave nothing else but bare signs without any corresponding spiritual substance,"[103] and thus began vigorously to oppose them. Once begun, the dispute was inflamed on both sides by harsh accusations and inflammatory language.

Both parties failed in their duties, Calvin says, by "thinking of nothing but to defend their own opinion and confute anything contrary."[104] Luther on his part should have made it clear that he did not advocate the kind of eucharistic presence taught by the Church of Rome, he should have affirmed his opposition to the adoration of the host, and he should have refrained from using such harsh similes and offensive language. Zwingli and Oecolampadius should also have done more that just decry the Roman position. Rather than calling the presence of Christ's body and blood in the bread and wine superstitious, fantastic and perverse, and insisting that the bread and wine are instead signs of Christ's body and blood, they should have better explained the reality which is joined to the signs, and made it clear that they did not

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[102] Ibid., p. 165. Cf. the following earlier statement of Calvin: "Indeed one can see at a glance that, too much absorbed with overturning the superstition of a carnal presence, [Zwingli] at the same time set aside the true efficacy of our participation, or at least threw obscurity on it." Calvin, "Letter to Zebedee" (May 19, 1539), Letters of John Calvin, 4: 403.

[103] Calvin, "Short Treatise on the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 165.

[104] Ibid.

intend to obscure the true communion which Christ gives us in his body and blood by means of the sacrament.[105] Nevertheless, Calvin cautions, we must not forget what is our duty. For being mindful of what we owe these outstanding servants of God and taking into account their human frailties, "we could well pardon them this and more than this, without blaming or defaming them."[106]

The final paragraph of the treatise contains Calvin's formula for agreement between the churches until such time as the disputants can all be gathered together in one place to draw up a formal mutual confession. In it, he summarizes the main points made earlier in the treatise saying:

> We all confess, then, with one mouth that, in receiving the sacrament in faith, according to the ordinance of the Lord, we are truly made partakers of the real substance of the body and blood of Jesus Christ. How this is done, some may deduce better and explain more clearly than others. But be this as it may, on the one hand we must, to shut out all carnal fancies, raise our hearts on high to heaven, not thinking that our Lord Jesus Christ is so abased as to be enclosed under any corruptible elements. On the other hand, not to diminish the efficacy of this sacred mystery, we must hold that it is accomplished by the secret and miraculous virtue of God, and that the Spirit of God is the bond of participation, for which reason it is called spiritual.[107]

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105 Ibid., pp. 165-66.

106 Ibid., p. 166.

107 Ibid.

Sasse states that this passage represents "perhaps the most perfect expression of Calvin's doctrine" of the eucharist.[108] It certainly provides the epitome of his teaching on the subject with regard to the issues under debate. Here we see in capsule form, the key features of Calvin's contribution to the eucharistic debate: First the central confession that in receiving the sacrament "we are truly made partakers of the real substance of the body and blood of Christ," followed by the admission that precisely how this happens remains unclear. Nevertheless, he says, in seeking to understand this sacred mystery: we must reject both a carnal and a local understanding of Christ's presence. Instead, the answer is to be found in terms of the solution that "the Spirit of God is the bond of participation" through which Christ and his benefits are truly communicated to us in the Lord's Supper.

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[108] Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 324.

CHAPTER FIVE

CALVIN'S POSITION ON THE EUCHARIST IN HIS NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE LUTHERANS AND THE SWISS

CALVIN'S UNION ACTIVITIES WITH THE LUTHERANS (-1540)

During the three years that Calvin resided at Strasbourg, he became involved in a series of theological dialogues, mainly through his close association with Martin Bucer who was widely regarded, to use Wendel's phrase, as "the best negotiator in the service of the new churches."[1] In 1536 the theologians of Strasbourg had signed the Wittenberg Concord, which officially brought them into communion with the Lutherans. This is not to say that they agreed with Luther on all points; the concord was rather a statement by Luther and his associates repeating what they understood Bucer and his colleagues to affirm, and indicating the basic requirements for establishing church fellowship.[2] In order to assume his teaching duties in Strasbourg,

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[1] Wendel, Calvin, p. 58.

[2] See Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 308. In many ways the Wittenberg Concord represented a compromise between the Wittenbergers and the South

Calvin was required along with the other ministers of the church there to subscribe to the Wittenberg Concord. Although at the beginning he objected somewhat to the document's vagueness, he later declared that he did not wish to question that confession, but rather to strengthen it through his own eucharistic teaching.[3]

Bucer's contacts with Luther and Melanchthon introduced Calvin personally to the German reform movement. In February of 1539 Calvin journeyed to Frankfurt to attend a conference of political leaders and

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Germans, both in terms of evasive language used, and in terms of divisive points of doctrine tacitly omitted from the document. For example, the confession says nothing about the Swiss view of the Lord's Supper being a commemorative meal, nor does it address the interpretation of John 6:63 ("the flesh is of no avail"). In describing the presence of Christ in the Supper, it states that with the bread and wine the body and blood are truly and substantially present, offered, and received (foreshadowing the language of the "Augustana variata"). When it says that "the bread is distributed at the same time the body of Christ is present and truly offered," the language is such that the South Germans can accept it without, in fact, affirming what the Lutherans mean by a "sacramental union." And the section regarding the reception of the sacrament by those lacking faith uses the milder *indignorum* [those with weak faith] rather than the more characteristic Lutheran term *impiorum* [those without faith], leaving a certain ambiguity as to how each party understood the term. See James M. Kittleson and Ken Schurb, "The Curious Histories of the Wittenberg Concord," Concordia Theological Quarterly, 50, no. 2: 124-27; Theodore G. Tappert, "Christology and the Lord's Supper in the Perspective of History," Marburg Revisited, p. 59.

[3] W. Nijenhuis, "Calvin and the Augsburg Confession," Ecclesia Reformata: Studies in the Reformation (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1972), p. 112. Cf. Brian A. Gerrish, "Strasbourg Revisited: Reformed Perspectives on the Augsburg Confession," The Old Protestantism and the New, p. 251; Wendel, Calvin, p. 139.

theologians who were meeting to discuss religious peace in Germany and the threat of war with the Turks. There he met Philip Melanchthon for the first time. They discussed a variety of issues, and Calvin came from the meeting with the conviction, as he later related it to Farel, that although Melanchthon was being pressured by some obstinate persons within the Lutheran camp, "As for himself, you need not doubt about him, but consider that he is entirely of the same opinion as ourselves."[4]

In the period of 1540-41 Calvin participated in a series of unsuccessful colloquies called by the Emperor to enable reunification of the church, meeting first at Hagenau in June of 1540, then at Worms in October of that year, and finally at Regensburg in April of 1541. There, he was treated as a Lutheran representative in the talks.[5] The document presented for discussion by the evangelical party was the Augsburg Confession. It was not, however, the same confession as that signed in 1530, but a new version drafted by Melanchthon in 1540 specifically for the Worms colloquy and revised so as to facilitate quick settlement among all the representatives of the evangelical party so that they could stand united against the Roman Catholic representatives gathered there. Article 10 of the original 1530 Confession states regarding the eucharist: "Our churches teach that the body and blood of Christ are truly present and are distributed [*quod corpus et sanguis Christi vere*

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[4] Calvin, "Letter to Farel, March 1539," Letters of John Calvin, 1: 130. Cf. Tylenda, "The Ecumenical Intention of Calvin's Early Eucharistic Teaching," p. 33.

[5] See Gerrish, "Strasbourg Revisited: Reformed Perspectives on the Augsburg Confession," p. 251.

adsint et distribuantur] to those who eat in the Supper of the Lord. They disapprove of those who teach otherwise."[6] The same article in the 1540 Confession reads: "On the Supper of the Lord they teach that the body and blood of Christ are truly exhibited with the bread and wine [*quod cum pane et vino vere exhibeantur corpus et sanguis Christi*] to those who eat in the Supper of the Lord."[7]

Inasmuch as Melanchthon substitutes the term "exhibited" in the 1540 Confession for "present and distributed" in the original, choosing the same term which Calvin used to express his distinctive and hopefully reconciliatory formulation in the 1536 Institutes, one may wonder whether Calvin had any direct influence in Melanchthon's choice of this alternative wording. Later on Calvin recounts that Melanchthon was persuaded to drop the word '*adsint*' and use '*exhibeantur*' in its place at the insistence of some of the delegates gathered for the colloquy.[8] Calvin, of course, was one of those delegates, but we do not know to what extent he was personally involved in effecting the change.

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[6] "The Augsburg Confession" (Latin Text), trans. Theodore G. Tappert, The Book of Concord, ed. Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 34.

[7] Melanchthons Werke 6: Bekenntnisse und kleine Lehrschriften, ed. Robert Stupperich (Gütersloh: Bertlesmann, 1955), p. 19; passage trans. in Tylenda, "The Ecumenical Intention of Calvin's Early Eucharistic Teaching," p. 35.

[8] Calvin, "Letter to the Pastors of Zurich, November 13, 1554," Letters of John Calvin, 3: 91. Cf. W. Nijenhuis, "Calvin and the Augsburg Confession", p. 107.

We do know, however, that he willingly subscribed to the 1540 Confession, later known as the 'variata' to distinguish it from the original of 1530.[9] This, to him, signified his agreement with the Lutheran party, and in later debate with Luther's successors he would repeatedly appeal to his agreement with that statement of faith, claiming that "in the Confession, as published at Ratisbon, there is not a word contrary to our doctrine."[10] For Calvin, his part in the adoption of this Confession was the climax to his negotiations with the Lutheran party. For twenty years Calvin was to regard Melanchthon as a true brother in the faith and one with whom he stood in substantial agreement on all important theological matters.

Calvin tended to view Melanchthon as the true interpreter of Luther's teaching, and his professed agreement with Lutheran doctrine must always be seen in that light.[11] He appeared not to have understood that after Luther's death Melanchthon was regarded by the Gnesio-Lutheran party within the Lutheran camp as secretly being of a "Calvinist" orientation. Barclay observes that in the new round of the eucharistic debate which followed, the

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[9] There is some debate as to whether Calvin actually signed the 1540 version of the Augsburg Confession, or merely (in later reflection) stated his agreement with it. See the discussion in Nijenhuis, "Calvin and the Augsburg Confession," pp. 109-10.

[10] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 306; cf. pp. 276-77. See also "Last Admonition to Westphal", TT 2: 467; "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments (Exposition)," TT 2: 225.

[11] See e.g. Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal", TT 2: 253 and "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 473-74. Cf. Gerrish, "Strasbourg Revisited: Reformed perspectives on the Augsburg Confession," p. 253.

Lutheran antagonists "directed their polemic against the points in which Calvin and Melanchthon were agreed . . . [and] so insisted on them that not only Calvinism in Switzerland, but also Melanchthon's followers in Germany were branded as unorthodox."[12] Thus, Calvin's professed agreement with Melanchthon's teaching did more in the end to discredit Melanchthon than it did to make Calvin acceptable to the Lutherans.[13]

CALVIN'S UNION ACTIVITIES WITH THE SWISS (-1549)

Feeling that he had achieved agreement with the Lutherans in Germany through his signing of the Augustana Variata, and now having received recognition from Melanchthon and his supporters, Calvin soon after his return to Geneva in September 1541 turned his attention toward establishing accord among the Swiss. Wendel notes that Calvin's negotiations with the Zwinglians was perhaps even more hazardous than his enterprise with the Lutherans had been.[14] The Lutherans were at least united in their teaching by the Augustana Confession, but among the Swiss a variety of opinions and teachings existed. Many (particularly in the Swiss-German provinces) agreed with the view that a real and substantial presence of Christ exists in the sacrament, while the Zurichers strongly defended their spiritualized understanding of the sacrament, and vehemently rejected the Lutheran position. In

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[12] Barclay, Protestant Doctrine of the Lord's Supper, p. 182.

[13] See John T. McNeill, Unitive Protestantism (Richmond, Virginia: John Knox Press, 1964), p. 203.

[14] Wendel, Calvin, p. 101.

cities such as Bern, a strong diversity of opinion existed within the local church, with various factions dominating at different times. In general, a spirit of controversy seemed to penetrate the entire region.[15]

After the death of Luther in 1546, Calvin's growing reputation, coupled with his outstanding abilities as a church leader and theologian, clearly placed him in a position of leadership among the Protestant churches in Europe. If any agreement were to be possible between the Lutherans and the Zwinglians, it was clear that Calvin alone had the stature, the ability, and the respect among the various factions to negotiate such a formulation. In keeping with his vision for healing the divisions in the church and finding a confessional formula acceptable to all (as stated in his "Short Treatise on the Holy Supper" which we have already examined), Calvin began to apply his energies to courting the Zwinglians, now under the leadership of Henry Bullinger in Zurich, in hopes of bringing them to an acceptance of his mediating view.

McNeill notes that Calvin had maintained a courteous friendship with Bullinger through correspondence since 1537, and was of the opinion that there was no issue dividing them upon which complete accord could not be reached.[16] Calvin therefore worked diligently over a period of seven years (from 1542 to 1549) to draw Bullinger into a position of formal consensus.[17]

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[15] See Barclay, Protestant Doctrine of the Lord's Supper, p. 161.

[16] McNeill, Unitive Protestantism, p. 196.

[17] A detailed examination of the theological points at issue during this negotiation phase between Bullinger and Calvin on the doctrine of the Lord's

In June of 1548, Calvin sent Bullinger a carefully worded letter enumerating his views on the Lord's Supper, which duplicated in great part what he had said earlier in his "Short Treatise," but which also strove to emphasize the points which they affirmed in common:

> When the signs of the flesh and blood of Christ are spread before us in the Supper, we say that they are not spread before us in vain, but that the thing itself is also manifested to us. Whence it follows, that we eat the body and drink the blood of Christ. By so speaking, we neither make the sign the thing, nor confound both in one, nor enclose the body of Christ in the bread, nor, on the other hand, imagine it to be infinite, nor dream of a carnal transfusion of Christ into us, nor lay down any other fiction of that sort. You maintain that Christ, as to his human nature, is in heaven; we also profess the same doctrine. The word 'heaven' implies, in your view, distance of place; we also readily adopt the opinion, that Christ is undoubtedly distant from us by an interval of place. You deny that the body of Christ is infinite, but hold that it is contained within its circumference; we candidly give an unhesitating assent to that view, and raise a public testimony on behalf of it. You refuse to allow the sign to be confounded with the thing; we are sedulous in admonishing that the one should be distinguised from the other. You strongly condemn impanation; we subscribe to your decision. What then is the sum of our doctrine? It is this, that when we discern here on earth the bread and wine, our minds must be raised to heaven in order to enjoy Christ, and that Christ is there present for us, while we seek him above the elements of this world. For it is not permitted for us to charge Christ with imposition; and that would be the case, unless we held that the reality is exhibited with the sign.

Supper is given in Ulrich Gäbler, "Das Zustandekommen des Consensus Tigurinus im Jahre 1549," Theologische Literaturzeitung 104 (May 1959): 325-27.

> And you also concede that the sign is by no means empty. It only remains that we define what it contains within it.[18]

In November of that year, Calvin sent Bullinger a more formal list of twenty-four propositions on the sacrament. The statements received Bullinger's general approval, although he complained about some of the expressions which Calvin used. Calvin nevertheless continued in his efforts to cultivate a greater acceptance of his views, and cautioned Bullinger not to misjudge him. "A preconceived opinion regarding me leads you to imagine and attribute to me what never occurred to my mind," Calvin wrote in January, 1549. "But had it not been for the obstacle of an unprofitable distrust, there would by this time have been no controversy between us, or none to speak of."[19] In March of 1549 Calvin made another formal presentation, this time of twenty articles, submitted to a Synod meeting at Bern. Again, Calvin's ideas received general support, but were not endorsed by the Synod.

In early May, however, Calvin received an invitation from Bullinger to come and meet with him. Calvin joyously accepted the invitation, and full of hopefulness at the prospect of finally being able to conclude an agreement with him, hurriedly departed for Zurich with Farel, his co-worker in Geneva, accompanying him. They met with Bullinger and the other ministers of Zurich over a period of several days, and by the end of the conference had secured agreement with the ministers and the civic council on a common

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[18] Calvin, "Letter to Henry Bullinger, June 20, 1548," Letters of John Calvin, 2: 170.

[19] Ibid., pp. 210f.

statement, now known as the Consensus Tigurinus.[20] The Consensus was then forwarded to the other Swiss Protestant communities, which all eventually gave their assent to it. Its adoption signaled the unification of the French and German Swiss Protestant churches.

It can be argued that the Consensus, by uniting the various theological contentions promoted among the Swiss into a single agreed upon formulation, solidified the Swiss position and gave it a degree of stature which would finally command recognition from the Lutherans. There were broad hopes, even from within Lutheran circles, that this formulation might serve as a basis for even greater consensus between the two Reform movements.[21]

Although the Articles of the Consensus may have provided hopeful signs for common understanding, it contained problematic statements as well. While the confession affirms the presence of Christ in the sacrament, it is the notion of the spiritual presence and reception of Christ that is predominant. There is frequent reference in the twenty-six Articles to receiving Christ "spiritually," partaking of his "spiritual gifts," and the benefits received being conveyed "by the agency of his Spirit."[22] The traditional Zwinglian terminology is also reaffirmed which states that the sacraments are "marks and badges of Christian profession and fellowship or

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[20] Further amendments were made to the Consensus prior to its publication in 1551. These are detailed in Gäbler, "Das Zustandekommen des Consensus Tigurinus," p. 328.

[21] See McNeill, Unitive Protestantism, pp. 199-200.

[22] See Articles 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15 and 16 of the "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments (Heads of Agreement)" in Calvin, TT 2: 214-17.

fraternity."[23] And while the Lutheran party would agree that reception of Christ's benefits in the sacraments is dependent on faith, and that belief in a localized presence of Christ, the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the adoration of the host, are all to be rejected, they would certainly take issue with the way in which these positions are stated. According to the Consensus, believers are said to receive the benefits of the sacrament "according to the measure" of their faith, while unbelievers receive nothing at all.[24] In denying a localized presence, it is affirmed that "Christ, regarded as man, must be sought nowhere else than in heaven, and not otherwise than with the mind and the eye of faith."[25] In denying transubstantiation, the declaration assaults the Lutheran formulation as well, saying "we deem it no less absurd to place

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[23] Article 7, Ibid., p. 214.

[24] See Articles 10, 17, 18 and 19, Ibid., pp. 215, 217-18. This point is of Zwinglian rather than Calvinist origin. Note Zwingli's own confession: "Thus the stronger our faith in Christ and our love for him, so much the more is the body of Christ present to our souls in the Supper by the contemplation of faith." Huldreich Zwinglis Werke: Erste vollstaendige Ausgabe, eds. Melchior Schuler and Johannes Schultess (Zurich, 1828ff.) IV:39; trans. in Locher,Zwingli's Thought, p. 224, (n. #359). This distinction between the "state of faith" and the "degree of faith" does not reappear in Calvin's later writings. (Even when in the final edition of the Institutes, Calvin cites Augustine saying "I hold that men bear away from the sacrament no more than they gather with the vessel of faith" (IV,17.33; LCC 21: 1407) he uses this principle only to discuss the presence or absence of faith, and not the degree of faith present.) The occurence of this teaching in the "Consensus Tigurinus" must therefore be viewed as a concessionary point yielded to the Zwinglians in the formulation of the "Consensus," but one which Calvin does not repeat again in setting forth his own teaching.

[25] Article 22, "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments (Heads of Agreement)," TT 2: 219; Cf. Article 25, p. 220.

Christ under the bread or couple him with the bread, than to transubstantiate the bread into his body."[26] And finally, in what seems to be the harshest blow aimed at the Lutheran interpretation, the declaration insists that the words of institution, "This is my body; this is my blood," must be understood figuratively, and those who take them in "the precisely literal sense, we repudiate as preposterous interpretors."[27]

In the strong Zwinglian orientation of these passages we note the price which Calvin had to pay in acceding to a formulation which would be acceptable to all the Swiss. In particular, it was important that the theologians of Bern, which was now dominated by an extreme Zwinglian party, give their consent to the document. Even with the above language so firmly embedded within it, the Bernese were extremely hesitant to do so, and complied only after much negotiation.[28] Because of these constraints upon the manner in which the teaching on the Lord's Supper is presented in the Consensus, Wendel cautions that we should not search too strongly there for an indication of Calvin's true theological position. He warns that

> Its careful drafting, and the reciprocal concessions that the two parties had to make, prevent one, moreover, from finding in

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[26] Article 24, Ibid., p. 219.

[27] Article 22, Ibid.

[28] McNeill, Unitive Protestantism, p. 198. Cf. Gäbler, "Das Zustandekommen des Consensus Tigurinus," pp. 329-30.

> this [formulation] a complete and authentic expression of their thought.[29]

Despite the immediate objective of uniting the Swiss, McNeill comments that the Consensus was also "calculated to overcome Lutheran assumptions about the Zwinglians." He states that Calvin genuinely believed that

> . . . the essential, as distinct from the accidental, elements of the Lutheran view were . . . forcibly stated and reiterated in the Consensus, and that moderate Lutherans would regard the positive sections of the document with no disfavour."[30]

The "Lutheran view" of which Calvin speaks here is, of course, his understanding of the Melanchthonian representation of Lutheran teaching, and is reflected in his endorsement of the "Augustana Variata." But at the same time it must be understood that Luther never directly opposed the changes Melanchthon had made to the Augsburg Confession in creating the Variata edition of 1540, and this edition was regarded as an official document at Worms and Ratisbon. As Barclay notes, the Variata after Luther's death was becoming more and more accepted as the official view of the Lutherans, and Luther's own particular doctrine had begun to recede into the background. He points out that the Church of the Augsburg Confession was broad enough at this time

> . . . to include everyone within its bounds who acknowledged a real communication of Christ in the Sacrament. It had room

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[29] Wendel, Calvin, p. 102; cf. pp. 330, 343. Cf. Niesel, Calvin's Lehre vom Abendmahl, p. 55, (n. #1).

[30] McNeill, Unitive Protestantism, p. 199. Cf. Gerrish, "Calvin's Image of Luther," pp. 39-40.

for Luther's view of an outward communication of the body and blood, as well as for the Melanchthon-Calvin view of an act of real communion with Christ's Person.[31]

THE RENEWED EUCHARISTIC DEBATE (1552-1562)

Calvin, still regarding himself as a true upholder of the Augustana Confession,[32] hoped that this new confessional agreement with the Swiss would now provide a means for removing the long standing breach between the Wittenbergers and the Zurichers[33] Success in this venture was, of course, dependent upon the persuasive influence of the moderate and conciliatory Melanchthonian party of the Lutheran camp. But other events had made this impossible.

The year following Luther's death, the Emperor Charles V defeated the German princes in the Smalcald War, and at the Diet of Augsburg in 1548 he imposed the religious settlement on the German Protestants known as the Augsburg Interim. The Interim formally reintroduced many of the Roman Catholic practices and structures back into church affairs. By negotiation, Melanchthon succeeded in having the terms of the Interim modified into the somewhat more tolerable Leipzig Interim of 1548. But this was done at great

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31 Barclay, Protestant Doctrine of the Lord's Supper, p. 181. Cf. Nijenhuis, "Calvin and the Augsburg Confession," p. 113.

32 I.e. the Augustana Variata of 1540.

33 He says, e.g. "I hoped, when our Agreement was published, that many who had previously been rather keen would have been pacified and be more friendly with us." Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 313. See also Joseph MeLelland, "Lutheran-Reformed Debate on the Eucharist and Christology," Marburg Revisited, p. 45.

personal price. When Melanchthon, albeit reluctantly, consented to its terms, choosing to regard the Roman prescriptions as "adiaphora," or non-essential matters, he was bitterly denounced by the Magdeburgians of northern Germany who had escaped defeat and could thus reject the terms of the Interim more freely. Other strict confessionalists -- most notably Joachim Westphal of Hamburg -- quickly came to the aid of the Magdeburgians, led by Matthias Flacius Illyricus and Nikolaus vom Amsdorf, to vigorously protest the perceived liberalism and conciliatory weaknesses within the Lutheran camp. Within a few months, Melanchthon had lost his position of leadership in the church, and he and his supporters were forced into retreat while the Flacian party gained the upper hand with a rigorous and literalistic defense of Luther's teachings.

In 1552 Joachim Westphal began a vigorous pamphlet war with the publication of his "Farrago of Confused and Divergent Opinions on the Lord's Supper Taken from the Books of the Sacramentarians" which, while naming a number of so-called "sacramentarians," focused most extensively on Calvin and his writings. The following year, Westphal published a companion volume to the "Farrago" entitled "The Right Belief in regard to the Lord's Supper Demonstrated and Taught in the Words of Paul the Apostle and the Evangelists."

That Calvin should be considered merely another "sacramentarian" in these writings was certainly a serious misjudgment on the part of Westphal, but from the German provinces it seems that the position of the Swiss was never clearly understood. Luther, too, had been guilty of judging the Swiss

theologians to be "fanatics" after the manner of Karlstadt,[34] and Melanchthon admitted upon reading the "Consensus Tigurinus" that never before had he really understood the Swiss position.[35] It should not seem strange, therefore, that Westphal as a distanced observer should judge Calvin and Zwingli to be of the same mold. With Zwingli's death in battle in 1531 (some two decades previously) and Calvin's ascendency as the current leading theological figure in the Swiss provinces, it is clear that the term "Zwinglian" was becoming less servicable. Considering Calvin's role in the formulation and the signing of the "Consensus Tigurinus," it was clear to the Germans that he was the true successor to Zwingli in representing the Swiss position. Thus in his treatise of 1553, Westphal refers to Zwingli's teaching as "the Calvinist heresy," and in other writings of the period Zwinglianism and Calvinism are soon equated.[36] In this new round of debate over the eucharist, it is clear, as Willis observes, that "'Calvinist' was becoming synonymous with, or was even replacing 'Zwinglian' as the most comprehensive term to describe the 'sacramentarians.' "[37]

Upon discovering that Westphal was actively trying to influence the Swiss-German provinces to formally reject the Consensus Tigurinus, Calvin in January 1555 issued the full text of the Consensus along with a defense of

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34 See Luther, "This Is My Body", LW 37: 18, (n. #14).

35 McNeill, Unitive Protestantism, p. 200.

36 See Willis, Calvin's Catholic Christology, pp. 12-13.

37 Ibid., p. 23. Cf. McLelland, "Lutheran-Reformed Debate on the Eucharist and Christology," p. 41.

the articles under the title "The Defense of the Sound and Orthodox Doctrine on the Sacraments." At first, Calvin appealed to Melanchthon to support him in his defense of the Swiss position against the charges of Westphal. Writing to him on March 5, 1555, shortly after the publication of his first treatise against the writings of Westphal, Calvin appealed to him to join in a united stance saying, "All the Swiss churches have subscribed to it. Those in Zurich gave it their unqualified approbation. Now I long to have your opinion. . . ."[38] Calvin was of the mistaken opinion that Westphal was an aberrant spokesperson among the Lutherans and that he had few supporters. He did not realize that it was now Westphal and not Melanchthon who represented the dominant Lutheran spirit. Melanchthon's reply was one of diplomatic avoidance and silence.[39]

In response to Calvin's treatise, Westphal replied with "A Just Defense Against the False Accusations of a Certain Sacramentarian" (1555). In reply to Westphal's inflamatory polemics, Calvin published his "Second Defense of the Pious and Orthodox Faith Concerning the Sacraments in Answer to the Calumnies of Joachim Westphal" (1556). In this treatise, Calvin appealed directly to the ministers of Saxony to stand with him in defending the unity of

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[38] Calvin, "Letter to Melanchthon, March 5, 1555," Letters of John Calvin, 3: 158. Cf. Tylenda, "The Calvin - Westphal Exchange: The Genesis of Calvin's Treatises against Westphal," Calvin Theological Journal 9: 196.

[39] The words of Melanchthon's reply read: "With your superior prudence, you can judge from the writings of your adversaries what type of men they are. I'll, therefore, write nothing about them." CO 15: 616, translated in Tylenda, Ibid., p. 196.

the church against the divisive attacks of Westphal.[40] The reply, however, was a further treatise from Westphal entitled "The Confession of Faith on the Sacrament of the Eucharist, in which the Ministers of the Church of Saxony Defend the Presence of the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Supper by Solid Arguments of Sacred Scripture in Answer to the Book Dedicated to them by John Calvin" (1557). The "Confession" was a collection of various letters and confessions on the Supper by Westphal, the ministers of Magdeburg, and the churches of Bremen, Hildesheim, Hamburg, Lüneburg, Hanover, Brunswick, etc. Calvin now had his united defense, but it was from the opposing side.

On May 16 1557 Bullinger wrote to Calvin, alarmed by what had transpired. "Everyone is rising up against us," he cried. "Everyone is defending Westphalism."[41] By now supporters of both parties had also rushed into the fray with a host of treatises and confessions each supporting their party's position. Calvin decided to issue one final and definitive reply. In August 1557, he published "The Last Admonition of John Calvin to Joachim Westphal who if He Heeds it Not Must Hence Forth be Treated in the Way which Paul Prescribed for Obstinate Heretics." Westphal remained resolute in his position. The following year he wrote both a brief "Answer to Some of the Outrageous Lies of John Calvin," and an extended "Apology

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[40] See Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal (Preface)," TT 2: 250.

[41] CO 16: 483-4, translated in Tylenda, "The Calvin - Westphal Exchange," p. 205.

Concerning the Defense of the Lord's Supper Against the Errors and Calumnies of John Calvin."

Calvin, however, tiring from the unproductive debate which rather than reconciling the parties had only deepened the gulf between them, and weakened by ill health, chose not to reply to Westphal's subsequent pamphlets. In revising his Institutes for republication (in what was to be their final form) in 1559, however, Calvin devoted the greater part of Book IV, Chapter 17 to the issues raised by Westphal, utilizing materials from his treatises of 1555 and 1557 in making his final statements on the matter. Only once did the debate briefly resurface, when in 1560 a Lutheran pastor from Magdeburg named Heshus (or Heshusius) sought to reopen the debate with a treatise entitled "The Presence of the Body of Christ in the Lord's Supper Against the Sacramentarians." Calvin replied with a final "Clear Explanation of Sound Doctrine Concerning the True Partaking of the Flesh and Blood of Christ in the Holy Supper to Dissipate the Mists of Tileman Heshusius." (1561).[42]

In the course of this lengthy exchange which created a new round of the eucharistic controversy, three main points were argued by Westphal against Calvin's position:

1) that the bread of the Supper is the body of Christ; i.e. that Christ's body and blood are substantially present in the bread and wine;

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[42] For a more detailed discussion see Tylenda, "Calvin and Christ's Presence in the Supper - True or Real," Scottish Journal of Theology, 27, n. 1 (February 1974): 66-67 and Tylenda, "The Calvin - Westphal Exchange," pp. 182-209.

2) that in the Supper Christ's body is present in a ubiquitous (although illocal) manner; and

3) that the real body of Christ is literally received by the mouth and teeth in the Supper -- and this by both believers and unbelievers.[43]

In defending his own teaching, Calvin in turn, argued:

1) that a figurative interpretation of the words of Institution, which distinguishes between the sign and that which is signified, preserves the true reception of Christ's body and blood in the Supper without resorting to claims of a substantial presence;

2) that the body of Christ, since his ascension, is contained (locally) in heaven and is absent from the earth; and

3) that we feed on Christ by faith and not by any carnal means, so that the unworthy cannot receive the true body and blood of Christ in the sacrament.[44]

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[43] See Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 486. For other modified listings covering these same points, see "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal (Preface)," TT 2: 248-50; "Last Admonition to Westphal", TT 2: 371, 402, 486; "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper", LCC 22: 311. See also Barclay, Protestant Doctrine of the Lord's Supper, pp. 182, 183.

[44] See Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.11-35) LCC 21: 1371-1411 (cf. Barclay, Protestant Doctrine of the Lord's Supper, p. 213) and Commentary on A Harmony of the Gospels, 3: 136. A more concise summary of these points (and one which lends iself more easily to memory) is given by McDonnell, who notes that the essential points for Calvin were that in the sacrament there is "no substantial presence," "no local presence," and "no carnal presence." McDonnell, Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 42.

In Part Two of our study we shall examine each of these major issues raised in the renewed eucharistic debate. Although there is a strong correlation between the three points raised by Westphal and the three points affirmed by Calvin, we shall divide our study into a total of five main areas so that each distinct point can be examined thoroughly, whether raised by the Lutherans or by Calvin himself. These five points consist of:

1) the controversy over the meaning of a substantial presence;

2) the controversy over the use of figurative language in explaining Christ's presence;

3) the controversy over the actual manner of Christ's presence in the Supper;

4) the controversy over the reception of Christ's body and its benefits; and

5) the controversy over ubiquity and its christological implications.

From our perspective today, it is much more important to compare Calvin's teaching on the eucharist to that of Luther, than to to compare it to that of such minor figures as Westphal and Heshus. Therefore, we shall bring Luther's own views on each of these issues into the discussion as much as possible, making use of his later writings which have not yet been examined in the course of our investigation. We have already examined the developmental states of both Luther's and Calvin's eucharistic teachings. Now we shall compare the mature stage of their thinking on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper in light of the issues raised in the later eucharistic debates. Fully cognizant of the fact that Luther and Calvin never actually debated with one another on a personal level, it is still fitting in the second half of this presentation to give a systematic, rather than an historical, treatment of their final positions on the doctrine of the eucharist. In Part Two, the material will

therefore be arranged in the form of a systematic comparison between the teachings of the mature Luther and the mature Calvin on each of the main issues debated in the later eucharistic controversy.

CHAPTER SIX

THE FUNDAMENTAL CONTROVERSY OVER A "SUBSTANTIAL PRESENCE"

BASIC TERMINOLOGY AND ITS USE

Luther, throughout the course of his writings, continually affirmed the "real presence" of Christ in the Lord's Supper. This, to him, was a fundamental article of faith held by the church throughout the ages. Calvin also affirms that Christ is present in the Supper, but not in the same way as Luther expresses it. Calvin in general prefers not to speak of a "real" presence, but of a "true" presence of Christ in the Supper. He finds the claim of a "real" presence, as the Lutherans insist on it, to be suggestive of a "local" presence. In his mind, this is an inaccurate and unfitting way of describing the presence of Christ in the Supper. But he is also aware that the Lutherans use the term "real" in contradistinction to "illusory", and notes that this corresponds to the sense in which he uses the term "true." Therefore, in an attempt at striking common ground, he states that "If they will use 'real' for true and oppose it to

'fallacious' or 'imaginary' ", he will adopt their more vulgar term and will "rather speak barbariously than afford material for strife."[1]

But Calvin's qualified acceptance of Luther's terminology does not really bridge the gap between their two positions. For Luther, a "real" presence meant a "substantial" presence -- in keeping with the philosophical constructs inherited from his theological training in late scholasticism.[2] This meant for him nothing less than the concrete manifestation of Christ's own person, or "being," in the sacrament.[3] He affirmed the substantial presence

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[1] Calvin, "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments (Exposition)," TT 2: 239-40. For further discussion on Calvin's use of the terms 'true' and 'real' see Tylenda, "Calvin and Christ's Presence in the Supper -- True or Real."

[2] Note Laskey's comment that "Luther moved away from his predecessors on important theological points relating to the Lord's Supper, while retaining the form and categories inherited from medieval theology." Dennis A. Laskey, "Luther's Preaching on the Lord's Supper: A Comparison with Preaching in the Late Middle Ages," Concordia Journal 12, no. 5 (September 1986): 169. Cf. the assessment by Tappert that "Most of the problems Luther wrestled with were inherited problems, and he handled them with tools inherited from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance." Theodore G. Tappert, "Meaning and Practice in the Reformation," Meaning and Practice of the Lord's Supper, ed. Helmut T. Lehman (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1961), p. 88.

[3] It would be a mistake to think of "substance" in Luther's terminology as referring only to a "material" object. Heick notes that "Luther uses the terms "substance," "being," and "nature" interchangeably. The "substantial presence" of Christ's flesh in the Supper then, does not refer to a local physical presence, but rather to a concrete instance of "active being" (to use Gennrich's phrase) which is inseparable from Christ's "historical being." See Heick, "Consubstantiation in Luther's Theology," p. 8. Cf. Grislis, "The Manner of Christ's Eucharistic Presence According to Martin Luther," p. 5;

of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament because this was the only way he knew of guaranteeing the real, efficacious presence of Christ in the Supper. It must be kept in mind that Luther's debate was with those who saw no need for anything but a spiritual communion with Christ in the Supper, since to them the flesh was of no benefit. Against this claim, Luther affirmed in no uncertain terms that Christ's flesh is of benefit to the believer, that it is really given and received in the Supper, and that it conveys the forgiveness of sin and redemption. If Christ's flesh is removed from the sacrament, then, for Luther, the benefit which accompanies it also disappears.[4] Therefore, it was of the utmost importance for Luther to affirm that the body of Christ is present, given and received in the sacrament of the altar. He thus strenuously protested any argument which reasoned that it is impossible for Christ's body to be substantially manifested in the elements of the Supper. And although he defended his own explanation of how the body of Christ may be substantially

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Paul Wilhelm Gennrich, Die Christologie Luthers im Abendmahlsstreit 1524-1529 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1929), p. 71; Ian D. Siggins, Martin Luther's Doctrine of Christ (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 224.

[4] Quere, in his analysis of the development of Luther's understanding of the real presence, makes the following observation: "Early on Luther had so closely identified the body and blood of Christ with the forgiveness of sins that they became a kind of two-fold *res* or the twin realities which the sacrament signified and to which the sacrament pointed. By 1529 the body and blood alone are the *res* of the sacrament -- forgiveness is "contained" in the eucharistic body and blood." Quere, "Changes and Constants in Luther's Understanding of the Real Presence," pp. 73-74. Cf. Stephenson, "Martin Luther and the Eucharist," p. 458.

present in an omnipresent and illocal manner, he did not insist that this explanation be adopted as doctrine.[5] Overall, he was generally tolerant of any proposal which would permit the real substantial presence of Christ in the sacrament to be maintained.

Calvin is in basic agreement with Luther's position that the divine benefits received in the Supper cannot be separated from Christ's body and blood, and he steadfastly affirms that it is Christ's body itself which is received in the Supper, and not just the benefits associated with the body.[6] Yet his explanation of the presence of Christ's body and blood differs greatly from that of Luther. Calvin consistently rejects the arguments for a "substantial presence" of Christ in the Supper which are derived from the Scholastic definition of "substance." As Niesel observes, the body and blood of Christ are to him not some "divine material" which lend themselves to theories of impanation and ubiquity.[7] And Wendel states that "There is no

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[5] Note Tappert's assessment with regard to Luther's distinctive contention for various possible modes of presence (circumscriptive, definitive, and repletive) used in his debates with Zwingli: "Luther himself did not press this argument after his controversy with Zwingli. In his later years he refused to employ it, preferring to confine himself to the testimony of the Scriptures." Tappert, "Christology and the Lord's Supper in the Perspective of History," p. 58.

[6] McDonnell, Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist, pp. 245-46.

[7] "Calvin wehrt sich dagegen, von der Substanz des Leibes und Blutes Christi, in dinglichen Sinne zu reden wie die Scholastiker. Leib und Blut Christi sind ihm nicht ein himmlischer Stoff, über den man Impanations und Ubiquitätstheorien aufstellen kann. . . ." Niesel, Calvins Lehre vom Abendmahl, p. 50 n. 103.

question of making Calvin say that in the Eucharist we receive a kind of invisible material substrate or . . . a kind of fluid, either material or of celestial essence."[8] Calvin, in fact, consistently rejects any notion of a local transformation, infusion, or enclosure of substance in the bread and wine.[9] It is in this sense (and generally only in this sense) that he lists as an opinion to be rejected "the idea that the body of Christ is really and substantially present in the Supper."[10]

In as much as Luther's understanding of a "substantial presence" is derived from scholastic terminology, Calvin is critical of the Lutheran explanation of Christ's "real presence" in the Supper as well. But one should not conclude from this that Calvin rejects the historic testimony of the Church Fathers as to the real presence. McDonnell asserts that

> Rather than denying the real presence, as [Calvin] has been accused of doing, he [like Luther] presupposes it. None of the reformers defended it more forcefully than Calvin. To reject the Roman Catholic and the Lutheran explanation of the real presence, as he did, is not to deny the real presence. . . . Calvin

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[8] Wendel, Calvin, p. 341.

[9] See e.g. Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 248, 277, 278, 281, 283, 291, 298, 310. Cf. "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 401; "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 264; Institutes (IV,17.26) LCC 21: 1394 and (IV,17.29) 1398. See also "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments (Heads of Agreement)" (Article 23), TT 2: 219. (Note that this article was added by Calvin in 1551 when the Consensus was published; it was not part of the original document signed in 1549.)

[10] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 281; cf. pp. 278, 280, 297, 310, 311.

rejects the explanation of the dogmatic fact, not the fact itself.[11]

CALVIN'S DISTINCTIVE USE OF THE TERM "SUBSTANCE"

A careful study of Calvin's writings shows that in speaking of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper he uses the term "substance" in a positive sense with three different, but related, meanings. As Gollwitzer observes in his detailed analysis, Calvin in some instances uses the term "substance" to refer to the real and natural body of Christ which is offered in the sacrament. On other occasions he speaks of Christ himself as the "substance" of the sacrament. And finally, he frequently employs the term "substance" to refer to that which is given us when we receive the body and blood of Christ, namely, his spiritual gifts and benefits.[12] Further comparison shows that these three usages correspond to what Calvin refers to in his Institutes as the threefold "spiritual truth" of the sacrament which is present with the physical signs of bread and wine. These are: "the signification, the matter that depends on it, and the power or effect that follows from both."[13] We shall examine the

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[11] McDonnell, Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist, p. 224 (emphasis is mine).

[12] Helmut Gollwitzer, Coena Domini: Die altlutherishe Abendmahlslehre in ihrer Auseinandersetzung mit dem Calvinismus dargestellt und der lutherischen Frühorthodoxie (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1937), pp. 120f.; cited in Wendel, Calvin, p. 342. Cf. McDonnell, Calvin, the Church and the Eucharist, pp 232-33.

[13] Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.11) LCC 21: 1371.

three distinctive meanings of the term "substance" referred to by Gollwitzer, using the explanatory model provided by Calvin in the Institutes.

Calvin explains his first point, saying that the signification refers to the divine promises which are implicit in the physical signs.[14] That is, in presenting the bread and wine of the Supper, Christ promises to give us his own body and blood.[15] In employing the term "substance" to express this, he says, for example, "Should anyone raise a dispute as to the word substance, we assert that Christ from the substance of his flesh, breathes life in our souls, nay, infuses his own life into us."[16] Thus, "our souls are truly fed by the substance of Christ's flesh,"[17] and we are made "partakers of the

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[14] Ibid., p. 1372.

[15] See e.g. Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 297.

[16] Ibid., p. 248; cf. p. 311. Cf. "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 384, 401; "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 263, 264, 267; Institutes (IV,17.24) LCC 21: 1390 and (IV,17.32) 1404; "Confession of Faith in Name of the Reformed Churches in France," TT 2: 159-60.

[17] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 277, 278; "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 493; Commentary on the First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians [I Cor. 11:24]," vol. 9 of Calvin's [New Testament] Commentaries, trans. John W. Fraser, eds. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1960), p. 246. Cf. Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 298.

substance of his body and blood."[18] It is in this sense that Calvin claims that the flesh and blood of Christ are "substantially offered" to us in the Supper.[19]

In its second usage, Calvin states that "I call Christ with his death and resurrection the matter, or substance" of the sacrament.[20] We recall Calvin using this terminology earlier in his "Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper" of 1541 where he stated that "the substance of the sacraments is the Lord Jesus."[21] He reaffirms this language in his later writings, saying that "Christ is uniformly called by me the substance of baptism and of the Supper,"[22] and "I long ago declared in my Institutes [3rd edition, 1543] as well as repeatedly elsewhere, not only that Christ was from the first the matter of all the sacraments in general, but was especially so in the holy Supper."[23] Note that Calvin uses the terms "substance" and "matter" here, not in the Scholastic sense of "essence" and "materia", but to denote "essentialness" and "foundation". One must be careful to distinguish Calvin's meaning, because his use of this terminology can sometimes be confusing. Since it is Christ himself

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[18] Calvin, " Confession of Faith in Name of the Reformed Churches in France," TT 2: 161. Cf. "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 264.

[19] Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 267.

[20] Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.11) LCC 21: 1372.

[21] Calvin, "Short Treatise on the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 169.

[22] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 292.

[23] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 398. Cf. p. 394.

who is the substance of the sacrament, our reception of him in the Supper is referred to by Calvin as a "substantial partaking" of his body and blood,[24] and we are said to be "substantially fed on the flesh and blood of Christ."[25]

The third point Calvin explains saying, "by effect I understand redemption, righteousness, sanctification, and eternal life, and all the other benefits Christ gives to us."[26] This too, he links with the "substance" of Christ's body and blood. He says, for example, that "having been made partakers of his substance . . . we may also feel his power in partaking of all his benefits,"[27] and "The substance, however, is that Christ is truly offered to us by the sacraments, in order that being made partakers of him, we may obtain possession of his blessings."[28] By focusing not on the manifestation of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament, but on the reception of these with their accompanying benefits, Calvin thus extends the term's meaning to include what he refers to as our having "substantial communion" with the flesh and blood of Christ.[29]

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[24] Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.19) LCC 21: 1382. Cf. "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 329.

[25] Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 264; cf. "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 393.

[26] Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.11), LCC 21: 1372.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 274.

[29] Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 287; cf. pp. 278, 329.

Calvin's three-fold usage of the term "substance", then, to describe 1) that which is signified in the divine promise, 2) Christ himself who makes himself present in the Supper, and 3) the reception by faith of the accompanying benefits, goes beyond the Lutheran use of the term to denote only the presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament. Although Calvin was consistent in his own understanding of the term, his varied use of it must have been a source of considerable confusion among his Lutheran detractors. Wendel notes that

> . . . by using the word 'substance' some times in its material and scholastic meaning, sometimes as equivalent to 'foundation', or again to spiritual gifts, Calvin himself helped to give an appearance of ambiguity to his doctrine which his adversaries were prompt to exploit.[30]

Wendel goes on to state that Westphal, for example, had no desire to acknowledge that Calvin used the word "substance" with different meanings, and this seemed to provide him with the opportunity of charging Calvin with self-contradiction and duplicity.[31]

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[30] Wendel, Calvin, p. 342. Cf. Gerrish, "Gospel and Eucharist: John Calvin on the Lord's Supper," p. 116.

[31] Wendel, Calvin, p. 342. Heshus also makes similar charges. See e.g. Calvin's complaint that "He repeatedly charges me with subtleties, sophisms, even impostures: as if there were any equivocation or ambiguity, or any kind of obscurity in my mode of expression." "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 267.

FURTHER DISTINCTIONS IN LUTHER'S AND CALVIN'S USAGE

As we have already mentioned, Luther's conceptual dependence on scholastic philosophical models bound him to a substantialist understanding of Christ's presence in the Supper. For to him, if the "*res*" was not there apart from the "*accidents*," then Christ's body was merely an appearance, an illusion. Calvin's view of something being "real" was quite different on the other hand. To him, the "reality" of Christ's presence in the sacrament was demonstrated (according to the threefold "spiritual truth" of the sacrament described above) by his body and blood being offered there according to his promise, its being received from Christ himself who is present, and its being communicated to us with its accompanying benefits.

We have seen that Calvin at times uses substantialist terms to describe each of these aspects of the "reality" of Christ's presence, and thus refers to a "substantial offering," a "substantial partaking," and a "substantial communion" of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament. But substantialist terms, however reappropriated for his own usage, are not really Calvin's preferred means of speaking about Christ's presence in the Supper. As mentioned earlier, Calvin's own choice of terms is to speak of a "true" presence rather than a "real" presence as the Lutherans do. And we should note that Calvin uses the term "true" with exactly the same set of meanings as he gives to the term "substantial" in the references cited above. Thus, he says, for example, "We maintain that the body and blood of Christ are truly offered to

us in the Supper,"[32] and "we hold that in the Supper there is a true partaking of the flesh and blood of Christ,"[33] and "We assert a true communion of the flesh and blood in the holy Supper."[34]

But these expressions have a different meaning than what Luther has in mind in affirming a "substantial presence." The fundamental difference is this: While Luther uses his term to denote an active "state of being", Calvin uses his corresponding terms to denote an active "event." Thus, whereas Luther's understanding of a real presence requires a concrete manifestation of Christ's body and blood in the Supper, Calvin's conception of substance enables him to say that Christ is present by virtue of his activity in the sacrament, for wherever anything acts, there it is.[35] In this regard, Calvin

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[32] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westpahl (Preface)," TT 2: 248; cf. p. 298. Cf. "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 491; Institutes (IV,17.32), LCC 21: 1404.

[33] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal (Preface)," TT 2: 248; cf. p. 276. See also "Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper," LCC 22: 172.

[34] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 491; cf. pp. 456-57, 485

[35] See Barclay, Protestant Doctrine of the Lord's Supper, p. 208; cf. p. 181. This observation is based on the study by August Ebrard in Das Dogma vom Heiligen Abendmahl und seine Geschichte, 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Heinrich Zimmer, 1845-46), 2: 459. It has been echoed by more contemporary voices: See McLelland's comment that "the Reformed . . . insisted on action rather than presence in the Supper." McLelland, "Lutheran - Reformed Debate on the Eucharist and Christology," p. 49. See also McDonnell's statement that "The real presence is not simply a fact . . . [but] an act. . . ." McDonnell, Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist, p. 239.

explicitly contrasts his position to that of the Lutherans, explaining that "the body of Christ is exhibited in the Supper effectually, not naturally -- in respect of virtue, not in respect of substance."[36]

To the Lutherans, this emphasis upon virtue and effect signified a confusion between the substance of Christ's body and its efficacy.[37] But for Calvin, the substance of the sacrament and its effect are inseparable. We have already seen how according to Calvin's third usage of the term "substance," the reality of Christ's presence is demonstrated in the benefits which he bestows. For Calvin, the benefit of the sacrament is not secondary to or merely a consequence of Christ's presence, but an integral feature of that presence in the sacrament. Niesel emphasizes this point in stating that for

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[36] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 278; cf. p. 280. See also Pelikan, The Christian Tradition 4: 201.

[37] E.g. "Westphal pretends that I transfer the name of substance to the use and virtue of the flesh of Christ." Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 292. Cf. "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 278. But this distinction is not always clear in Luther's own terminology. Note Quere's analysis of the transition in Luther's teaching from 1523 onward. There, he states: "In effect, Luther ends by virtually equating sign, things signified, and benefit -- concepts which were once distinguished. For the benefit of forgiveness, which brings life and salvation, is found in Christ's body and blood." Quere, "Changes and Constants in Luther's Understanding of the Real Presence," p. 55; cf. pp. 74-75. However, the real complaint here by the Lutherans is not that Calvin links the "substance" and the "benefit" of the sacrament, but that they suspect him of using the word substance to describe the virtue or efficaciousness of Christ's body and blood, and not the body and blood of Christ itself. For a more contemporary discussion of the judgment that Calvin uses the term "substance" to mean the benefits connected with Christ's body, see McDonnell, Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist, pp. 241-43.

Calvin, "the question of the effect of the sacraments is not a subsidiary one, since the work of Christ may not be separated from his presence. . . ."[38]

With Calvin's emphasis that the reality of Christ's presence in the sacrament is demonstrated by Christ's activity there, the effect of the sacrament becomes Calvin's dominant concern. Thus, in contrast with Luther, Calvin tends to focus on our communion with the flesh and blood of Christ, rather than the presence of the literal body and blood of Christ itself.[39] He makes explicit reference to this distinction as follows: With regard to the Lutherans, he says,

> Their confession is, that the true body of Christ is given to be substantially eaten in the Supper. We not less distinctly maintain true communion with the flesh of Christ of which Paul speaks.[40]

Furthermore,

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[38] Wilhelm Niesel, The Theology of Calvin, trans. Harold Knight (London: Lutterworth Press, 1956; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), p. 222. Also: "[Christ] himself in his person is the substance and the foundation of all the other gifts. Without the matter of the sacrament there is no effect, and apart from fellowship with the divine-human Jesus Christ there is no salvation. This teaching discloses the roots of the whole theology of Calvin." Ibid.

[39] See McDonnell, Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist, p. 240. For a further discussion on the centrality of "communion with Christ" in Calvin's eucharistic teaching, see ibid., p. 177. See also Gerrish, "Gospel and Eucharist: John Calvin and the Lord's Supper," pp. 108-109, 111-12.

[40] Calvin,"Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 481; cf. "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 281.

> I teach that no term could better explain the mode in which the body of Christ is given to us than the term 'communion,' implying that we become one with him, and being ingrafted in him, truly enjoy his life.[41]

In some places Calvin's language aproaches the realism of the Lutheran terminology. For example, he says that "in the Supper there is a true partaking of the flesh and blood of Christ,"[42] and Christ's "true and natural body is there held forth."[43] Likewise, he can state that "The true body of Christ is eaten in the Supper,"[44] it being the same body which was

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[41] Calvin,"Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 414. In a slightly different use of the term, Calvin also frequently states that Christ is "communicated" to us in the Supper. E.g. ". . . the special end of the holy Supper is to communicate Christ and his life to us. . . ." Ibid., p. 448. And "None of us denies that the body and blood of Christ are communicated to us." "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments (Exposition)," TT 2: 239; cf. "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 411; "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 268.

[42] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal (Preface)," TT 2: 248; cf. p. 276. See also "Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper," LCC 22: 172.

[43] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 401; cf. p. 443. See also "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 287; Institutes (IV,17.11) LCC 22: 1372.

[44] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 482.

crucified and hung on the cross,[45] and that "we truly feed upon his body and blood."[46]

But despite this very forceful affirmation that we partake of Christ's true flesh and blood in the sacrament, we must keep in mind that as Calvin uses these words, no physical manifestation is implied. He makes this point abundantly clear, stating, "it is one thing to believe that the body is truly given us, and another, that his substance is placed under the earthly elements."[47] And,

> I certainly do this day, not less than formerly, repudiate the substantial presence which Westphal imagines; for though the flesh of Christ gives us life, it does not follow that his substance must be transferred to us."[48]

Thus in contrast with the above passages which emphasize the reception of the very body and blood of Christ in the sacrament, Calvin makes many other statements which show that what is being described here is an act of communion with Christ in faith rather than an encounter with a physical presence of Christ's body and blood. He says, for example, "we maintain no other

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[45] Ibid., p. 375. Cf. "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 280; Commentary on I Corinthians [I Cor. 11:24], p. 246.

[46] Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 309.

[47] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 298; cf. pp. 292-93.

[48] Ibid., p. 277; cf. pp. 281, 291. Cf. "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal (Preface)," TT 2: 248; Institutes (IV,17.32) LCC 21: 1404.

presence than that of relationship,"[49] and "the body of Christ is not given in the Supper in any other way than . . . that he is our head, and we are his members."[50] And, "we do not . . . eat his flesh or drink his blood in any other way than by being made one with him by faith, so that he, dwelling in us, may truly give us life.[51]

We should also note that in Calvin's view communion with Christ in the Lord's Supper is no different from communion with Christ in its more general sense apart from the eucharist. Partaking of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament is thus but a special case of the believer's "perpetual eating" in faith. As McDonnell points out:

> When speaking of union with Christ in faith, Calvin speaks of communion with the substance of Christ. When speaking of union with Christ in the eucharist he speaks also of union with the substance of Christ. In both cases, union in faith and union in the eucharist, what we receive is the substance of Christ.[52]

Thus he concludes:

> Clearly, Calvin considers the substantial participation which we have in the eucharist to be a precision of that substantial participation which we have with Christ in faith. What Calvin says about our substantial union with Christ by reason of the

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[49] Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.13), LCC 21: 1374.

[50] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 409. Cf. "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 268.

[51] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 426; cf. p. 441.

[52] McDonnell, Calvin, the Church and the Eucharist, pp. 233-34.

> eucharist, can be said about our union with Christ quite apart from the eucharist.[53]

Further problems arise when Calvin speaks in terms of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament being a "spiritual" reality rather than a substantial presence. He states, for example, "I hold that the spiritual matter of the Supper is the body and blood of Christ, just as the earthly matter is the bread and wine."[54] It should not be unexpected that with Calvin's denial of a substantialist mode of presence, his characterization of Christ's body and blood as a "spiritual" reality, and his emphasis upon our "spiritual communion" with Christ in the Supper, Westphal and his followers understood Calvin to be making the same kind of spiritualized claims as the "sacramentarians" from Luther's time. Calvin defends his position, explaining that "When we say that we are made partakers of Christ spiritually, we do not mean that his body is held forth to be eaten only in a figurative, symbolical, and allegorical sense."[55] And he complains that

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[53] Ibid., p. 180; cf. p. 179.

[54] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 414. Cf. "To the extent that the flesh of Christ gives life and is heavenly food to feed our souls, to the extent that his blood is spiritual drink and cleansing, to that extent we are not to think that there is anything earthly or elemental in them." John Calvin, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews and the First and Second Epistles of St. Peter [Heb. 9:11], vol. 12 of Calvin's [New Testament] Commentaries, trans. William B. Johnson, eds. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1963), p. 120.

[55] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 445. As far back as the second edition of the Institutes, Calvin had declared (against the view of Karlstadt) that "I am not satisfied with those persons who, recognizing that

> When we say that it is spiritual, they roar out as if by this term we were making it not to be what they commonly call real. . . . [But] I wish to declare to peaceful and moderate men, that according to us the spiritual mode of communication is such that we enjoy Christ in reality."[56]

Westphal and his supporters could not really understand the point that Calvin was trying to make here. For them, as for Luther before, either Christ is substantially present in the supper with his body and blood, or he is absent from the meal. A spiritual communion -- in the sense in which they understood it as a communion in faith only -- means that we do not really receive Christ's body and blood in the sacrament, for it removes the substantial presence of Christ from the Supper. To claim that one nevertheless "really" partakes of Christ (in this spiritual manner) was, in their view, but to play with words.

In the end, the conceptual framework which Calvin and his Lutheran opponents each used to describe the reality of Christ's presence in the sacrament was so different, that they were unable to communicate the true intent of their positions to each other. Language and terminology had become a barrier to understanding. The debate ended with no common means between them for describing the nature of Christ's presence in the eucharistic meal.

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we have some communion with Christ, when they would show what it is, make us partakers of the Spirit only, omitting mention of flesh and blood." Institutes (IV,17.7), LCC 21: 1366-67.

[56] Calvin, "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments (Exposition)," TT 2: 239-40.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE FUNDAMENTAL CONTROVERSY OVER SIGN AND SYMBOL

BASIC CONCERNS OVER A LITERAL OR FIGURATIVE INTERPRETATION OF CHRIST'S WORDS

We recall from the analysis of Luther's teaching given in Chapter Three that for him the matter of greatest importance was that the words, "This is my body / This is my blood," be retained without alteration and interpreted in their simple, literal sense. He vigorously opposed those who regarded the bread and wine of the Supper as merely the "sign" or "symbol" of Christ's body and blood, thus denying the real presence of Christ in the sacrament which, he maintained, is guaranteed by the verb "is." In Calvin's view, to say that the bread "is" Christ's body, as a statement of identity, confuses the two, and leads to the errors of transubstantiation, impanation, and ultimately the adoration of the host, which he finds particularly offensive. Thus, Calvin rejects this simple literalistic understanding of the words of Institution.[1]

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[1] He says, e.g. that "The words cannot be taken in an absolutely literal sense without holding that the bread is converted into the body, so that the visible bread is the invisible body." Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to

Basic to Calvin's teaching is the distinction which he makes between the "sign" and the "thing signified." To him, it is critically important that the proper relationship betwen these two be strictly maintained. As Gerrish notes, Calvin charges that both the Zwinglian and the Roman Catholic teachings misrepresent this relationship. For

> In the Roman theory of transubstantiation the sign is in effect transformed into the thing signified; the substance of the bread becomes the substence of the body. The symbolic relationship is destroyed by a failure to maintain the distinction. In the Zwinglian view, on the other hand, sign and reality are divorced, since the body of Christ is absent from the Supper. This, too, in its own way destroys the symbolic relationship, in which the sign guarantees the presence of what is signified.[2]

According to this criterion, Luther's teaching on the eucharist falls under the same criticism that is aimed at Rome.[3] For although Luther in his early writings on the sacrament had also made a distinction between the "sign" and the "significance" (and it may be, in fact, this early stage of Luther's teaching to which Calvin was exposed in reading Luther's writings, and which he subsequently kept as a permanent feature in this own theology), as Quere

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Westphal," TT 2: 272. Cf. his statement that "As Christ consecrates the bread testifying to us that it is his body we must not imagine there is a change of substance but hold to the alteration in use." Calvin, Commentary on A Harmony of the Gospels, 3: 134.

[2] Gerrish, "Gospel and Eucharist: John Calvin on the Lord's Supper," p. 113; cf. p. 115. See Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.14), LCC 22: 1376; Commentary on I Corinthians [11:24], p. 245-46.

[3] See Gerrish, "Sign and Reality: The Lord's Supper in the Reformed Confessions," p. 122.

points out, Luther altered this explanatory model as a result of his involvement in the eucharistic controversy. Through a detailed analysis, Quere shows how this Augustinian model for describing the sacrament, in which the sign "points to" Christ or to his benefits, was subsequently replaced in Luther's thought by a new understanding in which "the sign is Christ and is identical with his benefits."[4] To Calvin, however, the correct understanding is not that the bread and wine "are" Christ's body and blood, but that they "signify" the reality of Christ's presence which is offered and received in the sacrament.[5]

Unfortunately, hearing that Christ's body and blood is "signified" in the sacrament sounded to Calvin's Lutheran opponents like nothing but a repetition of what they understood Zwingli's argument to be, namely that the bread and wine are mere signs -- which amounts to a denial of the reality of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament. For Luther, the sign was never a "mere" sign which pointed to the thing signified as something "external" to the sacrament. Rather, as Quere's analysis shows, even at the earliest stage of Luther's writings on the eucharist, the sign was said not merely to signify, but to "contain" the promise.[6] Later on, Luther characterized the sacrament as the "vehicle" of the promise, and finally as the "vessel" which contains the

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[4] Quere, "Changes and Constants in Luther's Understanding of the Real Presence," p. 71 (emphasis is mine).

[5] Calvin, Institutes (IV,17,20), p. 1383.

[6] Quere, "Changes and Constants in Luther's Understanding of the Real Presence," pp. 53, 72. Cf. Bornkamm, Luther's World of Thought, pp. 97-98.

gift. In the final stage of his development, Quere claims, Luther virtually equated the sign with the gift, which is Christ.[7] Thus, at all stages in Luther's thought, the existence of the sign and the reality of the gift with which it is identified, were to Luther inseparable.

Calvin takes pains to explain to his critics that these are not "empty signs" or signs which make Christ's presence "fictitious of shadowy."[8] He says,

> . . . although I distinguish between the sign and the thing signified, I do not teach that there is only a bare and shadowy figure, but distinctly declare that the bread is a sure pledge of that communion with the flesh and blood of Christ which it figures, for Christ is neither a painter, nor an actor, nor a kind of Archimedes who presents an empty image to amuse the eye;

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[7] Quere, "Changes and Constants in Luther's Understanding of the Real Presence," pp. 72-74.

[8] There is an indirect reference here to the heresy of Marcion that Christ has only a "shadow" or "phantom" of a body. Luther charged that his opponents, in arguing that the bread is "the sign of the body," denied the presence of Christ's "real, genuine body" in the Supper, leaving only "an empty thing, shadow, or phantom" such as that taught by Marcion. See Luther, "This Is My Body," LW 37: 110-11. Calvin frequently defends his position in his writings of this period, through the use of a variety of phrases, claiming that these are not empty, bare, shadowy, fictitious or illusory figures, symbols or signs of Christ's presence and that Christ's own presence in the Supper is not that of an empty, imaginary, or illusory phantom. See "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments," TT 2: 224, 226, 238, 240, 244; "Second Defense Against Westphal," TT 2: 256, 276, 292; "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 401; "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 268, 282, 288, 290, 295, 298; Institutes (IV,17.10), LCC 21: 1370, (IV,17.21) 1385; "Confession of Faith in Name of the Reformed Churches in France," TT 2: 152, 162. Cf. "Catechism of the Church of Geneva," LCC 22: 137.

> but he truly and in reality performs what by external symbol he promises.[9]

By emphasizing that the reality is preserved under the figure of the elements in the Supper, Calvin hopes to satisfy the objections of his Lutheran opponents who will not tolerate any intimation of a mere "symbolic" presence of Christ in the sacrament. But it must be kept in mind that Zwingli before him had also used realistic language, yet he had done so in a consciously figurative sense,[10] and so the Lutheran party was naturally skeptical of Calvin's stated aim.

THE USE OF SYNECDOCHE AND METONYMY

Luther, during the first round of the eucharistic debate, had vigorously opposed Zwingli and his other antagonists on the use of symbolic language to describe Christ's presence in the Supper. This was not merely a side issue

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[9] Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 268. Cf. ". . . no empty or ineffective sign is set before us. . . . The true eating of the flesh of Christ is not only displayed in sign but demonstrated in real effect." Harmony of the Gospels, 3:135-36. Cf. also Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 307. Cf. "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments (Exposition)," TT 2: 238.

[10] Gerrish, "Sign and Reality: The Lord's Supper in the Reformed Confessions," p. 119. The distinction between Calvin's and Zwingli's use of symbol is described by Gerrish as follows: "For Zwingli, symbolism is what enables him to use realistic language without meaning it realistically. For Calvin, symbolism is what assures him that he receives the body of Christ without believing in a localized presence of the body in the elements. . . . His position is . . . , in effect, the exact opposite of Zwingli's: because the sacrament is a sign, therefore it bestows what it signifies." Ibid., pp.122-23 (emphasis is part of printed text).

of the debate, for as Gerrish notes, Zwingli's fondness for symbolism was an overarching principle to his entire use of sacramental language.[11] Thus, a large part of Luther's debate with Zwingli had focused on the various grammatical rules which should be employed in interpreting the words, "This is my body."[12] Despite many arguments that these words should be interpreted as sign, symbol, figure, etc., in the end Luther rejected all metaphorical interpretations which would do away with the reality of Christ's body and blood in the Supper.[13] The only grammatical term which he was willing to employ in interpreting the words of Institution was that of "synecdoche," whereby the name of one thing which is a part of or has been united with another is used to refer to the other part or to the whole.[14] The advantage of

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[11] Ibid., p. 120.

[12] See Luther, "This Is My Body," LW 37: 30-46; "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 163-206, 252-294.

[13] See Luther, "This Is My Body," LW 37: 38 and passim in the sections listed in the previous footnote. See also Steinmetz, "Scripture and the Lord's Supper in Luther's Theology," p. 256.

[14] Luther explains this principle as follows: Though "bread and body" are by nature diverse things, there is the following rule of grammar: "When two diverse things become one being, grammar embraces the two beings in a single expression, and as it views the union of the two things, it refers to the two in one term." Thus, "by virtue of the sacramental unity it is correct to say, 'This is my body,' designating the bread with the word 'this.' For now it is no longer ordinary bread in the oven, . . . but a bread which has become one sacramental substance, one with the body of Christ." "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 301,303. Cf. Luther, "Against the Heavenly Prophets," LW 40: 198.

this mode of speech, as contrasted to all the others, is stated by Luther (speaking to Oecolampadius) at the Marburg Colloquy. There he says:

> A metaphor abolishes the content altogether: e.g. as when you understand "body" as "figure of a body"; synecdoche does not do this. . . . Your figure of speech does away with the kernel and leaves the shell. Synecdoche is not a comparison; it [says,] "it is there," and it is [actually] there.[15]

Calvin too cites a rule of grammar to be used in interpreting Christ's words in the Supper: the rule of "metonymy" whereby "the sign receives the name of the thing signified."[16] He states his position formally as follows:

> . . . we assume an axiom received by all pious men without controversy, that whenever the sacraments are treated of, it is usual to transfer the name of the thing signified by metonymy to the sign. . . . This mode of speech must be regarded as a general rule.[17]

By use of metonymy, Calvin aims to preserve the reality of Christ's presence in the Supper no less than Luther does by use of synecdoche. Thus, he says:

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[15] "The Marburg Colloquy," LW 38: 30-31 (Hedio's account); Cf. Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 254. Cf. Luther, "The Sacrament -- Against the Fanatics," LW 36: 336 (emphasis is part of the printed text).

[16] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 419. Cf. Institutes (IV,17.21) p. 1385.

[17] Calvin, "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments (Exposition)," TT 2: 243. Cf. "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," TT 2: 318; "Mutual Consent (Heads of Agreement)" (Article 22), TT 2: 219. Cf. also Commentary on A Harmony of the Gospels 3: 134-35; cf. p. 132.

> I admit that the mode of expression is figurative, provided only that the reality of the figure be not taken away; in other words, provided the thing in itself also be present, and the soul receive the communion of the blood not less than the mouth receive the wine.[18]

As Wendel notes in explaining Calvin's use of the principle of metonymy, the signs of the sacrament are thus "not simply symbols that do no more than represent the thing in question. They do not only represent, but they present (exhibit) it, which implies that the thing itself necessarily accompanies the sign."[19] Calvin emphasizes this very point in this arguments with his Lutheran opponents as he tries to make his position clear to them: E.g. "For we say that the reality which the promise contains is there exhibited, and that the effect is annexed to the external symbol."[20] And

> In short, we so harmonize the analogy of the sign and the thing signified, that to the word and visible symbol are annexed not only the fruit or effect of the grace which we receive from

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[18] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 271. Cf. Institutes (IV,17.21) p. 1385. See also Commentary on I Corinthians [I Cor. 11:24], p. 245 and Commentary on the Gospel of John [John 1:31] 1: 34.

[19] Wendel, Calvin, p. 343. Cf. Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.10), p. 1371, (IV,17.32) p. 1404; "Confession of Faith in Name of the Reformed Churches of France," TT 2: 157-58.

[20] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 275. Cf. Commentary on I Corinthians [I Cor. 11:24], p. 245.

> Christ, but also the reality of secret communion with his flesh and blood.[21]

Thus, "the presence of the divine essence is not at all excluded when the name of God is by metonymy applied to the symbol by which God truly represents himself, not figuratively merely, but substantially."[22]

Synecdoche and metonymy are actually very close in function. To use an example of Luther's, when one by synecdoche points to a leather purse and says, "Here is a hundred gulden,"[23] so one likewise by metonymy may understand the coins to be signified when the purse is named without their reality being compromised. Similarly, in the Lord's Supper, when one points to the bread and hears Christ's words, "This is my body," one understands that Christ's true body is there signified and is really presented in the sacrament. Calvin, in fact, appears to regard any difference between the use of these two terms as being insignificant. He says in one instance, "If [the Lutherans] choose to call it synecdoche rather than metonymy, and thus reduce it to a quarrel about a word, we shall leave the grammarians to settle it."[24]

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[21] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 418. Cf. "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments (Exposition)," TT 2: 225; "Confession of Faith in Name of the Reformed Churches of France," TT 2: 157-58.

[22] Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Supper," LCC 22: 269. Cf. Institutes (IV,17.21) p. 1385.

[23] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 302.

[24] Calvin, "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments (Exposition)," TT 2: 243.

But Calvin's approach creates a great deal of difficulty as he re-introduces other terms rejected by the Lutherans (and by Luther himself), claiming that there is no substantial difference between them as well. He says:

> We declare then that in the Supper we eat the same body as was crucified, although the expression refers to the bread by metonymy, so that it may be truly said to be symbolically the real body of Christ, by whose sacrifice we have been reconciled to God. Though there is some diversity in the expressions: the bread is a sign or figure or symbol of the body, and: the bread signifies the body, or is a metaphorical or metonymical or synecdochical expression for it, they perfectly agree in substance. . . .[25]

Certainly neither Luther nor his followers would approve of such a sweeping statement, and this endorsement of the terminology used by the "sacramentarians" merely served to reinforce the opinion of Calvin's opponents that, despite his protests to the contrary and his clever use of wording, Calvin was really of the same opinion as Zwingli and his party.

LUTHER'S PRINCIPLE OF "SACRAMENTAL UNION"

Despite Calvin's failure to notice it, there is actually a subtle but very important difference between the terms synecdoche and metonymy. In using the term synecdoche, Luther proclaims a unity between the two things. Returning to the example given above, Luther argues that there is properly speaking neither money nor a purse as a separate entity any longer, but now a

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[25] Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 270.

new entity: a money-purse. As applied to the Supper, a "sacramental union" is said to exist between Christ's body and the elements of bread and wine so that it becomes "flesh-bread" and "blood-wine" which is set before us.[26]

Luther uses the term "sacramental union" to describe the inseparableness which he sees between Christ's body and the consecrated bread of the Supper. This principle is expressed by Luther in his instructions to Melanchthon who was a participant in church negotiations at Kassel in 1534. There he says,

> Our opinion is that the body is in such a way with or in the bread that it is truly received with the bread. Whatever the bread suffers or does is also true of the body. Thus it is rightly said that it is carried, given, received, eaten. That is the meaning of 'this is my body.'[27]

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[26] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 302-303; cf. p. 317. Note the similarity between these phrases and the terms "spirit-flesh" and "God's flesh" which Luther uses in describing the body of the incarnate Christ. See Luther, "This Is My Body, LW 37: 124. In fact, Luther bases his argument for this "sacramental union" upon the analogy of these two natures in Christ's person. He says, ". . . just as in Christ by virtue of the union of persons God and man are one personal being, so, too, one must say of the sacrament, 'This is my body,' although the word 'this' indicates the bread, for here also a union has taken place out of two distinct substances. . . ." And, "Here, too, out of two kinds of objects a union has taken place, which I shall call a 'sacramental union,' because Christ's body and the bread are given us as a sacrament. This is not a natural or personal union, as is the case with God and Christ . . . but it is also assuredly a sacramental union." Ibid., pp. 299, 300.

[27] Passage trans. by Sasse, This Is My Body, pp. 307-8; cited from Ernst Bizer, Studien zur Geschichte des Abendmahlsstreits im 16. Jahrhundert (Güttersloh: C. Bertlesmann, 1940), pp. 72ff.

Sasse argues that this was a "minimum requirement" which Luther was not willing to yield on in his defense of Christ's presence in the Supper,[28] but one must consider this judgment carefully. The "sacramental union" does not play a main role in Luther's debates with Karlstadt, Zwingli and Oecolampadius. In fact, it is introduced only in the closing section to Part I of what was meant to be the last of his writings on the eucharistic controversy, and even there it appears in the context of an excursus on another subject.[29] It is therefore likely that the distinctive concept of the bread in the Supper ceasing to be natural bread in becoming a "flesh-bread," represents only a temporary phase of Luther's thinking. In the final analysis we must be guided by the fact that while Luther used a variety of expressions and analogies in his arguments for maintaining the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Supper (and this to him was the one undeniable requirement), "he never made the 'how' of the real presence a dogma of the church."[30]

In contrast with Luther's use of synecdoche to express a union between Christ and the elements in the Supper, Calvin employs his principle of metonymy to affirm a distinction between the sign and that which it signifies. He says, "in separating the external symbols from Christ's flesh and blood, we still hold that he truly and in reality performs and fulfills what he figures under the bread and wine, namely that his flesh is meat to us and his

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[28] Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 307.

[29] See Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 294-303.

[30] Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 308; cf. pp. 163-64.

blood is drink."[31] And "although they are signs distinct from the things signified, they are neither disjoined nor separated from them; [but] they are given to ratify and confirm what God has promised by his word."[32] Here we find a significant underlying distinction between the understandings of Luther and Calvin on the real presence. As Wendel says,

> The whole conflict upon this point can be shortly summed up thus: Union between the Christ and the eucharistic elements meant, according to the Lutherans, that there was a real contact between the body and the blood on the one hand, and the bread and the wine on the other: according to Calvin, it meant only that the believer received the body of Christ when he consumed the consecrated bread. Westphal and the Lutherans therefore maintained that there was a direct relation between the Christ and the elements; Calvin, on the contrary, put the Christ and the elements separately into direct contact with the believer.[33]

CONCERNS OVER A LOCAL PRESENCE

To better illustrate the relationship of Christ's body and blood to the elements of the Supper in this sacramental union, Luther had said that Christ's body is to be understood as being "in" the bread, "under" the bread, and "with" the bread of the Supper.[34] But to Calvin, these terms signify a

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[31] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 401.

[32] Calvin, "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments," TT 2: 224.

[33] Wendel, Calvin, p. 344.

[34] The full phrase, "in, with, and under," does not originate with Luther. See Walther Köhler, Zwingli und Luther, ihr Streit über das Abendmahl nach seinen politischen und religiösen Beziehungen, 2 vols. (Quellen

localizing of Christ's presence in the bread and wine. So sensitive is he to any concept which would reintroduce the teaching of a localized presence of Christ in the Supper, that he mischaracterizes the Lutheran argument. For example, he charges that Heshus "admits none but a local presence" since he "places the body of Christ wherever the bread is."[35] This misinterpretation of the Lutheran teaching is especially evident when, for example, in writing against Westphal, he charges that the Lutherans "allow themselves to say that the body of Christ is contained by the bread as wine by a goblet."[36] And in the final edition of the Institutes he uses a variety of expressions to criticize

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und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte, vols. 6-7), (Leipzig: Verein für Reformationsgeschichte, Vermittlungsverlag von M. Heinsius Nachfolger, 1924-53; reprint ed., New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1971), 1: 236. In debate with Zwingli and Oecolampadius, Luther does use the terms "in" ("This Is My Body," LW 35: 65, 112; "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 230, 309) and "under" ("This Is My Body," LW 37: 109, 111; "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 258), and even combines their use ("Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 165-66). The term "with" was favored by Melanchthon and is used occasionally by Luther with the other terms ("Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 306). See Quere, "Changes and Constants in Luther's Understanding of the Real Presence," p. 75. The customary phrase, "in, with, and under," was received into formal use in the Lutheran Churches with the adoption of the "Formula of Concord," where it is specifically cited. See "Formula of Concord," (Article 7), trans. Arthur C. Peipkorn, Book of Concord, pp. 575, 576. See also Tappert, "Christology and the Lord's Supper in the Perspective of History," p. 62.

[35] Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 279.

[36] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 268.

his opponents, saying that they teach that Christ's body is "enclosed" under the bread, is "attached" to it, is placed "in" the bread and hidden "under" it, that it descends "into" the bread, and that it is "fastened" to it.[37] He concludes:

> . . . it is clear enough that they insist on the local presence of Christ. Why so? Because they cannot bear to conceive any other partaking of flesh and blood except that which consists in either local conjunction and contact or some gross form of enclosing.[38]

But Calvin was quite wrong in this conclusion. While Luther's concept of sacramental union does affirm a "conjunction and contact" between Christ's body and the physical elements of the Supper, Luther himself had expressly denied that this is to be understood as a local presence or an enclosing.[39] Perhaps it was confusing for Luther to use the terms "in," "with" and "under" -- which are prepositions of place -- to describe a reality which is manifested illocally. When, for example, Luther says that "faith understands that in these matters 'in' is equivalent to 'above,' 'beyond,'

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[37] See Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.16) p. 1379, (IV,17.19) p. 1381, (IV,17.29) p. 1398, (IV,17.30) p. 1401, (IV,17.31) p. 1403.

[38] Ibid. (IV,17.16) p. 1379.

[39] ". . . Christ's body is not present locally . . . in the sacrament, but definitively. That is, he is certainly there, not like straw in a sack, but yet bodily and truly there. . . ." Luther, "Brief Confession Concerning the Holy Sacrament" (1544), trans. Martin E. Lehmann, LW 38 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971): 301; cf. p. 292. Cf. "This Is My Body," LW 37: 65; "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 230.

'beneath,' 'through and through,' and 'everywhere,' "[40] one senses that he is caught by the limitations of his own language and the inadequacy of these prepositions to describe that which is illocal. Their use certainly misled Calvin into misjudging Luther's position. But as used by Luther himself, all such prepositional phrases are only meant to serve as illustrative aids in helping us to comprehend the supernatural manner of Christ's real presence in the Supper, without becoming prescriptive in defining that mode of presence, or adding any other meaning to the words of Institution than that which is conveyed in their simple, literal sense. Luther explains:

> While the fathers and we occasionally say, 'Christ's body is in the bread,' we do so quite simply because by our faith we wish to confess that Christ's body is present. Otherwise we may well allow it to be said that it is in the bread, it is the bread, it is where the bread is, or whatever you wish. Over words we do not wish to argue, just so the meaning is retained that it is not mere bread that we eat in Christ's Supper, but the body of Christ.[41]

CALVIN'S DEFENSE OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

Calvin finds it interesting that the Lutherans, who are so insistent on maintaining the simple and literal meaning of Christ's words, and who are so loath to accept any figurative interpretation of these words, quite willingly adopt these supplementary prepositions in explaining the meaning of Christ's presence in the Supper. In defense of his own use of figurative language,

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[40] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 230.

[41] Luther, "This Is My Body," LW 37: 65. Cf. "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 165-66.

Calvin argues that the Lutherans, in using these added terms, also adopt (without admitting it) a figurative interpretation of Christ's words. He charges:

> They urge the literal sense, that the bread is truly and naturally the body of Christ. But when they in turn are urged to say whether the body is properly bread, they temper their previous inflexible rigidity, and say that the body is given under the bread or with the bread.[42]

Thus,

> If the body of Christ is given in the bread, and through the bread, and is received with the bread, it is clear that the bread is figuratively called the body, as containing the body in it, but is not naturally and properly that which it is said to be.[43]

Calvin even coaxes the Lutherans to admit their figurative use of language, and offers to affirm along with them that Christ's body is received "under" the bread, if this is understood in a figurative sense. He says:

> Should anyone say that the body of Christ is offered to us under the bread, as an earnest [note Calvin's qualification], we

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[42] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 268 (emphasis is mine). Cf. "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments (Exposition)," TT 2: 242, 243; Commentary on A Harmony of the Gospels, 3: 135. Sasse notes that Zwingli had also charged that Luther interpreted the sacramental words figuratively through his use of synecdoche. But, he says, Luther dismissed this objection as "not being to the point, because the reality of the body was not denied." Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 163. Thus we must realize that Luther does not object to figurative language per se in describing Christ's presence in the sacrament, but only as it may be used to reject the "real presence" which he understands to be there.

[43] Calvin, "Second Defense Against Westphal," TT 2: 272; cf. "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments (Exposition)," TT 2: 242, 243.

> will not quarrel with him on that account. . . . Let believers then receive the body of Christ under the symbol of bread; for he is true who speaks, and it is not his character to deceive us by holding forth an empty badge; only let there be no local enclosing or carnal infusing.[44]

Calvin is convinced that his own use of metonymy is preferable both to the symbolic language which the Lutherans are so opposed to, and the alternative substantialist claims which the Lutherans make. Metonymy, he claims, has the advantage of both preserving the reality of Christ's presence in the Supper while avoiding the error of localizing that presence. He says,

> When [Heshus] compares the two sentences: the bread is the sign of the absent body, and the body is truly and substantially present and is given under the bread, it is easy to answer that there is a medium between these two extremes: the body is indeed given by the external symbol, but has no local position.[45]

And elsewhere he directly criticises the Lutheran concept of a sacramental union of Christ with the elements of the Supper as being unnecessary to the purpose of the sacrament when he states:

> It is amazing that those men should always be saying that Christ spoke in respect of a sacramental union and pay not attention to what they are saying. What is the sacramental

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[44] Calvin, "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments (Exposition)," TT 2: 241-42. Note the subtle difference however between the Lutherans' claim and that of Calvin. They claim that Christ's body is received under the bread itself (through a sacramental union with the bread), while Cavin maintains that Christ's body is received under the symbol of bread (as the visible guarantee on the divine promise).

[45] Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 309.

> union of object and sign? Is it not that God fulfils, with the hidden power of his Spirit, the action he promises?[46]

But, he argues, this very thing is accomplished in the use of metonymy: "For what is the effect of the metonymy on which we insist, but just to make the bread be in a sacramental manner the true body of Christ that was sacrificed for us, and thus be truly communicated to us?[47]

Despite Calvin's attempt to provide a "middle ground" between the Zwinglian argument for a "symbolic" understanding of Christ's presence in the Supper, and the Roman Catholic teaching which was characterized as affirming a "localized" presence, his proposed solution was unacceptable to the Lutherans. He failed to understand the importance which the concept of a sacramental union had for them in guaranteeing that the body and blood of Christ <u>are</u> present with the bread and wine in the Holy Supper. They were as unwilling to abandon their concept of a sacramental union as Calvin was to give up his own understanding of the use of metonymy. As at the beginning of the eucharistic debate between Luther and his opponents, so now in this later debate between Calvin and his opponents, there was no agreement to be found on the meaning of the word "is" in Christ's statement, "This is my body." In the end, Calvin's attempt to provide a common rule for interpretation which could be agreed to by all within the evangelical movement, met with failure.

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[46] Calvin, <u>Commentary on A Harmony of the Gospels</u> 3: 135.

[47] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," <u>TT</u> 2: 479.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE FUNDAMENTAL CONTROVERSY OVER THE MANNER OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE

THE BASIC ORIENTATION OF LUTHER'S AND CALVIN'S ARGUMENTS

In the present section we shall discuss the differences between Luther and Calvin in their explanations of the manner of Christ's presence in the Eucharist. As we saw in the previous section, Luther's understanding of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper involves a manifestation of his body with the elements of the Supper in a kind of "sacramental union," so that Christ's body and blood become intimately linked with the bread and wine. Since, in his understanding, Christ is bodily present wherever the consecrated eucharistic elements are, by virtue of Christ's own declaration ("This is my body"), Luther defends the assertion that Christ's body shares the qualities of the divine nature, and can be everywhere present at once, just at the divinity can. This assertion, that the flesh of Christ has the same omnipresent characteristics as the divinity, is called "bodily ubiquity." Calvin, however, denies the Lutheran teaching of ubiquity. For him, no such bodily manifestation of Christ is required in the Supper. As he sees it, Christ is truly made present for the believer in the act of receiving the bread and wine without his

body being conjoined to the elements themselves. This means that Christ is able to communicate himself to the recipients in the Supper without his body undergoing any "change of place."

Fundamental to Calvin's explanation of the manner of Christ's presence in the Supper, is his assertion that the flesh of the resurrected, ascended, and glorified Christ still retains the characteristics of a true natural body.[1] For, as Calvin explains, though in Christ's resurrection and ascension, God "gave immortality to his flesh, he did not take away its nature."[2] Building upon Augustine's principle that "the nature of a true body requires that it occupy some locality,"[3] Calvin claims that Christ's body is thus locally "contained" in heaven,[4] and is to be sought nowhere else than in heaven.[5] He adds

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[1] E.g. Calvin says, ". . . the human body is definite and cannot be everywhere: Christ truly assumed a human body, and still retains it: Therefore, he cannot, in respect of his human nature, be everywhere." Ibid., p. 450; cf. p. 444. Cf. "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 290.

[2] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 382; cf. p. 489. Cf. Institutes (IV,17.28), LCC 21: 1397.

[3] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 386; cf. pp. 383, 445-46, 455. Cf. Institutes (IV,17.28), LCC 21: 1396.

[4] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 285; "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 382, 383, 454, 473; "Clear Explanation Concerening the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 312, 314.; Institutes (IV,17.26), LCC 21: 1393

[5] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 383; cf. pp. 382, 389, 401, 473, 489. Calvin takes many of these points directly from Augustine's writings. See the list given by McNeill in Calvin, Institutes, p. 1396, (n. #96).

that having been "received into heavenly glory, Christ's body "is separated from us in respect of his flesh by an interval of space,"[6] and is "far removed from us."[7]

In this respect Calvin's view is very close to Zwingli's position that the body of Christ is confined to the right hand of God in heaven. Steinmetz briefly summarizes Zwingli's view in these words:

> Zwingli takes as his starting-point the confession that Christ has assumed finite human nature. . . . [And for him] there is a soteriological necessity that Christ assumed, bore, and continues to bear finite human nature. . . . If the humanity of Christ continues to be finite, even after the resurrection, then the "right hand of God" must be a place where this finite humanity can be found. . . . Zwingli has no idea where the "right hand of God" is located and does not speculate about it. It is sufficient for him that the finite humanity of Christ is not found in the space and time which we inhabit. However, [he concludes,] if the finite humanity of Christ is at the right hand of God, then it cannot be in the eucharistic elements.[8]

In contrast to this, Luther's position, as Steinmetz explains it, is that

> Since the right hand of God is found everywhere and since the body of Christ is at the right hand of God. . . , then the body of Christ is ubiquitous. It is not limited by space and time but is present wherever God rules. . . . [Thus] Once having come to

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[6] Calvin, "The Best Method of Obtaining Concord," tran. J. K. S. Reid, LCC 22: 327.

[7] Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 312.

[8] Steinmetz, "Scripture and the Lord's Supper in Luther's Theology," pp. 259-60 (emphasis is mine). Cf. Bornkamm, Luther's World of Thought, p. 113.

> us in the incarnation, Christ does not go away. He remains in our space and time.[9]

Steinmetz continues, saying that for Luther

> The ascension does not point to the absence of the humanity of Christ at the right hand of God. Rather it celebrates the ubiquitous presence of the God-man, Jesus Christ, and the universal accessibility of that saving presence through . . . the sacraments.[10]

Whereas for Zwingli, Christ's flesh cannot be present in the Supper because of the spatial limitations of a finite body, Luther affirms that

> . . . what changes in the ascension is not the fact of Christ's presence but solely the mode of that presence. Prior to the ascension he was accessible in a circumscriptive way to sight; after the ascension he is invisibly accessible to us in the means of grace.[11]

But Calvin does not share Luther's view that Christ's body remains in the world after his ascension through a different "mode" of presence than before. The ascension means for Calvin not only that Christ's body in now contained in heaven according to a spatial limitation of the body, but that it must remain in heaven out of eschatological necessity. It is from heaven that Christ will come again at the end of the age, and to include Christ's body under the elements of the Supper, as the Lutherans would have it, would be to

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[9] Steinmetz, "Scripture and the Lord's Supper in Luther's Theology," pp. 261-62 (emphasis is mine). Cf. Martin J. Heinecken, "Christology, the Lord's Supper and its Observance in the Church," Marburg Revisited, p. 90.

[10] Ibid., p. 262.

[11] Ibid.

bring back the body of Christ to earth before the time of his appointed return.[12] Thus Calvin's explanation of the manifestation of Christ's body in the sacrament, from its dwelling place in heaven, is different from that of Luther. Though the body of Christ is "absent from the earth,"[13] he says, Christ is not prevented by distance of space from communicating himself to us.[14] For, "how remote soever he may be from us, he infuses life, from the substance of his flesh and blood into our souls, so that no distance of place can impede the union of the head and members."[15] This is possible because,

> . . . though by Christ's ascension into heaven the presence of his flesh has been taken from us, still he fills all things by his virtue and grace, and extends the vigour of his empire over the whole globe.[16]

Calvin thus claims that Christ becomes present in the sacrament, not through any omnipresent ability being bestowed upon his body, but because

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[12] See McDonnell, Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist, pp. 290-91.

[13] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 327. Cf. "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 389; "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 270.

[14] Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 274, 314; "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 384, 471, 489.

[15] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 416.

[16] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 421; cf. p. 457. Cf. "The Best Method of Obtaining Concord," LCC 22: 327. Cf. also Calvin's Commentaries: Commentary on the First Book of Moses called Genesis [Gen. 28:12], trans. John King (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1844), 2: 113.

in his divine person he is omnipresent "by his virtue and grace." We will explore this explanation later in greater detail. But first we should note a few things about the orientation of Calvin's arguments.

In a very fundamental sense, Calvin feels that it is unfitting and debasing for Christ's ascended and glorified body to be connected with the earthly elements of the bread and wine. In the Institutes he says, for example,

> . . . we must establish such a presence of Christ in the Supper as may neither fasten him to the elements of bread, nor enclose him in bread, nor circumscribe him in any way (all of which things, it is clear, detract from his heavenly glory). . . .[17]

And he continues, stating:

> Let nothing be withdrawn from Christ's heavenly glory -- as happens when he is brought under the corruptible elements of this world, or bound to any earthly creatures.[18]

While these statements most directly focus on the Roman Catholic teaching of transubstantiation, they are also a judgment against the Lutheran concept of a "sacramental union" between Christ's body and the bread and wine. Calvin is thus anxious to protect Christ's divine glory from any debasement by being joined with earthly things.

Luther, however, finds profound meaning in Christ's manifesting himself through such lowly means. He rejoins:

> But the glory of God is precisely that for our sakes he comes down to the very depths, into human flesh, into the bread, into our mouth, our heart, our bosom; moreover, for our sakes, he

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[17] Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.19) LCC 22: 1381.

[18] Ibid., pp. 1381-82.

> allows himself to be treated ingloriously both on the cross and on the altar.[19]

As Rogness has stated, "The heart of Luther's christology was the overwhelming truth of the incarnation: in Jesus Christ God has become man."[20] Luther stresses that God has chosen to reveal himself through the man Jesus. In the incarnation God totally identified himself with the human, and his divine nature did not stay remote from or shun our mortal nature. Luther, consequently, sees the mystery of Christ's presence in the Eucharist in incarnational terms.[21] Nagel observes that

> As Luther glories in the lowliness of the baby in the stable, so he glories in the lowly bread and wine, for these show Christ come all the way to us and mercifully dealing with us on our earthly level through earthly things.[22]

Basic to Calvin's christology, on the other hand, is the affirmation that in Christ the almighty and sovereign God is revealed. He says, for example, "we should so believe in Christ that our faith does not stop at the sight of his flesh but grasps his divine power."[23] Calvin stresses that we must

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[19] Luther, "This Is My Body," LW 37: 72.

[20] Michael Rogness, Philip Melanchthon, Reformer Without Honor (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1969), p. 66; cf. p. 67.

[21] See Steinmetz, "Scripture and the Lord's Supper in Luther's Theology," p. 256.

[22] Nagel, "Luther on the Lord's Supper," p. 44.

[23] Calvin, Commentary on the Gospel of John [John 17:7], 2: 139. Cf. his statement that "faith should look directly at Christ, yet so as to know nothing earthly or contemptible about him, but to be carried up to his divine

not confuse the majesty of the divine nature with the lowliness of Christ's human nature, nor let the humanity in any way diminish his divine glory.[24]

Calvin's approach on this matter may be viewed as being similar to Zwingli's earlier position. Nagel notes that

> Zwingli held that it was not fitting for the almighty majesty of God to lower himself to bread and wine and there suffer himself to be mishandled and abused. [Rather,] man's soul must rise to the higher, more spiritual level if he is to have communion with God.[25]

And Calvin's solution to the dilemma of how Christ can be truly present in the sacrament if he is bodily confined to heaven is in part worked out along the lines that Zwingli suggests, namely that Christ does not come down to us, but that our souls rise to commune with him in heaven. He says, for example, "Christ, regarded as man, must be sought nowhere else than in heaven, and not otherwise than with the mind and eye of faith."[26] He advises that we

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power. . . ." Ibid., [John 17:8] 2: 140. The contrast with Luther's orientation could hardly be stronger. When, e.g. Oecolampadius at the Marburg Colloquy admonished Luther "not to cling to the humanity and flesh of Christ but to lift up his mind to [Christ's] divinity," he was harshly rebuffed by Luther who said he did not "know or worship any God except him who was made man," and therefore, "we cannot suffer his humanity to be thus curtailed and minimized." "The Marburg Colloquy (Anonymous' account)," LW 38: 46; cf. p. 82 and Sasse, This Is My Body, pp. 252-53.

[24] See Calvin, Institutes (II,17.7) LCC 20: 491. Cf. Wendel, Calvin, p. 219.

[25] Nagel, "Luther on the Lord's Supper," p. 46.

[26] Calvin, "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments (Heads of Agreement) [Article 21]," TT 2: 219; cf. p. 229. Cf. "Last Admonition to

ought not to "stop at the elements themselves, or remain fixed [on them], as if Christ were to be sought on earth,"[27] for "none duly enjoy Christ but those who seek him above."[28]

Against the Lutheran claim that Christ comes to us by becoming present with the bread and wine, Calvin counters that "nothing could be more absurd than to draw Christ down to earth when he rather is calling us up to himself."[29] He explains, "It is not necessary for him to move his body from its place in order to infuse his vivifying virtue into us,"[30] and we do not "drag" his body down from heaven as it were.[31] "The thing necessary," he

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Westphal." TT 2: 443; Institutes (IV,17.18) LCC 21: 1381; Calvin, The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews and the First and Second Epistle of St. Peter [I Peter 3:22]," vol. 12 of Calvin's [New Testament] Commentaries, trans. William B. Johnston, eds. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1963), p. 297; A Harmony of the Gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke, 3: 136.

[27] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 443; cf. p. 422.

[28] Ibid., p. 444; cf. pp. 421, 464, 473.

[29] Calvin, A Harmony of the Gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke," 2: 136. Cf. Institutes (IV,17.31) LCC 21: 1403.

[30] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 281; cf. p. 280.

[31] Ibid., p. 288; cf. p. 278; Institutes (IV,17.31) LCC 21: 1403; "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 450. To be fair to the Lutheran representation, we should note that in a letter to the Swiss, dated December 13, 1537, Luther expressly denies that Christ either descends from heaven or ascends to heaven in manifesting himself in the eucharist. Cited in Barclay, The Protestant Doctrine of the Lord's Supper, p. 252.

says, " is not that he come down to earth, but that we rise up to heaven."[32] The sacraments, he claims, act as physical aids to increase our faith, and serve as a kind of ladder "by which believers climb upward to heaven."[33] Thus, "we rise by faith above the world"[34] (or alternately, Christ "raises us to himself"[35]), and we commune with Christ in heaven.

THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN CALVIN'S EXPLANATION

But Calvin's explanation differs from Zwingli's view, in that rather than emphasizing the role which the believer plays in the soul's "rising upward" to heaven through an act of faith, he places the main activity with Christ, who through his own initiative is said to draw us upward to himself.[36] The means by which Christ accomplishes this is explained by Calvin through his own distinctive approach in claiming that "the Holy Spirit is the bond of

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[32] Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 287. Cf. "The Best Method of Obtaining Concord," LCC 22: 328.

[33] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 443; "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 250, 296; "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments (Exposition)," TT 2: 229, 232.

[34] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 373; cf. pp. 410, 422, 473.

[35] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal, TT 2: 286; cf. p. 296. Cf. "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 443, 444.

[36] See Gerrish, "Sign and Reality: The Lord's Supper in the Reformed Confessions," p. 129. Cf. McDonnell, Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist, pp. 228-29.

our participation" with Christ in the Supper. As Gerrish notes, "by assigning the presence of the body and blood to the work of the Spirit, [Calvin] believed he could avoid any suggestion that Christ, if present, must be enclosed in the elements of bread and wine."[37]

This assertion that Christ's body is absent from the Supper and is confined to heaven, along with the claim that our communion with Christ is through the Holy Spirit, was particularly problematic for the Lutherans. So much of Luther's position had been defined in opposition to the argument by Zwingli and others that Christ is only spiritually present in the Supper, that any mention by Calvin that Christ is made present "through the Holy Spirit," merely confirmed for the Lutherans that he was arguing for the same thing. Yet as Calvin describes the role played by the Holy Spirit, it becomes clear that he is speaking of much more than a mere spiritual presence of Christ in the Supper and a spiritual communion with him there. As McDonnell observes, in Calvin's usage of the term, "the presence of Christ in the Eucharist is called spiritual because the presence is effected by the Holy Spirit."[38] While the Spirit is the agent in communicating Christ to us in the sacrament, it is Christ's own flesh and blood which we receive, however. This is clearly seen, for example, when he says, "by the secret virtue of the Holy Spirit, life

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[37] Gerrish, "Gospel and Eucharist: John Calvin on the Lord's Supper," p. 113; cf. p. 116. Cf. Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.33), LCC 22: 1405. For an extended discussion on how the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Reformed theology became the counterpart of the doctrine of ubiquity in Lutheran theology, see Pelikan, The Christian Tradition, 4: 202-203.

[38] McDonnell, Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist, pp. 261-62; cf. p. 239.

is infused into us from the substance of his flesh,"[39] and "Christ, by the incomprehensible agency of his Spirit, perfectly unites things disjoined by space, and thus feeds our souls with his flesh, though his flesh does not leave heaven. . . .[40]

Calvin frequently describes our reception of Christ as being by the "virtue," "power," and "energy" of the Spirit. For example, he says: "though [Christ] is in heaven, he can, not withstanding, by the wondrous virtue of his Spirit, give us his flesh and blood for spiritual nourishment;"[41] "having been received into heavenly glory, the body breathes life upon us by the secret power of the Spirit;"[42] and "the obstacle arising from distance of space is surmounted by the boundless energy of the Spirit."[43] On other occasions,

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[39] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 277.

[40] Ibid., p. 299. Calvin also states that Heshus is wrong when he charges "that the flesh is excluded from the Supper and from all divine acts when we teach that it is contained in heaven. . . ," and he explains his own position, saying that ". . . local absence does not exclude the mystical and incomprehensible operation of the flesh." "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 314.

[41] "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 416; cf. pp. 375, 387; "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 267, 276, 278, 309, 312; "The Best Method of Obtaining Concord," LCC 22: 328; "Confession of Faith in Name of the Reformed Churches in France" (Articles 36 and 38), TT 2: 160, 161.

[42] Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.34), LCC 21: 1410; cf. (IV,17.10) p. 1370, (IV,17.26) p. 1394, (IV,17.28) p. 1398. Cf. Commentary on I Corinthians [I Cor. 11:24], p. 247.

[43] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 291. Cf. "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 289.

Calvin speaks of the presence of Christ as being directly manifested by his own divine and vivifying "virtue," "energy," and "vigour," often without any reference to the activity of the Holy Spirit.[44] Thus, in a different set of references paralleling those just cited, he says, "Christ, without changing place, descends to us by his virtue,"[45] and "I teach that Christ, though absent in body, is nevertheless . . . present with us by his divine energy, which is everywhere diffused."[46]

Calvin therefore presents us with two images: in some passages Christ is seen as the one who personally acts to communicate himself to us in the Supper, while in numerous other passages it is the Spirit which is seen as the primary agent by which we are united with Christ, and through whom we are brought in touch with Christ's efficacious and vivifying power.[47] Other terms which Calvin uses to describe the activity of the Holy Spirit in communicating Christ to us in the Supper are the "secret operation," "work," and

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[44] See eg. Calvin, "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments (Exposition)," TT 2: 230, 240; "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 278, 281, 286; "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 375, 384; "Clear Explanation Concerning the Supper," LCC 22: 270.

[45] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 280.

[46] Ibid., p. 285.

[47] Ibid., p. 299. Cf. "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments (Heads of Agreement)" (Article 23), TT 2: 219. [Note: this Article was added to the "Consensus Tigurinus" by Calvin when it was published with the "Exposition" in 1551; cf. Articles 3 and 4 of the original "Consensus," p. 213]; "Mutual Consent (Exposition)," p. 238; "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 408, 489; "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 264.

"medium" of the Spirit.[48] It is not entirely clear as Calvin uses these terms, whether Christ is to be seen as the main actor in this communication, with the Holy Spirit being the secondary agent which Christ uses to manifest himself in the Supper, or whether the Spirit itself is to be regarded as the prime actor. One can thus justifiably question on the basis of these statements whether in Calvin's understanding it is Christ himself, by his own divine virtue, who communicates himself to us through the agency of the Spirit, or whether it is the Holy Spirit who communicates these benefits on behalf of Christ. One must admit that Calvin's language seems to slip freely back and forth between these two ideas.

This situation is complicated by the fact, as has been previously pointed out, that Calvin also makes no real distinction between the Holy Spirit and the Spirit of Christ, so that in the above references Calvin uses the terms "agency," "virtue," and "energy" of "his Spirit" and "the (Holy) Spirit" interchangeably. One should not suppose that Calvin means to divide this activity between two different Persons of the Holy Trinity; rather, he seems to be describing the activity of Christ in his "divine essence" in two different ways. Certainly there is in Calvin's usage never a suggestion of a separation between Christ's operation and the Spirit's activity, as if the one were operating in the absence of the other. Rather, the activity of the two is so cojoined as to be described interchangeably.

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[48] See Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 384; Commentary on I Corinthians [I Cor. 11:24], pp. 246, 247; Institutes (IV,17.31), LCC 21: 1403.

In the end, what it seems Calvin is attempting to describe is the activity of a single "divine essence," which in some instances is identified with Christ himself, and in other instances is seen to act on behalf of Christ through the agency of the Holy Spirit. Thus, Willis is quite correct in speaking of both the activity of Christ in his divine essence and the activity of the Spirit in setting forth his summary of Calvin's position when he states:

> . . . for Calvin the manhood of Christ, insofar as the flesh is its obvious feature, remains in heaven after the ascension, and until his return in judgment; but . . . the One Person . . . is present with us by his divine essence and by virtue of his Spirit. Though Christ remains bodily absent from us, yet we are properly said to be given life by his flesh because he is present with us through his divine energy which is everywhere diffused.[49]

THE ROLE OF THE WORD IN LUTHER'S APPROACH

How does Calvin's concept of the role which the Holy Spirit (or Christ's Spirit) plays in manifesting Christ's presence in the Supper compare with Luther's explanation of the mode of Christ's presence? When Luther speaks of the presence of Christ being manifested in the Supper, he does not attribute it to the agency of Christ's divine essence or to his Spirit. In fact, it

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49 Willis, Calvin's Catholic Christology, p. 97, (n. #2) (Emphasis is mine). Calvin also couples these terms together in his own writings saying, "I acknowledge, however, that by the virtue of his Spirit and his own divine essence, he not only fills heaven and earth, but also miraculously unites us with himself in one body, so that flesh, though it remain in heaven, is our food." Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 285.

would be quite uncharacteristic of Luther to focus on the operation of Christ's divinity or of his Spirit in this regard, since it was of such importance for him to emphasize the presence of Christ's body in the sacrament. Yet, in a way, his writings do contain a parallel to Calvin's formulation, in that he attributes the actualization of Christ's presence in the Supper to the divine and efficacious activity of the Word.

In Luther's terminology, "the Word" refers to both the Word of God proclaimed (which exists in scripture, preaching, creed and sacrament), and the Eternal Word which is one with God in substance.[50] The proclaimed word is efficacious because it is the Word of God and it is God himself who speaks it. As Nagel observes in discussing the Lord's Supper,

> For Luther the Words of Institution were the very words of Christ which speak true and have in them his creative power that effects what they say. The same God who said "Let there be light: and there was light" says of the bread in each Holy Communion, "This is my body" and of the wine "This is my blood," and it is so.[51]

It is in this sense that Luther says to Zwingli at the Marburg colloquy, ". . . when the words [of Institution] are spoken at the command and in the name of God, then they not only signify but also at the same time effect and offer that which they signify."[52]

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50 See Siggins, Martin Luther's Doctrine of Christ, pp. 13, 71.

51 Nagel, "Luther on the Lord's Supper," p. 44.

52 "The Marburg Colloquy (Anonymous's account)," LW 38: 41; cf. pp. 22, 27. Cf. "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 184.

In examining Luther's two-fold use of "the Word," we should note, even if only in passing, those instances in Luther's writings where the Word is identified with Christ himself. Although, as Siggins points out, Luther deliberately does not develop a "Logos" christology, and therefore does not broadly use "the Word" as a christological title, he does, of course, affirm that Christ is the Incarnate Word where the biblical texts so indicate,[53] and attributes the functions of Christ's divine nature to this Eternal Word.[54]

Next, we examine in more detail those occasions where Luther speaks of the proclaimed Word, particularly in the context of his writings on the Eucharist. Luther claims that there are two things in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper: the word, and the bread and wine.[55] He (like Calvin) makes use of Augustine's formulation that "when the word is joined to the external element, it becomes a sacrament."[56] There is further agreement between them that, as Tappert states it, "the gift of the sacrament is the same as that of the word: redemption, eternal life, and Christ himself as the giver of these."[57] For both Luther and Calvin, the sacrament confers nothing

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53 Siggins, Luther's Doctrine of Christ, pp. 13, 205, 225.

54 Ibid., pp. 165, 166, 225.

55 Luther, "The Adoration of the Sacrament," LW 36: 295.

56 Luther, "The Large Catechism," trans. Robert H. Fischer, Book of Concord, p. 448; cf. p. 438. Cf. Calvin, Institutes (IV,14.4), LCC 21: 1279. See Augustine, "Homilies on the Gospel of John" [Tractate 80.3], NPNF 7: 344.

57 Theodore G. Tappert, "Christology and the Lord's Supper in the Perspective of History," Marburg Revisited, p. 60. Cf. Martin J. Heinecken,

different than that which the proclaimed word does. They have the same function -- the sacrament is only another form of the Word of God, a distinct type of the Word which is joined to a specific physical sign.[58]

But the role of the Word for Luther extends far beyond merely "containing" the divine gift offered in the sacrament. And here we begin to see how the function of the Word in Luther's theology parallels the function of the "divine essence" in Calvin's formulation. As Quere notes, in Luther's thought the Word is "the dynamic power" that not only "constitutes the sacrament," but also "mediates Christ's presence and gives his benefits."[59] Thus, in Luther's usage, the Word becomes the means of presenting Christ to us in the sacrament, as when he says,

> . . . you should hold it to be a living, eternal, all-powerful Word that can make you alive, free from sin and death, and keep you eternally; that brings with it everything of which it

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"Christology, the Lord's Supper and its Observance in the Church," Marburg Revisited, pp. 82, 92, 97. See Luther, "The Small Catechism," trans. Theodore G. Tappert, Book of Concord, p. 352; Calvin, "Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper," TT 2: 166.

58 See Heinrich Bornkamm's extensive argument of these points in Luther's World of Thought, pp. 95, 100, 102, 106. Cf. Tappert, "Meaning and Practice in the Reformation," p. 94; Heinecken, "Christology, the Lord's Supper and its Observance in the Church," pp. 82, 97; Gerrish, "Gospel and Eucharist: John Calvin on the Lord's Supper," pp. 110-111.

59 Quere, "Changes and Constants in Luther's Understanding of the Real Presence," p. 64.

> speaks, namely, Christ with his flesh and blood and everything that he is and has.[60]

On other occasions in Luther's writings the Word is seen as the means for mediating the divine gift contained in the sacrament, as when Luther says,

> . . . we say there is forgiveness of sins in the Supper, not on account of the eating, nor because Christ merits or achieves forgiveness of sins there, but on account of the word through which he distributes among us this aquired forgiveness, saying 'This is my body which is given for you.'[61]

Quere summarizes Luther's position stating: "the power to effect what is signified and bestow the divine gift resides in and comes from the Word."[62]

Luther even speaks of the Word as that which presents the Holy Spirit, as when, for example in opposing the enthusiasts, he says, "we must hold firmly to the conviction that God gives no one his Spirit or grace except through or with the external Word which comes before."[63]

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[60] Luther, "The Adoration of the Sacrament," LW 36: 278. Cf. Quere, "Changes and Constants in Luther's Understanding of the Real Presence," pp. 65, 73.

[61] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 192.

[62] Quere, "Changes and Constants in Luther's Understanding of the Real Presence," p. 72; cf. pp. 62, 65, 68.

[63] Luther, "The Smalcald Articles," (III.8) , trans. Theodore G. Tappert, The Book of Concord, p. 312. Cf. the criticism of Zwingli's position made on these same grounds at the Marburg Colloquy, Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 224. The principle that "the Spirit is bound to the Word" is well established in Luther's theology. See Althaus, The Theology of Martin Luther, pp. 35-42; Siggins, Luther's Doctrine of Christ, pp. 70, 73.

Thus, it may be said that "the Word" fulfills much the same function in Luther's thought as the "divine essence" does in Calvin's system -- in acting as Christ himself, in acting on behalf of Christ, in bestowing the divine gift or benefit, and in being the source of the Spirit's activity.

POSSIBILITIES FOR DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE TWO APPROACHES

In one sense, Calvin's and Luther's explanations stand diametrically opposed to one another. McDonnell even states that Calvin's appeal to the operation of the Holy Spirit is a deliberate attempt to circumvent both the Roman and the Lutheran arguments for a bodily presence of Christ in the Supper, while still maintaining the "sacramental reality" of truly receiving his body and blood.[64] Still, the corresponding functions of the Word and the Spirit set forth in Luther's and Calvin's descriptions of the manner of Christ's presence in the sacrament, provides some intriguing possibilities. William Fennel, as a Reformed theologian, proposes that a solution to the impass between Luther's and Calvin's respective formulations might be reached through viewing the sacrament as a "visible" word, and preaching as an "enacted" word.[65] Martin Heinecken, as a Lutheran theologian, provides

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[64] See McDonnell, Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist, p. 257.

[65] William O. Fennel, "The Nature and Manner of the Impartation of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper," Marburg Revisited, pp. 72, 76. The description of the sacrament as a "visible word" comes from Augustine and was used extensively by both Lutheran and Reformed theologians during the time of the Reformation. See Pelikan, The Christian Tradition 4: 190.

a similar argument in an accompanying essay, noting that in the Lutheran understanding ". . . ["act" and "word"] are inseparable. God does not act in self-revelation apart from the interpretive, disclosing word and the word is always itself an act."[66] Building upon the understanding that Christ himself is present in the proclaimed Word, whether in preaching or in sacrament, Fennel asks in terms of the Lutheran formula:

> Is there therefore a sense in which it would be right to say that Jesus Christ is given to us in, with and under the human words of proclamation? If so, is it not possible in the same sense appropriate to speak of him as given in, with and under the visible word of the bread and wine?[67]

And terms of the Reformed formulation he says:

> . . . it becomes impossible to separate the presence of Jesus Christ from the presence of the Holy Spirit; or to separate the presence of Christ . . . from his presence in the spoken and enacted word of proclamation. . . . The Holy Spirit is no substitute for an absent Christ. He is rather the subjective presence and agency of God through whom the objective presence of the Christ, mediated through the enacted Word of the sacrament, is made available to faith.[68]

And he concludes on the following hopeful note:

> From this way of viewing the real presence of Jesus Christ in the sacrament we are not led into the christological questions

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66 Heinecken, "Christology, the Lord's Supper and its Observance in the Church," p. 83; cf. p. 104.

67 Fennel, "The Nature and Manner of the Impartation of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper," pp. 72-73.

68 Ibid., p. 77.

> that historically proved the be so divisive in the Protestant community. We are not forced to formulate either . . . [an explanation of] how Christ in his human nature can be present in the sacrament, or a doctrine of a localized Christ in heaven with whom we come into communion only through the Holy Spirit lifting up our hearts on high.[69]

Of course, these are modern reflections on an historical problem which divided the reformation movement. In the sixteenth century, the divergent paths chosen by Luther and Calvin in their explanations of the manner of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, seemed to be contradictory and irreconcilable. Luther remained firm in his conviction that Christ is bodily present with the elements of bread and wine in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and Calvin argued that Christ's body must of necessity remain in heaven in the celebration of the Holy Meal. In the sixteenth century debates, no solution to this impass could be found.

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[69] Ibid.

CHAPTER NINE

THE FUNDAMENTAL CONTROVERSY OVER THE RECEPTION OF CHRIST'S BODY

THE DEBATE OVER ORAL RECEPTION

Another area of controversy between Calvin and his Lutheran opponents was over the explanation of how Christ's body and blood are received in the Lord's Supper. Specifically, the issue revolved around Luther's contention for an "objective" presence of Christ in the Supper independent of any human action or response, and Calvin's contention for a "relational" presence in which communion with Christ can only take place where faith is present.

We have seen this basic difference between Luther's and Calvin's orientation reflected in other issues, as when Luther applies his energies to arguing for a "substantial presence" while Calvin emphasizes a "substantial communion," and when Luther affirms a "sacramental union" between Christ's body and the physical elements of the Supper while Calvin focuses on Christ communicating himself directly to the recipient without necessarily being "connected" to the elements themselves. New implications stemming from each of these contrasting positions arise in the context of this next area of controversy. We shall discuss these under two headings: the first regarding what Calvin refers to as a "carnal" eating of Christ's body and

blood in the Supper, and the second (and more significant) topic concerning the "role of faith" in receiving Christ in the sacrament.

We recall that Luther affirms a "sacramental union" between Christ's body and blood manifested in the Supper and the physical elements of bread and wine displayed there. Accordingly, Luther believes that Christ's body and blood are received as the bread and wine are received, and also, on the basis of this sacramental union, that what happens to the elements happens to Christ who is conjoined to them. This leads Luther to the conclusion that Christ's body and blood are taken into the mouth in partaking of the Holy Supper, just as the bread and wine are. Luther does not doubt that this is so, and in keeping with traditional piety and practice prior to the Reform, it may never have occured to him to think otherwise.[1] Thus, he says in summarizing the principle articles of his faith, "I also confess and say that in the sacrament of the altar the true body and blood of Christ are orally eaten and drunk in the bread and wine,"[2] and in his final statement on the eucharist he staunchly says,

> I do not first want to seek counsel from my reason as to how it is conceivable or possible that I am able to receive his body and blood orally, and afterwards, as a judge over God, explain his

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[1] We recall from chapter Two how Luther slowly abandoned the concept of transubstantiation, and how he found it amazing that anyone could doubt the real presence. Luther, as a rule, did not reject traditional concepts unless compelled by Scripture and faith to do so.

[2] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 367.

> words according to my inclination. Nor do I want to rave thus. He has said it; I shall adhere to that.[3]

In contrast with Luther's position, Calvin affirms that Christ's body is received when (not as) the bread and wine are received, without it being in any way "attached" to the elements themselves. To his mind, the assertion that Christ's body and blood are received by the mouth in the Supper along with the bread and wine, is a gross and carnal interpretation of how Christ is communicated in the sacrament. He says, "I frankly engage at close quarters with the man who denies that we are partakers of the substance of the flesh of Christ unless we eat it with our mouths."[4] He goes on to explain his own understanding of the manner in which Christ's body and blood are received in terms of a substantial communion, saying

> [Heshus'] expression is that the very substance of the flesh and blood must be taken by the mouth; but I define the mode of communication without ambiguity, by saying that Christ in his boundless and wondrous powers unites us into the same life with himself, and becomes truly ours by communicating his blessings to us, and accordingly joins us to himself, as head and members unite to form one body.[5]

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3 Luther, "Brief Confession Concerning the Holy Sacrament," LW 38: 306.

4 Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 268.

5 Ibid.

Calvin not only rejects the oral reception of Christ's body in the Supper,[6] but also its corollary that Christ's body is swallowed as well, and passes into the stomach.[7] He still affirms, however, that Christ's body and blood are "spiritual food"[8] which are to be received in the Supper for their nourishing and life-giving benefit. He states:

> We by no means call in question the doctrine of Scripture, that the flesh of Christ is meat indeed and his blood drink indeed, because they are both truly received by us and are sufficient for the whole of life.[9]

And he adds, "We also profess that this communion is received by us in the Sacred Supper." But, he cautions that in explaining this, "Whoever presses on farther certainly goes beyond the limits."[10]

Calvin certainly believes that the Lutherans have gone beyond the proper bounds in their assertions. He accuses Westphal of being a

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6 See Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 448; "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 277; "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal (Preface)," TT 2: 249.

7 See Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 278; "The Best Method of Obtaining Concord," LCC 22: 326; "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 374, 376, 378, 379, 402.

8 See Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.40), LCC 21: 1417; "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 376; "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal (Preface)," TT 2: 249.

9 Calvin, "The Best Method of Obtaining Concord," LCC 22: 327.

10 Ibid.

"Capernaumite,"[11] and notes that Westphal approves of the medieval confession of Berengarius that "the true Body and Blood of our Lord . . . is handled and broken by the priests, and chewed by the teeth of the faithful."[12] But this conclusion is completely unacceptable in Calvin's way of thinking.

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[11] The name refers to those who upon hearing Jesus' words spoken at Capernaum that one must "eat his flesh and drink his blood" [John 6:53], took offense thinking that this must be done in an earthly manner. Calvin explains that in Augustine's time, the Capernaumites "were those who pretend[ed] that the body is chewed by the teeth and swallowed by the stomach." Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 362, 363.

[12] See "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 260; "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 362-63; "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 267. For the text of Berengarius' confession, see Lanfranc, *De corpore et sanguine Domini, cap. 20, Migne, Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latine* 150: 426. On its treatment by both Lutheran and Reformed Theologians in the eucharistic debates, see the discussion in Pelikan, The Christian Tradition 4: 199. Luther himself approved of Berengarius' confession on the basis on the "sacramental union." Thus he says, "He who takes hold of this bread, takes hold of Christ's body; and he who eats this bread eats Christ's body; he who crushes this bread with teeth or tongue, crushes with teeth or tongue the body of Christ." Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 300. This is an isolated statement on Luther's part, however, made to emphasize the point of sacramental union. Bornkamm characterizes it as an attempt by Luther "to accentuate his opposition to Zwingli and the Spiritualists . . . in the most challenging and defiant terms." Bornkamm, Luther's World of Thought, p. 111. Westphal adopts this principle and gives it much greater prominence in the statement of his own position. Heshus, by contrast, approves only the milder claim that Christ's body "is eaten by the mouth but not touched with the teeth." See Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 267. Cf. Barclay, Protestant Doctrine of the Lord's Supper, p. 222. Only this latter position of "oral reception" was adopted into Lutheran orthodoxy, with Capernaitic eating being rejected. See "The Formula of Concord," Book of Concord, pp. 481, 483, 486, 489, 579, 581, 584, 588, 591.

He adopts Augustine's phrase, calling such a "pressing with the teeth" a "carnal" eating as opposed to the "spiritual" eating which the Supper is meant to provide.[13] He claims,

> The whole question turns on this -- Are we fed by the flesh and blood of Christ when by them he infuses life into us; or is it necessary that the substance of his flesh should be swallowed by us in order to be meat, and that the blood should be substantially quaffed in order to be drink?[14]

He answers, "we must adopt another definition, viz. that he is spiritually eaten,"[15] and he indicates his difference of opinion with the Lutherans saying,

> Our expression is, that the flesh of Christ is spiritually eaten by us, because he vivifies our souls in the very manner in which our bodies are invigorated by food: only we exclude a transfusion of substance. According to Westphal, [however,] the flesh of Christ is not vivifying unless its substance is devoured.[16]

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[13] ". . . he who does not abide in Christ and in whom Christ does not abide, doubtless does not spiritually eat his flesh or drink his blood, although he may carnally and visibly press the sign of the body and blood with his teeth." Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.34), LCC 21: 1409 (emphasis is mine). Cf. Augustine, "Homilies on the Gospel of John," [Tractate 26.18], NPNF, 7: 173. See also Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concern-ing the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 306; "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacra-ments (Exposition)," TT 2: 235. Cf. "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 375, 376.

[14] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 402.

[15] Ibid., p. 376 (emphasis is part of the printed text).

[16] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 283. Cf. "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 378.

THE ROLE OF FAITH IN RECEIVING CHRIST IN THE SUPPER

We turn now to the second point in the debate, concerning the role which faith plays in receiving Christ in the sacrament. We note that Luther steadfastly maintined that Christ is present in the eucharist in an "objective" manner, i.e. according to Christ's own declaration and promise given in the words of Institution, and that this presence is not conditional upon human activity -- whether expressed in terms of Christian piety or unbelief. As Steinmetz explains,

> For Luther the Lord's Supper is a testament, a one-sided covenant in which God both sets the terms on which he will be gracious to the church and fulfills those terms himself. The condition for putting the testament into effect is the death of the testator, not the faith of the beneficiary.[17]

Luther defends his assertion that Christ is really present in the Supper regardless of one's state of faith on two fronts: First, in reference to the perceived abuse of the mass in Roman Catholic practice, he affirms (in keeping with historic Christian principles) that infidelity on the part of one consecrating the sacrament does not nullify the validity and efficacy of the sacrament itself. In this context he states that Christ's presence in the sacrament "does not rest upon man's belief or unbelief, but on the Word and

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17 Steinmetz, "Scripture and the Lord's Supper in Luther's Theology," p. 258.

ordinance of God."[18] On the second front, Luther had to contend with the radical opponents of his day who sought to explain the reception of Christ's body and blood totally in terms of a devotional act of faith. Here again, Luther affirms that Christ's presence rests totally upon God's Word and ordinance,[19] and as Steinmetz again points out, "Faith does not make Christ present; Christ is present whether greeted with faith or unbelief."[20]

The affirmation of an "objective" presence, however, leads Luther to conclude that Christ's body and blood are received by all who receive the sacrament itself. He confesses: "We hold that the bread and wine of the Supper are the true body and blood of Christ and that these are given and received not only by godly but also by wicked Christians."[21] If the faith of the recipient is made a condition for Christ's being present in the Supper, then, Luther maintains, faith becomes a "work," something which makes God's gracious gift become manifested. Seen from this point of view, Steinmetz observes that "Unless one affirms that even unbelievers eat the

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[18] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper, LW 37: 367; cf. p. 188.

[19] With regard to the sacramentarians, Luther says if they do not "have the words and instituted ordinance of God but have perverted and changed it," then "they, indeed, have only bread and wine." Ibid.

[20] Steinmetz, "Scripture and the Lord's Supper in Luther's Theology," p. 259. Cf. Heinecken, "Christology, the Lord's Supper and its Observance in the Church," p. 99.

[21] Luther, "The Smalcald Articles" (III.6)," The Book of Concord, p. 311.

body and blood of Christ, one will lapse into a new form of works-righteousness."[22] Thus, Luther affirms that in the Supper Christ is present in "his true, natural body which the godless person or Judas receives orally just as well as St. Peter and all the saints,"[23] although he adds, "it is unprofitable . . . for unbelievers,"[24] since "they cannot partake of it spiritually."[25]

As Calvin takes up the debate, he responds to the arguments of his Lutheran opponents that Luther's position is grounded in the teachings of the Church Fathers. Much of this debate becomes argued in terms of the interpretation given to certain of Augustine's statements. With regard to the

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[22] Steinmetz, "Scripture and the Lord's Supper in Luther's Theology," pp. 258-59.

[23] Luther, "Brief Confession Concerning the Holy Sacrament," LW 38: 304; cf. pp. 300-301. Cf. "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 188. Westphal and Heshus, like Luther, affirm that Judas truly received Christ's body at the institution of the Lord's Supper. See Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 249, 297; "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 417, 469. But Calvin strongly disagrees with their interpretation of Augustine's words (see "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 304-305), and cites Augustine's declaration to a different end, namely, that while "others took the bread the Lord, Judas [received] nothing but the bread of the Lord." Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 370, 378; Institutes (IV,17.34), LCC 21: 1409; Commentary on the First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians [I Cor. 11:27], p. 252; "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 306. See Augustine, "Homilies on the Gopspel of John" [Tractate 59.1], NPNF, 7: 308.

[24] "The Marburg Colloquy" (Anonymous's account), LW 38: 42-43. Cf. Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 248.

[25] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 354.

"objectivity" of the sacrament -- that it is based on divine action rather than human actions -- Calvin notes Westphal's use of Augustine's words that "in the Supper, when the word of Christ is added to the bread, the bread becomes a sacrament."[26] But he takes issue with Westphal's conclusion that therefore "the sacrament is made by the word, not by our faith."[27] He has no quarrel with the teaching that the sacrament itself is constituted by the Word, and that this is what gives it its efficacy. He emphasizes that his own teaching affirms that very point.[28] But, he says, the meaning of Augustine's statement is made clear by the words which he immediately adds, that "This is done by the word, not because it is said, but because it is believed."[29] Thus, he maintains that faith must accompany the word and the physical sign[30] if the sacrament

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26 See Augustine, "Homilies on the Gopspel of John" [Tractate 80.3], NPNF, 7: 344.

27 Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 303.

28 "I think it is now evident to all, that in our doctrine the authority of the word is as stable as the ordinance of the sacrament is firm and efficacious." And, "I willingly allow that the sacrament of the flesh and blood is constituted by the words of Christ." Ibid.

29 Ibid., p. 304. Cf. "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments (Exposition)," TT 2: 227.

30 "But the spiritual promise and corporeal eating ought not to be dissevered! Certainly no more than faith and the word should be dissevered from the external sign, when the name of the sacrament is mentioned." Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 449 (emphasis is mine).

is to be truly efficacious, for the sacraments "avail and profit nothing unless received in faith."[31] "Hence it follows," he says, "that believers alone are partakers of Christ and his spiritial blessings."[32]

Calvin affirms that Christ, in faithfulness to himself, is truly present in the sacrament and offers his benefits to all.[33] But, he adds, "it is one thing to be offered, another to be received."[34] He explains, "there is a wide difference between the two propositions, that the faithfulness of God consists in performing what he demonstrates by a sign, and that man, in order to enjoy the offered grace, makes room for the promise."[35] Thus, he maintains that "Christ offers his body and blood to all in general; but because unbelievers

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[31] Calvin, Institutes (IV,14.17), LCC 21: 1292. Cf. his statement that as "the promises of the gospel . . . are to be received by faith, so they are made effectual by faith." "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 448; cf. p. 367; "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 302; "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments (Heads of Agreement)," TT 2: 217, and (Exposition), p. 233.

[32] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 302. Cf. "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 402, 470. Similarly, he says "In the elect alone the sacraments effect what they present." Institutes (IV,14.15), LCC 21: 1290. Cf. "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments" (Heads of Agreement)," TT 2: 217.

[33] See Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Sacrament," LCC 22: 316. Cf. "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 367, 379.

[34] Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.33), LCC 21: 1406. Cf. "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 304.

[35] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 303.

bar the door to his liberality, they do not receive what is offered."[36] He says that since "the only obstacle to their possession of Christ is their own unbelief, the whole blame resides in themselves," and not in the sacrament.[37] He argues that "It is mere ignorance, therefore, that makes some cry out, that the figure of the holy Supper is made empty and void, if the ungodly do not receive as much in it as unbelievers."[38] For

> If the wicked defraud themselves of this benefit, and their unbelief causes that the fruition does not reach them, we deny that any thing is lost to the sacrament on this account, inasmuch as it remains entire.[39]

Calvin emphasizes this point repeatedly, stating that

> . . . those who profane the Sacrament by unworthy receiving make no change in its nature, nor in any respect impair the effect of the promise. But although Christ remains like to

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[36] Calvin, "The Best Method of Obtaining Concord," LCC 22: 330. Cf. "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 306; "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 491; Institutes (IV,14.7), LCC 21: 1282 and (IV,17.33) p. 1407; "Confession of Faith in Name of the Reformed Churches of France," TT 2: 158; Commentary on the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians [I Cor. 11:29], p. 254; "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments" (Heads of Agreement), TT 2: 217 and (Exposition), p. 233.

[37] Calvin, "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacrament" (Exposition), TT 2: 232.

[38] Calvin, "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments (Exposition)," TT 2: 234. Cf. "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 304; "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 379.

[39] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal (Preface)," TT 2: 249. Cf. Institutes (IV,17.33), LCC 2: 1406-07.

himself and true to his promises, it does not follow that what is given is received by all indiscriminately.[40]

Thus, as Niesel observes, "The doctrine of Calvin preserves the objectivity of the sacrament on which the Lutherans set so much store,"[41] although, admittedly, there is a distinct difference between his formulation and theirs. Calvin's position, as Tappert puts it, was not "that faith effects the presence of Christ and its benefits, but rather that faith alone can accept and receive what is objectively offered."[42]

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[40] Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Sacrament," LCC 22: 283. Note also the following summary statement by Calvin: "We distinctly declare that no unbelief prevents the sacred ordinance of Christ from retaining its force and nature; prevents his flesh from being offered and given to all as spiritual food, and his blood as spiritual drink; prevents the bread from being a true symbol of flesh, and the wine of blood; prevents that which Christ pronounces from heaven to be firm and sure. . . ." Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal" (Preface), TT 2: 249. Cf. "The Best Method of Obtaining Concord," LCC 22: 330; "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 367; Institutes (IV,14.16), LCC 21: 1291, 1292 and (IV,17.33), p. 1407; "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 303; "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments" (Heads of Agreement), TT 2: 217 and (Exposition), pp. 232-33; Commentary on the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians [I Cor. 11:27], p. 252.

[41] Niesel, The Theology of Calvin, p. 227.

[42] Tappert, "Christology and the Lord's Supper in the Perspective of History," p. 66 (emphasis is mine). McDonnell takes this point even further, incorporating the role which the Holy Spirit plays into his explanation of Calvin's "sacramental objectivity." He says, one must not think "that the real presence arises out of the act of faith of the believers. Rather the Holy Spirit who effects the presence of Christ also gives the faith which makes a man worthy. This is sacramental objectivity of a high order, though it is neither

Therefore, the two positions can be stated side by side and summarized in the following fashion: The Lutherans, in arguing against the claims of those who maintained that in the Lord's Supper Christ is only spiritually present through faith, were concerned with affirming that Christ's body is objectively present, whether faith receives it or not. Calvin's explanation, on the other hand, is that Christ's body is always objectively presented in the sacrament whether faith receives it or not. If faith is lacking, then Christ's body is not received even though it is still offered in reality.

"SACRAMENTAL" AND "SPIRITUAL" EATING

One of the main areas of dispute between Calvin and his Lutheran opponents with regard to the role which faith plays in receiving Christ in the sacrament, was over the distinction between what is termed "sacramental eating" and "spiritual eating." The term "sacramental eating," in the theology of Augustine, and later that of Thomas Aquinas, was used to refer only to the act of "partaking of Christ's body" through the eating of the elements of the Supper, whereas "spiritual eating" was reserved for describing the actual reception of Christ's benefits. Although both normally occur together in the usual observance of the Lord's Supper, Augustine admits that Christ is not bound to the elements and can bestow his grace apart from them; thus when the consecrated elements are not available one can still "spiritually" partake of Christ's body and blood through "desiring" them in faith. On the

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the sacramental objectivity of the Lutheran nor of the Roman." McDonnell, Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist, p. 266; cf. p. 272.

other hand, when the unworthy receive the sacrament without faith and without Christ's accompanying benefits, they are said to partake of the Supper only "sacramentally."[43]

Against this historical background, we can examine the differing ways in which Calvin and his Lutheran opponents use these terms. Specifically, we find that they reach different conclusions as to whether the reception of Christ's body and blood in the Supper should be considered part of sacramental eating or part of spiritual eating. Calvin suggests that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper can be viewed in terms of three component parts: the external sign of bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ itself (without its benefits), and the divine efficacy of the body and blood.[44] As Calvin sees it, according to the Lutheran teaching, Christ's body is thought to be present with the consecrated elements, and is said to always be received with them. Since this is said to occur whether faith is present or not, the Lutheran understanding of the reception of Christ's body with the bread and wine must, in Calvin's judgment, necessarily fall under the description of

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[43] See Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 53. Thomas' formulation was officially adopted by the Council of Trent, where the distinction is made between (only) sacramental eating, (only) spiritual eating, and sacramental and spiritual eating (together). See Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, (Session 13, Chapter 8), trans. H. J. Schroeder, O.P. (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1941), p. 78. See also Augustine, "The City of God" [XXI.25], trans. Marcus Dods, NPNF 2: 472, 473; "Homilies on the Gospel of John" [Tractate 26:18], NPNF, 7: 143.

[44] See Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 368.

"sacramental eating."[45] "Spiritual eating" then, as the Lutherans use the term, would refer only to receiving Christ's benefits when the eating is done in faith.[46]

But Calvin cannot conceive of Christ's body being separated from his benefits. As we saw in Chapter Six, the "substance" of Christ's body and its "effect" are for Calvin inseparable. Thus, he rejects out of hand Westphal's argument that for some receiving the sacrament "there is the body of Christ without fruit," while for others, "there is the body combined with its use and end."[47] He says, "It is clear that this connection of substance and fruit is perversely and barbarously dissevered, when the wicked without faith are said to receive the lifeless body of Christ."[48] He focuses on the image of Christ's body without its benefits as being in a sense "lifeless" and "dead", and says, "Who does not see that Christ is rendered lifeless and dissevered by [this] sacriligious divorce from his Spirit and all his virtue?"[49] Most importantly

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[45] Calvin, "The Best Method of Obtaining Concord," LCC 22: 329. Cf. Institutes (IV,17.34), LCC 21: 1408.

[46] See Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 374, 376.

[47] Ibid. Cf. "The Best Method of Obtaining Concord," LCC 22: 329.

[48] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 377; cf. p. 376.

[49] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 303; cf. p. 306. Cf. "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 314; Institutes (IV,17.33), LCC 21: 1406; "Confession of Faith in Name of the Reformed Churches of France," TT 2: 158; Commentary on the First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians [I Cor. 11:27], pp. 251, 252.

though, to say that Christ's body can be received in the sacrament without bestowing any benefits to the recipient, is, for Calvin, contrary to the very nature and purpose for which the sacrament was initiated. he says,

> The whole reality of the sacred Supper consists in this -- Christ by ingrafting us into his body, not only makes us partakers of his body and blood, but infuses into us the life whose fulness resides in himself: for his flesh is not eaten for any other end than to give us life.[50]

Thus, Calvin considers the true reception of Christ's body and blood to be inseparable from the reception of his benefits, and places both under the category of "spiritual eating." This leaves "sacramental eating" in Calvin's usage to describe only the reception of the physical elements of bread and wine apart from the reception of Christ's body and blood.

Two areas of conflict arise out of Calvin's linking of the reception of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament with "spiritual eating" and the Lutheran contention that it is properly part of the "sacramental eating." First, there is the old perception within Lutheran circles that "spiritual" means "unreal" and hence, "illusory."[51] In hearing that Calvin denies that Christ's body is received in the sacramental eating, but is part of the spiritual eating, they conclude that he is of the same opinion of the sacramentarians in discarding the real presence of Christ in the sacrament in favour of having a spiritual reception only. Thus, they accuse him of holding to the same

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[50] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 377; cf. p. 448.

[51] See Calvin, "The Best Method of Obtaining Concord," LCC 22: 329; "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 284.

opinion as Zwingli and others who claimed that "eating Christ's body" is the same thing as "believing."[52]

Calvin is certainly aware of the sacramentarian view. He writes in his second edition of the Institutes (1539) that "there are some who define the eating of Christ's flesh and the drinking of his blood as, in a word, nothing but to believe in Christ."[53] But he refuses to be put in the same camp with them. This is to "speak too narrowly and stringently,"[54] he says, for "spiritually to eat the flesh of Christ is something greater and more excellent than to believe."[55] On his part, he says,

> I distinctly affirm that those who receive the promise by faith, truly become partakers of Christ, and are fed by his flesh. Therefore, the eating of Christ is something else than the receiving of the promise.[56]

Returning to the Institutes, he goes on to explain:

> . . . here is the difference between my words and theirs: for them to eat is only to believe; I say that we eat Christ's flesh in

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[52] See Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 283, 284.

[53] Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.5), LCC 21: 1365.

[54] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 377.

[55] Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 307. Cf. Institutes (IV,17.5), LCC 21: 1365.

[56] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 284. Cf. "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 415.

> believing. . . . Or if you want it said more clearly, for them eating is faith; for me it seems rather to follow from faith."[57]

And in his debate with Westphal he explains this further, saying that he does not teach that "to eat the body is equivalent to receiving the promise by faith."[58] Rather, the relationship sould be seen as one of cause and effect: eating Christ's body is the effect of receiving Christ's promise in faith, but it is not caused by faith; the cause of the efficacy lies in the promise itself.[59] Calvin emphasizes that it is important not merely to receive the promise in faith, but to receive the external sign of the sacrament as well. For the promise has been "annexed to the ordinance" and these "are united by an indissoluble tie."[60] Thus, he says, "Spiritual eating is held by us in such a manner as by no means excludes sacramental eating."[61]

The second area of conflict between Calvin and the Lutherans with regard to the different meanings given to the terms "sacramental eating" and "spiritual eating," lies in the question as to whether in partaking of the Supper in a "sacramental" fashion, unbelievers receive Christ (without his benefits), as the Lutherans affirm, or only receive the elements of bread and wine, as

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[57] Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.5), LCC 21: 1365 (emphasis is mine).

[58] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 284 (emphasis is mine).

[59] Ibid., pp. 283, 284.

[60] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 447-48.

[61] Ibid., p. 373.

Calvin claims. This is perhaps the most significant issue in this part of the debate. Certainly Calvin is able to state, "The hinge of the whole controversy is simply this -- Do unbelievers become substantially partakers of the flesh of Christ?"[62]

Luther had affirmed on the basis of St. Paul's words in I Corinthians 11:27 (whoever eats the bread and drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of Christ), that "the unworthy receive the body and blood of Christ as well as the worthy."[63] But when Westphal and Heshus quote this passage to Calvin, he replies, "when [St. Paul] says that they become guilty of the body and blood of Christ . . . I ask whether he makes them guilty of the body as offered or as received?"[64] His own explanation is that "the guilt is not ascribed to receiving,"[65] but "because they desecrate and dishonour what is offered to them by the way they use it, as if they were throwing it on the ground and trampling it underfoot."[66]

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[62] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 305-6.

[63] See Luther, "Brief Confession Concerning the Holy Sacrament," LW 38: 300-301.

[64] Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 283.

[65] Calvin, "The Best Method of Obtaining Concord," LCC 22: 329. Cf. "Confession of Faith in Name of the Reformed Churches in France," TT 2: 158.

[66] Calvin, Commentary on the First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians [I Cor. 11:27], p. 252; cf. p. 253; "Last Admonition to

Therefore, he says the unworthy "are deservedly condemned," not for receiving Christ's body, but "for profane and brutish contempt."[67]

Luther had also affirmed that when the flesh of Christ is eaten by unbelievers in the Supper, instead of it acting as a "medicine for eternal life," it is for them "not only unprofitable but is both poison and death."[68] But Calvin disagrees with this point as well, saying that while the bread and wine is "taken from the Lord's table by some unto life, by others unto destruction," the actual body and blood of Christ "is taken by those who partake of it, unto life by all, unto death by none."[69]

Westphal," TT 2: 491; "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 283.

[67] Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 284.

[68] "The Marburg Colloquy (Anonymous' account)," LW 38: 42-43. Cf. Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 248.

[69] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 377. Cf. "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments (Exposition)," TT 2: 235; Institutes (IV,14.15), LCC 21: 1291. Note: This statement taken from Augustine ["Homilies on the Gospel of John" [Tractate 26:15], NPNF, 7: 173], marks a change from Calvin's earlier position, where in the first edition of the Institutes he says: "We see that this sacred bread of the Lord's Supper is spiritual food, as sweet and delicate as it is healthful for pious worshipers of God. . . . On the other hand, it is turned into a deadly poison for all those whose faith it does not nourish and strengthen. . . ." This judgment is tempered by an addition to this passage in the second edition of the Institutes in which he states: ". . . this spiritual food, if it enters a soul corrupted by malice and wickedness, casts it down with a greater ruin -- not by the fault of the food itself, but because to polluted and unbelieving men nothing is clean, however much it otherwise be sanctified by the Lord's blessing." See Institutes (IV,17.40),

Returning to the subject of "sacramental eating" in a broader sense, Calvin categorically rejects the Lutheran definition of "sacramental eating" as "an eating of the substance of the flesh without effect or grace."[70] Since to Calvin, Christ's body is only truly received with its acompanying benefits, he cites Augustine to show a distinction between "sacramental eating" and what he calls "eating in reality." In writing against Westphal, he says,

> What does Augustine say? He teaches that the body of Christ is eaten sacramentally only when it is not eaten in reality. In two passages this antithesis is distinctly expressed by him. Hence we surely gather that the sacrament is equivalent merely to the visible or external use, when unbelief precludes access to the reality.[71]

And later, in reply to Heshus, he says that Augustine "opposes as things contrary to each other sacramental and true eating of the flesh of Christ. Hence it follows that it is not eaten by the wicked."[72]

Thus, when Westphal cites Augustine's words that the body of Christ is given alike to good and bad, Calvin responds by saying that these words refer (in the classical sense) only to Christ's body being received

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LCC 22: 1417. Cf. "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments," TT 2: 232.

[70] Calvin, "The Best Method of Obtaining Concord," LCC 22: 329. Cf. Institutes (IV,17.34), LCC 21: 1408.

[71] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 374.

[72] Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 306-7 (emphasis is in printed text).

"sacramentally,"[73] and that Augustine's true meaning is shown by a parallel passage in which he says that "good and bad communicate in the signs."[74] Thus, he argues, when Augustine says that unbelievers receive Christ's body, he is speaking "metonymically," and is really referring only to the bread and wine themselves.[75] Calvin continues in this vein, saying that in the sacrament "the body of Christ is taken in two ways -- sacramentally and in reality. If the reality is taken away, certainly nothing remains but the sign."[76] And from this he says, "we without doubt infer that the wicked do not eat the body of

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[73] Ibid., p. 305; "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 368; Commentary on the First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians [I Cor. 11:27], p. 252; "Confession of Faith in Name of the Reformed Churches in France," TT 2: 159.

[74] Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Sacrament," LCC 22: 307 (emphasis is mine). Cf. "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 367; Institutes (IV,17.34), LCC 21: 1410. See Augustine, "Reply to Faustus, the Manichaen" [13.13], trans. R. Stothert, NPNF, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956): 205.

[75]. Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 367. This would appear to be an exception to Calvin's normal application of his rule that in using metonymy to refer to the sign, the reality of that which is signified (namely Christ's body and blood) is not done away with. Calvin's exegesis of Augustine's writings on this point is not fully convincing. Although Calvin wishes to cite Augustine in his favor, we should note that the Lutheran understanding that "sacramental eating" includes the reception of Christ's body and blood can also be readily defended from Augustine's writings.

[76] Ibid., p. 369; cf. p. 375.

Christ in any other way than in respect of the sign, because they are deprived of the reality."[77]

Calvin is firm in his position that "nothing but the bare sign is taken by unbelievers,"[78] for none may "eat of the flesh of Christ but those who, endued with living faith, abide in him."[79] The very nature of the sacrament of Holy Communion is, as Calvin understands it, that it signifies our union with Christ.[80] How then, he asks, is it possible "that unbelievers, though eating the body of Christ and his blood, remain in a state of complete alienation from him"?[81] And he says that Augustine

> . . . strenuously maintains that those who are not to be classed among the members of Christ do not eat his body, because they

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[77] Ibid., p. 369; cf. p. 370. Cf. "The Best Method of Obtaining Concord," LCC 22: 330; Institutes (IV,14.15), LCC 21: 1291 and (IV,17.34), pp. 1409, 1410; "Confession of Faith in Name of the Reformed Churches in France," TT 2: 158.

[78] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 368; cf. p. 377; Institutes (IV,17.34), LCC 21: 1408.

[79] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 378. Cf. "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 306; Institutes (IV,17.34), LCC 21: 1409.

[80] See McDonnell, Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist, p. 186.

[81] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 435. Cf. Institutes (IV,17.33), LCC 21: 1406; "Confession of Faith in Name of the Reformed Churches in France," TT 2: 158.

> cannot be at the same time the members of Christ and the members of a harlot.[82]

Calvin's final position on the matter may be summed up in these words where, again referring to Augustine, he says:

> To show our entire agreement with this holy writer, we say that those who are united by faith, so as to be his members, eat his body truly or in reality, whereas those who receive nothing but the visible sign eat only sacramentally.[83]

The fact that Westphal and Calvin could both cite Augustine to defend their positions, indicates that a resolution of their arguments could not ultimately be sought from Augustine's writings. Rather, the source of their controversy was much more contemporary. Luther had explained the presence of Christ in the sacrament in terms of a "sacramental union" with the consecrated elements. This implied an objective presence of Christ's body such that whenever the consecrated element was received, Christ's body (present with it) was understood to be received as well, although without benefit to the unbeliever. Calvin not only rejected the view that there is an inherent "connectedness" between Christ's body and the elements of the Supper (which to him seemed to be an affirmation of a local presence), but he

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[82] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 369. Cf. "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments" (Exposition), TT 2: 235-36. Using even stronger terms, Calvin says that in distributing the substance of Christ's flesh to unbelievers, Christ's body is "prostituted to the ungodly." "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 466. Cf. "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 298; Institutes (IV,17.33), LCC 21: 1406.

[83] Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 281.

was also of the view that the "substance" and the "effect" of Christ's body are inseparable, so that under no circumstances could Christ's body ever be received apart from its effect. As long as the question of the "connection" between Christ's body and the elements of the Supper remained unresolved, the controversy as to whether unbelievers receive Christ's body with the consecrated bread would remain unresolved as well.

CHAPTER TEN

THE FUNDAMENTAL CONTROVERSY OVER UBIQUITY AND THE TWO NATURES OF CHRIST

THE BASIC CHRISTOLOGICAL ISSUE UNDERLYING THE DEBATE

We have so far explored four main areas where Luther and Calvin differed significantly in their respective understandings of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper: We first of all examined what Luther and Calvin each meant in speaking of Christ's presence in the sacrament as being a "substantial presence." We then went on to examine the kind of descriptive language which each reformer used in characterizing this presence -- Calvin's use of metonymy and Luther's use of synecdoche, and the related issues as to whether, according to Luther's view, a "sacramental union" exists between Christ's body and the elements of the Supper, or, according to the view of Calvin, a distinction is to be maintained between the sign and that which it signifies. Next, we examined the issue of whether, as Calvin explains it, Christ's body remains in heaven as he is manifested in the Supper, and that through the agency of the Spirit we rise by faith to commune with him there, or, as Luther argues, Christ is bodily present with the consecrated elements here on earth through a "ubiquitous" mode of presence. And finally, we

examined the issue of Luther's contention for an "objective" presence of Christ in the Supper which is received by the partaker of the sacrament independently of whether the recipient possesses faith or not, and Calvin's argument for a more "relational" presence, where the reception of Christ in the sacrament is possible only where faith is also present.

In each of the areas just described, the focus of the differing positions taken by Luther and Calvin rests not so much on sacramental disagreements, but on basic christological issues. Underlying the entire eucharistic debate, and of even greater importance than each of the points already examined, is a primary christological issue which consists of the differing approaches used by Luther and Calvin to describe the relationship between the divine and human natures in the person of Christ. This difference is fundamental to understanding Luther's distinctive and uncompromising assertion of a "bodily ubiquity" of Christ in the sacrament, and Calvin's equally forceful assertion that the body of Christ remains in heaven as Christ is manifested in the Supper. The other contentious issues concerning a "sacramental union" and the reception of Christ's body apart from faith derive from the fundamental positions taken by each reformer on this chief underlying issue.

Most simply put, the dominant christological concern for Luther in discussing the manner of Christ's presence in the Supper was that <u>the reality of Christ's person</u> be retained. The main concern for Calvin was that in describing this presence, <u>the reality of Christ's human nature</u> be preserved. We have already seen how Calvin, writing against Westphal, lists as one of his cardinal points that in speaking of the "mode" of Christ's presence in the

sacrament, nothing must be done which would "overthrow the reality of his human nature."[1] And in the Institutes he specifically states:

> Let nothing inappropriate to human nature be ascribed to his body, as happens when it is said either to be infinite or to be put in a number of places at once.[2]

Calvin remains firm in his assertion that in the incarnation, "Christ truly assumed a human body, and still retains it: Therefore, he cannot, in respect of his human nature, be everywhere."[3] In the debate with his Lutheran opponents, Calvin repeatedly cites Augustine on this point, saying for example:

> Augustine plainly asserts that our Saviour, in respect of his human nature, is in heaven, whence he will come at the last day; that in respect of human nature, he is not everywhere diffused, because though he gave immortality to his flesh, he did not take away its nature; that therefore we must beware of raising the divinity of the man so as to destroy the reality of the body; . . . [and] that Christ is everywhere present as God, but in respect to the nature of a real body occupies some place in heaven.[4]

For his part, Calvin declares:

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[1] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 411.

[2] Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.19), LCC 21: 1382.

[3] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 450.

[4] Ibid., p. 382; cf. pp. 383, 389, 446. Cf. also "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 306; Institutes (IV,17.28), LCC 21: 1397.

> My mode of expressing the doctrine is this: As Christ is in heaven in respect of the substance of his flesh, so he sits in his flesh on the right hand of the Father, yet filling the whole world with his power and virtue.[5]

Calvin thus distinguishes between the flesh of Christ which, he says, remains in heaven, and the divine-human person of Christ who is present everywhere. He writes: "There is nothing to perplex in the doctrine that Christ dwelling in heaven in respect of his flesh, still as Mediator fills the whole world, and is truly one with its members."[6] And he lays down the principle that "though Christ as God and man, whole and undivided, fills heaven and earth, yet in respect of his flesh, he is only in heaven."[7] He is firm in his application of this principle,[8] and says that if his opponents would only accept this rule, then the whole dispute would be at an end.[9]

However, this principle that Christ is present in the Supper according to his person but not according to his flesh, violates a fundamental dictum of Luther, namely that "If God and man are one person and the two natures are

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[5] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 457.

[6] Ibid., p. 465.

[7] Ibid., p. 488; cf. pp. 452, 466. Cf. "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 306; Institutes (IV,17.28), LCC 21: 1397. Cf. also "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 286-87; "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 275, 315.

[8] ". . . we assert that he fills all things because it were impious to separate him from his members. But as the question is concerning the flesh, we insist on it." Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 465.

[9] Ibid., p. 466.

so united that they belong together more intimately than body and soul, then Christ must also be man wherever he is God."[10] For, as Luther says, "How can it happen without dividing the person, that God may be here without the humanity and there with the humanity?"[11] As Rogness notes, "The merest suggestion that in the eucharist Christ's human nature was not fully present meant for Luther that the ancient doctrine of the eternal union of the two natures was compromised."[12] Thus, Luther says,

> . . . if you could show me one place where God is and not the man, then the person is already divided and I could at once say truthfully, "Here is God who is not man and has never been man." But no God like that for me! For it would follow from this that space and place had separated the two natures from one another and thus had divided the person, even though death and all the devils had been unable to separate and tear them apart.[13]

Calvin, however, sees no problem in saying that Christ according to his flesh does not exist everywhere as his divinity does. When Westphal, echoing Luther's argument, states that "the two natures are inseparable and conjoined, so that the Son of God is nowhere without flesh," Calvin replies sharply, "Where then is the nature of the flesh, if the divinity of Christ

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[10] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 229; cf. p. 218.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Michael Rogness, Philip Melanchthon, Reformer Without Honor, p. 67.

[13] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 218; cf. pp. 219, 229.

extends it in proportion to his own immensity?"[14] In contrast, he states his own position in these words:

> Now we hold for certain and infallible that though the human nature of our Lord Jesus is conjoined with his divinity, so as to establish in him a true unity of person, still his human nature retains its quality and condition, and every thing which is proper to it.[15]

Calvin strongly affirms that if the reality of the human nature is to be retained, then it cannot be given the property of ubiquity, as the Lutherans claim. He maintains that this in no way detracts, however, from the wholeness of Christ's person. "All men agree that the whole Christ is offered us in the Supper,"[16] he says. That is never questioned. Calvin is aware of the principle established in scholastic theology that "Christ is whole everywhere, but not wholly (*totus ubique, sed non totum*),[17] and he employs it in his debate with Westphal and Heshus. Thus, he argues that "although the whole

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[14] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 385.

[15] Calvin, "Confession of Faith in Name of the Reformed Churches in France," TT 2: 160. Cf. "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 290.

[16] Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.20), p. 1384. Cf. Wendel, Calvin, p. 343.

[17] Calvin, Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 418; cf. pp. 457, 488. Cf. "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 275. See Peter Lombard, Sentences [III.22.3].

Christ is everywhere, still the whole of that which is in him is not everywhere,"[18] for "it would be absurd to apply this to his flesh."[19]

This line of scholastic argumentation would not have been very convincing for Luther. As Siggins has shown, Luther discarded much of the abstract characterizing of Christ's person and his two natures which was present in scholastic theology, and chose instead to speak of Christ's person in the sense of an "historical being,"[20] with the divine and human natures being seen as functional aspects of that person.[21] Seen in these concrete terms, the human nature of Christ could not be separated from the divine nature without destroying the personhood of that singular being.

Luther's followers also strongly affirmed that if Christ is to be present in the Supper, he must be present according to both his divine and his human nature. To them, if Christ is not bodily present with the elements of the Supper, then his presence is illusory, without substance, and Christ himself -- in his divine-human person -- is absent from the meal. Calvin's Lutheran opponents, hearing it said that although Christ is present in the Supper, he is not there according to his flesh, understood this to mean that

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[18] Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.30), LCC 21: 1403. Cf. Calvin's statement that "it does not follow that what is in God must be everywhere as God is." Ibid., (IV,17.28), LCC 21: 1397; "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 306.

[19] Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 311.

[20] See Ian D. Siggins, Martin Luther's Doctrine of Christ, p. 224.

[21] Ibid., pp. 232-33.

Christ is present only according to his divinity, with his humanity being excluded. This, however, is not what Calvin was intending to say. His principle affirms that it is not merely the divinity of Christ which is present in the Supper, but the entire person. Nevertheless, so conditioned were the Lutherans to reacting against Zwingli's argument that the flesh of Christ is necessarily absent from the Supper, that they did not understand the distinction which Calvin was making, and continued to regard his statements as Zwinglian in nature.[22]

In his own debate with Zwingli, Luther made the charge that Zwingli so differentiated the functions of the two natures of Christ that he "applies all the texts concerning the passion only to the human nature, and completely excludes them from the divine nature."[23] Similarly, he said that Zwingli excludes the human nature from Christ's saving action and from his presence in the eucharist.[24] But this, he said, leads Zwingli to "divide the person of

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[22] One may note that Zwingli also affirms that "the whole Christ" is present to the faithful in the Lord's Supper. But he adds, "This presence of Christ's body is of a spiritual nature." See Locher, Zwingli's Thought, pp. 223-24 & n. #359.

[23] Ibid., p. 213. Cf. a similar complaint raised by Luther against Oecolampadius, p. 280.

[24] Luther, "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John (Chap. 6-8)," LW 23: 101-102. Cf. "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 234. Note the following assessment by Tappert: "In his divine nature Christ is omnipotent, Zwingli conceded, but in his human nature he is bound by time and space. It was according to his human nature that Christ was born of Mary, grew in wisdom and stature, suffered and died, and ascended into heaven. . . . Only according to his divine nature, said Zwingli, could Christ make the

Christ,"[25] for

> . . . if the works are divided and separated, the person will also have to be separated, since all the doing and suffering are not ascribed to natures but to persons. It is the person who does and suffers everything, the one thing according to this nature and the other thing according to the other nature, all of which scholars know perfectly well.[26]

Thus Luther says, "One dare not divide the person, leaving only the human nature,"[27] for the two natures in Christ "simply will not let themselves be separated and divided from each other. He has become one person and does not separate the humanity from himself."[28] To say otherwise, is to

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blind see and the lame walk, and only so could he say, 'Lo I am with you always.' To this Luther responded by charging that Zwingli so separated the two natures as to lose sight of their unity in one person." Tappert, "Christology and the Lord's Supper in the Perspective of History," Marburg Revisited, p. 57.

[25] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 211, 231; cf. pp. 213, 218, 229. Cf. "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John (Chap. 6-8)," LW 23: 101.

[26] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 213.

[27] Luther, "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John (Chap. 1-4)," LW 22: 362.

[28] Luther continues, "Thus you cannot shell the divinity from the humanity and lay it aside at some place from the humanity. For thereby you would be dividing the person and making the humanity merely a pod, indeed, a coat which the divinity put on and off. . . ." Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 219. Cf. "Sermons of the Gospel of St. John (Chap. 1-4)," LW 22: 113

fall into the heresy of Nestorius who separated the human nature of Christ from his divine nature and so divided the unity of the one person.[29]

It is on this basis that Luther violently objected when Zwingli put forth the argument that Christ, in offering his disciples the bread at the Last Supper, saying, "This is my body," was merely using figurative language to speak of his human nature, when he actually was calling on them to partake of his saving divinity in faith.[30] Zwingli called this figure of speech "alloeosis," and defined it as "an exchange or interchange of the two natures which are in one person, by which in naming one nature we mean the other or name both to mean only the one."[31]

But Luther was strongly opposed to the use of "alloeosis," since it seeks to apply things spoken of the person of Christ to only one nature or the other. He argues instead that

> . . . we should ascribe to the whole person whatever pertains to one part of the person, because both parts constitute one person. This is the way all the ancient teachers speak. . . . But this damned alloeosis exactly inverts the matter and changes it so that it ascribes to the parts what Scripture assigns to the whole person.[32]

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[29] See Luther, "Brief Confession Concerning the Holy Sacrament," LW 38: 307 (n.b. n. #42).

[30] CR 92: 618. See Robert H. Fischer, "Introduction," LW 37: xviii.

[31] CR 92: 925f. Trans. Robert H. Fischer in LW 37: 206 (n. #63). Cf. alternative translation by Pelikan in Luther the Expositor, p. 129.

[32] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 211.

Thus Luther lays down his own counter position, namely: "That which applies to one nature, applies to the entire person in the concrete."[33] Luther couples this principle with another key assertion, that "Wherever this person is, it is the single indivisible person, and if you can say, 'Here is God,' then you must also say, 'Christ the man is present too.' "[34] Because of the indivisibility of the person, Luther claims that "Christ must also be man wherever he is God," and that it is impossible "for God to be somewhere where Christ the man is not . . . without dividing the person."[35]

It is on the basis of this understanding that Luther erects his notion of "bodily ubiquity," namely that the body of Christ is everywhere present with the divinity because of the unity of the two natures in the one person.[36] Luther describes his position as follows:

> Our faith maintains that Christ is God and man, and the two natures are one person, so that this person may not be divided in two; therefore, . . . it must follow that . . . he is and can be wherever God is and that everything is full of Christ through and through even according to his humanity -- not according

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[33] Luther, "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John (Chap. 1-4)," LW 22: 328; cf. p. 352. Cf. "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John (Chap. 14-16)," LW 24: 105; "Lectures on the First Epistle of St. John" (1527), LW 30: 222.

[34] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 218; cf. pp. 219, 222, 223.

[35] Ibid., p. 229; cf. p. 218.

[36] See Heinecken, "Christology, the Lord's Supper and its Observance in the Church," p. 81.

to the first, corporeal, circumscribed mode, but according to the supernatural, divine mode.[37]

USE OF THE *COMMUNICATIO IDIOMATUM*

Luther provides further support for this teaching by calling upon the principle found in the writings of the Church Fathers known as the *communicatio idiomatum*, or the "communication of properties."[38] Luther describes

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[37] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 218; cf. p. 221.

[38] It must be emphasized that Luther does not base his teaching of bodily ubiquity upon the principle of the *communicatio idiomatum*. Rather, as Stephenson points out, it is merely one of several "apologetic devices" which he uses to defend his position. See Stephenson, "Martin Luther and the Eucharist," p. 457. The principle of the *communicatio idiomatum* was affirmed by many of the early Christiain Fathers, although it was often variously applied and remained for centuries in a largely unarticulated form. Among the early Partistic writers who gave clearest expression to the *communicatio idiomatum* were Tertullian and Origin; among the later Church Fathers who expressed this doctrine were Gregory of Nyssa and Epiphanius. The form in which the doctrine came to be used by the Arians and Apollinarians caused it to come under criticism for a time. This led to a more vigorous clarification as to the proper application of this doctrine at the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon. Cyril of Alexandria supplied new impetus to the doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* in opposing the position of Nestorius in his "*De incarnatione Unigeniti*," and the doctrine was subsequently given conciliar authority by Leo the Great in his "*Tomus ad Flavianum*." The doctrine came to be considered by the Council of Chalcedon in terms of its debate with the Nestorian position over whether or not Mary in bearing Christ is the "Theotokos," or bearer of God. The concept of the "Theotokos" here arises from a direct application of the principle of the *communicatio idiomatum*. When the Council of Chalcedon affirmed in its christological confession that Mary is the "Theotokos," it in effect ratified the principle of the *communicatio idiomatum* and gave it new importance for

this principle saying, "since the divinity and the humanity are one person in Christ, the Scriptures ascribe to the divinity, because of this personal union, all that happens to humanity, and vice versa."[39] Luther finds this principle amply demonstrated in Scripture, as when St. Paul speaks of "the Lord of glory" being crucified [I Cor. 2:8], and when St. John records Jesus' words regarding "the Son of Man ascending [into heaven] where he was before" [John 6:62].[40] We should note that Calvin also affirms the *communicatio idiomatum* as part of the historic confession of the church[41] and recognizes

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christology. See Aloys Grillmeier, Christ in Christian Tradition, trans. John Bowden (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1975) I: 122, 376, 436, 536. See Also John T. McNeill in Calvin, Institutes LCC 20: 483 (n. #4).

[39] Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 210. Cf. "On the Councils and the Church (1539)," LW 41: Church and Ministry III, trans. Charles M. Jacobs, et al., ed. Eric W. Gritsch (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966): 103; "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John (Chap. 1-4)," LW 22: 327, 346, 352, 492, 493; "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John (Chap. 14-16)," LW 24: 105-106.

[40] See Luther, "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John (Chap. 14-16)," LW 24: 106. Cf. "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John (Chap. 1-4) LW 22: 351, 362; "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 210. See also Luther's listing of other passages in "On the Councils and the Church," LW 41: 105-106.

[41] Calvin's own definition of the *communicatio idiomatum* is as follows: ". . . the Scriptures . . . sometimes attribute to [Christ] what must be referred solely to his humanity sometimes what belongs uniquely to his divinty; and sometimes what embraces both natures but fits neither alone. And they so earnestly express this union of the two natures that is in Christ as sometimes to interchange them. This figure of speech is called by the ancient writers 'the communicating of properties.' " Calvin, Institutes (II,14.1), pp. 482-83.

its basis in Scripture.[42] But Calvin does not give this principle the same broad application as Luther does, and he specifically rejects its use in reference to any claims of a bodily ubiquity.

Luther employs the *communicatio* to reinforce his insistence on the inseparability of the person of Christ and the consequent unity of the divine and human natures in his person. He says, "in this indivisible person [the humanity and divinity] are so united that the one cannot be separated from the other,"[43] and "These two natures in Christ ought not to be separated but united as much as possible."[44] His most extensive treatment of the subject is in an expository sermon of John 3:35 in which he says in part:

> You know about the communication of properties: two natures dwell in the Lord Christ, and yet he is but one person. These two natures retain their properties, and each also communicates its properties to the other. . . . The two natures, the human and the divine, are inseparable. They are so united in one person that the properties of the one nature are also attributed to the other. . . . Since the two natures are united in one person, the effect is that the properties are also united. Admittedly, the properties of the divine nature have nothing in common with human nature. I shall go beyond this and say

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[42] Ibid. (II,14.2-4), pp. 483-86. Cf. Calvin, Commentary on the Gospel According to John, 1: 174.

[43] Luther, "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John (Chap. 6-8)," LW 23: 148. Cf. "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John (Chap.1-4)," LW 22: 492; "Sermon on Psalm 8," (1537), LW 12 Selected Psalms I ed. Jaroslav Pelikan (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955): 126.

[44] Luther, "Disputation on 'The Word Was Made Flesh' (Account "A")," LW 38: 254. Cf. "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John (Chap. 1-4)," LW 22:346.

> that there is still less relationship between God and man. Yet these two natures are so united that there is only one God and Lord . . . . The two natures are so joined that the true deity and humanity are one.[45]

Luther's stress upon the unity of the two natures in the person of Christ is clearly evident in the above quotation. On the basis of this argument, Luther broadly applies the *communicatio* to the two natures of Christ making such statements as, "The infant Christ, who lies in the cradle and is suckled by the Virgin Mary, created heaven and earth,"[46] and "God became man, God suffered, and God died."[47] It should be emphasized, however, that Luther never makes such a characterization about one of Christ's natures in isolation from the entire person. In Luther's usage, it is always the person of whom these things are said,[48] and he employs the principle of the *communicatio*

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[45] Luther, "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John (Chap. 1-4)," LW 22: 491-93.

[46] Ibid., p. 352; cf. pp. 362, 492-93. Cf. also "On the Councils and the Church," LW 41: 100.

[47] Luther, "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John (Chap. 1-4)," LW 22: 492. Cf. "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John (Chap. 14-16)," LW 24: 99.

[48] E.g. "Indeed, you must say that the person (pointing to Christ) suffers, and dies. But this person is truly God, and therefore it is correct to say: the Son of God suffers. Although, so to speak, the one part (namely the divinity) does not suffer, nevertheless the person, who is God, suffers in the other part (namely, in the humanitiy)." Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 210. Cf. "Disputation on 'The Word Was Made Flesh'," LW 38: 254, 274.

idiomatum to show how "the attributes of both natures are ascribed and imputed to the whole person of Christ."[49]

Nevertheless, Calvin sees this broad transference of the divine and human properties as being reckless, and is anxious to maintain a proper distinction between the two natures. He seeks to downplay the principle of the *communicatio idiomatum*, describing it as merely "a term invented to some purpose by the holy fathers."[50] And he treats its application as an anomaly, saying that in the few scriptural passages where it occurs, the characteristics are "transferred improperly, although not without reason."[51] Thus he seeks to ensure that, in Wendel's words, "in the person of Christ, divinity and humanity keep their own characteristics without reacting upon each other any more than is required for the existence of this union."[52]

Calvin is concerned that the Lutheran position has crossed over the boundary of confessing a unity of person, to asserting a unity of the two natures themselves.[53] He makes the following distinction: "Although the two

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[49] Luther, "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John (Chap. 1-4)," LW 22: 352; cf. p. 361. Cf. "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John (Chap. 14-16)," LW 24: 105; "On the Councils and the Church," LW 41: 109.

[50] Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.10), LCC 21: 1402 (emphasis is mine).

[51] Ibid., (II,14.2), LCC 20: 484 (emphasis is mine).

[52] Wendel, Calvin, p. 222.

[53] "Unity of person in Christ is received without controversy by all the orthodox. If a unity of the divine with the human nature is affirmed, there is no pious person who will not abhor it. In the union, it is necessary that each nature retain its own properties." Calvin, Last Admonition to

natures form the one person of the Mediator, the properties of each remain distinct, since union is different from unity."[54] As Wendel again notes,

> What mattered above all to Calvin was to avoid anything that might be interpreted as a confusion of the divinity with the humanity, even at the centre of the personality of Christ.[55]

On his part, Calvin emphatically rejects any confusion or commingling between the two natures in Christ's person.[56] In discussing the Lutheran argument for ubiquity in his Institutes, he accuses his opponents of adopting the ancient Eutychian heresy saying,

> . . . some are carried away with such contentiousness as to say that because of the natures joined in Christ, wherever Christ's divinity is, there also is his flesh, which cannot be separated from it. As if that union had compounded from both natures some sort of intermediate being which was neither God nor man! So indeed did Eutychus teach. . . . But from Scripture we plainly infer that the one person of Christ so consists of two

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Westphal," TT 2: 451. And "the union of the human nature with the divine does not confound the unity of both, nor does the unity of the person mix up the divine nature with the human, so as not to leave each its peculiar properties." Ibid., p. 487.

[54] Calvin, "The Best Method of Obtaining Concord," LCC 22: 327.

[55] Wendel, Calvin, p. 220.

[56] Calvin, Institutes (II,14.1) LCC 20: 482, (II,14.4) pp. 486, 487, (II,14.7) p. 491. Cf. "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 451, 478; "Confession of Faith in Name of the Reformed Churches of France," TT 2: 141; Commentary on the Gospel According to John [I John 1:1], 2: 234-35.

natures that each nevertheless retains unimpaired its own distinctive character.[57]

In fairness to Luther, it must be stated that he does not fall into the Eutychean error of compounding the two natures of Christ into a single indistinguishable identity. In the midst of his call for the essential unity and indivisibility of Christ's person, he still emphasizes that the natures must always be differentiated.[58] Nor does Calvin, in stressing the distinction between the two natures, fall into the Nestorian error mentioned earlier of separating the natures; his call to maintain a distinction between the two natures always takes place within the context of the unity of Christ's person.[59] Both reformers in their time had to contend with opponents whose views they regarded as reflecting each of these abuses,[60] and both clearly

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[57] Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.30) LCC 22: 1402.

[58] See Luther, "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John (Chap. 14-16)," LW 24: 105.

[59] See Calvin, "Commentary on the Gospel According to John [1:14]" 1: 20.

[60] E.g. Luther accuses Zwingli and his followers of Nestorianism, and Schwenckfeld and his followers of Eutychianism in their interpretations of Christ's eucharistic words. See Luther, "Brief Confession Concerning the Holy Sacrament." LW 38: 287, 307. Calvin, in his dealings with Servetus and other anti-Trinitarians, sees both heresies being manifested in their positions. See Calvin, Institutes (II,14.4-8), LCC 20: 486-493, (IV,17.30) LCC 21: 1402. Cf. Commentary on the Gospel of John [I John 1:1]," 2: 234-35. Note the following assessment by McLelland: "Even before Marburg, . . . the battleline was drawn up in the position outlined at Chalcedon. The campaign was to be conducted as between Nestorians and Eutycheans. The real tradegy was that these terms of reference were adopted for all future Lutheran-

avoided these excesses in stating their own positions. But this does not eliminate the tension between their two approaches.[61] Luther, for example, regards the heretical teachings of both Nestorius and Eutyches as stemming from their refusal to employ the mutual communication of properties between Christ's two natures.[62] Calvin, however, refuses to apply the *communicatio idiomatum* in any broad sense precisely because he feels that it leads to the abuses found in the ancient heresies.[63]

Calvin, then, while admitting to the communication of properties in the person of Christ, gives the *communicatio idiomatum* only limited application. He is aware of the Scriptures which attach to Christ's humanity that which is properly characteristic only of his divinity, and conversely; but he also recognizes the large number of texts which differentiate between the two

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Reformed engagement. . . . From Luther and Zwingli through Westphal and Calvin, Brentz and Peter Martyr, to Andreas and Beza, the posture of debate remains essentially the same." McLelland, "Lutheran-Reformed Debate on the Eucharist and Christology," p. 43. Cf. Pelikan, The Christian Tradition, 4: 158.

[61] See McLelland, "Lutheran-Reformed Debate on the Eucharist and Christology," p. 50.

[62] Luther, "On the Councils and the Church," LW 41: 100-101, 102-103, 108-109, 112, 117-118.

[63] See Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal, TT 2: 451, 478.

natures of Christ, and he prefers to emphasize this point rather than the other.[64]

Luther, on the other hand, prefers to emphasize those Scriptures which indicate a communication of properties in the natures of Christ, and applies them just as broadly as he can. He extends the traditional doctrine of the communication of properties to claim:

> [Since] Christ is God and man in one person . . . whatever is said of him as man must also be said of him as God, namely, Christ has died, and Christ is God; therefore God died -- not the separated God, but God united with humanity. . . . On the other hand, whatever is said of God must also be ascribed to the man, namely, God created the world and is almighty; the man Christ is God, therefore the man Christ created the world and is almighty. The reason for this is that since God and man have become one person, it follows that this person bears the 'idiomata' of both natures.[65]

But such a claim is an affront to Calvin's view concerning the necessity of properly distinguishing between the natures of Christ, and so Calvin takes the opposite opinion that "though he was one person of God and man, it does not follow that his human nature was given anything that was properly divine. . . ."[66] Thus Calvin is firm in his desire to limit the application of the

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[64] E.g. "We have cited so many testimonies that distinguish his divinity from his humanity, and there are so many others besides, that they can stop the mouths of even the most quarrelsome persons." Calvin, Institutes (II,14.4), LCC 20: 487.

[65] Luther, "On the Councils and the Church," LW 41: 103

[66] Calvin, Harmony of the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke [Luke 2:40], 1: 107

communication of properties only to those instances where Scripture has made the communication absolutely necessary; in all other instances the divine and human properties are to be understood as functioning distinctly.

FURTHER CONSEQUENCES ARISING OUT OF THE CHRISTOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES

This contrasting emphasis on the part of Luther and Calvin with regard to the unity of Christ's person and the distinction of his two natures, had further consequences for the eucharistic debate. As Wendel observes,

> While Luther has taken the unity of the person of Christ as his point of departure and, by extending the traditonal notions of communication of the idioms and of the ubiquity, finished by admitting the ubiquity not only of the divine but also of the human nature of Christ, Calvin took his stand upon the immutability and incommunicability of the divine, and thence arrived logically . . . at very different conclusions. He retained the ubiquity of the single divine nature, which he even accentuated to some degree. But he categorically rejected the ubiquity of the body of Christ. . . .[67]

We shall now explore these consequences in greater detail.

Throughout his writings, Calvin raises two main objections to the Lutheran teaching on ubiquity. He says,

> We deny not that the flesh and blood of Christ are communicated to us. We only explain the mode, lest any carnal eating should either derogate in any respect from the heavenly glory of Christ, or overthrow the reality of his human nature.[68]

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[67] Wendel, Calvin, p. 224.

[68] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 411.

These are the same two objections raised earlier in the Institutes of 1543,[69] (see Chapter Four) and they are also repeated in his "Exposition on the Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments" of 1554.[70] Although Calvin raises other arguments as well against the teaching of ubiquity,[71] we shall focus on the two points raised here, since they reflect the differences arising

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[69] Calvin Institutes (IV,17.19) LCC 21: 1381-82; (IV,17.32) p. 1404.

[70] Calvin, "Mutual Consent in Regard to the Sacraments (Exposition)," TT 2: 241.

[71] In the final edition of the Institutes, Calvin lists five points of objection to the teaching of ubiquity:

1. They say that Christ's body is invisibly present in the Supper, but where is the scriptural proof of the invisibility of Christ's body?
2. They in effect make Christ's body double: visible in heaven and at the same time invisible on earth in the Supper.
3. They are in danger of letting the body be "swallowed up by the divinity" by making it to share the omnipresent attributes of the divine nature.
4. Their teaching defies the nature of a body, and makes what they call a body to be no more that a phantom.
5. Scripture tells us that our resurrected body is to be like Christ's resurrected body; are we then to hope for a body which is invisible and infinite? See Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.29) LCC 21: 1398-99.

Points three and four are addressed in the two concerns raised above. For Calvin's argument the Christ's body is not invisibly present in the Supper, see "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 387, 388, 454, 472, 489-90; "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 315. For his argument that Christ's body in not made "double," see "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 327; "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 365, 380-81, 386-88, 408, 410, 442-43, 458. And for his argument on the nature of a resurrected body see "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 289-90; "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 391, 458.

between Luther and Calvin in their different understandings of the roles played by the two natures of Christ.

Calvin first says we must not "derogate in any respect from the heavenly glory of Christ." Wendel notes that

> From the very beginnings of his theological reflections [Calvin] had felt the necessity of safeguarding the divinity of Christ from any contamination by humanity. Certainly Christ was both true God and true man and he conjoined the two natures in a single person, but that was not an exception, not even a unique exception, to the absolute transcendence of the divinity.[72]

What Calvin so strongly objects to, is that Luther and his followers through the teaching of ubiquity and the employment of the *communicatio idiomatum*, held that the humanity of Christ participates fully with the divinity and is not subordinate to it. Locher even claims that "For Luther, the deity and manhood of Christ coincide, virtually to the point of identity."[73] But Calvin finds it necessary to safeguard the transcendence of

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[72] Wendel, Calvin, p. 220 (emphasis is mine). Cf. his statement: "Calvin affirms . . . that the distinction between the two natures is indispensable if we do not want to end by admitting a change in the divinity itself, brought about by the fact of the incarnation and necessarily equivalent to a dimunition of it." Ibid., p. 219. For a further discussion on how the absolute transcendence of the divine over the human features prominently in Calvin's theology, see pp. 151ff. Cf. McDonnell, Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist, pp. 160, 165-66.

[73] Locher, Zwingli's Thought, p. 173. This comment is made in contrast to the position of Zwingli, who, Locher says, maintained that in the incarnation, "the divine nature [of Christ] is active whereas the human nature (as a creature) is passive" (ibid.). Thus, he says Zwingli holds that "with

the Godhead -- even with respect to the person of Christ. The divinity remains entire, even without reference to the manhood of Christ. As Niesel says, "It retains always its fundamental transcendence over human nature."[74] And as Wendel goes on to say, "The divinity of Christ . . . is not bound by [Christ's] humanity . . . although it dwells in that humanity. In other terms, the divinity is not dependent on the humanity even in the smallest degree."[75]

The affirmation that in the incarnation the Eternal Son of God was united with but not restricted to the humanitiy, later came to be called the *extra Calvinisticum.*[76] Calvin describes his principle in the Institutes in these words:

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regard to the human nature of Jesus, there is a definite subordinationism" (p. 175).

[74] Niesel, The Theology of Calvin, p. 119.

[75] Wendel, Calvin, p. 223. Cf. McDonnell, Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist, p. 221. One may note at this point the argument put forward by Karl Barth in this Dogmatics (I.2,sect.15.2) that the Lutherans stress the enhypostatic reality of the humanity to such an extent that one can speak of no manhood apart from God, and no God apart from the man Christ. In contrast, Reformed theology stressed the anhypostatic reality of the divinity apart from the humanity and the freedom of the divine even with respect to the incarnation. Cited in Joseph McLelland, "Lutheran-Reformed Debate on the Eucharist and Christology," p. 17.

[76] Willis notes that the term arose as part of the Giessen-Tübingen debate of the 1620s, where the Lutheran theologians referred to the claim of the Eternal Son's existence beyond the flesh of Christ as 'that Calvinistic beyond' (*illud extra Calvinisticum*). He goes on to say that there is nothing uniquely Calvinist about the teaching, and that it is affirmed in principle by many Church Fathers, from Origin and Theodore of Mopsuestia, to

> . . . the very same Christ, who, according to the flesh, dwelt as Son of man on earth, was God in heaven. In this manner, he is said to have descended to that place according to his divinity, not because divinity left heaven to hide itself in the prison house of the body, but because even though it filled all things, still in Christ's very humanity it dwelt bodily, that is, by nature, and in a certain ineffable way.[77]

And he describes as "something absurd," the argument that

> . . . if the Word of God became flesh, then he was confined within the narrow prison of an earthly body. . . . For even if the Word in his immeasurable essence united with the nature of man into one person, we do not imagine that he was confined therein. . . . [Rather,] the Son of God descended from heaven in such a way that without leaving heaven, he willed to be borne in the virgin's womb, to go about the earth, and to hang upon the cross; yet he continuously filled the world even as he had done from the beginning![78]

Luther was not unaware of this argument,[79] and, in fact, he agrees with it, saying, "According to his human nature, he dwelt on earth, died, and

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Athanasius and Cyril, to St. Thomas and Gabriel Biel." Willis, Calvin's Catholic Christology, pp. 1, 20, 23, 60.

[77] Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.30) LCC 21: 1402-03.

[78] Ibid., (II,13.4), LCC 20: 481.

[79] At the Marburg Colloquy, Zwingli quoted to Luther a passage from Fulgentius ("*Ad Thrasamundum*") which Luther by his reply seems to have also been well acquainted with. It reads: "[Christ] is one and the same who according to his human substance was absent from heaven when he was on earth, and left the earth when he ascended into heaven, and who according to his immeasurable divine substance did not leave heaven when he decended from heaven, nor left the earth when he ascended into heaven." Cited in Sasse, This Is My Body, p. 259 (n. #100).

was buried; but according to his divine nature, he ascends into heaven again, where in his divine nature, he has always remained."[80] According to the Lutheran view, however, the position established by the *extra Calvinisticum* was superfluous, since it contained nothing that was not already provided by their use of the *communicatio idiomatum*.[81] But for Calvin, who chose to limit the *communicatio*, and who denied that the body of Christ can take on the omnipresent characteristics of the divine nature, it was necessary that the divinity not be limited by the finite characteristics of the humanity.[82] In fact, Willis argues, it is the very principle of the *extra Calvinisticum* which

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[80] Luther, "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John (Chap. 1-4)," LW 22: 326; cf. pp. 325, 328.

[81] See Willis, Calvin's Catholic Christology, p. 24.

[82] Willis discusses at length the commonly held opinion that the *extra Calvinisticum* "is governed by an espousal of the philosophical principle *finitum non capax infinitium* [the finite cannot contain the infinite]" (Ibid., p. 74). This is not the case, he says, but rather the "imagery and language [are] drawn from political life" (p. 100; cf. pp. 75-76) to safeguard the understanding that "In the incarnation the Son of God left heaven only in such a way that he continued to exercise his dominion over creation; the incarnation was the extension of his empire, not the momentary abdication of it" (p. 76; cf. p. 99). He concludes, "In the *extra Calvinisticum*, Calvin is asserting that Christ is able to be God for us because he does not cease to be God over us in the incarnation and because the humanity of Christ never ceases to be our humanity in the movement of God toward us. In Jesus Christ the vindication of the majesty of God and the re-establishment and fulfillment of the humanity of man take place. . . . Such is Calvin's affirmation of the *extra Calvinisticum*, not the philosophical principle of *finitum non capax infiniti*" (p. 7).

guarantees for Calvin that the human nature of Christ remains "finite and creaturely even when hypostatically joined to the infinite Creator."[83]

Concerning the second of Calvin's two main objections about ubiquity, we find that he is equally certain that the Lutheran teaching of bodily ubiquity violates the nature of a human body. We recall his criteria as stated in the Institutes: "Let nothing inappropriate to human nature be ascribed to his body, as happens when it is said either to be infinite or to be put in a number of places at once."[84] In his opinion, any such claim of ubiquity clearly overthrows the reality of Christ's human nature. He says,

> . . . if to fill all things in an invisible manner is numbered among the gifts of a glorified body, it is plain that the substance of the body is wiped out, and that no difference between deity and human nature is left.[85]

And, "if the flesh of Christ is so conjoined to the Godhead that there is no distinction between the immensity of the one and the finite mode of existence of the other," the result is to "rob Christ of his human nature."[86] He warns that we

> . . . may not take from him his own stature, or parcel him out to many places at once, or invest him with boundless

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[83] Ibid., p. 18.

[84] Calvin Institutes (IV,17.19) LCC 21: 1381-82.

[85] Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.29) LCC 21: 1398-99.

[86] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 385.

magnitude to be spread through heaven and earth. For these things are plainly in conflict with a nature truly human.[87]

Calvin specifically rejects the Lutheran argument for the ubiquity of Christ's body on the basis of the unity of Christ's person,[88] arguing instead that "The hypostatic union of the two natures in not equivalent to a communication of the immensity of the Godhead to the flesh."[89] Calvin focuses much of his criticism against the supposed "immensity" which a ubiquitous body would possess,[90] and firmly states, "we repudiate the bodily immensity which others feign."[91] He pleads with his hearers to "Let Christ keep his flesh, which is real flesh, and do not hold the mistaken view that his body stretches all over heaven and earth."[92] And he argues that if Christ's body encompasses heaven and earth as the Lutherans claim, then his bodily ascension would be meaningless. For "If he now occupies the whole world in

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[87] Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.19) LCC 21: 1381.

[88] See Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 465.

[89] Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 21: 311.

[90] See Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 381, 385, 452, 453, 454, 465, 472, 489, 490; "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 327; "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 275; "The Best Method of Obtaining Concord, LCC 22: 327.

[91] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 401.

[92] Calvin, Commentary on the First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians [I Cor. 11:24]," p. 247. Cf. "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 384.

respect to his body, what else was his ascension . . . but a fallacious and empty show?"[93]

It should be noted that Zwingli also opposed Luther's teaching of ubiquity on the grounds that a body of such immense proportions could not be a real body.[94] And he was concerned that by extending the ubiquitous character of the divine nature to the humanity, the human nature itself would be lost.[95] As Siggins puts it, "Zwingli felt that to communicate such modes of presence to Christ's flesh and blood could only mean the obliteration of the human by the divine."[96]

Calvin too charges that in extending the property of ubiquity to Christ's body, "the human nature of his flesh is destroyed."[97] Following Augustine's example, he cautions that "we must beware of so elevating the divinity of the man as to destroy the reality of the body,"[98] and he warns

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[93] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 286. Cf. "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 386, 454, 489.

[94] See Luther, "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper," LW 37: 276.

[95] See Zwingli, "Fidei Ratio" (1530) presented to the Emperor at the Diet of Augsburg, cited in Barclay, Protestant Doctrine of the Lord's Supper, p. 101.

[96] Siggins, Luther's Doctrine of Christ, p. 236 (emphasis is mine).

[97] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 383; cf. p. 384.

[98] Calvin, "Clear Explanation Concerning the Holy Supper," LCC 22: 306. Cf. Institutes (IV,17.28) LCC 21: 1397; "Last Admonition to

against letting Christ's body be "swallowed up" by the divinity."[99] He charges that the Lutherans, in extending the divine attributes to the body, "make a spirit out of Christ's flesh,"[100] and give him "a spiritual body, which has no affinity with a real body."[101] And finally, he says that the Lutherans in "depriving Christ of the reality of his flesh, transform him into a phantasm,"[102] and that by their fictitious ideas "we are drawn away from the true body of Christ to some indescribable phantom. For in vain do they exclaim that it is the true body of Christ, while they make it a false body."[103] In each of these criticisms there is an underlying fear that if the humanity of Christ is overthrown through the principle of ubiquity, then the reality of the incarnation will thereby also be put into question, and ultimately our very redemption through Christ, the divine-human Mediator, will be in danger of being invalidated.[104]

Westphal," TT 2: 382. See Augustine, "Letter to Dardanus," Fathers of the Church, 12: 228.

[99] Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.29) LCC 21: 1398. Cf. "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 381.

[100] Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.29) LCC 21: 1401.

[101] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 282.

[102] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 445; cf. pp. 435, 456. Cf. Institutes (IV,17.7) LCC 21: 1367.

[103] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal," TT 2: 413-14.

[104] See McDonnell, Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist, pp. 211-12.

It is ironic that the Lutheran position should be characterized as doing away with the reality of Christ's human nature. Luther's initial concern in dealing with the sacramentarians was to preserve the reality of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament against those who claimed that Christ was only "spiritually" present. And from his thoroughly incarnationalist perspective, if one were to deny the possibility of the real presence of Christ in the Supper, this would be tantamount to denying Christ's ability to take on human flesh and blood in the incarnation. Now, however, his position is being characterized as destroying that very flesh, and transforming it into "spirit," and thus nullifying the incarnation.

The dilemma which Luther faced was that he could only claim that Christ was bodily present in the sacrament (whenever and wherever the eucharist is celebrated) by arguing that the human nature shares the properties of the divine nature and is present as the divinity is -- in a ubiquitous manner. But his emphasis on the unity of Christ's person, and that in this person the humanity shares everything that belongs to the divinity, gave rise to fears that the distinctive characteristics of the humanity would thereby effectively be lost. Zwingli, Oecolampadius, and Calvin were not alone in expressing these concerns. More contemporary voices have also echoed this judgment on Luther's position. Willis, e.g. says that in attempting to affirm the flesh of Christ, "the Lutherans could only engage in a new kind of theology of glory, fatally speculating away the reality of precisely that flesh."[105]

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105 Willis, Calvin's Catholic Christology, p. 24.

This criticism, however, seems too extreme in its judgment. Rather, it may be said that a lasting tension exists in the explanations which Luther and Calvin each provide in attempting to show how the body and blood of Christ are actually made present and available to the believer in the sacrament. Both affirm that the involvement of the humanity of Christ is essential to the communication of Christ's benefits in the Supper, and they each seek to preserve both the integrity and the activity of Christ's human nature in bestowing these benefits. As McLelland notes: "It is the irony of the debate that both sides wished to make this same point, but each thought to safeguard it from a different point in the christological circumference."[106] Thus, Luther based his argument upon the unity of the two natures in the person of Christ (without denying their distinction), while Calvin argued on the basis of the distinction between the two natures (without denying their unity). Each approach was met with its own set of difficulties and criticisms.[107] These two contrasting approaches led to irreconcilable differences which could not be resolved during the period of debate which began in the sixteenth century, and they each, in turn, became part of the definitive stance of the Lutheran and Reformed traditions.

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[106] McLelland, "Lutheran-Reformed Debate on the Eucharist and Christology," p. 46.

[107] See Tappert, "Christology and the Lord's Supper in the Perspective of History," p. 63.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EUCHARISTIC DEBATE

THE CONFESSIONALIZING OF LUTHER'S AND CALVIN'S POSITIONS

The second round of the eucharistic debate between Calvin and Luther's successors resulted in an impass of as great a magnitude as that experienced in the first round of the debate between Luther and his early opponents. Following the death of each reformer, their teachings were not only rigorously defended by their respective followers, but also came in time to be "confessionalized" through formal subscription to these positions by the pastors and teachers in the respective religious communions. Calvin, embroiled in debate with the Gnesio-Lutheran representatives following Luther's death, directly experienced the early stages of this process. He complained at one point to Westphal how Luther's personal views had become excessively prescriptive for subsequent theological expression within the Lutheran camp, saying:

> Luther having always held the principle, that it was not permitted either to himself or to any other mortal to be wise

> above the Word, it is strange and lamentable that the Church of God should be so imperiously bound down to his decrees.[1]

But this trend toward making the views of a revered deceased leader determinative for subsequent theological thought was not a phenomenon which occurred only within the Lutheran camp. Within a few years of Calvin's death, his teachings also came to be normative within the Swiss congregations. The "confessionalizing" of Calvin's distinctive teaching on the Lord's Supper was accomplished rather quickly following his death, mainly due to his extensive work with other Swiss reformers in formulating common confessional positions. In the more fragmented Lutheran churches, divisiveness and infighting delayed the process so that a definitive confessionalization of Luther's views was not achieved until some thirty years after his death.

In 1561 (three years before Calvin's death), Heinrich Bullinger composed a lengthy confessional document summarizing the essential teachings of the evangelical faith. We recall that Calvin had worked extensively with Bullinger in preparing the Consensus Tigurinus of 1549 which had united all of the Swiss in a common confession of faith. In this new confessional statement, Bullinger retained each of Calvin's distinctive teachings with regard to both the nature of the sacraments, and the means of the believer's communion with Christ in the Holy Supper.

The confession was later forwarded to Frederick III, elector of the Palatinate, whose chancellor had requested a statement of the Swiss position

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[1] Calvin, "Last Admonition to Westphal, TT 2: 447.

in answer to the barrage of criticism coming from the Lutheran camp. It was subsequently adopted (with only minor editing) by each of the Swiss cantons, and became known as "The Second Helvetic Confession." It was published in both Latin and German in March of 1566, and came to be, as Cochrane puts it, "the most widely received among Protestant Confessions."[2]

The confession penned by Bullinger faithfully reproduces Calvin's teachings with regard to the Lord's Supper: Calvin's distinction between the "sign" and the "thing signified" is prominently retained.[3] It rejects both the Roman Catholic teaching of transubstantiation whereby "the symbols are changed into the thing signified, or cease to be what they are in their own nature,"[4] as well as the more radical "spiritualized" view that the physical

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[2] Arthur C. Cochrane. "Introduction [to The Second Helvetic Confession, 1566]", Reformed Confessions of the Sixteenth Century (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966), pp. 220-21. We should note that the Reformed Churches of today are not bound by a single collection of confessional documents, as are most Lutheran Church bodies. Their situation is much more diverse in nature, with various confessions of faith being subscribed to by various Reformed Churches at different points in history. Other later confessions of faith exist within the Reformed Churches which are also essentially "Calvinist" in orientation, e.g. "The Westminster Confession" subscribed to by most Presbyterian bodies. "The Second Helvetic Confession" has been chosen for analysis here primarily because of its official adoption only two years following Calvin's death, its clear fidelity to Calvin's teachings, and its broad reception among Reformed Churches at an early date.

[3] "The Second Helvetic Confession, 1566" (Article XIX), Reformed Confessions of the Sixteenth Century, pp. 277, 279, 280, 281.

[4] Ibid. (Article XIX), p. 280.

signs are not needed at all to enjoy the benefits which they signify.[5] Corporeal (Capernaitic) eating of Christ's body is expressly rejected[6] in favor of a spiritual eating and communion with Christ.[7] The confession denies that "the body of Christ is hidden corporeally under the bread," and instead affirms the point so central for Calvin, that "The body of Christ is in heaven at the right hand of the Father; and therefore our hearts are to be lifted up on high, and not to be fixed on the bread. . . ."[8] The confession also repeats Calvin's distinctive teaching that the Holy Spirit is the means by which we on earth commune with Christ's body in heaven, and even retains the ambiguous language of Calvin in describing this as both the operation of the Holy Spirit[9] and of Christ himself.[10]

The confession aviods the "substantialist" terminology of the Lutherans in describing the manner of Christ's presence in the Supper, while

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[5] "Nor do we approve of those who despise the visible aspect of the sacraments because of the invisible, and so believe the signs to be superfluous." Ibid. (Article XIX), p. 281.

[6] Ibid. (Article XXI), pp. 284-85.

[7] "There is also a spiritual eating of Christ's body; not such that we think that thereby the food itself is to be changed into spirit, but whereby the body and blood of the Lord, while remaining in their own essence and property, are spiritually communicated to us, certainly not in a corporeal but in a spiritual way, by the Holy Spirit." Ibid. (Article XXI), p. 285; cf. p. 286.

[8] Ibid. (Article XXI), p. 287. Cf. (Article XI), p. 245.

[9] Ibid. (Article XXI), p. 285; cf. p. 284.

[10] Ibid. (Article XXI), p. 287.

affirming, as Calvin did, that "the substance and matter of the sacrament . . . is Christ,[11] and that "the very body of Christ was truly given for us"[12] in the Holy Supper. Without specifically using the term, the Confession explicitly rejects the Lutheran teaching of a "sacramental union," when it states: "We do not, therefore, so join the body of the Lord and his blood with the bread and wine as to say that the bread itself is the body of Christ except in a sacramental way"[13] (i.e. that the sign takes on the name of the thing signified[14]). The Confession also explicitly rejects the Lutheran teaching of a bodily ubiquity, in stating: "Therefore, we do not in any way teach that . . . Christ according to his human nature is still in this world and thus is everywhere."[15] The Confession also insists that faith must be present for Christ to be truly received (with his benefits) in the sacrament.[16] Therefore, the Lutheran concept of the objectivity of Christ's presence in the sacrament is rejected, in stating:

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[11] Ibid. (Article XIX), p. 278.

[12] Ibid. (Article XXI), p. 284.

[13] Ibid. (Article XXI), p. 287.

[14] Ibid. (Article XIX), p. 280.

[15] Ibid. (Article XI), p. 244.

[16] ". . . he who outwardly receives the sacrament by true faith, not only receives the sign, but also . . . enjoys the thing itself. . . . But he who comes to this sacred Table of the Lord without faith, communicates only in the sacrament and does not receive the substance of the sacrament whence comes life and salvation." Ibid. (Article XXI), pp. 286-87.

> We do not approve of the doctrine of those who teach that grace and the things signified are so bound to and included in the signs that whoever participate outwardly in the signs, no matter what sort of persons they be, also inwardly participate in the grace and things signified.[17]

In its place, Calvin's concept of the objectivity of the promise is affirmed, in saying:

> . . . the sacraments, which by the Word consist of signs and the things signified, remain true and inviolate sacraments, signifying not only sacred things, but, by God offering, the things signified, even if unbelievers do not receive the things offered. This is not the fault of God who gives and offers them, but the fault of men who receive them without faith and illegitimately; but whose unbelief does not invalidate the faithfulness of God.[18]

The Confession reaffirms the ancient creedal statement concerning the two natures of Christ in the one divine-human person, stating that

> . . . these are bound and united with one another in such a way that they are not absorbed, or confused, or mixed, but are united and joined together in one person -- the properties on the two natures being unimpaired and permanent.[19]

And the Confession restricts the use of the "*communicatio idiomatum*" to the limited role which Calvin himself prescribed for it, of "explaining and reconciling apparently contradictory passages [of Scripture]."[20]

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[17] Ibid. (Article XIX), p. 281. Cf. (Article XXI), p. 287.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid. (Article XI), p. 244.

[20] Ibid.

The Second Helvetic Confession fixed Calvin's teaching in a confessionalized form which later became normative for the Reformed Churches of France, Scotland, Hungary, Poland and the Netherlands. Even in the present century, it retains official status in most of the Reformed Churches of Eastern Europe,[21] and is listed among the confessions of faith of some Presbyterian and Reformed Churches in North America.

The "confessionalizing" of Luther's teachings took a longer route toward being accomplished. It was complicated by the fact that the normative statement of faith for the Lutherans, the Augsburg Confession, had been formulated by Melanchthon rather than Luther. In addition to the original Confession of 1530, he had also composed an altered version (the "variata") in 1540 which Calvin has subscribed to. Melanchthon was the figurehead of a conciliatory faction within the Lutheran communion which viewed Calvin and his teachings in a largely favorable light. The Philippists, as this party came to be known, found itself under attack after Luther's death from the Gnesio-Lutheran faction led by Matthias Flacius Illyricus, which took a hard line against anyone whom they regarded as being "crypto-Calvinist" in orientation.

An open split between the Lutherans at the Colloquy of Worms in 1557 led to a series of complex theological negotiations over the next twenty years which sought to establish a uniform position on Lutheran doctrinal issues. These discussions finally culminated in the issuing of the "Torgau

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[21] Cochrane. "Introduction [to The Second Helvetic Confession, 1566]", Reformed Confessions of the Sixteenth Century, p. 221.

Book" in 1576 (named for the conference of theologians convened in Torgau by the Elector of Saxony). The contents of this book was then summarized into an "Epitome" which was circulated to all territories adhering to the Augsburg Confession," with requests for comments and criticisms by their chief theologians. On the basis of the memoranda thus received, the Torgau Book was reworked into the "Solid Declaration" of 1577, which over the next three years was itself circulated throughout the Lutheran territories. In all, 8,188 theologians, ministers, and teachers signed the "Solid Declaration," which, together with the "Epitome," forms the present "Formula of Concord." The confession succeeded in solidifying the Lutheran stance, and with its broad subscription, came the pledge henceforth "to remain unanimously in this confession of faith and to regulate all religious controversies and their explanations according to it."[22]

The stated aim of the Formula of Concord was to present the "final explanation of our conviction" with regard to the various controversies which had arisen since the signing of the original Augsburg Confession, and to declare "Christian unanimity and agreement among oursleves" in presenting "the current Christian interpretation" of that Confession.[23] The scope of the Formula of Concord is thus not as broad as that of the Augsburg Confession, since it limits itself only to the contentious issues which had arisen through controversy with other parties. The document is thoroughly polemical in style. It consists of eleven sections, each dealing with a different

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[22] "Preface," The Book of Concord, p. 14.

[23] Ibid., p. 8.

contentious issue, and arranged in the form of an opening statement, a list of affirmative theses (giving the agreed upon Lutheran position), and a corresponding list of antitheses (wherein the contrary doctrines are condemned). This is followed by a final section on additional errors held by various religious groups. It is sweeping in its condemnation of Roman Catholic, Swiss, Anabaptist, and "Crypto-Calvinist" positions.

Upon inspection, one finds the majority of the "Gnesio-Lutheran" claims represented in the Formula of Concord, and as Chadwick notes, it contained such an "uncompromising exclusion of the Reformed doctrine of the eucharist" that "no Philippist could subscribe to it."[24] While the Formula of Concord, then, represents the final and unified position of the Lutherans in the Sixteenth Century with regard to the eucharistic controversy which we have been examining, we must also recognize that it reflects the rigid position espoused by Westphal and others during the final phase of the eucharistic debate, to the exclusion of the moderate voices within Lutheranism which favored greater accord with the Reformed churches on the doctrine of the eucharist.

In presenting the Lutheran teaching on the Lord's Supper, the Formula of Concord prominently affirms not only the doctrine of the "real presence," but also the three distinctive Lutheran claims which were featured in the final phase of the eucharistic controversy: the claim of a sacramental union between the elements of bread and wine and the body and blood of

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[24] Owen Chadwick, The Reformation (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), p. 144.

Christ in the Supper (the *unio sacramentalis*), the claim of an oral reception of the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament (the *manducatio oralis*), and the claim that all who receive the sacrament receive the body and blood of Christ regardless of whether they are believers of unbelievers (the *manducatio impiorum*). These last three teachings, we saw, were only briefly touched upon by Luther in his writings. In the Formula of Concord, however, they receive prominent attention along with the affirmation of the real presence.[25]

The first of the "affirmative theses" in the Formula of Concord presents the Lutheran teaching of the real presence in a direct and forceful manner: "We believe, teach, and confess that in the Holy Supper the body and blood of Christ are truly and essentially present and are truly distributed and received with the bread and wine."[26] The second thesis in turn affirms the

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[25] In the opening statement of the section dealing with the Lord's Supper (Article VII), each of these points (with the sole exception of the claim for a "sacramental union") is embodied in what is described as "the chief question at issue between our doctrine and the sacramentarian doctrine": "The question is, In the Holy Communion are the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ truly and essentially present if they are distributed with the bread and wine and if they are received orally by all those who use the sacrament, be they worthy of unworthy, godly or godless, believers or unbelievers, the believers for life and salvation, the unbelievers for judgment? The Sacramentarians say No; we say Yes." "Formula of Concord" (Epitome), Book of Concord, pp. 481-82 (emphasis is mine). Cf. the parallel statement that "the Sacramentarians . . . deny the true, essential presence and the oral eating of the body of Christ, in which here on earth both the worthy and the unworthy alike participate." (Solid Declaration), p. 585.

[26] Ibid., (Epitome) p. 482. Cf. (Solid Declaration) p. 570.

"sacramental union" between Christ's body and blood and the elements of the Supper: Because "the words of the testament of Christ are to be understood in no other way than in their literal sense," the confession states, we are not to understand these words "as though the bread symbolized the absent body and the wine the absent blood of Christ, but that because of the sacramental union they are truly the body and blood of Christ."[27]

The signers of the Formula of Concord also firmly reject the teaching that Christ's body is locally contained in heaven, and therefore cannot be "essentially" present in the Supper.[28] In particular, they condemn the Calvinist teaching "that the believers should not seek the body of Christ in the bread and wine of the Holy Supper, but should lift their eyes from the bread to heaven and there seek the body of Christ."[29] Also rejected, is the teaching that Christ is present in the Supper only by his divine virtue, power, operation, or merit,[30] or that it is "through the Spirit of Christ, which is

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[27] Ibid., (Epitome) p. 482. It should be noted that the concept of "sacramental union" is employed in the Formula of Concord both to distinguish the Lutheran teaching of the real presence from the Roman Catholic teaching of a real presence via transubstantiation [(Solid Declaration), pp. 571-72, 575], and to affirm the real presence in contradistinction to the "sacramentarian" teaching of only a spiritual (or even only a symbolic) reception of Christ in the Supper [see (Epitome), pp. 482, 483].

[28] Ibid. (Solid Declaration), p. 590. Cf. (Epitome), p. 485.

[29] Ibid. (Epitome), p. 485. Cf. (Solid Declaration), pp. 569, 590.

[30] Ibid. (Solid Declaration), p. 589; cf. (Epitome), p. 481. See also (Solid Declaration), pp. 569-70, 578.

everywhere," that we "are united with the body of Christ, which is in heaven."[31]

The Lutherans, like the Calvinists, distinguish between "spiritual eating" and "sacramental eating" in partaking of the sacrament. "Spiritual eating," they equate with faith, and "sacramental eating," they maintain, consists of the oral reception of "the true, essential body and blood of Christ."[32] Furthermore, the Lutherans assert that the true body and blood of Christ is always (orally) received in partaking of the sacrament, regardless of whether faith is present or not. In their understanding, the sacramental union guarantees that "all who receive the blessed bread also partake of the body of Christ."[33] Therefore, in one of their affirmative theses, they clearly state: "We believe, teach, and confess that not only the genuine believers and those

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[31] Ibid. (Solid Declaration), p. 570.

[32] Ibid. (Solid Declaration), pp. 580-81; cf. p. 582. We recall that Calvin described "sacramental eating" as the mere reception of the bread and wine apart from receiving the body and blood of Christ, through lack of faith. According to the Calvinist position, there is no oral reception of Christ's body and blood with the bread and wine at all; rather, Christ communicates his true body and blood to the believer in a spiritual manner. The Lutherans specifically reject the position that there is no oral, but only a spiritual reception of Christ in the Supper. [(Epitome), p. 485; cf. p. 482. Cf. also (Solid Declaration), pp. 569, 570, 589, 590]. However, in affirming an oral eating, they are careful to state that by this they do not mean a "Capernaitic eating" as if "one rent Christ's flesh with one's teeth and digested it like other food." [(Epitome), p. 486; cf. pp. 483, 489 and (Solid Declaration), pp. 581, 588, 591].

[33] Ibid. (Solid Declaration), p. 579. Cf. the statement, "whoever eats this bread eats the body of Christ." (Epitome), p. 483.

who are worthy but also the unworthy and the unbelievers receive the true body and blood of Christ" in the sacrament.[34] They also firmly deny "that faith effects the presence of Christ's body in the Holy Supper," as if one's faith has "the power to achieve the presence of the body of Christ and to receive it," rather than ascribing Christ's presence to his own action in fulfilling his promise given in the words of institution.[35]

With regard to the christological question concerning the unity and distinction between the two natures in Christ's person, it should be noted that in the Formula of Concord, the section dealing with the doctrine of the person of Christ (Article VIII) is itself set within the context of the controversy over the Lord's Supper.[36] In describing the operation of the two natures within the unity of Christ's person, the Lutherans specifically reject the notion "that Christ is present with us on earth . . . in the sacraments . . . only according to his deity, and that this presence does not at all concern his human nature."[37] Like Luther, they defend their teaching of the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament by appealing to the "communication of properties" (the *communicatio idiomatum*).[38] Their

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[34] Ibid. (Epitome), pp. 483-84. For their condemnation of the opposite teaching see pp. 485-86; cf. also (Solid Declaration), p. 570.

[35] Ibid. (Solid Declaration), p. 585; cf. p. 590 and (Epitome), p. 485.

[36] See Ibid. (Epitome), p. 486.

[37] Ibid. (Epitome), p. 491. Cf. (Solid Declaration), pp. 606, 609.

[38] See Ibid. (Solid Declaration), pp. 597f.

estimate of the "sacramentarian" position is that the personal union of the divine and human natures in Christ is such that "neither of the two really . . . share in the properties of the other but have in common only the name."[39] However, the Lutheran position is that "this communion is not merely a matter of words but is to be understood of the person,"[40] for "any property, though it belongs to only one of the natures, is ascribed not only to the respective nature as something separate but to the entire person. . . ."[41] Therefore, the Lutherans reject any idea that in the person of Christ the deity "really . . . has nothing in common with the humanity and that the humanity really has nothing in common with the deity, its majesty, and its properties."[42] Rather, they affirm that through the communion of properties,

> . . . because the human nature in Christ is personally united with the divine nature in Christ, the former . . . received in addition to its natural, essential, and abiding properties, special, high, great, supernatural, unsearchable, ineffable, heavenly perogatives and privileges in majesty, glory, power, and might. . . .[43]

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[39] Ibid. (Epitome), p. 487 (emphasis is part of the printed text); cf. p. 490. Cf. also (Solid Declaration), pp. 597, 601, 603, 604, 609.

[40] Ibid. (Solid Declaration), p. 601.

[41] Ibid. (Solid Declaration), p. 598. Cf. also pp. 593, 594, 597, 600.

[42] Ibid. (Epitome), p. 487; cf. p. 490. Cf. also (Solid Declaration), p. 594.

[43] Ibid. (Solid Declaration), pp. 600-601; cf. pp. 603,604. Therefore, they say, "because of this communicated power he can be and is truly present with his body and blood in the Holy Supper according to the words of his covenant, to which he has directed us through his Word." [(Solid

However, they are quick to point out that this does not mean "that the human nature has been raised to the level of, and has become equal to, the divine nature in its substance and essence, or in its essential properties."[44] In fact, the Lutherans reject any hint "that the divine and human natures, together with their respective properties, are mixed together and the human nature according to its essence and properties is equalized with the divine nature and is thus negated."[45] On this basis, they reject the argument that "nothing should or can be ascribed to the human nature of Christ which transcends or contravenes its natural properties."[46]

One final point should be noted. In spite of the Formula of Concord's strong insistence on the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament -- incorporating all of Luther's explanations as to how such a real presence is possible, and even giving his more peripheral explanations "confessional" status -- the Formula concludes its section on the Lord's

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Declaration), pp. 596-97; cf. pp. 606-607, 609. Cf. (Epitome), p. 489] Consequently, they reject the argument that "because of the property of the human nature it is impossible for Christ to be [substantially] present at the same time at more than one place, still less to be present with his body everywhere." [(Epitome), p. 490; cf. p. 485] Further to this assertion, one should note that the Formula of Concord also cites Luther's original argument used against the claim that it is impossible for Christ's body to be substantially present in the Supper, in affirming that "the body of Christ has three different modes . . . of being at any given place." [(Solid Declaration), pp. 586f.]

[44] Ibid. (Epitome), p. 490. Cf. (Solid Declaration), p. 605, 609.

[45] "Preface," The Book of Concord, p. 11. See, eg. "Formula of Concord (Epitome)," pp. 487, 489, 490 and (Solid Declaration), pp. 592, 593, 594-95, 602-603, 609.

[46] Ibid. (Solid Declaration), p. 600.

Supper with the same claim with which Luther always ended his arguments, namely that it is ultimately a divine mystery beyond our comprehension. The Formula states:

> . . . in accordance with the simple words of Christ's testament, we hold and believe in a true, though supernatural, eating of Christ's body and drinking of his blood, which we cannot comprehend with our human sense or reason. Here we take our intellect captive in obedience to Christ, as we do in other articles also, and accept this mystery in no other way than by faith and as it is revealed in the Word.[47]

The solidification of the stances of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches around the confessional positions taken in these statements of faith led to a period of "Orthodoxy" in the European Churches which continued until late in the seventeenth century. During this period, theological opposition to the views of the opposing traditions intensified, and little interest was expressed for meaningful dialogue or conciliatory attitudes between the Lutheran and Reformed Churches.[48] Beyond a few isolated incidents of politically enforced unions between churches of these two traditions in some European countries (e.g. the Prussian Union in 1817), little was done until the second half of the current century to try to establish accord and some measure of reconciliation between the churches of the Lutheran and Reformed traditions.

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[47] Ibid. (Epitome), p. 486.

[48] See Tappert, "Christology and the Lord's Supper in the Perspective of History," p. 63.

RECENT LUTHERAN - REFORMED DIALOGUES ON THE DOCTRINE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Since the 1950s, however, many official sets of dialogues have been held between Lutheran and Reformed theologians and church representatives in Europe and in North America, which have resulted in three major statements of agreement on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper. The first of these common statements was the Arnoldshain Theses on the Lord's Supper, signed by the representatives of the territorial churches in Germany, and published in 1958. This document was the final product of a commission (operating from 1951 to 1957) of some of the leading biblical scholars and theologians in Europe from the Lutheran and Reformed traditions, as they sought to set forth the "decisive content in the biblical record of the Lord's Supper."[49] Other series of discussions took place in Europe, building upon the results of the earlier commission, between 1955 and 1960, and between 1964 and 1967. The most eventful of these discussions (held between 1969 and 1973) produced a remarkable statement of consensus between the Lutheran and Reformed participants known as the Leuenberg Agreement. Within the full document, Reumann notes that in only eight paragraphs devoted to the Lord's Supper and christology, "it became possible to overcome the animosities of

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[49] See Paul M. Bretscher, "The Arnoldshain Theses on the Lord's Supper," Concordia Theological Monthly, vol. 30, no. 2 (February 1959), p. 85. See pp. 85-87 for the complete English translation of the Arnoldshain Theses.

four and one-half centuries."[50] The Leuenberg Agreement was signed by fifty-six Lutheran and Refomed Churches in Europe, and allowed them to enter into full altar and pulpit fellowship with each other.[51]

On the North American continent, three series of official discussions have taken place between theologians and representatives of Lutheran and Reformed Churches in the United States and Canada[52] (Series I: 1962-1966; Series II: 1972-1974; Series III: 1981-1983). The report from the first series of discussions concluded:

> As a result of our studies and discussions we see no insuperable obstacles to pulpit and altar fellowship and, therefore, we recommend to our parent bodies that they encourage their constituent churches to enter into discussions looking forward

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[50] John Reumann, The Supper of the Lord: The New Testament, Ecumenical Dialogues, and Faith and Order on Eucharist (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), p. 100.

[51] An English translation of the text of the Leuenberg Agreement is printed in Lutheran World, vol. 20 (1973), pp. 347-353 and is reproduced in An Invitation to Action: The Lutheran - Reformed Dialogue, Series III (1981-1983), eds. James E. Andrews and Joseph A. Burgess (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), pp. 61-73.

[52] The original church bodies participating in these discussions were The American Lutheran Church, The Lutheran Church in America, the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, The Reformed Church in America, The Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., The Presbyterian Church in the United States, The Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and The United Church of Christ. Some, but not all, of these church bodies included Canadian districts in their jurisdictions. The names of some of these bodies (both Lutheran and Reformed) have since been changed due to mergers and restructuring.

> to intercommunion and the fuller recognition of one another's ministries.[53]

No official action was taken by any of the participating church bodies to implement this recommendation, however. Series II of the discussions was given the task of assessing "the consensus and remaining differences in the theology and life of the participating churches as they bear upon the teaching of the Gospel in the current situation."[54] However, problems concerning pulpit and altar fellowship dominated the discussions, in response to what their joint communique termed "recent developments affecting church relationships."[55]

The final report from Series III of the discussions renews the call for "intercommunion and fuller recognition of one another's ministries" which was recommended in the 1966 report, and does so in even more forceful terms than before. The "Joint Statement on the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper" contained in the final report says:

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[53] "Report to Sponsoring Confessional Organizations," Marburg Revisited, p. 191.

[54] "Lutheran - Reformed Consultation: Series II, 1972-1974," An Invitation To Action, p. 54.

[55] Ibid., p. 55. The report also noted that it "became clear to us that some of the most intransigent theological differences run along denominational lines." Ibid. Reumann attributes the failure of the Series II discussions to make further progress in establishing greater ecumenical accord, with "new leadership in the Missouri Synod [which] was directing that church away from fellowship not only with other Christians but even with fellow Lutherans." Reumann, The Supper of the Lord, p. 97.

> We affirm that the Lutheran and Reformed families of churches have a fundamental consensus in the gospel and the sacraments, which not only allows but also demands common participation in the Lord's Supper.[56]

The joint statement continues, saying:

> . . . through long and careful discussion, responsible commissions of Lutheran and Reformed representatives have concluded that our two communions do fundamentally agree on the gospel and on the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. We reaffirm these agreements, in particular the conclusions reached in Marburg Revisited in America (1966) and the Leuenberg Agreement in Europe (1973). We do not imagine that all differences in eucharistic doctrine between (and within) our two communions have thereby disappeared or become negligible, but we maintain that the remaining differences should be recognized as acceptable diversities within one Christian faith.[57]

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[56] "Joint Statement on the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper," An Invitation to Action, p. 16. Note, the participants from the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod did not sign the joint statements contained in the final report, but instead issued their own "Minority Report" which gives their reasons why they cannot (at this time) follow the recommendations of the other Lutheran participants and "recognize the eucharists . . . of those churches which affirm the Reformed Confessions. . . ." See An Invitation to Action, p. 8; cf. p. 110.

[57] "Joint Statement on the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper," An Invitation to Action, p. 16.

REASSESSING THE DIFFERENCES AND COMMONALITIES BETWEEN LUTHER'S AND CALVIN'S TEACHINGS ON THE EUCHARIST

One of the points of agreement reached by the committee engaged in the Lutheran - Reformed Dialogues on this continent was the following statement contained in the introduction to their final report:

> Our work together in this dialogue persuades us that such a basic consensus now exists among us to justify the conclusion that the condemnations pronounced by the Reformation Confessions are no longer appropriate.[58]

Considering the harshness of the sixteenth century anathemas, one might wonder how such a conclusion is possible. Were there not, after all, significant, weighty, and irreconcilable differences between the theologies of Luther and Calvin concerning the doctrine of the Lord's Supper? Or is that only the image painted and the attitude taken by the participants in the Eucharistic controversy of four centuries ago? The contemporary Lutheran - Reformed dialogues force us to reassess the extent of the differences portrayed in that debate.

We must first of all be reminded of the fact that while in both stages of the eucharistic debate there were differing positons taken concerning the nature of Christ's presence in the sacrament, there was by and large major

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[58] "Introduction," An Invitation to Action, p. 4. The same sentiment is stated in the earlier Leuenberg Agreement between the European Churches, which states "it is impossible for us to reaffirm the former condemnations today." "Leuenberg Agreement" (paragraph 23), Lutheran World, vol. 20 (1973), p. 351; reprinted in An Invitation to Action, p. 69.

agreement on the other points of doctrine, including not only the nature and purpose of the sacrament, but each of the essential doctrines of the new evangelical theology which had emerged with the Reformation. We must recall that when the Lutheran delegation met with the Swiss theologians at Marburg in 1529, they expressed agreement upon every major doctrinal issue except the Lord's Supper. Even on this final issue, there was partial agreement: both parties acknowledged that Christ is spiritually present in the Supper, but could not agree on the presence of his "body and blood."[59] When Calvin engaged in debate with Luther's successors, he was of the opinion that they were in common agreement on all essential matters of the Christian faith.[60] And even with regard to the eucharist, he claimed that his Lutheran opponents were forced to admit "that the end and use of the Supper is rightly explained by me."[61] As Nijenhuis observes, "According to Calvin an agreement on the principle points, the summa, exists with the Lutherans,"

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[59] See "The Marburg Colloquy," LW 38: 88.

[60] "In regard to the one God and his true and legitimate worship, the coruption of human nature, free salvation, the mode of obtaining justification, the office and power of Christ, repentance and its exercises, faith which, relying on the promises of the gospel, gives us assurance of salvation, prayer to God, and other leading articles, the same doctrine is preached by [us] both." Calvin, "(Prefatory Letter to the) Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 251; cf. p. 298. See also W. Nijenhuis, "Calvin and the Augsburg Confession," p. 103.

[61] Calvin, "Second Defense in Answer to Westphal," TT 2: 298.

and to him it is only "a difference of opinion" that exists between them and him concerning the question of how Christ is present in the eucharist.[62]

Calvin had certainly demonstrated his willingness to reach accord with the Lutherans in many occasions. He subscribed to the Wittenberg Concord while living in Strasbourg, and later confessed his allegience to the Augsburg Confession (i.e. Melanchthon's "variata" edition of 1540). It was only after establishing these ties with the Lutheran wing of the Reformation movement, that he turned his energies to uniting the various Swiss factions under the Consensus Tigurinus of 1549. He succeeded in moving most of the Swiss theologians and teachers away from Zwingli's more "radical" teachings which had evoked such strong criticism from the Lutherans. But Calvin's contribution as a mediator and a bridge builder between the German and the Swiss reform movements was largely unrecognized by the Lutherans. Following the publication of the Consensus Tigurinus, Calvin became identified with the other Swiss in the eyes of the dominant Lutheran party (the Gnesio-Lutherans), and his teaching on the eucharist was dismissed by them in the same manner as that of the other "sacramentarians."

This misjudgment of Calvin's positon was a constant feature in the argumentative treatises which Westphal and Heshus issued against Calvin. But as we have demonstrated, Calvin also misjudged the Lutheran position on some points. The writings between them were highly acrimonious and polemical -- not the best circumstances under which to gain a common understanding. As the participants in the North American Lutheran - Reformed

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[62] Nijenhuis, "Calvin and the Augsburg Confession," p. 102.

dialogues have admitted in discussing the heritage of their respective traditions,

> Polemic often leads to caricature and polarization, rarely to careful appreciation of nuances. It is not strange that close cousins within the church catholic have been on occasion the objects of the sharpest polemic and the most unfair caricature. This has often been true for Reformed and Lutheran traditions.[63]

As we delve beneath the polemical style of the treatises in question, and examine their content, we find three major factors which help to explain why the eucharistic controversy of the sixteenth century reached such an impass:

First, we must understand that the battles fought by Luther and Calvin concerning the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, were really not battles fought against each other. Luther's argument was against certain German and Swiss extremists of his time, who, it seemed to him, were "spiritualizing" away the real presence of Christ in the eucharist. Later, as Calvin engaged in verbal conflict with Luther's successors, they chose to fight Luther's old battles all over again, and mounted a strong "anti-sacramentatian" attack against Calvin's views.

On Calvin's part, his own opposition to substantialist teaching was aimed most strongly at refuting the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation, which resulted in the teachings of impanation and the adoration of the host. These practices were especially abhorant to Calvin. And when he

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63 "Introduction," An Invitation to Action, p. 3.

contends against the Lutheran substantialist claims in debate with Westphal and Heshus, he repeats, in both form and substance, many of the "anti-Romanist" arguments used elsewhere in his writings.

That Calvin should respond to the Lutheran teaching with arguments that are "anti-Romanist" in form, and that the Lutherans should use "anti-sacramentarian" arguments to refute Calvin's position, should not really surprise us. We recall the generalization reported in an earlier chapter, that in the Swiss view, the Lutheran reform was "incomplete" and still too close to the teachings of Rome on certain issues, while to the Lutherans, the Swiss were all judged as radicals and "spiritualizers" who had departed too far from the historic Christian faith. In truth, and especially as seen within the full range of theological positions present in the church at the time of the Reformation, Calvin and Luther actually stood quite close to one another in their positions on most issues -- including their teaching on the Lord's Supper. But in the polemics of the eucharistic debate each side consistently aimed past the true position of the other in firing their verbal volleys, by characterizing their opponents' positions as more extreme than they actually were.[64] It is only in the present century, far removed from the former

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[64] Note the following evaluation by the participants in the North American Lutheran - Reformed dialogues: "Both traditions were trying to protect and preserve the dynamic of authentic sacramental union between Christ, the believer, and the other faithful over against the opposing extremes of mere symbolic recollection and the magic of transubstantiation. Each tradition suspected that the other veered too far toward one of the unacceptable extremes." "Joint Statement on the Lord's Supper," An Invitation to Action, p. 19.

debate, that we have come to realize just how close they were to standing on common ground.

Secondly, a major element in the inability of each side of the debate to accurately understand the position of the other must also be attributed to a common misunderstanding in the terminology used by them both. As the representatives of the Lutheran - Reformed dialogues observed in their 1966 report:

> During the Reformation both Reformed and Lutheran Churches exhibited an ecumenical intention when they understood the Lord's Supper in the light of the saving act of God in Christ. Despite common intention, different terms and concepts were employed which not only shared in the inadequacy of all human thought and language, but also led to mutual misunderstandings and misrepresentation. Properly interpreted, the differing terms and concepts were often complementary rather than contradictory.[65]

A few examples should make this point clear:

Luther and his successors chose to affirm the nature of Christ's presence in the eucharist by describing it as a "real" presence. But Calvin, in hearing this term employed, suspected the Lutherans of contending for a "local" presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament. Furthermore, the "real" partaking of the body and blood which they described, Calvin considered to be a "carnal" eating of Christ's flesh. What Calvin chose to emphasize was the "spiritual" reality which characterizes the partaking in the

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[65] "Summary Statement: Christology, the Lord's Supper and Its Observance in the Church," Marburg Revisited, pp. 103-104. Reprinted in An Invitation to Action, p. 42.

sacrament, and consists of communion with Christ and the receiving of his benefits. But to the Lutherans, "spiritual" meant the opposite of "real" (or "corporeal"), and hence it was the same as being "non-real" or "illusory." Thus, when Calvin tried to substitute the term "true" for "real," it was totally unacceptable to the Lutherans, for they already considered Calvin's "true" presence to be, in fact, an "illusory" one.

On another disputed subject, when Calvin spoke of the bread and wine being the "sign" of Christ's body and blood, the Lutherans interpreted this to mean a mere "symbol" devoid of the reality which it signifies (i.e. something which stands in place of the reality, and only represents it, rather than something which "exhibits" the reality and presents it efficaciously, as Calvin believed). And although both Luther and Calvin used the terms "substance" and "substantial" in speaking of the Lord's Supper, it soon becomes clear that what the Lutherans were contending for was a "substantial presence" of Christ in the Supper, while what Calvin chose to emphasize was a "substantial communion" with Christ in the sacrament.

But by far the most important factor in the failure of each side to reach understanding with the other, is that Luther (with his followers) and Calvin each operated from differing basic conceptual frameworks in constructing their theological formulations. Thus, while they had similar goals in mind in describing the nature, the reality, and the benefits of the Lord's Supper, each drew different conclusions as to the presence and reception of Christ in the Supper based upon their different underlying assumptions. It is this third divisive factor to which we shall devote our greatest amount of attention.

Luther, we recall, operated from a world-view which was rooted in the concepts of the scholastic school of thought in which he was educated. In this conceptial framework, "reality" was described in terms of the Aristotelian concepts of "substance" and "accidents." Although he abandoned the methodology of scholastic theology as a reformer, he still continued to view a thing as being "real" only if it were "substantially" there. Calvin, on the other hand, who had more humanistic influences in his early education, operated from a "dynamic" view of reality in which a thing is said to "be" where it is seen to "act." Thus, for Calvin, the presence of Christ in the Supper was guaranteed by his activity there. Stated in the most concise terms: in describing the reality of Christ's presence in the Supper, Calvin argued for an "active presence" while Luther argued for a "substantial presence."

Luther's conceptual framework made it imperative that Christ's body and blood be "substantially" manifested with the bread and wine if Christ himself were to be operative there. This led Luther to conclude that a "sacramental union" exists between Christ's flesh as present in the Supper, and the consecrated elements of the bread and wine. But Calvin's framework placed no such requirements upon Christ's flesh, and so in his conceptual system Calvin came to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit is the means of our communion with the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper.

Calvin was thus able to affirm the dictum that Christ's body is finite and is contained in heaven in a way that Luther could not. Whereas Luther's system of explanation made it necessary for Christ's body and blood to, in a manner of speaking, "come" under the bread and wine in being manifested in the Supper, the explanation which Calvin developed, in effect, let Christ's

body and blood "remain" in heaven, and instead let the believer "rise by faith" to commune with Christ there.

This nearly opposite portrayal of the way in which Christ and the believer are both seen as acting in the Supper is itself based upon a further fundamental difference in the orientations of Luther's and Calvin's thought. The saving action of Christ in Luther's system of thought can best be schematically represented as a downward motion from heaven to earth. Our redemption is based in God reaching down to us to help us in our helplessness. The paradigm for this is the incarnation: in Christ, God comes to us; God condescends to take on human form; God lays aside his majesty, and for our salvation submits to human suffering and death. As applied to the sacraments, Christ's redemptive activity in using them as a means for providing the forgiveness of sins is visualized in the same terms: Christ comes to us in the Supper; he is manifested in the earthly elements of bread and wine; he allows his body and blood to be ignobly eaten and drunk for our salvation.[66]

But the focus of Calvin's thought is much different. His portrayal of Christ's saving action follows through beyond Christ's incarnation, suffering and death, to focus on his resurrection, ascension, and subsequent glorification. The schematic representation of this would be a "U" shaped motion consisting of both a downward and an upward thrust -- from heaven to earth and back to heaven -- with an emphasis placed upon the final upward motion. Moreover, in Calvin's representation, we become participants with Christ in

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[66] Cf. Nagel, "The Incarnation and the Lord's Supper in Luther," p. 648.

this upward movement. Through our union with Christ, we receive the promise of our own resurrection and being raised to glory with Christ.[67] It is natural, then, for Calvin to carry through with this conceptual model in explaining our participation with Christ in the Lord's Supper. Christ's redemptive activity in bestowing his benefits in the sacrament is seen in terms of raising us to heaven in eschatological expectation of our own final redemption, resurrection, and glorification.

We have mentioned earlier that Luther chose to emphasize the "substantial presence" of Christ in the eucharist, while Calvin emphasized our "substantial communion" with Christ in the Supper. This seemingly small difference in emphasis had major implications when applied to the role which faith plays in receiving the sacrament. For Luther, the preoccupying issue which colored his entire approach to the eucharistic debates in which he was engaged, was the forceful affirmation that Christ, according to his own declaration, is present in the sacrament. When questioned about the role which faith plays in this activity, he was quite specific: our faith, or lack of it, does not affect Christ's presence; it is his action, not ours, that causes him to be there, and our own lack of faith cannot remove him. Thus, from Luther's orientation, the argument follows to its logical conclusion: Since Christ wills

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[67] Note McDonnell's observation that in Calvin's view, "He who is planted in Christ must have the same movement in time toward the Father as Christ, and must receive the same reward given to Christ. To be joined to Christ is to be put in relation with the mystery of Christ, his death, resurrection, ascension, and second coming." McDonnell, Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist, p. 289; cf. p. 292. Cf. Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.4), LCC 21: 1364; Commentary on the Gospel of John [John 20:28], 2: 211.

to be present in the sacrament, and his body and blood are "joined" to the bread and wine in a "sacramental union," and since this union cannot be annuled on our part by lack of faith, therefore, Christ's body and blood are received whenever the consecrated bread and wine are eaten, regardless of the state of faith of the recipient.[68]

For Calvin, however, the conclusion was very different. From his point of theological orientation, the essential matter to be stressed was not the presence of Christ in the sacrament, but communion with Christ there. Christ, on his part, offers himself to be received in the partaking of the sacrament, but true communion with Christ can only take place through faith. If faith is absent, then Christ is not received. Thus Calvin, in slightly different fashion than Luther, argued that Christ, in faithfulness to his promise, is truly offered in the sacrament. And in describing the role which faith plays in this, he answers similarly: our faith, or lack of it, does not affect Christ's promise; it is Christ's action to offer himself, and our lack of faith cannot void that offering. Yet this subtle difference in wording between the affirmations of Luther and Calvin produces greatly differing conclusions. For Calvin, although Christ is offered to all in the Holy Supper, his body and blood are received only by those who possess faith. For Luther, because Christ is present to all in the eucharist, his body and blood are received by all regardless of their faith.

The final example of how Luther and Calvin operated from different conceptual frameworks in setting forth their theological arguments

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68 See Tappert, "Meaning and Practice in the Reformation," p. 111.

concerning Christ's presence in the eucharist, is found in their christological thought. Luther defends his concept of "bodily ubiquity" by stressing the full unity of the divine-human person of Christ, while Calvin denies that Christ's body can be omnipresent, based on the retention of the physical characteristics of a body and the proper distinction between the two natures in Christ's person. Although these two emphases are in contrast with one another, they are both quite orthodox in terms of the history of Christian thought, and each has a long tradition behind it. In general terms, the unity of Christ's person was emphasized in the Alexandrine school during the Patristic period, while the distinction between Christ's two natures was stressed by the Antiochene school.[69] Even though Luther's and Calvin's christological orientations are thus representative of two different theological traditions -- and this in itself might have resulted in the failure of each side in the debate to accept the arguments of the other -- there was also a more personal orientational factor at work which, added to the underlying christological understanding of each

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[69] R. V. Sellers argues that the ancient Alexandrine and Antiochene schools of theological thought both affirmed two fundamental christological principles: "first, that Jesus Christ is one person, God himself, who has become man for man's salvation, and second, that in him are the two elements of Godhead and manhood, these remaining real in their union in this one person." The Alexandrine school, he claims, placed particular stress upon the first of these principles in its resistance to Nestorian doctrine, while the Antiochene school stressed the second principle in its rejection of Eutychianism. R. V. Sellers, Two Ancient Christologies: A Study of the Christological Thought of the Schools of Alexandria and Antioch in the Early History of Christian Doctrine (London: S.P.C.K., 1954), pp. xiii-xiv; cf. pp. 39,41. Cf. R. V. Sellers, The Council of Chalcedon: A Historical and Doctrinal Survey (London: S.P.C.K., 1953), pp. 136, 150, 176-77.

reformer, made attempts to reach a common understanding even more difficult.

Luther chose to use the ancient principle of the *communicatio idiomatum* to bolster his argument in favor of ubiquity. But as Siggins points out in his detailed work on Luther's christology, this technical principle was unnecessary and even redundant to what Luther amply sets forth elsewhere on the basis of Scripture.[70] Why, then, did Luther choose to emphasize this principle? Perhaps the reason can be found in Luther's great love for irony and paradox which reoccurs throughout his theological thought. As he describes the operation of the communication of properties in extended detail in his sermons on St. John's Gospel, for example, one senses his delight in the logical absurdity of such statements as "the infant Christ who lies in the cradle . . . created heaven and earth," and "God suffered and . . . died."[71] But to Calvin, the systematician, for whom logical clarity and precision were of key importance, such language was completely reckless and irresponsible. Thus Calvin argued strongly in favor of the activity of each of the natures in Christ's person being restricted to the function which is proper to that nature

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[70] "Luther's use of the rule is beyond reproach; but his expositions of the rule . . . leave much to be desired. His biblical writings certainly prompt the judgment that its technicalities need not have arisen for Luther. . . . Enough of Luther's doctrine is now before us to establish, beyond a shadow of doubt, that he has far more lucid and straightforward ways of expressing the claim he tries to protect by means of the *communicatio*. . . ." Siggins, Martin Luther's Doctrine of Christ, pp. 230-31.

[71] Luther, "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John (Chap. 1-4)," LW 22: 352, 362, 492-93; "Sermons on the Gospel of St. John (Chap. 14-16)," LW 24: 99.

alone. In keeping with this principle, Calvin attributed ubiquity to the divine nature of Christ alone (ubiquity being a property which is characteristic of the divine essence), while Luther (because of the unity of the two natures in Christ's person) extended the property of ubiquity to the flesh of Christ as well.

Each of the three factors detailed above contributed to the breakdown in understanding between the Lutheran and the Reformed communions in the sixteenth century over the doctrine on the Lord's Supper. Yet despite these differences, we must also keep in mind their common affirmations concerning the eucharist. Both Luther and Calvin affirmed an efficacious presence of Christ in the Supper, and that the entire Christ is there present (or presented) and received in faith. Concerning the matter of how Christ is made present in the Supper, both offered their own solutions [Luther: it is by an ubiquitous mode of presence; Calvin: it is by the agency of the Spirit], and each had essential points at stake in affirming this mode of presence [Luther: it is not an illusory but a real presence of Christ in the Supper; Calvin: Christ's body is finite and its nature as a true body must not be overthrown], yet ultimately, both regarded the how as a divine mystery beyond their own comprehension.[72]

Although the eucharistic controversy by its tone, its vehemence, its accusations, and its acrimony emphasized the differences in the eucharistic

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[72] See Luther, "Babylonian Captivity of the Church," LW 36: 43; "Against the Heavenly Prophets," LW 40: 176; "This Is My Body," LW 37: 28-29. See Calvin, Institutes (IV,17.32), LCC 21: 1403; cf. (IV,17.1), p. 1361; (IV,17.10), p. 1370.

teachings of Luther and Calvin, we have seen that there was also much of fundamental importance on which they did agree. Even though the mutual representations of each other's positions in the heat of argument, the confusion in the terminology used by each, and the differing conceptual models employed by each created a situation in the sixteenth century in which mutual consensus ultimately could not be found, we have the advantage of historical perspective to help us view the matter more clearly today. Through a calmer and more objective analysis than was possible then, we can look beyond the extremist characterizations which were made of each party's positions in the debate. We can also recognize the misunderstandings which arose from the use of terminology which was misinterpreted by the opposing parties, and we can see much more clearly than they, how in the use of these terms, similar cardinal points were being defended. And from our contemporary vantage point we can appreciate more fully how differing conceptual orientations can enrich theological thought, providing broader perspective and insights than is possible with a single conceptual framework.[73]

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[73] As the participants in the North American series of Lutheran - Reformed dialogues noted in their final report: "We realize that while the sixteenth-century formulations of doctrines such as the real presence represent faithful articulations of the biblical message, they also were conditioned by the worldview of the period. . . . The task of "translating" traditonal doctrines into a language which mirrors the worldview of our times represents both a challenge and new possibilities. . . . We believe that as this "translating" continues, Lutheran and Reformed Christians will increasingly discover that what divided their forebears in regard to the Lord's Supper need not be divisive; to the contrary, classical Reformed and Lutheran concerns over the real presence may come to be seen as complementary and enriching for the lives of both traditions." "Joint Statement on the Lord's Supper," An Invitation to Action , p. 21 (n. #4).

We have come a long way from the controversies of the sixteenth century. That was a time which preceeded modern religious tolerance, a time in which to be found in theological error could be quite literally damning in the eyes of the church, a time in which excommunication and the pronouncing of anathemas was common. But in our more ecumenical age, we can afford to view these matters differently. The analysis of the teachings of Luther and Calvin on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper which is contained in this paper, has been presented in the hope of overcoming the hostile characterizations of a previous time, and of providing a more constructive climate for understanding their respective theological positions. No attempt has been made to disregard the true differences which existed between them on fundamental issues, and yet it has been seen that these differences are largely due to attempts by each reformer to safeguard essential points relating to the efficacious presence of Christ in the eucharist which the other would not really seek to deny. Calvin quite fully agreed with the point which Luther strove so vigorously to maintain, that the presence of Christ in the sacrament is not illusory but quite real, although he firmly rejected Luther's conclusion that this presence is made possible through Christ's "bodily ubiquity." And Luther, in his own way, completely agreed with the fundamental point so strongly emphasized by Calvin, that the integrity of Christ's person must be maintained in both its human and divine characteristics, although he flatly rejected the view that Christ's body is confined to heaven.

In the final analysis, neither the ubiquitous presence of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament, nor our participion with Christ by rising by

faith to heaven is specifically taught by Scripture. And yet the proper theological tools exist for defending each conclusion on the basis of scriptural principles. We should not, therefore, allow ourselves to be unnecessarily brought into a position of rigid affirmation or denial of either of these models for explaining the manner of our reception and communion with Christ in the Holy Supper. Instead, we can, I believe, come to respect the differing lines of argument provided by Luther and Calvin in defending the fundamental affirmation of the efficacious presence of Christ in the sacrament, and view each of their endeavors as providing a positive contribution to the Reformational understanding of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

APPENDIX

A Chronology of Significant Events

1483	November 10	Martin Luther is born at Eisleben
1509	July 10	Calvin is born at Noyon
1517	October 31	Luther posts the "Ninety - Five Theses"
1519	December	Luther publishes his first treatise on the eucharist: "The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ, and the Brotherhoods"
1520		Luther publishes the "Treatise on the New Testament, that is, the Holy Mass" and "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church"
1521	April 17	Luther defends himself at the Imperial Diet at Worms
	May 26	Edict of Worms issued against Luther
1523		Luther publishes the treatise on "The Adoration of the Sacrament"
1525	January	Luther publishes "Against the Heavenly Prophets"
	March	Zwingli publishes the "Commentary on True and False Religion"
	August	Oecolampadius publishes the "Genuine Exposition of the Words . . . 'This Is My Body' "
1526		Zwingli publishes the "Clear Instruction Concerning Christ's Supper"
1527	April	Luther publishes "Whether These Words: 'This Is My Body, etc.' Still Stand Firm Against the Fanatics

1528	March	Luther publishes the "Confession Concerning Christ's Supper
1529	October 1 - 4	Luther, Melanchthon, Zwingli and Oecolampadius at the Marburg Colloquy
1530	June 25	presentation of the Augsburg Confession to the Emperor Charles V signing of the Tetrapolitan Confession
1531	October 11	Zwingli dies in battle
1533 - 1534		probable date for Calvin's conversion to the evangelical movement
1535		Calvin exiled from France
1536		Wittenberg Concord signed
	March	Calvin publishes the first edition of The Institutes of the Christian Religion
	October	Calvin attends the colloquy at Lausanne with Farel
1537	January	Calvin (with Farel and Viret) drafts the "Confession of Faith Concerning the Eucharist"
1539	February	Calvin attends the colloquy at Frankfurt; meets Melanchthon for the first time
	August	Calvin publishes the second edition of the Institutes (French trans. 1541)
1541		Calvin publishes the "Short Treatise on the Lord's Supper" (Latin trans. 1545)
	April	Calvin subscribes to the (revised) Augsburg Confession at Regensburg
1543		Calvin publishes the third edition of the Institutes (French trans. 1545)
1544		Luther publishes the "Brief Confession Concerning the Holy Sacrament"
1546	January 18	Luther dies at Eisleben

1547		Emperor Charles V defeats the German princes in the Smalcald War
1548		the Augsburg Interim is imposed by the Emperor on the German Protestants
1549	May	formation of the Consensus Tigurinus
1550		Calvin publishes the fourth edition of the Institutes (French trans. 1551)
1552		Westphal publishes the "Farrago of Confused and Divergent Opinions on the Lord's Supper"
1553		Westphal publishes "The Right Belief in Regard to the Lord's Supper
1555	January	Calvin publishes "The Defense of the Sound and Orthodox Doctrine on the Sacraments" Westphal publishes "A Just Defense Against the False Accusations of a Certain Sacramentarian"
1556		Calvin publishes the "Second Defense of the Faith Concerning the Sacraments"
1557		the Lutheran Colloquy at Worms Westphal publishes "The Confession of Faith in the Sacrament of the Eucharist"
	August	Calvin publishes "The Last Admonition of John Calvin to Joachim Westphal"
1558		Westphal publishes "Answer to Some of the Outrageous Lies of John Calvin" and "Apology Concerning the Defense of the Lord's Supper"
1559		Calvin publishes the final edition of the Institutes (French trans. 1560)
1560		Heshus publishes "The Presence of the Body of Christ in the Lord's Supper Against the Sacramentarians"

1561		Calvin publishes the "Clear Explanation . . . Concerning the True Partaking of the Flesh and Blood of Christ in the Holy Supper" and "The Best Method of Obtaining Concord"
1564	May 27	Calvin dies at Geneva
1566	March	publication of the "Second Helvetic Confession"
1577		issuing of the Lutheran "Solid Declaration"
1580		publication of the Lutheran "Book of Concord"

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1958		publication of the "Arnoldshain Theses on the Lord's Supper"
1973		issuing of the Leuenberg Agreement
1983		final report of the Lutheran - Reformed Consultation (North America) is issued

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