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A B S T R A C T

LUTHER'S EUCHARISTIC WRITINGS OF 1523 TO 1528

by JOHN RAYMOND STEPHENSON

Chapter One expounds the formal and material principles of Luther's Reformation in their mediaeval context, arguing that both were conceived as a return to the dogma and tradition of the ancient Church. Chapter Two examines Luther's approach to exegetical method, calling in question the view that he decisively broke with his mediaeval antecedents. Chapter Three recalls the outbreak of the eucharistic controversy of the 1520s, specifying the precise nature of real presence doctrine which Luther early embraced and, later, tenaciously defended, and outlining the liturgical practices which gave expression to the Reformer's belief. Chapter Four examines Luther's painstaking exegetical defence of the controverted doctrine of the Church, urging the consistency of his position with the application of the exegetical method outlined in Chapter Two. Chapter Five describes Luther's distinctive recension of traditional Christology, pointing up the congruity of the real presence doctrine with the Reformer's understanding of the mystery of the person of Christ. Chapter Six examines the connection between the imparting of the sacred body and blood under the elements and the epistemology of the 'theologia crucis', closing with an account of Luther's understanding of the benefits of the presence in connection with his overall conception of the Incarnation.

MARTIN LUTHER'S EUCHARISTIC WRITINGS OF 1523-1528

A study on the extent to which, in his defence of the doctrine of the corporeal presence of Christ in the elements, Luther remained true to his exegetical principles, to his notion of the modality of divine operation, and to his conception of the work of the Holy Spirit in Word and Sacrament.

by

JOHN RAYMOND STEPHENSON

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Ph. D.
University of Durham
Department of Theology
1982.

16 JAN 1983

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PREFACE

In this thesis I seek to establish the inter-connectedness between Martin Luther's adherence to and development of the doctrine of the corporeal presence of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar and his theology as a whole. Luther's penchant for coining paradoxical formulations (a state of mind which at times seems reducible to an irrepressible impish delight in hyperbole) combines with his continuing status as a controversial figure (for both Roman Catholics and Protestants) to make him perhaps the easiest target for caricature in the history of the Western Church. The long dead Reformer needs not only to be defended from unsympathetic misrepresentations which flow from the pens of scholars who approach him from other vantage-points in the Christian tradition, however, but also - perhaps supremely - to be rescued from ossification in the 'Luther images' entertained by his spiritual offspring. All Lutheran students of the Reformer's thought (myself included) approach the Weimar Edition in search of guidance on those issues which form the agenda for today's inter-Lutheran and wider ecumenical concerns and debates. Notoriously, though, we not only listen to Luther's distinctive contribution to the discussions and controversies of his own day, but also - whether consciously or unconsciously - edit the seemingly infinite volume of Luther footage from the Weimar Edition in order to produce a Luther who turns out to be miraculously fashioned in our image and after our likeness. I cannot claim to have

gained a definitively 'objective' perspective on Luther in these pages. The accuracy of my Luther interpretation is for the informed reader to decide. The lengthy quotations from Weimar given in the text and in the footnotes are intended to preserve Luther's rich and multifaceted thought from imprisonment in the straitjacket of arbitrary and one-sided interpretation. As a phase of engagement with Luther's thought draws to a close with the completion and submission of this thesis, I am gripped with an uneasiness about customary models of Luther interpretation which has only gradually entered my mind during several years of research and reflection. When I encounter the assertion, whether written or spoken, that the centre of Luther's theology is to be located in the doctrine of justification by faith alone, my reaction tends to range from 'Up to a point, Lord Copper' through the German 'Jein' to 'It all depends what you mean'. Those Lutherans influenced by Rudolph Bultmann who emphasise the centrality of the theme of justification in Luther's thought seem (to me at least) to reduce this mystery to an existential truism in such a way that the Gospel shrivels up into a baseless proposition about human self-understanding that has nothing to do with the central mysteries of the Blessed Trinity and the Incarnation. For Luther, any interpretation of CA IV ('Of Justification') which does not flow unaffectedly from an unconditional, wholehearted and joyous appropriation of CA III ('Of the Son of God') would be not merely building on sand, but gross infidelity. Again, the stiff confessionalist is all too apt to present the Biblical and Lutheran theme of justification in such a way that he preaches about the Gospel (thereby dishing out the Law!), tragically failing to bring men and women under the forgiving

and reconciling Lordship of Jesus by imparting the Gospel. Luther's concern was that the Incarnate Son of God confessed in CA III should be mediated to the Church through the means proposed in CA V ('Of the Ministry'). In the process, the evangelical note of assured absolution must be sounded without reservation, and in this sense CA IV is non-negotiable. But Luther (not to mention the New Testament!) could employ images other than that of forensic justification to impart and extol the atonement and reconciliation wrought by our Lord Jesus Christ. Woe betide us if we (even unwittingly) bypass the living Lord of the Church in our infatuation with a theory about the work of that Lord, regardless of whether this is decked out in scholastic or in existentialist garb! Martin Luther is bigger by far than his epigoni, and his perception of the mystery of God in Christ is not the private property of Lutheran Christendom, but speaks to and for the Una Sancta as a whole.

I gladly discharge a fivefold debt of thanks. First and foremost, I thank my parents who have selflessly supported me through an all too lengthy period of studenthood. To them this volume is fittingly dedicated. Secondly, I owe much to my Supervisor, Dr. T. H. L. Parker, who by his example and by his availability for dialogue and advice has taught me more than words can express about scholarly method and about the personal relationship of the theologian (including the would-be theologian) to the Church, its tradition, and, above all, its Lord. Thirdly, I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Heiko Augustinus Oberman of the University of Tübingen, who kindly encouraged and directed my studies in South-West Germany in the academic year 1976-1977. Along with Dr. Parker, Dr. Oberman corrected my enthusiastic assumption that Luther dropped

ready-made from heaven. In the process, both scholars imparted to me a reverence and love for the Christian Middle Ages. Fourthly, I wish to thank Ronald Feuerhahn and Glen Zweck, of Westfield House, Cambridge, for their unremitting friendship and encouragement during the last two years. Last, but not least, I thank my typist, Mrs. Gillian Coutts, who - with seeming effortlessness! - produced a near perfect manuscript at very short notice, undaunted at the mountains of mediaeval Latin and German quotation.

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The Fifteenth Sunday after
Pentecost 1982.

CHAPTER ONE: SOLA SCRIPTURA

1. The unity of the fivefold 'solus'

Sola Scriptura avows that not even the most exalted organ of ecclesiastical authority may impose on the conscience of a Christian man as a binding article of faith any proposition which cannot be proved by clear Scripture. This is the formal principle of the Reformation, whose corresponding material principle is expressed in the slogan sola fide, an exclamation which simply dots the is and crosses the ts of the Augustinian sola gratia: salvation is wrought neither wholly nor partly by any creaturely work, but exclusively in virtue of an unmerited favour grounded in the free decision of God and apprehensible only by the passive attitude of faith. Yet none of these exclusive principles of the Reformation is adequate as a reliable summary of the heart and core of Luther's piety and theology, which is to be located in the confession solus Christus. According to the Reformer we may not speak of the divine mercy on which our salvation rests without at the same time speaking of Jesus Christ, the merit of whose atoning sacrifice is the ground of our acceptance by the Father;[1] indeed, we may not speak of the true God at all except on the basis of the knowledge of him

---

1. cf. WA 56. 204, 17-21: 'Hic autem satisfecit, hic Iustus est, hic mea defensio, hic pro me mortuus est, hic suam Iustitiam meam fecit et meum peccatum suum fecit, iam ego illud non habeo et sum liber. Si autem Iustit-

vouchsafed us in Christ.[2] As far as Luther was concerned, 'apart from this man there is no God'.[3]

The distinctive quality of the primacy of Christ in Luther's thinking is not identical without further ado with the statement of christological orthodoxy achieved by the ancient Church. For, as the Reformer observed at the outset of the Smalcald Articles of 1537, in the brief pledge of his adherence to those 'high articles of the divine majesty' which embrace the classical dogmas of the Trinity and the two natures, these mysteries were unambiguously and wholeheartedly confessed by both sides of the reformational divide:

> 'Diese Artikel sind in keinem Zank noch Streit, weil wir zu beiden Teilen dieselbigen bekennen. Darumb nicht vonnoten, itzt davon weiter zu handeln.' (4)

---

iam suam meam fecit, iam Iustus ego sum eadem Iustitia, qua ille' (Romans, 1515-16). cf. also WA 39 I. 289, 16-18: 'Deus facit et vult facere in iustificatione et salvatione hominis omnia proper Christum, propter hunc dilectum sumus vocati, electi et predestinati et manemus dilecti Dei patris' (disputatio de veste nuptiali, 1537).

2. cf. WA 50. 267, 6-10: 'Also, wer nicht in Christo Gott findet oder kriegt, der sol ausser Christo nimermehr und nirgent mehr Gott haben noch finden, wenn er gleich uber den himel, unter die helle, ausser der welt fure, Denn hie wil ich wonen (spricht Gott) jnn dieser menscheit, von Maria der Jungfrawen geborn &c' (Die drei Symbola oder Bekenntnis des Glaubens Christi, 1538).

3. 'ausser diesem menschen keyn Gott ist': WA 26. 332, 19-20 (Vom Abendmahl Christi. Bekenntnis, 1528). In the Kirchenpostille of 1522 Luther reflected on the relationship of the two natures within the one undivided person of the God-man as follows: 'denn die menscheytt were keyn nutz, wenn die gottheyt nit drynnen were, doch widderumb will und mag gott nit fundenn werden denn durch und ynn disser menscheyt' (WA 10 I. 208, 22-24).

4. BS 415, 1-3

In the first draft of the Smalcald Articles, which were conceived as a 'Lutheran' statement of faith for use at the forthcoming General Council, the Reformer had written that Romans and 'evangelicals' alike 'believe and confess' the Trinity and the Godmanhood of Christ. In the final draft Luther saw fit to delete 'glauben und'. Whatever we may think of the Reformer's presumptuousness in refusing to acknowledge his Roman opponents as fellow believers, we do well to acknowledge that the reason for his unwillingness to predicate true faith, as opposed to verbal confession, of the adherents of the old Church is intimately bound up with the distinctive role played by the ancient dogmas in his own theology. In Luther's view, ancient Christology develops into the articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiae when the Eternal Son's assumption of human nature and the God-man's self-offering perfected on the Cross are understood as God's sovereign way of effecting reconciliation between himself and his fallen creatures, a reconciliation for which the hostile human race can claim no credit. Since 'faith alone' can apprehend the work of the God-man, and hence gain for the otherwise lost creature a share in the life of God, sola fide appears to Luther as the inescapable corollary of solus Christus, both together forming the 'chief article' of faith:

> 'Hie ist der erste und Hauptartikel: Dass Jesus Christus, unser Gott und Herr, sei "umb unser Sunde willen gestorben und umb unser Gerechtigkeit willen auferstanden", Ro. 4, und er allein "das Lamb Gottes ist, das der Welt Sunde trägt", Joh. 1, und "Gott unser aller Sunde auf ihn gelegt hat", Jsaiae 53, item: "Sie sind alle zumal Sunder und werden ohn Verdienst gerecht aus seiner Gnade durch die Erlosung Jesu Christi in seinem Blut" &c, Ro. 3. -- Dieweil nu solchs muss geglaubt werden und sonst mit keinem Werk, Gesetze noch Verdienst mag erlanget

> oder gefasset werden, so ist es klar und gewiss, das allein solcher Glaube uns gerecht mache, wie Ro. 3 S. Paulus spricht: "Wir halten, dass der Mensch gerecht werde ohn Werk des Gesetzes durch den Glauben", item: "Auf dass er alleine gerecht sei und gerecht mache denen, der da ist des Glaubens an Jesu". -- Von diesem Artikel kann man nichts weichen oder nachgeben, es falle Himmel und Erden oder was nicht bleiben will; denn "es ist kein ander Name, dadurch wir konnen selig werden", spricht S. Paulus Act. 4. "Und durch seine Wunden sind wir geheilet". -- Und auf diesem Artikel stehet alles, da wir wider den Papst, Teufel und Welt lehren und leben. Darum müssen wir des gar gewiss sein und nicht zweifeln. Sonst ist's alles verlorn, und behält Bapst und Teufel und alles wider uns den Sieg und Recht.' (5)

As far as the Reformer himself was concerned, his insistence on sola fide was the outcome of taking the christological dogma of the ancient Church utterly seriously and putting it to practical effect. What is the point of

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5. BS 415, 6-416, 6. Six years previously, in his Glose auf das vermeintliche kaiserliche Edikt, Luther had exactly prefigured this systematic inference of sola fide from solus Christus. He begins here by identifying the 'heubt artickel des Christlichen glaubens' with the proposition that 'allein der glaube on werck gerecht mache' (WA 39 III. 364, 34-35). Just as in the confessional document of 1537, the Reformer's exposition of the 'chief article' deals with the whole redeeming work of Christ, his atoning sacrifice and man's laying hold of its salutary benefits appearing as distinguishable but inseparable parts of one event: 'Es ist niemand fur unser sunde gestorben denn allein Jhesus Christus Gottes son, Allein Jhesus Gottes son, Noch ein mal, sage ich, Allein Jhesus Gottes son hat uns von sunden erloset, Das ist gewislich war und die gantze schrifft, und solten alle teufel und welt sich zu reissen und bersten, so ists ja war. Ist ers aber allein, der sunde weg nimpt, So konnen wirs mit unsern wercken nicht sein. So ists ja unmuglich das ich solchen einigen und allein erloser von sunden, Jhesum, anders denn mit dem glauben fassen und erlangen muge. Mit wercken ist und bleibt er unergriffen. Weil aber allein der glaub, fur und ehe die werck folgen, solchen erloser ergreiffet, So mus es war sein, das allein der glaube, fur und ohn werck, solche erlosunge fasse, welchs nicht anders sein kan, denn gerecht werden' (367, 20-21).

affirming the res about Jesus Christ, namely that he is God and man, if one then goes on to deny the usus of this doctrine, namely that 'he is our righteousness, quite apart from our works'?[6]

The Christ-oriented sola fide is not simply a matter of soteriology, but also captures the essence of the Reformer's epistemology. Luther's writings abound in admonitions to eschew the path of speculation, which would bypass the mediatorship of Christ.[7] It is perilous to tamper with 'naked divinity', for, as Scripture records, 'No man shall see Me and live'. Any colloquy with unmediated divinity can only be an encounter with the holy God of the law, whose searing majesty and burning purity can only terrify and consume his fallen creatures:

> 'Ubi igitur nudus Deus in maiestate loquitur, ibi tantum terret et occidit. ...Periculosum est, sine Christo mediatore nudam divinitatem velle humana ratione scrutari et apprehendere, ut sophistae et monachi fecerunt et alios docuerunt. Scriptura inquit: Non videbit me homo et vivet, et ut hoc periculum evitemus, donatum est nobis verbum incarnatum, quod positum est in praesepio et suspensum in ligno crucis.' (8)

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6. WATR 1. 113, 29-31: 'Pelagiani et papa sunt heretici speciosissimi. Qui concedunt rem in Christo, quod sit Deus et homo, sed usum Christi negant, quod scilicet sit iustitia nostra, sine operibus nostris.'

7. cf., e.g., WA 40 I. 75, 29-76, 5: 'Saepe audistis a nobis hunc canonem in sacris literis diligentissime observandum, ut abstineamus a speculatione Maiestatis, quae humano corpori intolerabilis est, multomagis menti. "Non videbit me homo, dicit scriptura, et vivet." Papa, Turcae, Iudaei et omnes sectarii hunc canonem non observant, sed removentes ex oculis Christum Mediatorem de solo Deo loquuntur, coram ipso orant, vivunt et agunt omnia' (Galatians, 1531-1535).

8. WA 39 I. 391, 3-4, 10-15 (First Disputation against the Antinomians, 1537).

The same holy God has graciously stooped down to assume our flesh and to deal with us through this bearable medium.[9] While some might devalue the humanity of our Lord by appealing to Jn. 6:63, the Reformer would boldly rephrase the Scripture in order to highlight its true sense: 'Deus sine carne nihil prodest'.[10] The crucial existential question, where can I find a gracious God? is to be posed simultaneously with the epistemological question, how can I know anything about the mystery of God, which transcends my understanding? Luther begs the sinner occupied with anxiety over his justification to 'know no God apart from this man Jesus Christ', to deal with 'no God apart from this incarnate and human God'.[11] For God the Father has mercifully caused himself to be visibly represented before poor

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9. cf., e.g., WA 25. 106, 26-34: 'Non possunt autem haec intelligi sine experientia, quae sola facit Theologum, haeretici sentient aliquando solem sine umbraculo, quia nudi erga nudam maiestatem procedunt abiecta carne Christi. Id quod, cum sunt extra tentationem, aliquamdiu non sentitur, Correpti autem tentatione praecipites ruent. Hoc enim omnino ei, qui tentatur, faciendum est, ut maiestatem divinam et terribilia illa maiestatis opera non scrutetur, neque enim Deus vult sic a nobis cognosci, ideo etiam non voluit nudus cum nudis congredi, Sed se in carnem nostram abdidit, quam apprehendere et capere possumus. Maiestatem divinam non possumus capere, nisi velimus ignem consumentem' (Lectures on Isaiah, 1527-1529).

10. WA 25. 107, 4-8: 'Quare ne audiamus eos, qui dicunt: Caro nihil prodest. Tu potius inverte et dic: Deus sine carne nihil prodest. In Christi enim carnem, in illum infantem haerentem ab uberibus Virginis oculi defigendi sunt, ut simpliciter obfirmes animum et dicas: Ego nullum nec in coelo neque in terra Deum habeo aut scio extra hanc carnem, quae fovetur in gremio Mariae Virginis.'

11. WA 40 I. 78, 14-16, 24-26: 'Itaque cum versaris in

sinners in the shape of his Son, Jesus Christ, in whom he has declared his gracious will:

> 'Ich bin ein armer sunder, das weistu, mein lieber herr, aber du hast dich mir lassen für bilden durch deinen lieben Son Jhesum Christum, das du wollest mir gnedig sein. ...Sihe, so hastu das rechte bilde gefasset und darffst nicht weiter forschen noch gen himel gaffen, wie Gott gegen dir gesynnet sey.' (12)

Since true theology is part of doxology, there is little remarkable in Dr. P. S. Watson's claim that 'The watchword of Luther no less than of Calvin is soli Deo gloria'.[13] Whatever may be its appropriateness as a crisp summary of a leading motif in his piety and thought, the manuscript evidence for Luther's use of the formula 'soli Deo gloria' is scanty. During his years as an Augustinian friar the Reformer had become familiar with I Tim. 1:17, which featured as the 'Little Chapter' in the Office of Prime. The Vulgate version of this verse ends with the exclamation 'soli Deo honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum. Amen'. These words of praise stamped the doxologies with which Luther closed two writings of 1519. Thus the Auslegung deutsch des Vaterunsers für die einfältigen Laien ended with

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loco Iustificationis et disputas de inveniendo Deo qui iustificat seu acceptat peccatores, Ubi et quomodo is quaerendus sit, Tum prorsus nullum Deum scito extra istum hominem Iesum Christum. ...Quare diligenter memineris, in causa Iustificationis seu Gratiae, ubi nobis omnibus res est cum Lege, Peccato, Morte, Diabolo, nullum Deum cognoscendum esse praeter hunc incarnatum et humanum Deum' (Lectures on Galatians, 1531).

12. WA 37. 456, 28-30, 33-34 (Sermon, 1534).

13. Philip S. Watson: Let God be God! (London, 1947), p. 59.

the words 'Soli deo honor et gloria',[14] while the first edition of the Resolutio Lutheriana super propositione XIII, de potestate papae closed with the ascription 'SOLI DEO GLORIA'.[15] According to Dr. K. Berckenhagen,[16] the latter may well be the first instance in the history of the Western Church of the abbreviation of I Tim. 1:17 into the well known 'soli Deo gloria'. Dr. Watson thought to discern, especially in the theology of the young Reformer, a turning away from a man-centred towards a God-centred theology and piety. In support of his contention that Luther inaugurated a 'Copernican Revolution' in theological attitudes, allegedly restoring biblical and patristic wholeness in the place of mediaeval and scholastic imbalance, Dr. Watson pointed to the centrality of the First Commandment in the Reformer's thinking[17] and to the radical understanding of repentance in the early Lectures on Romans: the saving purpose of God is to slay the man incurvatus in se, conforming him to the image of the Incarnate Son so that he may live to God.[18] Dr. Watson's concept of theocentricity, however, fits ill with Luther's central theological concern, for the dominant theme of, for example, the Lectures on Romans is not man's orientation towards the transcendent God

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14. WA 2. 130, 19.

15. WA 2. 240 (footnote).

16. 'Soli Deo Gloria', Luther 1970, 3, p. 149.

17. Watson: op.cit., p. 43f.

18. op.cit., p. 38f.

in the sense of apophatic theology, but the contrast between man-in-himself and man-in-Christ in the light of the evangelical understanding of poenitentia. The claim made for Luther by Dr. Watson is as follows:

> 'In Luther, the theocentricity of primitive Christianity returns; and it is the determining factor of his whole outlook. His opposition to Catholicism is due ultimately to nothing else but this. In the Catholic conception of Christianity it is in the last analysis man who occupies the centre of the religious stage; in Luther's reforming conception it is God.' (19)

Two objections can be raised against Dr. Watson's assertions, which would seem to owe more to the early Barth's antagonism to analogia entis than to any statement of Luther's. First, if the Origen of the De Oratione, with his insistence that prayer is to be addressed to the Father alone, albeit in and through the other two persons of the Godhead,[20] may be taken as typical of 'primitive Christianity', it is clear that the Reformer did not instigate a return to 'the theocentricity of primitive Christianity'. The God-centredness of the New Testament and the ancient Church was an orientation towards the Father in the Son, and Luther is separated from this 'Patricentrism' by a long mediaeval development which had seen a great shift of devotional emphasis from the Father to the Son. The Reformer was a thoroughly mediaeval Christian in that the centre of his devotion was the Incarnate Son, the suffering Saviour who had himself endured Anfechtung for Martin's sake. Secondly, Dr. Watson's statement that 'in Luther's reforming conception it is God ... who occupies the centre of the religious stage' is

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19. op.cit., p. 59.

20. De Oratione XV, 1-XVI, 1 (Migne: Patrologia Graeco-Latina XI, 464-468).

flatly misleading. The centre of Luther's vision is the Incarnate Son whose glory is freely to share man's lot to the full, and the Reformer follows the author to the Hebrews (Heb. 2:13b) in being unable to visualise the Son without his brethren. The totus Christus motif is applied to daily Christian living when Luther expounds the significance of holy baptism in the Small Catechism of 1529. The great Pauline formulation of incorporation into the death and resurrection of Christ through baptism (Rom. 6:4) is quoted[21] in support of Luther's understanding of baptismal living as a daily dying and rising with Jesus:

> 'Es bedeut, dass der alte Adam in uns durch tägliche Reu und Busse soll ersäuft werden und sterben mit allen Sunden und bösen Lüsten, und wiederumb täglich erauskommen und auferstehen ein neuer Mensch, der in Gerechtigkeit und Reinigkeit für Gott ewiglich lebe.' (22)

What, then, is the proper subject of theology? The Reformer answered this question in an exegetical work of 1532:

> 'Nam Theologiae proprium subiectum est homo peccati reus ac perditus et Deus iustificans ac salvator hominis peccatoris.' (23)

This assertion alone is sufficient reason for labelling Luther's theology theanthropocentric rather than theocentric. Perhaps the most beautiful and probably the most influential expression of the Reformer's theanthropocentrism is his exposition of the Second Article of the Creed in the Small Catechism. A Luther with a

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21. BS 517, 1-7.

22. BS 516, 32-38.

23. WA 40 II. 328, 17-18 (Enarratio Psalmi LI, 1532).

wider repertoire than the imagery of forensic justification preaches a gospel which is as much Irenaean or Athanasian as it is Augustinian or Anselmian:

> 'Ich glaube, dass Jesus Christus, wahrhaftiger Gott vom Vater in Ewigkeit geborn und auch wahrhaftiger Mensch von der Jungfrauen Maria geborn, sei mein HERR, der mich verlornen und verdampten Menschen erlöset hat, erworben, gewonnen und von allen Sunden, vom Tode und von der Gewalt des Teufels nicht mit Gold oder Silber, sondern mit seinem heiligen, teuren Blut und mit seinem unschuldigen Leiden und Sterben, auf dass ich sein eigen sei und in seinem Reich unter ihme lebe und ihme diene in ewiger Gerechtigkeit, Unschuld und Seligkeit, gleichwie er ist auferstanden vom Tode, lebet und regieret in Ewigkeit; das ist gewisslich wahr.' (24)

This brief record of the fivefold solus of Luther's Reformation should be sufficient warning against any piecemeal or unsystematic account of his theology,[25] and it should also afford ample proof of the untena-

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24. BS 511, 23-38. cf. A. F. C. Vilmar: Die Theologie der Thatsachen wider die Theologie der Rhetorik (Marburg, 1856), p. 12: '...dieselbe Kraft des lebendigen Gottes lässt auch aus dem verborgenen Quell Seines Wesens, Seiner ewigen Kraft und Gottheit, die Ströme seiner Offenbarung ausgehen unter die Geschlechter der Menschen, dass diese Geschlechter nicht allein sollen schöpfen aus diesen Quellen und sich baden in diesen Strömen, während sie sonst einem andern Element angehören, sondern dass sie sich eintauchen sollen ganz und gar, dass sie leben sollen mit ihrem ganzen Sein in diesen Quellen und Strömen des göttlichen Lebens, wie der Fisch in der Creatur des Wassers sein ganzes Leben, sein einziges Dasein hat. ...Uns ist dabei nichts Anderes zu thun übrig, auch nichts Anderes nützlich, als dieser Ströme des göttlichen Lebens mit unserm ganzen Dasein inne zu werden und dieselben zu geniessen, ihre Tiefe und Breite so weit unsere Kräfte reichen, zu ermessen, und uns und andere zu hüten und dagegen zu schützen, dass wir nicht diesen Lebensströmen, den Bedingungen unseres Daseins, entrissen, und dem Verschmachtungstode am dürren Strande preis gegeben werden.'

25. cf. the claim of Dr. Wilhelm Maurer ('Die Einheit

bility of the widespread opinion that he ruthlessly pruned down the rich foliage of the Christian faith until only the bare twig of solifidianism remained.[26] In fact, the particulae exclusivae stand not alone, but together, their interdependence acting as a safeguard against arbitrary subjectivism:

> 'Die drei durch die "particula exclusiva" ... ausgezeichneten Grössen bestimmen sich wechselseitig: das "sola scriptura" wird nicht nur interpretiert, sondern auch qualifiziert durch das mit dem personal verstandenen "sola gratia" identische "solus Christus". Beide aber werden durch das "sola fide" auf den Vollzug des Glaubens verwiesen, in dem der heilige Geist Christus als die wirksame Wahrheit der Schrift vergegenwärtigt.' (27)

The view that Luther was essentially a systematic thinker with an instinct for balance and proportion has not found many friends in England; indeed, many would be disposed to apply R. H. Tawney's famous statement concerning 'Luther's utterances on social morality' to the whole of his thought. In a theological culture where,

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der Theologie Luthers', ThLZ 75, 1950, p. 245): 'Die Einheit der Theologie Luthers ist seit Holls Forschungen eine anerkannte Tatsache. Die Rede, Luther sei kein Systematiker, ist seitdem bei den Massgebenden verstummt. Strittig ist nur, wo der Punkt zu suchen ist, der die einheitliche Betrachtung von Luthers Glauben und Denken möglich macht.' According to Dr. Maurer, 'Der Einheitspunkt, von dem aus Luthers Theologie in allen Hauptteilen verständlich wird, ist die Christologie' (p. 251).

26. cf., e.g., E. W. Zeeden: The Legacy of Luther (London, 1954), p. 6: 'Note that when he says gospel he means justification by faith. ...So the Gospel itself was reduced to this one doctrine.'

27. G. Gloege: art. 'Schriftprinzip', RGG^3 5, 1541.

according to H. D. A. Major, 'Martin Luther, the greatest protagonist of the Reformation, is viewed as a vulgar, violent and mistaken man',[28] there may yet be some who would maintain that:

> 'Luther's utterances ... are the occasional explosions of a capricious volcano, with only a rare flash of light amid the torrent of smoke and flame, and it is idle to scan them for a coherent and consistent doctrine.' (29)

By contrast, Dr. E. G. Rupp portrays the Reformer as a theologian of balance and moderation and as the sensitive architect of a via media:

> 'We must not think of the Reformation as though Martin Luther were the norm, and all else deviation from the Lutheran party line. For it is really Luther who is the great surprise. The medievalist, familiar enough with anti-clericalism, mysticism and moralism, finds nothing very surprising in a Von Hütten, Carlstadt, Müntzer, or even Zwingli. But Luther is disconcerting, with his heights and depths of exploration of the Biblical world, his poised and balanced Middle Way between Popery and Puritanism, a more genuine "Via Media" than the Anglican muddle of principle and expediency. I say, he is the surprise. He gave to the whole Reformation movement a new thrust and direction. But for him, Puritanism would have swallowed up Protestantism, and the whole matter of the Reformation might have been dissolved in a new legalism in religion, and in sectarian strife.' (30)

Luther's thought is properly to be expounded against the background of the aspirations for reform and renewal within the Body of Christ in the late Middle Ages. It is therefore appropriate to preface an account of the

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28. Editorial Preface, The Modern Churchman (1932), p. 225.

29. R. H. Tawney: Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (London, 1926), p. 97f.

30. 'Luther and the Puritans', Luther Today, ed. G. L. Belgum (Decorah: Luther College Press, 1957), p. 109.

Reformer's formal principle with a brief sketch of the views concerning the seat of religious authority current at the mediaeval universities, for at just such an institution the young Augustinian friar Martin Luther became in rapid succession a doctor and a professor in the October of 1512.

2. Sola Scriptura in the Middle Ages

Perhaps it was precisely because 'The Bible was the most studied book of the middle ages'[1] that sola Scriptura could become the formal principle of Reformation theology. The 'master of the sacred page' was the foremost representative of the theological profession within the mediaeval university. The second Scripture quotation in the Summa Theologica is none other than that cherished proof text of the conservative evangelical, II Tim. 3:16,[2] and S. Thomas is happy to equate 'sacra Scriptura' with 'sacra doctrina'.[3] Aquinas unambiguously sets forth the sola Scriptura principle, forcefully distinguishing between the immediate authority of the inspired writings and the derived authority of the fathers:

> 'Sed tamen sacra doctrina huiusmodi auctoritatibus utitur quasi extraneis argumentis, et probabilibus. Auctoritatibus autem canonicae Scripturae utitur proprie, ex necessitate argumentando. Auctoritatibus autem aliorum doctorum ecclesiae, quasi arguendo ex propriis, sed probabiliter.

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1. Beryl Smalley: The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages (Oxford, 1941), p. ix.

2. ST I, qu. 1, art. 1, sed contra.

3. ST I, qu. 1, art. 2, ad 2.

> Innititur enim fides nostra revelationi Apostolis et Prophetis factae, qui canonicos libros scripserunt: non autem revelationi, si qua fuit aliis doctoribus facta.' (4)

The learned churchman's treatment of the Bible was described by Peter the Chanter (d. 1197) in words which capture the essence of Luther's traffic with Holy Writ over three centuries later:

> 'in tribus igitur consistit exercitium sacrae scripturae: circa lectionem, disputationem, et praedicationem.' (5)

These snippets from the writings of but two mediaeval theologians might give the impression that the Middle Ages were wholeheartedly at one with the Reformation in the confession of sola Scriptura. In fact, the authority which should properly be ascribed to canonical Scripture and Church tradition respectively in the shaping of Christian doctrine was a question of great complexity, both for the Middle Ages and for the Reformation. And since both scholastics and reformers were anxious to eschew novelty by adhering faithfully to the example of the fathers, it is appropriate to preface this section by recalling some of the views taken concerning the relationship of Scripture and tradition in the patristic age.

According to Dr. H. A. Oberman, in the pre-Nicene period Holy Scripture, although invariably considered as part of the living tissue of the wider ecclesiastical tradition, was universally accepted as the sufficient norm of Christian doctrine.[6] Oberman appeals to

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4. ST I, qu. 1, art. 8, ad 2.

5. Verbum abbreviatum 1 (PL 205. 20).

6. The Harvest of Medieval Theology (Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 366.

E. Flesseman van Leer's judgement that, as far as S. Irenaeus was concerned, 'To appeal to revelatory truth apart from Scripture is heretical gnosticism'.[7] Oberman summarises the early Christian consensus as follows:

> 'Scripture and Tradition are for the early Church in no sense mutually exclusive: Kerygma, Scripture and Tradition coincide entirely. The Church preaches the kerygma which is to be found in toto in written form in the canonical books. The Tradition is not understood as an addition to the kerygma contained in Scripture but as the handing down of that same kerygma in living form: in other words everything is to be found in Scripture and at the same time everything is in the living Tradition. ...Scripture and Tradition are substantially - as regards fides et veritas - co-extensive.' (8)

The essence of this pristine solution to the question of the fitting relationship between Scripture and Tradition, a scheme to which Oberman attaches the label 'Tradition I', would seem to be the view that Scripture alone possesses binding authority over the Church (sola Scriptura), but that the genuine sense of Scripture is itself authoritatively set forth only in the Tradition of the Church (secundum solam traditionem). It is significant that the appeal to bindingly authoritative extra-scriptural oral tradition first occurred in the context of liturgical customs. While Tertullian could make the striking remark that 'our Lord Christ surnamed himself truth, not custom',[9] he was quite prepared to underline the rightfulness of baptismal and eucharistic

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7. Tradition and Scripture in the Early Church (Assen, 1954), p. 191; quoted in Oberman: op.cit., p. 367.

8. op.cit., p. 366.

9. De Virginibus Velandis, 1: 'Sed Dominus noster Christus veritatem se, non consuetudinem cognominavit' (MPL 2. 889).

ritual and of making the sign of the cross by invoking the authority of extra-scriptural tradition: 'traditio' originates things which are confirmed by 'consuetudo' and observed by 'fides'.[10] The decisive shift away from the early Christian perception of the sole authority of Scripture as reflected in the living tradition of the Church was inaugurated, according to Professor Oberman, by S. Basil the Great in the East and, half a century later, by S. Augustine in the West. The insistence of the Eastern Church that orthodoxy is not just a matter of right doctrine but also of right worship is prefigured in the examples which S. Basil uses to illustrate the problem of Scripture and Tradition. What written warrant do we have for the use of the sign of the cross in baptism, for the custom of turning East for prayer, and for the anaphora at the heart of the eucharistic liturgy?[11] His reply is that these ceremonies have been prescribed in an unwritten oral tradition which may claim equal authority with Holy Scripture itself:

> 'Of the beliefs and practices whether generally accepted or publicly enjoined which are preserved in the Church some we possess derived from written teaching; others we have received delivered to us "in a mystery" by the tradition of the apostles; and both of these in relation to true religion have the same force.' (12)

S. Basil justifies his anticipation of the 'pari pietatis affectu et reverentia' of the Council of Trent by refer-

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10. De Corona Militis, 4: 'Harum et aliarum ejusmodi disciplinarum si legem expostules Scripturarum, nullam invenies: traditio tibi praetendetur auctrix, consuetudo confirmatrix, et fides observatrix' (MPL 2. 80).

11. De Spiritu Sancto, 66 (MPG 32. 187-191).

12. ibid.; quoted from The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers VIII, p. 40f.

ring to the notion of a disciplina arcani which shields the most intimate mysteries of the Church's life from the vulgar gaze of the unregenerate. '"Dogma" and "Kerugma" are two distinct things,' he writes; 'the former is observed in silence; the latter is proclaimed to all the world.'[13] S. Basil's view of Scriptural authority, which Dr. Oberman designates by the label 'Tradition II', would seem to boil down to the conviction that Holy Scripture is not itself a sufficient norm for the Church's teaching and practice, but must be supplemented by an indeterminate mass of equally authoritative unwritten tradition.[14]

The relevant sections from De Spiritu Sancto 66 found their way via Ivo of Chartres into the highly influential Decretum of Gratian of Bologona (fl. ca. 1140) and hence into the authoritative Corpus Iuris Canonici. 'For the canon lawyer, then, the two-sources theory has been established.'[15] An examination of scholasticism yields two schools of thought marked by their adherence to the early and late patristic conceptions of Scriptural authority (Tradition I and Tradition II). Dr. Oberman finds that until the beginning of the fourteenth century theologians as a whole 'defined their own task in the terms in which we have described Tradition I,

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13. op.cit. VIII, p. 42

14. n.b. Oberman's own definition of the labels 'Tradition I' and 'Tradition II': 'If for clarity's sake we call the single-source or exegetical tradition of Scripture held together with its interpretation "Tradition I" and the two-sources theory which allows for an extra-biblical oral tradition "Tradition II", we may say that both Tradition I and Tradition II had their medieval partisans' (op.cit., p. 371).

15. Oberman: op.cit., p. 369.

while the enterprise related to Tradition II was more or less an appendix'.[16] From that time, argues Dr. Oberman, it became increasingly difficult for theologians to accommodate the actual teaching and practice of the Western Church within the perimeters of Tradition I.[17] Accordingly, Occam,[18] d'Ailly,[19] Gerson[20] and Biel, all of whom were luminaries of the via moderna, practised their theology within the framework of Tradition II. Of these divines all but the last named were

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16. op.cit., p. 373f.

17. '...it indicates theological progress in the period that ...more and more theologians either had to call for a doctrinal reformation or to abandon the claim to a biblical warrant for a particular doctrine' (op.cit., p. 374).

18. cf. Oberman: op.cit., pp. 378-382. The habit of associating William of Occam with the sola Scriptura principle is perhaps attributable to the fact that his Dialogus in Monarchia romani imperii (Lyons, 1494; reprinted London, 1962) conscientiously sets forth both sides of the argument. Hence Douglas Carter ('Luther as Exegete', Crisis in Lutheran Theology II, J. W. Montgomery ed., Grand Rapids, 1969, p. 131, n.5) is able to appeal to Dialogus 1. 2, 1 in support of his contention that 'In the theological schools, ...notably by the exponents of the via moderna, ...Scripture was recognised, at least in theory, as the unique authority in matters of doctrine.' On the face of it, Occam's adherence to sola Scriptura is unambiguous: 'Christianus de necessitate salutis non tenetur ad credendum nec credere quod nec in Biblia continetur nec ex solis contentis in Biblia potest consequentia necessaria et manifesta inferri.' But Mr. Carter fails to point out that Dial. 1. 2, 1 is placed on the lips of the 'discipulus', whose position is countered by the 'magister' in the following chapter, where we read that 'multae sunt veritates catholicae quae nec in scriptura sacra continentur explicite, nec ex solis contentis in ea possunt inferri. Et multae etiam sunt veritates aliae, quas oportet certa fide tenere.' The second position would seem to be Occam's own.

19. cf. op.cit., pp. 382-385. 20. cf. op.cit., pp. 385-387.

conciliarists,[21] the ardent papalist Biel having departed to the greatest extent from the earlier model in his recension of Tradition II, anticipating not only Trent but even Vatican I with his prompt about-turn on the question of the admissibility of applying indulgences to the faithful departed in the light of Sixtus IV's pronouncement of 1476.[22]

Until relatively recently it was widely held that the agent of transmission of the sola Scriptura principle to the Reformer was the nominalist theology in which he received his Erfurt training.[23] Such a supposition would seem to be well-founded, for did not Luther himself write to his Erfurt teacher, Jodocus Trutvetter, on May 9th 1518:

> 'id est meam confidentiam, ex te primo omnium didici, solis canonicis libris deberi fidem' (24)?

In the light of the evidence presented above, however, a nominalist provenance for Luther's understanding of sola Scriptura would seem less than likely, and according to Dr. Oberman the Reformer's letter to Trutvetter is 'the only basis for such an assumption'.[25] In fact,

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21. 'One can as easily be curialist as conciliarist while adhering to Tradition II. The only difference is that in the one case the Pope, in the other the Council has the highest authority in defining extra-scriptural Tradition' (op.cit., p. 376).

22. cf. op.cit., p. 404f.

23. cf. E. G. Rupp: The Righteousness of God (London, 1953), p. 332, n. 1: 'That Biblical authority held a specially important place in Ockhamism is not questioned.'

24. WABr 1. 171, 72-73.

25. 'Headwaters of the Reformation', Luther and the Dawn of the Modern Era, H. A. Oberman ed. (Leiden, 1974), p. 42.

as was stated at the outset of this section, in his insistence on sola Scriptura Luther had a distinguished forerunner in S. Thomas Aquinas. This surprising parallel has been carefully expounded by Per Erik Persson, who draws attention to Aquinas' conviction of the sufficiency of Holy Scripture as sole source and supreme judge of the Church's doctrine. S. Thomas' teaching was that 'Sola canonica scriptura est regula fidei',[26] and that the object of faith is 'Solum scriptura canonica, quae in veteri et in novo testamento est'.[27] While both Luther and Aquinas proceed from the principle of the sole authority of the canonical Scriptures, however, they part company in that the Reformer did not share the schoolman's assurance of the complete congruity of the contents of the Bible with the actual pronouncements of ecclesiastical authority in general and of the

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26. In Joann. 21, 6(2). cf. Per Erik Persson: Sacra Doctrina (Oxford, 1970), p. 52.

27. Quodlibet 12, 26. Persson (op.cit., p. 68, n. 122) makes the following perceptive observations on the scripture principle of the Reformation: 'It was precisely in maintaining the unique and decisive significance of scripture as the starting-point for theology that the Reformers demonstrated their loyalty to the church and its tradition. In contrast, however, the real novelty is the idea originating at Trent and clearly developed in post-Tridentine theology that the church's tradition is a peculiar source of revelation and on a par with scripture. In this instance it is quite clear that it is in the Reformers and not in this later Roman Catholic theology that we can trace the continuity with the main lines of the earlier theological tradition.' Persson goes on to locate the point of divergence of the Reformers from the earlier champions of Tradition I: 'The conflict between Luther and scholasticism is not one between a theology which acknowledges scripture alone and one which denies this principle - and in both cases the starting-point is essentially the same - but rather the much profounder question of the interpretation of the prophetic and apostolic message.' (ibid.)

papal magisterium in particular. S. Thomas' attitude is conveniently illustrated by his justification of indulgences:

> 'Ab omnibus conceditur indulgentias aliquid valere, quia impium esset dicere, quod ecclesia aliquid vane faceret.' (28)

All men will concede the validity of indulgences only so long as they grant Aquinas' premise of the unthinkability of the Church's ever acting in vain!

As far as Luther was concerned, adherence to both Tradition I and the See of Rome became a practical impossibility when Leo X reaffirmed the binding authority of his recent predecessors' teaching on indulgences, thereby putting the papacy indubitably on the side of Tradition II. At Worms the Reformer pledged to submit to Scripture and reason,[29] but the 'tradition' with which the Church's magisterium thought to refute him was a metabasis eis allo genos in comparison with the substance of patristic divinity. It is appropriate to recall the precise nature of the Roman position with which Luther was obliged to deal by closing this section with a brief reference to a document which reflects

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28. Commentum in IV. libr. sentent. dist. XX, qu. 1, art. 3; quoted in Walther Köhler: Dokumente zum Ablassstreit (Tübingen, 1934), p. 17.

29. n.b. Luther's famous words at Worms in 1521: 'Nisi convictus fuero testimoniis scripturarum aut ratione evidente (nam neque Papae neque conciliis solis credo, cum constet eos et errasse sepius et sibiipsis contradixisse), victus sum scripturis a me adductis et capta conscientia in verbis dei, revocare neque possum nec volo quicquam, cum contra conscientiam agere neque tutum neque integrum sit' (WA 7. 838, 4-8). It is important to recognise that Luther's conscience is not the autonomous conscience of the Enlightenment, but the conscience that is bound to the Word of God.

an exalted estimate of the papal prerogatives, namely the first official reply made by the Curia to the 95 theses. Sylvester Prierias O.P. (1456-1523) took up his pen to write against the Reformer in January 1518 in his capacity as Master of the Sacred Palace. It is highly significant that he omitted to do so under the rubric of the doctrine of indulgences, preferring the heading De potestate papae dialogus. Prierias prefaced his 'dialogue' with the errant friar with a sketch of four fundamental maxims on the nature of the Church, in which he sought to counter Luther's exegetically based arguments with a careful statement of ecclesiological first principles. Only two of Prierias' fundamenta need detain us here. In the first he states that the universal Church is 'essentialiter' the company of all believers in Christ and 'virtualiter' the Roman church. The Roman church in its turn is 'repraesentative' the College of Cardinals and 'virtualiter' the Supreme Pontiff.[30] Most striking of all is the third maxim listed by Prierias:

> 'Fundamentum tertium: Quicunque non innititur doctrinae Romanae ecclesiae, ac Romani Pontificis, tanquam regulae fidei infallibili, a qua etiam sacra Scriptura robur trahit et autoritatem, haereticus est.' (31)

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30. 'Fundamentum Primum est: Ecclesia universalis essentialiter est convocatio in divinum cultum omnium credentium in Christum. Ecclesia vero universalis virtualiter est ecclesia Romana, ecclesiarum omnium caput, et Pontifex maximus. Ecclesia Romana repraesentative est Collegium Cardinalium, virtualiter autem est Pontifex summus, qui est Ecclesiae caput, aliter tamen, quam Christus.' Quoted in H. A. Oberman: 'Wittenbergs Zweifrontenkrieg gegen Prierias und Eck.' ZKG 80 (1969), p. 336, n. 16.

31. Quoted art.cit., p. 337, n. 19. Oberman observes of Prierias that he 'mit feinem Gespür die entscheidenden

With this adumbration of the 'ex sese, non autem ex consensu Ecclesiae' of Pastor Aeternus (1870), Prieras succinctly summed up the position which Luther rejected.

3. Martin Luther - Doctor of Holy Scripture?

The fact that Luther held the highest degree attainable in a mediaeval Faculty of Theology both determined the title by which he would later be known among the German people and provided the basis of his own self-understanding qua Reformer.[1] Even so, the subject of Luther's doctorate is customarily awarded the briefest of treatments in the secondary literature,[2] and the most thorough treatment of this topic remains Steinlein's article 'Luthers Doktorat', which was published in 1912 to commemorate the four hundredth anniversary of the Reformer's 'promotion'.[3] The lack of contemporary interest in a theme which concerns, albeit indirectly,

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Punkten heraushebt, die auch nach dem zweiten Vatikanum nichts von ihrer kirchentrennenden Bedeutung eingebüsst haben'. (p. 336).

1. cf. Hermann Sasse: In Statu Confessionis (Berlin, 1976) II, p. 141: 'Keiner der überschwenglichen Namen, mit denen die Begeisterung seiner Zeitgenossen den deutschen Reformator geschmückt hat, ist lebendig geblieben, aber als der Doktor Martin Luther lebt er im Munde und im Herzen des deutschen Volkes fort. Es ist auch kein Zufall, dass er sein Auftreten und sein Wirken als Reformator kirchenrechtlich und theologisch den Angriffen seiner Gegner wie den Anfechtungen seines eigenen Herzens gegenüber mit seinem theologischen Doktorat, und das heisst mit dem ihm ordnungsgemäss übertragenen kirchlichen Lehramt begründet hat.'

2. This subject figures as a mere snippet in Karl Holl's essay 'Luthers Urteile über sich selbst', Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte I, Luther (Tübingen, 1932), p. 381f.

3. Neue kirchliche Zeitschrift XXIII (1912), pp. 757-843.

the legitimacy of the Reformation itself contrasts markedly with the attitude of two lay emissaries of the Schmalkaldic League who were to be found in London on October 20th 1538. The Saxon Vice-Chancellor, Franz Burckhardt, contended on that date against the Hessian representative, Dr. Franz von Boyneburg, that the Reformer had already taken his doctorate when he began to preach against the indulgence hawker, Tetzel. Boyneburg denied this account of Luther's career as adamantly as Burckhardt asserted it, and the two dignitaries presently decided to make their disagreement the subject of a bet: if Burckhardt were wrong, then he would pay Boyneburg 122 gulden plus one parrot; conversely, if Boyneburg were mistaken, then he would pay Burckhardt 112 gulden. On their return to Germany, these unlikely gamblers resolved the issue by directing their enquiries to the University of Wittenberg: Dr. von Boyneburg failed to win his parrot, for it transpired that Luther was admitted to the doctorate on October 18th and 19th 1512.[4]

Since the doctor of theology, who was often called magister sacrae paginae, was himself a part of the Church's teaching office, exercising his functions apart from episcopal control in virtue of a papal mandate, the Reformer saw fit to appeal to his doctoral oath to establish his right to propound Scriptural teaching:

> 'Ich aber, Doctor Martinus, bin da zu beruffen und gezwungen, das ich muste Doctor werden, on meinen danck, aus lauter gehorsam. Da hab ich das Doctor ampt müssen annemen und meiner aller liebsten

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4. art.cit., p. 757f.

> heiligen schrifft schweren und geloben, sie trewlich und lauter zu predigen und leren. Uber solchem leren ist mir das Bapstum jnn weg gefallen und hat mirs wollen weren.' (5)

Luther's awareness of the dignity of the doctoral office is reflected in a jibe directed against Zwingli in Vom Christi Abendmahl. Bekenntnis of 1528: Oecolampadius' inability to distinguish between 'that' and 'how' and between 'accident' and 'substance' frankly amazes the Reformer, but Zwingli's ignorance of logic and dialectic occasions him no surprise, for the latter - whose highest degree was a mere M.A. - is but 'a home-grown doctor'.[6] Luther's high view of the rights and prerogatives pertaining to the sworn doctor of theology finds corroboration from an unexpected quarter, namely from his sometime up and coming contemporary and later bitter foe, the Ingolstadt professor Johannes Eck. This brilliant rising star of the via moderna had won his theological spurs on the eve of the Reformation by neatly exploiting the distinction between proprietas and possessio to argue the injustice of equating the taking of interest, on which depended the smooth functioning of early capitalism, with the practice of usury, which was condemned by the Church.[7] It would seem that scholarly renown was not the only boon enjoyed by the young Eck, for the redoubtable Jacob Fugger of Augsburg saw to it that this useful professor should not lack worldly re-

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5. WA 30 III. 386, 30-387, 14.

6. 'Im Zwingel ists nicht wunder, der ist ein selb gewachsen Doctor' (WA 26. 405, 19-20).

7. See Heiko A. Oberman: Werden und Wertung der Reformation (Tübingen, 1977), ch. 8, 'Oeconomia moderna', p. 177.

ward for liberating the conscience of the business community. Of chief interest in the present context is the fact that Eck chose to publicise his economic theories by giving notice of a disputation devoted to the subject in the October of 1514. Factions formed around the opposing viewpoints, and the motives of the various participants were not purely scholarly. A temporary halt was called to the controversy when the Bishop of Eichstadt, Gabriel von Eyb, a noted foe of the Fuggers, forbade Eck to proceed with the disputation. It is unclear whether von Eyb was acting in his capacity as diocesan or in his office as Chancellor of the University of Ingolstadt.[8] At all events, his action had a twofold result: Eck retired to Bologna where the proposed disputation was held on July 15th 1515,[9] and the question of doctoral rights came to the fore.[10] Eck for his part laid strong emphasis on the papally granted right of the doctor to debate within the framework of Catholic truth independently of episcopal supervision.[11] Now did not Luther himself appeal to the same principle in his respectfully couched letter of 1518 addressed to Leo X?

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8. ibid.

9. op.cit., p. 161. In his own view, Eck was the undoubted victor, and he returned to Germany as somewhat of a national hero in the eyes of the humanist community. Johannes Cochlaeus, who was an eye-witness of the Bologna disputation, thought Eck the loser.

10. op.cit., pp. 177, 187f.

11. op.cit., p. 189.

> 'me unum, auctoritate tua Apostolica Magistrum Theologiae, ius habere in publica schola disputandi pro more omnium Universitatum et totius Ecclesiae non modo de indulgentiis, verum et iam de potestate, remissione, indulgentiis divinis, incomparabiliter maioribus rebus.' (12)

Given that Eck had invoked his own doctoral prerogatives a full three years before Luther had cause to exercise his in his attack on indulgences, it is truly remarkable that by 1519 the Ingolstadt professor could contend that his Wittenberg colleague was in fact breaking his doctoral oath precisely by asserting his right to debate the question of indulgences even after Rome had issued the bull Cum postquam on November 9th 1518. Had Eck performed an about-turn in order to court the favour of a patron even more powerful than the financier Fugger? Or did he and Luther disagree simply in their definition of the Catholic truth which they were both pledged by oath to defend?

The question just posed can be sharpened to embrace the delicate issue of the Reformer's truthfulness. The last paragraph opened with Luther's claim that, when he was obliged in terms of his monastic vow of obedience to assume the doctoral office:

> 'I was obliged to promise and swear to my beloved Holy Scriptures that I would preach and teach them faithfully and purely.'

Be it noted that, even if the dative 'meiner allerliebsten heiligen schrifft' could be translated to imply that Luther's promise was made on rather than to the Bible, he still makes the overt claim that his oath obliged him to 'preach and teach faithfully and purely'

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12. WA 1. 528, 28-31 (Resolutiones disputationum de indulgentiarum virtute, 1518).

the contents of Scripture. The Reformer's account of the doctoral oath can scarcely be squared with the oath actually taken on October 19th 1512, which was that prescribed in the University statutes of 1508:

> 'Ego N. iuro domino Decano et magistris facultatis Theologicae Obedientiam et Reverentiam debitam, Quod in quocunque statu utilitatem Universitatis et Maxime facultatis Theologice pro virili mea procurabo, Sed hunc gradum non reiterabo, Quod omnes Actus Theologicos exercebo In mitra (Nisi fuerit religiosus), vanas peregrinas doctrinas ab ecclesia dampnatas et piarum aurium offensivas non dogmatisabo, Sed dogmatisantem domino Decano denunctiabo infra octendium, Quod manutenebo consuetudines, libertates et privilegia Theologice facultatis pro virilj mea, Ut me deus adiuvet et sanctorum evangeliorum conditores.' (13)

Hence what was expected of the Wittenberg doctor was that he would refrain from propounding vain and strange teachings which had been condemned by the Church or were thought offensive to pious ears, and that he would report anyone who did so to the dean of the faculty within a week. The problem posed by the incongruence between the actual doctoral oath and Luther's later recollection of it has been noticed, but not adequately solved.[14] Almost a century ago, Julius Köstlin suggested that the oath invoked by the Reformer was not the one taken at his doctoral 'promotion', but rather that which he took on October 4th 1512 when he received the licentia magis-

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13. Quoted by Steinlein: art.cit., p. 761, n 6.

14. See, e.g., Hermann Sasse: 'Luther and the Word of God', Accents in Luther's Theology, Heino O. Kadai ed., (St. Louis, 1967), p. 51: 'However, one must ask what he had actually promised in his doctoral oath. Was it not to teach the Scriptures according to the sense of the church?' See also W. J. Kooiman: Luther and the Bible (Philadelphia, 1961), p. 22; and Julius Köstlin: Luthers Leben (3rd ed., Leipzig, 1883), p. 71 (ET p. 64f).

trandi, that is, the permission to supplicate for the doctorate.[15] This escape clause would seem to be illusory, however, for according to Steinlein the decisive pledge made by Luther as licentiatus was the stark 'Juro etiam Romane ecclesie obedientiam'.[16] And the solution proposed by Steinlein himself, namely that Luther mistook the oath of October 1512 for the one which he took on March 9th 1509 on his graduation as baccalaureus biblicus,[17] is unconvincing, for according to the passage quoted here the Reformer explicitly associated his pledge to the Scriptures with his doctoral 'promotion'. The most convenient way out of the dilemma would be the discovery that Luther formally promised to uphold Scriptural doctrine when, shortly after his attainment of doctoral rank, Staupitz relinquished the lectura in Biblia, bequeathing to the Reformer the chair which he would occupy for the rest of his days. In the absence of any evidence of such an oath, nothing

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Oddly enough, Gustav Kawerau omitted all mention of the discrepancy in his amplification and revision of Köstlin's work Martin Luther. Sein Leben und seine Schriften I (Berlin, 1903), p 102f. Nor did E. G. Schwiebert touch on this delicate subject in his account of the doctoral ceremony in Luther and his Times (St. Louis, 1950), p. 195f.

15. 'Als Lizentiat gelobte er, die evangelische Wahrheit nach Kräften zu vertheidigen: namentlich diesen Eid muss er später im Auge gehabt haben, wenn er gerne darauf sich berief, dass er seiner allerliebsten heiligen Schrift geschworen habe, sie treulich und lauter zu predigen' (op.cit., p. 71).

16. art.cit., p. 759, n. 2.

17. 'Die Baccalaureatseid enthielt jedenfalls eine direkte Verpflichtung zur Beschäftigung mit der Heiligen Schrift' (art.cit., p. 782).

need be added to or subtracted from Steinlein's frank statement of what amounts to a glaring embarrassment:

> 'Freilich, wenn wir Luthers Selbstaussagen betreffs seiner Doktoratsverpflichtung und die Aussprüche anderer über dieselbe mit dem damaligen Wittenberger Doktoreid vergleichen, so sind wir zunächst etwas verwundert. Es steht eben nicht so, wie z.B. Melchior Zeidler in seiner Polemik mit dem Jesuiten Kedd meinte, dass dieser Eid eine direkte Verpflichtung auf die heilige Schrift enthielt. Die einzige direkte Beziehung auf letztere besteht darin, dass zum Schluss als Eideshelfer neben Gott auch die Heiligen Evangelisten angerufen wurden. ...Aber trotz alledem steht es keineswegs so, dass Luther durch die Doktorpromotion an und für sich den Antrieb zur Vertiefung in die Heilige Schrift bekam.' (18)

The discovery of the strange discrepancy between the Reformer's recollections and the doctoral ceremony prompts two observations. First, the root of the enmity between Luther and Eck lay in the adherence of the former to Tradition I and of the latter to Tradition II. Eck saw no disagreement between his own proposals concerning the legitimisation of interest and the pronouncements of the magisterium. Luther, on the other hand had strayed from the perimeters of Tradition II with his refusal to accept that only the pope could legitimately interpret Scripture. His retort would be that in overstepping the limits prescribed by Tradition I the pope became what the Reformer would later term a Schwärmer. The truth of the matter is that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments played only a mute ceremonial role in Martin Luther's doctoral 'pro-

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18. art.cit., pp. 781, 783.

motion'.[19] What made it natural for Luther to read into the oath pledges which it did not in fact contain was his own understanding of catholicity in terms of the - inclusively understood[20] - sola Scriptura. The relative neglect of secondary (traditional) in favour of primary (biblical) authority involved Martin's personal commitment to his Lord Jesus Christ,[21] and - as Steinlein pointed out[22] - the resolute dedication to

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19. 'The presiding dean was Andreas Karlstadt, who later became Luther's too enthusiastic disciple. In addition to receiving the actual insignia of his degree, which consisted of a doctor's ring and beret, the promovendus in the course of the ceremony was given a Bible, first closed and then opened, an act accompanied by appropriate liturgical formulas. In this case at least this act was an appropriate symbol' (Kooiman: op.cit., p. 21f).

20. Franz Hildebrandt pointed out in his early work EST. Das Lutherische Prinzip (Göttingen, 1931) that an exclusive understanding of the particulae exclusivae is typically Reformed, while an inclusive interpretation of these principles is characteristically Lutheran (p. 43).

21. This is made clear in WA 56. 371, 17-21: 'Ego quidem Credo me debere Domino hoc obsequium latrandi contra philosophiam et suadendi ad Sacram Scripturam. Nam alius forte si faceret, qui ea non vidisset, Vel timeret Vel non crederetur ei. Ego autem in illis detritus multis iam annis et multos itidem expertus et audiens Video, quod sit studium vanitatis et perditionis' (Romans, 1515-1516). Five lines further on Luther alludes to the connection between sola Scriptura and solus Christus which is so typical of his theology: 'Tempus est enim, ut aliis studiis mancipemur et Ihesum Christum discamus, "et hunc crucifixum"' (26-27).

22. 'Luther ist durchaus nicht erst durch seine Doktorwürde der Meister der Heiligen Schrift, der Reformator geworden. Vielmehr hat er sich gerade auch dem Doktorat gegenüber als Reformator erwiesen. Er hat erst aus dem "Doktor der Heiligen Schrift" das gemacht, was

exegetical theology which made possible Luther's reinterpretation of the oath of October 19th 1512 was itself a reformational act, even before All Saints Eve 1517. Secondly, awareness of the fallibility of Luther's memory will motivate the student of his thought to subject his autobiographical reminiscences to critical scrutiny. Middle-aged and old man Luther cannot be permitted to resolve questions about young Luther's development which can in fact only be decided by the very documents which attest the Reformer's theological evolution. This is supremely true of the account of the reformational breakthrough which Luther wrote in 1545.

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derselbe zwar auch zuvor schon auf Grund seines Namens hätte sein sollen, in Wirklichkeit aber absolut nicht war' (art.cit., p. 787). Steinlein rightly points to the novelty of Luther's practice of lecturing on the Bible alone: 'Wenn Luther nach seiner Doktorpromotion ausschliesslich über biblische Bücher las, so tat er's in direktem Gegensatz zu dem fast allgemein üblichen sonstigen Gebrauch' (art.cit., p. 786). The same is alleged by Karl Bauer in Die Wittenberger Universitätstheologie und die Anfänge der deutschen Reformation (Tübingen, 1928), p. 14. Although Bauer offers seventeen pages on 'Luther als Doktor der Heiligen Schrift', he does not deal with the doctoral office as such, concentrating almost exclusively on the Reformer's exegesis. The effect of Dr. Luther's change of course on the Wittenberg students is described in a letter of May 18th 1517 to Johann Lang in Erfurt: the undergraduates, alleges Luther, are dropping out of the lectures on the Sentences and voting with their feet in favour of the new divinity (WABr 1. 99, 8-13).

4. The Authority of Scripture

While Luther explicitly avowed the exclusive authority of Holy Scripture to determine Christian doctrine, and while he also expressed the view that the sacred text is free of error, it is incontestable that he devoted far less space to the statement of the formal principle of the Reformation than did his successors of the age of Lutheran Orthodoxy. According to Dr. Franz Hildebrandt there is good reason for the relative paucity of the Reformer's utterances on this subject: since Luther's relationship with Scripture was 'immediate', so that he as it were 'lived in the Bible', he did not stand at sufficient distance from Holy Writ to permit its becoming 'an object of reflection' for him.[1] Three further factors may be urged in explanation of Luther's unexpected brevity with regard to the Scripture principle. First, he never wrote a Summa, so that the principles which governed his thought are often to be found in those beautifully couched marginal asides which abound in his works, or else they are to be inferred from his actual theological method. Secondly, belief in the inspiration and authority of the Bible was common ground occupied by Rome and Reformers alike in the sixteenth and succeeding centuries. The debate concerning whether, and if so in what sense, the Bible

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1. '...gerade dadurch unterscheidet sich ja die Lutherische von jeder späteren Theologie, dass ihr die "Autorität der Bibel" gar kein Gegenstand der Reflexion ist. ...Das ist nun noch näher zu erklären. Während jeder Biblizismus im heutigen Sinne des Wortes ein theoretisches Urteil oder Vor-urteil über die Autorität der Bibel und darum immer "Reflexion" voraussetzt - ebenso wie die Bibelkritik -, ist der "Biblizismus" im Lutherischen Sinne keine eigentliche Vorstellung, sondern Einstellung; das Verhältnis ist ein unmittelbares, sehr trivial ausgedrückt ein "Leben in der Bibel".

is God's Word belongs to a later age. Disagreement between the warring camps at the time of the Reformation centred on the question of the proper interpretation of a primary authority acknowledged by both sides. Thirdly, since Luther's acceptance of biblical authority is in no way exceptional in the context of the age in which he lived, commonsense dictates that we rephrase our question. 'Is the Bible God's Word?' will elicit only a brief affirmative from the Reformer. Should we ask him whether the salvific truths mediated in the Bible are expressed plainly or obscurely, however, or should we enquire of him how we are to establish the binding sense of the sacred text, then it will be found that Luther makes a distinctive and valuable contribution to the later debate on the authority and use of the Bible, but under such different-sounding rubrics as claritas Scripturae and sensus grammaticus.

Notwithstanding these qualifications, it is possible to quarry an explicit statement of the Scripture principle from Luther's writings without undue difficulty. Scripture is nothing less than 'God's testimony concerning himself',[2] and should the infidel Turk enquire about the foundation of the Christian faith, the believer should keep silence and simply point to the Bible.[3] In the ~~Schmalkaldic~~ Smalcald Articles of 1537,

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Das Wort Gottes bleibt Gegebenheit, wird nie Gegenstand, dem das Denken entgegenstehen könnte' (op.cit., p. 84).

2. '...die schrifft Gottes zeugnis von im selbs ist.' WA 50. 282, 7 (Die drei Symbola, 1538).

3. 'Wyr musten yhe aller dinge schweygen und yhm die heyligen schrifft ym grund antzeygen.' WA 7. 315, 12-13 (Grund und Ursach aller Artikel, 1521). cf. Luther's

Luther bluntly enunciates sola Scriptura:

> 'Es heisst, Gottes Wort soll Artikel des Glaubens stellen und sonst niemand, auch kein Engel.' (4)

Difficulties arise when we seek to establish whether Luther believed Scripture to be free of error. In other words, would he countenance the concept of biblical inerrancy which some traditionalists deem necessary to avert the peril of the creeping erosion of Scriptural authority? In 1521 the Reformer stated that the Bible, which is in truth 'Christ's spiritual body, ... has never erred'.[5] Moreover, in 1527, in the context of the exegesis of the words of institution, he maintained that 'Scripture can never be at odds with itself'.[6] In the Large Catechism of 1529 we find a bold statement of Scriptural inerrancy which reduces the issue to the contrast between God's constant truthfulness, on the one hand, and fallen man's wretched propensity to deceive, on the other:

> 'Darümb dass wir wissen, dass Gott nicht leugt, ich und main Nähister und Summa alle Menschen

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contention in his reply to Jerome Emser, also written in the decisive year 1521, that 'das des geystis schwerd, göttlich wortt, yn allem streytt gellte, zweyffelt niemant' (WA 7. 637, 14-15).

4. BS SA 421, 23-25. cf. also WA 7. 98, 4-7: 'Sint ergo Christianorum prima principia non nisi verba divina, omnium autem hominum verba conclusiones hinc eductae et rursus illuc reducendae et probandae: illa primo omnium debent esse notissima cuilibet, non autem per homines quaeri et disci, sed homines per ipsa iudicari' (Assertio omnium articulorum, 1521).

5. ' ...noch nie geirret hat' (WA 7. 315, 32).

6. 'die schrifft nicht mag mit yhr selbs uneins sein.' WA 23. 123, 14-15 (Dass diese Wortt Christi "Das ist mein Leib" noch feststehen).

> mügen feilen und triegen, aber Gottes Wort kann nicht feilen.' (7)

That Luther tended to believe what the Bible said simply because the Bible said it is clearly indicated by a sermon on Genesis of 1527: fending off S. Augustine's opinion that the six days of creation are to be interpreted symbolically, a conviction whose root is probably to be found in the simul of the Vulgate version of Ecclus. 18:1, the Reformer urges us to pay the Holy Spirit the compliment of considering him wiser than ourselves by taking 'Moses' literally here.[8] And it is well known that Luther dismissed outright Copernicus' heliocentric account of the universe, which was reported to him at table sometime during 1539: after all, Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, not the earth.[9] Despite this wealth of evidence, which would seem to place Luther firmly in the pro-inerrancy camp,[10] there are two reasons for supposing that in those statements which predicate inerrancy of the Bible the Reformer was guilty of at least hyperbole and at most plain inconsistency. First, the Reformer occasionally pointed out discrepancies in the biblical narrative, thereby implicitly set-

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7. BS GK 702, 50-703, 3. cf. the Latin version: 'porro autem verbum Dei nec potest errare nec fallere' (703, 8-9).

8. WA 24. 19, 7ff.

9. WATR 4. No. 4638.

10. This position was solidly argued by M. Reu in his Luther and the Scriptures (1944 - republished as a special edition of The Springfielder, August, 1960).

ting his face against the concept of inerrancy.[11] Secondly, the doubts which Luther expressed concerning no fewer than four books of the New Testament (James, Jude, Hebrews and Revelation) would suggest that he believed the received Canon of the New Testament to be riddled with inconsistency. It would in fact be possible so to marshal the relevant evidence as to make out a strong case for Luther's being both a supporter and an opponent of the concept of biblical inerrancy.[12] A closer examination of the two points alleged against the Reformer's adherence to what, after all, was the unanimous conviction of Christendom for many centuries, will tip the scales in favour of the so-called conservative position.

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11. cf. Karl Holl: 'Luthers Bedeutung für den Fortschritt der Auslegungskunst', Luther. After listing some of the Reformer's observations on implausibilities in the Old Testament record, Holl remarks: 'Ich erinnere: es ist nicht Reimarus oder Colenso, sondern Luther, der diese Überlegungen anstellt. ...Aber auch im Neuen Testament bemerkt er die Unstimmigkeiten im Taufbericht und in den Auferstehungserzählungen. Er hebt sie sogar mit einer Unbekümmertheit hervor, die 50 Jahre später bewirkt hätte, dass er aus seiner eigenen Kirche ausgeschlossen worden wäre' (p. 574f). Perhaps the most convincing presentation of the opposite position to that advocated by Reu is Kooiman's chapter on 'Inspiration and Incarnation' in Luther and the Bible, pp. 225-239. cf. also Hildebrandt: op.cit., pp. 86-89. In the opinion of the last-named author, Luther's approach to the Bible can be summed up as 'scholarly openness' ('wissenschaftliche Unbefangenheit', p. 86).

12. Dr. T. H. L. Parker makes the same point about John Calvin's attitude to Holy Scripture in his Calvin's New Testament Commentaries (London, 1971), p. 57.

The reference given by Karl Holl to buttress his contention that Luther found discrepancies in the Gospel accounts of Jesus' baptism only half supports his interpretation. In a sermon of 1526, expounding Mt. 3:14 where the Baptist remonstrates against Jesus' desire to receive his baptism with the words, 'I have need to be baptised of thee, and comest thou to me?', the Reformer notes that the fourth evangelist 'writes the very opposite'.[13] Thus far Holl's interpretation holds good. Holl fails to point out, however, that Luther here goes on to iron out the inconsistency between the two Gospel accounts by speculating on the psychology of the Baptist, thus carrying on the tradition of harmonising the several accounts of the incarnate life which had been the established practice of the Church since patristic times. It is noteworthy that the Reformer closes his treatment of the relation between the Matthean and Johannine accounts by urging the following interpretative principle:

> 'Also mus man den zween Evangelisten zusamen helffen, sonst weren sie widder eynander.' (14)

Luther's well-known reservations about the canonicity of Hebrews and James afford prima facie evidence of his being a precursor of the biblical criticism which got under way with Reimarus in the eighteenth century. Even so, four arguments can be advanced against this interpretation of the Reformer's stance. First, those books whose canonicity was doubted by the Reformer are among those (including also II Peter and II and III John) whose authenticity was already questioned in the patristic period. Hebrews and James were <u>antilegomena</u>

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13. <u>WA</u> 20. 223, 22-23.

14. <u>WA</u> 20. 224, 34-35.

long before Martin Luther wrote his celebrated Prefaces in the German New Testament of 1522. And it is appropriate to record that the Reformer never expressed any reservations about the so-called homologoumena. Secondly, the reverse side of Luther's belief that Jas. 2:21 and Heb. 6:4 are incongruous with the gospel when taken in their plain grammatical sense is that he held the rest of the New Testament to be unanimous in its testimony to the gospel.[15] Thirdly, he readily conceded that the difficulties engendered by these verses could easily be resolved with the help of interpretative glosses, even though he himself preferred to have Scripture without a gloss.[16] And, fourthly, it must be stressed that Luther never issued any wholesale condemnation of any of the antilegomena, for he found much of value in both James and Hebrews; that he expressly disavowed any intention to impose his assessment of these books on anyone;[17] and that he continued to print these writings in the German Bible and also to quote them as authoritative divine teaching.

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15. See WADB 7. 384, 25-29: 'Und daryn stymmen alle rechtschaffene heylige bucher uber eyns, das sie alle sampt Christum predigen und treiben, Auch ist das der rechte prufesteyn alle bucher zu tadelln, wenn man sihet, ob sie Christum treiben oder nit, Syntemal alle schrifft Christum zeyget Ro. 3 und Paulus nichts denn Christum wissen will I Cor. 2' (Preface to James).

16. See the Prefaces to both Hebrews and James (WADB 7. 344, 16 and 384, 14-15. Arguing with Emser in 1521 about the fitting relationship between Scripture and tradition, Luther had contended that 'die schrifft on alle glose ist die sonne und gantzis licht, von wilcher alle lerer yhr licht empfahen, und nit widderumb' (WA 7. 639, 1-2).

17. See WADB 7. 386, 17-19: 'Darumb will ich yhn nicht haben ynn meyner Bibel in der zal der rechten heubtbucher, will aber damit niemant weren, das er yhn setz und hebe, wie es yhn gelustet' (Preface to James).

5. Sola Scriptura and Tradition

Luther intended sola Scriptura to guarantee the Church's tradition, not to deal a deathblow at it. He ascribed a relative authority to such patristic, and even scholastic, tradition as is consonant with Holy Scripture. At the same time, he denied authority to such scholastic, and even patristic, tradition as stands in opposition to the pure doctrine of the gospel. The Reformer's attitude towards the doctrinal tradition of the preceding fifteen Christian centuries can best be summarised by examining in turn his appreciation of, first, the late scholastic doctrine of grace, and, secondly, of the doctrinal harvest of the ancient Church as encapsulated in the orthodox definitions concerning the trinitarian life of Almighty God and the divine-human person of Christ.

(a) Luther and Scholasticism

A propitious source from which to elucidate the Reformer's position vis-à-vis the late mediaeval theologians from whose writings he derived the substance of his Erfurt training is the 97 theses Contra Scholasticam Theologiam, which were posted in the university on September 4th 1517. These theses formed the deliberate first shot in a premeditated battle against the prevailing theology. According to H. J. McSorley, 'This disputation contains almost a complete outline of Luther's new theology';[1] and Professor H. A. Oberman has stressed the care taken by the Reformer not to lump together and subject to equal castigation all representatives of scholastic theology:

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1. Luther: right or wrong? (New York, 1969), p. 241.

> 'but rather, acutely aware of the variety of positions, to take up each point separately in order to direct his attack expressly and precisely against that theologian whom he regards as responsible for each particular thesis.' (2)

The feature of late scholastic theology which provoked Luther's dissent was its tendency to fuse the ethics of Aristotle with the biblical-Augustinian doctrine of grace, whereby the former - at any rate in the Reformer's opinion - cancelled out the latter. This thought lies at the root of th. 41, which argues that:

> 'Tota fere Aristotelis Ethica pessima est gratiae inimica.' (3)

This enmity between supernatural grace and natural morality stemmed from Aristotle's conviction that the righteousness of the just man is the product of his own striving: τὰ δίκαια πράττοντες δίκαιοι γινόμεθα[4] Now the late mediaeval theologians had too great a respect for the Bible, S. Augustine and the pronouncements of the magisterium to advocate an undiluted Pelagianism. But the upshot of scholasticism's reconciliation of the biblical-Augustinian tradition with Aristotelian philosophy, especially when with Duns Scotus and William of Occam a more optimistic view of man's natural capacities than that held by the largely Augustinian S. Thomas held the field, was that in the treatment of the justification of the sinner - par excellence by Gabriel Biel - the outer structure of the doctrine was determined by sola gratia, the inner by solis operibus. It went without saying that Almighty God was not strictly obliged to re-

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2. 'Iustitia Christi and Iustitia Dei', (Harvard Theological Review 59 (1966), p. 6.

3. WA 1. 226, 10.

4. Nicomachaean Ethics II, 1.

ward imperfect creaturely efforts, for 'nullius debitor esse potest'. Hence it was of pure mercy that he chose to give his grace de congruo to the one who did his best ('facienti quod in se est'), thereby placing the viator on the bottom rung of the ladder of merit, where - after receiving the first, (almost) gratuitous grace - he could avail himself of the sacramental good offices of the Church to ascend under the virtue of the gratia de condigno to merit eternal beatitude itself. Luther's difficulties with this scheme, which he early imbibed from the writings of the Tübingen professor Gabriel Biel, arose when he tried to square it with the teaching of the Apostle Paul and especially when he sought to understand it in the light of the latter's sharp distinction of law from gospel. For when the beginning of justification was located in man's facere quod in se est, and when it was seriously propounded that the act of loving God above all things was possible even e puris naturalibus, then to speak of a 'gospel' seemed a cruel misuse of language, since, when understood along Scotist-Bielite lines, the 'good news' might well appear to the stricken conscience as proposing little more than a ruthless tightening of the already unbearable screws of the law: 'Item sequitur quod odiosior fiat gratia dei quam fuit lex ipsa.' (5)

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5. WA 1. 227, 11 (th. 60). The same point had been made more fully in the early lectures on Romans: 'Quocirca mera deliria sunt, que dicuntur, Quod homo ex viribus suis possit Deum diligere super omnia Et facere opera precepti secundum substantiam facti, Sed non ad intentionem precipientis. O stulti, O Sawtheologen! Sic ergo gratia non fuerat necessaria nisi per novam exactionem ultra legem. Siquidem lex impletur ex nostris viribus, Ut dicunt, Sed solum pro impletione nove super legem exactionis a Deo imposite. Quis ferat has sacrilegas opiniones? Cum Apostolus dicat, Quod "lex iram operatur" Et "infirmatur per carnem" et prorsus sine gratia non impleri potest' (WA 56. 274, 11-275, 2).

Since 'young Luther' is a quantity which has only emerged from almost total obscurity during the present century, earlier generations were thrown back almost entirely on the aged Reformer's autobiographical fragment of 1545 for their understanding of his so-called reformational breakthrough. This exigency had two baleful results, for an uncritical wholesale acceptance of every detail of the Reformer's preface to the first volume of his Opera Latina fosters both an inaccurate grasp of the actual teaching of the Western Church on the eve of the Reformation and a romantically idealised picture of Luther's early development. Now the Reformer was never one to eschew hyperbole in the heat of debate; so it is perhaps not surprising that in outlining his difficulties with the unicum vocabulum of Rom. 1:17, namely with the image of the iustitia Dei, Luther alleged that according to the use and custom of all the doctors he had been taught to understand the righteousness of God in the philosophical sense as the righteousness with which he is himself righteous and with which he punishes evildoers.[6] Heinrich Denifle

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6. 'Miro certe ardore captus fueram cognoscendi Pauli in epistola ad Rom., sed obstiterat hactenus non frigidus circum praecordia sanguis, sed unicum vocabulum, quod est Cap. 1: Iustitia Dei revelatur in illo. Oderam enim vocabulum istud "Iustitia Dei", quod usu et consuetudine omnium doctorum doctus eram philosophice intelligere de iustitia (ut vocant) formali seu activa, qua Deus est iustus, et peccatores iniustosque punit. ... Donec miserente Deo meditabundus dies et noctes connexionem verborum attenderem, nempe: Iustitia Dei revelatur in illo, sicut scriptum est: Iustus ex fide vivit, ibi iustitiam Dei coepi intelligere eam, qua iustus dono Dei vivit, nempe ex fide, et esse hanc sententiam, revelari per euangelium iustitiam Dei, scilicet passivam,

was later to make good use of this hostage to fortune,[7] for, after all, one need look no further than the exegesis of Rom. 1:17 offered by the Glossa Ordinaria to find a ready-made solution to Luther's difficulty:

> 'Iusticia enim dei. Haimo. Amb. Est quae gratis iustificat impium per fidem sine operibus legis, vt alibi inueniar in illo non habens iusticiam meam que ex lege est, sed illam que ex fide, quam reuelat euangelium dum dat fidem homini: per quam iustificatur quando credit deum iustum et veracem in promissis. Hoc contra Iudeos qui negant hunc esse Christum, quem promisit deus.' (8)

It would seem that the Reformer was guilty of turning the conclusions which he drew from Semi-pelagian late mediaeval nominalism into a blanket statement which inaccurately encapsulated the teaching of the Western Church as a whole. Four further caveats must be

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qua nos Deus misericors iustificat per fidem, sicut scriptum est: Iustus ex fide vivit. Hic me prorsus renatum esse sensi, et apertis portis in ipsam paradisum intrasse' (WA 54, 185, 14-20; 186, 3-9).

7. See E. G. Rupp: The Righteousness of God, p. 123.

8. Prof. Rupp has pointed out (op.cit., p. 124) that a similar account of iustitia Dei is offered in the celebrated dist. 17 of Book I of the Sententiae of S. Peter Lombard (d. 1160). The significance of these snippets of mainline mediaeval thought is twofold. First, Martin Luther's abrasively polemical sweeping statements should be carefully sifted so that his just criticism of some nominalists does not degenerate into a pretext for outrageous libel against the scholastics en masse. Secondly - and this time to Luther's credit! - the Glossa Ordinaria and the Lombard here join forces in proving that there was nothing 'new' or un-catholic about the biblical-Augustinian doctrine of grace espoused by the Reformer and rejected by Rome in the early years of the Reformation.

sounded against a 'literal' interpretation of the autobiographical fragment of 1545. First, as Ernst Bizer pointed out, some of the vocabulary used in this preface - such as the expression iustitia dei passiva - is more redolent of the older than of the younger Luther.[9] Secondly, in a fascinating parallel to the reminiscences of 1545, which was written in the critical year 1518, the Reformer explicitly links his breakthrough, which he ascribes to Staupitz' goodly counsel, to the concept of poenitentia. Just as in the fragment of 1545 Luther tells how the breakthrough with respect to poenitentia prompted him to verify his discovery in terms of other Scriptural images. This passage is proof that Luther did not have a one-track mind which got stuck in the groove of 'justification'; it demonstrates that there was more to his breakthrough than simply the concept of iustitia; and it indicates that the core of his problem had to do with the relationship of law and gospel:

> 'Memini, Reverende pater, inter iucundissimas et salutares fabulas tuas, quibus me solet dominus Ihesus mirifice consolari, incidisse aliquando mentionem huius nominis "poenitentia", ubi miserti conscientarum multarum carnificumque illorum, qui praeceptis infinitis eisdemque importabilibus modum docent (ut vocant) confitendi, te uelut a coelo sonantem excepimus, quod poenitentia uera non est, nisi quae ab amore iusticiae et dei incipit, Et hoc esse potius principium poenitentiae, quod illis finis et consummatio censetur. Haesit hoc uerbum tuum in me sicut sagitta potentis acuta, coepique deinceps cum scripturis, poenitentiam docentibus, conferre. Et ecce iucundissimum ludum, uerba undique mihi colludebant, planeque huic sententiae arridebant et assultabant, ita, ut, cum prius non fuerit ferme in scriptura tota amarius mihi uerbum

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9. Fides ex Auditu (Neukirchen, 1958), p. 9.

quam poenitentia ..., Nunc nihil dulcius aut gratius mihi sonet, quam poenitentia.' (10)

Thirdly, there is internal evidence within the fragment of 1545 itself which would tend to suggest that the aged Reformer's memory was playing tricks on him. For the reader of the preface might be pardoned for inferring that Luther's troubles with respect to Rom. 1:17 only came to a head after his first three (or, rather, four) courses of exegetical lectures, that is, in or around the year 1518.[11] Now the pluperfect captus fueram could, admittedly, be taken as an allusion to

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10. WA 1. 525, 4-21 (Resolutiones disputationum de indulgentiarum virtute). It is worthwhile to draw out the parallels between the two autobiographical reminiscences more fully. Just as, before the breakthrough, mention of poenitentia unmanned the Reformer, even so 'odiebam iustum et punientem peccatores Deum, tacitaque si non blasphemia, certe ingenti murmuratione indignabar Deo, dicens: quasi vero non satis sit, miseros peccatores et aeternaliter perditos peccato originali omni genere calamitatis oppressos esse per legem decalogi, nisi Deus per euangelium dolorem dolori adderet, et etiam per euangelium nobis iustitiam et iram suam intentaret' (WA 54. 185, 23-28). Moreover, just as the understanding of poenitentia mediated by Staupitz incited Luther to see other Scriptural images in a new light, even so 'Ibi continuo alia mihi facies totius scripturae apparuit. Discurrebam deinde per scripturas, ut habebat memoria, et colligebam etiam in aliis vocabulis analogiam, ut opus Dei, id est, quod operatur in nobis Deus, virtus Dei, qua nos potentes facit, sapientia Dei, qua nos sapientes facit, fortitudo Dei, salus Dei, gloria Dei. Iam quanto odio vocabulum "iustitia Dei" oderam ante, tanto amore dulcissimum mihi vocabulum extollebam, ita mihi iste locus Pauli fuit vere porta paradisi...' (WA 54. 186, 9-16).

11. 'Interim eo anno iam redieram ad Psalterium denuo interpretandum, fretus eo, quod exercitatior essem, postquam S. Pauli Epistolas ad Romanos, ad Galatas, et eam, quae est ad Ebraeos, tractassem in scholis' (WA 54. 185, 12-14).

the very first years of his professorship, but Luther's statement that the breakthrough was closely followed by his second course of lectures on the Psalms strongly reinforces the impression that he intended the breakthrough to be dated around 1518.[12] In his Fides ex Auditu E. Bizer took the Reformer at his word, challenging the customary early dating of the breakthrough between 1512 and 1514 and insisting that Luther attained spiritual peace only after the Reformation had begun. A glance at just a few of the iustitia Dei texts which Luther interpreted in his lecture room well before he became embroiled in public controversy[13] will corroborate the judgement of E. G. Rupp:

> 'I cannot bring myself to believe that Luther's Lectures on Romans were written by one who was held up, blocked, cut off from the whole dimension of Paul's thought about the gospel.' (14)

Fourthly, it is advisable to guard against reading the fragment of 1545 through pietistic spectacles, that is against supposing that Luther was somehow 'not a Christian' until he underwent an intimate 'conversion experience' in the privacy of his friar's cell. Such a view would run clean counter to his constant emphasis on the ecclesiality of Christianity and would make a mockery of his plain teaching that holy baptism effects incorporation into Christ. Luther never 'gave his heart to Jesus' (which would be no better than sentimen-

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12. 'Istis cogitationibus amatior factus coepi Psalterium secundo interpretari' (WA 54. 186, 21).

13. cf., e.g., WA 56. 171, 27-172, 1; 172, 3-5, 8-11; 204, 14-29; 212, 13-14; 216, 16-18; 220, 9-12; 225, 15-19; 226, 23-26; 227, 18-228, 2.

14. Just Men (London, 1977), p. 34.

tal Pelagianism); rather, he was graciously adopted as a child of God through the 'washing of regeneration' (Tit. 3:5) when his parents brought him to the font. What took place in the moments of illumination which undoubtedly underlie the autobiographical fragments - and, as Prof. Oberman rightly insists,[15] his reminiscences echo a plurality of experiences - was that the young professor became aware of this fact. Whatever else he may have been, Martin Luther was never an 'evangelical' in the current Anglo-Saxon sense of the word.

A table talk recorded in the winter of 1542-43 pinpoints the nature of the reformational breakthrough in the context of Rom. 1:17. By bringing together the abstract concept of iustitia with the figure of Christ as the concrete Righteousness of God, Luther learned to distinguish between the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of the gospel. He had previously lacked nothing but the discrimen between law and gospel, thinking that Christ differed from Moses only with respect to his place in history and his greater perfection. When the Reformer discovered the discrimen, 'then I broke through'.[16] Armed with the distinction between law and gospel, which he was delighted to find had al-

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15. 'Noch wichtiger ist die Tatsache, dass Luther die von ihm geschilderte Erfahrung offensichtlich mehrmals gehabt hat' ('Wir sein pettler. Hoc est verum', ZKG 78, 1967, p. 235).

16. 'Da sah ich, von welcher iustitia Paulus redet: Da stand zuvor im text iustitia, da reumet ich das abstractum und concretum zusamen und wurde meiner sachen gewiss, lernet inter iustitiam legis und evangelii discernirn. Zuvor mangelt mir nichts, denn das ich kein discrimen inter legem et evangelium machet, hielt es alles vor eines et dicebam Christum a Mose non differe nisi tempore et perfectione. Aber do ich das discri-

ready been discerned and exploited by no less an authority than S. Augustine,[17] Luther was able to make a clean break with the Pelagianising theology of grace espoused by his nominalist masters; so that his 97 theses Contra Scholasticam Theologiam should be understood, not as a revolutionary charter, but as a programme for the restoration of Catholicism. It is imperative to note that when he was not indulging in polemical hyperbole the Reformer never imagined that all the scholastics succumbed in equal measure to the Pelagian virus. In January 1538 he pointed out that, whereas the older scholastics were Pelagians 'under the name of Christ and the Church', 'Occam and the moderns' were much greater offenders against biblical truth with their contention that the sinner can fulfil the divine command 'without the Holy Spirit'.[18] And in the treatise Von den Konziliis und Kirchen of the following year, in the context of overall praise for S. Peter Lombard's painstaking collection of patristic wisdom, the Reformer made the measured statement that in his treatment of the 'proper articles, such as Fides and iustificatio', the Master of the Sen-

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men fande, quod aliud esset lex, aliud evangelium, da riss ich her durch' (WATR 5. 210, 9-16).

17. cf. WA 54. 186, 16-17.

18. 'Ita sub nomine Ecclesiae et Christi ipsissimi Pelagiani fuerunt, ut taceam, quod postea subinde peiores facti sunt. Occam enim et moderni, ut vocantur, sceleste docent, quod ratio sine Spiritu sancto possit Deum super omnia diligere, et quod Christus tantum meruerit primam gratiam. Imo quidam eorum scripsit, quod ad bonum opus non requiriatur gratia Spiritus sancti' (WA 39 I. 419, 17-420, 3).

tences 'speaks too thinly and weakly, even though he praises the grace of God highly enough'.[19]

The effect of the reformational breakthrough - or, rather of the recovery of Catholic substance - on Luther's attitude to the antecedent mediaeval tradition was two-fold. First, agreement with the 'chief article' (Christ alone, therefore faith alone) would henceforth be the criterion against which the beliefs and practices of Christendom would be measured; anything which smacked of synergism would be rigorously excised, regardless of pedigree or antiquity. The most notable casualty of this scrutiny was the thousand year old belief in the Sacrifice of the Mass. By the time of the Reformation it was universally held that the bloody sacrifice of Calvary is renewed, albeit in an unbloody manner, when the celebrant of the Mass offers the Lord's body and blood to the Father under the forms of bread and wine as a propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead. If any teaching of the Roman Church meets the stiff requirements of the Vincentian Canon (quod ubique, quod semper,

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19. 'Wollen wir der Veter Spruche vergleichen, So last uns Magister Sententiarum furnemen, der ist in diesem werck uber die masse vleissig und uns lange zuvorkommen, Denn derselb hat auch solche anfechtung von der ungleichheit der Veter gehabt und solcher sachen abhelfen wollen. Und meines achtens hat ers besser gemacht denn wirs machen wurden, Und du wirst in keinem Concilio, noch in allen Concilien, dazu in keinen Vetern so viel finden, als in dem buch Sententiarum, Denn die Concilia und Veter handeln etliche stucke der Christlichen lere, keiner aber handelt sie alle, wie dieser man thut, oder je doch die meisten. Aber von den rechten Artickeln, als Fides & iustificatio, redet er zu dünne und zu schwach, ob er wol die Gnade Gottes hoch gnug preiset' (WA 50. 543, 13-23).

quod ab omnibus creditum est), then it is surely this doctrine of the Sacrifice of the Mass. Even so, Luther could not tolerate this intrusion of synergism into the mystery which sustains the Church's life. Just as little as the gospel, which is God's act of applying Christ's work for man to man, can be turned into a sacrifice offered by man to God, can the sacrament itself be understood as a human work, 'for this sacrament is the gospel':

> 'So wenig als du auss dem Euangelio kanst eyn opffer odder werck machen, sso wenig kanstu es auch auss dissem sacrament machen, denn diss sacrament ist das Euangelion.' (20)

Parallel reasoning caused a whole string of mediaeval dilutions of the particulae exclusivae to be struck from the Church's agenda. Thus the associated doctrines of purgatory and indulgences were unceremoniously rejected;[21] and while the Reformer(s)[22] deemed it likely that angels

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20. WA 11. 442, 21-23 (Vom Anbeten des Sakraments des heiligen Leichnams Christi, 1523). cf. also BS SA 416, 8-11: 'Dass die Messe im Bapstum mus der grosseste und schrecklichste Greuel sein, als die stracks und gewaltiglich wider diesen Häuptartikel strebt und doch uber und fur allen anderen bäpstlichen Abgottereien die hohest und schonest (lat. speciosissima) gewest ist.' cf. also WA 26. 508, 30-39.

21. See BS SA 420; 423, 11ff; and WA 26. 507, 28-34; 508, 6-10.

22. For Luther's attitude see BS SA 424, 10-425, 25; and WA 26. 508, 13-16. Melanchthon's similar opinion is outlined in BS AC 318. While the Reformers' virtual prohibition of the invocation of the saints is perfectly understandable against the background of a popular piety which threatened to degenerate into practical polytheism, it may be asked whether the request to the saints in heaven to pray for those on earth in and through Christ is less a usurpation of Jesus' sole mediatorship than a practical realisation of this mediatorship within the communio sanctorum.

and glorified saints intercede for the Church militant, they found neither biblical warrant nor sufficient reason for invoking them to do so. And the age-old custom of praying for the Christian dead - 'Ipsis, Domine, et omnibus in Christo quiescentibus, locum refrigerii, lucis et pacis, ut indulgeas, deprecamur' - was relegated from a prominent place in the public liturgy of the Church to become an intermittent feature of private prayer.[23] Secondly, in keeping with the movement from works to faith, Luther came to have a radically different conception of what is entailed by the reform of the Church from that which was entertained by reform-minded mediaeval churchmen. It is salutary to recall that the insight that the Western Church stood in dire need of thoroughgoing reform 'in head and members' was not vouchsafed exclusively to Luther and his circle.[24] The profanity and even down-right commercialism which sometimes soiled the Church's ministrations weighed heavily on the consciences of devout churchmen of the

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23. See WA 26. 508, 1-6.

24. Acknowledgement that the contemporary Church stands in need of reform is perhaps more indicative of spiritual health than of religious decay. The fact that Protestant historians have tended to accentuate the 'abuses' of the late mediaeval Church for polemical reasons, while their Catholic counterparts have often been ready to excoriate the practical side of 15th century Church life while deftly salvaging the official doctrines of the period, should arouse suspicion: no epoch of church history has a God-given right to look de haut en bas at another! For an antidote to unthinking prejudice against the late mediaeval Church, cf. Lawrence G. Duggan: 'The Unresponsiveness of the Late Medieval Church: A Reconsideration', Sixteenth Century Journal IX, 1 (1978), pp. 3-26.

fourteenth and fiteenth centuries, who knew of a not so distant past when the Papacy, the bond of visible unity, was split three ways, and when the well meaning Conciliarists proved impotent to enforce their reforming will in the aftermath of the Councils of Constance and Basel. Both within and without the pale of the Roman Church there had been a whole host of 'forerunners' of the Reformation. A glance at just one of these, the 'modernist' Jean Gerson, sometime Chancellor of the University of Paris and a theologian for whom Luther held an ungrudging lifelong respect,[25] will illuminate the unbridgeable gulf that divided them from the Wittenberg model of reform. According to Gerson Christendom's woes stemmed not from the official doctrine of the Church, but from its corrupt practice. Let this be remedied and the visible Church would once more shine brightly amidst the darkness of the nations. It should occasion no surprise that Gerson advocated a synergistic doctrine of justification, in which man's free repentance - thought of as a purgare et illuminare wrought by man himself! - would precede divine acceptance.[26] Prof. Oberman summarises his understanding of the nature of reform as follows:

> 'Since in the medieval exegetical tradition the individual soul and the Church are interchangeable, Gerson's view of the reformation of the Church is implied: through penance and purgation the re-establishment of the Church without spot or wrinkle. In this perspective, reformation must mean corpo-

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25. See, e.g., WATR 5. 327, 13ff: 'Durch den Gersonem hat Gott angefangen zu leuchten. Ille solus scripturam coepit legere, deinde Hussius.'

26. See Ioannis Carlerii de Gerson: De Mystica Theologia, Andre Combes ed. (Lugano, 1958), pp. 215, 112-120; 216, 122-134.

rate purge, moral reform, withdrawal from the negotium saeculare.' (27)

Now Luther's view of the justification of the sinner was the very opposite of Gerson's: 'Christus enim non nisi in peccatoribus habitat.'[28] In a table-talk recorded in the autumn of 1533 he frankly acknowledged the blemishes that marred the visage of even the purified Church. The Wittenberg reform purposely differed from the earlier efforts of Wycliffe and Hus in that it centred on the doctrine rather than the life of the Roman Church.[29] Add to this that the Reformer was convinced of the imminence of the Parousia, and it becomes clear that he was bound to be sceptical of the possibility of enduring structural reform in the Church. Rather, in constant despair of their own capabilities, believers are to return ever anew in the daily renewal of Baptism

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27. 'The Shape of Late Medieval Thought: The Birthpangs of the Modern Era', ARG 64 (1973), p. 28f.

28. WABr 1. 35, 29 (April 8th 1516).

29. 'Doctrina et vita sunt distinguenda. Vita est mala apud nos sicut apud papistas; non igitur de vita dimicamus et damnamus eos. Hoc nesciverunt Wikleff et Hus, qui vitam impugnarunt. Ich schilte mich nicht fromm; sed de verbo, an vere doceant, ibi pugno. Doctrinam invadere ist noch nie geschehen. Ea est mea vocatio. Alii vitam tantum insectati sunt, sed de doctrina agere, das ist der gans an kragen greiffen, nempe quod regnum papistarum et officium est malum ... Sed quando manet verbum purum, etiamsi vitae aliquid deest, so kan vita dennoch zu recht kommen. Es ligt alls in verbo, quod verbum papa sustulit et peperit aliud verbum. Damit hab ich gewonnen und hab sonst nichts gewonnen, nisi quod recte doceo' (WATR 1. 294, 19-295, 5). cf. also WA 18. 190, 13-14: 'Wyr reden ... non de moribus, sed dogmatibus Pape.'

to the iustitia aliena of Christ which is apprehensible in Word and Sacrament. In this way the notae ecclesiae will be preserved by God's grace in a rebellious world, but in such a way that the accent falls - in accordance with II Cor. 4:5 - on the Christ who is sovereignly present in the means of grace rather than on the virtues of his followers.

Perhaps the most striking example of Luther's continuity with the antecedent mediaeval tradition is to be found in his ongoing adherence to nominalism in general and to William of Occam in particular. 'Sum enim Occanicae factionis'[30] was written in a virulently anti-Roman pamphlet of the year 1520. Even so, it is noteworthy that well nigh all those statements in praise of Occam and his school which can be culled in abundance from the writings and table talk of the mature and elderly Luther turn out on closer examination to be encomia pronounced on the method rather than on the content of their thinking. 'Occam, magister meus, summus fuit dialecticus.'[31] Indeed, 'Occam solus intellexit dialecticam, dass es liege am definire et dividere vocabula.'[32] Not that the Reformer ever had any qualms about taking sides in the great debate on universals:

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30. WA 6. 600, 11 (Adversus execrabilem Antichristi bullam).

31. WATR 2. 516, 6 (March 1532).

32. WATR 1. 85, 27 (February/March 1532). On a somewhat lighter note, cf. WATR 5. 649, 25-27: 'D. M. Lutherus commendavit Angliam ab optimis ingeniis, nam Scotus, Occam fuerunt Angli. Gallia nunquam tales genuit homines.'

> 'Terministen hiess man eine secten in der hohen schulen, unter welchen ich auch gewesen. ...Der hader war, ob humanitas und dergleichen wordt eine gemeine menscheit heisse, die in allen menschen were, wie Thomas und die andern halten. Ja, sagen die Occamisten oder Terministen, es sey nichts mit solcher gemeiner menschheit, sondern der Terminus "homo" oder menschheit heist alle menschen insonderheit, gleichwie ein gemalt menschen bilde alle menschen deutet.' (33)

Luther goes on to advise the noble recipient of this Gutachten of the theological implications of the nominalist understanding of reality. Just as it is sensible to talk to a carpenter on his own terms, even so it is imperative to interpret the text of the Bible in terminis propriis, letting one's exegesis be governed by the subject-matter and refraining from injecting alien concepts into one's account of Scriptural truth. Nominalist epistemology lies at the root of the Reformer's exegesis in general and of his eucharistic doctrine in particular:

> 'Aber Euer furstlichen Gnaden mussen itzunder in dieser sachen heissen Terministen, die in terminis propriis von einem dinge reden und nicht die wordt frembde und wilde deuten, und sonst heist man wergcklich davon reden. Als mit einem tzimmerman muss ich in seinen terminis reden, nemlich winckeleisen und nicht krumpeisen, axt und nicht beil. Also sol man auch die wordt Christi lassen bleiben und vom sacrament reden in suis terminis, ut "hoc facite" sol nicht heissen "sacrificate", item "corpus" sol nicht bedeutten "beider gestalt", wie sie itzunder die wordt martern und von der strassen gerne wolten mit dem hellen texte.' (34)

Two other indicators of Luther's continuing affinity with scholasticism merit brief mention here. First, in the De servo arbitrio of 1525 the Reformer contended that

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33. WATR 5. 653, 1-9.

34. ibid., 10-18.

his own position concerning the relationship between supernatural grace and the human will was closer to that of the much-maligned 'Sophists' than to that of his immediate interlocutor.[35] Secondly, while in his manifesto of September 4th 1517 Luther could challenge the scholastic method with the bald assertion that, 'Nulla forma syllogistica tenet in terminis divinis',[36] there is little evidence that the mature Reformer took pains to adhere to his own rule. Perhaps it was on account of just such reasoning that in the last years of his life he reaffirmed the Mariological convictions which he had first aired on December 16th 1516:[37] in a Christological disputation of 1540 Luther argues for the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary as a safeguard of the sinlessness of her son,[38] while in

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35. 'Tolerabilius longe tradunt Sophistae, uel saltem pater eorum Petrus Longobardus, qui liberum arbitrium dicunt esse facultatem discernendi, deinde et eligendi, boni quidem, si assit gratia, mali uero, si desit gratia ...Damnabilis igitur est tua definitio etiam apud Sophistas, qui nisi inuidia excaecati in me sic insanirent, in tuum libellum furerent potius ...Non haec dico, quod Sophistarum sententiam de libero arbitrio probem, sed quod tolerabiliorem esse ducam quam Erasmi, propius enim accedunt ad veritatem' (WA 18. 665, 5-22).

36. WA 1. 226, 19 (th. 47).

37. WA 1. 106, 29-107, 22. See esp. 107, 3-7: 'Quasi non sit ideo dicendum "Maria", sed "Mirjam" aut non "stella maris", sed "stilla maris". ...Igitur insignis laus virginis in isto nomine traditur, quod scilicet sit ex omni mari totius massae generis humani unica praeservata stilla.'

38. WA 39 II. 107, 10-11: '...et in conceptione purgata tota illa caro et sanguis Mariae est, ut nihil peccati sit reliquum' (disputation de divinitate et humanitate Christi).

a bitterly anti-Jewish tract written three years later he claims Scriptural warrant for this doctrine.[39]

Nevertheless, no statement of the Reformer's complex attitude to scholasticism can obliterate the fact that he regarded the transition from scholastic to reformational theology as a transition from darkness to light and an exchange of servitude for liberty. Luther gave forceful expression to this view in terms redolent of the Vulgate version of Phil. 3:8 when, in August 1540, he concluded an outline of the four 'ways' available in scholasticism (Albertism, Thomism, Scotism, 'modernism') by assuring his table companions of their own good fortune: 'Sed vos estis felices ...qui haec stercora non didicistis.'[40]

(b) Luther and the Dogma of the Ancient Church

Luther's attitude to the achievements of the patristic period are much more easily ascertained, and may therefore be more briefly stated, than was the case with regard to scholasticism. In short, he wholeheartedly accepted the orthodox definitions concerning the trinitarian life of God and the divine-human person of Jesus Christ as set forth in the Apostolic and Nicene Creeds.[41] The expositions of the Faith offered in the two Catechisms of 1529 hang with unaffected ease on the pegs supplied by the three articles of the Creed. To

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39. WA 53. 640, 29-31: 'Darumb war es not, das seine mutter were eine Jungfraw, eine junge Jungfraw, Ein heilige Jungfraw, die, von der Erbsünde erlöset und gereiniget, durch den heiligen Geist nicht mehr denn einen Sohn, einen Jhesum, trüge' (Vom Schem Hamphoras und vom Geschlecht Christi). The 'therefore' with which this assertion begins is based on such 'clear' texts as Gen. 3:15 and Isa. 7:14.

40. WATR 4. 679, 3-20.

41. See WA 26. 500, 27-32; BS SA 414.

Die drei Symbola oder Bekenntnis des Glaubens Christi[42] (where, surprisingly, the Nicaenum appears as a postscript and the Te Deum is regarded as a full-blown Creed) the Reformer devoted an exposition in 1538; and in the following year, against the backcloth of Paul III's imminently expected summons of a General Council, Luther sent to press his Von den Konziliis und Kirchen.[43] In this treatise the Reformer showed an enviable ability to distinguish the wood from the trees. While he regards the disciplinary canons enacted by the ancient Councils as geared to specific local needs and therefore of only temporary validity, and while he displays a keen distaste for the church-political rivalry between the great patriarchal sees which forms part of the context in which - Dei providentia et hominum confusione - the perimeters of the mysterium Christi were authoritatively defined, he cherishes the dogmatic pronouncements of the first four ecumenical Councils as true confessions of the majesty and sovereign power of God in Jesus Christ.[44] Even so, it must be emphasised that Luther's ungrudging acceptance of the ancient Creeds flowed from his conviction that these confessions are in full harmony with Holy Scripture. Therefore, while Holy Scripture is sovereign as norma normans, the Creeds, in virtue of their fidelity to the written Word, speak with no less binding authority as normae normatae. A sermon of 1533,

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42. WA 50. 255-284.

43. WA 50. 488-653.

44. See WA 50. 522, 6-16; 543, 1-12, esp. 8, which fences off the first four Councils from their many successors: 'das ich nach den vier heubt Concilien die andern alle wil geringer halten.'

which seeks to secure the doctrine of the virginal conception of Christ, makes clear just how great is this derived authority of the normae normatae:

> 'Hie habe ich ein klein büchlin, welchs heisset das Credo, darinn dieser Artikel stehet, Das ist meine Bibel, die ist so lang gestanden und stehet noch unumgestossen, Da bleib ich bey, da bin ich auff getaufft, darauf lebe und sterbe ich, weiter las ich mich nicht weisen.' (45)

Luther's attitude to individual church fathers is closely akin to his view of the symbols: the confessors and exegetes of Christian antiquity are to be accorded the utmost respect and honour, and their teaching is to be heeded so long as it is in accord with Scripture. It would be not only a superficial application of sola Scriptura, but quite frankly an exercise in intellectual Pelagianism, were an exegete to carry out his task without taking due account of the achievements of his predecessors. Thus the Reformer recounted in 1539 how he himself drew from the rich store of patristic wisdom in the preparation of his lectures. S. John Chrysostom aided his understanding of Hebrews, S. Jerome accompanied him through Titus and Galatians, and he tackled Genesis fortified by the expositions of

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45. WA 37. 55, 12-16. It is instructive to recall the terms of the Wittenberg doctoral oath according to the reformed university statutes of 1533: 'Ego promitto Deo aeterno patri Domini nostri Jesu Christi, Conditori generis humani et Ecclesiae suae, cum filio suo domino nostro Jesu Christo et Spiritu sancto, me, Deo iuvante, fideliter servaturum esse Ecclesiae in docendo Evangelio sine ullis corruptelis & constanter defensurum esse Symbola, Apostolicum, Nicenum, et Athanasianum et perseveratum esse in consensu doctrinae comprehensae in Confessione Augustana, quae per hanc Ecclesiam exhibita est Imperatori, Anno MDXXX' (quoted by Steinlein: art.cit., p. 761, n. 2).

SS. Ambrose and Augustine.[46] In his account of the Marburg Colloquy of 1529 the Reformer of Nuremberg, Andreas Osiander, has left us an excellent summary of Luther's attitude to patristic authority. In the course of one of the Sunday sessions the Swiss Reformers urged certain aspects of the thought of S. Augustine against the doctrine of the real presence. After pointing out that he could invoke the authority of SS. Cyprian, Cyril, Ambrose and Jerome in support of the teaching of the Church, Luther stated that the authority of patristic teaching is contingent on its agreement with Scripture:

> 'So Wöllen wir nun den lieben Vättern die eer gern thun, das wir Ir schryfft, damit sy unns gedient haben, auffs pest wöllen ausslegen, wie wir können, damit sy mit der heylligen schryfft einhellig pleyben, Wo aber Ir schryfft mit Gottes wort nit überain kommen, ist vyl pesser, wir sprechen, sy haben geirret, dann das wir umb Iren willen solten gottes wort faren lassen.' (47)

Not for a moment did the Reformer suffer from the illusion that this principle was his own invention. On the

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46. 'Denn ich hab die Veter auch gelesen, auch ehe denn ich so steiff wider den Bapst mich setzet, Hab sie auch mit besserm vleis gelesen weder die, so itzt durch sie wider mich trotzen und stolzen, Denn ich weis, das ir keiner versucht hat, ein Buch der heiligen Schrifft in den Schulen zu lesen und der Veter schrifft dazu brauchen, wie ich gethan. Und las sie noch ein Buch fur sich nemen aus der heiligen schrifft und die glose suchen bey den Vettern, so sols im gehen wie mirs gieng, da ich die Epistel ad Ebreos furnam mit S. Chrysostomos glosen, und Titum, Galatas mit hulffe S. Hieronymi, Genesin mit hulffe SS. Ambrosij und Augustini, Den Psalter mit allen scribenten, so man haben kan, und so fort an. Ich hab mehr gelesen, denn sie meinen, habs auch durch alle Bucher getriben, Das sie ia zu vermessen sind, die sich duncken lassen, Ich hab die Veter nicht gelesen' (WA 50. 519, 18-29).

47. WA 30 III. 149, 1-5 (Das Marburger Gespräch und die

contrary, he considered it to be the historic Christian position. The anonymous account of the Marburg proceedings supplements Osiander's record by telling how at this juncture of the debate Luther appealed to a maxim laid down by S. Augustine himself. For had not the Bishop of Hippo, in his Letter to Fortunatianus, expressed the wish that the readers of his books would not accept his teachings uncritically, but only to the extent that they were backed up by Scripture?[48]

(c) Luther and the 'End of Dogma'

What, then, of Adolf von Harnack's famous contention that, in the perspective of the whole history of Christian theology, Luther represents 'the end of dogma'? The modern Lutheran, thought Harnack:

> '...will be inclined to trust here the Catholic judgement, according to which Luther overthrew the system of doctrine of the ancient and mediaeval Church and only retained portions of the ruins. ...it cannot but be held that in Luther's reformation the old dogmatic Christianity was discarded and a new evangelical view substituted for it. ...The history of dogma, which had its beginning in the age of the Apologists, nay, of the Apostolic Fathers, was brought to an end.' (49)

Marburger Artikel, 1529). The same point had already been made in the Rationis Latomianae Confutatio of 1521: '...proinde optime valere eorum autoritates, quando scripturis manifestis nituntur' (WA 8. 79, 12-13).

48. 'Illud adjiciens, etiam sequendam Augustini regulam, quae dicit, se tales lectores velle suorum librorum, qualis aliorum ipse esset, ut scilicet ad scripturam omnia referantur, quibuscum quicquid non concordaverit, id interpretatione, si commode fieri possit, leniendum, vel, si non possit, omnino rejiciendum' (WA 30 III. 141, 20-142, 24). Augustine's Letter to Fortunatianus can be found in MPL 33. 628f.

49. The History of Dogma (London, 1899) VII, pp. 194, 227 and 228.

While it is patently clear from sections (a) and (b) above that von Harnack's thesis is a parody of the relevant evidence, his interpretation can best be refuted by examining the function of the dogma of the Ancient Church in Luther's thought. The most propitious source for such an enquiry is the short Von den drei Symbola of 1538, in which the Reformer explains the nature of his adherence to the ancient dogmas. Church history, he contends, records two chief ways in which the pivotal and all-important vere Deus, vere homo has been subverted, to wit, through the denial of his perfect Godhead by some[50] and of his perfect manhood by others.[51] But while Luther remained on his guard against any tinkering with the substance of Chalcedonian orthodoxy, he believed that in his own day the mysterium Christi stood in danger of a third, more subtle corrosion perpetrated by the Pelagianising theology of late scholasticism, which would deny that the Eternal Son assumed human nature pro nobis:

> 'Und was haben wir, die letzten grossesten heiligen im Bapsttum, angericht? Bekennet haben wir, das er Gott und mensch sey. Aber, das er unser Heiland, als fur uns gestorben und erstanden etc., das haben wir mit aller macht verleugnet und verfolget, horen auch noch nicht auff. Etliche haben geleret, Er sey allein fur die erbsunde gestorben, fur die andern mussen wir selbs gnug thun, Etliche aber, wenn wir nach der Tauffe sundigen, so sey Christus aber mal nicht mehr nutze. Da haben sich erfunden der heiligen anbeten, walfart, fegfeur, Messen, kloster und des unzifers unendlich und unzelich, damit wir Christum selbs haben versunen wollen, als were er nicht unser vorsprecher, sondern unser Richter vor Gott.' (52)

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50. See WA 50. 267, 28-268, 3.

51. See WA 50. 268, 4-11.

52. WA 50. 268, 21-30. cf. also 269, 8-10: 'Was hil-

These words make it unambiguously clear that Luther's intention was not to bury or bypass the ancient dogma, but to set it loose in full and unabridged force. Hence his proclamation of justification by faith alone was the 'lebensraum' appropriate to the trinitarian and christological mysteries. The interpretation of the Reformer's relationship to the ancient dogma advocated here is reinforced by Wilhelm Dilthey's observation that his 'doctrine of justification exists only so long as its dogmatic presuppositions remain in force.'[53]

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ffts, das du bekennest, Er sey Gott und mensch, wo du nicht auch gleubest, das er fur dich alles worden sey und gethan habe.'

53. Gesammelte Schriften (Leipzig, 1914) II, p. 56: 'Dieser Zusammenhang religiöser Begriffe ist nicht der Ausgang des Dogmas, das "Ende des alten dogmatischen Christentums", sondern hat dieses überall zu seiner notwendigen Voraussetzung. Luther steht und fällt selbst mit dem Dogma ...die Rechtfertigungslehre selbst existiert nur so lange, als diese ihre dogmatischen Voraussetzungen gelten.'

CHAPTER TWO:

LUTHER'S USE OF THE BIBLE

1. The Bible and the Word of God

'The Word' is the master concept which pervades Luther's theology from first to last, but acknowledgement of this fact is apt to raise as many problems as it might solve. There is good reason why this should be so, for under this simple-sounding heading there lurks not one concept but three: the incarnate Word, the written Word and the preached Word. All three forms of the Word of God are intimately bound up with the incarnational nerve centre of the Christian faith, according to which it is believed that it pleases Almighty God to stoop to the level of his rational creatures in order to bring them into fellowship with himself. Since the Enlightenment all three forms of the Word as diverse yet complementary modes of the one self-revelation of the one God have been vigorously called into question and even outrightly denied. Eighteenth-century rationalism was wont to cast doubt not only on the propriety but also on the very possibility of a unique self-revelation of the Creator under the creaturely limitations of space and time, the two dimensions of eternal and 'necessary' truth and contingent historical fact now being sundered by a 'nasty wide ditch' across which Lessing for one could not leap. The eighteenth century also came to distinguish natural religion, as the body of knowledge concerning God, the

soul and immortality which was believed to be universally and immediately disclosed to the consciousness of every man, from positive religion, as those doctrinal and ceremonial additions to the natural knowledge of God which had been enjoined according to the changing circumstances of time and place by the founders of the several higher religions. The nascent historical-critical method was presently employed to set the dogmatic tradition of the ancient Church at odds with the 'simple' teaching of the Bible, to open up a chasm between the robust ethical precepts of the historical Jesus and the metaphysical doctrines about him propounded in the apostolic writings, and to foster the view that there exists no intrinsic qualitative difference between the books of the Bible and other ancient near eastern literature. The movement away from the classical teachings of the Bible, which are based on an allegedly unique historical revelation which shows scant regard for Lessing's ditch and displays a marked want of respect for the pretensions of natural religion, culminated in Immanuel Kant's exorcism of a heteronomous positive religion, which he was disposed to replace with an autonomous natural religion determined 'within the limits of reason alone'. The chief concern of much of Protestant theology in the two centuries following Kant's death has been partly to assimilate and partly to counter the intellectual revolution of which he is the chief standard bearer.

By the nineteenth century a derided Orthodoxy had found itself pushed increasingly to the periphery of the two main Protestant confessions, so that the first conspicuous attempt to come to terms with all the implications of the Enlightenment was made by a Herrnhuter

pietist 'of a higher order', Friedrich Schleiermacher. In the early years of the century he appeared in the guise of an apologist for the Christian faith, his technique, like that of most competent apologists, being to steal the enemy's weapons for his own arsenal. In full harmony with the then dominant Idealist philosophy, Schleiermacher began his plea for Christianity not with an external, dead past which was no longer thought able to command the allegiance of subsequent ages, but with the self-consciousness of the believing individual. From this starting-point he traced the Christian faith backwards to the perfect God-consciousness of the historical Redeemer as its temporal inception and perennial inspiration. It is unquestionable that Schleiermacher seemed to many to have furnished a badly needed intellectual foundation for an increasingly precarious faith. He himself was still able to write a Dogmatics of a sort, and even as late as the end of the century the last great representative of the Erlangen school, F. H. R. von Frank (d. 1894), could claim to deduce the orthodox system of Christian belief from the starting-point which he had proposed. But any respite won for Christian profession by this particular apologist was bound to be of short duration, for the adoption by all branches of theological learning of the subjectivism of the Enlightenment must in the long run culminate of necessity in the cultural relativism of Ernst Troeltsch with its logical denial of the Church's claim to be the bearer of absolute truth.

The most celebrated and effective denunciation of the path taken by much of Protestant theology into the blind alley signposted by Kant and Schleiermacher has

unquestionably been that voiced by Karl Barth during and after the First World War. The medicine prescribed by Barth for an enfeebled Protestantism was a summons to return to the biblical Word of God, which the Reformation had understood as the sole source and final judge of the faith and morals of the Church. The sustained intellectual discipline and the sheer literary beauty of Barth's so-called neo-Orthodox presentation of Christian truth has exerted untold influence on friend and foe alike in all branches of theology, Luther studies not excepted. And it may be that Barth's account of the Bible as the written Word of God has been one of the factors which have led many Luther scholars to give a somewhat distorted presentation of the Reformer's own position on this crucial subject.

There is nothing new about Luther studies being influenced, whether consciously or unconsciously, by the prevailing intellectual climate. We need only think of the diverse facets of Luther's personality and teaching which have come to the fore in the mental image of him entertained by Orthodoxy, Pietism and Rationalism in turn: the defender of pure doctrine has successively given way to the champion of faith and to the upholder of the rights of conscience. It is evident to all readers of their works that some of the so-called neo-Lutherans of the nineteenth century - for example, Theodosius Harnack - were ultimately incapable of reading the Reformer's writings except through pietistic spectacles, however lightly tinted. And the earnest moralism of a Liberal Protestant is clearly discernible in Karl Holl's magisterial refutation of Denifle's charge

that Luther's doctrine of justification is essentially antinomian,[1] as in his marked avoidance of any detailed treatment of the Reformer's sacramental doctrine.

In the majority of non-Scandinavian Luther studies written since the 1920's, the open or subliminal influence of Karl Barth has largely replaced that of pietism and liberalism. Since the basic tendency of Barth's thought runs with rather than against the Reformation, this influence has been on the whole beneficial. It may be, however, that in his grasp of how the Bible is the Word of God Barth's thinking is not wholly congruous with that of the Reformers. Let it be recalled in this context that it was not a mainline sixteenth century Reformer, but the eighteenth century 'neologian', J. S. Semler (d. 1794), who urged that, 'The root of ... evil in theology is the confusion of Scripture and Word of God'.[2] Now while Barth was undoubtedly prepared to make the formal identification of the Bible with the Word of God which Semler found so objectionable, his understanding of this equation would seem to issue in a tantalising dialectic of sic et non. His conservative

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1. see the essay 'Die Rechtfertigungslehre in Luther's Vorlesung über den Römerbrief usw.' in Holl's Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte I Luther, pp. 111-154. Holl's firm insistence that Luther sees justification as not merely a 'declaring righteous' that remains external to the believer, but also as a 'making righteous' through which the believer becomes truly Godpleasing, remains a salutary and timely emphasis: 'Aber wie der grosse Künstler in dem rohen Marmorblock schon die fertige Statue erblickt, so sieht Gott in dem Sünder, den er rechtfertigt, bereits den Gerechten, den er aus ihm gestalten wird' (op.cit., p. 125).

2. quoted in Gerhard Maier: The End of the Historical-Critical Method (St. Louis, 1977), p. 15.

evangelical critics have fastened, at times with an unseemly glee, on his supposed opinion that Scripture either merely 'contains' the Word of God or else only 'becomes' the Word of God when it meets with a believing response. To determine the justice or otherwise of this charge forms no part of our present concern. Suffice it to say that his conservative evangelical critics hold that, with his allegedly ambiguous approach to Scripture, Barth has in fact scored an own goal, undermining and vitiating the epistemological foundation on which he so resolutely took his stand against Schleiermacher and liberal Protestantism.

An account of Luther's doctrine of Scripture in keeping with the view popularly ascribed to Barth was given by P. S. Watson in 1947. While conceding that Luther sometimes spoke as if he believed Scripture to be the Word of God, Watson is anxious to exculpate him from the charge of 'fundamentalism':

> '...although his exegesis may not be modern, ... yet he is no "fundamentalist". The creaturely words, whether written or spoken, are for him rather the vehicle or media of the Divine, creative Word, by which God addresses Himself directly and personally to us. ...When Luther asserts, therefore, that "there is no other evidence ... of Christian truth on earth but the Holy Scriptures", he does not mean that he himself believes, or that anyone else must believe, what the Bible says, simply and solely because the Bible says it. ... for Luther, all authority belongs ultimately to Christ, the Word of God, alone, and even the authority of the Scriptures is secondary and derivative, pertaining to them only inasmuch as they bear witness to Christ and are the vehicles of the Word.' (3)

While it may readily be admitted that there are passages in Luther which might at first glance give succour

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3. Let God Be God, pp. 152, 174f.

to Watson's interpretation, closer examination will show them to bear an opposite sense to that which he wishes to place on them. Thus Watson adduces a single proposition from the disputation de fide of 1535 (th. 41) to buttress his argument:

> 'Et Scriptura est, non contra, sed pro Christo intelligenda, ideo vel ad eum referenda, vel pro vera Scriptura non habenda.' (4)

When read out of context this statement is undoubtedly grist to the mill of those who credit the Reformer with the view that there is a canon within the Canon against which all Scriptural teachings, regardless of antiquity or authorship, are to be measured: the Bible is to be understood for Christ and hence in solifidian terms, so that the celebrated 'ob sie Christum treiben' becomes the touchstone of canonicity. Now the wider context in which Luther advances th. 41 is supplied by the sharp antithesis of law and gospel, and it is clear to the attentive reader that by 'vera Scriptura' the Reformer means nothing but 'gospel'. With its indication that its author is prepared to play off Scripture against Christ and vice versa, th. 49 might seem to support Watson:

> 'Quod si adversarii scripturam urgerint contra Christum, urgemus Christum contra Scripturam.' (5)

The dénouement is given in th. 51, which makes it plain

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4. WA 39 I. 47, 3-4.

5. ibid., 19-20. Gerhard O. Forde appeals to this proposition to make a similar point to Watson's in 'Infallibility Language and the Early Lutheran Tradition', Teaching Authority & Infallibility in the Church: Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue VI (Minneapolis, 1978), p. 129.

that the 'scriptura' which may and perhaps must be urged against Christ is nonetheless, despite th. 41, itself 'vera Scriptura':

> 'Si utrum sit amittenda, Christus vel Lex, Lex est amittenda, non Christus.' (6)

Now Luther followed S. Paul in thinking of the law in its alliance with sin and death as one of the tyrannical powers which hold Adamic man in thrall apart from the grace of Christ. Even so, and again following the Apostle, he was also aware that while the law 'gives knowledge of sin, works wrath and puts to death', the commandment is nevertheless 'holy and just and good'. He therefore recognised that the law is itself the very Word of God, albeit with a function different from that exercised by the gospel. Once this is borne in mind, Luther's so-called biblical criticism - the case of the Epistle of S. James springs to mind - appears as much less modern than some interpreters would allow.

Perhaps there is no more reliable indicator of the Reformer's attitude to the written Word than his occasional inscriptions in volumes of various kinds, which were diligently collected by O. Albrecht and printed in WA 48. Most of these inscriptions are meditations on a single text and many are personal dedications written on the inside cover of gift Bibles. Thus we chance upon the ageing Reformer presenting his old childhood friend and later brother-in-law with a copy of holy writ, directing him to the verse Jn. 5:39 and recalling in a sentimental aside how Ömeler:

> 'mich pusillen und kind, auff seinen armen hat, ynn und aus der schulen getragen mehr denn einmal,

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6. ibid., 23-24.

> da wir alle beide noch nicht wusten, das ein schwager den andern truge.' (7)

Some items from this collection will now be examined, and it will be asked whether F. Beisser and W. J. Kooiman are perhaps guilty of fashioning the Reformer too much in the mould of a modern Lutheran with their allegations that:

> 'Wenn Luther von "scriptura" oder von "verbum" redet, so denkt er nicht primär an einen Text' (8);

and that 'he could not regard scriptura and verbum as identical.' (9)

The reader of these occasional jottings is struck by Luther's predilection for such texts as Jn. 5:39, Rom. 15:4 and II Tim. 3:16.[10] His comment on Ps. 119: 92 makes clear his conviction that the Bible not only attests or contains but truly is the divine Word:

> 'Das kann doch ia kein ander buch, lere noch Wort, das es kundte trosten ynn noten, Elende, tod, sterben, ia unter den Teuffeln und ynn der Helle, on allein dis Buch, das uns Gottes wort leret. Und darin Gott selbs mit uns redet, wie ein mensch mit seinem freunde.' (11)

The Reformer's remarks on Ps. 22:6 offer a somewhat more forceful expression of the same opinion:

> 'Die heilige Schrifft ist Gottes wort, geschrieben und (das ich so rede) gebuchstabet und in buchsta-

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7. WA 48. 145 (no. 189), 10-13.

8. Claritas Scripturae bei Martin Luther, p. 83.

9. Luther and the Bible, p. 237.

10. On Jn. 5:39 see WA 48. 136-147 (nos. 181-193); on Rom. 15:4 see 207-208 (nos. 277 and 278); on II Tim. 3:16 see 215-219 (nos. 288-292).

11. WA 48. 72 (no. 94), 4-8.

> ben gebildet, Gleich wie Christus ist das ewige Gottes wort, in die menscheit verhullet, Und gleich wie Christus in der Welt gehalten und gehandelt ist, so gehets dem schrifftlichen Gottes wort auch.' (12)

The true confessor, Luther feels, will not share the world's appraisal of Jesus and the Bible:

> 'Sondern mit S. Petro bekennen, Er sey des lebendigen Gottes Son, und die Schrifft sey von dem heiligen Geist geschrieben.' (13)

Now the Reformer's interpretation of Scripture was nothing if not trinitarian. He accordingly states that Ps. 2:7 is an announcement of the divine triunity, in which explicit reference is made to the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit 'speaking this text and the whole psalm through David'.[14] Luther delights in dubbing the whole Bible 'the Holy Spirit's book', in which Christ is to be sought and found in both law and gospel.[15] No explicit appeal will be made here to the many inscriptions in which the Reformer speaks simply of 'the Word', probably but not indubitably meaning nothing other than Holy Scripture. Even so, his frequent allusions to 'reading' the Word tell in favour of the interpretation advocated here.[16] The comment on Isa. 55:11 tells decisively against Watson's account of Luther's doctrine

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12. WA 48. 31 (no. 36), 4-8.

13. ibid., 23-24.

14. WA 48. 22 (no. 28), 3-4 and 9-10: 'In diesem spruch ist bekant, Das Gott sey ein gott in drey personen unterschiedlich ... Die dritte ist der heilig geist, der solchen spruch, und den gantzen psalm durch Dauid ausspricht.'

15. WA 48. 43 (no. 55), 2-4: 'Das ist des heiligen Geists buch, nemlich die heilige Schrifft, darin mus man Christum suchen und finden. Nicht allein durch die Verheissung, sondern auch durch das Gesetze.'

16. cf. WA 48. 12 (no. 14), 11f.; 67 (no. 87), 9;

of Scripture:

> 'Das ist doch ia ein trostlicher spruch Wo wir gleuben kundten, das Gott mit uns redet und Gottes wort were, was wir ynn der Biblia lesen oder horen Da wurden wir finden und fulen, das es nicht on frucht noch umbsonst gelesen oder gehoret wurde Aber der verfluchte unglaube und leidigs fleisch lassen uns nicht sehen noch achten das Gott mit uns redet ynn der Schrifft oder das es Gottes wort sey Sondern dencken, Es sey Isaias Paulus oder sonst ein schlechter mensch der nicht habe hymel und Erden geschaffen Darumb ists uns nu nicht Gottes wort und wircket nicht seine frucht bis es Gottes wort ynn uns werde erkand.' (17)

Whether its content is apprehended in the oral-auditory event of its public proclamation or in the act of its being studied privately by the literate faithful, the Bible is God's Word. If heard or read as such, it will not return void to its divine Author but will accomplish his saving purpose. The idea that the Bible is the word of mere men is prompted by carnal unbelief. Should this view be held, then the Bible 'is now not God's word <u>for us</u>' and will not fulfil its appointed function until its divine credentials are acknowledged. This qualification does not, however, mean that the Bible only becomes God's Word on the say-so of mankind. Rather, it is to be understood in terms of the Reformer's exposition of the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer in the <u>Small Catechism</u> of 1529: God's Name is holy in itself and his kingdom will come and his will be done apart from our consent; but when we respond in faith, his Name becomes holy 'for us' and his kingdom and will

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68 (no. 88), 3-6; 80 (no. 106), 3; 83 (no. 113), 6f.; 93 (no. 124), 6f.

17. <u>WA</u> 48. 102 (no. 135), 4-12.

are realised and effected 'in us'.[18] The Bible is likewise God's Word apart from the approbation of humanity; but it only becomes God's Word 'for us' when we are moved by the Holy Spirit to submit to it as such.

2. The Clarity of Scripture

Speaking of 'the conviction, which he now (1517) consciously advocates, of the clarity of the Bible,'[1] Karl Holl alluded to one of the chief beams in the edifice of Luther's reformational theology. For should the 'clarity of Scripture' prove a baseless assumption, then the theology of the leading Reformers of the sixteenth century would be unmasked as mere enthusiasm. Luther often referred to the vulgar scholastic allegation that Scripture has a 'waxen nose',[2] an attitude echoed today in the oft-repeated remark that, 'You can prove anything from the Bible (ergo, nothing)'. In the year 1521 the Reformer gave a succinct account of his own position, on which he resolutely took his stand in the whole series of polemical exchanges in which he thereafter engaged (with Latomus of Louvain, Erasmus, Karlstadt, and the Swiss), in an exposition of Ps. 37 penned on the Wartburg for his 'dear Wittenbergers':

> 'Es ist auff erden kein klerer buch geschrieben denn die heyligen schrifft, die ist gegen alle ander bucher gleych wie die szonne gegen alle liecht.' (3)

It is well to observe at the outset of this treatment of

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18. BS KK, 512-513.

1. 'die jetzt mit Bewusstsein von ihm vertretene Überzeugung von der Eindeutigkeit der Bibel' (Luther, p. 551).

2. 'caereum nasum': see, e.g., WA 5. 280, 36-38 (Operationes in Psalmos, 1521).

3. WA 8. 236, 9-10.

the Reformer's notion of the claritas Scripturae that he never supposed the doctrinnaire mouthing of these two Latin words sufficient to dispel the whole host of grammatical and linguistic problems which beset the student of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. On the contrary, he freely conceded that human ignorance of grammar and vocabulary render some passages of the Bible opaque to the reader. Even so, he is careful to qualify this admission by pointing out that the content of obscure texts is reproduced in plain and unambiguous terms in other parts of Scripture.[4]

Should it be expounded apart from the claritas Scripturae, then Luther's confession sola Scriptura is bound to lose its cutting edge. For plenary inspiration and absolute inerrancy may be ascribed to Holy Scripture with a wealth of baroque superlatives and solemn anathemas, but, should this be accompanied by simultaneous emphasis on the perils of 'private judgement' in

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4. see. e.g., WA 8. 236, 3-5: 'Das ist wol war, ettlich spruch der schrifft sind tunckel. Aber ynn den selben ist nichts anderss, denn eben wass an andern orttern yn den klaren, offenen spruchen ist.' See also WA 18. 606, 22-24 and 30-37: 'Hoc sane fateor, esse multa loca in scripturis obscura et abstrusa, non ob maiestate rerum, sed ob ignorantiam vocabulorum et grammaticae, sed quae nihil impediant scientiam omnium rerum in scripturis. ...Res igitur in scripturis contentae omnes sunt proditae, licet quaedam loca adhuc verbis incognitis obscura sint. Stultum est vero et impium, scire, res scripturae esse omnes in luce positas clarissima, et propter pauca verba obscura, res obscuras dictare, Si uno loco obscura sunt verba, at alio sunt clara. Eadem vero res, manifestissime toti mundo declarata, dicitur in scripturis tum verbis claris, tum adhuc latet verbis obscuris. Iam nihil refert, si res sit in luce, an aliquod eius signum sit in tenebris, cum interim multa alia eiusdem signa sint in luce' (de servo arbitrio, 1525).

view of the Bible's complexity and ambiguity, then Christians will perforce be thrown back on the exposition of the mysterious divine text given by the ecclesiastical magisterium as the decisive and ultimately binding court of appeal. The claritas Scripturae is in fact the necessary precondition of the Bible's sole sovereignty over the Christian Church. It is therefore fitting - especially if we wish properly to understand the conviction of the mature Luther that, despite their outward differences, his opponents to both right (i.e., Rome) and left (i.e., Karlstadt and the Swiss) shared a common subjective starting-point[5] - to delve behind Luther's bald assertion of the claritas Scripturae in an attempt to uncover its theological roots. The essence of the Reformer's argument was as follows: the content of Holy Scripture, which centres in and emanates from Jesus Christ, bestows an 'external clarity' on the biblical

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5. Just such an allegation is already made in de servo arbitrio, in which Luther contrasts his own model of a perspicuous, self-authenticating Scripture with the belief that the Bible must be supplemented by teaching gained elsewhere: 'Neque illos probo, qui refugium suum ponunt in iactantia spiritus. Nam satis acre mihi bellum isto anno fuit et adhuc est cum istis Phanaticis, qui scripturas suo spiritui subiiciunt interpretandas, quo nomine et Papam hactenus insectatus sum, in cuius regno hac voce nihil vulgatius aut receptius est, Scripturas esse obscuras et ambiguas, oportere spiritum interpretem ex sede Apostolica Romae petere, cum nihil perniciosius dici possit, quod hinc homines impii sese supra Scripturas extulerint et ex ipsa fecerint, quicquid collibitum fuit, donec prorsus scripturis conculcatis nihil nisi hominum furiosorum somnia et crederemus et doceremus. Breviter non est humanum inventum illa vox, sed incredibili malitia ipsiusmet principis omnium daemonum in orbem missum virus' (WA 18. 653, 2-12).

writings which shines through their very diversity, an 'external clarity' which is chiefly realised in the public ministry of Word and Sacrament; the Holy Spirit meanwhile bestows an 'internal clarity' on the believing hearer or reader of the Word; and the context in which the dispute about the perspicuity of Scripture takes place is not purely academic, but is supplied by the unrelenting struggle between the true God and the devil which dominates salvation history in its entirety.

(a) Jesus Christ as the content of and the key to the claritas externa Scripturae

Both the Anglican Ottley and the Roman Catholic Lortz[6] confirm the view taken here that Luther's thinking is avowedly christocentric, and the Reformer's predilection for Jn. 5:39 has already been noted. In the de servo arbitrio of 1525, Luther insisted that Jesus Christ is the all-decisive content of Holy Scripture, the focal point apart from whom the biblical writings must fly asunder into a chaotic collection of documents spanning many centuries and embracing a plurality of literary genres, the kernel without whom Holy Writ must degenerate into a useless shell. The Reformer's confession that Jesus is the content of Scripture must not be misinterpreted in such a way that we would take him to advise us to reconstruct a 'historical Jesus' and ourselves endeavour to trace the pattern of divine activity latent in his life and fate. On the contrary, Luther is adamant that Christ is himself the 'dominus Scripturae'.[7] He it is who has broken open the seals

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6. see R. L. Ottley: The Doctrine of the Incarnation (London, 1896) II, p. 225f; Joseph Lortz: The Reformation in Germany I (London, 1968), p. 450.

7. WA 40 I. 458.

that hid the true sense of Old Testament Scripture (cf. Rev. 5:1-5), and it is in the gospel concerning him that the mysteries of the divine triunity and of the God-manhood in which Jesus suffered for us and will reign for ever are published throughout the world, being sung by the people of God in the highways and byways. Christ's self-interpretation in his Incarnate Life and in the apostolic writings, as handed on in the proclamation of the Church, is the deepest root of the claritas externa Scripturae:

> 'Quid enim potest in scripturis augustius latere reliquum, postquam fractis signaculis et voluto ab hostio sepulchri lapide, illud summum mysterium proditum est, Christum filium Dei factum hominem, Esse Deum trinum et unum, Christum pro nobis passum et regnaturum aeternaliter? Nonne haec etiam in biviis sunt nota et cantata? Tolle Christum e scripturis, quid amplius in illis invenies?' (8)

In other words, the 'New Testament' - viz., Christ's disclosure of the hidden realities of the Old Testament, a divine act which is now being manifested to the world through the gospel concerning Jesus that has been committed to the Church - bestows clarity on the Bible as a whole:

> 'denn das new testament ist nit mehr denn eyn offinbarung des allten, gleych alls wenn yemant tzum ersten eyn beschlossen brieff hette und darnach auffbrech. Alsso ist das alte testament eyn testamentbrieff Christi, wilchen er nach seynem tod hatt auffgethan unnd lassen durchs Euangelion lessen und ubiralle vorkundigen, wie das Apocali. 5. betzeychnet ist durch das lamp gottis, wilchs alleyn auffthett das buch mit den sieben sigillen, das sonst niemant kundt auffthun noch ynn hymel noch

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8. WA 18. 606, 24-29. A similar point had been made four years previously on the Wartburg: 'Denn wo ist doch klerer geschrieben, das gott hymel und erden geschaffen hab, Christus geporn von Marien, geliden, gestorben, aufferstanden und alliss, was wir gleuben, denn ynn der Bibel? Wer ist yhe so grob gewesen, der solchs gelesen und nit vorstanden habe?' (WA 8. 236, 29-237, 2).

auff erden noch unter der erden.' (9)

(b) The proclamation of the Word as the element in which the claritas externa Scripturae is revealed

Reviewing the preface of Erasmus' Diatribe, the Reformer contends that the 'external clarity' of Scripture is tantamount to the obscure things of Scripture being brought out and published to the world 'per verbum',[10] and it is clear from the context that Luther is here using 'Word' in its third sense to refer to the contemporary proclamation of the gospel. The clarity of Scripture is realised when truth is distinguished from falsehood in the public teaching of the Church, and it is the concern of the called and ordained servants of the Word, whose actions must be geared, not to their own profit, but to the promotion of the salvation of souls:

> 'Ideo alterum est iudicium externum, quo non modo pro nobis ipsis, sed et pro aliis et propter aliorum salutem, certissime iudicamus spiritus et dogmata omnium. Hoc iudicium est publici ministerii in verbo et officii externi et maxime pertinet ad duces et praecones verbi; Quo utimur, dum infirmos in fide roboramus et adversarios confutamus. Hoc supra vocavimus externam scripturae sanctae claritatem. Sic dicimus: Scriptura iudice omnes spiritus in facie Ecclesiae esse probandos. Nam id oportet apud Christianos esse imprimis ratum atque firmissimum, Scripturas sanctas esse lucem spiritualem, ipso sole longe clariorem, praesertim in iis quae pertinent ad salutem vel necessitatem.' (11)

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9. WA 10. I. 181, 24-182, 5. For an illuminating and perceptive account of Luther's utterly Christ-centred approach to Holy Scripture, see Hermann Sasse: Sacra Scriptura (Erlangen, 1981), pp. 216-219.

10. WA 18. 609, 13.

11. WA 18. 653, 22-31.

As Karl Holl points out, Luther was displeased at Erasmus' tendency to treat the text of Holy Scripture as if it belonged to a dead past rather than as the vehicle of a contemporary divine address.[12] This reaction stemmed from the Reformer's conviction that the most appropriate form of the Word of God as far as the salvation of souls is concerned is its present-day occurrence as preaching:

> 'Non autem "eloquia domini" tantum ea, quae in libris scripta sunt, intelligit, sed multo maxime, quae voce proferuntur.' (13)

So attached is Luther to the view that the New Testament exists for us primarily in the form of oral preaching that in the Epiphany Postil of 1522 he can go so far as to maintain that the actual writing of the New Testament was symptomatic of a 'spiritual deficiency'.[14]

While it is well to remember that this understanding of the Word of God is consonant with the Johannine Supper Discourses and with the teaching of II Cor. 3-5, illumination can also be gained from the following words of K. Burdach in an address of 1903 to the Berlin Academy of Sciences, dealing with the character of the German language in Luther's day:

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12. op.cit., p. 551

13. WA 5. 379, 1-2 (Op. in ps.)

14. A glance at the relevant passage makes it clear that this opinion is not at odds with the interpretation of Luther's doctrine of Scripture offered above. The thrust of the Reformer's argument is that the written Scriptures of the Old Testament are only properly understood when interpreted in the light of the New Testament gospel. The most appropriate expression of the latter is oral proclamation, the committing of the apostolic message to writing being rendered necessary by the rise of heresy: 'Christus hatt tzwey tzeugnis seyner gepurt

> 'Die deutsche Sprache des Mittelalters war eine Sprache des gesprochenen Wortes: der Predigt, der Rezitation oder des Vorlesens. Die mittelhochdeutsche Sprache ist eine Sprache, die dem Ohr verständlich sein will, ihre Syntax ist eine Syntax, deren Gliederung nur gehört klar erscheint. Die Bildung des deutschen Mittelalters ruht noch überwiegend auf dem mündlichen Austausch.' (15)

Bearing in mind this coalition of theological and cultural factors, it should be clear that Luther would be predisposed to expect the eucharistic words of Jesus, spoken at the most solemn juncture of his earthly life and intended to remain in force at every celebration of the Mass until his parousia, to be a prime example of the perspicuity of the words of Scripture becoming manifest in the here and now.

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und seyns regiments. Eyns ist die schrifft oder wort ynn die buchstaben vorfasset. Das ander ist die stym oder die wort durch den mund aussgerufen. ...Nu wirt die schrifft nit ehe vorstanden, das liecht gehe denn auff. Denn durchs Euangelion sind die propheten auffgethan. ...Denn ym neuen testament sollen die prediget mundlich mit lebendiger stym offentlich geschehen und das erfurbringen ynn die sprach und gehöre, das tzuvor ynn den buchstaben und heymlich gesicht verborgen ist. ...darumb ists gar nicht neutestamentisch, bucher schreyben von Christlicher lere, ssondern es solten on bucher an allen orttern feyn gutte, gelerte, geystliche, vleyssige prediger, die das lebendige wortt auss der allten schrifft tzogen und on unterlass dem volck furbleweten, wie die Aposteln than haben. ...Das man aber hatt mussen bucher schreyben, ist schon eyn grosser abbruch und eyn geprechen des geystis, das es die nott ertzwungen hatt, und nit die artt des newen testaments' (WA 10 III. 625, 13-627, 3). cf. also WA 5. 537, 17-18: 'Novi enim testamenti ministerium non in lapideis et mortuis tabulis est deformatum, sed in vivae vocis sonum positum.'

15. Zum Ursprung der neuhochdeutschen Schriftsprache (Berlin, 1903), p. 61f. cf. also Hermann Sasse: Sacra Scriptura, p. 297f.

(c) The claritas interna Scripturae and the man in the pew

While Luther is insistent that the proper setting of the claritas externa Scripturae is to be found in the rough and tumble of scholarly exchange and doctrinal controversy, he knows of another kind of claritas Scripturae which is no respecter of academic hoods or social distinctions. This is the famous claritas interna Scripturae, which is bestowed by the Holy Spirit on the hearer or reader of the Word who acknowledges his own spiritual poverty and seeks divine illumination. The following sentence comes from the pen, not of Calvin, but of Luther:

> 'Spiritus enim requiritur ad totam scripturam et ad quamlibet eius partem intelligendam.' (16)

The immediate context of this statement makes it plain that the giving or witholding of the claritas interna Scripturae has to do with the mystery of predestination. In the Reformer's opinion man's hardness of heart can lead to his refusal to acknowledge those things which have been set forth per verbum, an obstinacy which Luther, in stark acceptance of the predestinarian paradox which must always remain a rock of offence for the natural reason, likens to the imagined complaint of men standing in a narrow side street that the fountain in the marketplace

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16. WA 18. 609, 11-12. N.b. ibid., 5-11: 'Si de interna claritate dixeris, nullus homo unum iota in scripturis videt, nisi qui spiritum Dei habet, omnes habent obscuratum cor, ita, ut si etiam dicant et norint proferre omnia scripturae, nihil tamen horum sentiant aut vere cognoscant, neque credunt Deum, nec sese esse creaturas Dei, nec quicquam aliud, iuxta illud Psal. 13. Dixit insipiens in corde suo, Deus nihil est.'

is not in the light, and to the perversity of men who veil their eyes and themselves choose darkness and yet complain that the sun is not shining.[17] It is to be observed that, while Luther was adamant that - paradoxically - the claritas externa can convince no man who is not inwardly illumined by the Holy Spirit, he refused to accord the claritas interna any significance in public debate.[18] For the work of the Spirit is not to lead to new revelation beyond Scripture, but to bridge the gap between then and now so that the Bible may be experienced as God's contemporary living Word.

A late table talk sheds light on the Reformer's understanding of the claritas interna. Luther expresses his admiration for a remark of Gregory the Great to the effect that Holy Scripture is like a river in which elephants must swim while lambs may paddle, adding the following comment of his own:

> 'Denn die scioli und grossen Hanse vorstehen sie nicht, aber die geringen und einfeltigen vorstehen sie.' (19)

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17. WA 18. 606, 37-39; 607, 14-16.

18. See WA 18. 653, 14-22: 'Uno interiori, quod per spiritum sanctum vel donum Dei singulare, quilibet pro se suaque solius salute illustratus certissime iudicat et discernit omnium dogmata et sensus, de quo dicitur I Corinth. 2: Spiritualis omnia iudicat et a nemine iudicatur. Haec ad fidem pertinet et necessaria est cuilibet etiam privato Christiano. Hanc superius appellavimus interiorem claritatem scripturae sanctae. Hoc forte voluerunt, qui tibi responderunt, Omnia esse iudicio spiritus decernenda. Sed hoc iudicium nulli alteri prodest, nec de hoc quaeritur in hac causa. Nec ullus, credo, de illo dubitat, quin sic se habeat.'

19. WATR 5. 168, 19-21.

(d) Church history as the battleground of the claritas Scripturae

In his posthumously published biography of the 'middle' Luther, the late Heinrich Bornkamm pointed out that the Reformer did not, after all, throw his inkpot at the devil during his lonely sojourn on the Wartburg. The oldest form of this legend can be traced back no further than 1591, and it contradicts the well known tale of later centuries by alleging that it was in fact the devil who 'employed this cowardly missile against Luther.'[20] Yet the many thousands - including, at the beginning of the last century, the adolescent Julius Hare - for whom one of the high points of their tour of the Luther sites of Saxony was perhaps the sight of the ink mark on the wall of the Reformer's Wartburg apartment, have at least gazed on poetic truth. For that mural relic of an apocryphal skirmish with the prince of demons stands witness to Luther's lifelong conviction that the faith and life of the Christian are subject to constant assault from preternatural, malign spirits. As a young friar in Erfurt Luther had read how the story of mankind from the Fall of our first parents is largely concerned with the implacable strife between those who follow Abel in turning from the deceptive, perishable goods of this world to the imperishable Good who will be enjoyed forever in the everlasting Sabbath, and those who follow Cain in closing their minds to the mystery of transcendence, plunging into a bondage to the things of sense and a disregard of the divine precepts whose final reward is perpetual banishment from the face of God. From his youth Luther was

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20. Martin Luther in der Mitte seines Lebens (Göttingen, 1979), p. 25.

aware that the bitter warfare between the respective members of the civitas Dei and the civitas terrena is but an earthly reflection and enactment of the contention between the true God and the devil which underlies the whole history of redemption. And he knew from his own experience that the individual soul - especially that of the believing Christian - is an arena in which the combat between God and the devil takes place. But while Luther shared this 'dualism' with S. Augustine and the entire Western tradition, the exigencies of the dispute with Rome caused him to intensify this tradition at one crucial point. At the end of the patristic age S. Augustine could still view the Catholic Church as a beacon of light shining triumphantly amidst pagan darkness, as the visible and tangible 'pillar and ground of the truth'. At the end of the Middle Ages it could not but seem to Luther that the Western Church of his day was itself a battleground on which the struggle between the true Church and the false was being enacted. While S. Augustine's successors were able to interpret his De Civitate Dei as the blueprint for the Holy Roman Empire, the Reformer was disposed to regard his own age as the last. His intensification of the Augustinian dualism is most apparent in his conviction, publicly expressed with increasing bitterness from 1520 onwards, that the bishop of Rome is the Antichrist foretold in II Thess. 2: 2-4.[21] The aspect of papal practice which invited Luther to identify the wearer of the triple tiara with

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21. See, e.g., WA 5. 231, 29-232, 3. On the non-exegetical factors bound up with his conception of world chronology and with his expectation of the Lord's imminent return which made possible Luther's identification of the Papacy with the Antichrist, see Hermann Sasse: Sacra Scriptura, p. 98.

the figure sketched in these verses was none other than its tendency to elevate itself above Scripture 'tanquam sit Deus'. By insisting that Scripture needs to be illumined and supplemented by the tradition of which they deemed themselves not only the custodians but also the arbiters, the popes were, in Luther's opinion, guilty of trampling the claritas Scripturae underfoot. A brief review of some of the Reformer's statements on the changing fortunes of the claritas Scripturae motif from the apostolic age until his own day will endeavour to establish its importance as a prime bone of contention in the battle between God and Satan for mastery over Christendom.

On the first page of his first avowedly polemical tract on the real presence, Luther gives a glowing account of the apostolic age, in which Holy Scripture was the 'lady empress' which held unquestioned sway over the infant Church:

> 'Im anfang des Euangelii, da Gotts wort durch die Apostel lauter und rein gepredigt ward und noch kein menschen gebot, sondern eitel heilige schrifft furgestellet wurden, war es anzusehen, als solt es nymer mehr not haben, weil die heiligen schrifft unter den Christen die keiserynn were.' (22)

The opening words of this writing invoke a proverb which pictures the devil as a 'master of a thousand arts', and the Reformer grimly observes that the evil one proves his title to this appellation chiefly 'ynn geystlichen ynnerlichen sachen, die Gotts ehre betreffen und das gewissen'.[23] At the very outset of the Church's history Luther believes that the devil refrained from overt hostilities and suffered sola Scriptura to prevail, but that he presently succeeded in throwing the young Church

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22. WA 23. 65, 16-19 (Das diese Wort Christi ...noch fest stehen, 1527).

23. ibid., 2, 10-11.

off balance by infiltrating his own into the Christian schools and, when the moment was ripe, provoking disputes about the interpretation of Scripture which culminated in the emergence of 'viel secten, ketzerey und rotten unter den Christen'.[24] Each of these factions appealed to Scripture in support of its own position, but in subjecting the sacred text to arbitrary interpretation they brought it into grave discredit, causing the Bible to gain an evil reputation as a 'heretic's book'. By this stratagem the devil succeeded in depriving Christians of the principal weapon which was of avail in their spiritual warfare, causing it to be held in suspicion as 'sheer poison'.[25] The power of Scripture having been thus broken, the faithful turned in desperation - and good faith - to General Councils for the direction which the Bible seemed impotent to give:

> 'Aus dem furnemen (wie wol sie es gut meineten) flos her, das man spricht, Die schrifft were nicht gnug, man müste der Concilia und veter gebot und auslegung auch haben, Der heilige geist hette es den Aposteln nicht alles offenbart, sondern etliche ding auff die veter gespart, bis das zu letzt das Bapstum draus ist worden, darynn nichts gillt denn menschen gebot und glosen nach dem hertzen schrein des heiligen vaters.' (26)

A passage from the earlier Operationes in Psalmos testifies to Luther's earnest conviction that any tampering with the clarity or sufficiency of Scripture is the devil's doing. Dealing with the related issue of the putative fourfold sense of the sacred text, to which

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24. ibid., 25-26.

25. 'eitel gifft': WA 23. 67, 2.

26. ibid., 11-16.

we shall turn in the next section, the Reformer makes an unmistakable allusion to II Thess. 2:7. Let it be borne in mind that the vocabulary of the Church and her theology permitted him to sound no more solemn or urgent alarm than this:

> 'A multis saeculis coepit hoc mysterium iniquitatis operari, ut simplicissimae scripturae simplicissimus sensus in multos divideretur.' (27)

Having to all practical intents and purposes dethroned Scripture, the devil senses that the victory is his.[28] As the centuries roll on, he occupies the distracted Christians with such unedifying sideshows as the struggles between Pope and Emperor, the contests between bishops and princes, and the internecine strife amongst the clerical and learned castes.[29] The Reformer charges that a mighty reversal of the downward trend, a restoration of primitive conditions, has set in with the Reformation, which is now barely a decade old:

> 'Nu itzt zu unsern zeiten, da wir sahen, das die schrifft unter der banck lag, und der teufel durch eitel stro und hew menschlicher gebot uns gefangen hielt und narret, Haben wir der sachen auch durch Gotts gnaden wollen radten und fur war mit grosser sawrer erbeit die schrifft widder erfur bracht und menschen gebotten urlaub gegeben, uns frey gemacht und dem teuffel entlauffen, wie wol er sich redlich geweret und auch noch weret.' (30)

The reference to Satan's resistance to the sovereignty of the Bible at the end of the immediately preceding quotation indicates that the claritas Scripturas

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27. WA 5. 644, 2-4.

28. WA 23. 67, 17-25.

29. ibid., 25-33.

30. WA 23. 69, 10-15.

notion is still in peril despite - or perhaps precisely because of - the reformational successes of the 1520s. Luther seems to postulate a kind of church-historical law of eternal recurrence which dictates that not only the laudable but also the lamentable features of earlier epochs must repeat themselves. At the end of the 1520s the Reformer is of the opinion that the devil has infiltrated the 'evangelical' camp with some of his own troops, not to promote the claritas Scripturae but to wreak havoc behind the 'evangelical' lines, thereby distracting the Wittenbergers from the primary battle against the now shell-shocked forces of the Church of Rome:

> 'Aber doch weil er uns mus lassen gehen, vergisst er doch seiner kunst nicht, hat auch heimlich seines namens unter uns gemenget, die unser lere und wort solten fassen, Nicht dazu, das sie uns beystünden und hülffen die schrifft treiben, sondern, weil wir widder menschen thand forne stritten, sie hinder uns ynn unser heer ein fielen, auffrur anrichten und widder uns tobeten, auf das wir zwisschen zweyen feinden deste leichter untergiengen. Das heisst, mein ich ja, quecksilber ynn den teich geworffen.' (31)

The issue on which the Reformer supposes the devil to have spread confusion is that of the correct understanding of the eucharistic words of Jesus. While he had early rejected the time-honoured doctrine of the Sacrifice of the Mass as being without foundation in Scripture and as frankly antithetical to the thrust of the gospel, Luther had always - even in the darkest days of his dispute with Rome - continued to adhere to the traditional doctrine of the corporeal presence of Jesus in the eucharistic elements. As we shall endeavour to

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31. ibid., 15-22.

establish in greater detail in a subsequent chapter, the Reformer was convinced that the four New Testament reports of the institution of the eucharist unequivocally propound this teaching: 'If these words are not clear, then I have no idea how to speak German.'[32] Luther was keenly aware that those who attacked the Church's doctrine were at one solely in their denial of the corporeal presence. The routes by which they arrived at this denial were widely divergent and, taken together, added up to a powerful blow against the claritas Scripturae. Karlstadt's interpretation of Hoc, Zwingli's account of est and Oecolampadius' exposition of corpus seemed to Luther to turn the eucharistic words of Jesus from the firm foundation of an article of faith into a football to be kicked around the German churches and universities for no better purpose than to enhance the several scholars' reputation for erudition and incisiveness. The devil, thinks Luther, has begun his counter-attack on the epistemological foundations of the Reformation, that is, on the claritas Scripturae, by undermining the doctrine of the sacraments. The Reformer feels that he has never encountered such shameful heresy, with such open discord among its advocates at the very outset. He senses in this novel teaching the first stirrings of a system of thought which will eventually drain Christendom of its dogmatic lifeblood.[33]

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32. 'Wenn solche wort nicht klar sind, weis ich nicht, wie man deutsch reden sol': WA 19. 485, 13 (Sermon von dem Sakrament des Leibes und Blutes Christi, wider die Schwarmgeister, 1526).

33. 'Er wirds aber dabey nicht lassen bleiben, sondern fehet am geringsten an mit den sacramenten, wie wol er bereit ynn dem selbigen stuck die schrifft schier ynn zehen löcher und ausflucht zurissen hat, Das ich nie

It is perhaps far from easy for the twentieth century to appreciate Luther's vehement advocacy of a doctrine which does not loom large on its own theological agenda. Even so, the historian will do well to remember that as far as the Reformer himself was concerned the chief plank of his reformational platform was at stake in the eucharistic debate of the 1520s. Should he then go on to recall that Luther felt bound in conscience to accuse his Swiss adversaries of having committed the sin againsy the Holy Spirit by denying the corporeal presence,[34] and that in this context he remarked to the church at Strassburg that, 'Christ must not only have Caiaphas among his enemies, but also Judas among his friends',[35] then it will occasion him no surprise that this very doctrine was to be the cue for a schism within the Churches of the Reformation which remains unhealed to this day.

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schendlicher ketzerey gelesen habe, die ym anfahen unter sich selbs so viel köpffe, so viel rotten und uneynickeit habe, ob sie gleich ynn der heubtsache, Christum zu verfolgen, eintrechtig sind. Er wird aber fort faren und mehr artickel angreyffen, wie er schon funkelt mit den augen, das die tauffe, erbsund, Christus nichts sey' (WA 23. 69, 23-30). Luther goes on in this passage to foretell the ill-fated church-political manoeuvres to recover the lost unity of the Churches of the Reformation from Marburg (1529) to Leuenberg (1973): 'Und wo die wellt solt lenger stehen, wird man widderumb, wie die alten gethan haben, umb solche zwitracht willen auch menschliche anschlege suchen und abermal gesetze und gebot stellen, die leute ynn eintracht des glaubens zuerhalten, das wird denn auch gelingen, wie es zuvor gelungen ist' (ibid., 34-37).

34. WA 23. 73, 34-35.

35. 'Christus mus nicht alleyn Cayphan haben unter seynen feynden, sondern auch Judam unter seynen freunden': WA 15. 392, 23-24 (Ein Brief an die Christen zu Strassburg wider den Schwärmergeist, 1524).

3. 'one simple constant sense'[1]

After being invested with the lectura in biblia, Luther had ventured into the land of the Old Testament with the famous four-horse chariot'[2] known as the fourfold sense of Scripture. Some years later he harked back to this method, quoting the mnemonic couplet:

'Litera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria,
Moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia.' (3)

Expounding the twenty-second psalm to his Wittenberg students in the tense months before he set off to face the Reichstag at Worms, Luther exclaimed: 'Nonne impiissimum est sic partiri scripturas.'[4] In the cooler ecumenical climate of the present, however, it is well to urge two caveats against too harsh a judgement of the method expressed in the quest for the fourfold sense. First, as Karl Holl pointed out, this technique was not entirely without fruit for the art of exegesis. For precisely by being summoned to uncover the allegorical, tropological and anagogical senses which were thought to lie beneath the literal sense, the mediaeval exegete was placed under the 'salutary compulsion' to extract every last ounce of meaning from the sacred text, and the distinction of the several senses could cause the first, the literal sense, to stand out in bold relief.[5] And, secondly, it must be

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1. WA 5. 280, 36-37.

2. Heinrich Bornkamm: Luther and the Old Testament (Philadelphia, 1969), p. 88.

3. WA 5. 644, 37-38.

4. ibid., 39.

5. Luther, p. 545 ('Luthers Bedeutung für den Fortschritt der Auslegungskunst').

borne in mind that the Middle Ages held that only the sensus litteralis was valid in the context of doctrinal disputation.[6] It was the great Thomas who, in his treatment of the 'praeambula ad articulos fidei', put the idea of the fourfold sense into a nutshell. Picking up the distinction between res and voces made by S. Augustine in the De Doctrina Christiana, a distinction fraught with fateful consequences for the development of sacramental theology, S. Thomas summed up the relationship of the literal to the spiritual sense. (It is to be noted that the so-called allegorical, tropological and anagogical senses are merely refinements of the spiritual sense.) Aquinas' summary is in its turn neatly recapitulated by Dr. T. H. L. Parker:

> 'Man is able to signify res by the use of voces; God can also signify res by res. The res that are signified by voces themselves compose the sensus historicus, vel litteralis. When the res signified by voces themselves signify other res, this is the sensus spiritualis.' (7)

S. Thomas' belief that its divine Author intends several layers of meaning to be discerned in each single

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6. 'Zudem war es anerkannter Grundsatz dass im wissenschaftlichen Streit, bei Disputationen, bloss der buchstäbliche Sinn verwendet werden dürfe (Holl: op.cit., p. 545). cf. also H. A. Oberman: 'Headwaters of the Reformation', p. 64.

7. Calvin's New Testament Commentaries, p. 60. cf. Summa Theologiae 1, 1, 10: 'Dicendum quod auctor sacrae Scripturae est Deus, in cujus potestate est ut non solum voces ad significandum accomodet (quod etiam homo facere potest) sed etiam res ipsas. Et ideo, cum in omnibus scientiis voces significent, hoc habet proprium ista scientia quod ipsae res significatae per voces etiam significant aliquid. Illa ergo prima significatio qua voces significant res pertinet ad primum sensum, qui est sensus historicus vel litteralis. Illa vero significatio qua res significatae per voces iterum res alias significant dicitur sensus spiritualis ...'

passage of Scripture is intimately bound up with the thought-world of the via antiqua, of which he was the most distinguished representative. Even so, he was by no means disposed to advocate any unrestrained 'spiritualisation' of the literal sense of Scripture: the literal sense is the foundation and presupposition of the spiritual,[8] and the spiritual sense communicates no essential truth which Scripture does not plainly announce elsewhere through the literal sense.[9]

The distinction of the literal from the spiritual sense of Scripture in Christian theology goes back to the fateful misunderstanding of 2 Cor. 3:6 by the Alexandrians Clement and Origen. Their method, which centred on discovering the 'higher gnosis' latent in the external word of Scripture, was preserved in mainstream western theology through the enduring influence of the unimpeachably orthodox Augustine. In his Confessiones, the bishop of Hippo acknowledges his indebtedness to this exegetical technique, which had been mediated to him via S. Ambrose of Milan.[10] It amounted to what Beisser summarises as the realisation that 'sich das Geheimnis der eigentlichen Wahrheit hinter dem buchstäblichen Sinn der Schrift verbergen kann'.[11] This discovery was to blend with S. Augustine's neo-Platonism,

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8. The quotation from the Summa in the foregoing footnote immediately continues with: 'qui super litteralem fundatur et eum supponit.'

9. '...quia nihil sub spirituali sensu continetur fidei necessarium quod Scriptura per litteralem sensum alicubi manifeste non tradat' (ibid.).

10. VI, 3-5.

11. Claritas Scripturae bei Martin Luther, p. 10.

flowering in his love of allegory and typology. It is the merit of Miss Smalley to have charted the progress of mediaeval exegesis from a sometimes extravagant and uncontrolled stress on the spiritual sense to a new awareness of the pre-eminence of the literal sense, a development to which the school of S. Victor made a pivotal contribution and a passage from darkness to light which Miss Smalley associates with the gradual decline of Christian Platonism and its replacement with the commonsense Aristotelianism exemplified by the thought of S. Thomas.[12] Even so, as Thomas' own qualified approbation of the quest for the spiritual sense makes clear, the Middle Ages did not view the so-called 'literal sense' with the eyes of the Reformation. Indeed, as the mediaeval period drew to its close, Erasmus was still able, in his Methodus which appeared about six months before the Leipzig Disputation, to praise Origen's allegorical interpretation as the pinnacle of exegetical achievement.[13]

Reading his early lectures, we can watch Luther as, in Holl's striking phrase, 'he grows, almost in leaps, as an exegete'.[14] An indication of the extent to which he outgrew the mediaeval frame of reference in those years is given in his condemnation of the fourfold sense in 1518 as a mere 'game' which led to the devaluation of Scripture as having a 'waxen nose'.[15]

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12. The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages, pp. 58-155. See esp. pp. 86-155 on Andrew of S. Victor and pp. 234-236 on S. Thomas.

13. So Holl: op.cit., p. 552.

14. 'man sieht, wie er dabei fast sprunghaft als Ausleger wächst': op.cit., p. 550.

15. See WA 1. 507, 34-37: '...et iam proverbium fac-

To avoid this reproach, the Reformer is moved to urge that Scripture has in fact but 'one simple and constant sense':

> 'cum autem scripturae et verbi dei oporteat esse unum, simplicem constantemque sensum, ne (ut dicunt) sacris literis caereum nasum faciamus.' (16)

Now the simplicity of Scripture is rooted in the simplicity of God:

> 'Der heylig geyst ist der aller eynfeltigst schreyber und rether, der ynn hymell und erden ist, drumb auch seyne wortt nit mehr denn eynen eynfeltigsten synn haben kunden.' (17)

Furthermore, just as S. Thomas' conviction that Scripture intends to convey a plurality of senses ties in with the epistemology of the via antiqua, Luther's view that it aims to impart but one meaning likewise reflects his ongoing adherence to the via moderna (see WATR 5. 653, 1-18).

Even though it is more true than false to aver that Luther decisively rejected the notion of the multiple sense of Scripture, it would be downright misleading to contend that his reform of exegetical method added up to no more than the retention of the sensus litteralis and the banishment of the sensus spiritualis. There

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tum est, scripturam habere caereum nasum. Hoc effecerunt insulsi illi et inepti somniatores, ludentes in sensu literali, allegorico, morali, anagogico, et vocantur doctores scholastici' (Decem praecepta Wittenbergensi praedicata populo, 1518).

16. WA 5. 280, 36-38.

17. WA 7. 650, 21-23 (Reply to Emser, 1521). cf. also 651, 7-8: 'Es ist viel gewisser und sicher an den worten und eynfeltigen synn bleyben, da ist die rechte weyde und wonung aller geyster.'

are two reasons why this is so. First, while the 'middle' Luther could wryly observe that, 'When I was a monk I was an ingenious allegoriser ... I used to allegorise everything, even the cloaca,'[18] and the aged Reformer could pepper his exposition of Genesis with such remarks as, 'Ego itaque odi allegorias', his words immediately following the latter outburst prove that he did not rule allegory out of court without further ado: 'Si quis tamen volet iis uti, videat, ut cum iudicio eas tractet.'[19] S. Thomas would doubtless have concurred with Luther's counsel that, 'Allegoria non sit fundamentum, sed sit superficies'.[20] The Reformer was obliged to reckon with the possibility that the 'one simple and constant sense' of Scripture, especially in the Prophets,[21] might on occasion be none other than the allegorical sense.[22] Secondly, while Luther could at

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18. 'In allegoriis, cum essem monachus, fui artifex ...allegorisebam etiam cloacam et omnia': WATR 1. 136, 14-17).

19. WA 43. 668, 13-14.

20. ibid., 26-27.

21. cf. H. Bornkamm's account of Luther's allegorical exposition of Isa. 6 in Martin Luther in der Mitte seines Lebens, p. 511.

22. cf. WA 5. 51, 33-38, on Ps. 2:3: 'Est autem totus versus allegoricus, nam "rumpere" pro contemnere et irritum facere, "vincula" pro praeceptis, "proiicere" pro non obedire, negligere, non recipere, "iugum" pro eruditione et disciplina castigandae carnis accipitur. Non autem allegoricum dico more recentiorum, quasi alius sensus historicalis sub eo sit quaerendus, quam qui dictus est, sed quod verum et proprium sensum figurata locutione expresserit.'

times subsume the idea of the single sense of Scripture under the concept littera,[23] his tendency to qualify the latter as the 'literal-prophetic' sense[24] or as the 'literal sense of the tongue'[25] or even to omit the designation 'literal' in favour of such terms as 'grammaticum, historicum sensum' and 'tzungen oder sprachen synn'[26] conclusively demonstrates a certain unease on his part towards the traditional rubric sensus litteralis.

Of great influence in the hermeneutical distinction between the sensus litteralis and the sensus spiritualis had been that epitome of Pauline biblical interpretation, II Cor. 3:6. Clement and Origen had understood this verse to pinpoint the distinction between the merely 'literal' understanding of Scripture which was sufficient for simple Christians and the 'spiritual' or allegorical sense which lurked in the seemingly simple text to be discerned for the edification of more advanced believers. While S. Augustine gave added impetus to this mistaken interpretation of II Cor. 3:6, he also, in his De Spiritu

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23. WA 14. 560, 14-17: '...hic repeto iterumque monebo, ut Christianus lector primam operam navet quaerendo sensui illi, ut vocant, literali, qui solus tota est fidei et theologiae christianae substantia, qui in tribulatione et tentatione solus subsistit et portas inferi cum peccato et morte vincit atque triumphat in laudem et gloriam dei.'

24. WA 4. 305, 6-8: 'quia propheticum, i.e. litteralem primo non quisierunt: qui est fundamentum ceterorum, magister et lux et author et fons atque origo.'

25. WA 7. 650, 22-24: 'nit mehr denn eynen einfeltigsten synn ..., wilchen wir den schrifftlichen odder buchstabischen tzungen synn nennen.'

26. WA 7. 652, 25f.

et Littera, came to the conclusion that the littera occidens of this verse is identical with the law which 'gives knowledge of sin, works wrath and puts to death'. When Luther in his turn discovered the distinction between Law and gospel, finding to his delight that S. Augustine had anticipated him in the De Spiritu et Littera, it is understandable that he would be loath to label the 'sense' according to which Scripture clearly proclaimed the gospel by a term which carried unmistakable overtones of 'law':

> 'Darumb ists nit wol genennet schrifftlich synn, weyl Paulus den buchstaben gar viel anders deuttet denn sie.' (27)

Now Luther held that his mediaeval predecessors were not entirely mistaken in thinking that the true meaning of a biblical text might at times be different from the 'literal' sense. Since the sixteenth century seems to have been oblivious of the phenomenon of glossolalia, Luther, like Calvin after him, failed to interpret I Cor. 14 against the background of the ecstatic utterance rampant in the early Corinthian church. Hence I Cor. 14:2(c) seemed to the Reformer to sanction a certain kind of 'spiritual' sense, a Scripturally legitimated instance of which can be found in the Pauline allegory in Gal. 4:

> 'Allis, was du geystlich synn heyssest mit Origene und Hieronymo, wirstu ynn der gantzen Biblien nit eynen buchstaben finden, der mit euch stymme. S. Paulus heysset es mysteria, vorporgene, heymliche synn. Daher die aller elltisten vetter genennet haben Anagogas, idest remotiores sensus, separatas intelligentias. Zu weyllen auch allegorias, wie S. Paulus selbs nennet Gal. 4. aber da ist noch keyn geyst, wie woll der geyst solchs gibt, als wol als auch den buchstabenn und alle gütter.

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27. ibid., 652, 23-24.

> Wie wyr sehen I Cor. 14. "Der geyst redet die heymlichen synn", doch hie ettlich auss unvorstand habenn der schrifft vier synn gegeben, literalem, allegoricum, anagogicum, tropologicum, das keyn grund nyrgend bestehet.' (28)

Even so, the greatest care must be exercised when the exegete seeks to elucidate the 'spiritual' sense. Where the latter crops up - as, for example, in S. Paul's 'spiritualisation' of the marital relationship to refer to the communion between Christ and the Church in Eph. 5:32 - Holy Scripture draws our attention to its presence.[29]

Beisser comments on Luther's preferred designation of the 'one simple and constant sense' as the 'gramaticum, historicum sensum'[30] or 'tzungen oder sprachen synn' that:

> 'Was Luther damit meint, könnte man die unmittelbare Evidenz des gesprochenen Wortes nennen.' (31)

Bearing in mind this assertion that the Reformer's quest for the sensus grammaticus hinges on the 'direct evidence of the spoken word', it is well to recall his allegation that if, quite apart from the question of theological truth and simply for entertainment's sake, one wished to express the view that Christ's body is present in the

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28. ibid., 13-22.

29. 'Wie Paulus Eph. 5 mysterium heysset Christus und die kirch yn eynem fleysch, so doch von mann und weyb die schrifft und buchstab lauttet. Aber hie ist nott, das nit ein iglicher von yhm selb mysteria ertichte, wie ettliche than und noch thun, der geyst mus es selber thun, odder auss der schrifft muss man es beweyssen ...' (ibid., 32-36).

30. ibid., 25.

31. op.cit., p. 31.

host, there is in fact no more apposite way of doing so than by means of the words of institution as we have them:

> 'Denn ich habs versucht: Wenn gleich ym abendmal eitel brod und wein were, Und ich wolte doch von lust wegen versuchen, wie ichs aussprechen möcht, das Christus leib ym brod were, so kündte ichs doch warlich nicht gewisser, einfeltiger und klerer sagen denn also: "Nemet, esset, Das ist mein leib."' (32)

Perhaps it will be rejoined that, since these words were written at the height of the bitter logomachy between Luther and Zwingli, it would be unwise to accept them at face value. Has his Swiss opponent forced the Reformer into an uncomfortable corner, so that there is an element of special pleading here which threatens to eclipse any impartial concern for the integrity of the sensus grammaticus? This suspicion can be dispelled by taking a brief glance at the de captivitate babylonica of 1520, which was, after all, written a full three years before Luther had cause to contend with the denial of the real presence. In the section of this writing dealing with the 'second captivity' of the Sacrament, namely the doctrine of transubstantiation, the Reformer recalls the deep impression made on him while he was 'drinking in scholastic theology' by the argument of Cardinal Pierre d'Ailly that, had not Holy Church authoritatively decreed otherwise, it would be altogether more econcomical to suppose that the body of Christ is present in the host without destroying the substance of the element:

> 'Dedit mihi quondam, cum Theologiam scholasticam haurirem, occasionem cogitandi D. Cardinalis Camaracensis libro sententiarum quarto, acutissime disputans, multo probabilius esse et minus superfluorum miraculorum poni, si in altari verus panis

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32. WA 26. 447, 14-17 (Vom Abendmahl Christi. Bekenntnis, 1528).

> verumque vinum, non autem sola accidentia esse astruerentur, nisi Ecclesia determinasset contrarium.' (33)

Luther notes that he is himself inclined towards this 'sententia', which has 'stabilised' his conscience and which allows for a doctrine of the real presence no less robust than that expressed by the novel philosophical concept of transubstantiation.[34] It is noteworthy that even at this early stage, well before the real presence has become a topic of controversy, the Reformer contends that his acceptance of this doctrine - albeit in a form purged of Aristotelian leaven - springs from his wish to adhere to the 'simplicissima significatio' of the text of Scripture:

> 'Est autem meae sententiae ratio magna, imprimis illa, quod verbis divinis non est ulla facienda vis, neque per hominem neque per angelum, sed quantum fieri potest in simplicissima significatione servanda sunt, et nisi manifesta circumstantia cogat, extra grammaticam et propriam accipienda non sunt, ne detur adversariis occasio universam scripturam eludendi.' (35)

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33. WA 6. 508, 7-11.

34. 'Postea videns, quae esset Ecclesia, quae hoc determinasset, nempe Thomistica, hoc est Aristotelica, audacior factus sum, et qui inter saxum et sacrum haerebam, tandem stabilivi conscientiam meam sententia priore, Esse videlicet verum panem verumque vinum, in quibus Christi vera caro verusque sanguis non aliter nec minus sit quam illi sub accidentibus suis ponunt.' (ibid., 11-16).

35. WA 6. 509, 8-12. While the present writer hopes to have made it abundantly plain that Luther's well-documented stress on the 'one simple and constant sense' of Scripture represents his distinctive contribution to the art of exegesis, it must be pointed out that this idea does not convey the whole of his thought about this subject. At least two factors should be allowed to qualify the account of the Reformer's thinking given in this section. First, notwithstanding his adamant apo-

'Quantum fieri potest' and 'nisi manifesta circumstantia cogat' would seem to indicate that there are occasions when it would be inappropriate to expound Scripture in its grammatical sense. Consideration of this exigency will bring this brief account of Luther's use of the Bible to a close.

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logetic and polemical insistence on the single sense of Scripture, Luther's actual exegesis - supremely of the Psalms - often presupposes that the Holy Spirit intends more than one meaning to be gleaned from a particular text. Thus, in an exposition of Ps. 111 written in 1530, Luther contends that the original purpose of the author was to produce a hymn for use at the annual Passover festival (WA 31 1. 396, 18-25). Since Christians are in a position to celebrate the 'true' Passover daily in the Mass, the Reformer purposes to interpret Ps. 111 of the Christian Eucharist also (397, 17-19). To accommodate both dimensions of meaning Luther briefly expounds the Psalm twice over, dealing first with the Jewish understanding (397, 35-403, 28), whereupon he suggests: 'Nu wollen wir jhn widder forn anfahen und auff unser Osterfest, das ist, auffs abendmahl oder Messe zihen' (404, 3-5), a programme which is carried out in the second half of the commentary (404, 30-426, 35). Secondly, while the importance of WATR 5. 653, 1-18 for our understanding of the relationship between Luther's nominalist background and his exegetical method is underscored by a passage from the debate of 1521 with Jerome Emser of Leipzig, the latter might also prompt us to beware of overemphasising the role of nominalist epistemology as a cardinal factor in the Reformer's thought. Immediately after affirming the 'eynen eynfeltigsten synn ...wilchen wir den schrifftlichen odder buchstabischen tzungen synn nennen,' Luther rejects the epistemological foundation of the sensus spiritualis: 'Das aber die ding, durch seyne eynfeltig wort einfeltiglich bedeuttet, ettwas weytter und ander ding und also ein ding das ander bedeuttet, so seyn die wort auss und hören die tzungen auff' (WA 7. 650, 24-26). This prohibition of allegory only holds good for Scripture, however: 'Thun doch das alle andere ding, die nit ynn der schrifft genennet werden, Seyntemal alle gottis werck und creaturn eytel lebendig tzeychen und wort gottis sein, wie Augustinus sagt und alle lerer. Aber darumb soll man nit

4. secundum regulam fidei

When Luther sought to undergird the Scripture principle by alleging that 'Holy Scripture is its own interpreter',[1] was he not guilty of wrenching the Bible from the sole context in which it can be expounded with balance and perspective, namely from the tradition of the Church? Was he not preparing the ground for the assertion that, 'The Bible and the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants', a dangerous half-truth which was bound in the long run to drain Christianity of the dogmatic substance which sustains it? After all, such an undoubted authority on the Reformer's thought as Professor Ebeling could allege in 1942 that:

> 'Durch Luthers Auffassung der Schrift ist der Tradition die Bedeutung einer hermeneutischen Grösse genommen.' (2)

A brief consideration of the role of credal orthodoxy and supposedly universal tradition in the Reformer's exegesis will endeavour to prove Professor Ebeling precisely wrong.

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sagen, das die schrifft odder gottis wort mehr denn eynen synn haben' (ibid., 26-30). What, then, is the relationship between Luther's mystical doctrine that created reality is a larva behind and through which God conceals and reveals himself and his nominalist philosophy?

1. See WA 7. 97, 22-26: 'Oportet enim scriptura iudice hic sententiam ferre, quod fieri non potest, nisi scripturae dederimus principem locum in omnibus quae tribuuntur partibus, hoc est, ut sit ipsa per sese certissima, facillima, apertissima, sui ipsius interpres, omnium omnia probans, iudicans et illuminans, sicut scriptum est psal. 119.' cf. also WA 26. 280, 4-6: 'ich von Gotts gnaden verstehe, wie man müsse einen ort der schrifft durch den andern verkleren.'

2. Evangelische Evangelienauslegung (Munich, 1942), p. 405.

Arguing against the innovation of re-baptism, Luther listed the genuinely Christian notae ecclesiae retained by the papal church:

> 'Wir bekennen aber, das unter dem Bapstum viel Christliches gutes, ia alles Christlich gut sey, Und auch derselbs herkomen sey an uns, Nemlich wir bekennen, das ym Bapstum die rechte heilige schrifft sey, rechte tauffe, recht Sacrament des altars, rechte schlussel zur vergebung der sunde, recht predig ampt, rechter Catechismus, als das Vater unser, Zehen gebot, die artickel des glawbens.' (3)

Now while the three sacraments, the ministerial office and the first two items of the 'rechter Catechismus' may be understood as so to say the flesh and blood of the skeletal sola Scriptura, the same cannot be said of the third and final ingredient of Christian catechesis, namely the 'articles of faith'. It is well to note that in Luther's traditional usage fides/Glaube does not refer solely to the Spirit-produced attitude of fiducia, that is, to the fides qua creditur, but also to the doctrinal substance which is believed, that is, to the fides quae creditur. The credal articles which form the Faith are, admittedly, themselves culled from Holy Scripture in the first place. Even so, it is also true to say that the ancient baptismal symbol which developed into the Apostle's Creed summarises the contents of Scripture as rightly interpreted and authoritatively set forth by the Church. It is demonstrable that Martin Luther never forgot that the business of exegesis is to be carried on within the Church, with the corollary that the individual exegete is bound to subject his own sensus to the consensus omnium as reflected in

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3. WA 26. 147, 13-18 (Von der Wiedertaufe an zwei Pfarrherrn, 1528).

the Church's Creed. Thus in the early lectures on the Psalms Luther advised his students to prefer traditional interpretations which do not conflict with the fidei regula to their own expositions, even should the latter seem to correspond more closely with the litera of Scripture.[4] Nor was this highly conservative posture cast aside as the Reformation got under way: the principle that the Bible must be interpreted in keeping with the articles of faith was reiterated in writings of 1523, 1525, 1527 and 1528.[5] If we may adapt a pun coined by Paul Althaus in another context: sola Scriptura nunquam sola.

By stoutly refusing at Marburg in 1529 to go along with a 'broad church' remedy which would paper over the cracks of doctrinal disagreement which threatened to displace the Reformation by a plurality of attempts at reform, Luther provoked torrents of protest at his 'stubbornness', 'short-sightedness', 'lack of statesman-

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4. 'Quare ubicunque et a quocunque profertur aliquis sensus, qui non repugnat fidei regulis, nullus eum debet reprobare aut suum preferre, etiam si suus sit multo evidentior et magis proprie litere consonat' (WA 3. 517, 35-39).

5. WA 11. 436, 21-22: 'Eyn iglich wortt soll man lassen stehen ynn seyner naturlichen bedeuttung und nicht davon lassen, es zwinge denn der glawbe davon' (1523). WA 18. 147, 23-27: 'Darumb ist das unser grund: Wo die heylige schrifft ettwas gründet zu gleuben, da soll man nicht weichen von den worten, wie sie lautten, noch von der ordnunge, wie sie da stehet, Es zwinge denn eyn ausgedruckter artickel des glaubens, die wort anders zu deuten odder zu ordenen, Was wollt sonst die Bibel werden?' (Wider die himmlischen Propheten, 1525). WA 23. 93, 25-28: 'Denn wer sich untersteht, die wort ynn der schrifft anders zu deuten denn sie lauten, der ist schuldig, dasselbige aus dem text dessel-

ship' and even 'want of charity'. For it seemed to the Reformed Church both in the sixteenth and succeeding centuries that Luther and his followers attached an importance to sacramental doctrine which cannot be justified in terms of either the New Testament or early tradition. If the marked decline in the importance of the doctrine of the sacraments from John Calvin's Institutio to Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics is a reliable indicator of changing attitudes within one of the great communions of Christendom, then one might aver that, within the Reformed Church, the doctrines of baptism and the Lord's Supper have increasingly tended to forfeit their age-old church-divisive potential and to take on more and more the quality of adiaphora. Against this background the Lutheran insistence that recognition of the integrity of the divine est is a precondition of church fellowship cannot but appear as the bitter fruit of the founding father's 'relapse into scholasticism'. Yet would it be true to say that the doctrine of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper is not an article of faith in the strict sense? For while Luther himself still considered that the communio sanctorum of the Apostle's Creed is simply an explanatory phrase illuminating the article unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam,[6] it cannot be overlooked that clarification by apposition is a technique of the eastern, Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed rather than of the concise, not to say abrupt,

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bigen orts odder einen artickel des glaubens zu beweisen.' WA 26. 403, 27-29: 'Man sol ynn der schrifft die wort lassen gelten, was sie lauten, nach yhrer art und keyn ander deutung geben, es zwinge denn eyn offentlicher artickel des glawbens.'

6. BS GK, 657.

western 'Apostolic' Creed. Stephen Benko[7] and the late Hermann Sasse[8], among others, have marshalled the relevant patristic and early mediaeval evidence for a neuter interpretation of sanctorum communio as shorthand for the doctrines of baptism and Lord's Supper.

Even though Luther's exposition of communio sanctorum in the Large Catechism of 1529 would seem to have been based on deficient data, he nevertheless had an instinctive grasp of the original sense of the Apostle's Creed. Thus he always treated the question of the real presence as a matter of binding confessional commitment, refusing to degrade it to the level of a theologoumenon about which the theologians may quibble. A letter written by the Reformer in 1532 to his friend the laicised Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights, Albrecht Duke of Prussia, underscores his conviction that the doctrine of the real presence is strictly de fide and shows up his attitude to tradition in a surprisingly Catholic light. The real presence, contends Luther, is clearly taught in Scripture and has, moreover, been unanimously confessed by both Greek and Latin fathers:

> 'Zu dem so ist dieser Artickel nicht eine lere odder auff satz, ausser der schrifft von menschen ertichtet, Sondern klerlich im Euangelio durch helle, reine, ungezweiffelte wort Christi gestifft und gegründet und von anfang der Christlichen Kirchen jnn aller Welt bis auff diese stund eintrechtiglich gegleubet und gehalden, Wie das aus weisen der lieben Veter bücher und schrifft, beide, Griechischer und Latinischer sprache, Da zu der teglich brauch und das werck mit der erfarung bis auff diese stund.' (9)

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7. The Meaning of Sanctorum Communio (Naperville, Illinois, 1964; Studies in Historical Theology, vol. 3).

8. Corpus Christi, pp. 13-29.

9. WA 30 III. 552, 3-9.

Luther was either unintentionally unaware of or else wilfully blind to the variety of real presence doctrine which obtained in the Western Church from the time of S. Augustine until the formal dogmatisation of the corporeal presence in the elements in the Ego Berengarius of 1059 (1079). And the reader of the powerful defence of the received doctrine written in 1527 is acquainted with the Reformer's strenuous attempts to reclaim Tertullian and Augustine from their conscription into the ranks of Oecolampadius' patristic witnesses.[10] In the present context, however, our interest must focus on Luther's strong conviction that 'articles of faith' mediated through tradition both can and should decisively influence the exegete's interpretation of the sacred text. Indeed, the Reformer could sombrely counsel his princely correspondent in that letter of 1532 that it is both perilous and shocking to believe anything that runs counter to the consensus omnium. So far is Luther prepared to push this principle that he can frankly argue that the real presence would merit belief solely on the basis of fifteen centuries of uninterrupted, unanimous tradition, quite apart from its attestation in Scripture:

> 'Welchs zeugnis der gantzen heiligen Christlichen Kirchen (wenn wir schon nichts mehr hatten) soll uns allein genugsam sein, bey diesem Artickel zubleiben und dar uber keinen Rottengeist zu hören noch zu leiden, Denn es ferlich ist und erschrecklich, etwas zu hören oder zu gleuben widder das eintrechtig zeugnis, glauben und lere der gantzen

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10. On Tertullian's figura corporis, see WA 23. 217ff.; and on S. Augustine's use of the signum concept, see 209ff.

heiligen Christlichen Kirchen, so von anfang her nu uber funffzehen hunder jar jnn aller Wellt eintrechtiglich gehalten hat.' (11)

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11. WA 30 III. 52, 9-15. For Luther's conviction that tradition is more unanimous in handing down the doctrine of the real presence than in transmitting other articles of faith, see WA 23. 129, 12-15: 'Es solte ja unter so vielen vetern und so viel schriften ein mal eine negativa fallen, wie ynn andern artickeln geschicht, nu aber stehen sie alle auff der affirmativa eintrechtig und bestendiglich.'

CHAPTER THREE: MARTIN LUTHER IN THE EUCHARISTIC DEBATE OF THE 1520s

1. The real presence in the history of doctrine

Since, as Hermann Sasse observed, 'it was not by accident that the Reformation, which had begun as a controversy on the sacrament of penance, later became to a larger degree a controversy about the Sacrament of the Altar',[1] it is fitting at this juncture to recall the development of the doctrine of the real presence before it was mediated to Martin Luther through the catechesis and practice of the late mediaeval Western Church. Sasse made the bold claim that:

> 'no theologian of the Early Church ever doubted that, according to the Words of Institution, the consecrated bread is the body, and the consecrated wine is the blood of Christ; the differences referred only to the theological theories about the right understanding of the doctrine on which all were agreed.' (2)

At the close of the New Testament period, S. Ignatius of Antioch had warned the Smyrnaeans against those who:

> '...hold aloof from the Eucharist and from services of prayer, because they refuse to admit that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins and which, in his goodness, the Father raised from the dead.' (3)

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1. Hermann Sasse: This is my body. Luther's Contention for the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar (revised posthumous edition, Adelaide, 1977), p. 13.

2. op.cit., p. 11.

3. LCC I, p. 114.

Half a century later, S. Justin Martyr was to use similarly realist language of the Eucharist:

> 'For we do not receive these things as common bread or common drink; but as Jesus Christ our Saviour being incarnate by God's word took flesh and blood for our salvation, so also we have been taught that the food consecrated by the word of prayer which comes from him, from which our flesh and blood are nourished by transformation, is the flesh and blood of that incarnate Jesus.' (4)

A further generation was to elapse before S. Irenaeus of Lyons would confess the real presence in terms remarkably redolent of 'consubstantiation'. This formulation was to be eagerly seized on by Martin Luther thirteen centuries later, as was the connection proposed by Irenaeus between the oral reception of Christ's body and the future resurrection of the believer's own body:

> 'Our way of thinking is in harmony with the eucharist, and conversely the eucharist confirms our thinking. We offer him what is his own, and thereby proclaim the harmonious fellowship and union of flesh and Spirit. When the bread, which comes from the earth, receives the invocation of God, it is no longer ordinary bread; it is eucharist - composed of two elements, one earthly and one heavenly. Similarly, when our bodies partake of the eucharist, they are no longer corruptible; they have the hope of resurrection.' (5)

The realist doctrine of these early fathers was not, however, the only understanding of the eucharistic presence current in the ancient Church. Origen stands out as the first to lean in the direction of a figurative understanding of the words of institution. While he

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4. op.cit., I, p. 286 (Apology I, ch. 66).

5. Adversus haereses IV, 17, 5. Quoted from Maurice Wiles and Mark Santer eds.: Documents in Early Christian Thought (CUP, 1975), p. 187.

could employ the realistic terminology of the Church to warn communicants to beware lest any particles fall to the ground at their reception of the Lord's body,[6] his own characteristic understanding of the eucharistic mystery is perhaps encapsulated in his statement that the true food and drink is in fact the Word, which nourishes the soul.[7]

Even so, the philosophically oriented Origen forms an isolated exception among the fathers of the Greek Church. In the mid-fourth century S. Cyril of Jerusalem taught his catechumens that the elements are transformed (μεταβαλλειν) into the body and blood of Christ at the invocation of the Holy Spirit.[8] Meanwhile the φαρμακον ἀθανασιας motif was further developed by S. Gregory of Nyssa: while 'the soul is united with him by faith, ...when the body which God made immortal enters ours, it transforms it entirely and makes it like itself.'[9] Such is the faith of the Church, but this Cappadocian father notes that:

> 'we are bound to ask how that one body can be perpetually distributed throughout the world to so many thousands of the faithful, and yet be received in its entirety in the portion each gets, and still remain whole in itself.' (10)

With these words Gregory lays his finger on an unfathomable mystery which would compel Aquinas to confess, in the Pange lingua which he composed for the festival of

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6. in Exod. hom. 13, 3 (GCS 29. 274, 6f).

7. in Matth. comm. 85 (GCS 38. 196f).

8. Cat. Myst. 5, 7 (MPG 33. 1113; Wiles and Santer: Documents, p. 192). cf. also Cat. Myst. 4, 9 (MPG 33. 1104; Wiles and Santer: Documents, p. 190).

9. Cat. Or. 37 (Wiles and Santer: Documents, p. 194).

10. Wiles and Santer: ibid. cf. Thomas' confession in

Corpus Christi: 'Ad firmandum cor sincerum sola fides sufficit.' Even so, Gregory would carry the apologetic method as far as it would go. Our own bodily nature, he remarks, is sustained by food and drink (bread and wine), so that it is appropriate to regard these substances as potentially being our body:

> 'So when we look at those things, we are looking at what is potentially the bulk of our own body. In me they become blood and flesh; in each case the food is subjected to the transforming power which changes it into the form of the body.' (11)

The human nature assumed by the Second Person of the Trinity was sustained in just the same way, and S. Gregory contends that there is a precise analogy between the gradual transformation of bread and wine into the material humanity of the God-man in the days of his earthly life and the sudden transformation of the eucharistic bread and wine into the substance of Christ's flesh and blood by the same Word of power today: 'The means whereby the bread was changed in that body and converted into divine power operate precisely the same way now.'[12] While Gregory's understanding of the real presence focusses on the transformation of the elements

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his Lauda Sion: 'Sumit unus, sumunt mille, Quantum isti, tantum ille, Nec sumptus consumitur.' It is noteworthy that identical thoughts were expressed in the hymnody of the golden age of Lutheran Orthodoxy, e.g., in the Schmücke dich o liebe Seele of Johann Crüger (1649): 'Nein, Vernunft, die muss hier weichen, kann dies Wunder nicht erreichen, dass dies Brot nie wird verzehret, ob es gleich viel Tausend nähret, und dass mit dem Saft der Reben uns wird Christi Blut gegeben. O der grossen Heimlichkeiten, die nur Gottes Geist kann deuten!'

11. Wiles and Santer: op.cit., p. 195.

12. op.cit., p. 196.

into the body and blood of Christ, his thought also betrays a certain kinship with the later scholastic theory of impanation.

Eucharistic realism is carried to such lengths by S. John Chrysostom that Hans Grass is prompted to speak of 'vulgar rhetoric'.[13] Chrysostom tells how the communicant's tongue is turned red by the blood of Christ,[14] while he holds the actual body of the Saviour in his hands.[15] Moreover, he asserts that Christ drank his own blood at the Last Supper.[16] The full doctrine of the real presence was irrevocably sealed for the Church of the East when S. John of Damascus ruled out a figurative understanding of the verba testamenti in favour of a μεταποιεῖν of the elements.[17]

In the Latin Church of the West the vast influence exercised over their contemporaries and successors by SS. Ambrose and Augustine ensured that for centuries to come the perimeters of speculation concerning the eucharistic presence would be more widely spaced than would have been thinkable in the Christian East. S. Ambrose is commonly regarded as the father of a realist understanding of the words of institution in the Western Church,

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13. RGG[3] 1. 23.

14. in Matth. hom. 82, 5 (MPG 58. 743).

15. in I Cor. hom. 24, 4 (MPG 61. 203).

16. in Matth. hom. 82, 1 (MPG 58. 739). The same view was espoused by Luther in the 1520s.

17. De fide orthodoxa 4, 13 (MPG 94. 1136ff).

while the customary view of S. Augustine's position concerning the real presence is indicated by Hans Grass's observation that, 'The high esteem in which Augustine was held delayed the victory of eucharistic realism in the West until the eleventh century'.[18] The standpoint of Ambrose is speedily sketched: we may speak of the presence of bread on the altar only prior to the consecration. In addition to pointing the way towards the doctrine of the conversion of the elements, S. Ambrose also lays great emphasis on what was to become a distinctively Western viewpoint, namely the conviction that the eucharistic presence is wrought not by the epiclesis of the Spirit, but by the verba sacramentorum:

> 'Sed panis iste panis est ante verba sacramentorum; ubi accesserit consecratio, de pane fit caro Christi. Hoc igitur adstruamus, quomodo potest, qui panis est, corpus esse Christi. Consecratio igitur quibus verbis est et cuius sermonibus? Domini Iesu. ... Ubi venitur, ut conficiatur venerabile sacramentum, iam non suis sermonibus utitur sacerdos, sed utitur sermonibus Christi. Ergo sermo Christi hoc conficit sacramentum.' (19)

It would be flatly misleading to suggest that S. Augustine consciously dissented from his erstwhile mentor's conviction that the eucharistic elements are the body and blood of Christ. For S. Augustine was too faithful a churchman and too honest an exegete to depart from the consen-

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18. RGG[3] 1. 25.

19. De sacramentis IV. 4, 14 (CSEL 73. 51f). cf. also IV. 5, 23 (CSEL 73. 56): 'Et ante verba Christi calix est vini et aquae plenus; ubi verba Christi operata fuerint, ibi sanguis efficitur, qui plebem redemit. Ergo videte, quantis generibus potens est sermo Christi universa convertere.'

sus omnium on this matter. Thus he is at one with S. John Chrysostom (and Martin Luther) in confessing that the Lord held his own body in his hands at the Last Supper.[20] He aligns himself even further with the upholders of the manducatio impiorum by teaching that Judas received the body and blood just like the other disciples.[21] And those among Jesus' Jewish contemporaries who afterwards embraced the Faith drank the precious blood which they had formerly shed.[22] As Hermann Sasse was at pains to point out, notwithstanding the neo-Platonic dimension of his thought:

> '...it is quite unthinkable that he wanted to give his communicants anything else than he said in the formula of distribution: the body and blood of Christ which were to be received orally by all participants, even the unworthy ...Here lies the difference between Augustine and the Reformed churches.' (23)

It is remarkable that neither SS. Ambrose and Augustine themselves nor their mediaeval successors seem to have discerned the difference between their respective teachings on the eucharistic presence. The reason for this surprising lack of perception on their part is that S. Augustine's 'symbolism' existed side by side with his 'realism', exercising a subliminal rather than overt influence on the theological speculation of later centuries. This second element in S. Augustine's thought was part of

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20. Enarratio in ps. 33 (MPL 38. 303).

21. Sermo 71 (MPL 38. 453).

22. Sermo 77 (MPL 38. 485).

23. This is my body, p. 23, n. 12.

the heavy price which he (and the Latin Church after him) had to pay for his 'loving so late'. When, in the early days of his episcopate, S. Augustine sought to give a systematic account of the Christian way of thinking, he naturally started with a treatment of the phenomenon of language. From the observation that a verbum is a signum which denotes a res[24] it was but a short step to the minting of a definition of sacramentum, which, although it came to exercise sovereign sway over the Western Church, was too redolent of neo-Platonic epistemology to co-exist comfortably alongside the straightforward biblical est. When not taken as synonymous with signum but considered exclusively in terms of its usage in the Pauline epistles, μυστηριον- and, therefore, its Latin equivalent sacramentum - is a wonderfully appropriate designation for the dominically instituted means of grace. Caught in a tension between 'hiddenness' (ἀποκρυπτω and cognates) and 'revelation' (ἀποκαλυπτω, γνωσις and cognates), μυστηριον focusses on God's gracious self-externalisation of himself in Christ and on the contemporary imparting of this health-giving presence through the proclamation of the gospel. (cf., e.g., Rom. 16:25; Eph. 1:9, 3:3, 4, 9, 6:19; Col. 1:26, 27, 2:2, 4:3; I. Tim. 3:16). μυστηριον as used in the New Testament attests Luther's well-known stress on Almighty God's sovereign initiative in the event of salvation (sola gratia) and on his gracious veiling of himself under external means to realise his saving purposes (theologia crucis, absconditio sub contraria specie). Looked at from the perspective of secular etymology, however,

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24. De Doctrina Christiana I, 2 (MPL 34. 19-20).

sacramentum is a less than ideal heading under which to gather together the means of grace, for since it signified both the sum of money deposited by the parties contesting a lawsuit and the soldier's oath of allegiance to the emperor, it could provoke a subtle shift of emphasis away from God's free and unmerited binding of himself to man in the direction of man's deliberate commitment of himself to God. While God's sovereign act of love towards man in Christ must and does enable and prompt a sacrificial response of thanks, praise and love on the part of the redeemed creature towards God, the accent in the means of grace must nevertheless remain on His boundless gift to the exclusion of our paltry response. Baptism, Lord's Supper and absolution empower Christians to perform their λογικη λατρεια (Rom. 12:1), but this movement of reconciled man towards the Father is based on the humble οὖν of the same verse, which roots 'man in Christ' in the superabundance of 'God in Christ'. The latent weakness of the sacramentum concept would make itself felt over a thousand years later in the sacramental theology of Ulrich Zwingli, for with his predilection for explaining the essence of the Christian sacraments on the analogy of the soldier's oath Zwingli turned a divine donum into a human opus, succumbing to the very Pelagianism which Luther, perhaps wrongly, discerned in the ancient doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass.

Among S. Augustine's distinctive contributions to the sacramental theology of the Western Church was his definition of sacramentum as signum.[25] This notion

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25. See, e.g., Sermo 272: 'Ideo dicuntur sacramenta, quia in eis aliud videtur, aliud intelligitur' (MPL 38. 1247); De civ. Dei X, 5: 'Sacramentum, id est sacrum

passed into the bloodstream of mainline Western theology, so that when S. Peter Lombard asked 'Quid sit sacramentum?' it was inevitable that he should reply in characteristically Augustinian terms. 'Sacramentum', says the Master of the Sentences, 'est sacrae rei signum ... Item sacramentum est invisibilis gratiae visibilis forma'.[26] Into this alien neo-Platonic scheme the Church's theology demanded the insertion of the orthodox doctrine of the real presence; so the theologians must busy themselves with coining a series of neat distinctions between what was signum/sacramentum tantum (viz., the outward appearances of bread and wine), signum/sacramentum et res contenta (viz., the true body and blood of Christ) and the further dimension of the eucharistic mystery which, while not being sacramentum, is res significata sed non contenta (viz., the unity of the mystical body, the Church):

> 'Nunc quid ibi sacramentum sit, et quid res, videamus. Sacramentum est invisibilis gratiae visibilis forma. Forma ergo panis et vini quae ibi videtur, est sacramentum, id est, signum sacrae rei; ...Hujus autem sacramenti gemina est res: una, scilicet, contenta et significata; altera significata et non contenta. Res contenta et significata est caro Christi, quam de virgine traxit, et sanguis quem pro nobis fudit. Res autem significata et non contenta est unitas Ecclesiae in praedestinatis, vocatis, justificatis, et glorificatis. ...Sunt ergo hic tria distinguenda: unum, quod tantum est sacramentum; alterum, quod est sacramentum et res; et ter-

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signum' (MPL 41. 282); Ep. 138, 7: 'Signa, quae ad res divinas pertinent, sacramenta appellantur' (MPL 33. 527). cf. the words of J. Finkenzeller in LThK 9. 221: 'Unter dem Einfluss der Platonischen Ontologie rechnet Augustin die Sakramente zum genus signorum, d.h. den sichtbaren Zeichen, denen eine unsichtbare Wirklichkeit (res) entspricht, die durch die Zeichen versinnbildet wird.'

26. Sententiarum libri quattuor IV, dist. 1, 2 (MPL 192. 839).

> tium, quod est res et non sacramentum. Sacramentum et non res, est species visibilis panis et vini; sacramentum et res, caro Christi propria et sanguis: res et non sacramentum, mystica eius caro.' (27)

Martin Luther's earliest publications on the Eucharist display a mind still moving entirely within the framework of this essentially Augustinian scheme. As the 1520s saw the Reformer become increasingly embroiled in controversy with the Swiss and South German Reformers on the real presence, however, he developed a certain reserve towards the signum concept. In 1528 he implicitly broke with this item of tradition, and when Johann Gerhard (1582-1637) urged that the sacraments are more appropriately categorised as in genere actionis than in genere signi, he made a real advance on the basis of the Reformer's insight.

In defining sacramentum as signum, S. Augustine wished to direct his congregation to the underlying res, which he was wont to locate in the corpus Christi mysticum.[28] Expounding the 98th Psalm, S. Augustine digressed into a consideration of Jn. 6:51ff, the key to which seemed near at hand (vs. 63a!):

> 'Ille autem instruxit eos, et ait illis: Spiritus est qui vivificat; caro autem nihil prodest: verba quae locutus sum vobis, spiritus est et vita. Spiritualiter intelligite quod locutus sum: non hoc corpus quod videtis, manducaturi estis; et bibituri illum sanguinem, quem fusuri sunt qui me crucifigent. Sacramentum aliquod vobis commendavi; spiritualiter intellectum vivificabit vos. Etsi necesse est illud visibiliter celebrari, oportet tamen invisibiliter intelligi.' (29)

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27. op.cit., dist. 8, 4 (MPL 192. 857).

28. See, e.g., Sermo 272 (MPL 38. 1246-1248; Wiles and Santer: Documents, pp. 199-201).

29. MPL 37. 1265.

While this pastoral stress on the manducatio spiritualis could - and did[30] - coexist throughout almost the whole of the post-Augustinian Western tradition alongside a real presence doctrine which could be summed up in the expression manducatio oralis, there was a further facet of S. Augustine's teaching which would be eagerly seized on by the Reformed side in the eucharistic controversy of the 1520s. This was his opinion that, while the risen and glorified Christ is ubiquitous insofar as he is God, he exists locally in heaven insofar as he is man:

> 'Una enim persona Deus et homo est, et utrumque est unus Christus Jesus; ubique per id quod Deus est, in coelo autem per id quod homo' (31). 'Sursum est Dominus; sed etiam hic est veritas, Dominus. Corpus enim Domini in quo resurrexit, uno loco esse potest; veritas eius ubique diffusa est' (32).

Leaping in this survey from the fifth century to the ninth, we come to Paschasius Radbertus, whose de corpore et sanguine Domini is, according to R. Seeberg, 'the first monograph concerning the Eucharist which we possess'.[33] Radbertus taught the conversion of the elements and the identity of the eucharistic with the historical body of Christ. Even so, he is usually cre-

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30. Let it be recalled that Lombard's Sententiae IV, dist. 9 is headed De duobus modis manducandi: 'Et sicut duae sunt res illius sacramenti, etiam duo modi manducandi: unus sacramentalis scilicet, quo boni et mali edunt; alter spiritualis, quo soli boni manducant' (MPL 192. 858).

31. Epistle to Dardanus, 3 (MPL 33. 836).

32. Tractatus 30 in Iohannem (Corpus Christianum, Series Latina XXXVI. 289, 16-19).

33. Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte III (6th ed., Stuttgart, 1960), p. 75.

dited with the denial of the manducatio impiorum.[34] Radbertus' realism, which was assisted to overwhelming dominance in the Western Church on the shoulders of popular piety, was countered by Rhabanus Maurus[35] and Ratramnus,[36] the latter being the same as the 'Bertram' beloved of Ridley of London and so influential in England in the days of Edward VI. The days of doctrinal pluralism in the Western Church on the real presence were numbered, however, and when, in the mid-eleventh century, Berengar of Tours took the field with an aggressive assertion of the figurative-symbolic understanding of the words of institution, the Church's teaching office - the local bishops and presently the Pope himself - were not slow to react. According to Hermann Sasse, not only was 'confugere ad rationem ...one of his watchwords', but he was also 'as far as we know, the first to interpret the Words of Institution merely tropically, the est as meaning significat.'[37] As the pontificate of Nicholas II began, the celebrated Cardinal Humbert concocted a theological form of humble pie which the errant divine was obliged to stomach: in the first draft of Ego Berengarius (1059) it was stated that, after consecration, the bread and wine on the altar are no longer 'solummodo sacramentum', but, on the contrary,

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34. ibid.ff.; cf. also Darwell Stone: History of the Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist I (London, 1909), pp. 216-220.

35. cf. Seeberg: op.cit., pp. 78-80; Stone: op.cit., pp. 222-225.

36. cf. Seeberg: op.cit., p. 80f.; Stone: op.cit., 226-232.

37. This is my body, p. 26.

the true body and blood of Christ, which are 'handled and broken by the priests and crushed by the teeth of the faithful'.[38] Berengar's 'repentance' would not seem to have been wholehearted, and the recurrence of his error led to his being pressed to consent to another, this time more cautiously formulated version of the Ego Berengarius during the reign of Pope S. Gregory VII in 1079: in the revised draft, which still has the force of dogma in the Roman Church, 'Berengarius' confessed the real presence in terms of the 'substantial conversion' of bread and wine into the body and blood of our Lord.[39] In the twenty years which lapsed between the first and second versions of Ego Berengarius, the earlier draft had not been without its critics, as Martin Luther was later to glean from the Corpus Iuris Canonici. It is therefore all the more remarkable that, in the Bekenntnis of 1528, Luther was moved to leap to the defence of Pope Nicholas II and the first draft of 1059: 'Would God that all Popes had acted so Christianly in all things!'[40]

The doctrine of the real presence having been thus secured in the eleventh century, there are only two further landmarks in the development of this doctrine of the Church which must claim our attention here. First, the Church was not satisfied with mere acknowledgement

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38. DS, no. 690.

39. DS, no. 700.

40. 'Darumb thun die schwermer unrecht, so wol als die glose ym geystlichen recht, da sie den Bapst Nicolaus straffen, das er den Berenger hat gedrungen zu solcher bekendnis, das er spricht: Er zu drücke und zureibe mit seinen zenen den warhafftigen leib Christi. Wolt Gott, alle Bepste hetten so Christlich ynn allen stücken gehandelt, als dieser Bapst mit dem Berenger ynn solcher be-

of the mystery and miracle of the eucharistic presence of the glorified humanity of Christ. Instead, it proceeded to make an article of faith out of not only the quod but also the quomodo of the real presence by dogmatising the theory of transubstantiation at Pope Innocent III's Fourth Lateran Council of 1215.[41] Secondly, the Church eventually got round to working out a retrospective justification for the communion of the laity under one kind (sub una specie). This tampering with the institution of Christ took the form of the promulgation of the doctrine of concomitance by the assembled Fathers of the Council of Constance on June 15 1415, just nine days after they had disregarded the imperial safe-conduct by dispatching the Bohemian Reformer Jan Hus to a martyr's death.[42] According to Sasse, these three definitions make it clear 'that the doctrine on the Lord's Supper is the only dogma that the medieval church produced'.[43]

2. The real presence in the young Luther

Walther Köhler candidly acknowledged that the real presence is the 'constant' in the development of Luther's doctrine of the Lord's Supper: 'he never surrendered it.'[1] Even so, no one disputes the fact that this doctrine played no central role in the Reformer's theological

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kendnis gehandelt hat' (WA 26. 442, 39-443, 3).

41. DS, no. 802.

42. DS, no. 1199.

43. This is my body, p. 14.

1. Zwingli und Luther I (Leipzig, 1924), p. 177: 'In der Entwicklung von Luthers Abendmahlslehre ist der ruhende Pol die Realpräsenz. Er hat sie nie preisgegeben.'

thought until he turned to its defence in 1523. It is therefore appropriate to trace the occurrence and role of the real presence in three writings of 1519-1520, bringing this section to a close by asking whether the young Reformer did in fact totally reject the ancient doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass. It will be argued here that Martin Luther allowed for a doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass in the Augustinian sense of the self-offering of the totus Christus to the Father (cf. De civ. Dei X, 6).

(a) Ein Sermon vom Sakrament des Leichnams Christi und von den Brüderschaften (1519)

Martin Luther's first published pamphlet on the Eucharist moves entirely within the thought-world of S. Augustine. To begin with, Augustine's distinction between sacramentum/signum and res repeatedly crops up here as the distinction between sacrament/tzeychen and its deeper bedeutung.[2] And the chief res of the Sacrament in this early sermon is none other than the mystical unity of the totus Christus. The significance of the Sacrament resides in the 'communion of saints', so that an appropriate label for the Mass would be Synaxis or Comunio. For Christ is one spiritual body along with all his saints, just as the citizens of a city make up one corporate entity where each person is a member of the other:

> 'Czum vierden, Die bedeutung odder das werck disses sacraments ist gemeynschafft aller heyligen: drumb nennet man es auch mit seynem teglichen namen Synaxis oder Comunio, das ist gemeynschafft, und Comunicare auff latein heyst diss gemeynschaft empfahen, wilchs wir auff deutsch sagen zum sacrament gehen, und kumpt daher, das Christus mit allen heyligen

2. See, e.g., WA 2. 742, 5-16; 743, 20-22; 744, 8-11.

> ist eyn geystlicher corper, gleych wie einer stat volck eyn gemeyn und corper ist, eyn yglicher burger des andern glydmas und der gantzen statt. Alsso alle heyligen seyn Christi und der Kirchen glid, die eyn geystlich ewige gottis stadt ist, und wer yn die selben stadt genommen wirt, der heyst yn die gemeyne der heyligen genommen und mit Christus geystlichem corper vorleybet und seyn glyd gemacht.' (3)

The benefit of the Mass is the reception of all the spiritual goods of Christ and his saints by the one who receives the Sacrament;[4] indeed, the Sacrament is quite simply a 'sure sign' of communion with and incorporation in Christ and all his saints.[5] The process whereby bread and wine emerge as unified entities from a mass of grains and grapes respectively is an apt symbol of the unification of all sorts and conditions of men in the mystical body of Christ, and the re-capturing of this imagery is the chief motive behind Luther's somewhat lukewarm suggestion that the next General Council should reverse the decision of Constance and restore the chalice to the laity.[6] So engrossed is the Reformer in the spiritual bedeutung of the Mass that he neglects to quote the words of institution until paragraph nine, and

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3. WA 2. 743, 7-17.

4. 'Czum funfften, Dysse gemeynschafft steht darynne, das alle geystlich guter Christi unnd seyner heyligen mit geteyllet und gemeyn werden dem, der dyss sacrament empfeht' (WA 2. 743, 27-29).

5. 'Alsso ist diss sacrament yn brott und weyn empfahen nit anders dan eyn gewis tzeychen empfahen disser gemeynschafft und eyn leybung mit Christo und allen heyligen' (WA 2. 743, 20-22).

6. 'Syntemall diss sacrament bedeutet eyn gantz voreynung und unvorteylete gemeynschafft der heyligen ..., wilche ubel und unfuglich wirt angetzeygt mit eynem stuck oder teyll des sacraments' (WA 2. 742, 33-743, 2). cf. also WA 2. 748, 6-26.

even then his purpose is to underscore the pro nobis of Jesus' death rather than to draw attention to the real presence.[7] While this doctrine is not mentioned until Luther reaches paragraph sixteen, however, it is clear that his entirely traditional emphasis on the res significata sed non contenta has not blinded him to the Church's public dogma. The outward forms of bread and wine have not been instituted 'nakedly or on their own', but Christ has 'given his true natural flesh in the bread' and 'his true natural blood in the wine'. This he has done for the sake of the perfection of the sacrament or sign, for just as bread and wine are 'transformed' into Jesus' body and blood, even so the recipient of the sacramental species is transformed into Christ's spiritual body, the Church:

> 'Czum sechtzehenden, Ubir das alles hatt er disse zwo gestalt nit bloss nach ledig eyngesetzt, ssondern seyn warhafftig naturlich fleysch yn dem brot und seyn naturlich warhafftig blut yn dem weyn geben, das er yhe ein volkomens sacrament odder zeychen gebe. Dan zu gleych als das brot yn seynen warhafftigen naturlichen leychnam und der weyn yn seyn naturlich warhafftig blut vorwandelt wirt, alsso warhafftig werden auch wir yn den geystlichen leyp, das ist yn die gemeynschafft Christi und aller heyligen getzogen und vorwandelt' (8)

It is noteworthy that the traditional signum concept occasions Luther no embarrassment here, but strikes him as thoroughly congruent with the received doctrine of the real presence. Warning against undue speculation concerning the modality of the real presence, he gives the following counsel:

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7. WA 2. 745, 36f.

8. WA 2. 749, 7-14.

'Es ist gnug, das du wissest, es sey eyn gottlich tzeychen, da Christus fleysch und blut warhafftig ynnen ist, wie und wo, lass yhm befollen seyn.' (9)

(b) Ein Sermon von dem neuen Testament, das ist von der heiligen Messe (1520)

This pamphlet, published in the year of Luther's excommunication by the Holy See, represents his first attempt to interpret the Mass in terms of his 'evangelical' theology. Thus, while the real presence figures among the res sacramenti, it is subordinated to a newly discovered res which is described as a 'great, eternal and unspeakable treasure', namely the forgiveness of sins. The function of the verum corpus is to act as a 'sign and seal' of the remissio peccatorum.[10] Luther's inability smoothly to integrate the real presence into the texture of his eucharistic theology as a whole is indicated by an unaccustomed hesitancy on his part concerning just what is the 'sign and seal': one moment it is the elements,[11] the next the true body and blood of Christ.[12]

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9. WA 2. 750, 1-3.

10. WA 6. 358, 14-24: 'Czum zehenden. Was ist den nu diss testament oder was wirt uns drynnen bescheyden von Christo? furwar ein grosser, ewiger, unaussprechlicher schatz, nemlich vorgebung aller sund, wie die wort klar lauten, "diss ist der kilch eyns newen, ewigen testaments yn meynem bluet, das fur euch und fur viele vorgossen wirt zur vorgebung der sund", als solt er sagen "sihe da, mensch, ich sag dir zu und bescheyde dir mit dissen worten vorgebung aller deyner sund und das ewig leben, und das du gewiss seyest und wissest, das solch gelubd dir unwidderrüfflich bleyb, sso wil ich drauff sterben und meyn leyb und bluet dafur geben, und beydes dir zum zeychen und sigell hynder myr lassen, da bey du meyn gedencken solt, wie er sagt "sso offt yhr das thut, sso gedenckt an mich".'

11. As, e.g., in WA 6. 359, 9-10, 18-19, 24-25; 363, 4; 365, 16.

12. As, e.g., in WA 6, 358, 22; 359, 4-6.

Another pointer to his inability to come to grips with the real presence at this time is his defence of the elevation of the host. When he alludes to the congruence of this practice with the singing of the Benedictus qui venit, we might expect him - as at the end of his life[13] - to locate the essence of the ceremony in an unspoken summons to adore the eucharistic Christ. Not at all: the 'seal and sign' of the 'testament' is held aloft to remind the congregation of the divine gifts of 'remission of sins and eternal life'.[14] Even so, while we shall find no coherent and consistent statement of the relationship between the real presence and the whole eucharistic action in this early writing, we are nevertheless vouchsafed a glimpse into the formation of at least two of the components which will later play their part within the completed structure of Martin Luther's doctrine of the Sacrament of the Altar: the stress on faith's appropriation of the forgiveness of sins in the Sacrament, and the teaching that the divine promissio is the sure guide to the significance of the external element.

Here for the first time Luther applied the sola Scriptura principle to the central act of the Church's worship, to the mysterium tremendum which sustained the Church's life then and now. That the Reformer did not

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13. See WATR 5. no. 5665.

14. WA 6. 22-28: 'Und das bedeut der priester, wen er die hostien auffhebt, damit er nit sso fast gott als uns anredt, als solt er zu uns sagen "Sehet da, das ist das sigill und zeychen des testaments, darynnen uns Christus bescheyden hatt ablas aller sund unnd ewiges leben." Dartzu stymmet auch der gesang ym chor "gebenedeyt sey, der do tzu uns kompt yn dem namen gottis", das wir bezeugen, wie wir darynnen gütter von gott empfangen und nit ym opffern oder geben.'

seek to enforce a rigid positivistic biblicism blind to the difference of law from gospel is made plain by the fact that his restoration of sola Scriptura here boiled down to a recovery of the understanding of the words of institution as gospel. Luther's momentous programme is briefly recapitulated. To get some inkling of the essence of the Mass, he urges, we must banish any concern with the vestiarian, musical and ceremonial paraphernalia which have accrued to its celebration down the centuries:

> 'biss das wir zuvor die wort Christi fassen und wol bedencken, damit er die mess volnbracht und eyngesetzt und uns zuvolnbringen bevolhen hatt, dan darynnen ligt die mess gantz mit all yhrem wessen, werck, nutz und frucht, on wilche nichts von der mess empfangen wirt.' (15)

We shall fail to appreciate the 'novelty' of Luther's approach and the burning prophetic fervour which underlies the concrete demands made in this manifesto unless they are assessed against the backcloth of the contemporary liturgical practice of the Western Church.
For the words of institution had for centuries been buried in the heart of a Canon Missae which was recited sotto voce by the sacerdotal celebrant, the lay spectators of the Mass meanwhile attending to the private devotions whence they would be summoned only briefly by the ringing of a liturgical bell so that they might adore - and only occasionally afterwards receive! - the Christ present in the consecrated and elevated host. Such malpractice, thinks Luther, is surely the judgement of an angry God on a Church which has permitted its jewel, the gospel, to fall into oblivion:

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15. WA 6. 355, 24-28.

> 'Ich besorge, das es alsso zugehe, das die heylige wort des testaments darumb sso heymlich gelessen, gehalten und den leyen vorporgen werden, das gott durch seynen zorn da mit bezeychne, wie das gantz Euangelium nit mehr offentlich dem volck gepredi-get wirt, das gleych wie die summa des Euangelii vorporgen ist, das auch alsso sein offentlich vork-lerung geschwigen sey.' (16)

The Reformer's unbounded rage at the withdrawal of the words of institution from the laity and his impassioned demand that they be audibly restored in the context of a vernacular Mass[17] spring from his insight that they represent a concise summary of the life-giving gospel from the lips of the Saviour himself:

> 'Christus hatt das gantz Euangelium ynn eyner kurt-zen summa begriffen mit den worten dises testaments oder sacraments.' (18)

Luther turned to good effect the insights won during years of patient exegetical toil, as he painstakingly acquainted himself with the imagery and substance of the biblical thought-world and passed on this precious knowledge to the students who increasingly crowded his lecture room. Thus he came to the words of institution as one intimately acquainted with the apostolic arguments of Galatians and Hebrews. It was therefore no accident that, as his quest for the kernel of God's living Word had formerly concentrated on the <u>iustitia Dei</u> of Rom. 1:17, so he now fastened on the <u>testamentum</u> motif as the master-key which would unlock all the treasures of the eucharistic words of Jesus. The fictional Martin's ri-

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16. <u>WA</u> 6. 374, 15-20.

17. <u>WA</u> 6. 362, 13-31.

18. <u>WA</u> 6. 374, 4-5.

poste to Brother Weinand goes straight to the heart of a, perhaps the, major concern of the historical Martin: 'It's the single words that trouble me.'[19] Analysing the notion of testamentum, Luther arrived at a sixfold distinction:

> 'Nu sehen wir, wie vil stück in dissem testament odder messe sein. Es ist zum ersten der testator, der das testament macht, Christus, zum andernn die erben, den das testament bescheyden wirt, das sein wir Christen, zum dritten das testament an yhm selbs, das sein die wort Christi, da er sagt "das ist meyn leyb, der fur euch geben wirt, das ist meyn bluet, das fur euch vorgossen wirt, eyn new, ewiges testament sc. Zum vierden, das sigill oder wartzeychen ist das sacrament, brot und weyn, darunder seyn warer leyb und blut, ...Zum funfften das bescheydne gut das die wort bedeutten, nemlich ablas der sund und ewigs leben. Zum sechsten, die pflicht, gedechtniss oder begengniss, die wir Christo halten sollen.' (20)

As has already been pointed out, Luther's primary concern here is with the 'great, eternal and unspeakable treasure', to wit, with the 'vorgebung aller sund'. It was to assure fallen mankind of the fulfilment of this promise that Christ gave his body and blood, first, in the Crucifixion, and then - 'zum zeychen und sigell' - in the eucharistic elements of bread and wine.[21] In this sermon the Reformer strives to bring out the connection between the Sacrament of the Altar and the actualisation of the justification of the ungodly: Almighty God applies and realises the objective reconciliation wrought in the once-for-all sacrifice of his Son through tangible

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19. John Osborne: Luther (London, 1961), p. 27.

20. WA 6. 359, 13-360, 2.

21. WA 6. 358, 14-24.

and visible means.[22] Indeed, the Lord's Supper is the justification of the ungodly.

A limited value will perhaps be ascribed to Luther's pastorally motivated exploitation of the testamentum motif to pinpoint the heart of the gospel in the forgiveness of sins. Even so, many interpreters of his thought - Lutherans included - have been uneasy at what seems to be a twofold restriction of the gospel within the perimeters of the notion of testament: to the sacrificial death of Christ, on the one hand, and to the forgiveness of sins as its major benefit, on the other. The second objection is speedily answered. Both in this sermon[23] and subsequently Luther never tired of coupling 'eternal life' with the 'forgiveness of sins' as the principal res sacramenti: 'denn wo Vergebung der Sunde ist, da ist auch Leben und Seligkeit.'[24] From 1523 onwards the Reformer interpreted the eucharistic words as promising - and therefore conveying - through the bread and wine 'Christum mit seym fleysch und blutt und alles was er ist und hatt'.[25] This realisation formed the basis of Luther's integration into his own teaching - in the Large Catechism[26] and elsewhere - of the wholesomely patristic conviction that the eucharistic body and blood are in truth the 'medi-

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22. cf. CA V (BS 58) and SA III, 8 (BS 453-456).

23. WA 6. 358, 20; 359, 28-29.

24. BS 520, 29-30 (Small Catechism).

25. WA 11. 433, 28.

26. BS 713, 18-20: 'Nu kann je Christus' Leib nicht ein unfruchtbar, vergeblich ding sein, das nichts schaffe noch nütze'; 721, 14-20: 'Man muss je das Sakrament

cine of immortality'. While ordinary food is changed into the body of the one who eats it:

> 'Diese speise widderumb wandelt den, der sie isset, ynn sich und macht yhn yhr selbs gleich, geistlich, lebendig und ewig, wie sie ist.' (27)

In brief, neither in 1520 nor in subsequent years did the pastoral emphasis on the gift of the 'forgiveness of sins' lead to the exclusion from Luther's teaching of the corollaries of this premise. And just as 'life and blessedness' form the obverse side of the coin whose reverse bears the legend 'forgiveness of sins', even so an attentive reading of paragraphs seven and eight of the sermon will make it clear that the testamentum motif afforded Luther a glimpse into the entire incarnational breadth, depth and height of the gospel, not merely into a single aspect of it. In paragraph seven the Reformer instructs his hearers that, since the fall into sin of our first parents, God in his mercy has unwaveringly promised the restoration of our vitiated nature. In the celebrated protevangelium of Gen. 3:15 - 'wie wol tunckel'[28] - God gave a promise which was powerful to save all those who trusted in it from the time of Adam and Eve to the days of Noah. Similar promises were subsequently vouchsafed to Noah and to Abraham, being renewed, augmented and clarified in the promise to David and his heirs. Paragraph eight tells how Jesus continued and consummated this divine mode of dealing with

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nicht ansehen als ein schädlich Ding, dass man darfur laufen solle, sondern als eitel heilsame, tröstliche Arznei, die Dir helfe und das Leben gebe beide an Seele und Leib. Denn wo die Seele genesen ist, da ist dem Leib auch geholfen.'

27. WA 23. 203, 27-29 (1527); cf. also 205, 11ff.

28. WA 6. 356, 23f.

mankind through a word of promise, the prime example of which is his word over the eucharistic chalice, which pledged a new testament. Now a testament is not just any common or garden promise 'but the final and irrevocable will of one who is about to die, in which he bequeaths his property and allocates it to whom he will'.[29] And the argument of Heb. 9:16ff that the validation of a testament necessitates the death of the testator, is still fresh in Luther's mind. Thus where the prophets speak of the new testament they have been given to understand that the One who has given the promise will himself become man to enact it. In Luther's thought, therefore, testamentum equals Incarnation.[30] Much more than simply the 'forgiveness of sins' must be at stake, for:

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29. WA 6. 357, 10-16: 'Czum achten. Alsso auch ym newen testament hat Christus ein zusagen oder gelubd than, an wilche wir glauben sollen und da durch frum und selig werden, das sein die vorgesagte wort, da Christus sagt "das ist der kilch des newen testaments", die wollen wir nu sehen. Ein testament heysset nit ein yglich gelubd, sondern ein letzter unwiderrufflicher will des, der do sterben wil, damit er hynder sich lessit seyne gütter bescheyden und vorordnet, wilchen er wil, auss zuteylen.'

30. WA 6. 357, 16-25: '...alsso (wie S. Paul sagt zun Heb.) das eyn Testament muss durch den todt becrefftigt werden, unnd nichts gilt, die weyll der noch lebet, der das Testament macht: dann andere gelübd, bey lebendingem leyb gethann, mügen vorhyndert oder widerruft werden, darumb heyssen sie auch nit testamente. Darumb, wo in der schrifft wirt angetzogen gottis testament durch die propheten, ist in dem selben wort den propheten zuvorstehn geben, das gott solt mensche werden und sterben und aufferstehen, auff das sein wort erfüllet und bestetiget würd, darynnen er solch testament vorspricht: dan soll er ein testament machen, wie er sich vorspricht, sso muss er sterben, soll er sterben, sso muss er mensch sein.'

> 'das klein wörtlein "Testament" ist ein kurtzer begriff aller wunder und gnaden gottis durch Christum erfüllet.' (31)

The structure of Luther's whole sacramental theology is precisely prefigured in this writing. In short, it was based on S. Augustine's bon mot 'Accedat verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum'.[32] As the Reformer observed in 1529, this summary is 'so apt and to the point that he can hardly have coined a better phrase'.[33] An examination of the ways of God in the Old Testament shows that, in order to accommodate himself to the structure of creaturely being and for the purpose of stimulating faith in his Word, it has been his wont to attach an external 'sign' to his promise. Thus mention of Noah, Abraham and Gideon conjures up the 'signs' of the rainbow, circumcision and the fleece respectively. The same principle is observed when the images and promises of the Old Testament are summed up and fulfilled in Jesus Christ. To the word of promise is joined a sign, namely Jesus' 'true flesh and blood under bread and wine'.[34] The structure of the sacraments is succinctly outlined in paragraph seventeen:

> 'Czum siebentzehenden. So last uns nu lernen, das in eynem yglichen gelubd gottis seyn zwey ding, der man must warnehmen, das seyn wort und zeychen, als

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31. ibid., 26-27.

32. Tractatus 80 in Ioannem (MPL 38. 1840).

33. 'Dieser Spruch S. Augustin ist so eigentlich und wohl geredt, dass er kaum ein bessern gesagt hat' (BS 709, 40-42; Large Catechism).

34. WA 6. 359, 4-6: 'Alsso hatt auch Christus in dissem testament than, und ein krafftigs, aller edlist sigill und zeychen an und in die wort gehenckt, das ist seyn eygen warhafftig fleysch und blüt unter dem brot und weyn.'

> yn der tauff seyn die wortt des teuffers und das tauchen yns wasser, in der mess seyn die wort und das brott und weyn. Die wort seyn gottlich gelubd, zusagung und testament, die zeychen seyn sacrament, das ist heylige zeychen.' (35)

The final point to merit mention in this section is a reminder that Luther here formulates a conviction concerning the Sacrament of the Altar which was never to leave him, not even as - from 1523 onwards - he was increasingly obliged to bring the real presence into the very centre of his eucharistic theology. This was his view that the Word which constitutes the sacrament is not only prior, but in a sense also superior to the element:

> 'Nu als vil mehr ligt an dem testament den an dem sacrament, also ligt vil mehr an den worten den an den tzeychen, dan die tzeychen mügen wol nit sein, das dennoch der mensch die wort habe, und also on sacrament, doch nit an testament selig werde, Denn ich kan des sacraments ynn der mess teglich niessen, wenn ich nu das testament, das ist die wort und gelubd Christi, fur mich bilde und meynen glauben drynnen weyde und stercke. Alsso sehen wir, das das beste und gröste stück aller sacrament und der mess sein die wort und gelubt gottis.' (36)

Now since these sentiments could be - and have been - taken for an implicit subordination of the sacraments to the Word and hence for an opting - at least in principle - for a 'spiritual' religion focussed on the Word as opposed to an 'incarnational' religion nourished on the sacraments, it is well to qualify them in two directions. First, it must never be forgotten that Luther's theology did not emerge in a vacuum, but rather took shape in and was therefore determined by the controversies in which

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35. WA 6. 363, 1-6.

36. ibid., 6-13.

he engaged. The Reformer's characeristic emphases will therefore be found to correspond exactly to the deficiencies which he diagnosed in the Christendom of his day. The stress on the word of promise as the constitutive principle of the sacraments is accordingly to be seen against the background of the mummification of the verba in the Roman Mass and in the positive context of the restoration of the summa des Euangelii in the heart of the Deutsche Messe. Secondly, care must be exercised lest Luther's pronouncements concerning the priority of Word over sacrament be read through pietistic spectacles. After all, it is a commonplace of Catholic theology that the materia of the sacraments does not come into its own apart from the forma. Thus Luther urges in 1523 that a failure to approach the Sacrament via the words of institution indicates an inability to get to grips with the Sacrament itself.[37] The distinctively reformational quality of Luther's doctrine of the real presence is rooted in the wholly traditional conviction that the oral eating of Christ's body is worse than useless apart from its being simultaneously spiritually eaten in faith. The Word establishes and confirms the dignity of the Sacrament, which accordingly becomes a mode of the operation of the Word and hence an instrument used by the Spirit in the justification and sanctification of the redeemed creature.[38]

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37. 'Wo du den wortten geringer ehre thust denn dem sacrament selbs, so ists eyn gewiss tzeychen, das du nicht recht das sacrament verstehist' (WA 11. 432, 32-35).

38. cf. WA 18. 202, 32-203, 2 (1525).

(c) de captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae praeludium (1520)

Having determined at the outset of this treatise that he will compose a 'prelude' on the 'captivity' of the Roman Church,[39] Luther feels obliged to adhere to his chosen theme and arrange his material on the Sacrament of the Altar in accordance with the notion of a triple 'captivity': the denial of the chalice to the laity, the 'novel' theory of transubstantiation, and the ancient (but allegedly pernicious) doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass. Yet it is only the last-mentioned 'captivity' which can truly provoke the Reformer to wrath ('Est longe impiissimus ille abusus'[40]), and so lukewarm is Luther's denunciation of the first two that one cannot escape the impression that the inclusion of communio sub una and transubstantiation under the rubric of 'captivity' owes more to his instinct for symmetry than to his passionate enmity to 'error'. After all, in this list of 'captivities' only the doctrine of the Mass sacrifice proved in the long run to be charged with church-divisive potential: because of its putative disharmony with the 'chief article of Jesus Christ' the sacrifice of the Mass is lambasted in the Schmalkaldic Articles of 1537 as 'prae omnibus aliis pontificiis idolatriis summa et speciosissima'.[41] Transubstantiation, however, was never to become such a major issue for Luther. Provided this theory be held as a mere opinio and not as the only licit expression of the arti-

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39. WA 6. 501, 15.

40. WA 6. 512, 7.

41. BS 416, 30.

culus fidei of the real presence, the Reformer has no qualms about its espousal.[42] It can be imagined that Luther pained his Bohemian correspondents in 1523 when he qualified his rejection of transubstantiation with the remark:

> 'Doch an dissem yrthum nicht gross gelegen ist, wenn nur Christus leyb und blutt sampt dem wort dagelassen wirt.' (43)

Nor can his Swiss opponents have been overjoyed to read his remarks about transubstantiation in the Vom Christi Abendmahl Bekenntnis of 1528:

> 'Nu ich hab bis her geleret und lere noch, das solcher kampf nicht von nöten sey, Und nicht grosse macht dran liege, Es bleibe brod oder nicht.' (44)

And their fears concerning a putative 'relapse into the Middle Ages' on the Reformer's part can only have been confirmed when he returned to the subject of transubstantiation a score or so pages later in the same treatise:

> 'Da widder wird abermal yemand sagen: Fichtestu doch selbs, das wein ym newen abendmal bleibe. Und diese deine rede solte wol gut Papistisch sein, welche keinen wein ym abendmal gleuben. Ich Antworte: Da ligt mir nicht viel an, denn wie ich offtmals gnug bekennet habe, sol mirs kein hadder gelten: Es bleibe wein da odder nicht, Mir ist gnug, das Christus blut da sey, Es gehe dem wein, wie Got wil. Und ehe ich mit den schwermern wolt eytel wein haben, so wolt ich ehe mit dem Bapst eytel blut halten.' (45)

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42. WA 6. 512, 4-6: 'permitto tamen aliis opinionem alteram sequi, quae in decretali firmiter statuitur, modo non urgeant suas opiniones (ut dixi) pro articulis fidei a nobis acceptari.'

43. WA 11. 441, 19-20.

44. WA 26. 439, 26-27.

45. WA 26. 461, 41-462, 5.

Luther's attitude to the distribution of Communion in one kind was likewise restrained. Thus as late as 1537 he can toy with the doctrine of concomitance by conceding 'quod sub una tantum sit, quantum sub utraque'.[46] The late Luther, however, loses no time in qualifying this speculative possibility by counselling that 'tamen una species non est tota ordinatio et institutio per Christum facta, tradita et mandata'.[47] It is remarkable that his call for the restoration of the chalice to the laity seventeen years previously had rested more on reason than on Scripture. Why deny the layfolk the signum of the Sacrament in its fullness (i.e., communio sub utraque), he asks, when, after all, we make no bones about their reception of the res, 'quae maior est'?[48]

Much of the distinctive teaching concerning the Eucharist in the de captivitate babylonica has already been encountered in the almost simultaneous Sermon von dem Neuen Testament. Thus we shall not be surprised to learn that the essence of the Mass is to be deduced from no other source than the words of institution:

> 'Nam in eo verbo et prorsus nullo alio sita est vis, natura et tota substantia Missae.' (49)

As might be expected, the testamentum motif is once again central to Luther's understanding not only of the Lord's Supper, but even of the Christian faith itself:

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46. BS 451, 19 (Schmalkaldic Articles).

47. ibid., f.

48. WA 6. 504, 26-31.

49. WA 6. 512, 33-34.

> 'ita in eodem testamenti vocabulo compendiosissime et incarnatio et mors Christi comprehensa est.' (50)

And the structure of the Sacrament is again found to consist in the conjunction of divine promissio and earthly signum. While Luther can plainly teach the priority of verbum over signum,[51] he nevertheless distinguishes between two signa or, perhaps, levels of signum. For the signum is not simply the outward forms of bread and wine, but also - and much more importantly - 'suum ipsius corpus et suum ipsius sanguinem in pane et vino'.[52] The words of institution are understood to bequeath to Christendom the true body and blood of Jesus 'as a sign and memorial' of his promised redemption:

> 'Est itaque Missa secundam substantiam suam proprie nihil aliud quam verba Christi praedicta "Accipite et manducate &c' ac si dicat "Ecce o homo peccator et damnatus, ex mera gratuitaque charitate, qua diligo te, sic volente misericordiarum patre, his verbis promitto tibi, ante omne meritum et votum tuum, remissionem omnium peccatorum tuorum et vitam aeternam, et ut certissimus de hac mea promissione irrevocabili sis, corpus meum tradam et sanguinem fundam, morte ipsa hanc promissionem confirmaturus et utrunque tibi in signum et memoriale eiusdam promissionis relicturus.' (53)

But while the real presence unmistakably forms an inalienable part of Luther's understanding of the Eucharist in de captivitate babylonica, it nevertheless remains ancillary to the 'forgiveness of sins', which continues to be regarded as the principal blessing of the Mass. Now

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50. WA 6. 514, 4-10.

51. WA 6. 518, 13-20.

52. WA 6. 518, 10-12.

53. WA 6. 515, 17-26.

if the real presence of Jesus' body and blood in the Eucharist is understood as nothing more than a signum or pignus which corroborates, props up and undergirds the gift of forgiveness of sins established by his death, then in the end of the day this doctrine must appear as an 'erratic block' unrelated to the other articles of faith and therefore standing out like a sore thumb in any theology which understands it in these terms. As was pointed out above, the real presence came into its own in Luther's theology when in 1523 he was moved to pinpoint the res sacramenti as 'Christus mit seym fleysch und blutt und alles was er ist und hatt'.[54] The Reformer laid his finger on the religious reality to which this doctrine corresponds when he argued in 1527 that Christ's purpose in choosing and actualising this mode of presence was none other than to be as close to his Church in the period following his Ascension as he had been to his disciples during the incarnate life: 'und uns ja so nahe sey leiblich als er ÿhnen gewest ist.'[55] It would be futile to claim that Luther had already made this rich discovery in 1520, but de captivitate babylonica is nonetheless remarkable as the first occasion on which the Reformer - motivated, admittedly, by the desire to explain the distinction between his own understanding of this mystery and that set forth in the scholastic theory of transubstantiation - discussed the real presence as a doctrine in its own right. So insistent is his confession that the real presence is clearly taught in the eucharistic words that Walther

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54. WA 11. 433, 28.

55. WA 23. 193, 10-11.

Köhler could observe that:

> 'denkt man die Worte Luthers in de captivitate zu Ende, so kann man schon das Donnerrollen von Marburg: est, est heraushören.' (56)

Indeed, such is the Reformer's awe before the divine est that he prefers to avoid the ambiguities which might lurk in saying that the body of Christ is in the bread by robustly asserting that the bread is the body of Christ:

> 'Ego sane, si non possum consequi, quo modo panis sit corpus Christi, captivabo tamen intellectum meum in obsequium Christi, et verbis eius simpliciter inhaerens credo firmiter, non modo corpus Christi esse in pane sed panem esse corpus Christi.' (57)

Half a century ago Dr. Hildebrandt drew attention to the glaring contrast between the Reformer's preferred usage and the wont of Philipp Melanchthon, the Formula of Concord and much of later Lutheranism to teach instead that the body of Christ is given 'in, with and under' the element of bread. Hildebrandt was able to quote a passage from the great Confession of 1528 where Luther sharply distances himself from the 'in, with and under' formulation, but a glance at the lines in question might prompt us to attribute Hildebrandt's claim that Luther 'detested' this way of speaking to youthful exuberance.[58] Even so, Hildebrandt's allusion at this juncture to the pivotally important section of the wri-

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56. Zwingli und Luther I, p. 59.

57. WA 6. 511, 18-21.

58. EST. Das Lutherische Prinzip, p. 69f: 'Auch hier ist wieder Melanchthon der verhängnisvolle Interpret, der schon in der Abendmahlslehre der ersten Loci so wenig Lutherisch gewesen ist wie nachher die Konkordienformel in ihrem von Luther perhorreszierten "in, mit, unter".

ting of 1528 headed 'De Predicatione Identica' and directed against the teachings of John Wycliffe is indicative of his instinct for the heart of the Reformer's theology.[59] Now it is a commonplace that Luther was not a systematic theologian in the usual sense of the word, and it would be all too easy to quarry a host of discrepancies from his writings (especially if the interpreter fails to keep the distinction of law from gospel in the forefront of his mind). Yet this admission is not tantamount to an assertion that his thought was random and disorganised. On the contrary, his thinking was determined christologically from start to finish,[60] and at no point of his teaching is this seen more clearly than in Luther's characteristic conception of the real presence. For the Reformer's major discovery in this field was that the statement 'the bread is the body' is a perfect mirror image and exact

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Gerade auf die "sakramentliche Einheit", die Gleichung von Brot und Leib kommt es an.' cf. WA 26. 447, 14ff: 'Denn ich habs versucht: Wenn gleich ym abendmal eitel brod und wein were, Und ich wolte doch von lust wegen versuchen, wie ichs aussprechen möcht, das Christus leib ym brod were, so kündte ichs doch warlich nicht gewisser, einfeltiger und klerer sagen denn also: "Nemet, esset, Das ist mein leib" sc. Denn wo der text also stünde: Nemet, Esset, ynn dem brod ist mein leib, Da sollte aller erst eitel schwermer regen, hageln und schneyen die da rieffen: Sihe da, Hörestu da? Christus spricht nicht, Das brod ist main leib, Sondern ym brod, mit brod, unter brod ist mein leib, und solten schreyen, O wie gerne wolten wir gleuben, wenn er hette hesagt, Das ist mein leib, Das were dürre und helle gered, Aber nu er spricht, ym brod, mit brod, unter brod, so folget nicht, das sein leib da sey, Und würden also tausend ausflucht und glose uber die wort "Im, Mit, Unter" ertichten.'

59. ibid., n. 258. cf. WA 26. 437, 31-445, 17.

60. cf. WA 40 I. 33, 7-9.

parallel of the Church's 'is' language about Jesus Christ: 'Hic homo est deus, hic deus est homo.' The christological analogue enables the Reformer to discard the notion of transubstantiation, for just as the Eternal Son of God indwells a complete human nature, even so the glorified body is so to say 'consubstantiate' with the element of bread:

> 'Sicut ergo in Christo res se habet, ita et in sacramento. Non enim ad corporalem inhabitationem divinitatis necesse est transsubstanciari humanam naturam, ut divinitas sub accidentibus humanae naturae teneatur. Sed integra utraque natura vere dicitur "Hic homo est deus, hic deus est homo". Ita in sacramento ut verum corpus verusque sanguis sit, non est necesse, panem et vinum transubstanciari ut Christus sub accidentibus teneatur, sed utroque simul manente vere dicitur "hic panis est corpus meum, hoc vinum est sanguis meus", et econtra.' (61)

As will presently be pointed out, the Reformer was well aware that the identity in distinction which corresponds to the Church's 'is' language about its Lord and his presence in the Eucharist transcends the possibilities of normal human discourse. Such is the syntax of revelation.

(d) Luther's rejection of the Sacrifice of the Mass: a reappraisal

Now the Reformer was indubitably of the opinion that by 1520 at the latest he had utterly rejected the time-honoured doctrine of the Sacrifice of the Mass once and for all, and that his reasons for doing so were rooted in the unimpeachably biblical-Augustinian opposition of the donum Dei to any Pelagian or semi-Pelagian opus hominum:

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61. WA 6. 511, 34-512, 2.

> 'Gottis wort und zeychen und gnade empfahen ist yhe nit ettwas guttis von sich geben odder wircken, sondern allein zu sich nemen.' (62) 'So wenig als du auss dem Evangelio kanst eyn opffer odder werck machen, sso wenig kanstu es auch auss dissem sacrament machen, denn diss sacrament ist das Evangelion.' (63)

The conviction that the Sacrifice of the Mass runs clean counter to the whole thrust of the gospel of God lay at the heart of Luther's liturgical reforms. Unfortunately, the German Reformer was not blessed with the liturgical green fingers which were to enable his English contemporary Cranmer to transfuse the old forms of the Church's worship with reformational content, so that both his Formula missae et communionis of 1523 and his Deutsche Messe of 1526 added up to little more than a graceless pruning of the Roman Mass. In subsequent Lutheran liturgy the structure of the latter was to remain standing, but with the focal point of the whole edifice, namely the Canon, ripped out. The Reformer's hatred of the Canon was boundless and intemperate ('Canone illo lacero et abominabili'[64]), and he felt that the presence for many centuries in its midst of the divine verba was akin to the lodging of the ark of God in the house of Dagon![65] The modern ecumenically minded Lutheran may well find cause for regret in the jerky abruptness of older Lutheran liturgy, which vaults at lightning speed from the

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62. WA 6. 365, 20-22.

63. WA 11. 442, 21-23.

64. WA 12. 207. 15 (Formula Missae et Communionis, 1523).

65. 'Et abhinc (i.e., from the Offertory onwards) omnia fere sonant ac olent oblationem. In quorum media verba illa vitae et salutis sic posita sunt ceu olim arca domini in templo idolorum iuxta Dagon' (WA 12. 211, 15-17).

Preface, Sanctus and Benedictus through the Our Father to the consecration, a pattern from which Lutheranism has only recently begun to move away in the direction of the restoration of a eucharistic prayer.[66] Even so, two pleas may be entered in the Reformer's defence. First, the opening words of the Preface to the Deutsche Messe make it perfectly plain that Luther saw his draft liturgy as a stop-gap measure which might be of assistance to those congregations which were making the monumental shift from Latin to the vernacular. The Deutsche Messe is only meant to continue in use until something better shows up, and, above all, it is to be used according to 'Christian liberty':

> 'Vor allen dingen wil ich gar freundlich gebeten haben, auch umb Gottis willen, alle die ienigen, so diese unser ordnunge ym Gottis dienst sehen odder nach folgen wollen, das sie ja keyn nöttig gesetz draus machen noch yemands gewissen damit verstricken odder fahen, sondern der Christlichen freyheyt nach yhres gefallens brauchen, wie, wu, wenn und wie lange es die sachen schicken und foddern.' (67)

The temptation to contrast this Pauline way of going about things with Pius V's imprecation of the 'indigna-

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66. Thus while the Missal of Matthew Ludecus, Bishop of Havelberg (published at Wittenberg in 1589 and among Bishop Cosin's collection), is overwhelmingly conservative in tone - in the companion volume of Offices, for example, he unaffectedly teaches the bodily assumption of the Blessed Virgin - the Canon shrinks to the material recommended in the Formula of 1523. For modern Lutheran suggestions relating to the restoration of the eucharistic prayer see Peter Brunner: Worship in the Name of Jesus (St. Louis, 1968), pp. 308-311.

67. WA 19. 72, 3-10.

tionem omnipotentis Dei, ac beatorum Petri et Pauli Apostolorum' on any who would make bold to alter one jot or one tittle of the Tridentine Mass cannot be resisted.[68] Secondly, despite its obvious liturgical defects, the Deutsche Messe undoubtedly achieves Luther's intentions by resolutely attesting the real presence. Thus the real presence is resolutely taught in the Exhortation which was intended to precede the 'ampt und dermunge' (i.e., consecration) in this most higgledy-piggledy of liturgies. Even so, the real presence is still (1526) ancillary to the overriding res of the forgiveness of sins.[69] Further evidence of Luther's desire to underscore the real presence in his liturgical changes is his remark in the Deutsche Messe that the elevation of the host should not be abolished, especially given its congruence with the deudschen Sanctus.[70] It is a widely held opinion, and

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68. From the Bull Quo primum, customarily prefixed to the old Roman Missal.

69. WA 19. 95, 22-23; 96, 20-28: '...weyl wir hie versamlet sind ynn dem namen des herrn, seyn heyliges testament zu empfahen. ...Zum andern vermane ich euch ynn Christo, das yhr mit rechtem glauben des testaments Christi warnehmet und allermeist die wort, darynnen uns Christus sein leyb und blut zur vergebung schenckt, ym hertzen feste fasset, das yhr gedenckt und danckt der grundlosen liebe, die er uns bewysen hat, da er uns durch sein blut von gots zorn, sund, todt und helle erloset hat, und darauff eusserlich das brod und weyn, das ist seynen leyb und blut, zur sicherung und pfand zu euch nemet. Dem nach wollen wir ynn seynem namen und aus seynem befelh durch seyne eygene wort das testament also handeln und brauchen.'

70. WA 19. 99, 16-100, 3: 'Das auffheben wollen wir nicht abthun, sondern behalten, darumb das es feyn mit dem deudschen Sanctus stymmet, und bedeut, das Christus befohlen hat, seyn zu gedencken, Denn gleych wie das

one not without foundation in the Tischreden, that the Reformer was in sympathy with Bugenhagen's discontinuance of this practice in 1542. Pastor Diestelmann has, however, drawn attention to cogent evidence that Bugenhagen's liturgical change was wrought during Luther's absence in Naumburg and against his will. Thus the Reformer charged the three princes of Anhalt to see to it that the elevation continue to be practised in their Duchy: 'Nam video eam abrogationem minuere autoritatem sacramenti et contemptibilius fieri.' For his own part, Luther was 'thinking of restoring the custom'. Prince Joachim recorded that after this interview the Reformer attended Mass with his noble guests. Bugenhagen cannot have been the celebrant that day, for 'Nos vidimus serio Lutherum procidere et reverenter adorare

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sacrament wird leyblich auffgehaben und doch darunter Christus leyb und blut nicht wird gesehen, also wird durch das wort der predigt seyner gedacht und erhaben, dazu mit empfahung des sacraments bekand und hoch gehret und doch alles ym glauben begriffen und nicht gesehen wird, wie Christus seyn leyb und blut fur uns gegeben und noch teglich fur uns bey gott, uns gnade zurlangen, zeyget und opffert.' A word of explanation is called for here, for the conjunction of Sanctus and elevation would seem to fly in the face of the account of older Lutheran liturgy briefly sketched above. The contradiction is only apparent, however, for the Church of the Augsburg Confession has rarely, if ever, followed the suggestions made in either the Formula missae et communionis or the Deutsche Messe. Lutheranism has, on the whole, agreed with Luther only in the excision of the eucharistic prayer. Luther's proposed order in the Formula runs as follows: Dialogue, Preface, words of institution, Sanctus and benedictus (during the singing of which the elevation of the elements would take place), Lord's Prayer, Pax, Agnus Dei and Communion (cf. WA 12. 212-213). The Deutsche Messe was intended for use in country areas where choirs would be a rarity and church Latin an incomprehensible tongue. Here the Dialogue and Preface vanish entirely, the consecration following

Christum, cum elevaretur sacramentum.'[71] The probable genuineness of this report is reinforced by Luther's firm defence of the elevation in his Kurzes Bekenntnis vom heiligen Sakrament of the same year, 1544.[72] But when all is said and done, the Reformer's essays in liturgical

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hard on the heels of the Exhortation. Since uninstructed layfolk could not be expected to sing the Latin Sanctus and Benedictus, Luther composed the deudsch Sanctus for their use (viz., the famous hymn 'Jesaia dem propheten das geschah'). The Reformer feels that these verses should be sung during the distribution. To make confusion worse confounded, he makes the tentative suggestion (which has never been put into effect) that it would be in keeping with the Pauline and Lucan accounts for the distribution of the bread to follow its consecration, preceding the consecration of the chalice (cf. WA 19. 99f).

71. WATR 5. 308 (no. 5665), 9-19: 'De elevatione sacramenti et adoratione. Doctor Martinus interrogatus a tribus fratribus principibus Anhaldensibus, an ipsi abrogare debeant elevationem sacramenti, respondit: Minime! Nam video eam abrogationem minuere autoritatem sacramenti et contemptibilius fieri. Igitur non probavi, inquit, quod me absente Doctor Pomer elevationem abrogavit, et cogito de restitutione. Nam alia res circumferri, alia elevari. Praeterea cum Christus vere adest in pane, cur non ibi summa reverentia tractaretur et adoraretur etiam? Igitur, dixit, in vestro ducatu non abrogate! Et addit princeps Ioachim: Nos ("Non" is surely a misreading) vidimus serio Lutherum procidere et reverenter adorare Christum, cum elevaretur sacramentum' (1544). cf. Jürgen Diestelmann: Studien zu Luthers Konsekrationslehre (Braunschweig, 1980), pp. 27-30. Diestelmann also produces evidence that Luther advised against the abolition of the elevation of the host in 1541 (p. 28).

72. 'Denn was Mose vom Thnupha und Thruma sonderlich Deuteronomio xvj schreibt, kan nu ein iglicher Leye in der Deudschen Biblia lesen, das es nicht opffer gewest sind, Gott zu versünen umb die sünde, wie die Papisten jre Messeopffer hielten und verkaufften aufs schendlichst etc. Sondern eitel Danckopffer oder dancksagung

revision were an unmitigated disaster. Nor can the question be suppressed: Was the total excision of the Canon Missae, based as it was on the fierce rejection of the Sacrifice of the Mass, necessary, even within the terms of Luther's own reformational theology?

In the Formula missae et communionis of 1523, Luther had anticipated CA XXIV by proposing the retention of the Mass in its aspect of sacramentum, though not in its quality of sacrificium.[73] Three years previously, however, he had been careful to leave the door open for a moderate version of the doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass. In paragraphs twenty-six to thirty-one of the Sermon vom Neuen Testament, Luther offers some reflections on the sacrificial aspect of the Mass which, while scarcely compatible with the teaching of Trent, come surprisingly close to typically Anglican accounts of this theme. Without surrendering his firm conviction that the verba testamenti do not permit the Mass to be thought of as a 'work of satisfaction' on man's part, the Reformer is willing to concede that the Sa-

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fur die empfangen güter des Lands etc. Auch were das eine feine deutung, das der Priester mit auffhebung des Sacraments nichts anders thette, Denn das er die wort verkleret "Das ist mein Leib", als wolt er mit der that sagen: Sehet, lieben Christen, das ist der Leib, der fur euch gegeben ist, das also das auffheben nicht ein zeichen des opffers (wie die Papisten narren) gegen Gott sondern eine vermanung were gegen die Menschen, sie zum glauben zu reitzen' (WA 54. 163, 14-25).

73. 'Apprehendamus eam ut sacramentum seu testamentum, seu benedictionem latine Eucharistiam graece, vel mensam domini, vel caenam domini, vel memoriam domini, vel communionem, vel quocunque nomine pio placet, modo sacrificii aut operis titulo non polluatur, et ritum monstremus, quo nobis visum est illa uti' (WA 12. 208, 8-13).

crament prompts believers to offer the sacrifice of themselves.[74] And even though this sacrifice can be and is offered quite apart from the Mass, the corporate context of the Eucharist is nevertheless its most appropriate setting.[75] Now while Protestants have traditionally endeavoured to preserve the unique dignity of the work of Christ by sharply distinguishing his primary sacrifice from the secondary sacrifice of Christians, nothing could seem more Pelagian in Catholic eyes than this arbitrary decapitation of the totus Christus. For how do we attain entrance into the life of God except through the mediation of the Son? Martin Luther would agree with this criticism:

> 'Das ist wol war, solch gepeet, lob, danck und unser selbs opffer sollen wir nit durch uns selbs fur tragen fur gottis augen, sondern auff Christum legen und yhn lassen dasselb furtragen.' (76)

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74. WA 6. 368, 5-10: 'Was sollen wir den opffern? Uns selb und allis was wir haben mit vleyssigem gepeet, wie wir sagen "dein will geschehe auff der erden als ym hymel", Hie mit wir uns dargeben sollen gottlichem willen, das er von und auss uns mache, was er wil nach seynem gottlichen wolgefallen, dartzu yhm lob und danck opffern auss gantzem hertzen fur sein unaussprechlich süsse gnade und barmhertzickeit die er uns in dissem sacrament zugesagt und geben hat.'

75. ibid., 11-20: 'Und wie woll solchs opffer auch aussen der mess geschicht und geschehen soll, denn es nit nötlich und wessentlich zur mess gehört, wie gesagt ist, sso ists doch köstlicher, fuglicher, stercker und auch angenhemer, wo es mit dem hauffen und in der samlung geschicht, da eyns das ander reytzt, bewegt und erhitzt, das es starck zu gott dringt und damit erlanget on allen zweyffel, was es wil. Den sso Christus hat zugesagt, wo zwen sein vorsamlet yn seynem namen, da sey er yn yhrem mittel, und wo zwen eins sein auff erden, ettwas zu bitten, soll geschehen als was sie bitten, Wie vil mehr solten erlangen was sie bitten, wo ein gantze statt zusammen kompt, gott eyntrechtiglich zu loben und bitten.'

76. ibid., 26-28.

This observation is backed up by a string of relevant texts, on which firm foundation Luther builds his assertion that:

> 'wir nit Christum sondern Christus uns opffert, und nach der weyss ist es leydlich, yha nützlich, das wir die mess ein opffer heyssen, nit umb yret willen, sondern das wir uns mit Christo opffern, das ist, das wir uns auff Christum legen mit eynem festen glauben seynes testaments, und nicht anders mit unserm gepeet, lob und opffer fur gott erscheynen, den durch yhn und seyn mittel, und wir nit dran zweyffeln, er sey unser pfarrer oder pfaff ym hymel fur gottis angesicht.' (77)

It is the faith of the Church which moves Christ to present his people and their works before the face of his Father.[78] Luther's difficulty with the understanding of the eucharistic sacrifice current in the sixteenth century is bound up with the view that the celebrant alone is the agent of the offering of Christ.[79] How-

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77. WA 6. 369, 3-9.

78. ibid., 9-17: 'Solcher glaub fur war macht, das Christus sich unser annympt, uns selb, unser gepet und lob furtregt, und sich selbs auch fur uns dargibt ym hymel. Wo man alsso die mess ein opffer hiess und vorstundt, were es woll recht, nit das wir das sacrament opffern, sondern das wir durch unser loben, beeten und opffern yhn reytzen, ursach geben, das er sich selb fur uns ym hymel und uns mit yhm opffer, als wen ich sprech, ich hett eynem fursten seynen sun geopffert, sso ich doch nit mehr than hett, den das ich den selben sun bewegt hett, meyn nodt und gewerb dem fursten antzutragen und des suns zu eynem mittler gepraucht.'

79. This objection is frankly acknowledged by Dr. Michael Ramsey in his The Gospel and the Catholic Church (2nd ed., London, 1956), p. 117: 'Abuses have also come through a false separation between the ministerial priesthood and the one Body, as if the priest, as an individual and in virtue of rights inherent in himself, were offering in each Mass a separate sacrifice to God. But ministerial priesthood - an indelible order as it is - is

ever, if it is recognised that the 'true priestly office' is quite simply the 'faith' which makes all Christians 'priests and priestesses', then Luther is prepared to supplement the testamentum motif, which stresses God's unmerited gracious condescension to man in the Mass, with the sacrificium motif, which allows for a Godward movement of praise and intercession in the Mass on the part of the praying Church:

> 'So wirts klar, das nit allein der priester die mess opffert, ssondern eynis yglichen solcher eygener glaub, der ist das recht priesterlich ampt, durch wilchs Christus wirt fur gott geopfert, wilchs ampt der priester mit den euserlichen geperden der mess bedeuttet, und sein alsso alsampt gleych geystliche priester fur gott.' (80) 'Dan der glaub mus allis thun. Er ist allein das recht priesterlich ampt.' (81) 'Da will ich gerne mit stymmen, das der glaub, den ich genennet habe das recht priesterliche ampt, der uns alle tzu pfaffen und pffeffyn macht, durch wilchen wir uns, unser nott, gepett, lob und danck auff Christo und durch Christo neben dem sacrament opffern, und damit Christum fur gott opffern, das ist, yhm ursach geben und bewegen, sich fur uns und uns mit yhm opffert.' (82)

There was therefore a loophole in Luther's own teaching which might have prompted him to eschew violent surgery in favour of moderate reform. Had the Reformer heeded his own balanced account of the place of sacrifice in the Mass, he need not have become a liturgical vandal.[83]

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the priesthood of the one Body focused in certain organs which act for the Lord and for the Body.'

80. WA 6. 370, 7-11.

81. ibid., 24-25.

82. WA 6. 371, 21-26.

83. Dr. Frank C. Senn, in 'An Attempt at Eucharistic Restoration during the Swedish Reformation' (Studia Litu-

3. The outbreak of the 'Supper-strife'

The erudite Baron C. K. J. von Bunsen, Ambassador of the King of Prussia to the Court of S. James from 1841 to 1854, charged with reference to the disagreements between Luther and Zwingli which resulted in the schism between the Lutheran and Reformed Churches, that 'it is impossible not to admit that the fault was Luther's'.[1] For, as Dr. Sasse sarcastically remarked, the view that Luther was the instigator of the eucharistic debate of the 1520s was at one time 'almost a dogma of the Reformed Church'.[2] A brief review of the developing crisis within the reformational camp will attempt to set the record straight.

The abiding popular impression of Luther's stance in the eucharistic debate of the 1520s has undoubtedly been determined by the mental image of an increasingly corpulent and obdurate Reformer lifting up the tablecloth at the Marburg Colloquy of 1529 to counter Zwingli's

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rgica 14/1 1980/1981, pp. 20-36), has provided information that the position adopted by Luther towards sacrifice in the Mass in 1520 was echoed elsewhere in sixteenth century Lutheranism. He points out that a eucharistic prayer incorporating the motif of sacrifice was restored in 'The Red Book' published on the authority of King Johan III of Sweden in 1576. In the Unde et memores section of this liturgy, the Church of Sweden prayed as follows: 'The same your Son, the same sacrifice, which is a pure, holy and undefiled sacrifice, set before us for our reconciliation, our shield, defense and covering against your wrath, against the terror of sins and of death, we take and receive with faith and offer before your glorious majesty with our humble supplications' (art.cit., p. 34).

1. Life of Martin Luther (Boston & New York, 1859), p. 142.

2. Corpus Christi, p. 32.

rational arguments by pointing defiantly to four Latin words which he had chalked on the table: Hoc est corpus meum! In its way this scene seems to capture Luther's quintessential Lutheranness just as much as does the memory of the earlier and more famous scene of the solitary Reformer's brave refusal to recant before Emperor and Estates at the Reichstag of Worms in April 1521: 'Hier stehe ich. Ich kann nicht anders.' But while the confession at Worms is commonly regarded as indicative of courageous adherence to principle over expediency, the confession at Marburg is wont to be interpreted as the regettable tantrum of a once sensitive Reformer who has now become more pope-like than the Pope. It is therefore apposite to recall that Luther's first moves in the unfolding eucharistic debate were marked by charity and moderation. Indeed, the Reformer displayed a distinct willingness to compromise throughout. Thus it was that he consented to the last-minute attempt to salvage the Marburg Colloquy by means of a compromise formula drawn up - so it is thought - by the Reformer of Nuremberg, Andreas Osiander. It was proposed, with the hearty approbation of Philipp of Hesse, that a declaration be issued under the names of Luther and Oecolampadius to the effect that:

> 'wir bekennen, dass aus vermög diser wort: "das ist mein Leib, das ist mein blut" der Leib und das Blut Christi wahrhaftiklich, hoc est substantive et essentialiter, non autem quantitative vel qualitative vel localiter im nachtmal gegenwertig sey und gegeben werd.' (3)

The warring parties would each eat humble pie as, first, Luther would admit in the light of his 'cordial dialogue'

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3. Walther Köhler: Zwingli und Luther II (Stuttgart, 1953), p. 114.

with Oecolampadius the inaccuracy of his earlier view:

> 'dass unsere lieben herren und brüder Oekolampadius, Zwinglius und die iren die waren gegenwertikeit des libs und bluts gentzlich verwerfen.' (4)

Oecolampadius would match this gentlemanly apology by graciously retracting his earlier conviction:

> 'dass unsere lieben herren und brüder Martinus Lutherus und Melanchthon und die iren halten und leren, das der leib Christi und blut sey in dem nachtmal quantitative vel qualitative vel localiter fleischlichen gedancken nach.' (5)

While conceding that this formula was 'Luther's ultimatum', Sasse maintained that it was nevertheless a 'wirkliches Friedensangebot'.[6] In Koehler's opinion, 'diese Formel war streng lutherisch konzipiert'.[7] Even so, Koehler argues that the failure of this last ditch attempt to restore Protestant unity owed more to a 'kirchenpolitisches innerschweizerisches Moment' than to strictly theological considerations: how could Zwingli and his associates return to Switzerland with such a 'Catholic'-sounding agreement after having condemned Luther's eucharistic theology so bitterly for so long?[8] Another and more obvious instance of Luther's displaying moderation and restraint in the service of ecumenical accord is to be found in the attitude which he adopted towards the Wittenberg Concord of 1536. Thus he acknowledged to Bucer and Capito in one of the first negotiating sessions 'dass er gegen seine Gegner zu scharf

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4. ibid.

5. ibid.

6. Corpus Christi, p. 53.

7. Zwingli und Luther II, p. 114.

8. op.cit., II, p. 117.

gewesen und sie persönlich angegriffen habe'.[9] And later in the week he held his peace when Bucer explained to Bugenhagen the Strassburg custom of keeping hosts consecrated but not consumed at one celebration for use at the next.[10] Similar treatment of unconsumed elements would land Pastors Wolferinus and Besserer in hot water during the coming decade. The text of the Concord itself shows that while Luther and his associates were unprepared to make substantial concessions to the South German delegation, they were nevertheless ready to modify the formulation of the real presence in such a way that Bucer and his friends could profess their unanimity with the Wittenbergers. At Marburg the 'Lutherans' had insisted that the real presence is effected 'in virtue of Christ's words' ('aus vermög diser wort'), but they would now meet 'Reformed' qualms about 'consecration' halfway by insisting simply 'dass die Einsetzung dieses Sakraments, durch Christum geschehen, kräftig sei in der Christenheit'. Furthermore, while 'durch sakramentliche Einigkeit das Brot sei der Leib Christi', the 'Lutherans' are content that this truth be undergirded with nothing more than the assertion that 'mit dem Brot und Wein wahrhaftig und wesentlich zugegen sei, gereicht und entpfangen werde der Leib und das Blut Christi'; why impale Bucer and his friends needlessly on the additional clarificatory prepositions 'in and under'? The major verbal concession concerned the vexed issue of the manducatio impiorum, a topic which at Bugenhagen's sug-

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9. Ernst Bizer: Studien zur Geschichte des Abendmahlsstreits im 16 Jahrhundert (Gütersloh, 1940; repr. Darmstadt, 1972), p. 100.

10. Köhler: op.cit., II, p. 450.

gestion was now considered under the rubric manducatio indignorum. Luther manifestly understood such impii as unbelieving Jews and Turks to be included under this heading, while Bucer took the indigni to refer to those who had the fides historica but not the fides justificans. The impeccably Pauline term permitted a variety of interpretation. Even though the Wittenberg Concord was included in the Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord as an indubitably Lutheran confession,[11] its intentionally wide perimeters demonstrate that the Reformer could be tolerant over detail if only the articulus fidei of the real presence be straightforwardly confessed.

Much of the future acrimonious debate was perfectly prefigured in the eirenical pamphlet which Luther dispatched to Bohemia in 1523, Vom Anbeten des Sakraments des heiligen Leichnams Christi. The previous year the Reformer had defended the 'Bohemian Brethren' against the documented charge of his friend Paul Speratus, a clergyman at Iglau in Moravia, that they held to a figurative understanding of the words of institution.[12] However, an anxious enquiry from Markgraf Georg von Brandenburg-Ansbach, whose faith had been troubled by reports current in Prague that Luther no longer taught

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11. see BS 977, 11-978, 19 (FC SD, VII). cf. also WA 23. 145, 30-32: 'Uber worten wöllen wir nicht zanken, alleine das der synn da bleibe, das nicht schlecht brod sey, das wir ym abendmal Christi essen, sondern der leib Christi.'

12. WABr 2. 531, 13ff (May 16th 1522); WABr 2. 560, 31f; 561, 64ff (June 13th 1522).

the propriety of adoring the Blessed Sacrament,[13] conspired with the Reformer's better acquaintance with the Brethren's writings to provoke the composition of Vom Anbeten. In his former life as a 'Papist' Luther admits that he had excoriated the Brethren as 'heretics', but since he is now mercifully 'anders gesynnet',[14] he can begin the pamphlet with the Christian greeting:

> 'Meynen lieben herrn und freunden, den Brudern genant Valdenses ynn Behemen und Mehren Gnad und frid ynn Christo.' (15)

He comes briskly to the point. Even though emissaries of the Brethren had personally assured him in Wittenberg:

> 'wie yhr eyntrechtlich hallten sollt, das Christus warhafftig mit seynem fleysch und blutt unter dem sacrament sey, wie es von Marien geporn und am heyligen creutz gehangen ist, wie wyr deutschen glauben' (16),

he was troubled to read in their children's Catechism (the one written by Senior Lucas):

> 'das Christus ym sacrament nicht selbstendig, naturlich, auch dasselb nicht anzubeten sey, wilchs uns deutschen fast (i.e., sehr) bewegt.' (17)

Luther's concern has been compounded on receipt of a Latin treatise from the pen of Senior Lucas, which is 'noch nicht sso lautter und klar gemacht ynn dissem artickel, als ich gerne gesehen hette'.[18] On account of

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13. The Markgraf's letter of January 5th 1523 is preserved in WABr 3. 9, 49ff.

14. WA 11. 432, 1-3.

15. WA 11. 431, 1-2.

16. ibid., 10-13.

17. ibid., 5-7.

18. ibid., 15-16.

its ambiguity, the Reformer has not had this little book translated as promised, and he ventures the weak diplomatic excuse that accurate translation is so difficult.[19] After discharging the polite formalities, Luther comes to the heart of the matter, charging that it is simply sacrilegious to make a 'waxen nose' of the words of institution by expounding est as significat:

> 'Man muss nicht sso freveln an gottis wortten, das yemandt on aussgedruckte klare schrifft eym wortt wolt eyn ander deutten geben denn seyn natürlich deutten ist, als disse thun, die das wortlin "Ist" frevelich on grund der schrifft zwingen da hyn, es solle sso viel heyssen als das wortlin "Bedeutt", Und machen dissem spruch Christi eyn solche nasen: "Das ist meyn leyb" solle so viel gellten als: das bedeutt meyn leyb.' (20)

Charitably but firmly, the Reformer contends for the bodily as opposed to the merely spiritual presence of Christ in the Sacrament:

> 'Hie sind die wortt durre und klar, das nicht der geystliche leyb Christi da sey, sondern seyn natürlicher leyb.' (21)

This strong emphasis on the supernaturally wrought presence of our Lord's natural body, along with the unashamed defence of the veneration of the consecrated elements, prompted Walther Koehler to contradict his frank appraisal of the tendency of the de captivitate babylonica by contending that Vom Anbeten amounts to 'eine deutliche Wendung nach rechts' on Luther's part.[22]

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19. ibid., 16-20.

20. WA 11. 434, 20-25.

21. WA 11. 438, 28-30.

22. Zwingli und Luther I, p. 69.

If the account of the occurrence of the real presence in the Reformer's thought given in the immediately preceding section is correct, then we may agree with Heinrich Bornkamm that:

> 'Wenn Luther in dieser an die Böhmen gerichteten Schrift den Glauben an die Realpräsenz so stark betonte, so gab er ihm damit keinen neuen Akzent, sondern er sicherte nur ab, was er immer als selbstverständliche Grundlage vorausgesetzt hatte und was er jetzt offen angegriffen sah.' (23)

The autumn of 1524 saw Luther's erstwhile collaborator Karlstadt publish no fewer than five minor writings on the Lord's Supper, in which he based his denial of the real presence on a highly eccentric interpretation of the words of institution: 'This is my body', contended Karlstadt, is a parenthetical remark within the eucharistic words of Jesus, a pointing to his actual, tangible body by Christ which bore no relation to the surrounding command 'Take, eat ... do this in remembrance of me'. Karlstadt's risible exegesis overtaxed the Reformer's patience,[24] so that when he got wind of Karlstadt's November sojourn in Strassburg Luther sought to counter his sometime ally's potential influence by dashing off a letter of warning to that city:

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23. Martin Luther in der Mitte seines Lebens, p. 448.

24. cf. Hermann Sasse: Corpus Christi, p. 35: 'Viel von dem, was man im Kampf zwischen Luther und Zwingli als Tragik beurteilen muss, erklärt sich daraus, dass jener unruhige und unklare Geist durch seinen Fanatismus die Debatten verdarb, indem er die Abendmahlsfrage mit ganz anderen Dingen verknüpfte. Nachdem er Kursachsen auf den Kopf gestellt hatte, fand er vorübergehend in Süddeutschland Stätten der Wirksamkeit in Rothenburg, Frankfurt, Strassburg, Zürich und Basel, bis er auch dort unmöglich geworden war. Er war nicht, wie Luther meinte, ein Revolutionär wie Müntzer, mit dem er nie

> 'Das bekenne ich, Wo D. Carlstad oder yemand anders fur funff jaren mich hette möcht berichten, das ym Sacrament nichts denn brod und weyn were, der hette myr eynen grossen dienst than. Ich hab wol so hartte anfechtunge da erlitten und mich gerungen und gewunden, das ich gerne eraus gewesen were, weyl ich wol sahe, das ich damit dem Bapstum hette den grössisten puff künd geben. Ich habe auch zween gehabt, die geschickter davon zu myr geschrieben haben denn D. Carlstad und nicht also die wort gemartert nach eygenem dunckel. Aber ich bin gefangen, kan nicht eraus, der text ist zu gewalltig da und will sich mit worten nicht lassen aus dem synn reyssen.' (25)

In the same month of December 1524 Dr. Karlstadt received the first instalment of the Reformer's reply in the shape of Part One of Widder die himmlischen Propheten. Genuine sorrow that 'Doctor Andreas Carlstadt ist von uns abgefallen, dazu unser ärgester Feind worden'[26] is mingled with sarcastic contempt. Dr. Karlstadt:

> 'will doch gesehen sein, der allerhöhest Geist, der den heiligen Geist mit Federn und mit all gefressen habe.' (27)

Late January 1525 saw the printing of Part Two, 'vom Sacrament'. It is remarkable that Luther's sole interlocutor in this detailed defence of the real presence is his former colleague, for on August 27th of the previous year Franz Kolb had written from Wertheim to 'Pio Christi Apostolo Martino Luthero, suo semper praeceptori in Christo',[28] casually informing his 'optime Doctor' in a

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harmonierte. Er war auch nicht, wie man im Süden vielfach glaubte, ein ernst zu nehmender Theologe.'

25. WA 15. 394, 12-20 (Ein Brief an die Christen zu Strassburg wider den Schwärmergeist).

26. WA 18. 62.

27. WA 18. 66, 19-20.

28. WABr 3. 329, 1.

postscript that 'Zwinglius, Leo (Jud) et ego' have embraced the figurative understanding of the words of institution.[29] As Heinrich Bornkamm has pointed out, Luther was bound to associate the Swiss denial of the real presence with Karlstadt's bizarre antics. Bornkamm drew attention to the fact that the Swiss Reformers could admit among themselves that with respect to the matter involved - namely the rejection of the real presence - as opposed to the way in which it was expressed, they were substantially at one with Karlstadt.[30] Thus Johannes Oecolampadius could write from Basel to Ulrich Zwingli in Zürich on November 27th 1524 that:

> 'Carlstadius libellis me non offendisset, si fratribus pepercisset. In his, quae ad eucharistiam attinent, quantum ipse capio, a nostra sententia nihil abest, quam in dulcissimo colloquio referebam.' (31)

Even though Luther was made increasingly aware of the serious doctrinal rupture within the reformational camp as 1525 wore on, he was strangely hesitant about attacking the deniers of the real presence in print. In private correspondence the Reformer, as usual, made no effort to mince his words. Johann Hess in Breslau[32] and Johann Briessmann in Königsberg[33] were accordingly warned against the new 'poison' during the summer months. On the last day of the year, but still in the context of

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29. WABr 3. 331, 80ff.

30. Martin Luther in der Mitte seines Lebens, p. 449.

31. CR XCV. 251, 11-252, 3.

32. WABr 3. 544, 3ff (July 19th 1525).

33. WABr 3. 555, 6f. (mid-August 1525).

private correspondence, Michael Stiefel in Tolleth was addressed on the subject of this grave doctrinal discord, which was now being fostered by a Silesian theologian too (Valentine Krautwald) in addition to Zwingli and Karlstadt. Since 'one opinion', namely the denial of the real presence, is being advanced on the strength of three conflicting reasons, how can it be the work of the Holy Spirit, who is a 'God not of confusion, but of peace'?

> 'Habet autem error iste de sacramento tres sectas in uno sensu. Aliis rationibus Zwinglius contra Carolstadium pergit, aliis Schlesita Valentinus contra utrumque et omnes, de quo audies suo tempore. Ista sectarum pugna(ntia) signum est, Satanae esse quod docent, eo quod spiritus Dei non sit dissensionibus Deus, sed pacis.' (34)

Not until he wrote his Erste Vorrede zum Schwäbischen Syngramma in early 1526 did the Reformer publicly denounce his Swiss opponents.[35] How could Luther justify continued silence while Karlstadt and the Swiss were busily engaged in undermining the epistemological foundation of the whole Reformation movement, namely the claritas externa Scripturae?

The development of Ulrich Zwingli's understanding of the Eucharist has been charted in great detail by Walther Köhler, according to whom the Zürich Reformer's first public statements on the Sacrament, from the year 1522, are so traditional that they 'flatly rule out a symbolic understanding'. At this stage of his career

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34. WABr 3. 653, 5-9 (December 31st 1525).

35. WA 19. 458, 7-459, 2: 'Auffs erst ist dise Secten so fruchtbar, das sie ynnwendig eym jar funff oder sechs kopffe hat gewonnen. Der erste war D. Carlstad mit seym "Tuto". Der ander Huldrych Zwingli mit seym "Significat". Der dritte ist Johan Oecolampadius mit seiner "Figura Corporis".'

Zwingli could happily use such expressions as 'Gott geniessen' and 'das Himmelbrot essen'.[36] The first hint of a shift away from eucharistic realism came in a letter to Thomas Wyttenbach of June 15th 1523: transubstantiation is denied as an alleged incentive to idolatry, but nevertheless, according to Koehler:

> 'Der Glaube ...geniesst unter dem Brote real den sonst im Himmel zur Rechten Gottes sitzenden Christus, der im Abendmahl eigens auf die Erde heruntersteigt.' (37)

Köhler finds the source of the doctrine thus summarised in Erasmus of Rotterdam, pointing to the humanist wont - so foreign to Luther's whole cast of mind - of obediently employing the Church's language to express sentiments which were scarcely identical with the Church's teaching.[38] The real presence could be confessed in rather hazy terms, attention being focussed on the manducatio spiritualis. Zwingli's decisive break with such a happy compromise is attributed by Köhler to the cumulative effect of four separate factors: Zwingli's acquaintance with the straightforwardly symbolic interpretation of the words of institution set forth in the 'letter' of the learned Dutch lawyer, Cornelius Hoen; Karlstadt's eruption onto the scene with his pamphlets on eucharistic doctrine; Luther's alleged 'swing to the right' in his Vom Anbeten; and the Zürich Reformer's severance of his ties with the doyen of sixteenth century religious moderates, Erasmus of Rotterdam.[39] Even though the decisive 'letter of Honius'

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36. Zwingli und Luther I, p. 16.

37. op.cit., pp. 21ff, 28.

38. op.cit., p. 49f.

39. op.cit., p. 61.

does not seem to have come into Zwingli's hands until the end of May 1524,[40] its clear-cut arguments must have worked powerfully on his mind to bring about the resolute rupture with the Erasmian softly-softly approach which now ensued. For by the autumn of 1524 the Zwingli who had begun by taking the safe option of ambiguous adherence to traditional formulae and official doctrine had become sufficiently convinced of the symbolic interpretation of the words of institution to become its enthusiastic propagandist, taking up his pen on November 16th to extol the virtues of the new doctrine to the Reformer of Reutlingen in Swabia, Matthäus Alber. Notwithstanding his prudent care to keep Karlstadt at arm's length,[41] the self-confident Zwingli was unable to resist a thinly veiled attack on Luther. Michael Cerullarius, he writes, has told of a eucharistic debate in which Alber has got entangled. Unless Zwingli is gravely wrong, many are presently in grave error concerning the Lord's Supper. Hitherto we of the reformational party have shot wide of the mark on this subject, but seemly epistolary brevity forbids us to name the 'author' of 'this sin'.[42] This mysterious figure can be none other than Luther.[43] On the strength of the development of Zwingli's understanding of the

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40. op.cit., p. 62.

41. CR XC. 336, 3ff; 343, 6ff.

42. CR XC. 335, 7-13: 'Certamen autem Michael noster audivit περι της ευχαριστιας esse indictum, in qua vereor multos vehementer errare, nisi ego magis quam omnes errem. Ac nisi me fallit omnis scripturae tum proprietas, tum sensus, imo pietas ipsa, longe hactenus a scopo iecimus. Quisquis autem peccati huius tandem sit autor, nunc non est ut dicam per epistolam, quam esse brevem oportet.'

43. cf. Köhler: op.cit., p. 73; and Bornkamm: op.cit., p. 450.

eucharistic words to this point, Walther Köhler insists:

> 'Stehen aber die Dinge so, denn ist die bisherige, mehr oder minder deutlich ausgesprochene Ansicht, dass Luther der Angreifer im Streite der Reformatoren gewesen sei, nicht zu halten, Zwingli hat vielmehr die Trennung in der Abendmahlsfrage zuerst vollzogen, in einer Form, die reizen konnte, wenn sie es auch nicht wollte.' (44)

It may be that as the storm clouds of the coming controversy gathered in expectation of the inevitable downpour of mutual recrimination and reproach, Luther himself unwittingly gave his future foes the impression that his commitment to eucharistic realism was less than absolute. For in the same month that Zwingli wrote to Alber, the Reformer addressed the people of Strassburg, casually informing them that deliverance from the divine est would have been most welcome to him around the year 1520, as it would have enabled him to deal the Papacy a knock-out blow. Luther continued in the same candid vein:

> 'Ja, wenn noch heutes Tages möcht geschehen, dass Jemand mit beständigem Grund beweiset, dass schlechtes Brot und Wein da wäre; man dürft mich nit so antasten mit Grimm. Ich bin leider allzugeneigt dazu, so viel ich einen Adam spure.' (45)

While Luther attributed his doubts concerning the real presence to his old Adam, Zwingli, when he became aware of this letter, would obviously be inclined to predicate this state of mind of the Reformer's new Adam. Perhaps there was still hope that the initiator of the Reformation would dot his is and cross his ts - as Zwingli would think - by discarding that doctrine which his more

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44. ibid.

45. WA 15. 394, 20-24.

radical fellow-workers sensed to be the cornerstone of the rotten edifice of papalist corruption and superstition, namely the real presence! In early 1527, prodded by the future peacemaker Martin Bucer,[46] Zwingli set out to teach the stubborn Luther a lesson in his Amica exegesis ...ad Martinum Lutherum. The tone of Zwingli's writing was, alas, not so cordial as its title, for in his treatment of the Reformer he alternated between the extremes of flattery, laid on with a trowel,[47] and pitied condescension, reflected in a manner which was didactic and governessy. The most wounding insult of all was the suggestion that with his 'stubborn' defence of the real presence, Luther was returning to the service of the 'kingdom of Antichrist' which he had formerly resisted: 'Postliminio igitur Antichristi regnum restituis?'[48] Indeed, Luther's eucharistic doctrine seems to be infected with the spirit of the Antichrist.[49] It may be retorted at this point that Zwingli was merely treating Luther to a dose of the very medicine which he himself had liberally administered to the scholastics and the Roman Curia a decade before. The 97 theses Contra Scholasticam Theologiam had, after all, been a

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46. In a letter to Oecolampadius, which the latter was bidden to forward to Zürich, CR XCV. 647, 2ff.

47. Thus Luther is compared with such heroes of antiquity as Diomedes, Jonathan, David and Hercules, CR XCII. 613, 12ff; 722, 2ff; 723, 1ff.

48. CR XCII. 711, 24.

49. CR XCII. 567, 11-19: 'Tu vero, mi Luthere, id velis esse, quod audis, purus, καθαρος , ac serenus. Adferamus enim non acerba, sed aequa, non frivola, sed deo fortia; quae si recipies, tum de integro profligabitur error, Antichristus corruet, qui te nunc non alia ratione vehit,

deliberate provocation of the ecclesiastical-cum-theological establishment, and in the dedicatory letter prefixed to the Latin edition of The Freedom of a Christian, Luther had addressed Leo X with a casual disrespect which would be repaid with interest in the insolence with which Zwingli now addressed him. The parallel may be admitted. The moral to be drawn is simply this: while Zwingli's challenge was undoubtedly courageous and sincere, by flinging down the gauntlet in this way he left Luther with little option but to react as he did. The tone adopted by John Calvin towards Luther in his Traité de la Sainte Cène, be it noted, was faultlessly courteous and perfectly diplomatic.

It is salutary to bear in mind that Luther and Zwingli were not the sole participants in the first eucharistic controversy. Luther was emphatically not the only one to hold the 'Lutheran' doctrine of the real presence. Nor was he the first to challenge in print the denial of the real presence by Karlstadt, Zwingli and Oecolampadius. Exhausted by the Peasants' War and preoccupied with the writing of de servo arbitrio, the Reformer was content to allow Pastor Bugenhagen to make Wittenberg's first reply to Zürich.[50] And when Zwingli's letter to Alber was followed by the Swabian-born Oecolampadius' appeal to his fellow countrymen to embrace the figurative understanding of the Lord's Supper, Luther was overjoyed that his South-Western brethren came together at Schwäbisch-Hall to prepare a refutation under the presidency of

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quam quod veretur, si opinione cesseris, omnia collabi. Quod et alias secuturum esse nihil ambigo, etiam si laborosius. Candide scripta candidius pro tua eruditione interpreteris, oro, et ubi omnia in dei gloriam cogitaveris ac egeris, ut hactenus fecisse videris, vale, et ne quid temere!'

50. cf. Bornkamm: op.cit., p. 453.

Johannes Brenz.[51] The Swabian Syngramma was an independent statement of the 'Lutheran' position. Meanwhile, the learned Nuremberg patrician Willibald Pirckheimer, fearful of a fateful breach with the Christian tradition, sought to counter Oecolampadius' appeal to the authority of the fathers.[52] As his friends plunged into debate with his attackers, Luther did for the doctrine of the Eucharist what he had done for the doctrine of grace almost a decade ago. At that time he had transposed the doctrine of grace developed in scholastic Latin in the lecture room into a popular key, outlining the essence of baptism, Mass, penance and the ars moriendi in a series of pithy vernacular sermons. The Easter of 1526 accordingly saw Luther fulfil his priestly office by ascending the Wittenberg pulpit to deliver three sermons on the Mass, which were presently published as the Sermon von dem Sakrament des Leibs und Bluts Christi wider die Schwarmgeister. With the aid of a wealth of - not always apposite - analogies Luther the pastor shared his devotion to the eucharistic Christ with the common man in words which are aglow with incarnational piety.[53]

The last straw for the irritated Wittenbergers came from the unethical professional conduct of the gifted Reformer of Strassburg, Martin Bucer. The latter had found favour with both Bugenhagen and Luther by taking on himself the heavy burden of translating

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51. cf. Bornkamm: op.cit., p. 457f.

52. cf. Bornkamm: op.cit., p. 459f.

53. WA 19. 482-523. cf. Bornkamm: op.cit., p. 460f.

some of their works. Bucer's talents were apparent in his rendition into German of Bugenhagen's Latin Commentary on the Psalms and in his translation into Latin of the literary fruit of Luther's enforced leisure on the Wartburg, the Postils on the liturgical pericopes. Now the business of translation has to do with fidelity to the sense of the original, and Bucer unquestionably exceeded the terms of his brief by altering Bugenhagen's remarks on Ps. 111 to bring them into line with the symbolic view of the Eucharist. Nor did he act with propriety when he interpolated a series of explanatory notes into the text of volume four of Luther's postils, remarks which argued against the eucharistic doctrine of the original. When apprised of the Strassburger's doings, Luther acted quickly and predictably by writing to the publisher of the Postils, Johannes Herwagen in Strassburg:

> 'Sed proh dolor, in mediis his laudibus et laboribus (permissu Dei) lapsus est in monstrum illud blasphemum Sacramentarii spiritus, et donum illud facundiae et intelligentiae contaminatur, immo perditur pestilenti illo veneno.' (54)

In the closing pages of the great treatise of 1527, Dass diese Worte Christi 'Das ist main Leib' noch feststehen, Luther returned with a heavy heart to the misdeeds of a former companion in arms who had nothing better to do than 'hinder meim rucken mein liebstes buch so zu schenden und damit seine gifft ynn die hertzen zu treiben'.[55] If his foes misrepresent him so while he is still active in Wittenberg, what will they not make of his teaching after his death?[56] Significantly, it was to the Bucer

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54. WA 19. 471, 16-19.

55. WA 23. 281, 1-2.

56. WA 23. 279, 30-32.

whom he greeted at the outset of the Marburg Colloquy with the words 'Tu es nequam',[57] and not to his straightforward opponents Zwingli and Oecolampadius, that Luther addressed the harshest words which he spoke at that gathering:

> 'ich bin euer herr nicht, euer Richter nicht, euer lerer auch nicht, so reymet sich unser gayst und euer gayst nichts zusamen.' (58)

Bucer's unwisdom was not, however, entirely without good fruit, for anxiety to forestall misrepresentations of his teaching after his demise led Luther to pen Part Three of the Confession of 1528, a goldmine of concise information concerning his mature theology.

As Bornkamm has pointed out, the atmosphere was already poisoned before the debate between the embryonic Lutheran and Reformed Churches got fully under way.[59] What would have been the outcome of the debate had the Reformed case first been presented to Luther through the agency of John Calvin's Traité de la Sainte Cène[60] rather than in the form of the writings of Karlstadt and the Swiss is one of the great ifs of church history. One thing at least is clear: while the schism was inevitable, given the nature of the real presence doctrine adherence to which Luther deemed an essential precondition for church fellowship, the parting would have been executed more in sorrow than in anger.

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57. Bornkamm: op.cit., p. 572.

58. WA 30 III. 150, 5-6 (Osiander).

59. op.cit., p. 456.

60. On Luther's reported reaction to the Traité, and on Calvin's attempted correspondence with the senior Reformer, see T. H. L. Parker: John Calvin (London, 1975), p. 136f.

4. The issue at stake

Oddly enough, as far as the present writer is aware, in all of his devotional and polemical writings on the eucharist Martin Luther never used the technical term 'real presence'. For the purposes of this thesis, the heading 'real presence' refers to the doctrine, common to Martin Luther and to the Latin Church of the West which was his spiritual matrix, that, according to the words of institution, the body and blood which Jesus assumed in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, in which he suffered our curse on the Cross, and in which it pleased the Father to raise him from the dead, are, through the incomprehensible working of Almighty God, illocally present in the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper, to be received unconsumed and undiminished by all communicants, believing and unbelieving alike. When employed to pinpoint this doctrine, the term 'real' is simply shorthand for 'corporeal', bodily. But in current Anglo-Saxon, particularly Anglican, usage the term 'real presence' is frequently used to specify a eucharistic participation in Christ conceived much more loosely than as the oral reception of his actual body and blood. Perhaps Jesus' speaking of his 'body and blood' at the Last Supper will be understood as a metaphorical use of language; in this case, the Lord will be taken as having promised participation in 'himself', in his 'person', to communicants at his Supper. Or else - as in the case of John Calvin - Jesus' reference to his 'body and blood' will be taken literally. Calvin would agree that (believing) communicants participate in the body and blood of Christ. Even so, he would be uncomfortable at Luther's favoured expression 'the bread <u>is</u> the body', stressing that, while the body of Christ is exhibited in and in a sense

conjunct with the element of bread, it is the soul, and not the mouth, that receives the body, and that by being elevated by the Holy Spirit to heaven, where the exalted Christ is located. In his Victim Divine, thy grace we claim, Charles Wesley celebrated the condescension of the Saviour who is pleased to be present with us in his Supper, ending with the plea: 'To every faithful soul appear / And show thy real presence here!' In fact, the 'real presence' doctrine confessed by Wesley here is closer to that of Calvin than to that of Luther. Since the term 'real presence' can be used to shelter a variety of conceptions of the presence of Christ (or, of the body and blood of Christ) in the eucharist, it is well to outline some characteristically Reformed views of the nature of Christ's eucharistic presence before seeking to ascertain just what was the doctrine of 'real presence' which Luther so adamantly defended against the Bohemians, Karlstadt and the Swiss.

In his Fidei ratio of 1530, Zwingli confessed the presence of the 'true body of Christ' in the Lord's Supper, a presence not in any way tied to the elements, but rather enjoyed by the 'contemplation of faith':

> 'Octavo credo, quod in sacra eucharistiae (hoc est: gratiarum actionis) coena verum Christi corpus adsit fidei contemplatione, ...' (1)

Zwingli's exposition of this confession makes it clear that he understands the presence of the body of Christ to the 'contemplation of faith' to be nothing more than faith's acknowledgement of the Incarnation of the Eternal Son and of the atonement wrought through his blood-shedding:

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1. CR XCIII/2 (CR Zw VI/2), p. 806, 6-7.

> '...hoc est: quod ii, qui gratias agunt domino pro beneficio nobis in filio suo collato, agnoscunt illum veram carnem adsumpsisse, vere in illa passum esse, vere nostra peccata sanguine suo abluisse et sic omnem rem per Christum gestam illis fidei contemplatione velut praesentem fieri.' (2)

Zwingli forcefully rejects a 'real presence' in the sense of the official dogma of the Western Church, intimating that those in the reformational camp who abide by this doctrine are in fact hankering after the 'fleshpots of Egypt':

> 'Sed quod Christi corpus per essentiam et realiter, hoc est: corpus ipsum naturale, in cena aut adsit aut ore dentibusque nostris manducatur, quemadmodum papistae et quidam, qui ad ollas Egiiptiacas respectant, perhibent, id vero non tantum negamus, sed errorem esse, qui verbo dei adversatur, constanter adseveramus.' (3)

In the preceding paragraph of the Fidei ratio, Zwingli had made it clear that his understanding of Christianity as essentially the communion between the Spirit of God and the spirit of man left no room for the mediation of supernatural grace through Word and Sacrament.[4] The Incarnation is not central, but superfluous, in Zwingli's theology. The same cannot be said

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2. ibid., 8-12.

3. ibid., 12-17.

4. CR XCIII/2 (CR Zw VI/2), p. 803, 5-15: 'Septimo credo, imo scio omnia sacramenta tam abesse, ut gratiam conferant, ut ne adferant quidem aut dispensent. ... Nam gratia, ut a spiritu divino fit aut datur ...ita donum istud ad solum spiritum pervenit. Dux autem vel vehiculum spiritui non est necessarium; ipse enim est virtus et latio, qua cuncta feruntur, non qui ferri opus habeat; neque id unquam legimus in scripturis sacris, quod sensibilia, qualia sacramenta sunt, certo secum ferrent spiritum; sed si sensibilia unquam lata sunt cum spiritu, iam spiritus fuit, qui tulit, non sensibi-

of the theology of John Calvin. In his beautiful Traité de la Sainte Cène of 1541, Calvin presents an account of Christ's sacramental presence which is strikingly identical with Luther's conception except in one respect: Calvin accepts the understanding of the Ascension propounded by Zwingli and Oecolampadius and must therefore reject Luther's teaching that the humanity of Christ graciously stoops to be present in the elements at the Supper. For Calvin, unlike Zwingli, the eucharist is in the fullest sense a means of grace, the elements being for him a mirror in which believers may behold the Lord who died for their sins and rose again for their justification:

> 'Qu'il nous souvienne doncques que la Cène nous est donnée comme un miroir, auquel nous puissions contempler Jesus Christ crucifié pour nous delivrer de damnation; et ressuscité pour nous acquerir justice et vie eternelle.' (5)

In Calvin's theology, the sacraments play a major role in the believer's appropriation of salvation. In a nutshell, the 'matter and substance' of the sacraments is the Lord Jesus himself, while what they effect is the 'graces and blessings' which come to us through his mediation:

> 'Pour ceste cause j'ay coustume de dire, que la matière et substance des Sacremens, c'est le Seigneur Jesus; l'efficace, sont les graces et benedictions que nous avons par son moyen.' (6)

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lia.' cf. also p. 804, 17-18: 'sacramenta dari in testimonium publicum eius gratiae, quae cuique privato prius adest.'

5. Petit Traicté de la Saincte Cène de nostre Seigneur Jesus Christ; quoted from Three French Treatises (ed. Francis M. Higman, London, 1970), p. 104, 38-105, 3.

6. op.cit., p. 105, 12-14.

In highlighting 'le Seigneur Jesus' as 'la matière et substance des Sacremens', it might seem as if Calvin is going no further than Zwingli's mentor, Cornelius Hoen, who stressed that Christ himself is the essence of the sacramental gift:

> 'Non ergo per haec verba "Hoc est corpus meum" salvator panem transsubstantiari voluit, sed per panem seipsum dare.' (7)

In fact, the view that the person of Christ is the major gift of the Supper is an essential element of Calvin's eucharistic theology:

> 'De cela nous avons à conclurre que deux choses nous sont presentées en la Cène: assavoir JESUS CHRIST, comme source et matière de tout bien; puis apres, le fruict et efficace de sa mort et passion.' (8)

But a closer examination of what Calvin means by participation in Christ will show that he does not intend, through his emphasis on the person of Christ, to bypass the issue of participation in the sacred body and blood; on the contrary, the latter is necessarily contained in the former. Calvin goes beyond the earlier Swiss Reformers in insisting that participation in Christ involves a sharing, not only in his Spirit, but also in his humanity:

> 'D'advantage, si la raison de communiquer à Jesus Christ est afin que nous ayons part et portion en toutes les graces qu'il nous a acquises par sa mort, il n'est pas seulement question que nous soyons participans de son Esprit; mais il nous fault aussi participer à son humanité, en laquelle il a rendu toute obeissance à Dieu son Père, pour satisfaire de noz debtes.' (9)

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7. 'letter of Honius': CR XCI (CR Zw IV), p. 517, 7-9.

8. Three French Treatises, p. 105, 21-24.

9. op.cit., p. 106, 6-11.

Calvin, like Luther, is anxious to adhere faithfully to the actual wording of the verba testamenti, which specifies the sacred body and blood as the sacramental gift. Like Luther, he knows that the identity of the element with the divine gift is an identity in distinction, but, unlike Luther, he sees the distinction as much in terms of disjunction as of conjunction. The elements, says Calvin, 'exhibit' the body and blood; they are aptly called the body and blood, because they are the 'instruments' through which the Lord Jesus distributes his body and blood to us:

> 'le pain et le vin sont signes visibles, lesquelz nous representent le corps et le sang; mais que ce Nom et tiltre de corps et de sang leur est attribué, pource que ce sont comme instrumens par lesquelz le Seigneur Jesus nous les distribue.' (10)

While at one with Luther in rejecting the sacrifice of the Mass,[11] Calvin differs from the older Reformer in the severity of his polemic against transubstantiation, which, unlike Luther, he misconstrues as involving a localised presence of Christ in the elements.[12] Furthermore, he also differs from Luther in condemning the veneration of the consecrated elements.[13] Calvin's intention to be Luther's faithful disciple rings through the clear confession of the real presence with which the Traité moves to its close:

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10. ibid., 26-29. A few sentences later, after recalling that communication in the body and blood is a mystery, Calvin writes: 'Il nous est doncques figuré par signes visibles, selon que nostre infirmité requiert; tellement neantmoins que ce n'est pas une figure nue, mais conjoincte avec sa verité et substance. C'est donc a bon droict que le pain est nommé corps, puis que non seulement il le nous represente, mais aussi nous le presente' (op.cit., p. 107, 10-14).

11. op.cit., p. 116, 27-119, 21.

12. op.cit., p. 120, 24ff. 13. op.cit., p. 121, 23ff.

> 'Nous confessons donc tous d'une bouche qu'en recevant en Foy le Sacremen, selon l'ordonnance du Seigneur, nous sommes faictz participans de la propre substance du corps et sang de Jesus Christ.' (14)

The reason for Calvin's intemperate rejection and misunderstanding of transubstantiation, for his reaction against the adoration of the host, and for his inability to follow Luther in teaching that the body and blood are received by all communicants, believing and unbelieving alike, is that he is at one with Zwingli and Oecolampadius in conceiving the Lord's humanity as locally situated in heaven and therefore as spatially distant from the earthly Supper. Despite this crucial agreement with Zwingli and Oecolampadius, Calvin nevertheless wishes to join Luther in affirming a participation by the (believing) communicant in the body and blood. The bridge thrown by Calvin between the remote glorified humanity and the clear text of the institution narratives is nothing less than the Holy Spirit himself. The Traité ends with an appeal to follow the exhortation sursum corda of the ancient liturgy. The faithful must raise their hearts to the heaven which contains the exalted Christ, confident that the Holy Spirit will conduct believing souls thither so that they may truly feed on the body and blood:

> 'Tant y a que d'une part il nous fault, pour exclurre toutes fantasies charnelles, eslever les cueurs en hault au ciel, ne pensant pas que le Seigneur Jesus soit abaissé jusques là, d'estre encloz soubz quelques elemens corruptibles. D'autrepart, pour ne pas amoindrir l'efficace de ce sainct mystère, il nous fault penser que cela se fait par la vertu secrette et miraculeuse de Dieu; et que l'Esprit de Dieu est le lien de ceste participation, pour laquelle cause elle est appellée spirituelle.' (15)

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14. op.cit., p. 130, 6-10. 15. ibid., 11-19.

Calvin's teaching is closely reflected in the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth Articles of Religion. Art. XXIX denies the manducatio impiorum, in which it is fully consistent with Art. XXVIII, which insists that 'the mean whereby the Body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is Faith'. This teaching is a far cry from the Lutheran doctrine that the body of Christ is received first by the mouth of the communicant (manducatio sacramentalis), and only then enjoyed by the heart of the believing communicant (manducatio spiritualis). Even so, we may not overlook the fact that Art. XXVIII pointedly invokes I Cor. 10:16 to specify the sacramental gift as a 'partaking of the Body of Christ' and a 'partaking of the Blood of Christ'. The qualifying statement that 'The Body of Christ is given, taken and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner' could, at a pinch, be interpreted as a variant of the Roman and Lutheran teaching of the 'illocal' presence of the body and blood in the Sacrament. More probably, though, it is to be understood in terms of Calvin's appeal to the work of the Holy Spirit as the proper agent of the real presence. Since the Elizabethan Church of England is, from the perspective of doctrine at any rate, to be included among the Reformed Churches of the sixteenth century, the doctrine of Arts. XXVIII and XXIX may properly be advanced along with the teaching of Calvin outlined above to question the rightfulness of Hermann Sasse's wont to define the difference between Lutheran and Reformed conceptions of the 'real presence' as consisting in the difference between a belief in the presence of Christ and a belief in the presence of his body and blood.[16] For the examples of John Calvin and the Elizabethan

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16. see This is my body, p. 25.

Church of England suffice to demonstrate that the Reformed theology of the sixteenth century could teach more than a mere 'presence of Christ' in the Eucharist. The 'presence of the body and blood' could also be taught in Reformed circles, so that the point of difference between Lutheranism and some strains of Reformed theology lay in the understanding of the human organ which receives the body and blood (mouth or soul?) and in the conception of the relationship between the body and blood and the elements, the latter being a question which involves the further christological issue of what is believed concerning the humanity which has been 'taken up into God'.

After outlining the precise nature of Luther's 'real presence' doctrine, this section will enquire into the suitability of the term 'consubstantiation' as a description of his characteristic understanding of the relationship between the body and blood and the elements of bread and wine, finally underscoring his commitment to the 'real' presence by recording his attitude to the bodily veneration of the consecrated elements.

(a) The 'real' presence

While the Sermon of 1526 sharply focusses attention on the belief that 'ym brod und wein warhafftig Christus leib und blut ist',[17] a conviction which can be labelled without further ado the 'Obiectum fidei',[18] it nevertheless attests a continuing twofold confusion in Luther's grasp of the eucharistic mystery. First, there is the abiding unclarity regarding the chief res sacramenti. As the real presence shows a 'tendency'[19] to become the

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17. WA 19. 482, 22-23.

18. ibid., 17.

19. Hans Grass: Die Abendmahlslehre bei Luther und Calvin (Gütersloh, 1954), p. 40.

major res, so the forgiveness of sins seems to be demoted to the level of an 'ancillary gift'.[20] Thus, while the young Reformer of 1520 had understood the real presence as a 'seal' or 'pledge' of the forgiveness of sins, six years later he could urge that the gift of spiritual peace is in fact a corollary of the real presence:

> 'Und wenn gleich die wort nicht da stunden, wie es Paulus aussenlesst, so hastu dennoch den leib, der fur deine sund gestorben, und das blut, so da fur vergossen ist. Wenn dir aber Christus geschenckt wird, so ist dir auch vergebung der sund geschenckt und alles was durch den schatz erworben ist.' (21)

The reader who expects Luther to be consistent will speedily be disappointed, however, for three pages later the Reformer contradicts this emphasis on the centrality of the real presence, reverting to his earlier teaching that the appropriation of the benefits of the Passion is the Christian's first concern in the Mass. The central doctrine of the Faith is the redemption achieved in the Cross; indeed:

> 'Das ist das erste heubstück Christlicher lere, wilchs uns ynn den worten (of institution) fur getragen wird und zum warzeichen und sicherung sein leib und blut uns da zu gegeben leiblich zu entpfahen' (22)

The second puzzle with which the Sermon presents us has to do with the nature of the real presence itself. These Eastertide homilies of 1526 presented Luther with the first major opportunity to employ the doctrine of the ubiquity of the humanity of Christ, which he had developed in the course of his writing against Karlstadt of the previous year. The emphasis on the ubiquity of

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20. Grass: op.cit., p. 39. 21. WA 19. 507, 29-33.

22. WA 19. 510, 21-23.

Christ was not only an apologetic device; it was also a piece of pastoral theology:

> 'Wenn Christus nicht bey mir were ym kerker, marter und tod, wo wolt ich bleiben?' (23)

Furthermore, this stress had the effect of injecting 'bestimmte personhafte Züge' [24] into Luther's account of the real presence of the body and blood, which had formerly been conceived in impersonal terms. Grass outlines the resultant ambiguity in Luther's thought:

> 'Er spricht nämlich von der Realpräsenz bald in der Weise, als handle es sich um die Gegenwart Christi, bald so, als handle es sich um die Gegenwart von Leib und Blut.' (25)

The tension in the Reformer's grasp of the real presence is reflected in the uneasy juxtaposition of 'he' and 'it' in his question 'warumb er da ist und warumb oder wozu es uns gegeben wird zu entpfahen'.[26] And confusion is exacerbated when Luther describes the presence of the indwelling Christ in the heart of believers as a presence of the 'whole Christ with his flesh and blood'.[27] The two discordant strains in Luther's account of the real presence are reflected in sharply contrasting statements of the Reformer's position by modern authors. Thus Franz Hildebrandt defined Luther's real presence doctrine in personalist terms, quoting the Berlin clergyman and celebrated editor of Hegel's works, Georg Lasson, to summarise the meaning of the eucharistic

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23. WA 19. 492, 29-30.

24. Grass: op.cit., p. 40.

25. ibid.

26. WA 19. 501, 26-27.

27. 'Denn er ist gantz mit fleisch und blut ynn der glewbigen hertzen' (WA 19. 499, 34-35).

'Leib' as 'Christus selbst, Er in seiner "persönlichen Daseinsform"'.[28] The very opposite interpretation is alluded to by Hans Grass when he quotes the nineteenth century confessional Lutheran, August Vilmar, albeit indirectly through Helmut Gollwitzer, to the effect that in the Sacrament 'ein "Es" wird gereicht, nicht ein "Du" begegnet'.[29] Only the sources can arbitrate between Hildebrandt's 'persönliche Daseinsform' and Vilmar's 'Es'.

It is worthwhile to quote Hildebrandt's argument in greater detail:

> 'σωμα ist mehr als σαρξ und αιμα, es umfasst beides in lebendiger personhafter Einheit. Das entspricht dem ursprünglichen lukanischen Abendmahlsbericht, der nur eine Einsetzung, beim Brot, kennt. "Leib Christi" heisst darum bei Luther immer - mit Ausnahme einer einzigen Stelle - Christus selbst, Er in seiner "persönlichen Daseinsform".' (30)

Given this definition of the real presence, which in fact adds up to the dissolution of the doctrine, it is easy to see why this author could subsequently invoke a real presence doctrine common to 'Luther and Calvin, Cranmer and Ridley, Wesley and Brevint'.[31] For in alluding to a 'single passage'[32] which militates against his Luther interpretation, Hildebrandt conveniently overlooked at least four further refractory places in the

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28. EST. Das Lutherische Prinzip, p. 59.

29. Die Abendmahlslehre bei Luther und Calvin, p. 47.

30. ibid.

31. I Offered Christ. A Protestant Study of the Mass (Philadelphia, 1967), p. 92.

32. The reference to EA 29. 205 given in op.cit., p. 59, n. 214 is surely a misprint for EA 29. 295 (WA 18. 212, 17-20).

same writing[33] (Wider die himmlischen Propheten), not to mention a clear-cut rebuttal of his exposition in the Bekenntnis of 1528.[34] In order to explain these five passages aright, a digression on the subject of the Reformer's attitude to the doctrine of concomitance is unavoidable. The view that Christ's body and blood, though distinct, are in fact inseparable from each other, and that they in turn are inseparable from his human soul and eternal Godhead, formed the pretext for the denial of the chalice to the laity. The question was therefore bound to arise whether, with his request for the restoration of the chalice to the laity, Luther had broken with the scholastic theory of concomitance. In 1520 the Reformer replied with a clear affirmation of this doctrine:

> 'Das glewb ich auch ...Wer hat ye daran getzweiffelt, das Christus gantz sey unter igklicher gestalt ...?' (35)

A mere eight years later, in Ein Bericht an einen guten Freund, the proponents of the theory of concomitance were to be showered with a string of highly uncomplimentary epithets; they are, inter alia:

> 'esel, narren, blind, tol, unsynnig, rasend, tȣricht und tobend.' (36)

However, the manifest contradiction in Luther's thought is apparent only. It is clear that the Reformer never seriously considered the presence of Jesus' body and

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33. WA 18. 164, 2-4; 165, 32-36; 161, 23-35; 174, 33-175, 7.

34. WA 26. 484, 35-485, 17.

35. WA 6. 139, 22-26 (Antwort auf die Zettel, so unter des Officials zu Stolpen Siegel ausgegangen, 1520).

36. WA 26. 606, 28-29.

blood in the Eucharist to be a matter of the presence of the mere appurtenances of his being minus his person. For already in 1523 he had argued that the real (i.e., bodily) presence necessarily entails the personal presence of the God-man.[37] It is essential in the present context to realise that the converse is not equally true: not even when the most extravagant claims are being advanced for the concept of ubiquity[38] could it be argued that the personal presence of Christ necessarily entails his real presence. Luther's polemic against concomitance in Ein Bericht an einen guten Freund stems from the same concern for Scriptural truth which led him to argue against Oecolampadius' interpretation of I Cor. 11:27 in terms of a personal, but not real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.[39] Both Rome and the Schwärmer, so it seemed to the Reformer, wished to side-step the plain teaching of Scripture in favour of corollaries which, while containing a grain of truth, nevertheless forfeited their truth content in being misused to supplant pristine biblical verities. Thus, while obliged to admit the validity of the chain of reasoning which produced the doctrine of concomitance, Luther was moved to protest against a way of thinking which would put

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37. cf. WA 11. 447, 9-11: 'Denn ich mus yhe bekennen, das Christus da sey, wenn seyn leyb und blutt da ist. Seyn wortt liegen mir nicht, Und er von seynem leyb und blutt nicht gescheyden ist.'

38. n.b. the use of the verb mögen rather than müssen in what is surely the most extreme of all Luther's claims for the ubiquity of the body and blood, WA 23. 145, 13-16: 'Wenn Christus ym abendmal diese wort "Das ist mein leib" gleich nie hette gesagt noch gesetzt, so erzwingens doch diese wort "Christus sitzt zur rechten Gotts", das sein leib und blut da müge sein wie an allen andern örtern.'

39. WA 26. 484-485.

the result of a syllogism on a par with God's Word written. Whence can one attain assurance of the truth of the Folge of concomitance?[40] While reason can be accorded a 'ministerial' role in theology, where will we end up if it assumes a 'magisterial' function? For if pressed too far the doctrine of concomitance will yield ludicrous conclusions. Let it be granted that the body accompanies the blood and vice versa, and that the soul and Godhead of Christ accompany his body and blood. But why stop there? Since God does not exist without his creatures, it follows that 'heaven and earth', 'devil and hell' and the 'bishop of Meissen and all' are also present, not only once, but twice over, in each of the sacramental species![41] Oecolampadius is likewise guilty of straying from the genuine sense of Scripture with his exposition of I Cor. 11:27 in terms of a dishonouring of the mere figura corporis which is tantamount to the offence of lèse majesté against the distant person of Christ. Luther, who already in 1521 had expressed

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40. 'Wer hat uns befolhen mehr ynn das sacrament zu zihen, denn die kleren hellen wort Christi geben? Wer hat dich gewis gemacht, ob dieser folge eine war sey? (WA 26. 606, 33-36).

41. Having already argued that the theory of concomitance allows - on a Roman understanding of the sacrifice of the Mass - for the merits of two offerings of the Mass to be procured through the celebration of just one (since both the body and the blood are offered under each element!), Luther takes characteristic joy in executing a reductio ad absurdum: 'Daraus folget, weil die Gottheit nicht on die Creatur ist, so mus hymel und erden auch ym sacrament sein, Daraus folget, das die teufel und die helle auch ym sacrament sind, Daraus folget, das, wer das sacrament (auch einerlei gestalt) isset, der frisset den Bischoff zu Meissen mit seinem mandat und zeddel, Daraus folget, das ein Meisnischer priester seinen Bischoff yn eyner iglichen messe zwey mal frisset und keufft,

his preference for 'die schrifft on alle glose',[42] insists against Oecolampadius that fidelity to the plain sense of Scripture obliges us to predicate the 'unworthy eating' of I Cor. 11:27 of the actual body and blood of Jesus, flatly precluding the spiritualisation of this verse by referring the offence to the 'person' of Christ. The Reformer's staunch 'literalism' at this point involves him in a somewhat grotesque use of language, when he contends that the guilt of which S. Paul speaks is incurred through the unworthy use of the Stücke of Christ's person:

> 'Sondern S. Paulus zeiget an, das die schuld geschehe an den stücken Christi. ...Den Paulus hie nicht die person Christi, sondern den leib und blut Christi als stücke der person anzeucht. ...Aber hie spricht S. Paulus, man sundigt an den stucken der person, als am leib und blut Christi, das ist neher und mehr denn an der maiestet odder regiment Christi.' (43)

Even when the great debate of the late 1520s was still a mere cloud on the horizon, the Reformer had no doubt that the doctrine to which he was committed involved the presence of the body and blood, and not just of the person of Jesus Christ. Thus he asserted uncompromisingly in his cordial appeal to the Bohemians of 1523 that:

> 'Hie sind die wortt durre und klar, das nicht der geystliche leyb Christi da sey, sondern seyn natürlicher leyb.' (44)

Daraus folget, das der Bischoff zu Meissen mus ein grössern leib haben denn hymel und erden, Und wer will alle folge ymer mehr erzelen?' (WA 26. 606, 20-27).

42. WA 7. 639, 1-2.

43. WA 26. 484, 35-485, 17.

44. WA 11. 438, 28-30.

And in the powerful Dass diese Worte Christi ...noch fest stehen of 1527 Luther straightforwardly stated his intentions as a communicant:

> 'Ich will seinen leib mit dem brod leiblich essen und ym hertzen dennoch zu gleich gleuben, das es sey der leib, der fur mich gegeben wird zur vergebung der sunden, wie die wort lauten: "Das ist mein leib, fur euch gegeben", Welchs yhr doch selbst heisst geistlich essen. Ist nu geistlich essen da, so kan das leibliche essen nicht schaden, sondern mus auch nütze sein umb des geistlichen essens willen.' (45)

The manducatio oralis makes possible the manducatio spiritualis in the first place. Finally, in the Small Catechism of 1529 the Reformer summarised the doctrine of the real presence in a form which has become familiar to successive generations of Lutheran layfolk. To the question 'Was ist das Sakrament des Altars?' Luther proposed the brief reply:

> 'Es ist der wahre Leib und Blut unsers Herrn Jesu Christi, unter dem Brot und Wein uns Christen zu essen und zu trinken von Christo selbs eingesetzt.' (46)

(b) 'Consubstantiation'?

If the term 'consubstantiation' be taken as a reference to the inseparable but distinguishable joint activity of God and man in the means of grace and to the divinely willed harmonious conjunction of invisible grace and visible element in the sacraments, then it could aptly serve as a one word summary of Luther's whole theology. Any account of the Reformer's thought which fails to locate its centre in the assumption of human nature by the Eternal Son in Jesus Christ and in the continuation of this incarnational mode of divine presence

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45. WA 23. 179, 10-15.

46. BS 519, 39-520, 2.

in the proclaimed gospel and in the sacraments, inescapably involves a fateful distortion of his understanding of the mystery of Christ and will necessarily expose him to the unjust charge of onesidedness and subjectivism. The interpreter of the mind of early Lutheranism must make it crystal clear that the fourth article of the Augustana (de iustificatione) can only be understood as the heart of the Confession when it is expounded in terms of the apprehension of the fullness of article three (de Filio Dei) through the means proposed in article five (de ministerio ecclesiastico). The student of Luther's thought will find deep significance in the fact that the writing De Iustificatione, which was begun during the Reformer's sojourn in the Schloss Coburg in 1530, was subsequently set aside and never completed. Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone was not a question of man-centred personalist or existentialist philosophy; rather it was conceived in the context of the sinner's appropriation of the Incarnate Son who has wrought full and free atonement.[47] And it can only be viewed in perspective when full weight is given to Luther's teaching concerning the means whereby fallen and lost man appropriates Christ and his benefits within the bosom of the Una Sancta: through the external Word of the gospel and through the external ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. A non-reductionist account of the Reformer's theology would do well to take as its point of departure his incarnational contextualisation of redeeming grace in the Schmalkaldic Articles of 1537[48] together with the

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47. cf. BS SA 415, 6-416, 6 and WA 39 III. 364, 34-35; 367, 20-31 (cf. also pp. 10-12 above).

48. Solus Christus is expressed within the perimeters of extra ecclesiam nulla salus in the resolute claim

remarks which he made at table on May 10th 1538. The unspoken master-key to this table talk is the concept of 'mediation'. Just as Almighty God accommodates himself to the structure of creaturely being by confronting mankind through the medium of the concrete humanity assumed by the Son, even so he continues to shower his blessings on those whom he would redeem through the medium of the ministerial office:

> 'Wir aber sagen, lehren und bekennen, dass der Prediger Wort, Absolution und die Sacrament nicht der Menschen, sondern Gottes Werk, Stimme, Reinigung, Entbindung und Wirkung ist. Wir sind nur allein die Werkzeuge, Mitarbeiter oder Gehülfen Gottes, durch welche Gott wirket und sein Werk ausrichtet.' (49)

The wise layman should think of the liturgically functioning clergyman in these terms:

> 'Jtzt höre ich nicht Paulum, Petrum oder einen Menschen, sondern Gott selber reden, täufen, absolvirn, strafen, bannen und das Abendmahl reichen.' (50)

This daring vision of the operation of grace is underpinned and motivated by the burning concern of Luther the pastor to comfort troubled consciences:

> 'Lieber Gott, welch einen grossen Trost könnt ein arm, schwach und betrübt Gewissen von einem solcher Prediger nehmen, wenn es gläubte, dass solch Wort und Trost wäre Gottes Wort, Trost und ernste Meinung! Darüm schliessen wir stracks, rund und gewiss: Gott wirket durchs Wort, welches gleich wie ein Wagen ist und als ein Werkzeug, dadurch man ihn lernet im Herzen recht erkennen. (51)

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that 'Gott niemand seinen Geist oder Gnade gibt ohn durch oder mit dem vorgehend äusserlichem Wort' (BS 453, 17-19) and that 'Alles aber, was ohn solch Wort und Sakrament vom Geist gerühmet wird, das ist der Teufel' (BS 456, 3-5).

49. WATR 3. 673, 27-30.

50. ibid., 48-50.

51. WATR 3. 674, 1-5.

This table talk lays bare the living heart of the incarnational-evangelical theology of Martin Luther.

Even though the Reformer never tired of discouraging inquisitive speculation concerning the nuts and bolts of the quomodo of the real presence, which is to be believed on the sole authority of Scripture,[52] the analogies which he used to illustrate the miracle of the Mass - supremely the famous image of the iron in the fire, which was first used in the context of Christology - have encouraged the view that he taught a doctrine of 'consubstantiation'. Now no objection can be - or, for that matter, has been - raised against the application of this term to Luther's doctrine if it is understood to mean nothing more than the co-existence of the external elements with the substance of the body and blood of Christ. In this case the sole qualification that must be made is the reminder that Luther never supposed that the body and blood are present in the Eucharist in the same, local mode as that in which the bread and wine are present. On the contrary, the body and blood are not present in the same way that straw is contained in a sack or bread in a basket.[53] While the body present on the altar is identical with that in which Christ walked on earth, this means that the eucharistic Jesus is present 'ynn dem selbigen wesen und natur' as the historical Jesus, although 'nicht ynn der selbigen gestalt odder weise'.[54] Luther commends the scholastic theologians for distinguishing

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52. cf. WA 23. 87, 32-34: 'Wie aber das zu gehe odder wie er ym brod sey, wissen wir nicht, sollens auch nicht wissen. Gotts wort sollen wir gleuben und yhm nicht weise noch mas setzen.' cf. also WA 18. 166, 8-13; 23. 117, 27-28; 26. 297, 27-28.

53. WA 26. 341, 15.

54. WA 26. 299, 18-20.

between three modes of presence - namely, the circumscriptive, the definitive and the repletive - the last two of which he considers appropriate models for explaining the supernatural presence of the body and blood in the Supper.[55] The Lutheran compromise formula at Marburg, which asserted that the real presence is to be understood 'substantive et essentialiter, non autem quantitative vel qualiter',[56] faithfully reflects the position of the Luther who during the Colloquy echoed S. Thomas in alleging that the body of Christ is not present in the Supper 'ut in loco'.[57] The matter of 'consubstantiation' cannot, however, be allowed to rest with its definition in terms of 'coexistence' and the qualifier that the conjunct substances enjoy different modes of presence. For in what appears to be the first rejection of the term 'consubstantiation' by the Lutheran side, the real presence is defined precisely as the co-existence, albeit in different modes, of the element of bread and the body of Christ. Thus, Tilemann Hesshus (1527-1588), in his De praesentia corporis Christi in coena domini contra Sacramentarios of 1560, disowns the label 'consubstantiatio', only to observe two sentences later that:

> 'Diverso enim modo adsunt duae res: panis modo naturali et visibili, corpus adest modo extraordinario, divino et incomprehensibili.' (58)

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55. WA 26. 327-330.

56. Quoted in Köhler: Zwingli und Luther I, p. 114.

57. WA 30 III. 136, 3. cf. Aquinas: ST 3. qu. 76, art. 5.

58. Quoted in Hartmut Hilgenfeld: Mittelalterlich-traditionelle Elemente in Luthers Abendmahlsschriften (Zürich, 1971), p. 468.

It would therefore seem that to define 'consubstantiation' as 'coexistence' is tantamount to skirting, not solving, the problem. In fact, only when the question is tackled not from the point of view of semantics, but on the basis of what the term 'consubstantiation' has meant in the theological usage of the past four centuries, can the issue be grappled with in its perplexing complexity.

With the publication of his The Real Presence in 1855, E. B. Pusey not only emerged as the restorer to the English Church of a real presence doctrine in all essentials the same as that attributed to Martin Luther in the foregoing section; he also proved the exception to the Tractarian rule by defending the Reformer, along with the Church which he circumspectly called 'the Lutheran Body', from misrepresentation and caricature. After recounting how the term 'transubstantiation' had been 'framed by those who believed the doctrine which it was intended to express, in order to express what they believed', Pusey pointed out that:

> 'The term "Consubstantiation" was a term invented by persons to stigmatize a doctrine which they rejected, and, as mis-stating that doctrine, has never been accepted by those whose belief it was meant to stigmatize, and did misrepresent.' (59)

Of course, 'consubstantiation' is a perfectly innocuous label if 'taken simply to signify "causing two substances to co-exist, or exist simultaneously"'.[60] The problematic nature of the term, explained Pusey, arose from the danger of its being confused with the Nicene ὁμοούσιον, which the Church had traditionally employed to express the identity of the essence common to the persons of the

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59. The Doctrine of the Real Presence (London, 1855), p. 1.

60. ibid.f.

Godhead, not the co-existence of two distinct substances:

> 'Moreover, although a new form of word, it still was necessarily connected with a Theological term, of very defined and familiar, but wholly distinct meaning, "Consubstantial". It could not then fail, in popular usage, to partake of the meaning of that term; and yet, as far as it was understood to have a kindred meaning, it was, ipso facto, misunderstood. ...But since "Consubstantial" meant "of one and the same substance with", "Consubstantiality" "the being of one and the same substance", it could not but be that "Consubstantiation" would be taken to mean "making two substances to be blended into one". "Consubstantiate" is accordingly now too taken to mean, "to unite or co-exist in the same substance".' (61)

Pusey traces the caricature thus outlined back to Guitmund of Aversa, one of the opponents of Berengarius of Tours in the eleventh century, who attacked those who by 'commingling Christ with bread and wine (Christum pane et vino commiscentes), framed another and subtler heresy'.[62] The most recent research in this area supports Pusey's view that the term 'consubstantiation' was in fact invented by its enemies: it would seem that the word was never used in the context of the doctrine of the real presence by either the scholastics or Luther, first being employed in this setting by the Philippist side in the internecine disputes which beset Lutheranism after the Reformer's death.[63] In the following century Johann Gerhard, whom Pusey deemed 'a learned and pious Lutheran',[64] put the whole matter in a nutshell. After

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61. ibid.f.

62. op.cit., p. 2f.

63. 'Der terminus "consubstantiatio" muss also aus der antignesio-lutherischen Streittheologie stammen und zwischen 1555-1560 aufgekommen sein' (Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 468.

64. op.cit., p. 54.

quoting with approval S. Irenaeus' assertion that there are two res in the Eucharist, terrena and coelestis (a formulation which is in keeping with 'consubstantiation' in the sense of 'co-existence') Gerhard states:

> 'Proinde credimus, docemur et confitemur, in eucharistiae sacramento veram, realem et substantialem corporis et sanguinis Christi praesentiam, exhibitionem, manducationem et bibitionem.' (65)

This doctrine of the 'real presence' is not to be equated with transubstantiation, impanation or consubstantiation, the last of which is defined as follows:

> 'consubstantiatio, qua panis cum corpore Christi et vinum cum ipsius sanguine in unam massam physicam coalescat.' (66)

Is this the end of the matter, and should the customary heated Lutheran disavowal of 'consubstantiation'[67] be allowed to combine with Pusey's assertion that he could find 'not a trace of a doctrine of Consubstantiation' in 'the authorized statements of the Lutheran body' (including the two Catechisms and the Schmalkald Arti-

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65. Loci Theologici, 21, 10 (ed. Preuss, Berlin, 1867, vol. 5, p. 65).

66. ibid.

67. cf., e.g., the confident riposte of Charles Porterfield Krauth, the first great English-speaking scholar among nineteenth century American confessional Lutherans: 'Consubstantiation. The charge that the Lutheran Church holds this monstrous doctrine has been repeated times without number. In the face of her solemn protestations the falsehood is still circulated. It would be easy to fill many pages with the declarations of the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and of her great theologians, who, without a dissenting voice, repudiate this doctrine, the name and the thing, in whole and in every one of its parts' (The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology, 1871, repr. Minneapolis, 1963, p. 130).

cles, which come from Luther's pen)[68] to exculpate the Reformer once and for all from the 'universally customary'[69] charge that he did in fact propound this theory? An examination of Luther's delineation of the 'sacramental union' between the body and blood of Christ, on the one hand, and the elements of bread and wine, on the other, will endeavour to demonstrate that there is at least a grain of truth in the association of the Reformer's name with 'consubstantiation'.

In 1520 Luther proposed a principle to which he subsequently closely adhered, especially in the writings on the Lord's Supper of 1527 and 1528:

> 'Sicut ergo in Christo res se habet, ita et in sacramento.' (70)

It is well known that, in his understanding of the mystery of the person of Christ, the Reformer taught that, while both the divine and the human natures of the God-man remain distinct, an exchange of attributes (communicatio idiomatum) takes place between these natures within the unity of the person of the Redeemer. The relevance of this fact in the present context is indicated by Hilgenfeld's observation that:

> 'Der Begriff "consubstantiatio" schliesst offensichtlich die Idiomenkommunikation zwischen Leib Christi und dem Brot ein, und zwar besonders die Übertragung der proprietates des Leibes Christi auf das Brot ...' (71)

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68. op.cit., p. 36.

69. 'Es is heute allgemein üblich geworden, Luthers Bestimmung des Verhältnisses von Brot und Leib Christi, bzw. Wein und Blut Christi als Konsubstantiation ...zu bezeichnen' (Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 467).

70. WA 6. 511, 34.

71. op.cit., p. 470.

Be it noted that the very image of the iron in the fire had already been used in antiquity (for example, by Origen) to illustrate the communicatio idiomatum between the divine and the human natures of Christ. In 1520 Luther deliberately carried through his proposal that the eucharistic presence be understood on the analogy of the unity of the two natures in the person of Christ when he used this image to illustrate the nature of the presence of the body in the bread:

> 'Cur autem non possit Christus corpus suum intra substantiam panis continere sicut in accidentibus? Ecce ignis et ferrum duae substantiae sic miscentur in ferro ignito, ut quaelibet pars sit ferrum et ignis: cur non multo magis corpus gloriosum Christi sic in omni parte substantiae panis esse possit?' (72)

Nor was the invocation of this image to be a mere flash in the pan, for it would be employed again to illustrate the correlation of Christology and real presence in the Vom Anbeten of 1523,[73] and would figure as an image drawn from the natural world in the Wider die himmlischen Propheten of 1525.[74] In the Bekenntnis of 1528 the Reformer explicitly taught the communicatio idiomatum between the body and the bread, which had been hinted at eight years before. The first draft (1059)

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72. WA 6. 510, 4-8.

73. 'Syntemal wyr auch wol des gleichen tzweyerley wessen finden ynn der natur, das wyr vom feurigen eysen recht sagen: Das eysen ist feur und das feur ist eysen, und nicht: das feur bedeut eysen oder das eysen bedeut feur. Gleich wie wyr auch von Christo sagen: Der mensch ist gott und gott ist mensch, und nicht: gott bedeut den menschen odder der mensch bedeutt gott' (WA 11. 437, 2-7).

74. 'Denn so man die eynfelltige art der sprachen ansihet, kan man sagen von eym feurigen eysen "Das ist feur"

of the Ego Berengarius is defended,[75] and the claim is made that:

> 'Darumb ists aller ding recht gered, das man so auffs brod zeiget und spricht, Das ist Christus leib, Und wer das brod sihet, der sihet den leib Christi ...Also fort an ists recht gered, Wer dis brod angreiffet, der greiffet Christus leib an, Und wer dis brod isset, der isset Christus leib, wer dis brod mit zenen odder zungen zu drückt, der zu drückt mit zenen odder zungen den leib Christi.' (76)

While this somewhat overwhelming confession of the real presence is immediately qualified by a timely reminder of the illocal, supernatural mode in which Christ's body is present in the Mass,[77] it would be inappropriate to write it off as an isolated aberration on Luther's part. For this heavy stress on the eucharistic communicatio idiomatum was repeated almost word for word six years later:

> 'Und ist Summa unser Meinung, dass wahrhaftig in und mit dem Brod der Leib Christi gessen wird, alsso dass alles, was das Brod wirket und leidet,

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odder also "das eysen, das da ligt, ist eytell feur". Wenn nu hie ein zenkischer sophist seine spitze klugheit zu beweisen, sich auff mecht und wider alle welt fechten wollt, Eyssen und feur weren zweyerley und kund nymer mehr war seyn, das eyssen feur sey, sage myr, ob der nicht eyn unsynniger narr were?' (WA 18). 186, 10-15).

75. WA 26. 442, 39-443, 7.

76. WA 26. 442, 29-35.

77. 'Und bleibt doch allwege war, das niemand Christus leib sihet, greifft, isset odder zubeisset, wie man sichtbarlich ander fleisch sihet und zubeisset, Denn was man dem brod thut, wird recht und wol dem leibe Christi zu geeigent umb der sacramentlichen einickeit willen' (ibid., 35-38).

> der Leib Christi wirke und leide, dass er ausgeteilt, gessen und mit den Zähnen zubissen werde. Anno 1534, den 17 Tag Decembris.' (78)

This opinion was committed to paper for the use of Philipp Melanchthon in his impending negotiations on behalf of the 'Lutherans' with those of the 'Reformed' who adhered to the mediating position of Martin Bucer. It is of the utmost significance in the present context that Melanchthon complained in a private letter of being a 'nuntius alienae sententiae',[79] for in the difference between the Luther who used ancient Greek Christology to illuminate a belief in the identity of outward element and glorified body which went hand in hand with the elevation of the host and the adoration of the eucharistic Christ and the Melanchthon who in the Augustana Variata displayed a willingness to drop 'in et sub' in favour of 'cum' alone, we begin to gain an inkling of the half unconscious factors that lurk behind the traditional Lutheran antipathy towards 'consubstantiation'. While later Lutherans have tended to tone down the 'Catholicising' tenor of the Reformer's eucharistic teaching, reacting against his practice of adoring the host[80] and even flatly contradicting him by restricting the real presence to the moment of reception,[81]

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78. EA 55. 75f. (for Latin text see WA 38. 299, 20-24; esp. 22-23: 'vt Corpus Christi vere dicatur ferri, dari, accipi, manducari, quando panis fertur, datur, accipitur, manducatur.')

79. CR II. 822.

80. see, e.g., Johann Gerhard: Loci Theologici 21, 19 (Preus ed., pp. 201-206).

81. see, e.g., Franz Pieper: Christian Dogmatics (St. Louis, 1953) III, p. 372f.

his actual teaching and liturgical usage must often have seemed to come close to what the Philippists derided as ἀρτολατρεια.

In the crucially important section of the work of 1528 headed 'De predicatione Identica', Luther presented an account of the 'sacramental union' in terms which could, when parodied, come close to the formulation which had so offended Johann Gerhard: 'in unam massam physicam coalescat'. For the Reformer here plainly teaches that, at the moment of consecration, the elements of bread and wine become 'one essence or thing' with the body and blood of Christ:

> 'Doch wo sie (sc. leib und brod) zu samen komen und ein new, gantz wesen werden, da verlieren sie yhren unterscheid, so fern solch new einig wesen betrifft, und wie sie ein ding werden und sind, also heisst und spricht man sie denn auch fur ein ding, ...Denn es ist nu nicht mehr schlecht brod ym backofen, sondern fleischsbrod odder leibsbrod, das ist ein brod, so mit dem leibe Christi ein sacramentlich wesen und ein ding worden ist, Also auch vom wein ym becher ...Denn es ist nu nicht mehr schlechter wein ym keller, sondern Blutswein, das ist ein wein, der mit dem blut Christi ynn ein sacramentlich wesen komen ist.' (82)

Such statements as this prompt Hilgenfeld to observe that:

> 'Luthers Lösung des Verhältnisses von Brot und Leib Christi entspricht zum grossen Teil dem, was die Reformierten später Konsubstantiationslehre genannt haben.' (83)

It is essential to note that, in the quotation just given from the work of 1528, Luther does not speak of a mingling or alloy, but rather of a union of the bread and wine with the body and blood. This emphasis on the unity of natural element with supernatural gift is a per-

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82. WA 26. 445, 4-15.

83. op.cit., p. 426.

fect mirror image of the Reformer's Christology, with its great emphasis on the unity of person which holds together the two natures of our Lord. In his conception of the hypostatic union, Luther sees Christ's human nature as utterly open to penetration by his divine nature in such a way that, while the humanity of Jesus remains a finite creature distinct from his divinity, it is nevertheless endowed with the characteristic attributes of Godhead. Just so, he here understands the eucharistic elements to remain real bread and wine, but in such a way that, through their union with the body and blood, they are so suffused with the qualities of the latter as to make it possible for Luther to express his admiration for the first draft of Ego Berengarius. If the Reformer's distinctive conception of the perichoresis of the Lord's human by his divine nature must be understood as a Monophysite blurring of the distinction of the two natures, then his account of the 'sacramental union' will be judged 'consubstantiationist' in the polemical, Philippist-Reformed sense. On the other hand, if his Christology may be appraised as an albeit heavily Cyrilline legitimate variant of Chalcedonian orthodoxy, then Luther's grasp of the 'sacramental union' may not be understood to propound 'consubstantiation' in the questionable sense attacked by the Reformed and outlined by Pusey.

(c) Adoration

A casual remark in the de captivitate babylonica demonstrates the young Luther's implicit approval of the adoration of the eucharistic Christ: the layfolk are quite uninterested in abstruse disputes about substance and accidents, for what they adore in the Mass

is neither the accidents nor the substance of the external elements, 'sed latentem ibi Christum'.[84] Three years later he was obliged to address this question in greater detail in his literary exchange with the Bohemian Brethren. While anxious to preserve Christian liberty in a question where Scripture has not spoken clearly, Luther forthrightly avows that he for his part cannot refuse bodily reverence to the Sacrament 'without sin'. Having defined ehrbietung in terms of bodily reverence,[85] the Reformer states:

> 'wer nicht glewbt, das Christus leyb und blutt da ist, der thut recht, das er wider geystlich nach fleyschlich anbetet. Wer aber glewbt, als es denn tzu glewben gnugsam erweyset ist, der kan freylich dem leyb und blutt Christi seyn ehrbietung nicht versagen on sunde. Denn ich muss yhe bekennen, das Christus da sey, wenn seyn leyb und blutt da ist.' (86)

If such an attitude was a 'Catholic relic' (katholische Reste) which fitted ill with Luther's 'evangelical' theology, it was nevertheless a stoutly-held conviction which accompanied him to the grave. A mere two years before his death he was to counsel the princes of Anhalt as follows: 'Praeterea, cum Christus vere adest in pane, cur non ibi summa reverentia tractaretur et adoraretur etiam?'[87] Not only is this attitude towards the veneration of the consecrated elements the logical corollary of an application of the communicatio idiomatum to the bread and wine which Luther held, at least implicitly, as early as 1520; it also goes some way towards ex-

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84. WA 6. 510, 2.

85. WA 11. 445, 34-446, 12.

86. WA 11. 447, 5-10.

87. WATR 5. 308, 15-16.

plaining the deadly earnestness with which the Reformer approached the doctrine of the real presence in the great controversy of the 1520s. While there can be no doubt that his tenacious adherence to this doctrine is primarily attributable to his unshakable conviction that it is clearly set forth in the New Testament, the subjective factor of his deep personal devotion to the eucharistic Christ also played a role here. It is recorded that Luther informed Gregor Casel in a conversation held at Wittenberg in 1525 that he had 'often' experienced 'amazing visions' at the altar which left him in no doubt about the reality of the real presence:

> 'Martinus dixit se saepe expertum esse. Vidisse se visiones horribiles, adeo ut coactus sit cessare a missa.' (88)

As Walther Köhler pertinently observed, 'Derartige Realitäten gibt man nicht auf.'[89]

There is much evidence that Martin Luther took great care to treat with solemn reverence the consecrated elements to which he could apply the 'perichoretic' labels 'fleischsbrod odder leibsbrod'[90] and 'Blutswein'.[91] For example, there is the case of what was probably his last Mass, celebrated in the Church of our blessed Lady at Halle in the January of 1546:

> 'Man berichtete noch lange in Halle von dieser Feier, einer der letzten, wenn nicht der letzten seines Lebens. "Die grosse Zahl der Kommunikanten

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88. T. Kolde: Analecta Lutherana, p. 72; quoted in Walther Köhler: Zwingli und Luther I, p. 813.

89. ibid.

90. WA 26. 445, 11.

91. ibid., 14.

> hatten seine alten Arme ermüdet; einmal war auch die zitternde Hand Ursache, dass ein Weniges von dem gesegneten Weine an dem Fussboden troff. Luther setzte den Kelch auf den Altar nieder, fiel auf seine Knie und sog den Wein mit dem Munde auf, um ihn nicht mit Füssen zu treten, worauf die ganze Gemeinde in ein lautes Schluchzen und Weinen ausbrach".' (92)

And Titus Verinus tells of an incident which had occurred in Wittenberg a few years previously:

> 'John Hachenburg of Erfurt reports that about 1542 a woman communicant at St. Mary's Church, Wittenberg, bumped against the chalice as she was kneeling down so that some of its contents spilled upon her clothing. Luther and Bugenhagen, who were present, assisted the curate in wiping off the woman's jacket. After the celebration Luther had the affected portion of the lining of the jacket cut out and burned, along with the wood that he had had shaved from that part of the choir stall upon which the contents of the chalice had likewise been splashed.' (93)

The Reformer's profound veneration for the eucharistic Christ caused him to be deeply distressed at such cases of careless and irreverent treatment of the consecrated elements as were reported to him. Thus, when he heard that the Eisleben clergyman Simon Wolferinus was in the habit of storing hosts consecrated but not consumed at one celebration along with unconsecrated hosts for use at future Masses, he was not impressed by Wolferinus' appeal to Melanchthon's dictum 'extra usum nullum sacramentum'. The real presence, argued Luther, endures

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92. Hermann Sasse: Corpus Christi, p. 141 (the quotation given in double inverted commas is from Karl Loewe, being reproduced by Sasse from Karl Anton: Luther und die Musik, 3rd. ed., Zwickau, 1928, p. 59f).

93. 'The Moment at Which the Sacramental Union begins', Una Sancta 17, 3 (1960), p. 13f. cf. also Hans Grass: Die Abendmahlslehre bei Luther und Calvin, p. 120, n. 1.

from the consecration through the distribution to the consumption of the left-over elements. It is precisely in order to avert the unanswerable question of the status of the elements extra usum that piety demands their reverent consumption. Besides, Wolferinus has misunderstood Melanchthon's dictum: 'Sic sentio, sic sentit et Philippus, hoc scio.'[94] In the January of 1546 Luther's opinion was sought on the case of Adam Besserer, a curate in Weida. The cautionary tale of this careless cleric is succinctly told by Edward F. Peters:

> 'On the Third Sunday in Advent (Dec. 13) 1545, he preached and administered the sacrament in the villages of Rohna and Neuendorf, both of which belonged to the Friessnitz parish. In one of these villages he administered the sacrament to 17 communicants, and as he was about to give the host to the last communicant, he suddenly noticed that he had no more on the paten. He had counted the correct number of hosts before the celebration and had lost one. In his confusion he took an unconsecrated host out of the pyx and gave it to the last communicant. Later one of the women of the church saw the missing host lying on the floor and picked it up.

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94. In July 1543 Luther wrote to Wolferinus as follows: 'Sic ergo definiemus tempus vel actionem sacramentalem, ut incipiat ab initio orationis dominicae, et duret, donec omnes communicaverint, calicem ebiberint, particulas comederint, populus dismissus et ab altari discessum sit. Ita tuti et liberi erimus a scrupulis et scandalis quaestionum interminabilium. D. Philippus actionem sacramentalem definit relative ad extra, id est, contra inclusionem et circumgestationem Sacramenti, non dividit eam intra se ipsam, nec definit contra se ipsam. Quare curabitis, si quid reliquum fuerit Sacramenti, ut id accipiant vel aliqui communicantes vel ipse sacerdos et minister, non ut solus diaconus vel alius tantummodo bibat reliquum in calice, sed aliis det, qui et de corpore participati fuerint, ne videamini malo examplo Sacramentum dividere aut actionem sacramentalem irreverenter tractare. Sic sentio, sic sentit et Philippus, hoc scio' (WABr 10. 348, 27-349, 2).

> The curate put it into the pyx along with the unconsecrated hosts, since, as he later explained, he did not know whether it had fallen from the paten before or after the consecration. After the service one of the parishioners reproached him for doing this, and Besserer answered that it did not make any difference, that it was all the same thing. The parishioner told this to another pastor, and eventually the bishop of Naumburg, Nicholas von Amsdorf, sent the question to the theologians in Wittenberg. Luther answered in their names. In the meantime, von Amsdorf ordered Wolf Goldacker, the bailiff in Weida, to hold the curate in custody. Goldacker did this, but he immediately reported it to the elector John Frederick, who approved the measures which had been taken and ordered more exact details as to what had been done.
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> Bishop von Amsdorf wrote to Wolfgang Müstel, superintendent in Weida, that Besserer "was not to be put up with in our Christian churches", because he was a "despiser of the sacrament". He was not to be allowed to have another position in the church, and would have to stay away "from the fellowship of all Wittenberg Christian churches". In the meantime Müstel had undertaken the task of conducting an investigation among all those involved, as the elector had ordered. He was able to report that Besserer did not entertain any Zwinglian error and was sorry for his unintended mistake. Thereupon, von Amsdorf changed his mind and on Feb. 3 suggested that Besserer should undergo "strict penance" in the church at Friessnitz and then be moved to another place. Melanchthon advised that Besserer should be punished with two weeks' confinement and, if improvement was to be hoped for, then left in his position. On Feb. 28 the elector decreed that the imprisonment which Besserer had already undergone was sufficient and that he should be sent elsewhere.' (95)

The Reformer's reply to Amsdorf, written on January 11th, may not be dismissed as a senile tantrum. On the con-

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95. 'Luther and the Principle: Outside of the Use There is no Sacrament', Concordia Theological Monthly XLII, 10 (November, 1971), p. 650.

trary, it is indicative of his religious awe before the majesty of the eucharistic Christ: convicted not of 'mere negligence, but of wickedness, extraordinary wickedness', Besserer is to be unfrocked as a 'despiser of God and men' - 'Let him go to his Zwinglians.' (96)

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96. 'Primum non est negligentia, Sed nequitia, Eaque insignis istius Diaconi, Qui contemptor Dei et hominum in publico ausus est hostias consecratas ac non consecratas pro eodem habere. Ideo simpliciter est ejiciendus extra nostras Ecclesias. Vadat ad suos Zuinglianos' (WABr 11. 259, 5-9).

CHAPTER FOUR:

'DURCH DIE SCHRIFFT UND WIDDER HERDURCH OFFTMALS GEZOGEN'[1]

MARTIN LUTHER'S APPEAL TO HOLY SCRIPTURE IN HIS DEBATE WITH KARLSTADT AND THE SWISS

1. Unity and diversity in the four NT reports of the institution of the Eucharist; old Passover meal and new Lord's Supper.

On two occasions during the increasingly embittered controversy surrounding the real presence, Luther was driven to focus his professional attention on the Pauline and Synoptic accounts of the institution of the Holy Supper. Thus a review of these passages in the *Wider die himmlischen Propheten* of 1525[2] prefigures the more detailed exegesis which forms Part Two of the *Vom Christi Abendmahl. Bekenntnis* of 1528.[3] Of course, the Reformer was passionately concerned to highlight the congruence of the real presence dogma with the original sense of the *verba testamenti* in other sections of his powerful eucharistic writings also: his painstaking rebuttal of Zwingli's reduction of the divine *est* to a feeble *significat*[4] and his endeavour to refute Oecolam-

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1. *WA* 26. 500, 1-2.

2. *WA* 18. 164, 31-178, 7.

3. *WA* 26. 445, 21-498, 31.

4. see, e.g., *WA* 26. 268, 32-278, 29.

padius' claim that corpus should be understood figuratively, that is, as a tropus,[5] will merit due consideration in the relevant sections of the present chapter. The strenuously reiterated assertion that Jesus' words of institution are 'clear, blunt and luminous'[6] tends to flash spontaneously into the mind of the student familiar with Luther's eucharistic writings whenever he thinks of them. A glance at just two of the writings in question will discover at least six forthright appeals to the clarity of the eucharistic words in the pamphlet Vom Anbeten of 1523[7] and at least thirty-three such invocations in the essay Dass diese Worte Christi noch feststehen of 1527.[8] The modern non-Roman Catholic reader of these works is perhaps apt to find nothing in the least remarkable in the Reformer's conscious submission to and reliance on the four New Testament reports of the institution of the Eucharist in his successive controversies against the sacrifice of the Mass and for the real presence. On what other authority could he have based his eucharistic theology, it might be asked? In the early sixteenth century, however, Luther's recourse to the Synoptic Evangelists and S. Paul was itself a de-

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5. see, e.g., WA 26. 379, 17-401, 20.

6. so WA 23. 161, 7 et passim.

7. see WA 11. 434, 20-29; 435, 7; 437, 10-11; 438, 20-21; 438, 28-30; 440, 28-29.

8. see WA 23. 71, 33f; 73, 27-29; 87, 28-30; 95, 17; 99, 2; 105, 18; 115, 2; 117, 27-28; 121, 28f; 123, 5; 129, 20-22; 131, 1-2; 145, 25-26; 157, 27-28; 161, 7; 167, 15; 173, 11-12; 179, 10f; 179, 24f; 183, 6-7; 191, 8-9; 191, 17f; 197, 17-18; 207, 16-18; 219, 12; 225, 6-7; 225, 12-13; 233, 6; 251, 14-15; 255, 31-33; 259, 11f; 267, 9f; 283, 19.

liberate reformational act, a clear breach with the antecedent tradition.[9] For scholasticism had been wont to build its doctrine of the Mass on the account of the institution summarised in the forma consecrationis which lay at the heart of the Canon and whose traditional association with the venerable figure of S. Peter seemed to confer on it a clear primacy over the New Testament reports.[10] Thomas Aquinas could appeal to Pseudo-Dionysius in support of his contention that the Evangelists had no intention of passing on a formula designed for liturgical use;[11] and even when, as with Thomas of Strassburg, a liturgical character was ascribed to the Pauline account in I Cor. 11: 23-25, this concession was immediately qualified with the strict proviso that these verses supply a licit forma consecrationis only for churches of the Greek rite.[12] The deviations of the account of the institution given in the Roman Mass from the four New Testament reports are in fact cosmetic rather than substantial, amounting to the insertion of 'enim' at the heart of the consecration of both host and chalice and the statement that, in consecrating the host, Christ took the same into 'sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas', thereby 'elevatis oculis in coelum ad te Deum

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9. cf. Hartmut Hilgenfeld: Mittelalterlich-traditionelle Elemente in Luthers Abendmahlsschriften, p. 19.

10. cf. Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 13f.

11. see Summa Theologica III, qu. 78, art, 3, ad 9: 'AD NONUM dicendum quod Evangelistae non intendebant tradere formas sacramentorum, quas in primitiva Ecclesia oportebat esse occultas, ut dicit Dionysius, in fine Ecclesiasticae Hierarchiae. Sed intenderunt historiam de Christo texere.'

12. Commentary on the Sentences IV, dist. 8, art. 2, ad 6; quoted in Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 15, n. 17.

Patrem suum omnipotentem'. The circumlocutory reference to the Lord's hands is repeated at the consecration of the chalice, which is not only 'praeclarum' but also the chalice of the 'novi et eterni testamenti' and a 'mysterium fidei'.[13] The additions to the New Testament statements were justified by Innocent III in the typically Roman Catholic 'Et decuit, et factum est' manner, which is so infuriating to Protestants.[14] Luther's gradual turning from the allegedly Petrine formula contained in the Canon of the Mass towards a conflation of the New Testament accounts as the true and sufficient criterion of eucharistic faith and practice[15] is accordingly to be understood in the context of the Reformation's re-appropriation of the sola Scriptura principle.

Two dogmatic presuppositions are of overwhelming importance in the Reformer's approach to the four New Testament texts in question. First, he stresses that the words of institution proceed not from the lips of a mere man, but from the mouth of Incarnate God:

> 'Weistu und solt ia wissen, das unser text "Das ist mein leib" etc. ist nicht von menschen, sondern von

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13. The forma consecrationis from the Canon of the Mass runs as follows: 'Qui pridie quam pateretur, accepit panem in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas, et elevatis oculis in coelum ad te Deum Patrem suum omnipotentem, tibi gratias agens, benedixit, fregit, deditque discipulis suis, dicens: Accipite et manducate ex hoc omnes. Hoc est enim corpus meum. Simili modo postquam coenatum est accipiens et hunc praeclarum calicem in sanctas ac venerabiles manus suas, item tibi gratias agens, benedixit deditque discipulis suis, dicens: Accipite et bibite ex eo omnes. Hic est enim calix sanguinis mei, novi et aeterni testamenti, mysterium fidei, qui pro vobis et pro multis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum. Haec quotiescumque feceritis, in mei memoriam facietis.'

14. De sacr. alt. myst. IV, 5 (MPL 217. 858 BC); quoted in Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 13, n. 14.

15. cf. Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 17f.

> Gott selbst aus seinem eigen munde mit solchen buchstaben und worten gesprochen und gesetzt.' (16)

Secondly, the divergences in wording among the four accounts may not be understood to betoken any doctrinal pluralism within the primitive Church on the question of the real presence. The axiom of the plenary inspiration of the sacred text dictates that a single sense must be discerned within the varying phraseology employed by the several New Testament writers. Luther concedes that S. Mark's statement (Mk. 14: 23) that the Apostles all drank of the chalice before Jesus pronounced the words, 'This is my blood of the new testament, which is poured out for many' (Mk. 14:24), may well have acted as the catalyst which set Dr. Karlstadt off on his wildgoose chase with the demonstrative pronoun 'This'.[17] Against the possible implications of S. Mark's account here must be set the fact that the other Evangelists write differently, as indeed does the Second Evangelist himself with reference to the first part of the Sacrament.[18] After all, S. Mark simply 'kan nicht widder sich selbs und widder die andern alle sein'.[19] The unanimity of the New Testament writers in their transmission of the bread-saying was to afford great satisfaction to the Reformer in 1525:

> 'Auffs erste kan ja niemant leucken, das die drey Euangelisten, Mattheus, Marcus, Lucas, auch Paulus

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16. WA 26. 446, 1-3.

17. WA 26. 454, 22-25.

18. ibid., 26-31.

19. ibid., 32.

> dazu I Cor. 11, da sie vom ersten teyl des Sacraments eyntrechtiglich schreyben, auch fast mit eynerley worten.' (20)

This confidence would be sharply reiterated three years later, acting as a first line of defence against the suggestion that the differences in wording between the version of the cup-saying given by SS. Matthew and Mark, on the one hand, and that transmitted by SS. Luke and Paul, on the other, might perhaps betoken a difference of underlying sense among the New Testament writers.[21] As far as Luther is concerned, the identity of sense between the Lucan-cum-Pauline 'This cup is the new testament in my blood' and the Matthaean-cum-Marcan 'This is my blood of the new testament' is quite simply an a priori given: 'Denn sie müssen nicht widdernander, sondern miteynander eyner meynung seyn.'[22] The Reformer was able to draw on his developing skills as a Hebraist in explaining the discrepancies in phraseology between the first two Evangelists, on the one hand, and the Third Evangelist and S. Paul, on the other, in their account of the cup-saying. Thus he chides anyone who would be so foolish as to construe the Lucan cup-saying to mean that the chalice is 'in' the blood of Christ in the same way as a countryman stands 'in' his boots or meat lies 'in' a pot.[23] The

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20. WA 18. 164, 31-34.

21. WA 26. 459, 31-460, 10.

22. WA 26. 464, 14-15.

23. ibid., 21-24: 'Daraus folget, das grobe hempel sind, die aus den worten Luce schliessen wöllen: Es müsse der becher ym blut stehen, wo wir seinen worten, wie sie lauten, folgen wöllen, weil er spricht: "Der becher, das newe testament ynn meynem blut", denn sie dencken, "ym blut" heisse hie gleich wie ein bawer ynn stieffeln odder fleisch ynn dem topffen ist.'

solution to the riddle, surmises Luther, is to be found in S. Luke's predilection for the Hebrew idiom. His ἐν is therefore parallel to the highly versatile Hebrew בְּ. The Reformer raids the Old Testament to demonstrate:

> 'das "Inn" auf Ebreisch eine weitleufftige deutung hat, doch also, das es gleichwol anzeige, das ding müsse gegenwertig da sein, davon es redet.' (24)

It would seem that SS. Luke and Paul have adhered most closely to the ipsissima verba, while SS. Matthew and Mark have most successfully contrived to capture the ipsissima vox Jesu for the benefit of the Gentile reader:

> 'Mir gefelt aber Lucas mit S. Paulo bas, das sie die Ebreische weise zu reden an diesem ort steiff behalten haben, denn Mattheus und Marcus die es auff Griechische weise ausgesprochen haben, auff das man die wort Christi deste eigentlicher hette und den künfftigen rotten steuren möchte.' (25)

In his consideration of the several New Testament reports of the institution, the Reformer displayed his keen awareness of the close similarities, as well as of the slight differences, between the Matthaean and Marcan accounts. Surprisingly enough, the relationship between the first two Synoptic accounts is not even mentioned in Luther's ostensible discussion of Mt. 26: 26-28, which is completely swallowed up by a rumbustious tirade

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24. ibid., 35-36. cf. the preceding argument, ibid., 28-34: 'Lucas aber redet (wie er offt pflegt) Ebreischer weise, Denn so redet die Ebreische sprache, psal. 77: "Ihre priester fielen ym schwerd", das ist, sie fielen durchs schwerd. Item: "Die Fürsten sind ynn yhren henden erhenckt" Tren. 4, das ist, bey den henden auffgehenckt. Item: "Wir trincken unser wasser ynn gelt", das ist, umb gelt. Item: Die knaben fielen ym holtz, das ist, sie fielen unter dem holtz, das sie tragen musten. Item Hosee: Jacob dienet ynn Rachel, das ist, umb Rachel und des gleichen viel.'

25. WA 26. 465, 30-33. cf. also ibid., 16-18: 'Denn

against the Schwärmer.[26] These unruly spirits, alleges the Reformer, have deliberately resolved that the text of the Supper shall not be suffered to stand in its pristine integrity and clarity. By cunningly taking their separate paths to undermine each cardinal ingredient of Jesus' words of promise (Hoc -- est -- corpus meum), the Schwärmer in fact join forces to destroy the unitary sense of the verba testamenti just as surely as the miraculous draught of fishes succeeded in tearing S. Peter's net.[27] Turning to the Marcan account, Luther eschews rhetorical excess in favour of getting down to business. Already in 1521 a misplaced confidence in Erasmus' edition of the Greek New Testament had prompted the Reformer unjustly to inculpate the Vulgate translator of Matthew of mistranslation in virtue of having rendered the allegedly original εὐχαριστήσας by benedixit (Mt. 26: 26).[28] Still confident in 1528 of the genuineness of εὐχαριστήσας in the Matthaean bread-saying, and presupposing - in keeping with ancient tradition - the priority of S. Matthew's Gospel, Luther is puzzled at S. Mark's alteration of εὐχαριστήσας into

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da Mattheus spricht auff Griechische weise, Das ist mein blut des newen testaments, spricht Lucas auff Ebreische sprache, Das ist das newe testament ynn meinem blut.'

26. WA 26. 448, 26-453, 32.

27. WA 26. 452, 36-453, 7: 'Nu ists ia gewis, das die schwermer bey sich beschlossen haben, sie wollen sich nicht halten lassen, Das beweysen sie damit, das sie diesen einfeltigen text so manchfeltig zu boren und zu löchern, Einer will zum Tuto ein loch hindurch machen, der ander durchs "Ist", der dritte durch "Mein leib", die andern sonst und so, wie die fische das netze S. Petri zurissen.'

28. WA 8. 432, 5-11 (De abroganda missa privata).

εὐλογήσας . Notwithstanding the variant terminology, the Reformer deems 'bless' a synonym for 'give thanks' in this context: S. Mark 'wolle segen und dancken fur ein ding haben'.[29] The putative priority of Matthew likewise caused Luther to suppose that S. Mark changed S. Matthew's imperative 'Drink of it, all of you' (Mt. 26:27) into the indicative 'and they all drank of it' (Mk. 14:23).[30] Apart from these trifling differences, and notwithstanding the specifically Matthaean (and later Lutheran) stress on 'my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the remission of sins' (Mt. 26: 28), the Reformer notes the kinship between the Matthaean and Marcan accounts.[31] Already in 1521 Luther had taken cognisance of the equally close relationship between the Lucan and Pauline reports: 'Vide, ut Lucas cum Paulo pene per singula verba consentiat.'[32] As the developments of the mid-1520s

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29. WA 26. 459, 13-17: 'Widderumb Marcus, da er vom brod redet, spricht er "Eulogesas", das ist, "Er segenet es", da doch die andern allenthalben sagen "Eucharistesas", das ist, "Er danckt", Wie er selbs, Marcus, bey dem becher auch thut, Das michs dünckt: Er wolle segen und dancken fur ein ding haben.'

30. WA 26. 454, 33-455, 19: 'Aber mich wundert gleich wol, wie es kompt, das allein S. Marcus dis stück schreibt: "Und sie truncken alle draus", Und thuts dazu eben gleich an dem ort, da Mattheus ynn seym text schreibt: "Trincket alle draus", das es aus der massen stark scheinet, als sey der text in S. Marco verendert und aus "Piete" "Epion" gemacht.'

31. so ibid., 19-21: 'Denn wo "piete" hie stünde, so were es gleich ein text mit S. Mattheo, mit welchem doch sonst S. Marcus pflegt zu stimmen.' cf. also WA 26. 459, 11-13: 'Also haben wir, das Mattheus und Marcus uber ein stymmen und beide auffs einfeltigst und schier einerley wort reden, on das Mattheus am ende hinzu setzt dieses stücke "zur vergebung der sunden".'

32. WA 8. 432, 26-27.

obliged him to furnish a cogent defence of the biblical basis of the doctrine of the real presence, the Reformer was driven to rely increasingly on the Lucan and Pauline over against the Matthaean and Marcan institution narratives. For - with respect to the first two Evangelists, at any rate - Luther could not have withheld approval from Aquinas' contention that, 'The Gospel writers did not intend to hand on formas sacramentorum' (see n. 11 above). After all, SS. Matthew and Mark fail to point out that the Lord commanded his disciples to repeat the celebration of the Eucharist! At a pinch the Reformer will concede that the injunction to continue the celebration of the Holy Supper could just possibly be extracted from Jesus' omnium gatherum exhortation in Mt. 28:20, but this would be a flimsy foundation indeed on which to build the binding article of faith which encapsulates the central means of grace that sustains the Church's life. Only the Third Evangelist and S. Paul relate Christ's command to celebrate the Holy Eucharist after his return to the Father. Luther is not entirely certain whether S. Luke's account of the institution would of itself provide sufficient warrant for the Church's liturgical practice: on the one hand, the beloved physician could be taken to imply that Christ intended his Eucharist to be enjoyed exclusively within the fellowship of the Apostles;[33] on the other, the sufficiency of the Lucan account can be concisely and

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33. WA 26. 473, 9-21: 'Aber das ist gleich wol war, wie unvolkomen Mattheus und Marcus das abendmal beschreiben, müssen wir daraus mercken, Das, wo nicht Lucas und Paulus weren, so kündten wir dis sacrament nicht haben, Denn Mattheus und Marcus schreyben nicht, das uns Christus habe heissen hynnach thun und auch also halten, Und

unreservedly confessed.[34]

The distinctive virtues of S. Luke enabled Luther to produce a somewhat breathtaking argument for the real presence without reference to the words of institution. The Reformer here managed to pull off a syllogistic coup by highlighting the disjunction between the newly celebrated Eucharist and the foregoing Passover meal in conjunction with a timely recourse to S. Luke's opening claim to have written an 'orderly account' (Lk. 1:3) of the Gospel history. In Part Two of the treatise of 1528, Luther could begin to point to the distinction between the Passover meal and the Lord's Supper already with reference to the Matthaean and Marcan narratives. The stress laid by the first two Evangelists on the fact that, in the first Eucharist of the Last Supper, the Apostles all drank from one cup is interpreted by the Reformer as indicative of the Evangelists' firm intention to differentiate between the several vessels of wine which doubtless stood on the table for common use as Christ and his Apostles kept the Passover for the last time and the chalice of his blood.[35]

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mustens also lassen bleiben als eyn ander geschicht Christi mit seinen iüngern, die wir nicht kundten odder musten nach thun. Aber Lucas und Paulus schreyben, Christus habe solchs uns alle auch heissen thun. Ja wenn Paulus nicht were, so kündte uns auch Lucas nicht gnug thun, als der allein von den Aposteln möcht verstanden werden, das sie solten Christo solchs nach thun, Es were denn, das ynn Mattheo am letzten das ettwas thette, da Christus spricht: "leret sie halten, was ich euch befolhen habe". Aber obs gnug sein würde, weis ich nicht, Paulus ist der rechte lerer und Apostel unter uns heiden gesand.'

34. WA 26. 460, 16-17: 'Wer yhm wolt sagen lassen, der hette allein an S. Lucas gnug ynn dieser sachen, so klerlich und fein redet er vom abendmal.'

35. WA 26. 456, 21-29: 'Also mag Mattheus und Marcus

But it was the meticulous Third Evangelist who had underlined most unmistakably the caesura between old Passover and new Eucharist. For S. Luke records Christ's distribution of a valedictory cup to the Apostles at the end of their Passover celebration, a gesture in which Luther sees the true Passover Lamb bid farewell to the figure of the Law.[36] Even though the words spoken by Christ at this juncture (according to S. Luke) had earlier been placed by SS. Matthew and Mark at the end of the institution narrative (Mt. 26:29; Mk. 14:25), the Reformer is not in the least perturbed. For since S. Luke alone among the Evangelists pledged to write an 'orderly account' of the life of Christ, there is nothing sacrosanct about the chronology of the first two Gospels:

> 'S. Lucas ym anfang seines Euangelii bezeuget, das er wolle von forn an und ordenlich schreyben, Und das beweyset er auch mit der that, denn sein Euangelion gehet fein auffeinander bis ans ende, wie alle wellt zeuget. Aber solchs hat Mattheus und Marcus nicht verheissen.' (37)

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von diesem sonderlichen becher auch verstanden werden, das die Apostel sonst uber tisch ein iglicher fur sich einen becher gehabt, odder doch ia mehr denn ein becher gewest sey, Aber hie, da er einen newen sonderlichen trunck seines bluts gibt, heist er sie alle aus diesem einigen becher trincken, das also mit darreichen und sonderlicher geberde Christus seinen eigen becher nympt und allen draus gibt uber die andern gemeinen becher uber tissche, dabey sie deste besser drauff merckten, wie es ein sonderlicher tranck were uber die andern trůncke, so die malzeit uber gegeben wurden.' cf. also WA 26. 455, 21-29.

36. WA 26. 455, 29-456, 20; esp. 456, 18-20: 'Aber dieser becher zur letze ward gegeben, das sie alle aus dem selbigen truncken, damit dem allten Osterlam Valete gegeben.'

37. WA 26. 460, 39-461, 2.

The argument which Luther now goes on to produce for the real presence depends on a number of ifs, including the authenticity of the longer version of the Lucan institution narrative and the conviction that Christ himself partook of both the farewell cup and the eucharistic elements. That Jesus himself shared in the parting cup is simply asserted.[38] In 1521 the issue of whether or not the Lord ate and drank his own body and blood was very much an open question for the Reformer: the Evangelists and S. Paul 'Tacent vero, an et ipse comederit et biberit cum eis'.[39] By 1528, however, Luther was to undergo a change of heart, echoing Aquinas' opinion[40] in his insistence that:

> 'so die iüngern haben nach dem letze trunck des herrn blut getruncken, wird er on zweivel mit yhn getruncken haben.' (41)

Should all these assumptions prove well founded, then the contention that the eucharistic chalice contained mere wine would involve an outright denial of Jesus' truthfulness. For had he not assured the Apostles, in the moments before his institution of the Sacrament of the Altar, that 'from now on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes'? The Reformer was swift to draw the appropriate conclusion:

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38. WA 26. 462, 20-22: 'Es stehet nicht geschrieben, das er den letze trunck gethan haben, dennoch wird er denselbigen nicht den iüngern alleine gegeben, sondern auch mit getruncken haben.'

39. WA 8. 438, 13-15.

40. see Summa Theologica III, qu. 81, art 1: 'Utrum Christus sumpserit suum corpus et sanguinem.'

41. WA 26. 462, 24-25.

> 'Helt Lucas die rechte ordnung (als itzt beweiset ist), so trincket Christus den letzetrunck weins fur dem newen abendmal. Trinckt er aber den letze trunck weins fur dem newen abendmal, so kan ym abendmal nicht schlechter eytel wein getruncken werden. Denn seine wort stehen klerlich da, das er spricht: Er wölle nicht mehr nach diesem trunck vom gewechs des weinstocks trincken.' (42)

Luther shows no dismay in the face of the possible counter-argument that his chain of reasoning is entirely in keeping with the Roman doctrine of transubstantiation: rather 'pure blood with the Pope than pure wine with the Schwärmer'.[43] The Reformer is firmly convinced that the bodily presence of Christ in the elements is stoutly attested in the reports of the first celebration of the Eucharist, especially when due attention is given to the gestures by which the Lord distinguished his Supper from the foregoing and now superseded Passover celebration. First, one must pay due heed to the demarcation given in the 'farewell drink'.[44] Secondly, one must observe the distinction of the single eucharistic loaf from the bread consumed at the Passover meal, along with Jesus' solemn words, 'This is my body'. In his reconstruction of the first Eucharist, Luther cannot resist an unfavourable comparison of the rationalist Schwärmer with the faithful Apostles:

> 'Hie schweigen sie still und gleuben einfeltiglich, keiner fragt, wie brod leib sein müge.' (45)

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42. WA 26. 461, 36-40.

43. see WA 26. 461, 41-462, 5.

44. WA 26. 457, 20-27.

45. ibid., 28-35.

And, thirdly, one must be awed by Jesus' distribution of a cup whose contents he identifies with his blood.[46]

2. Hoc

With the exception of Dr. Karlstadt, Protestant exegetes have generally maintained that the demonstrative pronoun with which the bread-saying begins refers unambiguously to the bread that Jesus held in his hands. The modern non-Roman Catholic student may therefore be surprised to learn that the typical scholastic reaction to this seemingly self-evident proposition would be a cautionary 'Yes, but'. Two interrelated factors form the background to scholastic unease at the glib equation of Hoc with panis. In the first place, the theologians of the Western Church had, since 1215, been obliged to present the doctrine of the real presence in terms of the theory of transubstantiation. Since - by definition - the substance of bread was annihilated and superseded by the substance of the Lord's body as the last syllable of the forma consecrationis was recited, the logical status of the words of institution was clearly a special case. Secondly, the effect of the Aristotle Renaissance on theology was to inculcate a reverence for logic which tended to gloss over the paradoxical theses of the faith in favour of a smoothly straightforward statement of doctrine. Now Aristotle held that the truthfulness of a statement is contingent on the univocal identity of its subject and predicate,[1] and the schoolmen's testing of the words of institution against the yardstick of this logical principle forms the back-

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46. WA 26. 457, 35-458, 18.

1. see his Organon, chs. 6 and 10.

cloth against which the distinctiveness of Luther's interpretation of Hoc becomes apparent. In short, the Reformer held that the intervention of 'untimely logic'[2] in the exegesis of the eucharistic words would lead the interpreter to tone down the paradox contained in Jesus' identification of two such disparate entities as bread and his body by accommodating the subject to the predicate, or vice versa. It is appropriate here to allude to two diametrically opposed results of the scholastic examination of the verba testamenti in the light of Aristotelian logic.

Thomas Aquinas was too faithful an Aristotelian to stomach the view that the words of institution propose a paradox, and he forthrightly dismissed what would later become a typically Lutheran formula: 'Sed haec est falsa, "Panis est corpus Christi".'[3] The alternative understanding of Jesus' words as a mere tautology was ruled out by the fact that they are not only true, as spoken by the one who claims to be the Truth,[4] but also efficacious, as the Church's forma consecrationis. While the Hoc denotes the body of Christ after the forma has been recited, prior to the consecration it refers merely to what will become the body of Christ. Given that the miracle of the real presence is apt to wreak havoc with the laws of logic, it is impossible to withhold sympathy from the scholastic plight as expressed by Gabriel Biel: 'Videtur enim difficile salvare quod

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2. 'die unzeitige Logica': WA 26. 443, 8-9.

3. ST III, qu. 78, art. 5, 1.

4. S. Thomas begins the Sed contra of the above-quoted Quaestio with an appeal to Jn. 14:6.

locutio Christi est vera et simul conversiva.'[5] Aquinas' own definition of the sense of Hoc is given in his Quaestio 'de veritate locutionis'. Given that Jesus' locutio has not only a 'vis significativa' like other speech, but also a 'vis factiva' in its consecratory aspect, it behoves the interpreter to expound the eucharistic words 'secundum ultimum instans prolationis verborum' (namely, from the perspective of the moment of transubstantiation). The subject of the sentence, contends Thomas, is neither the 'terminus conversionis' (in which case the statement would become a tautology: 'scilicet quod corpus Christi sit corpus Christi') nor 'illud quod fuit ante conversionem, scilicet panis':

> 'sed id quod communiter se habet quantum ad utrumque, scilicet contentum in generali sub istis speciebus.'

Christ deliberately refrained from expressing the subject of the sentence with a clear-cut noun, the looser pronoun being more apt to capture the 'substantia in communi':

> 'Et ideo signanter non dicit Dominus, "Hic panis est corpus meum", quod esset secundum intellectum secundae opinionis; neque, "Hoc corpus meum est corpus meum", quod esset secundum intellectum tertiae; sed in generali, "Hoc est corpus meum", nullo nomine apposito ex parte subjecti, sed solo pronomine, quod significat substantiam in communi sine qualitate, idest forma determinata.' (6)

Thomas' solution of naming a universal substance underlying both the substance of the bread and the substance of the body of Christ as the subject of the locutio Christi did not find unanimous acceptance among his suc-

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5. Sacri canonis missae expositio, Lec. 48L; quoted in Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 43, n. 129a.

6. ST III, qu. 78, art. 5.

cessors. Rather, the discussion of his proposed solution made it clear that the Hoc must be expounded with reference to both the bread and the body of Christ. Dr. Hilgenfeld summarises the relevant factors that informed the debate:

> 'On account of the veritas locutionis, it is impossible for the hoc to denote in any direct or simple way either the substance of the bread or its accidents. On the other hand, should one suppose the conversion of the elements to be wrought through the speaking of the words of institution, then these must name both the starting-point (terminus a quo) and the goal (terminus ad quem) of the conversion; the words of institution may not, therefore, be a mere tautology. As far as the approved scholastic theologians are concerned, the goal of the conversion is crystal clear: it is the corpus Christi. The starting-point, though, is the substance of the bread. Hence the substance of the bread must be designated by the hoc of the words of consecration in such a way that the latter retain their truthfulness as a sentence.' (7)

Thomas of Strassburg (d. 1357) agreed with the opinion earlier expressed by Richard of S. Victor (d. 1173) that the demonstrative pronoun discharges a twofold task, directing the senses to the bread and the understanding to the body of Christ:

> 'Alii dicunt, quod est demonstratio mixta, quia partim est ad intellectum et partim ad sensum, ut sit sensus: "Hoc est corpus meum", id est illud, in quod istud est transmutandum, est corpus meum.' (8)

Echoing this position, Gabriel Biel (d. 1495) urged that while, in absolute terms, Hoc denotes corpus, the usage

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7. op.cit., p. 45.

8. Sent. IV, dist. 8, art. 2, ad 4; quoted in Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 45, n. 137.

of the speaker nevertheless causes it unmistakably to connote the tangible panis.[9]

Expounding the words of institution in the light of Aristotelian logic, the mainline scholastic theologians had been careful to interpret the subject of the bread-saying in terms of the predicate, thereby safeguarding the dogma of the real presence as it had been defined by the Church's teaching office. Should papal-cum-conciliar authority be disregarded, however, then the same Aristotelian principle could be applied to the eucharistic words from the perspective of their subject, so that, while Hoc is taken to refer unequivocally to the panis which Jesus held in his hands, the host meanwhile must be considered to be only in a qualified sense the corpus Christi. This ecclesiastically proscribed option was in fact taken, in the last years of his life, by the English adherent of the via antiqua, John Wycliffe (d. 1384). In his Dialogorum libri quattuor, Wycliffe succumbed to polemical hyperbole, unjustly picturing the majority of scholastic theologians as teaching 'quod istud pronomen "hoc" ...demonstrat simpliciter corpus domini et non panem'.[10] Wycliffe had little difficulty in demolishing this somewhat caricatured account of the Church's official teaching, pointing out that the two occurrences of the demonstrative pronoun in the forma consecrationis of the Canon Missae clearly

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9. see Hilgenfeld op.cit., p. 46. n.b. this author's judgement that 'Die von Richard von St. Victor gebrachte und von Biel begründete Lösung der demonstratio mixta brauchte nur geringfügig verändert zu werden, um mit ihr logisch möglich ein Nebeneinanderexistieren der Substanzen des Brotes und Leibes auszusagen' (ibid.).

10. IV, 3; quoted in Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 47, n. 144.

denote the bread, a point of view which is authoritatively reinforced by S. Paul's words in I Cor. 11:26 - 'as often as you eat of this bread'.[11] Having secured the identity of Hoc with panis, it only remained for Wycliffe to establish in what sense the panis is also the corpus Christi. Intent as he was to accept fully the authority of Christ and of Scripture, Wycliffe was moved to confess 'quod iste panis, qui est hoc sacramentum, est veraciter corpus Christi'.[12] But, given his insistence on interpreting this esse veraciter in terms of Aristotelian logic, Wycliffe's use of traditional realistic terminology in conjunction with the stout identification of Hoc with panis could not be the same as Luther's teaching of the co-existence of bread and wine with the glorified body and blood of Christ. Wycliffe's concern was to prove that, since Hoc unmistakably refers to actual bread, anything but a figurative understanding of corpus would necessarily involve our making God a liar in his inspired Word.[13] Wycliffe was able to uphold his concession 'quod iste panis ... est veraciter corpus Christi' by distinguishing various kinds of predication. Wycliffe noted three kinds of praedicatio - 'formalis, essentialis et habitudinalis' -, urging that only the last-named is appropriate in the case of the Eucharist.[14] The nature of a praedicatio

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11. ibid.; quoted in Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 48, n. 145.

12. IV, 4; quoted in Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 49, n. 153.

13. IV, 4; quoted in Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 50, n. 156.

14. IV, 7; quoted in Hilgenfeld: ibid., n. 157.

habitudinalis is explained by considering two apparently contradictory scriptural statements about John the Baptist. In Jn. 1:21 the latter confesses, 'I am not' Elijah, while our Lord himself states in Mt. 11:14, 'He is Elijah'. Wycliffe sought to resolve the difficulty by distinguishing between the various kinds of predication at work in these inspired statements:

> 'Unus enim intelligit, quod est Helias figuraliter, et alius quod non est Helias personaliter.' (15)

'Christ's testimony about John is such a praedicatio habitudinalis.'[16] Other scriptural examples of praedicatio habitudinalis, according to Wycliffe, are to be found in the statement of I Cor. 10:4 that 'the rock was Christ' and in Joseph's explanation (Gen. 41) that the seven good cows and the seven good ears of grain of Pharaoh's dream 'are' seven good years.[17] While a praedicatio essentialis vel formalis is a statement where the predicate tells us something about the essence of the subject, a praedicatio habitudinalis does not touch on the essence of the subject. Rather, in the case of a praedicatio habitudinalis it is true to say that the predicate is not identical with but similar to the subject.[18] Wycliffe admitted the legitimacy of the Church's est language concerning Jesus Christ being taken in the full sense of a praedicatio identifica (essentia-

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15. IV, 4; quoted in Hilgenfeld ibid., n. 157a.

16. Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 50.

17. IV, 7; quoted in Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 51, n. 158. Hilgenfeld appositely comments that these are 'alles Stellen, die Honius und die Schweizer später für das uneigentliche Verständnis der Einsetzungsworte zitieren werden' (p. 50).

18. IV, 7; quoted in Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 51, n. 158. Hilgenfeld remarks of the praedicatio habitudinalis

lis, formalis): on account of the subsistence of the assumed manhood of Christ in the person of the Eternal Son, it is proper to confess unreservedly that this man is God, and vice versa.[19] A praedicatio identifica is impossible in the case of the eucharistic words, according to Wycliffe, first, because it would contradict the plain association of Hoc with panis, and, secondly, because, if true, it would entail a communicatio idiomatum between the elements and the Lord's body and blood which Wycliffe deemed unacceptable.[20] It is striking that, in his refutation of the doctrine of the real presence, Wycliffe 'argued with the same weapons as were employed by his opponents. ...He subjected scriptural propositions to the same logical rule as did his opponents'.[21] Wycliffe appears here as a scholastic, not as a reformer.[22]

We now turn to Luther's discussion of the demonstrative pronoun Hoc in his eucharistic writings of 1520, 1525 and 1528. By refusing to justify the Word of God according to the rules of profane logic and insisting

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that 'Die Prädikation kann aber erfolgen, weil zwischen Subjekt und Prädikat eine Verhältnisähnlichkeit besteht' (p. 51).

19. IV, 7; quoted in Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 52, n. 164.

20. cf. Hilgenfeld: ibid.

21. 'Natürlich argumentiert er wie seine kirchlich approbierten Gegner mit demselben Rüstzeug. Auch für ihn steht fest, dass das Brot nicht der Leib Christi sein kann, weil er wie seine Gegner die Sätze der Schrift derselben logischen Regel unterwirft': Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 53.

22. cf. Sasse: This is my body, p. 53.

that the words of institution must be interpreted in the light of God's reason-transcending revelation and gift of himself in Christ, and in terms of the actual speech of the man in the street, the Reformer was able to preserve the positive statements of both the main-line scholastic theologians and their odd man out, John Wycliffe.

(a) de captivitate babylonica Ecclesiae (1520)

Falsely supposing the theory of transubstantiation to have originated in the thirteenth century, Luther surmises that the Church held to a theologically correct profession of the real presence for more than twelve hundred years. In the intervening period, however, the Church has fallen under the baleful influence of the pagan philosopher Aristotle.[23] When S. Thomas Aquinas appears as the villain of the piece and incurs the Reformer's sympathy for being such an inept interpreter of Aristotle,[24] it is clear that Luther writes here not only as one who would renew biblical theology within the Church, but also as a partisan of an anti-Thomist school of theology. The Reformer is quite prepared to tolerate those who would hold the theory of transubstantiation as a pious opinion,[25] but, if this highly questionable theologoumenon is decked out as a binding article of faith, Luther will pillory it as a definition of the Aristotelian-Thomistic as opposed to the Christian Church.[26]

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23. WA 6. 509, 27-34.

24. WA 6. 508, 12, 17, 20-26.

25. ibid., 19-20, 27-31.

26. ibid., 12-13.

Two factors have combined to prompt the Reformer to abandon the officially promulgated doctrine of transubstantiation. First, he cannot withhold his approval from Pierre d'Ailly's argument that a putative annihilation of the substances of bread and wine would involve a wholly superfluous breach of the principle of economy: the real presence can be just as fully confessed while supposing the substances of bread and wine to remain intact as it can in terms of the theory of transubstantiation.[27] Secondly, and decisively, Luther is convinced that the viewpoint circumspectly aired by d'Ailly faithfully represents the doctrine of the New Testament. If we devoutly understand Scripture in its 'simplest, ...grammatical and proper sense',[28] then the joint testimony of the Gospels, the Acts and S. Paul in First Corinthians will leave no room for doubt that the consecrated elements remain, among other things, genuine bread and wine:

> 'Ita et hic, cum Euangelistae clare scribant, Christum accepisse panem ac benedixisse, et actuum

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27. WA 6. 508, 9-11, 14-16: 'D. Cardinalis Camaracensis ..., acutissime disputans, multo probabilius esse et minus superfluorum miraculorum poni, si in altari verus panis verumque vinum, non autem sola accidentia esse astruerentur, nisi Ecclesia determinasset contrarium. ...tandem stabilivi conscientiam meam sententia priore, Esse videlicet verum panem verumque vinum, in quibus Christi vera caro verusque sanguis non aliter nec minus sit quam illi sub accidentibus suis ponunt.'

28. WA 6. 509, 8-13: 'Est autem meae sententiae ratio magna, imprimis illa, quod verbis divinis non est ulla facienda vis, neque per hominem neque per angelum, sed quantum fieri potest in simplicissima significatione servanda sunt, et nisi manifesta circumstantia cogat, extra grammaticam et propriam accipienda non sunt, ne detur adversariis occasio universam scripturam eludendi.'

liber et Paulus Apostolus panem deinceps appellent, verum oportet intelligi panem verumque vinum, sicut verum calicem (non enim calicem transsubstantiari etiam ipsi dicunt), transsubstantiationem vero potestate divina factam, cum non sit necesse poni, pro figmento humanae opinionis haberi, quia nulla scriptura nulla ratione nititur, ut videbimus.' (29)

In the treatise de captivitate babylonica, Luther counters the scholastic exegesis of the words of institution in terms of Aristotelian logic with a mixture of misrepresentation, ridicule and disciplined theological reasoning. He refers explicitly to the scholastics' reliance on Aristotle's principle of the univocal identity of subject and predicate, (although, since he quotes the Stagirite from the Summa compendiaria totius logicae of his Erfurt teacher Usingen, the Reformer wrongly alludes to the Metaphysics rather than to the Organon).[30] Alas, like Wycliffe before him, Luther permits polemic to triumph over honesty by unjustly inculpating the advocates of transubstantiation of understanding the bread-saying as a pure tautology, ascribing to them the view that 'subiectum non posse pro pane supponere sed pro corpore Christi'.[31] As has been indicated above, there is no evidence that any scholastic ever propounded this opinion. But Luther's critique of transubstantiation

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29. ibid., 15-21.

30. see Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 55, n. 171.

31. WA 6. 510, 25-30: 'At dicent forte, Ex Aristotele doceri subiectum et praedicatum propositionis affirmativae debere pro eodem supponere, seu (ut bestiae ipsius verba ex vi. metaphysicorum) "Ad affirmativam requiritur extremorum compositio", quam illi exponunt pro eodem suppositionem: quare, dum dico "hoc est corpus meum", subiectum non posse pro pane supponere sed pro corpore Christi.'

was not exhausted in a single sentence of caricature. Rather, he momentarily accepts Aristotelian logic for the sake of argument, executing a reductio ad absurdum in order to convict the scholastics of not going far enough. Recalling that Aristotle deemed all kinds of accidents capable of functioning as the subject of a statement (even though, admittedly, he thought of substance as the primary subject), the Reformer reasons that, if the scholastics are right to avoid identifying the substance of the bread with the body of Christ, then they ought to be equally concerned to avert an identification of the latter with the accidents of the bread. If transubstantiation must be posited for the sake of the veritas locutionis, why not trans-accidentation also?[32] Again, if it is considered unseemly for the body of Christ to co-exist with the substance of bread in the case of the consecrated host, would it not be advisable to postulate an annihilation of the competing substance in other, extra-eucharistic instances where the presence of the body of Christ had overlapped with that of another material object? Luther alludes to the traditional pious opinion that the virginal womb of the Mother of God was unimpaired by the birth of her Son. Should we suppose the substance of blessed Mary's

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32. WA 6. 510, 36-511, 6: 'Verum quid ad Aristotelem dicunt, qui subiectum omnibus praedicamentis accidentium tribuit, licet substantiam velit esse primum subiectum? Unde apud eum "hoc album", "hoc magnum", hoc aliquid" sunt subiecta, de quibus aliquid praedicatur. Quae si vera sunt, Quaero: si ideo est transsubstantiatio ponenda, ne corpus Christi de pane verificetur, cur non etiam ponitur transaccidentatio, ne corpus Christi de accidente affirmetur? Nam idem periculum manet, si per subiectum intelligat quis "hoc album vel hoc rotundum est corpus meum", et qua ratione transsubstantiatio

inviolate hymen to have been annihilated - 'seu, ut aptius dici volunt, transsubstantiatam' -, so that the infant Christ passed through its accidents only? And must we assume a similar annihilation of obstructing substance to have taken place when the newly resurrected Christ passed through the stone which sealed his tomb and through the closed doors behind which his fearful disciples took refuge?[33] The Reformer is quite unimpressed by the argument that a putative annihilation of the substances of bread and wine would avert the peril of idolatry of the creature in the event of adoration of the eucharistic Christ: there is the same danger of idolatry being committed towards the unchanged accidents as towards the invisible substance of bread. And it is quite obvious that the people adore neither the substance nor the accidents of the bread, 'but the Christ who is hidden within them'. Moreover, it is notorious that 'the subtle philosophy of substance and accidents' is above the head of the average layman,[34]

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ponitur, ponenda est et transaccidentatio propter suppositionem istam extremorum pro eodem.'

33. WA 6. 510, 9-13: 'Quid facient? Christus ex utero matris natus creditur illeso. Dicant et hic, carnem illam virginis interim fuisse annihilatam seu, ut aptius dici volunt, transsubstantiatam, ut Christus, in accidentibus eius involutus, tandem per accidentia prodiret. Idem dicendum erit de ianua clausa et ostio monumenti clauso, per quae illesa intravit et exivit.'

34. WA 6. 509, 35-510, 3: 'Dicent fortassis, periculum Idolatriae cogere, ut non sit panis et vinum vere. Ridiculum hoc valde, cum subtilem philosophiam de substantia et accidentibus laici nunquam cognoverint nec, si docerentur, capere possint, et idem sit periculum salvis accidentibus quae vident, quod in substantia quam non vident. Si enim accidentia non adorant sed latentem ibi Christum, cur adorarent panem, quem non vident?'

and not even the philosopher can determine with certainty what is substance, and what accident.[35]

There is an element of ecclesiastical populism in Luther's delight that the laity have retained a 'simple faith' in the real presence without bothering their heads with Aristotelian logic.[36] For his part, the Reformer will eschew speculation, preferring 'to take his intellect captive to the obedience of Christ, simply clinging to his words'. Fidelity to the words of the God-man without regard to the canons of profane logic prompts Luther to capture the sense of the bread-saying with a paraphrase that had been rejected by S. Thomas Aquinas:

> Ego sane, si non possum consequi, quo modo panis sit corpus Christi, captivabo tamen intellectum meum in obsequium Christi, et verbis eius simpliciter inhaerens credo firmiter, non modo corpus Christi esse in pane sed panem esse corpus Christi.' (37)

Such is the Reformer's understanding of the Pauline account of the institution of the Holy Supper. The scholastic dilemma over the demonstrative pronoun has now vanished, as Luther parenthetically clarifies 'hoc (id est hic panis, quem acceperat et fregerat)'.[38] The Reformer fancies that the scholastic appeal to the inde-

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35. WA 6. 510, 13-17: 'Sed hinc nata est Babylonia illa philosophiae istius de quantitate continua distincta a substantia, donec eo ventum sit, ut ignorent et ipsi, quae sint accidentia, et quae substantia. Nam quis certo monstravit unquam, calorem, colorem, frigus, lucem, pondus, figuras esse accidentia?'

36. ibid., 20-21: 'Et plane gaudeo, saltem apud vulgum relictam esse simplicem fidem sacramenti huius.'

37. WA 6. 511, 18-21.

38. ibid., 22-23. Luther goes on to paraphrase the Pauline 'Nonne panis quem frangimus participatio corporis Christi est?' as 'ipse panis est participatio corporis Christi' (ibid., 25).

terminate neuter Hoc in the bread-saying is more than cancelled by Christ's use of the masculine pronoun Hic in the (Latin!) Matthaean cup-saying, especially when taken in conjunction with the apposition of Hic with calix in the Pauline account.[39] Luther displays a total misunderstanding of the scholastic exegesis of Hoc with his assumption that it had understood the demonstrative pronoun to discharge an adjectival function towards the predicate corpus meum. He somewhat unctuously informs his Roman opponents that the agreement of Hoc with corpus only occurs in Greek and Latin, where both the demonstrative pronoun and the noun in question are neuter in gender. The Reformer enlightens the presumably ignorant 'sophists' that Hebrew lacks the neuter gender, so that the ipsissima verba might well have been 'Hic est corpus meum'.[40] Should this Latin reconstruction of a Hebrew original be carried just a step further, however, then Luther will be hoist on his own petard, for if the ipsissima verba were something like 'Hic [לְזֶה] est בְּשָׂרִי', then pronoun and noun would still be in agreement, only this time in the masculine gender. The Reformer's basic mistake here lay in assuming that the scholastics supposed the exegesis of Hoc to be a matter of grammar rather than logic.[41]

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39. ibid., 13-17: 'Sed ne nimium philosophemur, Nonne Christus videtur huic curiositati pulchre occurrisse, cum non de vino dixerit "hoc est sanguis meus" sed "hic est sanguis meus"? Et multo clarius, cum calicis miscet nomen, dicens "Hic calix novi testamenti in meo sanguine", Nonne videtur nos voluisse in simplici fide continere, tantum ut crederemus sanguinem suum esse in calice?'

40. ibid., 28-30.

41. cf. Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 54.

Finally, it is well to note two distinctive features of Luther's interpretation of Hoc that will be of great significance later on. First, he is disposed to regard the statement 'This is my body' as a mirror image of the christological statements 'This man is God, this God is man'.[42] The yardstick of theological discourse is therefore to be not the logic of Aristotle, but the being of God in Jesus Christ.[43] If the appropriateness

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42. WA 6. 511, 34-512, 2: 'Sicut ergo in Christo res se habet, ita et in sacramento. Non enim ad corporalem inhabitationem divinitatis necesse est transsubstanciari humanam naturam, ut divinitas sub accidentibus humanae teneatur. Sed integra utraque natura vere dicitur "Hic homo est deus, hic deus est homo". Quod et si philosophia non capit, fides tamen capit. Et maior est verbi dei autoritas quam nostri ingenii capacitas. Ita in sacramento ut verum corpus verusque sanguis sit, non est necesse, panem et vinum transsubstantiari, ut Christus sub accidentibus teneatur, sed utroque simul manente, vere dicitur "hic panis est corpus meum, hoc vinum est sanguis meus", et econtra.'

43. This avowed preference for revealed truth over natural reason ('Maior est spiritussanctus quam Aristoteles': WA 6. 511, 26) is not to be understood as a wholesale onslaught on the ethos of mediaeval Christendom, but rather as the reaction of one strain of mediaeval thought against another. It should be remembered that S. Thomas did not become the doctor communis of the Roman Church until 1923, and that during the Middle Ages themselves his programme of the maximal integration of secular knowledge into the systematic statement of Christian truth represented only one option out of several. Aquinas' qualified approbation of profane science was counter-balanced throughout the mediaeval period by a vigorous distrust of curiositas: the campaign contra vanam curiositatem involved deep reverence for scriptural truth and disdain for extra-scriptural teachings (see H. A. Oberman: Contra vanam curiositatem. Ein Kapitel der Theologie zwischen Seelenwinckel und Weltall, Zürich, 1974, pp. 13-18, 23-31). According to Dr. Oberman, Luther's attitude towards curiositas (op.cit., pp. 39-54) was determined by that of his nominalist predecessors (op.cit., pp. 33-38): the potentia absoluta

of the christological analogy is admitted, then it is Roman theology with its theory of transubstantiation that must appear Monophysite and not Luther's, with its careful insistence that the relationship of the element of bread to the Lord's body reflect the distinction of the two natures in the one person of Christ. Secondly, the Reformer's disinclination to seek the aid of the logician in interpreting the eucharistic words of Jesus is counterbalanced by his preparedness to expound the spoken words of Christ in the light of everyday speech. The actual use of language and common sense have persuaded Luther that the demonstrative pronoun refers not to the body of Christ, but to the bread.[44] This simple solution is, in the Reformer's opinion, valid only in the moment before Jesus pronounces the identity of the host with his body, whereupon the proper object of theological reflection is the statement 'iste panis est corpus meum'. But the instinct that drives Luther to think in grammatical rather than logical terms will presently serve him well. As the eucharistic conflict gets under way, a linguistic consideration of the image

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dei secured for curiositas a field of activity in those things which were not already determined by the potentia dei ordinata. For Luther, the Eucharist fell into the latter category, and it is notable that, in the four pages of the Weimar Edition of de captivitate devoted to discussion of the real presence, the Reformer twice denounces the interpretation of the verba testamenti in terms of Aristotelian logic as curiositas (WA 6. 510, 31-35; 511, 13).

44. WA 6. 511, 30-33: 'quod et ipse usus loquendi et sensus communis probat, subiectum scilicet esse monstrativum panis et non corporis, dum dicit "Hoc est corpus meum, das ist meyn leyp', id est, "iste panis est corpus meum".'

of glowing iron, which had long been invoked in the context of Christology and which Luther himself used to illustrate the miracle of the real presence in de captivitate,[45] will prompt the Reformer to avail himself of the services of the mediaeval grammarian in order to defend the meaningfulness of the proposition 'panem esse corpus Christi'.

(b) Widder die himmlischen Propheten (1525)

According to Andreas Karlstadt, Jesus commanded mere bread to be taken and eaten in his memory with thanksgiving. The statement 'This is my body', which Luther and the adherents of the papal church took to be the heart of the eucharistic words, was understood by Karlstadt as a platitudinous parenthesis only tangentially related to the institution of the Holy Supper. On Karlstadt's reading of the institution narratives, Jesus is supposed to have interrupted the institution of a memorial supper, pointing to his seated body and informing the attentive apostles that, 'This is my body, which will be given for you'. The Reformer summarised Karlstadt's proposed refutation of the real presence doctrine as follows:

> 'Unter solchen worten, spricht er, Ist das stuck "Das ist meyn leyb fur euch gegeben" gantz eyn eygen stuck und hanget nicht an dem, das für her geht: "Nemet hyn, esset" sondern ist eyn sonderliche rede und meynung, die hyn zu gesetzt ist, da doch on dasselbige die rede volkomen were. Summa D. Carlstad will damit so viel sagen: Christus hette diese wort "Das ist meyn leyb fur euch gegeben" wol mücht aussen lassen ym abent mal und were das abentmal gnugsam mit diesen worten eyngesetzt: "Jhesus nam das brod, danckt und brachs und gabs

45. WA 6. 510, 4-8.

seynen Jungern und sprach. Nemet hyn: esset: das thut zu meynem gedechtnis".' (46)

There is great bitterness in Luther's rejection of Karlstadt's eccentric reconstruction of the eucharistic words: the alleged tautological parenthesis tells the apostles nothing that they have not heard before, and, to account for such an unaccustomed interruption of lucid speech, one might well suppose that Christ had drunk too much wine at the foregoing Passover meal.[47] Karlstadt's explanation of the words of institution has never been adopted by any serious exegete, whereas Zwingli's interpretation of est as significat and Oecolampadius' view that corpus should be taken to mean figura corporis have greatly influenced Reformed scholarship to this day. Accordingly, Luther's treatment of est and corpus are of crucial importance in any examination of his exegetical defence of the real presence doctrine, while his securing of the association of Hoc with panis against Karlstadt's suggested reconstruction may be regarded as an unimportant sideshow in the eucharistic controversy. But the Reformer's reply to Karlstadt offers a concrete instance of his exegetical principles being put into practice and of his instinctive sense of the importance of the oral/auditory proclamation of the Word as the true setting of biblical exposition. It is therefore worthwhile to outline Luther's response to Karlstadt in some detail.

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46. WA 18. 144, 11-21.

47. WA 18. 144, 22-145, 2: 'Syntemal das seyn leyb fur uns gegeben werde, an vielen andern örttern der schrifft vermeldet ist. Er hats aber zum uberflus hyn zu gesetzt, sie zu erynnern, wo von sie seyn gedencken sollten. Wie du magst wol dencken, das der truncken bold Christus sich so vol gesoffen hat am abent, das er mit ubrigen wortten die Jünger hat uberteubet.'

Luther could have no sympathy for the view that doctrinal pluralism is either legitimate or acceptable. Rather, unanimity of biblically based doctrine should fitly reflect the unity of God.[48] Throughout the dispute on the Lord's Supper, the Reformer admonished his opponents that, if they wished to overturn the traditional understanding of the verba testamenti, then they must prove that the words of Christ not only may but indeed must bear the sense which they attributed to them. May and must are further apart than heaven and earth.[49] Karlstadt is therefore exhorted not merely to assert, but also to prove his position.[50] The Reformer then goes on to recall his chief exegetical principle, urging that the wording and word-order of biblical texts are not to be tampered with unless the straightforward sense would be at odds with an article of faith:

> 'Darumb ist das unser grund: Wo die heylige schrifft ettwas gründet zu gleuben, da soll man nicht weichen von den worten, wie sie lautten, noch von der ordnunge, wie sie da stehet, Es zwinge denn ein ausgedruckter artickel des glaubens, die wort anders zu deutten odder zu ordenen, Was wollt sonst die Bibel werden ' (51)

Since Luther is unaware of any article of faith which would demand the extraction of 'This is my body' from

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48. see, e.g., WA 19. 123, 13-14: 'den wir wissen, das der heilig geyst ein got der ainigkeit ist und eynerley synn, grundt und lere gibt' (Antwortschreiben an die Christen zu Reutlingen, 1526).

49. cf. WA 23. 169, 1-3: 'Wie offt habt yhr nu wol gehort, das diese zwei stuck, possibile, necessarium, Mügen and Müssen weiter von ander sind denn hymel und erden?' (Dass diese Wort Christi ...noch feststehen, 1527).

50. so WA 18. 146, 13, 15, 20, 22.

51. WA 18. 147, 23-27.

the flow of the institution narrative or which would rule out the possibility of the real presence, he is moved to reject Karlstadt's reconstruction.[52] Indeed, the presence of the statement 'This is my body' in the context of the Lord's taking bread and instituting his perpetual memorial prompts Luther to believe 'das das brod sey Christus leib'.[53] The Reformer's refusal to sever the pronouncement 'This is my body' from the rest of the institution narrative is not the result of adherence to a preconceived cut-and-dried dogma, but stems from the effect that the inspired text has on him when it is 'spoken, read and heard':

> 'Antwortte ich: Ich lasse sie darumb an eynander stehen, das ichs so finde ym text, wenn mans redet, lieset und höret, das es aneynander hange nach natürlicher rede art, Und weys keyn ursache, warumb ich solch natürlichen orden und anhang der rede solle odder müge scheyden.' (54)

Luther's appeal to the spoken use of language forms the basis of his riposte to Karlstadt's somewhat amusing foray into grammatical niceties for the purpose of demonstrating that 'This is my body' is a tautology. Karlstadt has observed that, in Greek and Latin, 'bread' is a masculine noun, whereas, in German, it is a neuter noun. He supposes Christ's use of the neuter pronoun τουτο to have been a deliberate accommodation to the neuter σωμα of the predicate. Karlstadt alleges that, had our Lord wished to imply that 'This bread is my body', then he would have used the masculine pronoun ούτος, which would thus match the masculine noun ἄρτος.[55] The

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52. ibid., 31-35.

53. 'so dringet und zwinget solch anhengen mit gewalt, das das brod sey Christus leib': WA 18. 149, 34-35.

54. WA 18. 151, 7-10.

55. WA 18. 152, 24-153, 10.

Reformer answers Karlstadt by invoking German linguistic usage, where the neuter pronoun Das commonly represents masculine, feminine and neuter nouns. Let 'the common man in German lands' judge whether or not Luther is talking sense:

> 'Nu wyr wöllen ursach sagen, Warumb Christus "Tuto" odder "Das" und nicht "Der" vom brod saget. Ynn Deutschen zungen gibts die art der sprache, das, wenn wyr auff eyn ding deutten, das fur uns ist, so nennen und deutten wyrs eyn Das, es sey sonst an yhm selbst eyn Der odder Die, ...Hie beruffe ich mich auff alle Deutschen, ob ich auch deutsch rede. Es ist ye die rechte mutter sprache, und so redet der gemeyne man ynn Deutschen landen.' (56)

In de captivitate babylonica, Luther had already illustrated the possibility of the coexistence of unimpaired bread with the glorified body of Christ by invoking the image of glowing iron: 'ignis et ferrum' are indeed 'duae substantiae', but when they merge 'in ferro ignito' it is true to say that 'quaelibet pars sit ferrum et ignis'.[57] The Reformer was here concerned to persuade scholastic theologians that the body of Christ can coexist with the substance of bread, but, in Widder die himmlischen Propheten, he must demonstrate to Karlstadt 'wie doch brod müge der leyb seyn'.[58] In 1520 Luther accordingly proceeded from two integral substances which are then united without either of them suffering annihilation, but in 1525 it was appropriate for him to instruct Karlstadt by taking as his starting-

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56. WA 18. 154, 12-15.

57. WA 6. 510, 5-6.

58. WA 18. 186, 3-4.

point the de facto combination of iron and fire in glowing iron.[59] The Aristotelian principle of the univocal identity of subject and predicate is clearly in the back of the Reformer's mind as he argues with Karlstadt, yet he refrains from meeting this potential objection head on, preferring to bypass it by bringing to the fore 'the simple way of speaking':

> 'Denn so man die eynfelltige art der sprachen ansihet, kan man sagen von eym feurigen eysen "Das ist feur" odder also "das eysen, das da ligt, ist eyttel feur. Wenn nu hie eyn zenckischer sophist seyne spitze klugheyt zu beweysen, sich auff mecht und wider alle wellt fechten wollt, Eyssen und feur weren zweyerley und künd nymer mehr war seyn, das eyssen feur sey, sage myr, ob der nicht eyn unsynniger narr were? der die leut von der eynfelltigen weyse zu reden, auff seyne spitze, scharffe sophistische weyse wollt füren, So doch die eynfelltige sprache nichts mehr will mit dem spruch "Das eyssen ist eytel feur", denn das sie deuten will, wie da eyssen und feur ynneynander sind, das wo eyssen ist, da auch feur sey. Und niemant so toll ist, der hie bedürffe der grossen sophistischen klugheyt, wie holtz nicht steyn, feur nicht eyssen, wasser nicht erden sey.' (60)

'According to the simple way of speaking', then, it is possible to say that 'iron is fire and fire iron', since the two substances are now 'as it were one thing' while yet 'each retaining its own proper essence'.[61] In just

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59. cf. Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 419: 'Der Berührungspunkt zwischen beiden Positionen liegt darin, dass beiden Widersächern gezeigt werden muss, dass der Leib Christi und das Brot koexistieren können. Dieses Verhältnis versucht Luther an den bekannten Beispielen vom feurigen Eisen und von der Person Christi zu illustrieren, doch sind sie in Wider die himmlischen Propheten anders nuanciert als in De capt. bab.: er geht hier von dem bereits vereinigten feurigen Eisen aus, während er dort von der erst zu erfolgenden Vereinigung der beiden Substanzen spricht.'

60. WA 18. 186, 10-21.

61. ibid., 22-24: 'Wie nu eyssen feur ist und feur ey-

the same way, 'the simple way of speaking' can say 'bread is body' and 'God is man', without confusing these conjoined but distinct essences in any way.[62]

If the model of the being of the Eternal Son of God in the assumed humanity of Jesus and the analogy of glowing iron fail to convince Dr. Karlstadt of the possibility of the coexistence of the body of Christ with the host, then Luther will make a final appeal on the basis of Scripture. Holy Writ, alleges the Reformer, 'commonly uses the figure of speech called synecdoche, whereby it names a whole but means only a part'.[63] In 1521 Luther had lauded the biblical use of synecdoche as a 'most sweet and necessary figure and a symbol of God's love and mercy'.[64] The force of this remark can

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ssen nach eynfeltiger art der sprache und die zweyerley ynneynander und gleich ein ding sind, doch eyn iglich seyn wesen fur sich hellt, ...'

62. ibid., 24-35: 'Also hetten sie sich hie auch leichtlich mügen demütigen und yhre spitze klugheyt lassen und mit Christo und aller wellt auff eynfeltige schlechte weyse der sprache sagen vom brod "Das ist meyn leyb". Syntemal das so viel gesagt ist, da ist brod und leyb eyn ding odder miteynander, wie feur und eyssen, und ist doch niemant so toll, der darumb sollt sagen, das leyb und brod nicht zweyerley unterschiedliche wesen seyen, Gleich wie wyr auch von dem menschen Christo sagen "Der ist Gott", und widderumb "Gott ist mensch". Und doch niemant so toll ist, der nicht wisse, das gottheyt und menscheyt zwo unterschiedliche natur sind, wilcher keyne ynn die ander verwandelt wird, sondern die eynfelltige rede will so viel sagen und deuten, das da ynn Christo sey gottheyt und menscheyt ynneynander wie eyn ding, das wo der mensch ist, daselbst auch Gott ist leyblich, wie Paulus sagt.'

63. WA 18. 187, 14-17: 'Oder wo diese art der sprache yhn nicht gefiele, möchten sie sich nach der weyse der schrifft richten, die da ym gemeynen brauch hat die figur, so do Synecdoche heysst, das ist wenn sie eyn gantzes nennet und doch nur eyn teyl meynet.'

64. WA 8. 65, 7-8: 'Est quidem synecdoche dulcissima

be felt as we notice how the Reformer introduces synecdoche into his argument with Karlstadt. Among its uses in Scripture Luther lists the Old Testament's custom of calling Israel the people of God and S. Paul's care to address the recipients of his various epistles as the Church of God. The Reformer thinks this a generous way of speaking on the part of Holy Scripture, for, after all, the majority of ostensible children of the covenant in both Testaments were only members of the ecclesia late dicta![65] In his eucharistic treatise of 1528, Luther will deal with synecdoche in greater detail, but, as he dashes off his reply to Karlstadt under great pressure in the winter of 1524/25, the Reformer has neglected to point out that this figure can name a part and mean a whole as well as name a whole and mean a part. In this first sense Luther supposes synecdoche to be used in the eucharistic words. By Hoc Jesus denotes both the host and his body, while only drawing his hearers' attention to the latter:

> 'Also hetten diese sophistische und spitze klüglinge an diesem ort auch mügen das gantze stuck alls brod und leyb, da Christus von redet, deuten alleyne auff den leyb, da er spricht "Das ist meyn leyb", unangesehen das brod. Nicht das brod sollt nicht da seyn, sondern das ynn der rede so gros am leybe gelegen ist, das er davon redet, alls were eytel leyb da und alles, was da ist, es sey brod odder farbe, nichts denn der leib were.' (66)

With these words the Reformer has crossed the dividing line that distinguishes exegesis from systematics. In

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et necessaria figura et charitatis misericordiae dei symbolum' (Rationis Latomianae confutatio).

65. WA 18. 187, 17-23.

66. ibid., 24-29.

his exegesis he has hitherto taken care to interpret Hoc as referring immediately to the bread, so that it must now occasion no little surprise that he speaks of 'das gantze stuck alls brod und leyb, da Christus von redet'. It would, as Dr. Hilgenfeld writes, be 'highly striking' if Luther really did mean to argue here that the demonstrative pronoun of the words of institution refers to an 'already given coexistence of the body of Christ with the bread'.[67] By pointing out that the Reformer has, on the previous page, expressed himself in his accustomed manner ('sagen vom brod "Das ist mein leyb"'[68]), Dr. Hilgenfeld has demonstrated the strong probability that Luther did not intend, as an exegete, to interpret the demonstrative pronoun in this comprehensive sense.[69] In fact, the Reformer's invocation of the figure of speech synecdoche was a response to an apologetic rather than exegetical need. He follows his application of synecdoche to the eucharistic words by giving a concrete illustration of the use of this figure of speech in everyday life. A mother may point to the cradle which holds her baby and say, 'This is my child'. Should a 'sophist' challenge her ostensible identity of a living child with an inanimate receptacle, he will make himself a laughingstock:

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67. '...ob Luther auch hinsichtlich der Einsetzungsworte der Meinung war, dass sich dort das "hoc" auf ein totum, also die vorgegebene Koexistenz von Leib Christi und Brot beziehe; das wäre in der Tat recht auffallend' (op.cit., p. 420).

68. WA 18. 186, 26.

69. Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 420f.

> 'Gleich alls wenn auch eyne mutter auff die wigen, da yhr kind ynnen lege, deutet und spreche "das ist meyn kind", Und eyn sophist spottet yhr und spreche: Wie? ist die wige deyn kind? meynstu nicht, sie würde yhn fur eynen narren odder schertzer hallten? alls der mutwilliglich nicht wollte die sprache verstehen, da sie beyde auff wigen und kind deutet, und doch das kind furnemlich meynet, alls were keyne wigen da.' (70)

Be it noted that neither the mother nor the onlooking 'sophist' in this illustration entertains the least doubt that an actual child is lying in the cradle. Given the conjunction of the two, it is possible to speak implicitly of the cradle while explicitly mentioning only the child. According to Luther's definition, therefore, the figure of speech synecdoche is here appropriate. But in the case of the eucharistic words there is no conjunction of the body of Christ with the bread until after Jesus has wrought this union through his word of power. If the consecratory value of the verba testamenti is admitted, then the words of institution, now taken as an authoritative commentary on an accomplished miracle, do indeed contain a synecdoche. However, to label the words of institution in their descriptive quality as a synecdoche is to beg the crucial question whether or not the verba testamenti teach the real presence. Luther's appeal to synecdoche is, properly speaking, part of his apologetic armoury against Wycliffe on the one hand, and the scholastic adherents of transubstantiation on the other.[71] The Reformer

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70. WA 18. 187, 29-35.

71. 'Mit der Einführung der synecdoche in die Auslegung der Einsetzungsworte unternimmt Luther das gleiche, was die Schweizer mit dem tropus tun: er hat das exegetische Schlagwort für die ihm schon längst feststehende Auslegung gefunden und in die Debatte geworfen. Mit der Anwendung der Synecdoche wird in der Sache gegenüber den

will have little difficulty in persuading Zwingli and Oecolampadius that the demonstrative pronoun refers to the bread. The uphill struggle will consist in securing the verb est and the noun corpus, so that the opponents of the real presence may be persuaded that Jesus' statement is a synecdoche rather than a metaphor.

(c) Vom Abendmahl Christi. Bekenntnis (1528)

Part One of this, Luther's longest work on the Eucharist, is taken up with a meandering, repetitive refutation of the arguments adduced by the Swiss reformers against the real presence. As he brings Part One to a close, the Reformer observes that he cannot stomach any further discussion of the bearing of the biblical dichotomy of flesh and spirit and of classical Christology on the question of the real presence,[72] so he seeks to revive the flagging debate by airing the issues raised by the Aristotelian law of 'identical predication'. At the very outset of the discussion, Luther frankly affirms the impossibility of 'predicatio identica de diversis naturis'. Neither Scripture nor reason will permit the nonsensical notion 'that two distinct natures should be one thing', and it is simply undeniable that a donkey cannot be an ox and a man cannot be stone or wood:

> 'Denn es leidet sich widder ynn der schrifft noch vernunfft solch predicatio identica de diversis naturis, das ist, das zweyerley unterschiedliche natur solten ein ding sein, ...Es ist ia war und kan niemand leucken, das zwey unterschiedliche wesen nicht mügen ein wesen sein, als was ein esel ist, das kan ia nicht ein ochse sein, Was ein mensch ist, kan nicht ein stein odder holtz sein, ...Solchs alles mus alle vernunfft ynn allen Creaturn bekennen, da wird nicht anders aus.' (73)

Ausführungen von De capt. bab. nichts Neues gesagt' (Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 419).

72. WA 26. 439, 2-5. 73. WA 26. 438, 3-439, 12.

In the light of this self-evident truth, the natural reason must take offence at the eucharistic words which 'speak two distinct essences, namely bread and body, into one thing or essence'.[74] If Aristotelian logic is to be the arbiter of divine truth, then one must assume that the host is either purely and simply bread or else purely and simply the body of Christ (once again, the Reformer wrongly accuses the scholastics of teaching that the demonstrative pronoun 'points not to the bread but to the body of Christ').[75] There is a seeming inconsistency in Luther's response to any invocation of the law of identical predication against the real presence. On the one hand, he can defiantly appeal to the superior authority of Holy Scripture in urging that, whatever the logicians may say to the contrary, 'two distinct essences may in fact be and be called one essence'[76]: the Holy Spirit laughs human wisdom to scorn by working identical predication in the eucharistic words. At the same time, however, the Reformer can impatiently brush aside any objection on the basis of the law of identical predication: there is no 'predicatio identica' in the words of institution, and the view that they do contain such a predication is but a dream of 'Wycliffe and the Sophists'.[77] The difficulty can only be resolved by considering the whole drift of Luther's argument in these pages: beginning with the assertion that there is a certain kind of identical predication at work in the eucharistic words, the Reformer goes on to examine various biblical instances of identity in distinction, his argument culminating in a brisk account of the role of the figure of speech synecdoche

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74. WA 26. 439, 13-15.

75. ibid., 15-25.

76. ibid., 29-31.

77. WA 26, 445, 1.

in Scripture and common speech.[78] With his recourse to synecdoche, Luther hits on the concept which will at once assimilate and overcome the law of identical predication.

The Reformer offers two reasons for his contention 'against all reason and sharp logic ...that two distinct essences may in fact be and be called one essence',[76] but on closer inspection these turn out to be but differently slanted formulations of the principle of Scriptural authority. First, we are urged to carry out to the full the Apostle's advice in II Cor. 10:5, taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ, letting our own wisdom be blinded, led, taught and mastered by the Word.[79] Secondly, when we have made this act of submission, Luther beseeches us to model our speaking on Scripture's speaking. We should be content simply to repeat what God authoritatively declares in Scripture, just as a young child recites the Lord's Prayer or the Creed in imitation of its father. It is imperative here to walk in darkness with our eyes closed, cleaving simply to the Word and reasoning thus: since God here identifies bread with Christ's body, the bread is therefore identical with Christ's body.[80] As far as Luther him-

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78. WA 26. 444.

79. WA 26. 439, 31-36: 'Und ist das mein ursache: Erstlich, das man ynn Gottes wercken und worten sol vernunfft und alle klugheit gefangen geben, wie S. Paulus leret 2 Corint. 10, und sich blenden und leiten, furen, leren und meistern lassen, auff das wir nicht Gotts richter werden ynn seinen worten, denn wir verlieren gewislich mit unserm richten ynn seinen worten, wie Psal. 50 zeuget.'

80. WA 26. 439, 36-440, 9: 'Zum andern, wenn wir denn nu uns gefangen geben und bekennen, das wir sein wort und werck nicht begreiffen, das wir uns zu friden stellen

self is concerned, the case is now in principle closed: Scripture has spoken. But, notwithstanding his blunt and unyielding biblicism here, the Reformer displays a fine sensitivity to the potential objection to Christian dogma which the eighteenth Century Enlightenment would sum up under the heading 'positivity'. For he seeks to place the identity in distinction of bread and body in the Lord's Supper in the wider context of the identity in distinction of the three persons in the one Godhead, of the two natures in the one person of our Lord, and of the Holy Spirit with external revelatory media. In other words, none of the paradoxical identities which abound in the revelation of God in Christ is treated as an erratic block; rather, all of them are presented as coherently bound up with the matrix of creation and redemption, that is, with the opening up of the life of God in Christ. Luther refuses to deal with the objection of 'identical predication' other than obliquely. To those who urge this principle against the identity of bread and body, he retorts that they understand neither Scripture, reason nor logic. Such thinkers have failed to see the issues involved in 'identical predication' in

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und von seinen wercken reden mit seinen worten einfeltiglich, wie er uns davon zu reden furgeschrieben hat, und fursprechen lest und nicht mit unsern worten als anders und besser davon zu reden furnemen, Denn wir werden gewislich feylen, wo wir nicht einfeltiglich yhm nach sprechen, wie er uns fur spricht, gleich wie ein iung kind seym Vater den glauben odder Vater unser nach spricht, Denn hie gilts ym finstern und blintzling gehen und schlecht am wort hangen und folgen, Weil denn hie stehen Gottes wort "Das ist mein leib" dürre und helle, gemeine, gewisse wort, die nie kein tropus gewesen sind widder ynn der schrifft noch einiger sprache, mus man die selbigen mit dem glauben fassen und die vernunfft so blenden und gefangen geben, Und also, nicht wie die spitzige sophistria, sondern, wie Gott uns furspricht, nach sprechen und dran halten.'

their right proportion: 'Denn sie haltens nicht recht zu samen.'[81] Concrete examples alone will suffice to resolve the question, taken first from Scripture and then from 'common speech'.[82]

The Reformer urges that the existence of the one Godhead in three persons involves more offence to man's reason than would the affirmation that wood is stone: the Godhead is infinitely more a 'unitary essence' than is wood, while at the same time the three divine persons are much more distinct from one another than is wood from stone.[83] The 'union of nature and of essence' among the three persons of the Godhead makes it possible for us to speak of Father, Son and Holy Spirit as 'one essence'. If there can be such identity in distinction within the Godhead itself, how can it be impossible for two such 'distinct things' as bread and the body of Christ to be 'spoken into one essence'?[84]

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81. WA 26. 440, 10-18.

82. ibid., 18-20.

83. ibid., 21-28: 'Der hohe artickel der heiligen dreyfaltickeit leret uns gleuben und reden also, das der Vater und son und heiliger geist seyen drey unterschiedliche persone, Dennoch ist ein igliche der einige Gott. Hie wird von der einigen Gottheit gesprochen, das sie sey dreyerley, als drey persone, Welchs gar viel höher und herter widder die vernunfft ist, denn das holtz stein sey, Denn freylich holtz an yhm selber nicht so ein einig wesen hat als die Gottheit, Und widderumb holtz und stein nicht so gewis und unvermischlich unterschieden sind, als die personen sind.'

84. ibid., 28-33: 'Kan nu hie die einickeit der natur und des wesens machen, das unterschiedliche personen dennoch einerley und ein wesen gesprochen werden, so mus es freylich nicht widder die schrifft noch artickel des glaubens sein, das zwey unterschiedliche ding einerley odder ein wesen gesprochen werden als brod und leib. Es

The mystery of the Blessed Trinity is altogether 'too sublime' to function as the chief paradigm of Christian discourse, and Luther is perceptibly relieved to turn to Christology as the basis of his argument for the meaningfulness of talk of the real presence. We may point to the man Christ and say, 'This is God's Son', or, 'This man is God's Son', while being under no obligation to suppose that Christ's humanity is meanwhile annihilated in order to facilitate the predication of divinity of the object of the demonstrative pronoun. On the contrary, we are persuaded that Jesus' manhood remains in its integrity while we confess his divinity. Now there is an infinitely greater ontic difference between God and man than between bread and body, but we may speak of the identity of God and man in Jesus on the basis of the union of the two natures in his person.[85] The 'natural union' in the Godhead enables us to speak of the three divine persons as one essence, and the 'per-

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sey aber gleich dieser artickel zu hoch, wir wollen einen andern fur uns nemen.'

85. WA 26. 440, 34-441, 5: 'Ich zeige auff den menschen Christum und spreche: "Das ist Gottes son" odder "dieser mensch ist Gottes son", hie ist nicht von nöten, das die menscheit vergehe odder werde zu nicht, damit das wörtlin "das" auff Gott deute und nicht auff den menschen, wie die Sophisten ym sacrament vom brod tichten, sondern die menscheit mus bleiben, Dennoch ist mensch und Gott viel unterschiedlicher und weiter von einander und widdernander denn brod und leib, fewr und holtz odder ochs und esel, Wer macht hie, das zwo so unterschiedliche natur ein wesen werden und eine die ander gesprochen wird? On zweifel nicht die wesentliche einickeit der naturn (denn es sind zwo unterschiedliche natur und wesen), sondern die personliche einickeit, Denn obs gleich nicht einerley wesen ist nach den naturn, so ists doch einerley wesen nach der person, Und entspringt also hieraus zweyerley einickeit und zweyer-

sonal union' of the two natures in Christ allows us to say, 'This man is God', and, 'God is this man'. The mysteries of the Blessed Trinity and of the Godmanhood of Christ persuade us that 'predicatio identica, or speaking of two distinct essences as one essence' is not 'contrary to Scripture'.[86]

The identity in distinction given in the Incarnation is matched by a union of spirit with outward form in other aspects of God's working. As he seeks out Scriptural instances of such union, Luther focuses first on angelology. Taking as his cue Ps. 104:4 ('He makes his angels winds, and his servants a flaming fire'), the Reformer notes that there is an ontic distinction between an angel in itself and an angel in its world-directed activity. There is a difference between the invisible spiritual reality of an angel and its outward form of wind and flame. Even so, Holy Scripture (i.e., Ps. 104: 4) makes one essence out of both angel and wind or fire, and the Reformer asserts that one who sees such wind (!) or fire sees an angel.[87] Luther is uncertain how this

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ley wesen (als ein natürliche einickeit und personliche einickeit), Und so fort an, aus der personlichen einickeit entspringet solche rede, das Gott mensch und mensch Gott ist.'

86. WA 26. 441, 9-11.

87. ibid., 11-22: 'Wollen der selbigen mehr suchen, Psal. 104 spricht: "Er macht seine Engel zu winde und seine diener zu fewrflammen." Hie sind auch zweyerley wesen als Engel und wind odder engel und fewrflammen gleich wie ym sacrament brod und leib, Noch macht hie die schrifft einerley wesen aus beiden und spricht: Er macht seine Engel zu winde und flammen, gleich wie er seinen leib zu brod macht, das man sagen mus von solchem winde und flammen: Das ist ein Engel, Und die schrifft also redet, das, wer solchen wind odder flamme sihet, der sihet den engel, Nu kan ia niemand einen engel sehen ynn seiner natur, sondern allein ynn seiner flammen odder hellen gestalt, Und mus auch nicht solche helle

union should be termed, and after some hesitation suggests that it be called a 'union of effect (Wirkliche einickeit), since the angel and its form accomplish the same work'.[88] The Reformer is quick to draw parallels with the Eucharist. God makes his angels winds, just as he makes his body bread.[89] And where Scripture speaks of angelic appearances to men and women, we must say, 'This is an angel', referring the demonstrative pronoun not to the invisible angel in itself, but to the visible Gestalt.[90] Luther cannot resist a playful attack on Wycliffe and the Sophists: when confronted by the biblical evidence of angelic appearances, Wycliffe must suppose that the witnesses saw 'all Gestalt and no angel', while the scholastics must suppose that they saw

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gestalt vergehen, wenn man zeigt und spricht: das ist ein Engel, wie die Sophisten das brod ym sacrament zu nicht machen etc., sondern sie mus bleiben.'

88. ibid., 27-28: 'Las sie gleich heissen Wirkliche einickeit, darumb das der Engel und seine gestalt einerley werck ausrichten.'

89. ibid., 15-16: 'Er macht seine Engel zu winde und flammen, gleich wie er seinen leib zu brod macht.'

90. ibid., 16-22: 'das man sagen mus von solchem winde und flammen: Das ist ein Engel, Und die schrifft also redet, das, wer solchen wind odder flamme sihet, der sihet den engel, Nu kan ia niemand einen engel sehen ynn seiner natur, sondern allein ynn seiner flammen odder hellen gestalt, Und mus auch nicht solche helle gestalt vergehen, wenn man zeigt und spricht: das ist ein Engel, wie die Sophisten das brod ym sacrament zu nicht machen etc., sondern sie mus bleiben.'

'all angel and no Gestalt'.[91] The union of angel with flame can be asserted on the basis of 'clear Scripture and the manifest work of God', which make it possible to point to the luminous angelic form and say, 'This is an angel'.[92] The case of the real presence is precisely analogous, for here too we are to suppose the occurrence of a mysterious union in virtue of which we can say, 'This is my body', while referring the demonstrative pronoun unequivocally to the bread.[93]

Luther next turns to the New Testament reports of the visible appearance of the Holy Spirit in the ministry of Jesus and in the infant Church. It is written that the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove at Christ's baptism in the Jordan, in the form of wind and tongues of fire at Pentecost, and in the form of a cloud at the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor.[94] Predictably, the Reformer speculates that Wycliffe would suppose the dove of

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91. ibid., 32-40: 'Und so fort an der exempel viel, Jnn welchen allen doch ia kein Engel nach seiner natur, sondern allein nach seiner gestalt odder flammen gesehen ist, Und wo man drauff zeiget, so mus man sagen: Das ist ein Engel, und doch solchs "Das" auff die gestalt des Engels zeiget. Ob nu hie der spitze Vigleph und Sophisten wolten fur geben die predicatio identica, das zwey unterschiedliche wesen nicht mügen ein ding sein, noch eins das ander gesprochen werden, sondern entweder muste eitel gestalt on Engel da bleiben, wie Vigleph wil, odder eitel Engel on gestalt, wie die Sophisten wollen, Da fragen wir nicht nach ...'

92. WA 26. 441, 40-442, 3: 'die klare schrifft und das öffentliche werck Gottes stehet da, das Gott seine Engel zu flammen macht, und die flamme ist der Engel, wenn man drauff zeigt und spricht: "das ist ein Engel" umb der wircklichen einickeit willen, das die zweyerley wesen ein ding worden sind.'

93. WA 26. 442, 4-7.

94. ibid., 8-11.

the Baptism to have been present without the Holy Spirit, and that the scholastics would suppose the Holy Spirit to have been present without the dove. For his own part, Luther thinks it right to point to the dove and say, 'This is the Holy Spirit', since the two distinct essences, the Holy Spirit and the dove, have 'to some extent become one essence'. The Reformer dubs this union a 'formal union, since the Holy Spirit willed to reveal himself in this form'.[95] The parallel to the real presence is swiftly drawn. While bread and the Lord's body are indeed two distinct essences, a supernaturally wrought 'sacramental union' of the two makes it possible for Christ and Christians after him to say, 'This is my body', while 'referring the "this" to the bread'.[96]

The Reformer understands the statement 'This is my body' as precisely parallel to the statements 'The man Jesus is God', 'The Holy Spirit is the dove' and 'The angel is the flame'.[97] Such language is based on a divinely wrought union of distinct essences that is prior

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95. ibid., 11-18: 'Hie mügen Vigleph und die Sophisten sich verklügen und sagen, diese taube sey da on den heiligen geist, odder sey der heilige geist da on die taube, wir sagen widder beyde teil, das, so man auff die taube zeigt, recht und wol spricht: "das ist der heilige geist" umb des willen, das hie die zwey unterschiedliche wesen als geist und taube etlicher massen auch einerley wesen sind nicht natürlich odder personlich, Wolan sie heisse gleich Formliche einickeit, darumb das der heilige geist sich ynn solcher form hat offenbarn wollen.'

96. ibid., 20-25: 'Warumb solt man denn nicht viel mehr auch ym abendmal sagen "Das ist mein leib", ob gleich brod und leib zwey unterschiedliche wesen sind, und solch "das" auffs brod deute? Denn hie auch eine Einickeit aus zweyerley wesen ist worden, die wil ich nennen Sacramentliche Einickeit, darumb das Christus leib und brod uns alda zum sacrament werden gegeben.'

97. WA 26. 443, 6-7, 18-25.

to man's believing apprehension of it. 'Wycliffe and the Sophists', in Luther's view, have been 'deceived by untimely logic',[98] rushing to apply logical canons before duly considering the nature of the thing to be described. 'Grammar, or the art of speaking' is to be heeded before the rules of logic are applied.[99] Now logic is right to mark the ontic distinction between bread and Jesus' body, the dove and the Holy Spirit, God and man. But logic must take its cue from grammar, which, when it observes the coalescence of two essences into one essence, henceforth speaks of the two essences as one:

> 'Die Logica leret recht, Das brod und leib, taube und geist, Gott und mensch unterschiedliche naturn sind, Aber sie solt zuvor auch die Grammatica hören zur hülffe, Welche leret also reden ynn allen sprachen: Das wo zwey unterschiedliche wesen ynn ein wesen komen, da fasset sie auch solche zwey wesen ynn einerley rede, Und wie sie die einickeit beider wesens ansihet, so redet sie auch von beiden mit einer rede ...' (100)

The supreme example of such union is that of divinity and humanity in the Incarnate Son, along with the union of the Holy Spirit with the dove and that of an angel with wind or flame.[101] Our language here should not be determined by the intrinsic ontic difference between these pairs of essences, but by the supernaturally wrought 'wesen der einickeit':

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98. ibid., 8-10.

99. ibid., 9-12: 'das ist, sie haben die Grammatica odder rede kunst nicht zuvor angesehen, Denn wo man wil Logica wissen, ehe man die Grammatica kan, und ehe leren denn hören, ehe richten denn reden, da sol nichts rechts ausfolgen.'

100. ibid., 12-17.

101. ibid., 18-25.

> 'Denn hie mus man nicht reden, nach dem die wesen unterschieden und zweyerley sind an yhn selbs, wie Vigleph und die Sophisten die Logica unrecht brauchen, sondern nach dem wesen der einickeit, nach dem solche unterschiedliche wesen einerley wesen sind worden, ein iglichs auff seine weise. Denn es ist auch ynn der warheit also, das solche unterschiedliche naturn so zu samen komen ynn eins, warhafftig ein new einig wesen kriegen aus solcher zu samen fugung, nach welchem sie recht und wol einerley wesen heissen, ob wol ein iglichs fur sich sein sonderlich einig wesen hat.' (102)

Up to this point Luther has laboured to prove that Scripture contains instances of 'identical predication'. But in speaking of 'identical predication' at all the Reformer is using a term and a principle introduced into the debate by Wycliffe and the scholastics, not an expression of his own choice. Luther's own favoured technical term for a language which mirrors the divinely wrought union of distinct essences that is such a pronounced feature of the Christian religion of the Incarnation of God is the figure of speech synecdoche, and the section 'De predicatione identica' accordingly closes with the Reformer's understanding of the eucharistic words as a synecdoche.[103]

Luther is conscious that, with his invocation of the figure of speech synecdoche, he stands in the tradition of the mediaeval grammarians. Perhaps, during his student days, he had become acquainted with the definition given in the Doctrinale of Alexander de Villa-Dei:

> 'saepe, quod est partis, toti datur et regit illam.
> est ibi syndoche ...
> si partem sumas pro toto vel vice versa,
> syndochen facies.' (104)

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102. ibid., 25-32.

103. WA 26. 444-445.

104. Alexander de Villa-Dei: Doctrinale (ed. Dietrich Reichling, Berlin, 1893), p. 80, lines 1235-1236, p. 168f,

In the treatise of 1528, he affirms that this figure of speech is 'very common, not only in Scripture, but also in all languages'.[105] For an example of the occurrence of synecdoche in everyday speech, the Reformer pictures a man pointing to a bag and saying, 'This is a hundred guilders'. While the demonstrative pronoun clearly refers to the bag, 'because the bag and the guilders are to some extent one essence', it also at the same time embraces the money contained in the bag. Similarly, one might point to a barrel and truthfully say, 'This is Rhine wine'.[106] Luther is pleased to place his use of the image of glowing iron, which he traces back to S. Augustine, under the heading of synecdoche.[107] In subsuming the eucharistic words under the category of synecdoche, the Reformer finds the very grammatical concept that will enable confession of the dogma of the real presence to co-exist with belief in the continuing existence of real bread, even after the consecration. There is no

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lines 2517-2518).

105. WA 26. 444, 1-3: 'Solche weise zu reden von unterschiedlichen wesen als von einerley, heissen die grammatici Synecdochen, und ist fast gemein nicht allein ynn der schrifft, sondern auch ynn allen sprachen.'

106. ibid., 3-12: 'als wenn ich einen sack odder beutel zeige odder dar reiche, spreche ich: Das sind hundert gülden, da gehet das zeigen und das wörtlin "das" auff den beutel, Aber weil der beutel und gülden etlicher masse ein wesen sind, als ein klumpe, so triffts zu gleich auch die gülden, Der weise nach greiffe ich ein fas an und spreche, das ist Reinisch wein, das ist Welsch wein, das ist roter wein. Item, ich greiffe ein glas an und spreche: das ist wasser, das ist bier, das ist salbe etc. Jnn allen diesen reden sihestu, wie das wörtlin "das" zeiget auff das gefesse, und doch, weil das getrencke und gefesse etlicher massen ein ding ist, so triffts zu gleich, ia wol furnemlich das getrencke.'

107. ibid., 16-20.

repetition in the pages 'De predicatione identica' of the momentary hesitation in a single passage of Wider die himmlischen Propheten where Luther takes the demonstrative pronoun to refer to an already given coexistence of bread and body.[108] Three times in these pages, the Reformer insists that the demonstrative pronoun in the bread-saying refers unambiguously to real bread,[109] once making an analogous claim for the cup-saying.[110] If one follows Luther in taking the eucharistic words to teach the real presence, the verba testamenti can indeed be regarded as a synecdoche in their descriptive function. But there is a crucial difference between the eucharistic words as a synecdoche and the sense in which the above-rehearsed christological, pneumatological and angelological statements can be classed under this figure of speech. For the believing reader of Scripture perceives the 'wesen der einickeit' to be an already existing state of affairs in the cases of the union of God and man in Christ, of the Holy Spirit with the dove, and of an angel with its luminous form. No such assumption can be made in the case of the words of institution, which, at any rate as understood by the mainline Western tradition and by Luther, at once produce and express the real presence of the Lord's body and blood. The Reformer's view that the words of institution contain a synecdoche stands and falls with the dogma that the verba testamenti are an efficacious formula of consecration at whose recitation it pleases Almighty God to transform

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108. WA 18. 187, 24-26.

109. WA 26. 442, 6, 22f; 445, 9f.

110. WA 26. 445, 13.

the host and chalice into the body and blood of his Son. Luther's 'synecdochal' understanding of the demonstrative pronoun is only valid in terms of the doctrine of consecration current in the Western Church since the days of S. Ambrose:

> '...und umb der sacramentlichen einickeit willen recht gered wird: "Das ist mein leib", mit dem wörtlin "Das" auffs brod zu deuten, Denn es ist nu nicht mehr schlecht brod ym backofen, sondern fleischsbrod odder leibsbrod, das ist ein brod, so mit dem leibe Christi ein sacramentlich wesen und ein ding worden ist, Also auch vom wein ym becher "Das ist mein blut" mit dem wörtlin "Das" auff den wein gedeutet, Denn es ist nu nicht mehr schlechter wein ym keller, sondern Blutswein, das ist ein wein, der mit dem blut Christi ynn ein sacramentlich wesen komen ist.' (111)

At the Marburg Colloquy of 1529, the Reformer urged the 'synecdochal' understanding of the eucharistic words. Synecdoche is defined by Luther as 'inclusive speech' (eingefasste red), and he proposes that, 'The body is in the bread just as a sword is in its sheath'. To understand the words of institution as propounding a synecdoche is to preserve the res of Jesus' words, while to take them as expressing a metaphor is to relinquish this res.[112] The Reformer's pithy reference to 'inclusive speech' summarises his whole Incarnation-oriented understanding of the theological use of language,[113] but the

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111. ibid., 8-15. The same understanding of the consecratory quality of the verba testamenti is to be found in WA 26. 287, 24-30 and in WA 19. 491, 1-2.

112. WA 30 III. 133, 4-134, 3: 'Synecdoche: Schwerdt, scheidt; Kandt, Bier. Also eingefasste red: das ist mein leib. Corpus in pane sicut gladius in vagina. Illa figura in usu est et textus urget. Metaphora rem omnino tollit: corpus, id est figura corporis; synecdoche non facit. Propter sophistas synecdoche admittitur.'

113. Gerhard Ebeling has pointed out that Luther's solus

verdict on whether 'This is my body' is a 'synecdochal' or metaphorical statement must be suspended until we have covered Luther's exegesis of the substantive verb est and the predicate nouns corpus and sanguis.

3. Est

Believing as he did that 'the Holy Spirit is a God of unity, who [in his Word] gives a single sense and doctrine',[1] Luther repeatedly drew attention to the irreconcilable differences of exegesis that obtained between his opponents in their interpretation of the eucharistic words.[2] Never, sighed the Reformer in 1527, had he encountered such a shameful heresy, marked by such dissension among its leading advocates at the very outset; his opponents were agreed, charged Luther bitterly, 'only on the most important point, that is, to persecute Christ'.[3] The fact that Karlstadt, Zwingli and Oecolampadius each based his denial of the real presence on a novel understanding of a different part of the verba testamenti certainly grieved the defender of the clari-

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needs to be seen in the light of his equal emphasis on simul. Ebeling cites the celebrated formula simul iustus et peccator as illustrative of the particula exclusiva 'being clarified and made more precise' by the particula inclusiva (Luther. An Introduction to his Thought, London, 1972, p. 246f). Supremely, the solus Christus itself becomes a particula inclusiva in Luther's concentration on the continuing incarnational presence of Christ in Word and Sacrament.

1. WA 19. 123, 13-14.

2. WA 19. 121, 29-34; 458, 7-459, 2; WABr 3. 653, 5-9.

3. WA 23. 69, 25-28: 'Das ich nie schendlicher ketzerey gelesen habe, die ym anfahen unter sich selbs so viel köpffe, so viel rotten und uneinickeit habe, ob sie gleich ynn der heubtsache, Christum zu verfolgen, eintrechtig sind.'

tas externa Scripturae, but in the very work of 1527 in which he charged those who denied the real presence with having thereby committed the sin against the Holy Spirit,[4] the Reformer was obliged to concede that there is no material difference between Zwingli's and Oecolampadius' interpretation of the words of institution. Just as 'laughter signifies joy' is synonymous with 'laughter is a sign of joy', even so 'This signifies my body' means the same as 'This is a sign of my body': '"Bedeuten" und "zeichen sein" ist einerley.'[5] In the treatise of 1528, Luther's tactic was to deal with his two major opponents separately, first of all urging against Zwingli that all 'is' statements invariably have to do with the essence of the predicate, which is, according to the Reformer, the only portion of a sentence where a figure of speech may lurk. Having to his own satisfaction secured the integrity of the divine est, Luther could ask which corpus Jesus had in mind when he pronounced the words of institution. The Reformer had always conceded that the predicate noun of a scriptural statement could be intended in a figurative sense. His arguments against such a supposition in the case of the eucharistic words are partly exegetical, partly dogmatic and partly based on his own reflections on the nature of a tropus. Since, in Zwingli and Oecolampadius, Luther was faced with two opponents arguing an almost identical case, he tended

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4. WA 23. 73, 34-35.

5. WA 23. 97, 10-16: 'Erstlich ist das gewis, das Zwingel und Ecolampad ym verstand eintrechtig sind, wie wol die wort anderley sind. Denn das Zwingel sagt "Das bedeut meinen leib", ist eben so viel als das Ecolampad sagt "Das ist meins leibs zeichen". Die deudsche sprache gibts auch und alle sprache, Das gleich viel sey, wenn ich sage: "Lachen bedeut freude", Und "lachen ist

inevitably to employ identical arguments against both. In particular, the Reformer's understanding of the figure of speech tropus (to which the nearest English equivalent would be 'metaphor') is central to his debate with both the Swiss reformers. In order to appreciate the full force of these arguments, it is appropriate to preface our treatment of est with a brief review of the grammatical term tropus, which in our context is fitly considered along with its more complex kindred notion figura. Our principal concern here is not with the understanding of figura and tropus in the Western exegetical tradition or in the minds of Zwingli and Oecolampadius, but with the conception of them with which Luther approached the sacred text.

(a) figura

The reader of the eucharistic work of 1528 is apt to be bewildered at the variety of terms with which Luther describes the non-literal understanding of the words of institution. Along with 'tropus' and 'Figur', this interpretation may be described as a 'Gleichnis', and the particular views of Zwingli and Oecolampadius are wont to be derided as 'Deuteley' and 'Zeicheley' respectively. Some comments of the late Professor Cargill Thompson on the conceptual complexities of Luther's 'two kingdoms' scheme may be thought apposite here:

> 'Although Luther was by no means such an unsystematic or contradictory thinker as some modern critics have maintained, on one point at least he cannot escape the charge of inconsistency and that is in his use of words. Luther's language is often extremely

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ein zeichen der freude", Das kein frage noch zweivel hat: "Bedeuten" und"zeichen sein" ist einerley.'

> imprecise: he had little regard for verbal exactness, while he frequently employs even technical theological terms in a variety of ways. Usually it is clear from the context in what sense he is using a particular term in a given instance; however, the fact that the same word or phrase can have several connotations makes the task of trying to expound his thought an extremely difficult undertaking for modern scholars, since it is often hard to define precisely what he means by a specific phrase or concept.' (6)

Thus forewarned, we shall not expect the Reformer to be fastidiously precise in his use of technical grammatical terms, and we may be pleasantly surprised that Luther was fully alive to the fact that the term figura could bear three distinct senses. As he cautioned Oecolampadius in 1527, 'Aber figura ist ein dunckel und wanckel wort'.[7]

(i) figura in the salvation-historical setting of type and antitype

Typology is a time-honoured technique in the Church's exposition of Holy Scripture, and Luther could only welcome the discernment of New Testament antitypes in Old Testament types when the Apostles see holy baptism prefigured in the Flood (I Pet. 3:20f) and in the passage through the Red Sea (I Cor. 10:1f), and when the Lord sees his Cross typified in Moses' hoisting of a brazen serpent in Num. 21:9 (Jn. 3:14f). Types of this kind are discerned by the Holy Spirit in the Bible and therefore have the status of articles of faith:

> 'Und das ichs erausz sag, Figur deuttung mag dreyerley weysz geschehen. Zum ersten, wenn die schrifft selbs deuttet, als da S. Petrus die tauff

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6. W. D. J. Cargill Thompson: 'The "Two Kingdoms" and the "Two Regiments": Some Problems of Luther's Zwei-Reiche-Lehre', JTS 20 (1969), p. 165.

7. WA 23. 219, 15.

> deuttet durch die sindflut und Archa Noe, unnd S. Paulus durchs Rote mehr, und Christus seyn Creutz durch die schlangen, Joan. iij. Solche deuttung tzwingen und sind artickel des glaubens.' (8)

The parallel drawn by S. Augustine between leprosy and heresy is of another order, for this connection was made by S. Augustine's 'believing intellect', and not by the Word of God. Typology of this kind may be attractive, but cannot be compelling. Since Holy Scripture does make explicit mention of the res of heresy, such typology poses 'no danger' and can be tolerated.[9] Like allegory, it is decorative, not fundamental. A third kind of typology provokes the Reformer's ire, as when ardent papalists glimpse in the high priest Aaron a type of the Pope. Such typology is a figment of the exegetical imagination, 'since not a single letter of Scripture anywhere mentions either the Pope or the Papacy'.[10] Aware that figura is also a technical grammatical term, Luther is uneasy at its use in the Vulgate as a rendition for τυπος and its cognates; usage has become second nature, however, and the Reformer is conscious of his impotence to reshape the vocabulary of theologians.[11]

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8. WA 8. 386, 31-387, 3 (Evangelium von den zehn Aussätzigen, 1521).

9. WA 8. 387, 3-12.

10. ibid., 13-17.

11. WA 8. 388, 32-389, 8: 'Ich wolt, das solch ding nitt "figurn" hieszen, aber es ist tzu tieff eingerissen und gewonheit worden, das ichs auch musz also heissen. Die schrifft nennet es nit figurn, sondern Allegoriam, umbram, faciem, und die deuttung Mysteria, abscondita, secreta. Sie habensz figurn nennet ausz dem spruch Pauli i Corin. x, da er sagt: "Solch alles ist yhn geschehen in figurn". Aber sanct Paulus an dem ort redet

The New Testament clearly bids us recognise in Jesus Christ the antitype of the Passover lamb of the Mosaic law (Jn. 1:29; I Cor. 5:7; I Pet. 1:19; Rev. 12:6, 12-13), and the mainline Western tradition has been disposed to regard the eucharistic body and blood of Jesus (I Cor. 10:16) as the eschatological fulfilment of the presence of Christ among his people which was merely prefigured in the Jewish Passover lamb. Such an understanding of the eucharistic gift in the context of the movement of salvation history from shadow to fulfilment was classically expressed by S. Thomas Aquinas. The writer to the Hebrews had pointed out that 'the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities' (Heb. 10:1), prompting S. Thomas to argue that the prefigurative symbol of the Old Testament is fittingly followed by the full reality of its New Testament antitype. Thus the sacrifices of the old law were a figure of the coming sacrifice of Christ; and if the antitype of those superseded sacrifices, namely the Christian Mass, is to share in the perfection of the 'new law', then Christ must be present in that celebration, not in figure only, but in reality:

> 'Hoc autem conveniens est, primo quidem, perfectioni novae legis. Sacrificia enim veteris legis illud verum sacrificium passionis Christi continebant solum in figura: secundum illud Heb. 10, 1: "Umbram habens lex futurorum bonorum, non ipsam rerum imaginem." Et ideo oportuit ut aliquid plus haberet

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nit von figurn, sondern von exempeln, und spricht, Wir sollen uns furchten, das uns nit auch so gehe, denn sie sind uns figur und exempel geweszen. Und S. Petrus II Pet. ij. nennet dasselb "exempel", und S. Paulus auch an viel orttern "Formam". Es ist schuld des latinischen interpretis, der "Tipos" itzt figur, itzt exempel transferirt hat, daran sie sich gestossen und figurn drausz gemacht.'

> sacrificium novae legis a Christo institutum: ut scilicet contineret ipsum passum, non solum in significatione vel figura, sed etiam in rei veritate.' (12)

But only when the doctrine of the real presence is believed will it be obvious that the eucharistic elements are the eschatological antitype of certain Old Testament types (for example, the Passover lamb or the manna in the wilderness). Should the Ego Berengarius be disregarded and Holy Scripture be interpreted differently, the Lord's Supper might itself be viewed as standing in the same relationship to Christ, the fulfilment of God's promises, as did the manna of Ex. 16, with the single difference that, while the manna of the wilderness pointed forward to the Christ who was yet to come, the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper may be thought to commemorate the Christ who has come. In his famous 'letter' written around 1520, the learned Dutch lawyer, Cornelius Hoen, distinguished between a threefold 'spiritual bread': 'Christ who is eaten by faith, the manna eaten by the fathers in the desert, and the eucharist of the Christians.' In Hoen's scheme, the second and third of these signify the first.[13] Hoen introduced to the sixteenth century the notion that the est of the eucharistic words is to be understood in the sense of significat. With the words 'Hoc est corpus meum', argued Hoen, Christ did not intend to transubstantiate the external element, 'but, through the bread, to give himself'. Jesus' gift of bread is likened to the custom of handing over 'a stick, a piece of straw, or a stone' in token of the

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12. Summa Theologica III, qu. 75, art. 1.

13. The 'letter' of Hoen was published by Zwingli in 1525, being printed in CR XCI (CR Zw IV), pp. 512-518; see esp. p. 514, 8ff.

transfer of land ownership from one person to another. Through the bread the Lord wishes to assure us that his body, signified by the bread, hung on the Cross for our sakes. Hoen's emphasis on the evangelical pro vobis is redolent of the chief theme of Luther's own theology: 'imo omnia, quae feci aut faciam, vestra sunt.' Nor was it accidentally or in vain that Christ avoided significat in favour of est: est, according to Hoen, brings out the magnitude and assurance of Jesus' self-gift 'much more certainly and vigorously' than would significat.[14]

A hasty glance at Luther's assertion, in de captivitate Babylonica, of the effectual equality between the evangelical 'sacraments' of the Old and New Testaments,[15] might lead one to suppose that, in 1520 at least, the Reformer's mind was not foreclosed against Hoen's argument. However, Luther's allegation of the salvific

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14. CR XCI, p. 517, 7-18: 'Non ergo per haec verba "Hoc est corpus meum" salvator panem transsubstantiari voluit, sed per panem seipsum dare; sicut mos est quibusdam in locis, quando venditor agri possessionem vult tradere emptori, dat ei baculum, stramen aut lapidem, et dicit: "Ecce, trado tibi agrum." Item possessio domus datur per traditionem clavium. Sic etiam dominus per panem seipsum tradit nobis, quasi dixisset: "Accipite et comedite, et nolite aestimare parvum, quia hoc, quod trado vobis, significat corpus meum, quod do vobis, dando istud. Quando ergo illud tradetur aut in cruce penditur, erit pro vobis, imo omnia, quae feci aut faciam, vestra sunt." Magna est consolatio ista et dulcissima verba, si recte contemplentur; nec sine caussa dictum est "est" pro "significat", quia "est" multo certius et vehementius praedictum sensum facit.'

15. WA 6. 532, 4-8: 'Error enim est, sacramenta novae legis differi a sacramentis veteris legis penes efficatiam significationis: utraque aequaliter significabant. Idem enim deus, qui nos nunc per baptismum et panem salvat, salvavit Abel per sacrifitium, Noe per arcum, Abraham per circumcisionem et alios omnes per sua signa.'

equality of patriarchal and New Testament signa was not made in the context of the Lord's Supper, but under the heading of baptism. Moreover, the Reformer's concern here was not to belittle the objectivity of sacramental grace, but to distance himself from both the Thomist and Scotist conceptions of sacramental efficacy,[16] and in particular to reject any understanding of the ex opere operato principle that would rule out the necessity for a subjective fides that would embrace the proffered grace. Luther urged that such 'signs' as Gideon's fleece, Manoah's sacrifice and the sign offered by Isaiah to Ahaz are to be sharply distinguished from the 'figurae legales' of the law of Moses, which were fulfilled merely by an outward human act.[17] With respect to the 'evangelical signs' of the Old Testament we are to remember that 'in iis enim simul promittebatur aliquid, quo fides in deum exigebatur'.[18] The 'signs and sacraments' of both covenants are bound up with a word of promise, which demands the faith of those involved. These divine ordinances are therefore fulfilled 'by faith, and by no other work':

> 'At nostra et patrum signa seu sacramenta habent annexum verbum promissionis, quod fidem exigit et nullo opere alio impleri potest: ideo sunt signa seu sacramenta iustificationis, quia sunt sacramenta iustificantis fidei et non operis, unde et tota eorum efficatia est ipsa fides, non operatio. Qui enim eis credit, is implet ea, etiam si nihil operetur. Inde proverbium illud "Non sacramentum sed fides sacramenti iustificat".' (19)

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16. WA 6. 531, 31ff.

17. WA 6. 532, 12.

18. ibid., 17-18.

19. ibid., 24-29.

The Reformer's concern, in advocating the equality of Old and New Testament 'signs and sacraments', was to highlight the necessity for man's suppliant faith to receive the justifying grace offered by God, as Luther and the whole tradition would believe, from Gen. 3:15 onwards. Sola fide is here quite simply the appropriate creaturely response to the sola gratia proclaimed and imparted through the Word: 'At sacramenta non implentur, dum fiunt, sed dum creduntur.'[20] But we may not ignore the fact that Luther's sacramental theology, at this stage of his development, is focussed almost exclusively on the faith-provoking Word: the word of promise mediates forgiveness and a share in the life of God in both Testaments, the 'annexed sign' appearing as an ancillary and dispensable addendum. Even though the Reformer stoutly and creatively confesses and develops the real presence dogma in de captivitate, the bodily presence of Christ nevertheless plays no essential role in the mediation and impartation of salvation. If Luther had not subsequently gone on to discover the saving significance of the presence of the sacred body and blood, the real presence would have remained a potentially redundant element of his theology, and there would have been no good reason for him to defend and expound this doctrine with such force from 1523 onwards; but, if an unbalanced theology of the Word had led the Reformer to relinquish the doctrine of the real presence, this would have had precious little to do with Hoen's understanding of the Lord's Supper in the salvation-historical setting of figura and res. By 1523 Luther

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20. WA 6. 533, 12-13.

had implicitly reverted to the traditional mediaeval understanding of the place of the eucharistic gift in the movement from shadow to fulfilment,[21] and in 1528 the traditional mediaeval argument was forcefully developed, with an original twist, by the Reformer.[22]

(ii) figura against the background of classical Latin usage.

In the work of 1527 Dass diese Wort Christi ... noch feste stehen, Luther was obliged to deal with Oecolampadius' appeal to patristic authority in favour of the non-literal understanding of the eucharistic words. Oecolampadius had referred to a passage in Adversus Marcionem where Tertullian argues from the words of institution for the unambiguous creaturely reality of our Lord's assumed humanity. We quote Tertullian from Dr. Ernest Evans' translation:

> 'So then, having affirmed that with desire he had desired to eat the passover, his own passover - it would not have been right for God to desire anything not his own - the bread which he took, and divided among his disciples, he made into his body, saying This is my body, that is, the figure of my body. Now there could have been no figure, unless it had been a veritable body; for an empty thing, which a phantasm is, would have been incapable of figure.' (23)

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21. WA 11. 434, 5-16. n.b. Luther's casual statement, in his debate with Emser of 1521, that 'figures' are out of place in the New Testament: 'ym newen testament, da die figur auss seyn' (WA 7. 630, 2).

22. WA 26. 382, 25-383, 3; 392, 28-31; 395, 26-35.

23. Tertullian: Adversus Marcionem, Books 4 and 5 (tr. and ed. Ernest Evans, OUP 1972), p. 493.

If the Latin figura may be understood in a sense akin to that which it bore in the preceding section, then Oecolampadius was justified in assuming it to mean the 'representation or likeness of an absent ...thing'.[24] Duly noting that 'figura is an obscure and ambiguous word', Luther summarised his Swiss interlocutor's understanding of it:

> 'Aber figura ist ein dunckel und wanckel wort. Er wolts wol gerne also deuten, das es hiesse ein gleichnis, furbilde odder deutzeichen, gleich wie man die geschicht ym alten testament figuren nennet des newen, wie Adam ein figur odder furbilde Christi, wie eine braut der Christenheit furbilde odder figur heisst.' (25)

The Reformer charged that Oecolampadius had injected an alien sense into the classical Latin figura, which, according to Luther, is to be taken as synonymous with the German Gestalt, 'shape': 'Eben das wir "gestalt" heissen, das heisst Tertullianus latinisch "figura".'[26]
The Reformer contended that, in classical Latin, figura bore the sense of a 'form or shape in the mathematical sense', so that, with his figura corporis mei, Tertullian meant to say the same as the later Western Church, which would customarily refer to the body and blood of Christ as existing under the Gestalt or 'form' of bread and wine:

> 'Denn wir sagen, das Tertullianus des worts figura nach rechter art der latinischen sprache braucht, da es heist eine form odder gestalt Mathematice, das lang, dick, breit, rund, weis, schwartz ist, das man sehen, fulen, handeln kan, wie wir deuds-

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24. Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 152: 'Oecolampad versteht unter figura also das Abbild, das Bild einer abwesenden, nicht einer verborgenen Sache.'

25. WA 23. 219, 15-19.

26. ibid., 27-28.

> chen auch sagen vom sacrament, das Christus leib sey unter brods gestalt und sein blut unter weins gestalt.' (27)

According to Dr. Hilgenfeld, the usage of Cicero backs up Luther's translation of figura with 'form odder Gestalt', while the Reformer is on weaker ground with his assertion that the term was originally employed in a mathematical context.[28] Commenting on the disputed passage from Adversus Marcionem, Dr. Evans states that 'figura does not indicate anything merely figurative, but a visible objective shape'.[29] Luther's unwonted foray into patristic studies would thus seem not to have been in vain.

(iii) figura as a technical grammatical term

In the science of rhetoric Quintilian provided a conceptual framework according to which the non-literal use of language might be categorised. In Books Eight and Nine of his Institutio oratoria, Quintilian introduced a fundamental distinction into the discussion of non-literal, decorative or metaphorical ways of speaking. Should the non-literal use of language be limited to a single word, then we may speak of the latter as a tropus; should it extend to a whole phrase or sentence, then this group of words may be referred to as a figura.[30] Quin-

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27. ibid., 22-27.

28. see Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 153f.

29. Adversus Marcionem, Books 4 and 5, p. 493, n. 40.

30. see Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 155f: 'Der Unterschied zwischen einem tropus und einer figura liegt nach Quintilian darin, dass die improprietas, die Uneigentlichkeit, des tropus sich auf einzelne Worte bezieht, d.h. ein tropus liegt vor, wenn anstelle des gewöhnlichen, in eigent-

tilian's clear-cut distinction between tropus and figura was not always respected by his successors, so that S. Augustine - for example, in his influential De doctrina christiana[31] - can speak of figura where, according to Quintilian's definition, he should have spoken of tropus. Quintilian's concern had been to distinguish between tropus and figura, but the overlap between the two concepts is seen when he discusses the relationship between metaphor, as the most common type of tropus, and allegory, as a subdivision of figura sententiarum: allegory, proposes Quintilian, is continua metaphora.[32] The term figura is Quintilian's rendition of the Greek σχημα , and in Quintilian's presentation σχημα διανοιας is matched by figurae sententiarum and σχημα λεξεως by figurae verborum.[33] In the textbook written by Luther's Erfurt teacher, Bartholomäus Arnoldi von Usingen, Quintilian's influence is strongly felt, but the distinction between figurae sententiarum and figurae verborum is now replaced by that between figurae rhetoricales and figurae grammaticales. In Usingen's presentation there is a further threefold division within the concept of figura grammaticalis, so that an equation is made of figura grammaticalis locutionis with tropus.[34] Once this identification has been made, the separate concept

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licher Bedeutung stehenden Wortes ein anderes, uneigentlich gebrauchtes gesetzt wird; eine figura bezeichnet dagegen die Uneigentlichkeit in Konstruktion und Aufbau der Rede.'

31. De doctrina christiana III, XXIX, 41; cf. Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 158.

32. Institutio oratoria IX, 2, 46f; cf. Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 157, n. 599.

33. see Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 157.

34. see Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 158f.

of tropus 'can easily be dispensed with'.[35]

Luther paid no regard to Quintilian's painstaking distinction between figura and tropus. Before the eucharistic controversy broke out, the Reformer invoked the concept of figura in the sense of tropus, and after - in 1525 - he became acquainted with the term tropus, he treated it as synonymous with his previous understanding of figura.[36] In his heated exchange of 1521 with Jerome Emser of Leipzig, Luther admitted that Scripture often uses words in a non-literal sense. The Reformer is swift to provide his own illustration of such usage. On hearing that 'Emser is a coarse ass', we are not to suppose that the Leipzig papalist is literally a long-eared quadruped. Rather, the similitude between Emser and an ass should be found in the lack of intellect supposedly common to both. This way of speaking is called, in Greek, schemata, and, in Latin, figurae:

> 'Viel vornunfftiger haben hie geleret, die den buchstaben ein vorblümett, vordackt wort, wie Augustinus auch weyland gethan, als wenn ich sprech "Emser ist ein grober Esell", und ein einfeltiger mensch den wortten folgett, vorstund, das Emser ein recht Esell were mit langen oren und vier füssenn, der were durch den buchstaben betrogen, sso ich durch ein solch vorblumet wort hett wollen antzeigen, er habe ein groben unvorstendigen kopff. Solch blumen wortt leret man die knaben ynn den schulen und heyssen auff kriechss Schemata, auff latinisch figure, darumb das man damit die rede vorkleydett unnd schmuckt, gleych wie man ein leib mit eynem kleynod tzierdt. Der selben blumen ist die schrifft voll, sonderlich ynn den propheten.' (37)

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35. see Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 159.

36. Within only a few lines Luther can equate the 'figur Alleosis' (WA 26. 317, 12) with the 'tropus Alleosis' (ibid., 26).

37. WA 7. 651, 25-34.

(b) tropus

In his definition, Quintilian had stressed that figura involves a 'renewal' of speech: figura is 'arte aliqua novata forma dicendi'.[38] Having subordinated tropus to the wider concept of figura grammaticalis, it was but a short step for Usingen to let Quintilian's definition of figura colour his own definition of tropus: tropus is 'novata locutio contra communem usum loquendi'.[39] The idea of a 'renewal' of language would become the major feature of Luther's own understanding of tropus. As we have already seen, prior to the outbreak of the eucharistic controversy the Reformer was acquainted with the matter, though not with the word tropus: what Quintilian had called tropus, Luther named figura. Quintilian had already lamented that, 'Nec desunt qui tropis figurarum nomen imponant ...',[40] and Luther was not the only one to err in this respect during the early years of the Reformation. Having been won over to a figurative understanding of the eucharistic words by the 'letter' of Hoen, Zwingli, in his letter to Matthew Alber of Reutlingen, described the est of the verba testamenti as a schema.[41] Not until he wrote his Subsidium sive coronis de eucharistia in the summer of 1525 did Zwingli - probably under the influence of the learned Oecolampadius[42]

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38. Institutio oratoria IX, 1, 14; quoted in Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 157, n. 593.

39. see Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 159, n. 606.

40. Institutio oratoria IX, 1, 2; quoted in Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 155, n. 587.

41. CR XC (CR Zw III), pp. 343, 4; 346, 25.

42. so Hanns Rückert: 'Das Eindringen der Tropuslehre in die schweizerische Auffassung vom Abendmahl', ARG 37 (1940), pp. 217-219.

- label the problematic est a tropus.[43] While Zwingli was developing his new understanding of the Lord's Supper, Luther was embroiled in a bitter controversy with Erasmus on the freedom of the will. Erasmus' Diatribe de libero arbitrio gave Luther his first encounter with the hermeneutical use of the concept tropus. On a literal reading, such texts as Ex. 9:12 ('...the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh') and Mal. 1:2 ('Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated') undoubtedly tell in favour of Luther's predestinarianism, but Erasmus felt obliged to temper these harsh statements which, as he saw it, stood in outright contradiction to the goodness of God. Erasmus thus postulated a tropus in these Scripture passages: God did not actually harden Pharaoh's heart, but merely gave Pharaoh the opportunity stubbornly to reject his saving will. Luther could not but regard Erasmus' face-saving interpretation of refractory texts as an assault on the perspicuous, self-expounding Word of God:

> 'Hic igitur Diatribe invenit novam artem eludendi manifestissimos locos, nempe quod tropum velit inesse verbis simplicissimis et clarissimis.' (44)

Only if the context demands it, or if the literal sense proposes an absurdity patently at odds with an acknowledged article of faith, may we admit the presence of a tropus in Scripture. Otherwise we must take Scripture according to the 'simple, pure and natural meaning of the words', mindful that the aptitude for accurate and meaningful speech was infused into men by God:

> 'Sic potius sentiamus, neque sequelam neque tropum in ullo loco scripturae esse admittendum, nisi id

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43. CR XCI (CR Zw IV), p. 466, 14ff.

44. WA 18. 700, 12-13.

> cogat circumstantia verborum evidens et absurditas rei manifestae in aliquem fidei articulum peccans; sed ubique inhaerendum est simplici puraeque et naturali significationi verborum, quam grammatica et usus loquendi habet, quem Deus creavit in hominibus.' (45)

The Reformer would seem, at this stage, to have no clear definition of tropus in the back of his mind. While Zwingli's understanding of est as significat and Oecolampadius' understanding of corpus as figura corporis take est and corpus to be tropi, Karlstadt's understanding of Hoc might be placed under the heading of figura. At all events it is impossible to square Karlstadt's exegesis of the demonstrative pronoun with the traditional definition of tropus. But, shortly after countering Erasmus' introduction of the concept of tropus into hermeneutical debate, Luther himself employs this term (or, rather, a cognate form of it) to label another set of opponents with whom he is concerned at the same time. Without naming Karlstadt and the Swiss, the Reformer refers to the 'new prophets' who challenge the clarity of the statement 'This is my body':

> 'Quid nostro saeculo accidit novis istis Prophetis in verbis Christi: Hoc est corpus meum? ubi alius in pronomine Hoc, alius in verbo Est, alius in nomine Corpus tropicus est.' (46)

At this early stage in the eucharistic controversy (1525), Luther understands tropus simply as a badge for non-literal/grammatical interpretation of Scripture. Thus Origen is excoriated as 'tropologus ille'.[47]

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45. ibid., 31-35.

46. WA 18. 701, 8-10.

47. ibid., 5.

Not until 1528 did Luther tackle head on the Swiss allegation that either the substantive verb or the predicate noun of the verba testamenti is a tropus. Zwingli's location of the presumed tropus in the verb est is abruptly dismissed with Luther's claim that 'is' must always mean 'is' and can never mean 'signifies'.[48] Should a figure of speech lurk in a phrase or sentence, argues the Reformer, then it must be found in the predicate noun. Luther must, since 1525, have delved into the grammatical textbooks of his youth, for he now furnishes a definition of tropus which bears the hallmarks of his teacher Usingen's emphasis on novatio. A tropus is formed when a common everyday word is transplanted from its customary context and applied (in a metaphorical sense) to describe another object. Thus, in its primary sense, a 'flower' is a rose, lily or violet, but in its secondary, 'tropical', sense the word can be used in comely description of, say, the Christ-child:

> 'Es mangelt den höhen geistern, das sie die rede kunst grammatica, odder wie sie es nennen "Tropus", so man ynn der kinder schulen leret, nicht recht ansehen. Die selbige kunst leret, wie ein knabe solle aus einem wort zwey odder drey machen, odder wie er einerley wort newen brauch und mehr deutunge geben müge. Als das ichs mit etlichen exempeln beweise. Das wort "blume" nach seiner ersten und alten deutunge heist es eine rosen, lilien, violen und der gleichen, die aus der erden wechst und blühet. Wenn ich nu Christum wolt mit eym feynen lobe preisen und sehe, wie er von der iungfrawen Maria kompt, so ein schön kind, mag ich das wort "blume" nemen und einen tropum machen odder eine neue deutunge und brauch geben und sagen: Christus ist eine blume.' (49)

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48. WA 26. 271, 20-25; 274, 23-25.

49. WA 26. 271, 25-272, 17.

The word 'flower' is here 'renewed'. According to the 'tropical' use of the noun, Christ does not 'signify' but truly 'is' a flower, albeit of a different kind from those that bloom in gardens. Luther illustrates his understanding of tropus with a not wholly apposite quotation from Horace's Ars Poetica:

> 'Hie sprechen alle grammatici odder redemeister, Das blume sey ein new wort worden und habe eine newe deutung, Und heisse nu nicht mehr die blume auff dem felde, sondern das kind Jhesus, Und müsse nicht hie das wort "Ist" zur deuteley werden. Denn Christus bedeutet nicht eine blume, sondern er ist eine blume, Doch ein ander blume denn die natürliche. Denn so spricht der Poet Horatius: "Dixeris egregie, notum si callida verbum reddiderit iunctura novum", das ist: Ger fein ists geredt, wenn du ein gemeyn wort kanst wol vernewen.' (50)

Two further points remain to be made before we pass on to the Reformer's exegesis of est and corpus. First, while the ancient and mediaeval grammarians had understood metaphor as a subdivision (albeit the most important one) of tropus,[51] in Luther's mind tropus and metaphor are synonymous. The 'renewed word' 'heist tropus odder Metaphora ynn der grammatica',[52] and when Jesus labels 'the seed' and 'the field' as 'the Word of God' and 'the world' respectively, we are to notice 'das Same und Acker seyen tropi odder vernewete wörter nach der Metaphora'.[53] Secondly, the Reformer is insistent

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50. WA 26. 272, 17-25.

51. Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 160.

52. WA 26. 273, 22-23.

53. WA 26. 277, 22-23. As Luther goes on (ibid., 23-24), 'Denn vocabulum simplex et metaphoricum sind nicht ein, sondern zwey wort', he makes an outright identification of tropus with verbum metaphoricum.

that a noun may only be used as a tropus when there is a certain similarity between it and the object to be described. Two things can be given one name 'umb des willen, das ein gleichnis ynn beiden ist',[54] and:

> 'wie die reden meister leren: Que transferuntur, secundum similitudinem transferuntur, Das ist, alle vernewerung odder tropi geschehen einer gleichnis halben.' (55)

A certain similitude between subject and predicate noun prompts Luther to list the following 'is' statements:

> 'Also redet man nu ynn allen sprachen und vernewet die wörter, als wenn wir sagen: Maria ist eine morgenrödte, Christus ist eine frucht des leibes, Der teuffel ist ein Gott der wellt, Der Bapst ist Judas, S. Augustin ist Paulus, S. Bernhard ist eine taube, David ist ein holtzwürmlin.' (56)

As the vine conveys sustenance to the grapes on its branches, even so Christ mediates the life of God to his brethren; thus the metaphor 'I am the true vine' of Jn. 15:5 is entirely fitting.[57] Should Oecolampadius be right in his surmise that the corpus meum of the eucharistic words should be understood as figura corporis mei, then there must be a similarity between the body of Jesus and the element of bread which renders such a metaphor possible.

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54. WA 26. 273, 24.

55. WA 26. 379, 31-33.

56. WA 26. 273, 18-21.

57. WA 26. 391, 29-392, 22: 'Denn wo eine figur, symbolum odder gleichnis sein sol, da eins das ander bedeuten sol, da mus ia etwas gleichs ynn beiden angezeigt werden, darauff die gleichnis stehe, Als Johan. 15 der weinstock ist ein gleichnis odder figur Christi ynn dem, wie er selbs sagt, Das gleich wie der rebe nicht kan frucht bringen, sondern verdorret, wo er nicht am weinstock bleibt.'

(c) Vom Anbeten (1523)

In this writing Luther dealt for the first time with the understanding of the eucharistic est as significat. Although directed to the Bohemian Brethren, Luther's argument in this brief pamphlet would seem to engage chiefly with an unnamed interlocutor, the Dutchman Hoen. Although it is no longer widely believed that Luther was the intended addressee of Hoen's letter,[58] it remains undisputed that Hinne Rode brought Hoen's condensed treatise to the Reformer in 1521. Luther was therefore well acquainted with Hoen's arguments, which would subsequently be developed and expanded by Zwingli, when he wrote his appeal to the Bohemian Brethren. The Reformer notes that some have begun to interpret 'is' as 'signifies', charging that such an exposition would reduce the eucharist to the level of an 'Old Testament figure':

> 'Auffs erst sind etliche gewesen, die es dafür gehalten haben, Es sey schlecht brott und weyn ym sacrament, wie sonst die leutt brott essen und weyn trincken, und haben nicht mehr gehallten denn: das brott bedeutte den leyb und der weyn bedeutte das blutt Christi, gleych als wenn man eyn figur aus dem alten testament nehme und spreche: Das hymel brod, das die Juden ynn der wüsten assen, bedeutt den leyb Christi odder das Euangelion, Aber das hymel brott ist nicht Euangelion noch der leyb Christi.' (59)

Should this figura/res scheme be applied to holy baptism, then the latter would no longer actually be, but would merely signify the bath of spiritual rebirth.[60] Lu-

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58. According to Zwingli, the 'letter' was written 'ad quendam, apud quem omne iudicium sacrae scripturae fuit' (CR XCI, 512, 1-3). This could just as well be Erasmus as Luther.

59. WA 11. 434, 5-11.

60. ibid., 11-16: 'Alsso, wenn ich von der tauffe

ther's mind is clearly moving here within the perimeters of the traditional understanding of the eucharistic gift within the context of the progression of salvation history from shadow to fulfilment, and his words betray unease lest Hoen's presentation of the Lord's Supper should diminish the eschatological fullness and reality of Christ's presence in his Church in this New Testament period. But Luther consciously refrains from making explicit appeal to the salvation-historical argument for the real presence. The 'error' of the Bohemian Brethren (and Hoen) will be demolished 'by no other sword than the fact that Christ said "is", not "signifies"'. Only a Scripturally based doctrinal factor could persuade Luther to tamper with the divine est:

> 'Fasse das wortt, da Christus spricht: Nempt hyn, das ist meyn leyb, das ist meyn blutt. Man muss nicht sso freveln an gottis wortten, das yemandt on aussgedruckte klare schrifft eym wortt wolt eyn ander deutten geben denn seyn natürlich deutten ist, als disse thun, die das worttlin "Ist" frevelich on grund der schrifft zwingen da hyn, es solle so viel heyssen als das worttlin "Bedeutt", Und machen diesem spruch Christi eyn solche nasen: "Das ist meyn leyb" solle sso viel gellten als: das bedeutt meyn leyb etc. Aber wyr wollen und sollen eynfeltiglich an Christus wortten bleyben, der wirt uns nicht betriegen, unnd solchen yrthum mit keym andern schwerdt tzu rück schlagen denn damit, das Christus nicht spricht: das bedeutt meyn leyb, ssondern "das ist meyn leyb".' (61)

Should the robust est of the eucharistic words crumble into a mere significat, what is to stop this dilution of dogmatic substance exerting the effect of a falling do-

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spreche: Die tauffe ist ein bad der seele, das ist, die tauffe badet nicht die seel, sondern bedeutt das bad der seele, da sie mit dem wortt gottis ym glauben gebadet wirtt. Solche ehre haben nu disse dem sacrament gethan, das sie sagen, Es sey nicht da der leyb Christi, ssondern bedeutte yhn wie eyn tzeychen.'

61. ibid., 19-29.

mino on other articles of faith? If an est spoken at the most solemn juncture of Jesus' earthly life may be reduced to significat, why may we not say that blessed Mary signifies rather than is the Mother of God, or that Jesus merely signifies God and man? Again, why not tone down the 'is' of Rom. 1:16, so that the gospel simply 'represents' the power of God?[62]

The bold claims which Luther would make in 1528 for the integrity of 'is' statements are strikingly prefigured in the pamphlet of 1523. Already at this stage the Reformer intimates that any figure of speech is likely to lurk in the predicate noun rather in the substantive verb. Hoen had contended that Scripture frequently uses 'is' in the sense of 'signifies', specifying, among other passages, S. Paul's allusion to the miracles of the Exodus as types of the gospel sacraments in I Cor. 10:1-4. Hoen took the manna and the rock whence Moses drew water as symbols of the coming Christ, interpreting S. Paul's statement 'and the Rock was Christ' to mean 'the Rock represented Christ'.[63] Luther's understanding of this passage is wholly different. The Reformer begins by noting the Apostle's emphatic threefold use of the adjective 'spiritual' in I Cor. 10:3f, arguing that S. Paul here evokes the actual manna and the actual rock which Moses struck as symbolic of the Bread of life and the spiritual Rock who has sustained believers under both covenants.[64] Having thrice qualified his nouns with the adjective 'spiritual', S. Paul cannot intend us to under-

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62. WA 11. 434, 30-435, 9.

63. CR XCI (CR Zw IV), p. 513, 38-41.

64. WA 11. 435, 10-31.

stand that Christ 'was' the rock of Ex. 17:6. Rather, Christ truly 'is' the spiritual rock typified by the rock in the desert:

> 'Da sihestu, das sie S. Paulus wortt felschlich auff yhren yrthum getzogen haben. Denn es ist war, das S. Paulus sagt: Christus war der fels. Nicht das er Christum bedeutt, ssondern ists selbs warhafftig der geystliche fels, wilcher durch yhenen leyplichen bedeutt ist.' (65)

A further factor worth noting in Luther's early defence of the integrity of the divine est is his insistence on rigorous exegetical discipline. The theologian must subject his own thinking to the clear statements of Scripture, not vice versa. And even if one could prove that Scripture elsewhere uses 'is' in the sense of 'signifies', one would still be obliged to demonstrate that 'is' must be taken to mean 'signifies' in the words of institution.[66] Only if the real presence is at odds with the regula fidei will Luther countenance a non-literal understanding of the eucharistic words.[67]

(d) Dass diese Worte Christi ...noch feste stehen (1527)

Luther's creative contribution to eucharistic theology in this work can be seen chiefly in his discussion of the hypostatic union as the matrix of the real presence and in his treatment of the bearing of the antithesis of 'flesh' and 'spirit' on the external means of grace. The Reformer's defence of the divine est here is briefly told. First, he reiterates the claim that the arbitrary assumption that a figure of speech is present in the eucharistic words puts at risk the integrity of the whole of Christian dogma. If we may interpret the verba testamenti as we please, what is to prevent

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65. ibid., 32-35. 66. WA 11. 436, 10-15.

67. ibid., 21-22: 'Eyn iglich wortt soll man lassen

our rendering Gen. 1:1 with 'In the beginning the cuckoo ate the hedgesparrow, feathers and all'?[68] Luther continues untiringly to propound the principle that non-literal interpretation can be justified only in terms of the immediate context or of an otherwise unavoidable clash with an accepted article of faith.[69] And he deals once again with Hoen's assertion, which had in the meantime been developed by Zwingli, that S. Paul's statement that 'the rock was Christ' means 'the rock signified Christ'. As in 1523, the Reformer is convinced that the figure of speech (to which S. Paul himself points through the adjective 'spiritual') will be found in the predicate noun rather than in the substantive verb.[70]

(e) Vom Abendmahl Christi. Bekenntnis (1528)

S. Thomas began his rebuttal of the suspicion that the body of Christ might be present in the Sacrament of the Altar not 'secundum veritatem, sed solum secundum figuram, vel sicut in signo' by marshalling two robust confessions of the real presence from the pens of SS.

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stehen ynn seiner natürlichen bedeuttung und nicht davon lassen, es zwinge denn der glawbe davon.'

68. WA 23. 91, 17-18.

69. WA 23. 93, 25-28: 'Denn wer sich untersteht, die wort ynn der schrifft anders zu deuten denn sie lauten, der ist schuldig, dasselbige aus dem text desselbigen orts odder einen artickel des glaubens zu beweisen.'

70. WA 23. 101, 35-103, 4: 'Denn die deuteley ynn Paulo und Mose ist yhm bald genomen, weil Paulus spricht: "Sie truncken vom geistlichen fels, Der fels aber war Christus". Hie zeigt S. Paulus selbs, das er von eym geystlichen fels rede. Nu deutet der geystliche fels Christum nicht, Sondern der fels war Christus selbs bey den Juden, gleich wie auch unser fels itzt nicht bedeut, sondern ist nichts anders denn Christus.'

Hilary and Ambrose.[71] Aquinas immediately went on to note:

> 'quod verum corpus Christi et sanguinem esse in hoc sacramento, non sensu deprehendi potest, sed sola fide, quae auctoritati divinae innititur.' (72)

The 'divine authority' to which 'faith alone' can cleave is none other than Holy Scripture, as S. Thomas made clear by appealing to the Lucan account of the Holy Supper as expounded by S. Cyril of Jerusalem, who appositely remarked that, since our Lord Jesus Christ is the truth, he does not lie in these words.[73] The testimony of the Fathers was clearly of vast importance for Aquinas in establishing the doctrine of the real presence, but the decisive factor telling in favour of the Church's doctrine was unmistakably the clear witness of the 'auctoritas divina', that is, the Bible. Nevertheless, we cannot fail to be struck by the fact that, after confessing the biblical doctrine of the real presence, S. Thomas swiftly passed on to list three dogmatic arguments in its favour. Only after placing the eucharistic gift in the setting of the progression of sacred history from shadow to fulfilment, urging that the bodily presence is in keeping with

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71. ST III, qu. 75, art. 1: 'SED CONTRA est quod Hilarius dicit, in VIII De Trin.: "De veritate carnis et sanguinis Christi non est relictus ambigendi locus. Nunc et ipsius Domini professione, et fide nostra, caro eius vere est cibus et sanguis eius vere est potus." Et Ambrosius dicit, VI De sacramentis: "Sicut verus est Dei Filius Dominus Iesus Christus, ita vera Christi caro est quam accipimus, et verus sanguis eius est potus".'

72. ibid.

73. ibid.: 'Unde super illud Lc. 22, 19, "Hoc est corpus meum quod pro vobis tradetur", dicit Cyrillus: "Non dubites an hoc verum sit, sed potius suscipe verba Salvatoris in fide: cum enim sit veritas non mentitur".'

the 'caritas Christi', who would fain keep intimate company with his friends, and alleging that it is also in keeping with the 'perfectioni fidei', which fittingly knows Christ 'modo invisibili' according to both his natures, divine and human, did Aquinas reiterate that denial of the real presence is 'verbis Christi contrarium'.[74] In short, S. Thomas confessed the real presence as biblical teaching, but conspicuously refrained from backing up the doctrine with exegetical observations, preferring to buttress it by demonstrating its congruence with the living tissue of revealed truth as a whole. Two centuries later Gabriel Biel would refer to those who denied the real presence, interpreting the est of the eucharistic words in the sense of significat:

> 'Sunt qui dicunt, quod "hoc" demonstret panem, sed verbum "est" non capitur substantive, sed ut "valet" tantum, id est "significat", ut sit sensus: "Hoc est corpus meum", id est panis significat corpus meum.' (75)

Biel himself, of course, understood the verb est in a substantive sense, but, after examining his treatment of such non-literal statements as Jn. 15:1 and I Cor. 10:4, Dr. Hilgenfeld urges that Biel:

> 'seems in principle willing to concede the grammatical and logical possibility of a switching of "Hoc est corpus meum" into "Panis significat corpus meum".' (76)

Against this background the distinctiveness of Luther's exegetical treatment of the verba testamenti in general, and of the disputed est in particular, cannot fail to become apparent. As the Reformer put it in 1523:

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74. ibid.

75. Sacri canonis misse expositio, Lec. 48G; quoted in Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 61, n. 199.

76. op.cit., p. 70.

> 'Aber wyr wollen und sollen eynfeltiglich an Christus wortten bleyben, der wirt uns nicht betriegen, unnd solchen yrthum mit keym andern schwerdt tzu rück schlagen denn damit, das Christus nicht spricht: das bedeutt meyn leyb, ssondern "das ist meyn leyb".' (77)

That is, the real presence must be proved exegetically before its coherence with the other articles of faith can be expounded dogmatically. We have already noted Luther's predisposition, long before the 'Supper strife' began in earnest, for locating any figure of speech in the predicate noun rather than in the substantive verb.[78] In the work of 1528, the Reformer made some bold assertions about the nature of 'is' statements which make it clear that he could have as little respect for Zwingli's 'tropical' interpretation of est as he had for Karlstadt's understanding of Hoc as the beginning of a tautological parenthesis. Luther claimed that it is utterly impossible for 'is' to carry the sense of 'signifies' in any language; should the 'Schwärmer' be able to prove the contrary, then the Reformer would gladly concede defeat:

> 'Aber euch als die unsern weiter zu unterrichten, solt yhr wissen, Das ein lauter geticht ist, wer do sagt, das dis wortlin "Ist" so viel heisse als "deutet", Es kan keyn mensch nymer mehr beweisen an einichem ort der schrifft, Ja ich wil weiter sagen: Wenn die schwermer ynn allen sprachen, so auff erden sind, einen spruch bringen, darynnen "ist" so viel gelte als "deutet", so sollen sie gewonnen haben.' (79)

A clear distinction must be made between the question 'What is this?' and the question 'What does this signify?'

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77. WA 11. 434, 25-29.

78. n.b. his insistence that Emser is an ass (WA 7. 651, 25-34) and that Christ is a rock (WA 11. 435, 32-35; 23. 101, 35-103, 4).

79. WA 26. 271, 20-25.

The mere use of the word 'is' infallibly indicates that one has to do with essence, not significance.[80] A metaphor may be used to describe the essence of a person or a thing, but the use of the verb 'to be' underlines the fact that the metaphor intends to capture the essence of the subject.[81] Luther's assertions will be readily conceded in the case, for example, of the 'I am' statements of the Johannine Jesus: our Lord cannot 'represent' or 'signify' a door, but a door can 'represent' or 'signify' him. The metaphorical pronouncements of the Gospel of John will not permit the dilution of est into significat, but merely the replacement of est by significatur per. But, while Luther would seem to stand on unassailable ground with his defence of the integrity of est in the Bible's metaphorical descriptions of Christ, and in such extravagant statements as 'Luther is Hus' and 'The Pope is Judas',[82] he is obliged to argue more stringently when he contends that est cannot be understood as significat even in the dominical explanations of the Synoptic parables or in Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dream. The Reformer aptly points out that, in the stories of the Sower and the Wheat and the Tares, Christ was consciously speaking in parables and not making plain, matter of fact statements. Thus, when Jesus

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80. WA 26. 383, 25-27: 'Denn es ist viel ein ander frage, wenn ich sage: Was bedeutet das? und wenn ich sage: Was ist das? "Ist" gehet ymer auffs wesen selbs, das feylet nymer mehr.'

81. WA 26. 274, 23-27: 'Vom wesen redet man ynn solchen sprüchen, was einer sey und nicht, was er bedeute, und macht uber seinem newen wesen auch ein new wort, So wirstu es finden ynn allen sprachen, das weis ich fur war, Und also leren alle Grammatici und wissen die knaben ynn der schule, Und wirst nymer mehr finden, das "Ist" müge "deuten" heissen.'

82. WA 26. 274, 1ff.

spoke of 'seed' and 'the field' he was not speaking of literal seed nor of a literal field, but of figurative seed and of a figurative field which are the Word of God and the world respectively:

> 'Und so fort an, was sie mehr fur exempel furen als "Der same ist Gottes wort", "der acker ist die wellt" etc. konnen sie keine deuteley aus dem "Ist" machen mit gutem grunde, Sondern die kinder ynn der schule sagen, das Same und Acker seyen tropi odder vernewete wörter nach der Metaphora, Denn vocabulum simplex et metaphoricum sind nicht ein, sondern zwey wort. Also heist Same hie nicht korn noch weitzen, sondern Gottes wort und Acker heist die welt, denn Christus (spricht der text selbs) redet ynn gleichnissen und nicht von natürlichem korn odder weitzen, Wer aber ynn gleichnissen redet, der macht aus gemeinen worten eitel tropos, new und ander wörter, sonst werens nicht gleichnisse, wo er die gemeinen wort brauchet ynn der vorigen deutunge.' (83)

Implicit in Luther's appeal to the parabolic form of so much of Jesus' teaching is a crucial awareness that, in his institution of the Holy Supper, our Lord did not begin his words with the formula 'The kingdom of heaven is like ...', with which he customarily drew his hearers' attention to a forthcoming non-literal use of language. Joseph's explanation in Gen. 41 is likewise unambiguously set in the context of Pharaoh's dream. Hence we are not to suppose that the seven oxen are of the kind that chew grass in meadows; rather, the 'seven oxen' spoken of here are metaphorical oxen which are seven years.[84] With these observations on the use of language, Luther undoubtedly believed that he had decisively secured the est of the eucharistic words.[85]

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83. WA 26. 277, 20-29.

84. WA 26. 277, 33-278, 24.

85. Against Karl Barth: 'Ansatz und Absicht in Luthers

While Luther's debate with Zwingli focused on the force of the copula est, Hebrew and Aramaic notoriously lack the verb 'to be'. Any appeal to a reconstructed Aramaic original form of the eucharistic words can, however, be of only secondary value to Christian theology, since the Church is obliged to base its doctrine on the inspired Greek text of the New Testament. Notwithstanding his proficiency in the Hebrew tongue, Luther showed no interest in recovering the related Aramaic original of the words of institution. Even so, in the exegetical Part Two of the work of 1528, the Reformer dealt with the actual or alleged absence of the copula at two places in the New Testament record of the institution of the Eucharist. First, Luther noted the absence of the copula in the Lucan version of the cup-saying; its presence in the corresponding part of the Pauline account is sufficient to remove any cause for alarm.[86] Secondly, in his treatment of S. Paul's version of the bread-saying the Reformer recalled how, according to Erasmus, the Greek text ran, 'Take, eat this my body'. The absence of the copula occasions Luther no embarrassment; on the contrary, he sighs that, if he were so learned a Greek scholar as Karlstadt and Zwingli, the verbless text would reinforce his conviction 'das ym brod der warhafftige leib Christi würde geessen'.[87]

Abendmahlslehre', Die Theologie und die Kirche (Munich, 1928), p. 73.

86. WA 26. 465, 21-29.

87. WA 26. 472, 39-473, 4.

The Reformer claims that the absence of the copula in the Pauline bread-saying and in the Lucan cup-saying was wrought by the Holy Spirit to strengthen faith in the real presence. Luther gives two reasons for this contention. First, 'This my body' or 'Here my body' testifies much more emphatically to the presence of the body than does 'This is my body'. Moreover, the lack of the connecting verb precludes the 'factious spirits' from calling its integrity into question:

> 'Denn er setzt das wort "Mein" hart nach dem wort "Tuto" odder "dieses", welchs der andern keiner thut, Dazu als etliche text sollen lauten, lest er das wortlin "ist" aussen, gleich wie es Lucas bey dem becher auch aussen lesst, Welche zwey stücklin uns der heilige geist zu unser stercke erzeigt, das wir gewis weren, der leib Christi sey ym brod, Denn wie wol es gleich viel bey uns gered ist, So ich sage: "Das ist mein leib" Und "Das mein leib", odder "Hie mein leib", So ist doch deudlicher und gewisser von der gegenwertickeit des leibs gered, wenn ich sage: "Das mein leib", odder "hie mein leib", und die rotten geister mit yhrem schwermen darynn nicht so leichtlich gauckeln konnen als ynn der rede "Das ist mein leib".' (88)

Secondly, we must bear in mind the inescapable context of Jesus' institution of the Eucharist, namely the passover celebration of the law of Moses. Formerly the people of God have eaten the body of an unblemished lamb, henceforth they will eat the body of Jesus. Luther judges that the absence of the copula focuses attention on the possessive pronoun, '<u>my</u> body' being linked immediately to 'this (bread)' in such a way that the supercession of the old rite by the new and fuller celebration is unmistakable:

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88. <u>WA</u> 26. 474, 1-11.

'Nu ists kein zweivel, Christus rede solche wort gegen das alte osterlamb, das er hiemit auffhebt, als solt er sagen: Bisher habt yhr das lamb und eines thiers leib geessen, Aber hie ist nu an desselbigen stat Mein leib, Mein, Mein sage ich gar unterschiedlich, Darumb Paulus so vleissig auff das wort "Mein" dringet, das ers auff eine newe weise bald nach dem "Das" setzt und spricht: "Das", "Mein", als wolt ers gern so dran binden, das ein wort mit dem "Das" würde, so doch Mein und leib viel neher mussen an einander hangen. Solchs alles thut er, auff das er den leib Christi ia deudlich gnug ausspreche ym abendmal.' (89)

4. corpus (et sanguis)

The relative clauses in the Lucan and Pauline versions of the bread-saying and in the Matthaean and Marcan versions of the cup-saying can be invoked by both the proponents and the opponents of the real presence doctrine. Thus Gabriel Biel appealed to Lk. 22:19c - 'corpus meum, quod pro vobis datur' - in support of the view that Jesus intended to impart in the Mass not a figurative body, but the very body in which he suffered for our sins.[1] If the relative clauses of the New Testament reports of the Supper are understood as underscoring the identity of the eucharistic with the historical body of Christ, then the theme of sacrifice can only with difficulty be excluded from the Lord's Supper. Luther's reluctance to undergird his arguments for the real presence by pressing the full force of the relative clauses can therefore be understood, if not wholly approved. In fact, as we shall note below, the Reformer detected two variant strains in the relative clauses of the verba testamenti, claiming that SS. Luke and Paul understand the relative pronouns to refer to the bread

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89. ibid., 11-19.

1. Sacri canonis misse expositio, Lec. 39 D; quoted in Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 66.

and wine distributed and poured in the Holy Supper, while SS. Matthew and Mark intend the relative pronouns to denote the body and blood sacrificed for us. Whatever his own interpretation of the relative clauses might be, however, Luther was obliged to deal with the use made of the Lucan bread-saying in particular by Karlstadt and Zwingli in their arguments against the real presence. According to Karlstadt, if 'This is my body' is to be understood of the element of bread in the Eucharist, it must at the same time be qualified by the relative clause 'which is given for you'. On Maundy Thursday Jesus possessed a mortal body which was to die on the morrow, and Karlstadt argued that, if the eucharistic words are believed to effect a real presence of the sacred body and blood in subsequent Eucharists, then - if the relative clause is to remain in force - the eucharistic body must be the passible, mortal body of Jesus, and this body must die again and again with each successive celebration.[2] Karlstadt thus prodded Luther into stating that the body and blood received in the Eucharist are, notwithstanding the glorification of Christ, identical with the body and blood sacrificed on the Cross:

> 'Hyrauff antworten wyr auffs erst, Das Christus blut nicht Gabriels odder Michaels blut worden ist, da es unsterblich ward, sondern ist desselben Christi blut blieben, Denn wyr gleuben und ist war, das

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2. 'Ist aber Christus sterblicher leib im sacrament gewest, so kündt ir, in krafft der wort Christi, die er redet, seinen leyb in keyner andern form und gestalt inss brodt brengen, denn er sich drein gebracht hat. So müsst ir sagen, das Christus sterblicher leyb in ewrem sacrament sey und das Christus alle tag sterb, wenn ir jn opfert, das wider gottes warheyt mit henden und füessen strebet.' From the Dialogue, as quoted in WA 18. 205, n. 1.

> Christus blut, das nu ym hymel zur rechten Gottes sitzt, sey fur uns eyn mal vergossen und keyn anders.' (3)

In his Das dise wort Iesu Christi ...ewigklich den alten eynigen sinn haben werdend of 1527, Zwingli presented Karlstadt's argument in a more refined form, pressing not the idea of a repetition of the sacrifice of Calvary, but the view that, if the real presence doctrine is correct, the body of Christ should be visibly present in the Lord's Supper, just as it hung visibly on the Cross. Zwingli insists that 'This is my body' must be understood in the light of the clause 'der für üch hingegeben wirt':

> '...sültind wir die wort: "das ist min lychnam" verston, das der lychnam Christi da wer, so müsstind wir ouch durch die: "der für üch hinggeben wirt", die glych als häll und dürr sind als yene, verston, das wir ye den lychnam Christi essen müsstind, wie er am crütz gehanget ist; dann er ist sichtbar und lydembar für uns hinggeben; also musstind wir in ouch essen.' (4)

Luther's response, in the Vom Abendmahl Christi. Bekenntnis of 1528, was to charge Zwingli with failure to take into account the distinction between 'that' and 'how'. The Reformer takes up the traditional distinction between substance and accident, maintaining that a thing can be present according to its substance in such a way that it sheds its customary accidents. Luther summarises Zwingli's argument, which only holds good if it is impossible for the body of Christ to be invisibly present in the Eucharist:

> 'Christus leib (spricht er) ist sichtbarlich am creutze fur uns gegeben, Weil denn ym abendmal stehet "Das ist mein leib, der fur euch gegeben ist,

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3. WA 18. 205, 6-10.

4. CR XCII (CR Zw V), p. 850, 23-28.

> So muste er auch sichtbarlich ym abendmal sein, so es der selbige leib fur uns gegeben sol sein, 'Also verkleret das folgende stücke das fodderst, das, weil Christus nicht sichtbarlich ist ym abendmal, so müsse "Ist" eine deuteley sein.' (5)

Zwingli has forgotten that the relative pronoun 'which' refers to the substance of a thing, not necessarily to its accidents ('qualitatem'):

> 'Die knaben ynn der schulen wissen, das Quod refert substantiam, Und dieser geist sagt: Quod refert qualitatem, imo accidens communissimum et mutabilissimum, ...' (6)

Zwingli has translated quod by 'how' rather than 'which', overlooking the possibility of a substantial presence of the body which would not entail the presence of its accidents. Luther's irrepressible humour cannot be restrained:

> 'Denn solche verklerunge geben diese wort "Der fur euch gegeben ist". Was heist Der? Der? Der geist sagt, Es heisse so viel als "Wie" odder "der gestalt" wie er am creutze hieng, Nu hieng er da fur den augen der Jüden sichtbarlich unter spiessen und rossen, Wo er nu ym abendmal were, so müsten alle Jüden, rosse, spiesse, creutze, negel und alles miteynander auch ym abendmal sein, ia auch zur rechten Gottes und an allen örten, da Christus leib ist, So sol man die schrifft verkleren und einen ort durch den andern richten.' (7)

The Reformer counters Zwingli's argument by insisting that a thing can be present, according to its 'essence and nature', both visibly and invisibly. Lamenting 'wie der geist aus Quod quale macht',[8] Luther resolves to ex-

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5. WA 26. 280, 22-26.

6. ibid., 33-35.

7. WA 26. 281, 22-29.

8. WA 26. 298, 28.

press specialist theological thinking in the German vernacular:

> 'Auff deudsch: Wir sagen nicht, das ym abendmal Christus leib sey, wie odder ynn welcher gestalt er ist fur uns gegeben (Denn wer wolt doch das sagen), sondern es sey der selbige leib, der odder welcher fur uns gegeben ist, nicht ynn der selbigen gestalt odder weise, sondern ynn dem selbigen wesen und natur, Nu kan einerley wesen wol hie sichtbarlich und dort unsichtbarlich sein.' (9)

At Marburg in 1529 the Reformer once again confessed the traditional belief of the Western Church in the invisible presence in the elements of the substance of Christ's body and blood. Such a doctrine is in keeping with the 'analogy of faith', for 'faith has to do with things not seen' (cf. Heb. 11:1):

> 'Substantialiter, ut natus est e virgine, est in sacramento ...Dicit hic esse perfectissimam analogiam fidei, quia hic fides est rerum non apparentium.' (10)

We now turn to Luther's arguments against the understanding of corpus meum as figura corporis mei, focussing first on his understanding of the eucharistic gift in the context of the progression of sacred history from shadow to fulfilment, and then examining his treatment of the predicate noun in the light of the inter-relation of the Synoptic and Pauline Supper texts and of such eminently relevant verses as I Cor. 10:16 and I Cor. 11:27, 29.

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9. WA 26. 298, 32-299, 21.

10. WA 30 III. 132, 2-5.

(i) corpus in the context of Old Testament type and New Testament antitype

Luther sees the biblical use of metaphor, 'renewed words' or tropus in the context of the movement of salvation history from shadow to fulfilment. While tropus is not simply identical without further ado with the New Testament fulfilment of an Old Testament image, the Reformer does believe that each instance of tropus in Holy Scripture must present us with an enhancement of an image or thing found either in the Old Testament or in everyday life. The biblical image of the vine supplies Luther with a suitable example of the elevation of a word into a tropus. In its primary sense a vine is simply a tree in a vineyard, and in its secondary, 'renewed' sense it is an apt description of Christ himself. The 'tropical' enhancement of the image of the vine is made possible by the 'similitude' (gleichnis) that obtains between the grape-bearing vine and the life-giving Christ.[11] When 'vine' becomes a tropus on the lips of Christ, it does not point 'backwards' to a tree in the vineyard, but 'forwards' to the superabundant fulfilment of the promises of God. Luther's understanding of the biblical use of tropus is that it captures the 'more' of eschatological fulfilment; tropus leaves behind and supersedes the type which it enhances:

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11. WA 26. 379, 24-28, 31-33: 'Wo ein tropus odder vernewet wort wird ynn der heyligen schrifft, Da werden auch zwo deutunge, eine newe uber die ersten alte odder vorige, wie droben gesagt ist, als das wort "weinstock" ynn der schrifft hat zwo deutunge, ein alte und newe, Nach der alten odder ersten heist es schlecht den strauch odder gewechse ym weinberge, Nach der newen heist es Christum, Johan. 15. ...wie die reden meister leren: Que transferuntur, secundum similitudinem transferuntur, Das ist, alle vernewerung odder tropi geschehen einer gleichnis halben.'

> 'Als ynn diesem spruch "Ich bin der rechte weinstock", Hie ist das wort "Weinstock" ein tropus odder newe wort worden, welchs nicht kan zu rück deuten den alten weinstock, der des newen gleichnis ist, sondern deutet fur sich den rechten newen weinstock selbs, der nicht ein gleichnis ist, Denn Christus ist nicht ein gleichnis des weinstocks, sondern widderumb der weinstock ist ein gleichnis Christi.' (12)

Such is the understanding of the biblical use of tropus from which Luther tackled Oecolampadius' assertion that the predicate noun corpus meum is itself a tropus. On Luther's definition of tropus, a tropical understanding of corpus meum would presuppose that the primary, literal sense of 'my body' is Jesus' concrete, physical body, so that in its secondary, 'renewed' sense, 'my body' must mean an enhanced body of Christ which was merely typified and prefigured by Jesus' physical body. By interpreting corpus meum as figura corporis mei while at the same time invoking the concept of tropus, Oecolampadius has, in Luther's eyes, put the concept of tropus into reverse gear. As Luther saw it, tropus must always 'point forward', but Oecolampadius, with his interpretation of leib as leibs zeichen, has invented a 'backward-pointing' tropus:

> 'Solche aber keret Ecolampad umb und macht ein solchen tropum odder vernewet wort, das da zu rücke deutet, die gleichnis des newen wesen und spricht "leib" solle leibs zeichen odder gleichnis heissen ynn dem spruch "Das ist mein leib", so er doch, wo er der schrifft nach folgen wolt, viel mehr solt das wort "leib" also vernewen, das es den rechten newen leib hiesse, welchem der natürliche leib Christi ein gleichnis were. Denn die schrifft troppet nicht also zu rücke.' (13) 'Denn es ist

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12. WA 26. 380, 23-28. cf. ibid., 32-33: 'alle tropi ynn der schrifft deuten das rechte newe wesen und nicht das gleichnis desselbigen newen wesen.'

13. WA 26. 380, 34-381, 21.

> ein rücklinger, verkereter tropus, macht aus dem rechten wesen ein gleichnis odder zeichen, welchs der heiligen schrifft art nicht ist, drumb ists ein lauter geticht.' (14)

Oecolampadius might retort that his understanding of tropus is found in everyday speech, as when one says of a statue, 'This is S. Peter, S. Paul or Pope Julius',[15] meaning, 'This is a representation of S. Peter, S. Paul or Pope Julius'. Luther is in fact unwilling to concede the use of tropus in Oecolampadius' sense even in the case of such usage as this. Whatever may be the grammatical status of such common speech, however, the Reformer insists that Oecolampadius prove his understanding of tropus in general and its application to the eucharistic words in particular on the basis of the usage of Holy Scripture.[16] Luther's own understanding of the Bible's use of language is that it keeps pace with God's revelation of himself. The type occurs first, and is fittingly followed by its antitype; just so, the 'old word' appears first, to be followed by the tropus which captures its 'true essence':

> 'Denn die heilige schrifft helt sich mit reden, wie Gott sich helt mit wircken. Nu schafft Gott alle wege, das die deutung odder gleichnis zuvor geschehen und darnach folge das rechte wesen und erfullunge der gleichnissen, Denn also gehet das alte testament als ein gleichnis furher und folget das newe testament hernach als das rechte wesen, Eben also thut sie auch, wenn sie tropos odder newe wort macht, das sie nympt das alte wort, welches die gleichnis ist und gibt yhm ein newe deutunge, welche das rechte wesen ist.' (17)

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14. WA 26. 381, 28-31. cf. 383, 9.

15. WA 26. 382, 15-19.

16. WA 26. 382, 20-22; 383, 13.

17. WA 26. 382, 25-383, 3.

On this understanding of the progression of sacred history and of the development of biblical language, there can be no room for an interpretation of corpus as figura corporis. Luther has here picked up the salvation-historical argument for the real presence which we have already met in S. Thomas Aquinas. His further arguments against Oecolampadius in this section of the work of 1528 are largely an exegetically based extension of the traditional understanding of the eucharistic gift in the context of the fulfilment and supersession of the Old Testament by the New. While Zwingli and Oecolampadius maintained that the real presence doctrine is at odds with the Creed (supremely with the doctrine that the exalted Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father), Luther devoted a paragraph to the assertion that Oecolampadius' reduction of corpus to figura corporis itself fails to do justice to the analogia fidei.[18] In Luther's view, if Christ had intended corpus meum in the sense of figura corporis mei, he would himself have lapsed into the Old Testament, teaching his disciples something that was neither new nor profitable.

We have already noted Luther's strong awareness that tropus is only possible where a similitude obtains between the 'old word' and the object which will be described by the metaphorical enhancement of the 'old word'. Therefore, if corpus meum is to be understood as an (albeit 'retrograde') tropus, there must be a similarity between the body of Christ and the element of bread, and likewise between the blood of Christ and the element of

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18. WA 26. 390, 33-35: 'Und sonderlich weil da kein analogia fidei ist, Denn es müssen ia alle wort Christi glauben und liebe treiben und dem glauben ehnlich sein Ro. 12.'

wine. As late as 1525, in his writing against Karlstadt, the Reformer could concede a 'similarity' between the body and blood and bread and wine,[19] but in the Bekenntnis of 1528 Luther stoutly denied any such similarity. Before the Reformer is rashly inculpated of special pleading here, it is incumbent on us to take note of the context in which he rejected the notion that there is a similitude between the elements and the body and blood. At first glance we might suppose that Luther's denial of such similitude was nothing more than a precipitate rejection of Oecolampadius' argument. On closer inspection, though, we shall notice that the Reformer fully accepts that the Bible knows of similitudes which fittingly flower in an edifying tropus:

> 'Zum dritten, ist das die aller grössest torheit, das er spricht: Das brod bedeute odder sey ein gleichnis seines leibs fur uns gegeben, Und der becher odder wein sey eine gleichnis seines bluts fur uns vergossen. Lieber, wo ist solche gleichnis ym brod und becher weins? Denn wo eine figur, symbolum odder gleichnis sein sol, da eins das ander bedeuten sol, da mus ia etwas gleichs ynn beiden angezeigt werden, darauff die gleichnis stehe, Als Johan. 15. der weinstock ist ein gleichnis odder figur Christi ynn dem, wie er selbs sagt, Das gleich wie der rebe nicht kan frucht bringen, sondern verdorret, wo er nicht am weinstock bleibt. Item, Elias ist eine figur odder gleichnis Johannis ynn dem, wie der Engel Gabriel sagt Luce 1., das er gleichen geist und krafft mit Elias habe.' (20)

Luther comes to the heart of his argument when he immediately goes on to observe that the passover lamb of the old law is an especially appropriate type of the coming

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19. WA 18. 161, 7-9: 'Er nympt etwas hertlichs, das der speise ehnlich ist, nemlich seyn leyb, und etwas weychlichs, das dem tranck ehnlich ist, nemlich seyn blut.'

20. WA 26. 391, 26-392, 24.

Christ.[21] Indeed, all the animal sacrifices instituted by God through Moses are eloquent types of Jesus' self-offering, 'as the Epistle to the Hebrews masterfully shows us';[22] but the passover lamb is an especially striking prefiguration of Christ:

> 'Und sonderlich das Osterlamb hat ia eine seer feine gleichnis mit dem leibe Christi fur uns gegeben zur vergebung der sunden ynn dem, das es geschlachtet und geopffert wird, sein blut vergossen, gesprenget und gestrichen an die thür zur erlösunge vom verderber.' (23)

Since Maundy Thursday had seen Jesus preside at the final licit celebration of the passover meal of the old law and then go on to supersede the old rite with the new order of the Christian Eucharist, the question of a putative likeness between bread and wine and the Lord's body and blood cannot be considered in abstracto, but only against the background of the passover meal with its eloquent type of the body and blood of Christ. Luther accordingly demands of his opponents that 'just such a likeness' be demonstrated between the body and blood and bread and wine.[24] Since the living passover lamb is a much more

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21. WA 26. 392, 24-28: 'Das Osterlamb ist eine gleichnis Christi ynn dem, wie Apocalypsis sagt, das er fur uns geschlacht und geopffert ist, Und so fort an ynn allen figurn und gleichnis mus etwas sein, darynn die gleichnis stehe und sich mit beyden reyme, Aber hie ym brod und weinbecher findet sich nichts, darynn Christus leyb und blut möcht denselbigen gleich sein.'

22. WA 26. 394, 23-27: 'Denn also thut Moses mit seinen gleichnissen, der zeigt an, wie die ochsen und kelber geschlacht und geopffert werden und yhr blut vergossen an den boden des altars und gesprenget zur vergebung der sunden und zu reinigen das volck und die hütten und alles gefess, wie uns die Epistel zu den Ebreern solche gleichnis meisterlich zeiget.'

23. ibid., 27-30.

24. ibid., 31-36: 'Solche gleichnis mus man ym brod

appropriate similitude of Christ's body and blood than are bread and wine, Jesus would have been well advised - if he had in fact intended to supply in the Eucharist mere types and figures of his body and blood - to retain the old rite:

> 'Wenn nu Christus wolt ein abendmal einsetzen, da nicht sein leib und blut, sondern gleichnis seins leibs und bluts ynnen were, so hette er billich uns das alte Moses abendmal mit dem Osterlamb gelassen, welchs aus der massen und rund umb, durch und durch, allenthalben auffs feinest seinen leib fur uns gegeben und sein blut fur uns vergossen zur vergebunge der sunden deutet und eine figur odder gleichnis ist, wie alle welt wol weis.' (25)

Except on the assumption of a hidden presence in the elements of bread and wine of Jesus' body and blood, the old meal of the people of God is plainly superior to the new. If Oecolampadius is right in his interpretation of corpus meum as figura corporis mei, Luther will be bold to accuse the Lord himself of being insensitive to the distinction between the two Testaments:

> 'So möcht man billich zu ihm sagen: Das newe testament sol eine erfullung und liecht sein gegen das alte testament, Aber du kerest es umb, das das newe Testament wol eine auslerung und finsternis ist gegen das alte testament, Denn dort ist ein lamb, ein lebendiger leib, so fur das volck geopffert wird, welchs viel heller und klerer den leib Christi deutet denn schlecht brod, welchs gleich ein finster gleichnis ist gegen dem lamb, Und dort ist blut des lambs, welchs viel heller und klerer Christus blut deutet denn schlechter wein.' (26)

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und wein auch anzeigen, odder wir müssen sagen, das ein narr sey, der sie dem leibe und blut Christi fur uns gegeben und vergossen zur vergebung der sunden gleich spricht, So doch nichts uberal solcher gleichnis dryn zu finden ist, Denn sols gleichnis sein, so mus etwas gleichs drynnen sein odder ist erlogen und falsch, so mans gleichnis heisset.'

25. WA 26. 395, 18-23.

26. ibid., 26-33.

Since the old Supper is incomparably superior to the new at the level of symbolism and typology, we may safely assume that our Lord would not have abrogated it unless he had intended to give more than mere bread and wine at the Eucharist. After all, piety demands that the Lord's Supper of the New Testament must 'far surpass' the Mosaic Supper of the Old.[27]

(ii) The tropical understanding of corpus et sanguis in the light of the Lucan and Pauline versions of the cup-saying.

Oecolampadius had maintained that 'body' and 'blood' are to be understood tropically, so that the words of institution should be interpreted as pledging to Christians the 'sign of the body' and the 'sign of the blood' of Christ. Luther would for a moment grant, for the sake of argument, that the Matthaean and Marcan versions of the cup-saying could be interpreted in this way. But will the tropical interpretation of 'body' and 'blood' endure a critical comparison of the Matthaean and Marcan versions of the cup-saying with the account of the cup-saying recorded by SS. Luke and Paul? Luther is quick to summon Oecolampadius 'before S. Luke's judgment seat'.[28] Firmly believing that there can be no real contradiction between the four inspired accounts of the institution of

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27. WA 26. 395, 33-396, 23: 'Summa: Dis abendmal ist ihenem ynn keinen weg zu vergleichen mit deutung und gleichnis, Darumb, so ym newen testament alles völliger sein sol denn ym alten, auch die gleichnis, so hette billich Christus uns bey ihenem abendmal lassen bleiben, odder wird nicht war sein, das schlecht brod und wein ynn unserm abendmal sey, Denn es mus warlich ihenes abendmal Mosi gar weit ubertreffen, Christus hette sonst ihenes nicht auffgehaben.'

28. WA 26. 466, 31ff.

the Holy Supper,[29] the Reformer charges that S. Luke must speak of the same blood as that of which S. Matthew tells. If the 'blood' of Mt. 26:28 is to be understood tropically, then the 'blood' of Lk. 22:20 must be understood in the same way. In Luther's view, such an interpretation of 'This cup is the New Testament in my blood' would be an impious violation of the rule of faith, a levelling of the New Testament to the imperfection of the Old, and a blasphemous dishonouring of the sacred blood of Christ. How can the eucharistic chalice be the New Testament on account of the presence of the mere 'sign' of the blood of Christ? Such 'signs' abounded in the rites of the old law, so that only the presence of the actual blood of Christ can justify the equation of the chalice with the New Testament.[30] Having secured the literal understanding of 'blood' in Lk. 22:20, Luther claims the Matthaean and Marcan cup-sayings as witnesses to the real presence also. And if 'blood' cannot be a tropus in the accounts of the institution, how on earth can 'body' be taken in a figurative sense?[31] The Reformer presently appeals to the Pauline version of the cup-saying to underscore the same points:

> 'Weil das wort "ynn meynem blut" so viel heisst als durch odder mit meinem blut, Denn Christus blut mus nicht so ein ommechtig ding sein, das es nu ein zeichen gebe des newen testaments, wie das kelber blut Mosi vorzeiten thet, So kan auch "Blut" nicht tropus sein, denn der becher kan nicht durch blutszeichen odder schlechten wein ein solch gros ding, nemlich das newe testament sein.' (32)

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29. WA 26. 464, 14-15.
30. WA 26. 466, 31-467, 13.
31. WA 26. 467, 28-38.
32. WA 26. 477, 7-12.

(iii) The tropical understanding of corpus in the light of I Cor. 11:27

Luther had already dealt with the bearing of this verse on the real presence in his debate with Karlstadt of 1525. A major charge made against Karlstadt in Widder die himmlischen Propheten is that he has perversely rendered inward and spiritual what God has ordained outward and bodily, and vice versa.[33] By understanding the sin specified in I Cor. 11:27 as unworthy remembrance of Christ, Karlstadt has, in Luther's opinion, repeated his fundamental error.[34] With grim humour the Reformer notes that S. Paul wrote incorrectly in urging 'Wer unwirdig isset und trincket ...'; rather, the Apostle should have written 'Wer unwirdig des HERRN gedenckt odder nicht kennet ...'.[35] One can only suppose that S. Paul dashed off First Corinthians on a drunken evening, and that Dr. Karlstadt subsequently mercifully discerned the Apostle's true meaning on a sober morning.[36] Luther quickly turns to the actual text of I Cor. 11:27, and his use of this verse to buttress the real presence doctrine is based on its unambiguous association of unworthy eating and drinking of the elements with culpably profaning the body and blood of the Lord:

> 'Wie kompt die sünde am leybe des HERRN zum essen, so er nicht ym essen odder brod sein sol?' (37)

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33. WA 18. 168, 27-30.

34. WA 18. 172, 26-28; cf. also 175, 9-12.

35. WA 18. 173, 10-12.

36. ibid., 14-18.

37. ibid., 30-31; cf. 174, 4-14.

The guilt before God against which this verse warns is simply inexplicable apart from the real presence of the sacred body and blood:

> 'Nu hats ja keynen scheyn noch grund, das man sich durch unwirdig essen am leybe des HERRN und durch unwirdig trincken am blut des HERRN solt schuldig machen, wo nicht der leyb ym essen, und das blut ym trincken were.' (38)

When discussing this verse in the treatise of 1528, Luther begins by rejoicing at S. Paul's pointed use of the demonstrative pronoun (at any rate according to the versions on which Luther relied) in speaking of '<u>this</u> bread'. What we have here, then, is no common bread or cup, but a bread and cup that have, according to vss. 24 and 25, been transformed into the body and blood of Christ:

> 'Aber wir loben Gott, das wir sehen, wie Paulus mit dem wort <u>Dis</u> ymer widder holet und einfüret diesen text: "Das ist mein leib", wie droben gesagt ist, Und solchs dazu noch heller bestettiget, da er spricht: Wer dis brod unwirdig isset, der sey schuldig nicht an eytel brod odder am zeichen des leibs Christi, sondern am leibe des Herrn.' (39)

The text clearly identifies the sin against which it warns as unworthy eating, hence the one who commits this sin 'mus ...ia nach art der wort und sprache an dem schuldig sein, das er isset',[40] that is, he profanes nothing less than the body and blood of Christ. Luther is not in the least impressed by Oecolampadius' explanation of this verse by invoking the crime of <u>laesa maiestatis</u>: just as dishonour paid to the emperor's image is

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38. <u>WA</u> 18. 174, 30-33.

39. <u>WA</u> 26. 482, 3-8.

40. <u>ibid</u>., 12-13.

dishonour committed against the emperor himself, even so dishonour directed at the sacramental signs of the body and blood of Christ involves dishonour committed against the body and blood themselves.[41] The first reason for the Reformer's refusal of this gloss is that, as he considers he has already amply proved, the bread and wine are not 'signs or images' of the body and blood:

> 'Erstlich, denn wir droben beweiset und beklagt haben, das brod und wein nicht sind noch sein konnenzeichen odder bilde des leibs und bluts Christi, denn kein stücklin angezeigt werden kan, darynn solche gleichnis stehe, darumb kan sich auch dis exempel vom keisers bilde nicht hie her reymen zur glose, es sey denn zuvor gewis gemacht, wie brod und wein des leibs und bluts bilde odder gleichnis sind, wie dem keiser sein bild gleich ist.' (42)

The fourth reason alleged by Luther for his disquiet over Oecolampadius' gloss is his awareness that Oecolampadius conspicuously neglects to understand the 'body and blood' of vs. 27b as a tropus. Now if 'body and blood' are to be understood literally, not tropically, in vs. 27b, why should they be interpreted tropically, not literally, in vss. 24 and 25?

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41. WA 26. 483, 1-6.

42. ibid., 8-14. The reader of the translation of the Bekenntnis of 1528 in the American Edition of Luther's Works might well ask questions about the Reformer's reasoning powers. Two pages after the rendition of the words quoted above (LW 37, 343), where Luther denies any similitude between the elements and the sacred body and blood, we read that the guilt spoken of in I Cor. 11:27 is incurred 'against the members of Christ, of which the bread and wine are analogies or signs' (LW 37, 345). The translator has failed to notice the presence of the modal verb sollen in this passage: 'Sondern S. Paulus zeiget an, das die schuld geschehe an den stücken Christi, welchen das brod und wein sol gleich odder zeichen

> 'Denn es wil sich ynn keinen weg leiden, das Paulus uber einer sachen odder materij und ynn einerley rede solte einerley wort anders und anders brauchen als ein zweyzüngiger und listiger teusscher, Sondern er mus einfeltiglich leib und blut an beiden örten gleich und einerley wort lassen sein, Heisst leib ym abendmal leibs zeychen und blut bluts zeichen, so mus hie auch leibszeichen und blutszeichen heissen. Heist es hie recht leib und blut, so mus ym abendmal auch recht leib und blut heissen, denn er an beiden örten von dem selbigen abendmal redet, so mus er auch von dem selbigen leib und blut reden, Denn dort leret und setzt ers ein, Hie vermanet er zum rechten brauch desselben.' (43)

The Reformer's fifth ground for unease over Oecolampadius' gloss is worthy of note. All our analogies are apt to break down sooner or later, and Luther fancies that he has discerned a fatal weakness in Oecolampadius' chosen illustration of the imperial (or royal) image. If his analogy is to correspond to the actual wording of I Cor. 11:27, Luther would have Oecolampadius rephrase it. Instead of saying that dishonour directed at the king's image involves dishonour committed against the king himself, Oecolampadius should say that dishonour committed against the nose of the king's image involves dishonour directed at the king's nose. For, according to S. Paul, the sacrilege committed by the unworthy participant in the Lord's Supper involves more than an offence against the 'majesty and kingship' of Jesus Christ. What is spoken of in I Cor. 11:27 is a sacrilege committed against the physical presence of Christ, against the Stücke of his person.[44] Luther here conceives the real pre-

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sein' (WA 26. 484, 39-485, 1). In other words, the sacramental bread and wine are said or alleged to be images and signs of the body and blood.

43. WA 26. 484, 7-16.

44. WA 26. 485, 7-19: 'Denn Paulus hie nicht die person Christi, sondern den leib und blut Christi als stücke der

sence as an extension of the Incarnation:[45] just as the Eternal Son freely exposed himself in the assumed humanity of Jesus Christ to the pain of rejection by the wrath of fallen man, so likewise the vindicated Victim continues his universal offer of healing, intimate fellowship with self-wounded humanity in the Sacrament of the Altar, graciously willing the reconciliation of all men with the Father while at the same time risking the hurt which is inflicted on him when his love is spurned by his fallen yet free creatures.[46]

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person anzeucht. Das rede ich darumb, das du sehest, wie Ecolampad seine glose und exempel nicht recht furet und sich zu S. Paulus text nicht reymet, Denn wo sichs reymen solt, müste S. Paulus, wie gesagt ist, so reden: Wer dis brod isset, der ist schuldig an Christo, gleich wie der schuldig ist am könige, wer des königes bilde unehret, Das ist, er sundigt nicht an eym geliede odder stücke der person, sondern an der Maiestet und regiment des königes, Denn das meinet man mit solcher rede, Aber hie spricht S. Paulus, man sundigt an den stücken der person, als am leib und blut Christi, das ist neher und mehr denn an der maiestet odder regiment Christi, Darumb ist solch glöslin auch an yhm selbs nichts, das von der maiestet und regiment sagt, so der text von stücken odder teil der person redet.'

45. Originally employed by Bishop Jeremy Taylor in the context of the Eucharist, this phrase was used by Bishop Charles Gore of the Church itself: see Michael Ramsey: From Gore to Temple (London, 1960), p. 115. Hans Grass is eager to claim the phrase for Luther's eucharistic theology: 'Er (viz., our Lord) begibt sich als der Realpräsente auch jetzt noch unter die Bedingungen irdischer Existenz. Luther sieht die Abendmahlsgegenwart in engem Zusammenhang mit der Inkarnation, so dass man geradezu von einer Fortsetzung der Inkarnation in der Realpräsenz sprechen kann' (Die Abendmahlslehre bei Luther und Calvin, p. 82).

46. see, e.g., WA 23. 157, 30-33: 'Unsers Gotts ehre aber ist die, so er sich umb unser willen auffs aller tieffest erunter gibt, yns fleisch, yns brod, ynn unsern

(iv) The tropical understanding of corpus in the light of I Cor. 11:28-29

The Middle Ages had distinguished between the sacramental and the spiritual eating of the body and blood of Christ. The former could take place when an infidel partook of the host, while the latter fitly occurred as the appropriate use of the former. Karlstadt completely sundered the sacramental from the spiritual eating of the body and blood, retaining only the latter. Luther begins his discussion of I Cor. 11:28-29 in Widder die himmlischen Propheten by summarising Karlstadt's spiritualising interpretation of S. Paul's words about eating and drinking judgement to oneself through 'not discerning the body'.[47] As we shall presently note in greater detail when considering the Reformer's use of the cardinal text I Cor. 10:16, Luther was supremely concerned in his appeal to the Pauline texts on the Lord's Supper to prove an objective corporeal presence of the Lord in the eucharistic elements, a presence so wholly independent of man's subjective appropriation of it that S. Paul could issue his stern warnings against the peril of unworthy eating and drinking of the holy things. Once the objective presence of the body and blood is secured, Luther will readily concede that the 'spiritual eating' of which Karlstadt has some inkling must come into its own as the appropriate enjoyment of the sacramental presence. For the present, though, Luther must demonstrate that such texts as I Cor. 11:28-29 necessarily entail the doc-

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mund, hertz und schos, Und dazu umb unsern willen leidet, dass er unehrlich gehandelt wird beide auff dem creutz und altar.'

47. WA 18. 175, 22-28.

trine of the corporeal presence of Jesus in the elements. The Reformer accordingly beseeches 'Peter rülltze' ('a 'spirit' behind whom lurks Karlstadt himself) to put on his spectacles and to clear his head by blowing his nose, so that he might read in the text how the Apostle associates 'not discerning the body' with unworthy eating and drinking, and not with unworthy remembrance of Christ.[48] Having established that 'not discerning the body' takes place in the act of eating and drinking the elements, it only remains for Luther to ascertain the sense of 'discern'. The Greek διακρινειν , the Reformer tells us, means making a distinction between things, not deeming them alike, but considering one 'nobler, better and more precious' than another. In the setting of I Cor. 10:29, then, S. Paul's use of διακρινειν will prompt us to distinguish between mere bread and the body of Christ, which is properly to be approached in an attitude of 'fear, humility and honour':

> 'Das Kriechische wort Diakrinin auff Latinisch discernere heysst ja, das man eynen unterscheyd habe und nicht eyns wie das ander sondern eyns edler, besser und köstlicher hallte denn das ander, Das S. Paulus also will, Wer unwirdig isst und trinckt, der verdienet billich eyn urteyl odder gutte straffe, Denn mit seym unwirdigen essen und trincken unterscheydet er nicht, non discernit, den leyb Christi, Sondern hellt und feret mit dem brod und weyn des HERRN, alls were es sonst schlecht brod und weyn, so es doch des HERrn leyb und blut ist, Denn wo ers mit ernst fur des HERRN leyb hielte, würde er nicht so zu faren und mit unwirden alls sonst eyn brod sondern mit furcht, demut und ehren essen. Denn er würde sich ja müssen fur des HERRN leyb schewen.' (49)

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48. WA 18. 175, 31-176, 10.

49. WA 18. 177, 11-21. cf. also ibid., 23-32.

Luther does not even consider the possibility that the 'body' to be discerned in I Cor. 11:29 might be the 'body of Christ' in the metaphorical sense, namely the Church. Vs. 27b, not to mention the text of the institution, are too close at hand for Luther to take seriously the possibility that the Apostle has so swiftly changed the topic of his discourse. The body to be discerned here is the supernaturally present natural body of Christ. Luther's argument is briefly recapitulated in the Bekenntnis of 1528.[50]

(v) corpus et sanguis in I Cor. 10:16

In 1525 Luther rejoiced that this text, which has been the 'lively medicine of my soul in my struggle over this Sacrament', is a 'thunderbolt on Dr. Karlstadt's head'. It alone is praised as sufficient to dispel all doubts concerning the real presence.[51] As the Reformer paraphrases the text, the mediaeval formula 'totum in toto, totum in qualibet parte' seems to be in the back of his mind:

> 'Das gebrochen odder mit stucken ausgeteylet brod ist die gemeynschafft des leybs Christi, Es ist, Es ist, Es ist, (sagt er) die gemeynschafft des leybs Christi. Was ist die gemeynschafft aber des leybs Christi? Es mag nicht anders seyn, denn das die jenigen, so das gebrochen brod, eyn iglicher seyn stuck, nemen, ynn dem selben den leyb Christi nemen. Das diese gemeynschafft sey

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50. WA 26. 486, 6-8, 15-22; 487, 5-8.

51. WA 18. 166, 32-167, 3: 'Das ist ja, meyne ich, eyn spruch, ia eyn donneraxt auff D. Carlstads kopff und aller seiner rotten. Der spruch ist auch die lebendige ertzney gewest meynes hertzens ynn meyner anfechtung uber diesem Sacrament. Und wenn wyr keyne spruche mehr hetten denn diesen, kündten wyr doch damit alle gewissen gnugsam stercken und alle widderfechter mechtiglich gnugsam schlahen.'

> so viel alls teylhafftig seyn, das den gemeynen leyb Christi eyn iglicher mit den andern empfehet.' (52)

Luther clearly interprets this text as teaching a bodily sharing in the body of Christ, so it will occasion no surprise that he rejects Karlstadt's 'spiritualising' explanation, which alleges that the 'communion of the body and blood of Christ' consists in the contemplation and sharing of the sufferings of Christ.[53] The Reformer wryly observes that, in German, the 'communion of the body (Leib) of Christ' can easily be converted into the 'communion of the suffering (Leid) of Christ' simply by swapping b with d.[54] Luther counters Karlstadt's 'spiritualising' interpretation by pointing out that only genuine believers can share in the suffering of Christ. Hence, especially when the strict warnings of I Cor. 11:27 and 29 against a manducatio impiorum are taken into account, it is clear that, since it predicates a sharing in the Lord's body and blood indiscriminately of all those who partake of the eucharistic elements, I Cor. 10:16 teaches an objective real presence of the body and blood that is received by believing and unbelieving communicants alike:[55]

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52. WA 18. 168, 16-24.

53. WA 18. 168, 27-169, 3: '...seynes geysts verkerter art, Das alles, was Gott eusserlich und leyplich setzt, geystlich und ynnerlich macht, und widderumb, was Gott ynnerlich und geystlich haben will, das macht er eusserlich und leyplich, wie ich droben gesagt habe. Also nympt er hie das wort "gemeynschafft" fur sich und will damit hyneyn ynn den geyst und eyne geystliche gemeynschafft draus machen und gibt fur, das die des leybs Christi gemeynschafft haben, die mit "ausgestrackter lust" das leyden Christi bedencken und auch mit leyden ꝛc.'

54. WA 18. 169, 12-17.

55. WA 18. 170, 2-9.

> 'So schleusst sichs hie mit gewallt, das Paulus hie nicht rede von der geystlichen gemeynschafft, die alleyne die heyligen haben, da D. Carlstad von trewmet, Sondern von eyner leyblichen, wilche beyde heyligen und unheyligen haben.' (56)

The Reformer is not moved to discern in S. Paul's reference to the 'bread which we break' an allusion to a symbolic commemorative re-enactment of Christ's passion; rather, appealing to such texts as Isa. 58:7 and Lam. 4:4, he understands 'breaking' as simply identical with 'distributing' bread.[57] I Cor. 10:16 goes beyond the institution narratives in specifying the bread 'which we break' as the 'communion' of the body of Christ. Luther asserts that, in speaking of the congregation's 'breaking' of bread, S. Paul would emphasise the actual distribution of the elements, and that by speaking of the 'communion' of the body of Christ he would reinforce the conception of a presence that is 'totum in toto, totum in qualibet parte':

> 'Item er wollt leren, das eyn iglicher ynn seynem stuck Christus leyb empfienge, darumb wollt ers nicht alleyne den leyb Christi nennen alls ynn eynem gantzen brod, sondern den leyb, der ynn die gemeyne ausgeteylet und durchs brod brechen allen gemeyne geben were, das also dis brod brechen nicht alleyne der leyb Christi sondern die gemeynschafft des leybs Christi sey, das ist, ein ausgeteyleter und von allen ynn der gemeyne empfangen.' (58)

Luther closed the exegetical Part Two of the work of 1528 with an extensive treatment of I Cor. 10:16, which has been hitherto and remains still 'the joy and

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56. WA 18. 171, 1-4.

57. WA 18. 168, 1-4: 'Wilchs brechen nicht anders ist denn stuck machen odder austeylen auff Ebreische weyse Isaie 58. "Brich den hungerigen deyn brod". Trenn. 4 "Die jungen hiesschen brod, und niemant brachs yhn" sc.'

58. WA 18. 171, 20-26.

crown of my heart'. S. Paul's words have the advantage over the institution narratives of not saying merely 'This is Christ's body'; rather, I Cor. 10:16 insists that 'This is the distributed body of Christ'.[59] Note well S. Paul's explicit association of the 'communion of the body of Christ' with the concrete act of distributing the eucharistic bread. Moreover, the Church's experience both then and now will teach us that not only believers in a state of grace, but also impenitent sinners partake of the eucharistic gift, a factor that rules out any 'spiritualising' interpretation of this verse. Nor may one advance a tropical understanding of the copula 'is', for Luther is adamant that he has proved irrefutably that 'is' language always has to do with essence and never with representation.[60] And how shall one interpret the 'communion' (gemeynschafft) of which the Apostle writes? Luther is aware that sharing can take place both physically and spiritually, and S. Paul's

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59. WA 26. 487, 12-18: 'Diesen text hab ich gerhümet und rhüme noch, als meins hertzen freude und krone, denn er nicht allein spricht: Das ist Christus leib, wie ym abendmal stehet, Sondern nennet das brod, so gebrochen wird, und spricht: Das brod ist Christus leib, ia das brod, das wir brechen, ist nicht allein der leib Christi, sondern der ausgeteilete leib Christi, Das ist ein mal ein text so helle und klar als die schwermer und alle welt nicht begeren noch foddern kündten.'

60. WA 26. 490, 19-26: 'Unser text und verstand stehen da fein und hell, leicht und liecht: Das brod, so wir brechen, ist die gemeinschafft des leibs Christi sc. Hie mustu zu erst mercken, das er sagt vom leiblichen brod, das wir ym abendmal brechen, das kan ia niemand leucken, Darnach ists ia auch gewis, das ynn solchem leiblichen brechen odder abendmal nicht allein eitel heiligen und wirdigen, sondern auch unwirdigen als Judas und seins gleichen sein müssen. So hastu gehort, das "Ist" nicht kan noch mag "deutet" heissen ynn einiger sprachen auff erden, sondern redet vom wesen, wo es stehet.'

emphasis on the concrete bread and cup of the Lord's Supper convinces him that I Cor. 10:16 is primarily concerned with a sharing of the former kind:

> 'Zuletzt: Gemeynschafft heist hie das gemeyne gut, des viel teilhafftig sind und geniessen, alls das unter sie alle ynn gemeyn gegeben wird. Dasselbige mag zweyerley weyse empfangen werden, leiblich und geistlich, Denn gemeyn ding heist, des viel ynn gemeyn geniessen als gemeyne born, gemeyne gassen, gemeyner acker, wiesen, holtz, feur sc. Denn es kan hie an diesem ort nicht heissen die gemeynschafft des glaubens ym hertzen, Denn der text redet hie von solchem gemeynen gut, das man empfahen und geniessen sol, als da ist das brod und der becher, Denn er spricht: Das brod, das wir brechen, der becher, den wir segenen, Und hernach: "Wir alle sind ein leib, die wir von einem brod und von einem becher teilhafftig sind" sc. So ist nu gewis, das kenonia die gemeynschafft des leibs Christi ist nichts anders denn der leib Christi als ein gemeyn gut unter viel ausgeteylet und gegeben zu geniessen.' (61)

Having argued that the 'blood of Christ' and 'body of Christ' specified in I Cor. 10:16 must be understood literally, the Reformer gladly concedes that the 'body' mentioned in the following verse 17 is a genuine instance of the biblical use of tropus. The 'body' made up of all those who partake of the eucharistic bread cannot be a natural body, but is a metaphorical body. In this case we are faced with a genuine forward-pointing tropus, a usage which enhances the image of a natural body.[62] Luther does not understand the 'one body'

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61. ibid., 26-38.

62. WA 26. 492, 11-16: 'Und ist hie "leib" ein rechter tropus nach der schrifft art, nicht ein figurlicher leib nach dem rücklingen tropus, sondern ein ander newer leib, dem ein natürlicher leib ein gleichnis ist sc. Und solchen tropus erzwinget der text, da er sagt: Wir sind ein leib, Nu können ia wir nicht ein natürlich leib sein. Also sollten die schwermer yhre tropus auch machen und beweisen und beybringen, das Christus leib und blut leibs und bluts zeichen weren.'

of I Cor. 10:17 as the ecclesia proprie dicta. Since this verse clearly teaches that all who share in the 'one bread' make up the 'one body', the latter image must be taken as describing the ecclesia late dicta, embracing both worthy and unworthy communicants alike. In the same year 1528, the Reformer's polemic against the scholastic doctrine of concomitance reached its peak.[63] Instead of using subtle syllogisms to boost the eucharistic gift into the whole Christ, rational soul and eternal Godhead as well as body and blood, Luther felt that humble fidelity to the plain words of Scripture obliged theologians to highlight the body and blood of our Lord as the res of the Holy Supper. In his discussion of I Cor. 10:16 in the Bekenntnis of 1528, Luther's distaste for the doctrine of concomitance can be keenly felt. If the Apostle had intended to teach that the eucharistic bread and cup mediate a spiritual participation in Christ, then why did he not simply leave out the redundant τοῦ αἵματος and τοῦ σώματος? After all, at the beginning of the Epistle he had described the Corinthian Christians as folk who had been called into the κοινωνία of the Son of God. By contrast, in I Cor. 10:16 S. Paul posits two concurrent 'communions', that of the blood and that of the body of Christ. A spiritual sharing in Christ can only be onefold, so that the Apostle's emphatic distinction of a twofold sharing, in both the blood and the body of Christ, must reinforce the conviction that this verse speaks of a bodily, not of a

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63. see WA 26. 606, esp. 33-35: 'Wer hat uns befolhen mehr ynn das sacrament zu zihen, denn die kleren wort Christi geben? Wer hat dich gewis gemacht, ob dieser folge eine war sey?'

spiritual participation in the body and blood.[64] So powerfully does I Cor. 10:16 witness to Luther of the doctrine of the real presence that he cannot imagine that it would not persuade a 'Turk, Jew or pagan' that this doctrine is plainly taught in the New Testament:

> 'Denn wenn ich gleich ein Türcke, Jüde odder Heyde were, der nichts von der Christen glauben hielte, und höret doch odder lese solche schrifft vom sacrament, so müste ich doch sagen: Ich gleube zwar nicht an der Christen lere, Aber das mus ich sagen: wöllen sie Christen sein und yhre lere hallten, so müssen sie gleuben, das Christus leib und blut ym brod und wein gegessen und getruncken werde leiblich.' (65)

5. <u>The bearing of the relative clauses of the verba testamenti on the real presence</u>

The relative clauses in the Lucan and Pauline versions of the bread-saying and in the Matthaean, Marcan and Lucan versions of the cup-saying had traditionally been understood of the Passion of our Lord, of his body 'given' or 'broken' and of his blood 'shed' on the Cross.

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64. <u>WA</u> 26. 495, 34-496, 30: 'Auch wo man wolt reden von der geystlichen gemeinschafft, were nicht von nöten, das man die zwey stück, leib und blut Christi, nennet, Sondern were gnug Christum genennet, wie Paulus am andern ort (I Cor. 1:9) sagt, das wir ynn der gemeynschafft des sons Gotts beruffen sind. Warumb solt er so unterschiedlich beide von leib und blut reden und gleich zwo gemeinschafft aneinander setzen als zwo unterschiedliche gemeynschafft, da keine die ander ist? Sintemal die geistliche gemeynschafft nur ein einige und nicht zwo unterschiedliche gemeynschafft ist, So ist ia die gemeynschafft des leibs Christi nicht die gemeynschafft des bluts Christi noch widderumb, Denn S. Paulus teilet sie ia hie von einander. Nu ists unmüglich, das ynn geystlicher gemeynschafft solte leib und blut Christi von einander sein und zwo unterschiedliche gemeinschafft machen, wie hie geschicht, Drumb mus hie des leibs und bluts gemeinschafft leiblich und nicht geistlich sein.'

65. <u>WA</u> 26. 496, 34-497, 22.

Thus the Glossa Ordinaria understood Jesus' breaking of the eucharistic bread in I Cor. 11:24 as a showing forth of his impending suffering: 'sed cum fregit, spontaneam passionem suam ostendit.' In the exegetical Part Two of the Bekenntnis of 1528, Luther was careful to treat the 'ancient interpretation' - 'which poses no danger'[1] - with great respect, devoutly averring that, even though it may not faithfully reflect the exact sense of all four accounts of the institution of the Eucharist, it is nevertheless an exposition in harmony with the general tenor of the New Testament. Oftentimes even the best exegetes have provided wonderfully orthodox expositions only partly appropriate to the text under discussion.[2] Moreover, the Reformer notes that the relative clauses in the Matthaean and Marcan versions of the cup-saying unambiguously refer to the blood-shedding on the Cross.[3] We recall that Zwingli had made much of the apposition of 'which is given for you' to S. Luke's report of the statement 'This is my body' in his argument against the real presence.[4] Only if the relative clause in the Lucan version of the bread-saying clearly refers to the

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1. WA 26. 470, 21: 'weil kein fahr stund ynn dem alten verstand.'

2. WA 26. 471, 1-8: 'Ob nu wol dieser verstand bis her nicht gehalten, sondern vom geben yns leiden und vom vergiessen am creutz yderman den text verstanden hat, were es doch kein schedlicher feyl gewest, wie es auch noch nicht ist, Denn niemand daran ubel thut, das er Christus leib und blut fur uns gegeben und vergossen helt am creutz, ob ers gleich an dem ort thut, da nichts davon geredt odder gelesen wird, on das es nicht streitet noch fichtet, wie sonst die lieben Veter die schrifft offt und on fahr an uneben ort, doch ynn gutem und nützlichem verstand gefurt haben.'

3. WA 26. 470, 14; 471, 33-34; 472, 5.

4. CR XCII (CR Zw V), p. 850, 23-28. cf. WA 26. 472, 9-12, 28-31.

Lord's giving his body on the Cross can Zwingli's argument that a real presence in the Eucharist must occur in the same mode as that in which Christ's body was present on the Cross (viz., visibly) have any claim at all to validity. Luther was therefore keenly aware that, if he could demonstrate that some at least of the relative clauses in the several accounts of the verba testamenti refer to the distribution of the body and blood under the elements of bread and wine, a further blow would be dealt against the reasons alleged by the Swiss Reformers for their denial of the real presence.[5]

In his examination of the Lucan institution narrative, Luther notes that the relative clause in this version of the cup-saying embodies a feature unique in the four New Testament accounts of the Last Supper, namely that the relative clause Το ὑπερ ὑμων ἐκχυννομενον seems to refer back to the nominative Το ποτηριον , rather than, as one would expect, to the dative τῳ αἱματι μου . This fact is not readily perceived by the reader of the Vulgate version's 'qui pro vobis funditur', since the masculine relative pronoun qui can refer with equal ease to either of the masculine nouns calix and sanguis, but is immediately apparent in German translation on account of the distinction between 'der Becher' and 'das Blut'.[6]

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5. WA 26. 470, 23-24; 471, 16-22; 472, 28-31.

6. WA 26. 470, 1-8: 'Es hat aber Lucas ynn diesem text ein stücke, das sonst kein Euangelist hat, Paulus auch nicht, nemlich, Der fur euch vergossen wird, und nicht "Das fur euch vergossen wird", denn ym Griechisschen lautet es vom becher und nicht vom blut, wie niemand leucken kan: "Tuto to potirion sc. ekchynomenon" und nicht: "En to emati sc. ekchynomeno", Jm latinschen kan mans nicht mercken, wenn sie sagen: "Qui pro vobis funditur", weil becher und blut beides ein "Der" ist ym latin, aber ym deudschen ists gut zu mercken, da blut ein "Das" und becher ein "Der" ist.'

The Reformer relates how, three or four years previously, a 'fine learned village clergyman' had drawn his attention to this peculiarity of the Lucan narrative. The singular syntax of the Lucan cup-saying had prompted Luther's interlocutor to reject the traditional interpretation of its relative clauses in terms of the sacrificial shedding of Christ's blood on Calvary in favour of the novel view that ἐκχυννομενον speaks of the blood of Christ 'poured' from the eucharist chalice for the disciples to drink:

> 'Solchs hat mich ein mal fur drey odder vier iaren erynnert ein fein gelerter pfarher auff eym dorffe und legt mir seine meynung fur, das Lucas solt also zuverstehen sein, "Dieser becher ist das newe testament ynn meinem blut, der fur euch ausgegossen wird', das ist, der uber tissch euch geschenckt und zu trincken furgesetzt wird, wie man sonst wein aus der kannen schenckt fur die geste.' (7)

Luther is careful not to dogmatise the exegetical speculation of the village parson, explicitly stating that he will teach nothing of which he himself entertains doubts.[8] But he cannot hide his hope that scholars more learned in the Greek than he will one day vindicate the village parson's exegesis, for, if the relative clause of the Lucan cup-saying must be interpreted of the distribution of the element of wine in the liturgical action, then the Schwärmer will be obliged to concede that at least one of the institution narratives unambiguously speaks of the presence of Christ's blood in the Holy Supper.[9] That

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7. ibid., 8-13.

8. WA 26. 471, 16-17: 'Solchs sag ich nicht, das ich gewis drauff stehe, denn wes ich selbs nicht gewis bin, das wil ich niemand leren.'

9. WA 26. 470, 18-24: 'Ich zwar, weil ich fand, das ers nicht mit den schwermern hielt, sondern bekennet, das

the Reformer is less than wholly convinced of the novel interpretation of the Lucan cup-saying is demonstrated by his recollection that the learned parson backed up his daring exegesis by appealing to the Pauline bread-saying.[10] Several pages further on, Luther comments in detail on the Pauline institution narrative, insisting that the relative clause of the bread-saying - Το ὑπερ ὑμων κλωμενον - must be understood of the liturgical distribution of the element of bread, and not of the suffering of Christ. Old Testament precedent in the form of the use of the Hebrew נִבְרָא conspires with the fact (prophesied in the Psalms and confirmed by S. John) that our Lord's body was not 'broken' on the Cross to convince the Reformer of the validity of this interpretation,[11] whose effect is to underscore S. Paul's testimony to the real presence:

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warhafftiger leib und blut ym sacrament were, ward ich fro und lies mir solche meinung gefallen, on das ich sie unnötig achtet, weil kein fahr stund ynn dem alten verstand, Und gefellet mir noch heutiges tages, Möcht auch wol wündschen, das man solche meynung kund aus dem Griechisschen text bringen, Denn damit were doch allen schwermern das maul abermal gestopfft mit aller gewalt.' cf. also WA 26. 471, 17-22: 'sondern das ich gerne wolte, es were also, und weil ich ym Griechisschen nicht erfaren bin, den gelerten ursache gebe, dem nach zu trachten, obs die Griechissche sprache wolt geben, so hetten die schwermer alzumal keinen behelff noch ausflucht mehr widder unsern verstand. Sie musten bekennen, das Christus leib und blut uber tissche wurde ausgeteilet, leiblich geessen und getruncken ym brod und becher.'

10. WA 26. 470, 15-17: 'Und furet dazu den text Pauli: "das ist mein leib, der fur euch gebrochen wird", das ist ausgeteilet und euch uber tissch fur gelegt.'

11. WA 26. 474, 20-32.

> 'So ist nu dieser text starck, das Christus leib uber tissche gebrochen und zustückt, zu bissen, zu drückt und geschlungen wird wie ander brod, doch ynn brods gestalt odder ym brod sc.' (12)

We have already noted that I Cor. 10:16 powerfully influenced Luther's mind in favour of an interpretation of the Pauline bread-saying in terms of the distribution of the body. Indeed, the Reformer says as much when he expresses his approval of the village parson's exegesis of the Lucan cup-saying. Luther's certainty that S. Paul speaks of the liturgical distribution encourages him to suppose that his ministerial colleague's speculation is not unfounded:

> 'Es ist bey mir kein zweivel, das der text Pauli "Das ist mein leib, der fur euch gebrochen wird" sey schlechts zuverstehen von dem brechen und austeylen uber tissche, wie er auch sagt I Cor. 10: "das brod, das wir brechen, ist der ausgeteilete leib Christi", Weil denn der text ynn Paulo so vom brod odder leibe Christi redet, von der austeilung uber tissche und nicht von dem hingeben an dem creutz verstanden wird, so kan freylich der text vom becher auch eben den selbigen verstand leiden.' (13)

The very verbs used in the relative clauses, in the Reformer's opinion, by no means point unambiguously to the Passion of our Lord. As he quotes statements from SS. Ambrose and Gregory the Great - which in fact attest these Fathers' adherence to a sacrificial view of the Mass[14] - about the 'pouring' of Christ's blood in the eucharist, Luther remarks that the Latin 'funditur' can just as well bear the sense of 'pouring' and 'giving' as of 'shedding':

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12. ibid., 32-35.

13. WA 26. 470, 24-30.

14. see Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 36.

> 'Denn das wort "funditur" heist ia freylich nicht allein vergiessen, sondern auch giessen und schencken.' (15)

The Reformer loses little time in backing up his exposition of the ἐκχυννομενον/funditur of the Lucan cup-saying by appealing to the το ... διδομενον of the same Evangelist's account of the bread-saying:

> 'Nu heist geben freylich etwas schencken und nicht etwas ym tod uberantworten.' (16)

So determined is Luther to argue the plausibility of an interpretation of the relative clauses in terms of the distribution of the sacred body and blood in the liturgical action that he seems prepared to go to any lengths to discredit any sacrificial references, at any rate in the Lucan and Pauline texts. In I Cor. 15:29 the Apostle had mentioned those who were baptised ὑπερ των νεκρων. The Reformer renders the preposition ὑπερ with the German fur, which in his usage can represent either für or vor. Luther takes ὑπερ here in the sense of vor, which is offered as equivalent to the Latin coram or ante. If (!) S. Paul uses ὑπερ to mean 'in front of' in this verse, what is to prevent a similar interpretation of the Lucan bread- and cup-sayings and of the Pauline bread-saying?

> 'So finden wir wol mehr orte, Da Paulus "hyper hymon" "fur uns" pro "coram" vel "ante" braucht als I Cor. 15: "Warumb lassen sie sich fur den todten tauffen?" Lucas mit dem, das er spricht: der becher ym blut werde ausgegossen auch "hyper hymon", das ist fur euch, fur ewren augen dar geschenckt zu trincken sc. Und mit dem, das er spricht: der leib wird fur euch gegeben, wie Paulus auch redet.' (17)

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15. WA 26. 471, 13-14.

16. ibid., 31-32.

17. ibid., 26-31.

Fidelity to the text of the New Testament obliges the Reformer candidly to point out that, with their versions of the cup-saying, SS. Matthew and Mark seem to contradict his construction of the sense of the relative clauses. With their περὶ πολλῶν, the first two Evangelists link the 'shedding' or 'pouring' of Jesus' blood to a much wider circle than the apostolic band present at the Last Supper.[18] Faced, as he sees it, with different strains of meaning in the New Testament accounts, Luther proposes a compromise: SS. Luke and Paul, with their relative clauses in the cup-saying, point to the 'pouring' of Jesus' blood at table, while referring to the blood-shedding on the Cross by relating the command to 'Do this in remembrance of me'; on the other hand, SS. Matthew and Mark, in their versions of the cup-saying, speak of the blood-shedding on the Cross and remain silent about the 'pouring' of the blood at table. The latter is at best implied in the relative pronoun 'This'.[19] The Reformer urges

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18. ibid., 33-36: 'Mattheus aber und Marcus lassen sich ansehen, als seyen sie da widder, da sie sagen: Das ist mein blut fur viele vergossen odder ausgegossen. Das laut, als rede Christus von vielen, die auch nicht gegenwertig sind uber tissche. Und sagen nicht "hyper hymon" sed "peri pollon".'

19. WA 26. 471, 37-472, 12: 'Wer zur obgesagten meynung lust hette, der möcht also odder des gleichen dazu antworten, das Lucas und Paulus reden vom giessen odder schencken uber tissche, melden aber das vergiessen am creutze damit, das sie sagen: Man solle solchs thun zu seynem gedechtnis odder seinen tod verkündigen, als die ordenlicher und klerer reden denn Mattheus und Marcus. Widderumb Mattheus und Marcus reden vom giessen am creutze und schweigen des giessens uber tissche, als das sie gnugsam durch das wort "Das" wöllen ausgericht haben. Syntemal wir wissen, das der Euangelisten gewonheit ist, das einer von einerley sagen sagt weiter und mehr denn der ander, und einer aussen lesst, das der ander sagt. Und also were dis wort "der fur euch

that the alleged variety of sense in the reports of the relative clauses is ground for boasting, not embarrassment:

> 'Bey uns ist keine fahr, sondern eitel forteyl, welche meynung wir von den beiden behalten, Sie sind beide gut und recht, Denn es ist beides ynn der that also, nemlich, das Christus leib beide uber tissch und am creutze gegeben ist, ob wirs nicht treffen am rechten ort der schrifft (wie vielen heiligen geschehen) so feylen wir doch der meynung und warheit nichts.' (20)

For the opponents of the real presence doctrine, on the other hand, Luther thinks that everything is at stake in the judgement made on the sense of the relative clauses. For if he and the learned village clergyman are right in their understanding of the Lucan and Pauline relative clauses, the connection between the identification of the elements with Jesus' body and blood and the distribution of the latter to the twelve is incontestable.[21]

6. Conclusion

While they were deeply at one in confessing the supernaturally wrought presence of the body and blood of Christ in the eucharistic elements, Aquinas and Luther parted company in the methods which they respec-

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gegeben wird" nicht so klar und gewis von dem leiden Christi, als dem Zwingel trewmet, der da durch das vorige stück, "das ist mein leib" wil verkleren, wie wir droben gehört haben.' On the relationship between the demonstrative pronoun and the distribution of the body and blood, cf. also WA 26. 470, 30-36.

20. WA 26. 472, 23-28.

21. ibid., 28-31: 'Den Schwermern aber ligt alle macht dran, Denn ist solche meynung nicht recht ynn diesem text, so haben sie damit nichts bessers ynn yhrer sachen, Ist sie aber recht, so ligen sie gantz und gar ynn den asschen.'

tively chose for proving this doctrine. S. Thomas briefly pointed to the biblical basis of the doctrine of the real presence, devoting most of his attention to listing the factors that show up the congruence of the real presence of the body and blood with what is otherwise known of the ways and the works of God. As we shall see in the next Chapters, the Reformer was also convinced of the harmony between the presence of the body and blood in the elements and the chief motifs of God's self-revelation and self-gift in Christ. But, as we have noted, when, in 1523, he turned to the defence of the real presence against its denial by Cornelius Hoen and the Bohemian Brethren, Luther expressly resolved to tackle this novel heresy 'with no other sword than the fact that Christ said "This is" and not "This represents my body".'[1] The sola Scriptura principle on which he had taken his stand against the Papacy obliged the Reformer to take the route of exegesis in defence of the Church's doctrine. From his creative re-expression of the real presence doctrine in the de captivitate of 1520 until he unveiled the defiant Hoc est corpus meum chalked on the table at Marburg in 1529, Luther untiringly asserted that his confession of the identity of the elements with Jesus' body and blood was based four-square on the Lord's authoritative words at the Last Supper as recorded by the Evangelists and S. Paul. The Reformer's exegetical methodology can be summed up with precise simplicity as the quest for the sensus grammaticus of Holy Scripture. Let a sentence from the de servo arbitrio of 1525 suffice to put in a

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1. see WA 11. 434, 19-29.

nutshell a principle which abounds in Luther's works from the outset of the Reformation until the end of his days:

> 'Sic potius sentiamus, neque sequelam neque tropum in ullo loco scripturae esse admittendum, nisi id cogat circumstantia verborum evidens et absurditas rei manifestae in aliquem fidei articulum peccans; sed ubique inhaerendum est simplici puraeque et naturali significationi verborum, quam grammatica et usus loquendi habet, quem Deus creavit in hominibus.' (2)

This single sentence might fittingly be chosen as an appropriate extract by an examiner concerned to elicit a concise and sufficient account of the Reformer's beliefs about language, revelation and Holy Scripture. First, we note the significant coupling of usus loquendi with grammatica: the Bible is the written form of a Word of God whose primal form is oral proclamation. Secondly, the very possibility of a revelatory Word of God is based on the created gift of language, whereby man may say what he means and mean what he says. At the root of Luther's understanding of human language as a fit vehicle for the communication of God's self-revelation is an appreciation of the (spoken) word as a means of grace, as the medium through which Almighty God imparts to his rational creatures a share in his own divine life. Peter Meinhold has traced such an understanding of the 'word' back to the early lectures on the Psalms, linking the quest for the sensus grammaticus with the fact that the 'letter' is used by the Holy Spirit to communicate the truth of God to the human heart:

> 'If the letter is the bearer of the spirit, if the truth gains its entrance into the heart under the spoken sound, then the basis of all understanding

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2. WA 18. 700, 31-35.

> can only be the apprehension of the literal sense, or, rather, the reception of the word in its natural sense.' (3)

Thirdly, one must always begin with the assumption that the correct interpretation of a text is to be found in the sensus grammaticus. If the 'natural sense' of a text is other than its literal sense, the exegete's attention must be drawn to this fact by either the immediate context or by the realisation that the sensus grammaticus would yield a proposition at odds with an article of faith. Throughout the eucharistic dispute the Reformer consistently argued that, if taken in their 'simplex puraque et naturalis significatio", the words of institution spoken by Jesus at the Last Supper clearly and unmistakably teach that the bread is his body and the wine is his blood. Moreover, as we shall see in the next two Chapters, Luther was anxious to rebut the charge that the real presence is at odds with any Scripturally based and credally defined article of faith. Three statements of the Reformer plainly attest his earnest conviction that the real presence doctrine represents the sense intended by our Lord with the words of institution spoken at the most solemn juncture of his earthly life. In first place, we recall how, in the autumn of 1524, Luther had admitted to the 'Christians of Strassburg' that his old Adam tempted him to suppose that mere bread and wine are present in the Holy Supper. The biblical texts are advanced as the sole cause for supposing differently:

> 'Aber ich bin gefangen, kan nicht eraus, der text ist zu gewalltig da und will sich mit worten nicht lassen aus dem synn reyssen.' (4)

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3. Peter Meinhold: Luthers Sprachphilosophie (Berlin, 1958), p. 14.

4. WA 15. 394, 12-20.

Secondly, in the exegetical section of the Confession of 1528, the Reformer alleged that his opponents' denial that I Cor. 10:16 unambiguously teaches the real presence is baseless assertion and nothing more. The Swiss replace the clear Word of God with a 'naked gloss', but Luther for his part will rest content with the 'naked text, ...spoken by God himself':

> 'Denn sollen wir ia an nackten, blossen worten hangen, so wöllen wir lieber an nacktem, blossen text hangen, welchen Gott selbs gesprochen hat, denn an nackten, blossen glosen, die menschen ertichten.' (5)

Thirdly, towards the beginning of the exegetical Part Two of the work of 1528, the Reformer considers the eucharistic dispute of those years from the point of view of the simple believer confused at the wranglings of the theologians. The man in the pew is being asked to choose between the plain sense of the word of Christ as advocated by Luther and the various reconstructions of that word as advanced by his opponents. Better be deceived by God himself, argues Luther, for he can make amends for misleading those who, perhaps naively, cling to the simple sense of his Word, than by mere men, who can offer no compensation for leading those souls to damnation who embrace their errors.[6] The believer who abides by the plain sense of the words of institution as spoken by Christ can appear with a good conscience before his Lord at the moment of death and on the day of judgement:

> 'Demnach kanstu frölich zu Christo reden beyde an deym sterben und jüngsten gericht also, "Mein lieber Herr Jhesu Christe, Es hat sich ein hadder uber deinen worten ym abendmal erhaben, Etlich wollen,

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5. WA 26. 497, 28-30.

6. WA 26. 446, 18-31.

> das sie anders sollen verstanden werden denn sie lauten, Aber die weil sie mich nichts gewisses leren, sondern allein verwirren und ungewis machen, und yhren text ynn keinen weg wollen noch konnen beweisen, So bin ich blieben auff deinem text, wie die wort lauten, Ist etwas finster darynnen, so hastu es wollen so finster haben, denn du hast keine andere verklerung drüber geben noch zu geben befolhen. ...Also bin ich auch an diesen deinen worten blieben, Das ist mein leib sc., und habe mir keine andere draus machen wollen noch machen lassen, sondern dir befolhen und heymgestellet, ob etwas finster drynnen were, und sie behalten wie sie lauten, sonderlich weil ich nicht finde, das sie wider einigen artickel des glaubens streben." Sihe, so wird kein schwermer mit Christo reden thüren, das weis ich wol, denn sie sind ungewis und uneins uber yhrem text.' (7)

In the light of the last three quotations from the Reformer in the previous paragraph we can concur with Hermann Sasse's lament:

> 'Nie hätte man bestreiten sollen, dass der letzte und tiefste Grund für Luthers Abendmahlslehre ein exegetischer ist.' (8)

That the Reformer's confession of the real presence stems from his self-subjection to the written Word of God has been disputed from his own time to the present day. In some of its forms - as, for example, when the first Reformed Elector of Brandenburg unctuously informed the Estates of that territory that, on his own confession, Luther drew his real presence doctrine not from Holy Scripture, but from the writings of Cardinal d'Ailly[9] - this charge need not detain us here. But as expressed by Karl Barth in 1923, the view that the Reformer's adherence to the real presence was decisively motivated by other than exegetical concerns contains a sufficient

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7. WA 26. 446, 32-447, 13.

8. 'Der Schriftgrund der lutherischen Abendmahlslehre', In Statu Confessionis I, p. 102.

9. see Werner Elert: The Structure of Lutheranism I

grain of truth to be of use in sharpening our awareness of the complexity of the question of the source and inspiration of Luther's firm stand on this issue. Barth considers the Reformer's appeal to 'It is written':

> 'Thus it stood written - and thus it had to stand written. Luther would have put things completely differently from Zwingli, even if he had not found the problematic est in the Bible. The passion with which he clung to the three letters e-s-t, and with which he wrote them with chalk on the conference table at Marburg, has nothing to do with philological fidelity to the text or with his much-invoked attachment to the doctrine of verbal inspiration (which Luther did not follow in any case).' (10)

The third sentence of this statement is demonstrably misleading, for Luther patently did believe in the inspiration and doctrinal inerrancy of Holy Scripture and, precisely in the context of the Lord's Supper, was supremely concerned with 'philological fidelity' to the text. We recall his detailed arguments on the sense of the demonstrative pronoun Hoc, the substantive verb est, and the predicate noun corpus, nor can we forget his impassioned insistence throughout this controversy on the need for the exegete to prove not what the text may mean, but what it must mean. But the Reformer's exegesis of the eucharistic words notoriously contains two strains. On the one hand, there is the firm resolve to subject his thinking to the inspired Word, the faithful adherence to the words of Jesus which issues in Luther's devout belief in the real presence. On the other hand, though, we may not be blind to a distinct apologetic concern

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(St Louis, 1962), p. 302, n. 4.

10. 'Ansatz und Absicht in Luthers Abendmahlslehre', Die Theologie und die Kirche (Munich, 1928), p. 73.

that pervades the Reformer's treatment of the verba testamenti.[11] Luther did not receive the doctrine and practice of the real presence in the Sacrament of the Altar in first place from Holy Scripture, but from the catechesis and usage of the Latin Church of the West. Thus in the proto-confession which forms the brief Part Three of the work of 1528 the real presence features among those 'articles of faith' which the Reformer is pleased to share with the Church Catholic.[12] Of course, while he received this doctrine from the Church, Luther continued to believe and practise it because he found it to be strongly attested in Holy Scripture. Accordingly the real presence is one of those 'articles of faith' which the Reformer has 'sieved time and again through Scripture'.[13] But Barth's view that, even if the 'problematic est' were not to be found in the text, 'Luther would have put it completely differently from Zwingli' is entirely correct. The traditional doctrine of the real presence fitted in with the Reformer's overall conception of the essence of Christianity. Not only did he find it clearly taught in Holy Scripture, he also found that it corresponded to the basic motifs and concerns of his theology and piety, and for that reason he defended it tenaciously. The apologetic strain in Luther's exegesis of the eucharistic words is seen at its most obvious in his argument for the real presence on the basis of the Lucan order and the relation of new Lord's Supper to old Passover meal, and in the alacrity

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11. cf. Albrecht Peters: Realpräsenz. Luthers Zeugnis von Christi Gegenwart im Abendmahl (Berlin, 1960), p. 172.

12. WA 26. 506.

13. WA 26. 500, 1-2.

with which he accepted the interpretation placed by the 'fine learned village parson' on the relative clause of the Lucan cup-saying. The Reformer's devotion to the real presence is thus not based on the sensus grammaticus alone. The latter is corroborated, in first place, by other texts of Scripture, and sacra Scriptura sui ipsius interpres is realised before our eyes as Luther interprets the words of institution in the light of I Cor. 10:16 and 11:27-29. Secondly, the sensus grammaticus which has stood the test of comparison with other relevant texts of Scripture is also found to be in harmony with the regula fidei. We have noted the Reformer's delight, as early as 1520, in drawing a parallel between the real presence and the divine-human person of Christ. With increasing clarity as the eucharistic debate develops, Luther will discern and express the congruence of the real presence on the altar with the Incarnation itself. The bodily presence in the Sacrament is found to be rooted in the assumption of humanity into the person of the Eternal Son and in keeping with the hiddenness of the Object of faith and with the indirect mode according to which Almighty God presents this Object to faith. Furthermore, the real presence strikes Luther as an entirely fitting extension of the Incarnation, given his view that the Holy Spirit is the polar opposite, not of the body, but of the 'flesh'. To Luther's exposition of the real presence in the context of the cornerstone of the Christian religion, namely the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, we now turn.

CHAPTER FIVE:

THE HYPOSTATIC UNION AS THE MATRIX OF THE REAL PRESENCE

Introduction

Our centuries' old habit of talking about 'the' Reformation does more to obscure than to clarify the many-sided upheavals that befall the Latin Church of the West in the sixteenth century. To accredit the 'Protestant' church bodies which emerged from the crisis of sixteenth century Christendom with having achieved 'the Reformation' of the Church is already to make the bold claim that one is privileged to view the antecedent late mediaeval Western Church through the eye of the Almighty. The historian can establish that all the protagonists in the sixteenth century struggle for the soul of Christendom - whether Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican or anabaptist - were concerned to remedy and 'reform' lamentable deficiencies that were supposed to have marred the Church's witness and practice in the late Middle Ages. Just which of these attempts at renewal, if any, deserves the absolute appellation 'the Reformation' is properly reserved to the judgement of Almighty God. Anticipation of the divine tribunal by labelling one or several of the sixteenth century renewal movements 'the Reformation' involves one's risking a statement of faith and confession that goes beyond the competence of the historian as such. For the purposes of this essay, it must be grasped that to lump together all the non-Roman Catholic attempts at

reform of the sixteenth century Church under the umbrella heading 'the Reformation' contributes no more to the meaningful description of the ecclesiastical landscape than does the common habit of dubbing all non-Roman Catholic Western Christendom 'Protestant'. As commonly used, the adjective 'Protestant' and the noun 'the Reformation' are akin to the statements of apophatic theology; they define negatively and offer nothing by way of affirmative description. The contradictions inherent in seriously associating together the Lutheran, Zwinglian, Calvinist and English 'Reformations' under the overall rubric 'the Reformation' can be brought to light by asking what Luther and Zwingli had in common to justify their respective endeavours as theologians and churchmen being considered as typical fruits of an identical movement. The crucial question is only deferred, and not answered, by pointing to the sola Scriptura principle. Sola Scriptura can be professed by a variety of individuals and movements ranging from Thomas Aquinas to the Jehovah's Witnesses. What is decisive in the case of Luther's and Zwingli's recourse to this principle is that they were unable to agree on the precise teachings enjoined by the commonly acknowledged authority. For Luther, the Pauline doctrine of justification loomed large in the pages of the New Testament as the centre in which all the other teachings of Holy Scripture hold together. Luther's understanding of the impartation to fallen men and women of a share in the alien righteousness of Christ did not, however, develop in a vacuum. On the contrary, the articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiae itself stands and falls with two groups of presuppositions. First, Luther's doctrine of justification is wholly dependent on the traditional orthodox concep-

tions of Christology and the Atonement. Moreover, Luther's own understanding of God's act of bestowing the alien righteousness of Christ on indigent sinners is intimately bound up with his conception of the 'taking up of manhood into God' at the Incarnation. Luther believed that, through the hypostatic union, the human nature of Christ was indwelled and penetrated by his divine nature in such a way that precisely the humanity of the God-man is able to mediate a share in the life of God across the boundaries of space and time through the medium of Word and Sacrament. Secondly, Luther's doctrine of justification presupposes that the one Mediator is himself mediated to men and women through the means of grace administered by the ordained ministry. As Luther sees it, justifying faith is created by the Holy Spirit as Christ is mediated through the external, human acts of preaching, baptising, absolving, and celebrating the Lord's Supper. Under the single heading of 'justification', therefore, we have to do with Luther's distinctive understanding of the Incarnation, both in the narrower sense of the 'taking up of manhood into God' in the divine-human person of Jesus Christ, and in the wider sense of the union of believing men and women with our Lord to make up the totus Christus, the Church. Now the doctrine of justification has never been diagnosed as the centre of the theology of Ulrich Zwingli. Furthermore, while Zwingli accepted the doctrine of the Incarnation, his understanding of the mystery of Christ was far removed from Luther's heavily Cyrilline recension of ancient Christology. And Zwingli strongly dissociated himself from Luther's conception of the work of the Holy Spirit in the means of grace. Accordingly, the fact that Zwingli was at one with Luther in his dissatisfaction

with contemporary Christendom and in his hostility to the papal government of the Church does not justify his being associated with Luther as a fellow-worker in 'the Reformation'. Since both men had such radically different conceptions of the essence of Christianity, they could not be at one in their understanding of what was rightfully involved in 'the Reformation' of the Church.

More was at stake in the dispute over the eucharist than the exegesis of a single set of New Testament texts or the understanding of a single ecclesiastical rite. Luther was aware that there are times when Holy Scripture must be understood in a non-literal sense, just as Zwingli and Oecolampadius were aware that biblical statements must often be taken in their literal sense. What was it that convinced Luther of the impossibility of a figurative understanding of the verba testamenti and Zwingli and Oecolampadius of the impossibility of the literal interpretation of the same text? We must recognise the fact that Luther and the Swiss came to the eucharistic controversy with widely divergent preconceptions concerning Christology and the means of grace. That is to say, each party to the debate on the Lord's Supper had a distinctive conception of the 'rule of faith' according to which they agreed that Scripture is to be interpreted. Luther explicitly conceded that the establishment of the literal sense of the text of the Holy Supper must be supplemented by a demonstration that the resultant doctrine is in keeping with the sense and drift of Holy Scripture as a whole:

> 'Wer Gotts worten nicht will gleuben, der darff von mir nichts weiters foddern. So thu ich gnug, wenn ich beweise, das nicht widder Gotts wort, sondern der schrifft gemesse sey.' (1)

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1. WA 23. 131, 4-6.

We gain insight into the divergent preconceptions with which Luther and the Swiss approached the sacred text when we recall the former's vehement reaction to a Christological remark made by Oecolampadius at the Marburg Colloquy. The anonymous account of the Marburg proceedings relates how Oecolampadius besought Luther not to cling obstinately to the humanity of Christ, but rather to lift up his mind to contemplate the Lord's divinity:

> 'Hic monere Lutherum Oecolampadius coepit, ne sic in humanitate et carne Christi haereret, sed sursum in divinitatem Christi mentem extolleret, humanitatem Christi plus satis extenuans.' (2)

Luther replied that he did not wish to know the divinity of Christ other than in and through his assumed humanity:

> 'Respondit Lutherus, sermones tales se ferre minime posse. Nullum enim deum vel scire se, vel colere praeter eum, qui homo sit factus, praeter hunc alium se habere nolle. Neque enim alium esse, qui praeter hunc salvare possit. Quare humanitatem eius sic extenuari et abjici, sese non passurum.' (3)

The christological argument with which Zwingli and Oecolampadius sought to prove the impossibility of the eucharistic multipresence of Christ's body and blood was based on the view that, as a result of his exaltation to the right hand of the Father, the bodily constitution of the God-man is locally present at one place in heaven, with the result that it cannot, without forfeiting its finite, creaturely quality, be simultaneously multipresent at earthly celebrations of the Lord's Supper. Luther's understanding of the hypostatic union of Jesus' assumed humanity with the Eternal Godhead of the Second

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2. WA 30 III. 132, 20-22.

3. WA 30 III. 132, 23-133, 8.

Person of the Trinity caused him to have a wholly different conception of the exaltation to the 'right hand of the Father' from that entertained by his Swiss contemporaries. As Luther saw it, the 'taking up of manhood into God' from the moment of Jesus' conception by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary involved the communication to his assumed humanity of the divine attribute of omnipresence, this being a mystery which was voluntarily 'hidden' by our Lord during the status exinanitionis and 'revealed' only at his entry into the status exaltationis. Add to this Luther's conviction that the humanity of Christ remains the organ through which men and women are drawn into the filial relationship at the heart of the inner-trinitarian life of God, and it is clear that such a text as I Cor. 10:16 would make a different impression on him from that it would make on Zwingli and Oecolampadius, who stood in the Augustinian tradition of Christian Platonism. Our procedure in this Chapter will therefore be to outline Luther's distinctive conception of the mystery of the person of Christ by way of introduction to an account of his apologetic use of christologically based arguments in his polemical writings on the eucharist.

A. LUTHER AND THE CHRISTOLOGICAL DOGMA OF THE CHURCH

1. Was Luther a Chalcedonian?

In the work Von den Konziliis und Kirchen of 1539, the Reformer makes no attempt to cover up the woeful deficiencies in his knowledge of the historical development of the classical dogma of the Church. The sources at his disposal as he strives to chart the achievements of the first four General Councils are meagre in the extreme, and his account of the errors of Nestorius and

Eutyches is based as much on conjecture as on verifiable fact. With respect to the gathering at Chalcedon in 451, Luther is aware that:

> 'die Veter im Concilio haben beschlossen, Es sey Christus eine Person und zwo natur, das ist nu recht und der christliche Glaube.' (1)

The Reformer's references to the Chalcedonian Definition itself are surprisingly sparing. In the eucharistic work of 1528, he asserts that:

> 'wir die naturn nicht mengen, und die person auch nicht trennen.' (2)

We cannot overlook the fact that this formulation owes more to the 'neque confundentes personas, neque substantiam separantes' of the Athanasian Creed than to the Formula of Chalcedon. Even so, his insisting on avoiding a 'mixture of the natures' does echo the ἀσυγχύτως which appears as the first of four adverbial qualifiers of the union of natures in 'one and the same' person of Jesus Christ in the Definition of 451. At the same time, in the work of 1539 Luther makes no mention of the Tome of Leo, and, if we bear in mind the somewhat artificial quality of the distinction between our Lord's 'divine person', on the one hand, and his 'divine nature', on the other, we cannot fail to be alarmed at the Reformer's casual description of Godhead and manhood as not only 'vereinigt' but also 'vermischt' (!) in the incarnate person.[3] But Luther's allegiance or otherwise to the substance of Chalcedonian Orthodoxy cannot be judged on the basis of his strongly rhetorical language or of

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1. WA 50. 593, 18-20.

2. WA 26. 324, 34-35.

3. WA 50. 588, 17.

the degree of his familiarity with the Definition itself. The Fathers of Chalcedon nursed three major concerns: to preserve an adequate confession of the full divinity of Christ, of his full humanity, and of the full union of the divine and human natures - albeit 'without confusion, without change, without division, without separation' - in the one incarnate person. The best way to assess Luther's proximity or otherwise to the Chalcedonian Definition is therefore to outline his presentation of the christological dogma against the background of these concerns.

2. The role of the ancient dogma in Luther's proclamation of Christ.

If called on to decide between S. Thomas' understanding of the Incarnation under the sole heading of God's act of mercifully rescuing his lost creatures and Duns Scotus' view that the Incarnation would have happened to crown and consummate the relationship between God and man even if the Fall had never taken place, Luther would undoubtedly come down on Aquinas' side. Two stanzas from the hymn Nun freut euch lieben Christen gmeyn remind us that the Reformer can only contemplate the Incarnation in the context of the desperate, damnation-bound plight of sin-flawed men and women apart from the intervention of God in Jesus Christ:

'Dem teuffel ich gefangen lag,
Im tod war ich verloren,
Meyn sund mich quelet nacht und tag,
Darynn ich war geporen.
Ich fiel auch ymer tieffer dreyn,
Es war keyn gutts am leben meyn,
Die sund hat mich besessen.

Meyn gutte werck die golten nicht,
Es war mit yhn verdorben,
Der frey will hasset Gotts gericht,
Er war zum gutt erstorben.
Die angst mich zuuerzweyffeln treyb,
Das nichts denn sterben bey mir bleyb,
Zur hellen must ich sinken.' (1)

Man's self-inflicted misery calls forth the divine mercy, so the hymn aptly goes on to relate how, in the eternal counsels of the Holy Trinity, the Father resolved to send his only-begotten Son into the world to do battle with the powers that hold men captive, 'throttling bitter death' so that we might live forever with him:

'Da iamert Gott ynn ewigkeit
Meyn ellend uber massen,
Er dacht an seyn barmhertzigkeyt,
Er wolt mir helffen lassen.
Er wand zu mir das vater hertz,
Es war bey yhm furwar keyn schertz,
Er lies sein bestes kosten.

Er sprach zu seynem lieben son,
Die zeyt ist hie zurbarmen,
Far hyn meyns hertzens werde kron,
Und sey das heyl dem armen,
Und hilff yhm aus der sunden not,
Erwurg fur yhn den bittern tod
Und las yhn mit dyr leben.' (2)

The Son obeys the Father's command, becoming 'my brother' through his birth of the Blessed Virgin. He adopts the form of a servant throughout his incarnate life, shielding his exercise of divine prerogatives from the public gaze, intent on 'catching the devil':

'Der son dem vater ghorsam ward,
Er kam zu myr auff erden,
Von eyner iungkfraw reyn und zart,
Er solt meyn bruder werden,
Gar heymlich furt er seyn gewalt,
Er gieng ynn meyner armen gstalt,
Den teuffel wollt er fangen.' (3)

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1. WA 35. 423, 6-424, 3.

2. WA 35. 424, 4-17. 3. ibid., 18-24.

Christ beseeches the lost creature to cleave to him. Through his unstinting gift of self, a 'blessed exchange' takes place, granting the sinner a share in the blessedness of the Son. Where he is, there shall we be also:

'Er sprach zu myr, halt dich an mich,
Es soll dyr itzt gelingen,
Ich geb mich selber gantz fur dich,
Da will ich fur dich ringen.
Denn ich bin deyn und du bist meyn,
Und wo ich bleyb da soltu seyn,
Uns soll der feind nicht scheyden.' (4)

At the close of Christ's earthly life the devil will snatch an illusory victory. Christ's blood is shed and he is robbed of his life, but his immortal life thereby swallows up death and his innocence bears the whole weight of human sin:

'Vergiessen wird er myr meyn blut,
Dazu meyn leben rauben,
Das leyd ich alles dyr zu gut,
Das hallt mit festem glauben.
Den tod verschlingt das leben meyn,
Meyn unschuld tregt die sunde deyn,
Da bistu selig worden.' (5)

Two factors are worthy of note in this verse presentation of Luther's Christology. First, he is unable to separate, even though he can distinguish, the person from the work of Christ. For Luther, the majesty of the God-man is discerned supremely in his work of achieving reconciliation between God and man. In his stress on the saving work of Christ, it is remarkable that Luther unaffectedly finds room both for the essentially Western motif of the triumph of forgiving grace over creaturely guilt and for the essentially Eastern motif of the vic-

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4. WA 35. 424, 25-425, 3.

5. WA 35. 425, 4-10.

tory of the superabundant life of God in Christ over the creaturely bondage to decay and death. The heritage of SS. Irenaeus and Athanasius, on the one side, and of S. Augustine, on the other, coexist happily in the Reformer's theological thinking; there is no tension between the two. Secondly, Luther's conception of the saving activity of the God-man focuses in a massive emphasis on the unconditional pro nobis of the Father's turning to the world in the Son. The Reformer preached to a generation scarred by the law, to men and women of all classes and conditions terrified at the prospect of God's coming judgement. The strength of his proclamation and theology stemmed from his having trodden to the point of bitter despair the path of seeking to placate an angry God through penitential discipline. Dr. Rowen Williams writes as follows:

> 'The Reformation cannot be understood at all without some sense of the agony of Luther's interior battles in these years leading up to 1519. It is given to mercifully few people in the Christian Church to experience directly and intensely the meaning of words and phrases that are, for most believers, clichés. Luther looked, with rare simplicity, into the face of the God he was told to serve and hated what he saw. God was a righteous God - that was taken for granted - and he demanded conformity to his righteousness and condemned failure to conform. He demanded whole-heartedness; but how could the endlessly self-regarding, self-observing, self-dividing human soul produce such simplicity? Nothing in human action and motivation could be clear; by what right can a person ever satisfy himself or herself that an action is "good"? By no right; Luther found this out through years of self-torture in the confessional. Scripture enjoined "penitence" - poenitentiam agere, "do penance", was the Vulgate translation of the evangelical "repent". And if sin was a nightmare of daily failure and doubt, so penance was a nightmare of struggling to find the possibi-

> lity of unequivocally good acts by way of recompense - which would themselves be open to the same agonies of doubt about motivation. How was it possible to be pleasing to God? As Luther often put it in later years, this experience was an experience of hell, of a condition of moral and spiritual hopelessness. The God who presides over this appalling world is a God who asks the impossible and punishes savagely if it is not realized - punishes here as well as hereafter.' (6)

As it were vicariously, as so to say the paradigmatic sixteenth century man, Luther experienced in the depth of his soul the unbridled wrath of the God of the law. He describes this bitter experience in the defence of the 15th of the 95 Theses:

> 'Sed et ego noui hominem, qui has poenas saepius passum sese asseruit, breuissimo quidem temporis interuallo, sed tantas ac tam infernales, quantas nec lingua dicere, nec calamus scribere, nec inexpertus credere potest, ita ut, si perficerentur aut ad mediam horam durarent, immo ad horae decimam partem, funditus periret, et ossa omnia in cinerem redigerentur. Hic deus apparet horribiliter iratus, et cum eo pariter uniuersa creatura. Tum nulla fuga, nulla consolatio, nec intus, nec foris, sed omnium accusatio. Tunc plorat hunc uersum: Proiectus sum a facie oculorum tuorum. nec saltem audet dicere: Domine, ne in furore tuo arguas me. In hoc momento (mirabile dictu) non potest anima credere, sese posse unquam redimi, nisi quod sentit nondum completam poenam. Est tamen aeterna, neque potest eam temporalem existimare, solum relinquitur nudum desiderium auxilii, et horrendus gemitus, sed nescit unde petat auxilium.' (7)

Against this sobering, terrifying and ultimately inescapable background of the inexorable wrath of God, the apostolic gospel (whose perimeters had been set for the

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6. Rowan Williams: The Wound of Knowledge (London, 1979), p. 143f.

7. WA 1. 557.

Church in the venerable dogmas of the Trinity and the Two Natures of Christ in one Person) spoke to Luther with elemental force. When he assumed our nature and endured our self-inflicted curse, the Eternal Son did not come as yet another lawgiver, but as the Saviour. Only when we share Luther's terror of the 'naked God', who is a consuming fire, can we also share his delight in the 'clothed God', who appeared in Jesus Christ, decisively announcing and imparting God's favour and lovingkindness to those who have deserved the very opposite. In the de servo arbitrio of 1525, the Reformer beseeches his readers to avoid curious prying into the consuming God of the law and to embrace with joy the God who comes to us clad in his Word. Luther clearly conceives 'the Word', that is, the Church's proclamation of Jesus Christ, as a continuation and extension of the gracious presence for mankind of the Incarnate Word:

> 'Relinquendus est igitur Deus in maiestate et natura sua, sic enim nihil nos cum illo habemus agere, nec sic uoluit a nobis agi cum eo; Sed, quatenus indutus et proditus est uerbo suo, quo nobis sese obtulit, cum eo agimus, quod est decor et gloria eius, quo Psalmista eum celebrat indutum.' (8)

Only in terms of Luther's soteriologically motivated devotion to the mediatorial humanity of Christ can we understand such statements as 'ausser diesem menschen kein Gott ist'[9] or 'Und ist keyn ander Gott'.[10] Perhaps the doctrine of the omnipresence of Christ's humanity was already seminally contained in the young Luther's 'rediscovery' of the gospel.

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8. WA 18. 685, 14-17.

9. WA 26. 332, 19-20.

10. WA 35. 456, 15 (Eyn feste burg).

The evangelical pro nobis of Luther's theology, which bids every man accept that, despite the wretched propensity for self-destruction that flows from his idolatrous self-dependence, and despite the miserable bondage to sickness, decay and death involved in his being part of a fallen order, he is nevertheless - for Christ's sake - the object of a wholehearted love which delights in forgiving sin and healing sickness, is only comprehensible when rooted in the eternal exchange of boundless love within the Godhead itself. From his pulpit Luther would gladly expound the two chief images through which Holy Scripture instructs us about the relationship between the first two Persons of the Blessed Trinity. First, there is the analogy with a creaturely father begetting an earthly son. This, says Luther, is a 'coarse and simple analogy' with which to illuminate the eternal birth of the Son from the Father; in earthly paternity the father gives only a mere 'portion' of his 'essence' to his offspring, whereas in the Godhead the Father gives 'the whole divine essence' to the Son:

> 'Ich pflege ein grob, einfeltig Gleichnis zu geben zur anleitung diese geburt des Sons Gottes vom ewigen Vater etlicher massen zuverstehen, nemlich diese: wie ein leiblicher Son fleisch und blut und sein wesen vom Vater hat, also hab auch der Son Gottes, vom Vater geborn, sein Göttlich wesen und natur vom Vater von ewigkeit. Aber wir könnens mit diesem oder anderm Gleichnis nicht erreichen, es kan nicht so volkömlich sein wie in der Göttlichen Maiestet, da der Vater dem Son das gantze Göttliche wesen gibt: der leibliche Vater aber kan dem Son das gantze wesen nicht geben, sondern nur ein stücke, das ist nu die ungleichheit.' (11)

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11. WA 46. 541, 21-29 (Sermons on the Gospel of John, 1537-1539).

Secondly, there is the analogy of the single man who can enter into dialogue with his own thought and word, to which he has a mysterious relation of identity and distinction. The image of the thinking subject's relation to his thought and word is apt to issue in a stress on the unity of the trinitarian persons, whereas the image of filial generation tends to lead to an emphasis on the distinction between the divine persons. Luther can present the image of the one God's relation to his Word in terms which do not minimise the personal relationship at the heart of the Godhead. God is 'pregnant' with a 'word or dialogue' which occurs eternally within himself. There is a relationship of love within the Godhead of whose intensity our finite minds have only the slightest inkling:

> 'Diesem Bilde nach gehet Gott auch in seiner Maiestet, in seiner Natur schwanger mit einem wort oder gesprech, das Gott in seinem Göttlichen wesen mit sich selber hat, und seines Herzens gedancken ist, dasselbe ist so erfüllet und gros und volkomen als Gott selber, niemand sihet, höret noch begreifft dasselbige Gespreche denn er allein.' (12)

The essence of salvation consists in our being incorporated into the filial relationship within the Godhead. In view of the magnitude of the gift, any notion that the indigent creature on whom such prodigious blessing has been poured can contribute to his apprehension of salvation through his own works of merit, can only appear risible. Two of Luther's Christmas hymns demonstrate his awed awareness of both the Creator's condescension in the event of the Incarnation, in which the Illimitable stoops to self-limitation, and of the unsurpassable dig-

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12. WA 46. 545, 6-10.

nity and unbounded measure of hope that is conferred on the creature through the fact that manhood has been irrevocably, eternally taken into God. 'True God and true man in one person' is beautifully confessed in Gelobet seystu Jhesu Christ:

'Des ewgen Vaters eynig kind
itz man ynn der krippen find,
Jnn unser armes fleysch und blut
verkleydet sich das ewig gut.

Den aller welt kreis nie beschlos,
der ligt ynn Marien schos,
Er ist eyn kindlin worden kleyn,
der alle ding erhelt alleyn.' (13)

Nor would it be fanciful to discern in Luther's thinking an implicit avowal of the Eastern understanding of salvation as 'deification'. The Son has entered into the order of sin in order to reverse the downward spiral of woe and elevate men to a share in the glorious life of God:

'Der son des vaters Gott von ard
eyn gast ynn der werlet ward
Und furt uns aus dem iamer tal,
er macht uns erben ynn seym saal.

Er ist auff erden kommen arm,
das er unser sich erbarm
Und ynn dem hymel machet reych
und seynen lieben engeln gleich. (14)

Kindred thoughts are expressed in the hymn Vom Himel kam der Engel schar, which rejoices that the Eternal Good has become our brother, God's Son has become our comrade, and we ourselves have become God's kith and kin:

'Des solt jr billich fröhlich sein,
Das Gott mit euch ist worden ein,
Er ist geborn ewr Fleisch und Blut,
Ewr Bruder ist das ewig Gut.

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13. WA 35. 434, 7-15.

14. WA 35. 435, 1-9.

Was kan euch thun die Sünd und Tod,
Jr habt mit euch den waren Gott,
Lasst zürnen Teuffel und die Hell,
Gotts Son ist worden ewr Gesell.

Zu letzt müst jr doch haben recht,
jr seid nu worden Gotts geschlecht,
Des dancket Gott in ewigkeit,
Gedüldig, frölich allezeit.' (15)

The distinctiveness of Luther's presentation of the Church's faith can only be seen when it is compared with certain aspects of late mediaeval piety and theology. Gabriel Biel was typical of an unhealthy trend in the late mediaeval Western Church with his teaching that Christians may put greater fiducia in the Blessed Virgin, who is purus homo, than in her Son, the homo deus.[16] The image of Christ the stern lawgiver and unbending judge drove those for whom he died and rose again to the intercession of his compassionate Mother. Luther's whole theological concern was directed against any such misrepresentation of Christ. In directing men and women to Christ as the embodiment of God's lovingkindness, Luther was consciously invoking the substance and imagery of ancient tradition against relatively recent distortion of that tradition. In what is perhaps his single most influential confession of Jesus Christ, Luther asserts the unqualified pro nobis dimension of the work of the Redeemer:

> 'Ich gläube, dass Jesus Christus, wahrhaftiger Gott vom Vater in Ewigkeit geborn und auch wahrhaftiger Mensch von der Jungfrauen Maria geborn, sei mein HERR, der mich verlornen und verdampten Menschen erlöset hat, erworben, gewonnen und von allen Sunden, vom Tode und von der Gewalt des Teufels nicht mit Gold oder Silber, sondern mit seinem heiligen, teuren Blut und mit seinem unschüldigen Leiden und

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15. WA 35. 472, 1-8, 13-16.

16. see H. A. Oberman: The Harvest of Medieval Theology, pp. 313ff.

> Sterben, auf dass ich sein eigen sei und in seinem Reich unter ihme lebe und ihme diene in ewiger Gerechtigkeit, Unschuld und Seligkeit, gleichwie er ist auferstanden vom Tode, lebet und regieret in Ewigkeit; das ist gewislich war.' (17)

3. vere deus?

Luther demonstrably shared the Chalcedonian concern to safeguard confession of the perfect Godhead of Jesus Christ in the sense of the Nicene ὁμοουσιον. Moreover, while the basis of his belief in the Godhead of Christ was supplied by Jesus' witness to himself (supremely in the Fourth Gospel) and by the explicit christological teachings of the apostolic writings, the Reformer's confession of the divinity of the Son was fuelled by the same soteriological concerns that had motivated SS. Athanasius and Anselm. Only if God himself was unconditionally at work in Jesus could this man have overcome the demonic forces of sin, death and the devil:

> 'denn bleibet Christus nicht warer, natürlicher GOTT, vom Vater in ewigkeit geborn, und Schöpffer aller Creaturn, so sind wir verlorn. Denn was were mir mit des HERRN Christi leiden und sterben geholffen, wenn er ein mensch nur were wie ich und du? so hette er den Teufel, Tod und die Sünde nicht überwinden können, er were jnen viel zu schwach gewesen, hette uns auch nicht helffen können. Darumb müssen wir einen solchen Heiland haben, der warer Gott und ein HERR uber Sünde, Tod, Teufel und Helle sey.' (1)

Again, man's voluntary turning away from the Source of all that he is and has, his wilful plunging into the fearful abyss of a self-love that is indistinguishable from self-destruction, that is to say, his sin, constitutes such an offence against the holy majesty of God that Lu-

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17. BS KK 511, 23-28.

1. WA 46. 554, 21-28.

ther, like S. Anselm before him, thinks it impossible that the self-offering of a mere man, however noble, could make amends for the immense volume of human transgression. Only the merit of God himself can outweigh the burden of our guilt; and only if God himself becomes man can a reparation of infinite merit be made by man for man's offence:

> 'und wird nu Christo die Gottheit entzogen, so ist keine hülffe noch rettung da wider Gottes zorn und gerichte. Denn unser Sünde, not und jamer ist zu gros, sol dem geraten werden, so mus eine höhere bezalung dafur geschehen denn die, so durch einen Engel, Erzvater und Propheten etc. kan ausgerichtet werden, GOTTES Son mus Mensch werden und dafür leiden und sein Blut vergiessen. Widderumb wird jm die Menscheit entzogen, so ists abermal mit uns verloren.' (2)

In a sermon delivered on the Eve of Epiphany 1539, the Reformer indicated that he would opt for a Christology 'from above', reminding his congregation that the relationship with God which it enjoyed as a result of the paschal events is rooted in the prior ontological reality of the Incarnation, which alone gives value and coherence to the work of Christ. One cannot understand Good Friday if one is unaware of the miracle of Christmas:

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2. WA 46. 555, 7-13. cf. WA 50. 590, 11-22: 'Denn wir Christen müssen das wissen, wo Gott nicht mit in der woge ist und das gewichte gibt, so sincken wir mit unser schüssel zu grunde, Das meine ich also: Wo es nicht solt heissen, Gott ist fur uns gestorben, sondern allein ein mensch, so sind wir verloren. Aber wenn Gottes tod und Gott gestorben in der wogeschüssel ligt, so sincket er unter und wir faren empor, als eine leichte ledige schüssel, Aber er kan wol auch wider emporfaren oder aus seiner schüssel springen. Er kündte aber nicht in die schüssel sitzen, Er müste uns gleich ein mensch werden, das es heissen kündte, Gott gestorben, Gottes marter,

> 'Ideo müssen das fest Nativitatis zu grund legen, ut agnoscatur, qualis persona Iesus Christus i.e. quod ab initio omnia creavit, postea promissus Adam, quod deberet filius Dei. Ergo zeitlich natus a virgine ex stam Adae, aus dem geblüt Adam, Abraham, David, Sic tres personae Trinitatis, sed tantum Christus homo, Si tenes hoc, tum intelliges am Karfreitag, qualis persona in cruce pendeat, qualis persona, quae nos in Sacramento, in baptismo salvet. Ideo bene inculca haec verba: "Verbum caro".' (3)

4. vere homo?

On the basis of such statements as those quoted in the foregoing section, there can be no doubt that the Reformer shared to the full the Chalcedonian concern to confess and teach that Jesus Christ is vere deus. The Luther who signed CA III solemnly averred that:

> 'die mittel person ynn Gott, nemlich der Son, allein ist warhafftiger mensch worden, von dem heiligen geist on mans zuthun empfangen, und von der reynen heiligen iungfraw Maria, als von rechter natürlichen mutter, geborn, wie das alles S. Lucas klerlich beschreibt und die Propheten verkündigt haben.' (1)

But can the Reformer's acceptance of the Chalcedonian vere homo ('warhafftiger mensch') be taken at face value? Since Luther's teaching of the omnipresence of Christ's humanity has often been censured as Eutychean, we must enquire into his understanding of Jesus Christ as 'true man'. In the confessional Part Three of the work of 1528 just quoted, Luther takes pains to reject the Apollinarian heresy, which denied that the Son of God assu-

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Gottes blut, Gottes tod, Denn Gott in seiner natur kan nicht sterben, Aber nu Gott und Mensch vereinigt ist in einer Person, so heissts recht Gottes tod, wenn der mensch stirbt, der mit Gott ein ding oder eine Person ist.' cf. also WA 47. 638, 6-8: 'Si autem hulse vol ist, quod Dei filius pro nobis datus, Dei sanguis et leben für uns gegeben. Das gewicht ist zu starck. Ideo reissts die helle auff und bricht sc.'

3. WA 47. 639, 18-640, 24. 1. WA 26. 500, 33-501, 23.

med a complete human nature. Apollinaris, who presupposed a tripartite anthropological structure of mind, soul and body, believed that the Logos exercised in the Incarnate Lord the functions which in other humans are carried on by the mind (νοῦς). Luther mistakenly thought that Apollinaris denied that the Logos assumed a human soul. Given his stress on the Son's assuming an 'entire complete human nature', we may, however, presume that the Reformer understood the 'soul' of Christ to include a finite, creaturely mind:

> 'Auch das Gott der son, nicht allein den leib, on seele (wie etliche ketzer geleret) sondern auch die seele, das ist, eine gantze völlige menscheit angenomen, und rechter samen odder kind Abraham und Dauid verheissen und natürlicher son Marie geborn sey, ynn aller weise und gestalt, ein rechter mensch, wie ich selbs bin und alle andere, on das er on sunde, allein von der Jungfrawen durch den heiligen geist komen ist.' (2)

In the sermon on the Johannine Prologue in the Kirchenpostille of 1522, Luther had already expressly rejected the Apollinarian theory of the Incarnation,[3] insisting that the σαρξ of Jn. 1:14 is to be understood as teaching that the Son assumed not a partial, but a total human nature, body and soul:

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2. WA 26. 501, 24-29.

3. WA 10. I. 236, 3-12: 'Das sag ich darumb sso vleyssig, das disser spruch (viz., Jn. 1:14) viel anstoss der ketzer hat erlitten, tzu der tzeytt, da gelerete, gross Bischoffe waren. Etlich alss Photinus unnd Apollinaris lereten, Christ were eyn mensch on seele, unnd die gottheyt were ynn yhm gewessen an der seelen stadt. Manichaeus aber leret, Christus hett nit naturlich warhafftig fleysch gehabt, sondern were eyn scheyn gewessen, durch Mariam seyne mutter gangen, das er nitt yhr blutt und fleysch het gefasset, wie die Szonn durch eyn glass scheynet, und nympt nit mit sich des glasss natur. Darumb hat der Euangelist braucht eyn begreyfflich wortt, er

> 'Hie soll man durchs fleysch vorstehen die gantz menscheyt, leyb unnd seel, nach der schrifft gewonheyt, die den menschen fleysch nennet.' (4)

The second half of Jn. 1:14, which teaches that the Word was not only made flesh, but also dwelt among us, evoked Luther's unbounded awe. The Reformer's amazement is not focused on any dazzling manifestation of the divine glory in the world in the manner described in the apocryphal Gospels, but centres on the sheer ordinariness of the Incarnate Life:

> 'das wortt, das fleysch wordenn ist, hab unter uns gewonet, das ist: Er hatt unter den menschen auff erden gewandellt, wie eyn ander mensch, ob er wol got ist, dennoch ist er eyn burger tzu Nazareht und Capernaum worden, hatt auch geperdet wie eyn ander mensch, wie auch S. Paulus Phil. 2. sagt.' (5)

The Pauline Christ-hymn does not mean to teach any change in the divine being of the Son:

> 'ssondern es soll verstanden werden nach seynem eusserlichen wessen und wandel, das er essen, trincken, schlaffen, wachen, erbeytt, ruge, hawss und stadt, gehn und stehen, kleyd und gewant, und alle menschliche wandell und geperden auch gefurt habe, das yhn niemandt hett mugen fur eynen gott erkennen, wo er nitt durch Johannes und das Euangelium vorkundigt were.' (6)

Such statements as these make it clear that there can be no doubt that Luther believed the Eternal Son to have assumed a full human nature. Indeed, was the reality of the human nature ever so starkly emphasised in the tradition of the Church as in Luther's exposition of

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sey fleysch worden, das ist: eyn mensch, wie eyn ander mensche, der fleysch und blutt, leyb und seel habe.'

4. WA 10 I. 235, 18-19.

5. WA 10 I. 243, 7-10.

6. ibid., 17-22.

Gal. 3:13?[7] Not only did the Son become man; he even - in a voluntary act of love - 'became' a sinner, the 'peccatorem peccatorum',[8] enduring in his body and soul the whole weight of the divine wrath against sin. The Reformer explicitly urged, in the Kirchenpostille of 1522, that it is simply impossible to overemphasise the full reality of the humanity assumed by the Son:

> 'Wyr kunden Christum nit sso tieff ynn die natur und fleysch tzihen, es ist unss noch tröstlicher.' (9)

We must beware, however, of illicitly 'modernising' Luther's stress on the self-giving of God into the reality of the flesh. An example of such procedure is Dr. Hildebrandt's claim that, with his insistence that God is at work in the integral humanity of his Son, Luther in principle rejected the dogma of the virginal conception of Christ.[10] A glance at the wider context of the Reformer's striking statement that ' we cannot draw Christ sufficiently deeply into the flesh' shows that Luther here presupposes not only the virginal conception of Christ,

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7. WA 40 I. 432, 17-452, 26.

8. WA 40 I. 434, 35-36.

9. WA 10 I. 68, 6-7.

10. EST. Das Lutherische Prinzip, p. 80: 'Damit wird nun aber eine Konsequenz unvermeidlich, die Luther nicht gezogen und doch klar gesehen hat: der Verzicht auf die Lehre von der Jungfrauengeburt. Er hält zwar an der historischen Tatsache fest, weil sie ihm durch Luc. 1 und Jes. 7, 14 gesichert scheint, und verfügt, als hätte er den kritischen Einwand geahnt, "Alma" heisse "Jungfrau" und sei nicht durch "Bethula" zu ersetzen. Aber dogmatisch kann er sich nicht im mindesten mit dem Gedanken befreunden, dass die "Gottheit" von der "Menschheit" physisch abgegrenzt und durch den Jungfraustand der Maria die Ehre Gottes gewahrt werden soll. Die Ehre

but even the immaculate conception of his Mother. While urging that Jesus was humanly born of a human mother, the Reformer nevertheless insists that, in her child-bearing, the Mother of God was exempt from the curse of Eve.[11] Both Christ and his Mother share our nature completely, even though in their case human nature is 'pure', free of sin. Only within the perimeters of the sinlessness of blessed Mary and her Son is it impossible 'to draw Christ sufficiently deeply into the flesh'. Luther here presupposes that sin does not pertain to the essence of human nature, but is a frightful distortion of the good creature of God.[12] A further factor to be urged against undue 'modernising' of Luther's emphasis on the full humanity of the Son is his insistence, in keeping with the orthodox teaching of the Church, that the Second Person of the Trinity assumed not a man, but human nature. The Reformer taught that the humanity of Christ

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Gottes besteht ja vielmehr - hier wie im Abendmahl - eben darin, dass die "Gottheit" ganz und gar, wahrhaftig und wirklich in die "Menschheit" eingeht. ...In der Tat: der Satz, das Gott "gegenwärtig im Fleisch", in einem leibhaftigen Menschen realpräsent ist, ist mit der Jungfrauengeburt unvereinbar. Es darf in der Lutherischen Lehre keinen Vorbehalt, keine "letzte Distanz" geben, die die völlige "unitas" von Gott und Mensch modifiziert.'

11. WA 10 I. 67, 9.

12. WA 10 I. 67, 16-68, 10: 'Das red ich darumb, das wyr unsers glawben grund haben und Christum lassen seyn eynn naturlich mensch, aller massen wie wyr, und yhn nichts ssondern an der natur, on wo es die sund und gnad betrifft. Natur ist an yhm unnd seyner mutter reyn gewessen, ynn allen glidenn, ynn allen wercken der glider. Ist auch keyn weyblich leyb noch gelid yhe on sund zu seynem naturlichen werck kummen, on alleyn ynn disser eynigen iungfrawen, da hatt gott eyn mal die natur und yhr werck tzu ehren gesetzt. Wyr kunden Christum nit sso tieff ynn die natur und fleysch tzihen, es ist unss

is anhypostatic, enhypostatic in the person of the Logos.[13] While Luther's belief in the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin, her virginal conception of Christ and the anhypostasis of his humanity might cause his adherence to vere homo to be questioned in those theological circles that no longer accept the binding force of the ancient dogmas, there can be no doubt that he held to the full humanity of Jesus in the sense of the fathers of Chalcedon.

5. in una persona?

Luther shared intensely the third major concern of the Fathers of Chalcedon, which was to insist on the unity of person within 'one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten'. Divinity and humanity do indeed remain distinct after the assumption of a complete human nature by the Second Person of the Trinity, but, since the assumed humanity is truly united to the Son, we must avoid the pitfall of attributing the indivisible works of the God-man to his divine and human natures respectively, as if these were separate agents of his activity.[1] So intimate is the union of divinity and humanity in the one person of the Son that we are bound to attribute the works performed through the divine nature (for example, the creation of the world) to the human nature also, and, conversely, to attribute happenings that befell the human nature (for example, the suffering, death and burial of Christ) to the divine nature also. The Reformer's

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noch tröstlicher. Darumb was nit widder die gnad ist, soll man seyner und seyner mutter natur gar nichts ablegen; der text stet klar alda und spricht, sie hab yhn geporenn, und er ist auch gepornn, sagen die Engell.'

13. WA 39 II. 116, 7-13.

1. According to Luther's understanding of the christological mystery, the divine nature works in and through

understanding of the hypostatic union involved the patristic conception of a 'sharing of attributes' (communicatio idiomatum) between the two natures:

> 'Fides catholica haec est, ut unum dominum Christum confiteamur verum Deum et hominem. Ex hac veritate geminae substantiae et unitate personae sequitur illa, quae dicitur, communicatio idiomatum. Ut ea, quae sunt hominis, recte de Deo et e contra, quae Dei sunt, de homine dicantur. Vere dicitur: Iste homo creavit mundum et Deus iste est passus, mortuus, sepultus etc.' (2)

Blessed Mary must therefore be regarded as being truly the Mother of God, the 'God-Bearer'. Moreover, the holy Mother's care of the Christ-Child must not be thought of as service performed for the human nature of the Redeemer alone: Mary breast-fed God, rocked God in the cradle, prepared broth and soup for God. Such language is necessitated by the full reality of the hypostatic union, as a result of which there are not two Christs, two Sons and two Jesuses, but one Christ, one Son and one Jesus.[3]

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the human nature: 'denn die menscheytt were keyn nutz, wenn die gottheyt nit drynnen were, doch widderumb will und mag gott nit fundenn werden denn durch und ynn disser menscheytt' (WA 10 I. 208, 22-24).

2. WA 39 II. 93, 2-9 (de divinitate et humanitate Christi, th. 1-4). cf. also WA 39 II. 98, 5-10: 'Nos non dicimus, Christum esse tantum creaturam sed esse Deum et hominem in una persona. Sunt illae naturae coniunctae personaliter in unitate personae. Non sunt duo filii, non duo iudices, non duae personae, non duo Iesus, sed propter unitam coniunctionem et unitatem duarum naturarum fit communicatio idiomatum, ut, quid uni naturae tribuitur, tribuitur et alteri, quia fit una persona.'

3. WA 50. 587, 10-16: 'Also sol man auch sagen, das Maria des kindes, so Jhesus Christus heisst, rechte natürliche Mutter ist, und sie die rechte Gottes Mutter, Gottes gebererin, und was mehr von Kindsmüttern gesagt kan werden, als seugen, wasschen, etzen, trencken, das

In his Eve of Epiphany sermon of 1539, Luther - who may well be the only exponent of classical Christology ever to have pictured the Blessed Virgin as meekly milking the cows after becoming aware of her vocation to be Mother of God![4] - expressed the unity of Christ's person in homely and intimate terms. The Eternal Word became our 'fellow citizen', acting just like other members of the human race. The Reformer tells how, during his childhood, the Eternal Word ran after S. Joseph, carrying his foster father's axe, and fetched water for his Mother.[5] In virtue of the personal union, we truly discern the Son of God in the assumed humanity of Jesus. Accordingly we say that the very Son of God was present in the Virgin's womb, drank his Mother's milk, laid in bed, and helped his Mother in the kitchen:

> 'Sic dic: Dei filius in cunis, in sinu matris sugit lac, leit im bette auff der Erden, holet der Mutter spehn, fiesch, kees, brot, ut istum articulum gewaltig fassen mogen propter istos, qui volunt istam personam zertrennen. Sic in Epistola: "Verbum, quod" sc. Quomodo caro et blut kan Got tappen? Certe, quia Deus et homo una persona, wer eins trifft, triffts beides, quia una persona ut eisen und fewer.' (6)

Luther's understanding of the personal union which embraces both natures of our Lord can be illustrated

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Maria Gott seuget, Gott wiget, Gotte brey und suppen macht sc. Denn Gott und mensch ist eine Person, Ein Christus, Ein Son, Ein Jhesus, nicht zwo Person, nicht zween Christus, nicht zween Söne, nicht zween Jhesus.'

4. WA 7. 575, 18.

5. WA 47. 637, 1-4: 'Datur similitudo de ferro ignito, qui attingit ferrum, et ignem attingit. Verbum, quod factum caro, habitavit inter nos, ist unser mitburger worden, hat gethan ut alius homo, kind existens hat er die axt Joseph nachgetragen, matri wasser geholet.'

6. ibid., 8-14.

through his answer to the question, Can God suffer? With the orthodox tradition of the Church, the Reformer returns a firm No to this question: God in himself cannot suffer. Yet this question ought not to be asked of God as he is in himself, apart from man and the world, but only of the God who has united human nature with the person of his Son. Through this personal union, there comes about a perichoresis of divine and human nature ('Da gehets ineinander humanitas et divinitas'); on account of this union ('Die unitas, die helts'), we may say that God himself truly suffered in the Passion of the Son of man:

> 'Obiectio: At Deus non potest crucifigi aut pati. R. Scio, cum nondum esset homo. Ab aeterno non est passus, sed cum factus est homo, est passibilis. Ab aeterno non erat homo, sed iam conceptus ex Spiritu sancto scilicet, natus ex virgine fit Deus et homo una persona et sunt eadem praedicata Dei et hominis. Hic facta est unio personae. Da gehets ineinander humanitas et divinitas. Die unitas, die helts.' (7)

Again, when considering the question whether God died in the death of Christ, Luther is adamant that we should not consider 'der abgesonderte Gott, sondern der vereinigte Gott mit der Menscheit'.[8] When we ponder the deep issue of Almighty God's attitude towards us solely in terms of 'the God who is united with manhood', we can rejoice that 'Gott gestorben, Gottes marter, Gottes blut, Gottes tod'[9] speak eternally in our favour. Any division between the natures of the God-man would place

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7. WA 39 II. 101, 24-102, 1.

8. WA 50. 589, 25-26.

9. WA 50. 590, 19.

a question mark against God's commitment to our cause. Our salvation stands and falls with the unity of Christ's person:

> 'Sic Mariae filius et Dei est unus filius, non duo. Christus Got und Mensch, non duo, sed unus Christus, una persona, non duae personae. Got ist Mensch, Mensch ist Got in einer person unzertrennet. Gottes kind und Menschen kind ist ein kind. Macht ligt in dem articel, quia si zertrennt, amisimus nostram salutem.' (10)

6. duae naturae?

Luther's allegiance to the hallowed formula of 'one person in two natures' needs to be examined in greater detail, for Karl Holl[1] and Dr. Hildebrandt[2] have each claimed that the basic tendency of the Reformer's Christology is plainly Monophysite, and Paul Althaus, while conceding that:

> 'Luther without reservation uses the traditional terminology of the "two natures" in the one person of the Lord to describe the mystery of Jesus Christ ...' (3),

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10. WA 47. 635, 12-16.

1. Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kirchengeschichte I, Luther, p. 69, n. 4: 'Aber wenn Luther dies (viz., the unity of Christ's person) in der alten Weise mit den zwei "Naturen" ausdrücken wollte, dann kam er hart an den Monophysitismus heran.' Later in the same footnote, Holl laments ancient Christology's attachment to the concepts of 'substance' and 'nature': 'Mit dessen (viz., ancient dogmas's) aus der alten Naturmetaphysik geschöpften Begriffen von "Substanz" und "Natur", die wie verharrende, nur durch ihre Wesensart bestimmte Grössen angesehen wurden ...'

2. EST. Das Lutherische Prinzip, p. 80f.: 'Gegenüber den nestorianisierenden Reformierten gehört Luther durchaus auf die Seite der Monophysiten.'

3. The Theology of Martin Luther, p. 179.

nevertheless asserts that the two natures doctrine was, in principle, 'inadequate'[4] to express the Reformer's deepest christological concerns. A glance at Luther's high claims for the two natures formula as 'given by God' and at his understanding of what is meant by human and divine nature respectively will seek to prove the first two of these authors wrong and the third muddle-headed. In the disputation de divinitate et humanitate Christi of 1540, the Reformer displayed a keen awareness of the sheer incapacity of human language in general and of analogy in particular adequately to express the mystery of the union of divinity and humanity in the person of Jesus Christ. Since the language of the Bible and the Church seeks to talk about something which transcends the normal perimeters of our speech, all analogy is bound to 'limp'. To expect analogy to capture the fullness of the mystery would be about as sensible as imagining that a man could run well on four feet:

> 'Quia rem ineffabilem volebant effari, deinde omnis similitudo claudicat nec unquam (ut dicunt) currit quattuor pedibus.' (5)

Indeed, the union of divinity and humanity in one person is a 'res incomprehensibilis' which even the holy angels cannot begin to grasp.[6] But Luther will not permit acknowledgement of transcendent mystery to be urged as an excuse for intellectual laziness. The inability of human language to measure up to the height, breadth and depth of the being of God in Christ does not mean

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4. op.cit., p. 191. 5. WA 39 II. 96, 3-4.

6. WA 39 II. 98, 13-15: 'Est res incomprehensibilis, sicut etiam ipsi angeli non possint capere et comprehendere, quod duae naturae in una persona unitae sunt.'

that human language cannot express the christological mystery in a manner that will be at once true and sufficient for the needs of the pilgrim Church. In the Reformer's opinion, the formula 'one person in two natures', along with the way of speaking that reflects a 'sharing of attributes' between the two natures in the one person of the God-man, has been given to the Church by God himself:

> 'Ideo ut capere aliquomodo possimus, dedit Deus nobis formulas loquendi, quod Christus sit Deus et homo in una persona, et non sunt duae personae, sed duae naturae unitae sunt in una persona sic, ut, quod ab humana natura fit, dicatur etiam fieri a divina, et e contra. ...Contenti sumus his formulis. Deinde etiam observandae sunt phrases sanctorum patrum.' (7)

Now Luther was well aware that the concept of 'nature' is not employed in the same sense in the confession of Jesus' divinity as it is in the avowal of his humanity. For while self-observation enables us to state with some precision just what human nature is, our present lack of immediate knowledge of God obliges us to know him chiefly through knowing what he is not. In Von den Konziliis und Kirchen, Luther surmises that the error of Nestorius did not consist in denial that Christ is one person in two natures, but in refusal to accept the communicatio idiomatum between the two natures in his one person. The Reformer feels obliged to translate theological jargon into simple German. Idioma means 'attribute' (eigenschafft) or 'what pertains to a nature', and in the case of human nature such 'attributes' can speedily be listed:

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7. ibid., 15-22.

> 'Aber Communicationem idiomatum wil er nicht zugeben, das kan ich mit einem wort nicht deudsch reden, Idioma heisst, was einer natur anhangt oder jr eigenschafft ist, Als sterben, leiden, weinen, reden, lachen, essen, trincken, schlaffen, trauren, freuen, geborn werden, mutter haben, brüste saugen, gehen, stehen, erbeiten, sitzen, ligen und was des mehr ist, heissen idiomata naturae humanae, das ist eigenschafft, die einem menschen von natur anhangen, als die er thun oder leiden kan auch wol mus, Denn Idioma griechisch, proprium latine, ist ein ding, Lasts uns dieweil ein eigenschafft heissen.' (8)

Jesus fully shared these attributes with the rest of the human race, differing from us only in that his humanity was without sin, never perpetrating the errors of self-dependence and self-seeking but always being selflessly focused on the Father's good pleasure. Luther fancies that some of Christ's human attributes were merely of transient duration, being restricted to the period of the Incarnate Life when he shared human weaknesses and needs. At his glorification, the transient attributes were cast aside, although he retains such essential attributes of humanity as 'body and soul, skin and hair, blood and flesh, marrow and bone'. The fact of Jesus' having shed certain transient attributes causes Luther to look with more sympathy on Eutyches than on Nestorius:

> 'Wie wol es war ist, das Eutyches mehr anfechtung vieleicht hat gehabt, weder Nestorius. Denn der menschlichen natur jdiomata sind von Christo viel hinder jm blieben, Als essen, trincken, schlaffen, trauren, begraben sc. Denn er sitzt nu zur rechten hand Gottes, isset, trinckt, schlefft, trauret, leidet, stirbet nimer mehr in ewigkeit, wie uns auch geschehen wird, wenn wir aus diesem leben in jenes leben komen. I. Cor. 15. Solchs sind zeitliche und vergengliche jdiomata, Aber die natürlichen bleiben, als, das er Leib und Seele, haut und har, blut und fleisch, marck und bein und alle glieder menschlicher natur habe.' (9)

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8. WA 50. 587, 21-29. 9. WA 50. 595, 35-396, 6.

Thus, so long as we bear in mind that Jesus' humanity was sinless from the moment of his conception and that his glorified humanity has left behind it certain of the limitations and weaknesses that pertain to human life in the here and now, we can speak meaningfully with the Fathers of Chalcedon of the Son's having assumed a human 'nature' which is ὁμοούσιος with our own. In the case of the Lord's divine 'nature', however, there is no such possibility of accurate description. With the exception of the positive quality of 'omnipotence' (itself the opposite of man's limited powers), all of Luther's suggestions concerning the Idioma Deitatis are negatives. We know what God is through knowing what he is not:

> 'Widerumb, Idioma Deitatis, Göttlicher natur eigenschafft ist, das sie unsterblich, allmechtig, unendlich, nicht geborn, nicht isset, trinckt, schlefft, stehet, gehet, trauret, weinet und was sol man viel sagen? Es ist gar ein unmeslich ander ding, Gott, weder ein mensch ist, darumb können die idiomata beider natur nicht ubereinkomen.' (10)

In the eucharistic writings of the late 1520s, the need to unfold the modality of divine presence (in the world, in Christ, in the Eucharist) prompted Luther to focus on the unknowability of God in himself. In the work of 1527, we read that Almighty God simply transcends all our human categories:

> '...ja wer weis was ist, das Gott heist? Es ist uber leib, uber geist, uber alles was man sagen, hören und dencken kan.' (11)

In the Confession of the following year, the Reformer insists that God is 'ein ubernatürlich unerforschlich wesen'[12] who in his utter transcendence of us wreaks

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10. WA 50. 587, 29-33. 11. WA 23. 137, 25-26.

12. WA 26. 339, 34.

havoc with all the limiting concepts and images of our human thinking:

> 'Nichts is so klein, Gott ist noch kleiner, Nichts ist so gros, Gott ist noch grösser, Nichts is so kurtz, Gott ist noch kürtzer, Nichts ist so lang, Gott is noch lenger, Nichts ist so breit, Gott ist noch breiter, Nichts ist so schmal, Gott ist noch schmeler und so fort an. Ists ein unaussprechlich wesen uber und ausser allem, das man nennen odder dencken kan.' (13)

The foregoing account of Luther's notion of divine and human attributes gives us some insight into his understanding of the formula 'one person in two natures'. While the one concept 'nature' is used to express the full reality of divinity and humanity in the undivided person of the God-man, in the first case it refers to an unknowable, in the second to a knowable essence. Dr. Grillmeier quotes Marcian, an early defender of the Chalcedonian Definition, as urging that the Fathers of Chalcedon intended natura to be understood as simply synonymous with veritas.[14] Dr. Grillmeier pertinently observes that:

> 'To a Christian of the time, the formal terms of Chalcedon did not sound so formal as they might seem to a theologian of the nineteenth or the twentieth century. They were meant to express the full reality of the Incarnation.' (15)

We have seen that Luther was passionately concerned to attest the full divinity and the full humanity of Jesus Christ, and that he was aware of the impossibility of

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13. WA 26. 339, 39-340, 2.

14. 'nos autem patrum suscipientes doctrinas naturam intelligimus veritatem': Aloys Grillmeier: Christ in Christian Tradition (London, 1965), p. 483.

15. ibid.

using language in an identical manner of divinity and humanity. There is therefore no reason to distance the Reformer from the classical two natures doctrine. Dr. Hildebrandt's endeavour to do precisely this tells us more about the influence of Hegel on Dr. Hildebrandt than about the actual Christology of the Reformer. It is essential to note that, in his account of Luther's Christology, Dr. Hildebrandt does not simply seek to drive a wedge between the Reformer and Chalcedon, but also to express his own reservations about the two natures Christology. Dr. Hildebrandt wrote EST. Das Lutherische Prinzip in conscious opposition to 'Reformed' theology, as represented by the early Barth. We learn that distinctively Reformed Christology is based on the ancient two natures doctrine 'mit ihrem griechischen, d.h. durchaus dinglichen Begriff von "Natur"'.[16] Moreover, we are informed that:

> 'Bis heute ist unsere Christologie dem griechischen "Natur"-begriff unterworfen geblieben.' (17)

The context of these observations is provided by Dr. Hildebrandt's clear disapproval of the Reformed concern to preserve the distinction of the two natures within the one person of Christ.[18] Over against this typically Re-

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16. EST. Das Lutherische Prinzip, p. 77.

17. op.cit., p. 78.

18. op.cit., p. 77f.: 'Göttliches und menschliches Sein werden als zwei Substanzen einander entgegengesetzt. Ihre Vereinigung in der Person Jesu Christi muss so gedacht werden, dass die "volle Menschheit" gewahrt bleibt. Denn der wirkliche, "empirische" Christus steht im Mittelpunkt der Betrachtung, und auf seine "Homousie" mit uns wird der entscheidende Wert gelegt. Darum ist seine "Gottheit" nur indirekt oder besser "dialektisch" zu verstehen; an der "Distanz" der beiden Naturen muss festgehalten werden. Finitum non capax infiniti. Man darf also nicht die "Eigenschaften" der Menschheit auf

formed emphasis, Dr. Hildebrandt wishes to focus exclusively on the Lutheran stress on the unity of Christ's person. The upshot is Monophysitism:

> 'Die konsequente Orthodoxie kann eigentlich nicht von der Gottheit Christi und der Menschheit Jesu sprechen, sondern allein von der Gottmenschheit Jesu Christi. Dabei ist zunächst die Negation ebenso wesentlich wie die Position. Denn die Zweinaturenlehre ist jetzt im Ansatz erledigt.' (19)

These pages seem to be informed by a Hegelian reluctance to respect the absolute distinction between divine and creaturely being. Whatever may be thought of Luther's understanding of the perichoresis of the divine and human natures of Christ as issuing in the omnipresence of his humanity, precisely in the setting of his ubiquity speculations the Reformer unmistakably attested the indissoluble distinction between the two natures within the one person of the God-man.[20] Dr. Hildebrandt would therefore seem not to do full justice to the entirety of Luther's teaching on Christology.

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die Gottheit übertragen oder umgekehrt; man darf vom Leib Christi nicht aussagen, dass er überall und so auch im Abendmahl realpräsent sei. Die Gleichungen müssen zu Gleichnissen werden. In dem Ganzen ist die Abendmahlslehre sichtbar enthalten: der Gang der Reflexion vom Empirischen zur Idee, das Prinzip der "Distanz" zwischen Mensch und Gott und der Grundbegriff des Symbols ist ohne weiteres erkennbar.'

19. op.cit., p. 79.

20. see, e.g., WA 26. 324, 32-35: 'Drumb halten wir unsern Herrn Christum also fur Gott und mensch ynn einer person non confundens naturas nec dividendo personam, das wir die naturn nicht mengen und die person auch nicht trennen.' see also WA 26. 340, 35-341, 3: 'Wollen wir Christen sein und recht von Christo dencken und reden, so mussen wir ia von yhm dencken, Das die Gottheit sey ausser und uber allen creaturen, Zum andern müssen wir dencken, das die menscheit (wie wol sie auch eine creatur ist), aber weil sie alleine und sonst keine also an Gott

Another modern Luther scholar to have obscured the Reformer's wholehearted acceptance of the two natures doctrine is Paul Althaus. Althaus' whole presentation of Luther's Christology is vitiated by a concern to drive a wedge between the chief motifs of 'Athanasian' and 'Augustinian' Christology and what he takes to be the major theme of the Reformer's understanding of Christ. Althaus summarises the tendencies of Greek and Latin Christology as follows:

> 'Ancient Greek Christianity was particularly motivated by concern for the immortal life of God which redeems from corruption and from death. For this reason, Greek christology thinks of Christ primarily as the One who through his incarnation and resurrection shares the immortal life of God with human beings. This understanding of salvation corresponds to the statements made about Christ. Western Christianity has been determined by the search for freedom from the guilt and the power of sin. The decisive statements about Christ therefore speak of him as having atoned for sin and now, through the sacraments, granting the power of grace for a holy life.' (21)

While admitting that 'Luther also knows these emphases in the doctrine of salvation' and that 'for this reason the corresponding forms of christology continue to be living elements in his own thought', Althaus nevertheless insists that the Reformer's chief christological concerns lay elsewhere:

> 'At the center of his theology, however, the concern for salvation assumes a new form. What does God intend to do with us sinful men? What is his relationship to me? How does he feel about me? This is therefore no longer a concern about God's

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klebet das sie eine person mit der Gottheit ist, so mus sie auch höher, über und ausser allen andern creaturn sein, doch unter Gott alleine, Wolan das ist unser glaube.'

21. The Theology of Martin Luther, p. 181.

> incorruptible and unfading life, his power, his atoning and saving grace; rather Luther is concerned about God Himself, his will and his heart.' (22)

Once again, an ostensible account of the Reformer's thinking tells us more about the Luther scholar than about Luther himself. As will presently become even clearer, Althaus' presentation of Luther's Christology is massively influenced by the Ritschlian distaste for metaphysics and preference for personal over ontological categories. The Reformer himself would have found the supposed contrast between the Athanasian and Augustinian models, on the one hand, and his own alleged concern for 'God Himself, his will and his heart' sheerly incomprehensible: 'God Himself' displays 'his will and his heart' towards us precisely in sending his Son to assume our nature, effecting reconciliation ('his atoning and saving grace') and delivering us from the despair of death ('God's incorruptible and unfading life'). One cannot but be struck by the total absence of a clear trinitarian frame of reference from Althaus' account of Luther's Christology. As opposed to emphasis on forgiving grace or on the opening up to men of a share in the immortal life of God, we read that:

> 'the decisive thing about Christ is that God has opened his heart to us in the person, activity and history of Jesus Christ and thus gives us certainty about how he feels about us and what he intends to do with us. This is the new meaning and importance of the deity of Jesus Christ for Luther. Christ is "the mirror of God's fatherly heart", in whom God himself appears to us. We can say that before Luther, the church and its theologians were primarily concerned with the divine in Christ. They looked

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22. ibid.

> for his divine nature, his divine life, and for the divine significance of his satisfaction. Luther, however, looks and finds God the Father himself in person in Jesus Christ.' (23)

Now the notion that we may meet the Father in the assumed humanity of the Son is clearly taught in Jn. 14:9b, and theologians may illustrate the possibility of such an encounter through the image of the circumincessio of the persons of the Blessed Trinity. But it is not at all clear that Althaus intends his account of Luther's stress on meeting the Father himself in the man Jesus to be understood in terms of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. Throughout his chapter on 'God in Jesus Christ' Althaus repeatedly asserts that Luther 'presupposed' the incarnational dogma of the ancient Church,[24] but the reader is as it were subliminally persuaded that the Reformer's deepest christological concerns were not wholly congruous with those of the Fathers by Althaus' thinly veiled contempt for the 'metaphysical' category of 'two natures'[25] and by his predilection for a reductionist account of Luther's Christology which is ultimately compatible with a Unitarian doctrine of God. We can only

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23. ibid. f.

24. op.cit., pp. 179, 180 ('Everything new which Luther has to say in christology presupposes the certainty of Christ's deity and incarnation in the sense of the ancient dogmas.'), 188, 193f.

25. see, e.g., op.cit., p. 190: 'The ancient dogma was concerned with the unity of the two natures in Christ. Luther teaches this as the tradition does. But it is not the "metaphysical" unity of the two natures but rather the personal unity of the Son with the Father, of the man Jesus with the eternal God, that is ultimately decisive in the matter of salvation.' Which of the Fa-

be perplexed by such a statement as the following:

> 'More accurately, it is not merely the deity or divine nature but God himself who is personally involved. ...God is this man, and this man is the presence of God for us. Basically, Luther thereby transcends the doctrine of the two natures as inadequate. It says far too little and does not say what is decisive. Luther is ultimately concerned not with the relationship of the divine and the human nature but with the relationship of the person of Jesus to the person of the Father. Luther thus takes the deity of Christ and his incarnation more seriously than anyone since the New Testament writers themselves.' (26)

Four objections can be made against this account of Luther's Christology. First, which teacher of the Christian Church ever taught that the acting subject in the person of Jesus Christ was the 'deity or divine nature'? Althaus' statement that it is 'God himself who is personally involved' is true enough as far as it goes, but inadequate. Luther, with the whole tradition, could only say that the acting subject in the one Lord Jesus Christ was the eternal Logos, himself always acting in intimate and inseparable union with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Secondly, the statement that Luther's ultimate concern was 'not with the relationship of the divine and the human nature' in the person of Christ is demonstrably false: this theme dominates the disputation de divinitate et humanitate Christi and the tract

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thers taught the 'metaphysical' unity of the two natures? In the orthodox conception, the unity of divinity and humanity in the one Lord Jesus Christ is grounded in the subsistence of a complete human nature in the person of the Eternal Son of God. This is the sole basis on which there can be a soteriologically fruitful relationship between 'the man Jesus' and 'the eternal God'.

26. op.cit., p. 191.

Von den Konziliis und Kirchen, and it emerges as a major concern of the later writings on the Lord's Supper. As far as the Reformer is concerned, if the unity of the two natures is imperilled, then ' we have lost our salvation'.[27] Thirdly, Althaus' contrast between concern for the inter-relationship of the two natures and concern for the 'relationship of the person of Jesus to the person of the Father' would be sheerly incomprehensible to Luther. Teaching as he did the enhypostasis of the assumed humanity in the person of the Son,[28] the Reformer could not conceive of any relationship between the man Jesus and the Father apart from the assumption of that humanity into the person of the Son, who alone enjoys an eternal filial relationship with the Father. Fourthly, what can be more mischievous than Althaus' use of a universally acknowledged half truth in his arguments against Luther's wholehearted commitment to traditional christological orthodoxy? According to Althaus, by urging that 'God is this man, and this man is the presence of God for us', Luther 'basically ...transcends the doctrine of the two natures as inadequate'. Althaus here seems to assume that, prior to Luther's time, the Church had regarded the formal statement of the two natures scheme as the summit of its witness to Jesus Christ. In fact, the two natures scheme expresses nothing more than an absolute minimum without which any christological statement is but a flimsy profession

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27. WA 47. 635, 16.

28. WA 39 II. 116, 7-13: 'Si diceretur: Persona divina suscepit hominem, id est, humanam personam, sequeretur, quod essent duae personae, sed hoc non est ferendum. Ergo recte dicitur: Verbum suscepit naturam humanam.'

of its author's subjective world-view. Only when it is convinced that its Lord is fully God, that he shares with the Father in the unknowable divine 'nature' ('Qualis Pater, talis Filius'), and that this same Lord has assumed an integral human nature ('quod non assumitur, non sanatur'), can the Church confidently go on to make its essentially doxological statements about the reconciliation between God and man wrought by Jesus Christ, and about the unsurpassable dignity and unbounded hope conferred on us men through the mystery of his person. Undoubtedly, in comparison with the Church's total witness to Jesus Christ in devotion, hymnody and theology (and this total witness is far from complete, even today), the two natures scheme 'says far too little and does not say what is decisive'; but who ever said that the two natures scheme is a perfect summary of the Church's witness to Christ? In fact, it expresses the sine qua non of the latter, and one does Luther an injustice by insinuating that he would bypass the need to attest the union of divine and human nature in the person of Jesus Christ in favour of an ungrounded, emotional testimony to the significance of Christ 'for me'. Apart from its basis in the trinitarian life of God and in the assumption of human nature by the person of the Son, Christology is Jesuolatry.

7. no dogma, no gospel

Luther's pinpointing of the gospel in the unconditional pro nobis of the work of Christ as actualised by the Holy Spirit through the proclamation of the Church would be unthinkable apart from his fullhearted endorsement of the classical trinitarian and christological dogmas. Sola fide does not move in a vacuum, but needs

a referent; and unless he was begotten of the Father in eternity and of the Virgin Mary in time, confession of Jesus as my Lord would be at best hero-worship, at worst idolatry. Luther's sermon on the festival of the Annunciation in 1534 makes clear his awareness that the gospel of full reconciliation with God through Christ stands and falls with the truthfulness or otherwise of the Incarnation of the Eternal Son of God in the man Jesus of Nazareth. Moreover, the Reformer is plainly of the opinion that the necessary minimum of doctrinal assertion concerning the Incarnation is appropriately expressed according to the terminology of the two natures scheme. Luther summons his congregation to ponder with thankfulness the implications of the Incarnation for mankind: our flesh and blood is currently seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and our nature is higher than that of the Angels.[1] In virtue of the sovereign condescension of the Son, he cannot be torn from us, for he is 'imbedded' in our nature.[2] In the Annunciation we celebrate the 'togetherness' of divine and human nature,[3] serenely confident that divinity and humanity cannot henceforth be separated from each other.[4]

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1. WA 37. 336, 25-30: 'Des solten wir uns ja trosten und unserm herr Gott da fur dancken, das er uns die ehr thut, das unser fleisch und blut sitzet jm himel zur rechten hand Gottes, und da ist Gott und mensch ein person. Wol dem, der solchs gleubt, und zu hertzen nimpt, das wir einer hohern natur sind denn kein Engel, welche doch die hohesten creatur sind.'

2. WA 37. 337, 7-9: 'Sondern er kan nicht von uns gescheiden werden, denn er sticket jnn unser natur, Denn er ist komen, er kan nu nicht wider weg.'

3. ibid., 18-20: 'Und heute ist der tag, da angangen ist unser heil, da Christus hat menschlich natur angenomen, Da ist Gottes und menschen natur bey samen.'

4. ibid., 24-26: 'Dis ist die historien, die wir heute

The very heart of the Reformer's piety and theology is to be found in his devotion to the Incarnate Lord, in his keen discernment of and impassioned witness to the fact that the Second Person of the Trinity himself deals with the estranged and hostile human race in, with and under the humanity of Jesus Christ. Luther's soteriologically inspired devotion to the humanity of Christ as the humanity of God is the living root of his theory of the omnipresence of Jesus' human nature and the nerve centre of his conception of the work of the Holy Spirit in uniting men and women to Christ through the gospel and the sacraments. Only in the assumed humanity of the Eternal Son is there peace between God and man, and only in the gospel and sacraments does the Father throw a bridge across the 'ugly wide ditch' that separates subsequent generations from the irreversible pastness of the Incarnate Life. Theodosius Harnack rightly pointed to the centrality of the humanity of Christ in the theology of the mature Reformer, urging that his understanding of this humanity was the basis on which Luther took his stand against his foes to the right and to the left.[5] But the humanity of Jesus can only play the indispensable salvific role which Luther accorded to it if it is indeed, as the Reformer confessed with the tradition of the Church, the assumed humanity of the Eternal Son.

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begehen der vereinigung gottes und menschen natur, das die zwo natur nicht konnen von ein ander gescheiden werden.'

5. Theodosius Harnack: Luthers Theologie II (repr. Munich, 1927), p. 104: 'Dennoch befriedigte ihn seine frühere Stellung zur Menschheit Christi später nicht

B. THE DEVELOPMENT AND APPLICATION OF LUTHER'S DOCTRINE OF THE OMNIPRESENCE OF CHRIST'S HUMAN NATURE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EUCHARISTIC DISPUTE

In the polemical writings on the eucharist from 1525 to 1528, we meet the doctrine of the omnipresence of Christ's human nature under three guises: in the work against Karlstadt and in the Eastertide sermons of 1526, it is presented as the clear teaching of the Epistle to the Ephesians, hence as biblical doctrine; in the work of 1527, it is unfolded as something involved in Christ's exaltation to the 'right hand of the Father', hence again as biblical doctrine; and in the Confession of 1528, it is set forth as a corollary of the hypostatic union, hence as an ingredient of orthodox Christology. Whichever route Luther took to arrive at the doctrine of the omnipresence of Christ's human nature, however, his teachings on this subject speak first and foremost of his understanding of the person of Christ, and especially of the role played by the Lord's humanity in the Church's appropriation of salvation. Now the Reformer taught and confessed the real presence long before he forcefully developed the notion of the omnipresence of Christ's human nature, and even when he unfolded this doctrine he invariably took pains to point out that he did so simply to refute his opponents' allegation that a real presence in the elements runs counter to the Lord's present exaltation to the 'right hand of the Father'. As will become clear in what follows, the basis of Luther's adherence to the real presence doctrine remained the clear teaching of the verba testamenti.

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vollständig, wo die letztere das eigentliche, vollbewusste und bleibende που στω seiner ganzen Theologie wird, von dem aus er auch die gegnerischen Lehren alle, die der Römischen, wie der Schwärmer und Sakramentierer, bekämpft und aus ihren Angeln hebt.'

But, notwithstanding his protest that the doctrine of Christ's omnipresence was applied for purely apologetic reasons - 'zum Überfluss'[1] -, and despite his reverent insistence that Almighty God may well have ways of achieving the illocal multilocality of the body of his Son quite apart from the mode suggested by Luther with the notion of an omnipresence of Christ's human nature consequent upon the hypostatic union,[2] the Reformer's choice of battleground is itself significant. William of Ockham and his school had conspicuously refrained from illustrating the possibility of the real presence by developing the idea of the interpenetration of the human by the divine nature of Christ (as had been done by Albert the Great[3]), preferring to ascribe the supernaturally wrought illocal multilocality of the Lord's body to an act of the potentia dei absoluta.[4] Luther likewise appeals to the almighty power of God through which he gloriously fulfils his promises,[5] but he is notoriously unable to rest content with this device. Another obvious way of pointing to the possibility of the multilocality of Christ's human nature would have been to develop the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, but, as far as the present writer is aware, only once in all of his writings on the Lord's Supper does the Reformer attribute the achievement of the real presence

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1. WA 23. 129, 31.

2. WA 23. 153, 15-20. cf. also WA 26. 413, 20-23.

3. Hilgenfeld: op.cit., pp. 341-343.

4. op.cit., pp. 335, 341.

5. WA 23. 117, 26-28; 119, 1-8.

to the Holy Spirit, and even in this solitary instance the Third Person of the Trinity features merely alongside and after the 'Word'.[6] However much we may highlight the secondary, apologetic role of the doctrine of Christ's omnipresence in Luther's doctrine of the real presence, his predilection for focussing on precisely this area of theological thinking tells us much about the Reformer's deepest concerns. As early as 1520 there is a hint that, if pressed, Luther will expound the possibility of the real presence in christological terms: if iron and fire can be so thoroughly mixed in red-hot iron that each part of the latter is both iron and fire, how much more feasible such a coexistence would be in the case of the 'corpus gloriosum Christi' and the element of bread.[7] Towards the end of the work of 1527, the Reformer insisted that the eucharist is rightly to be regarded, not as the Christians' Supper, but as the Lord's Supper in the fullest sense: not only did Jesus Christ institute the Holy Supper, he is also its principal minister, himself being 'cook, waiter, food and drink'.[8] Luther was predisposed to expound the doctrine of the real presence in the context of his understanding of the person of Christ, rather than take another route in defence of the teaching of the Bible and the Church. In this section we shall, in chronological sequence, outline and assess the Reformer's development and application of the doctrine of the omnipresence of Christ's human nature from 1525 to 1528.

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6. WA 19. 491, 2.

7. WA 6. 510, 5-8.

8. WA 23. 271, 8-11.

1. Widder die himmlischen Propheten (1525)

Towards the close of the eucharistic Part Two of this treatise, Karlstadt's somewhat crude polemic obliges Luther to deal with the mode of the real presence. Significantly, the Reformer chooses to take as his starting-point the presence of the Son of God in the assumed humanity of Jesus. Luther relates Karlstadt's objection that the real presence would involve a change of place on the part of the exalted Christ, who would be obliged to quit heaven in order to creep into the elements.[1] The Reformer denies any such implication of the real presence, urging that, if Karlstadt's objection to the eucharistic mystery holds good, he must logically also suppose that the Eternal Son experienced local motion in being humanly born of the Virgin. Luther echoes Aquinas' 'Verbum supernum prodiens / Nec Patris linquens dexteram':

> 'Denn wir sagen nicht, das er vom hymel kome odder lasse seyne stett ledig, Sonst müste dieser geyst auch sagen, das Gottes son, da er ynn seyner mutter leybe mensch ward, auch hette den hymel gelassen, Und alles das Carlstad spottet auff den leyb ym Sacrament, mus er auch spotten auff die Gottheyt Christi ym fleysch, wie er auch thun wird mit der zeyt.' (2)

The Reformer recalls that S. Stephen saw Jesus at the right hand of the Father, and that this vision of the heavenly Christ from this earth did not necessitate any change of place on the part of the exalted Lord. Likewise, no local travel from heaven to earth was required for S. Paul to have immediate experience of Christ on the Damascus road.[3] The view that Christ, whether in

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1. WA 18. 206, 1-9.

2. ibid., 10-14.

3. ibid., 14-17.

his Incarnation in first century Palestine or in his continuing Incarnation on the altar, is involved in local motion is a 'childish idea'.[4] Luther is searching for a conceptual scheme which will enable him to express a mode of presence through which Jesus Christ is simultaneously present both in heaven at the right hand of the Father and on earth, supremely in the Sacrament of the Altar. In a sermon of March 1521 the Reformer had already invoked Eph. 4:10b to proclaim that 'Christ' (and the context makes it plain that this includes not only the divine, but also the human nature) is, as a result of his exaltation, 'everywhere'.[5] Now he appeals to Eph. 1:23b in instructing Karlstadt that 'Christ' is in all places and fills all things. The 'mad spirit':

> 'Verstehet auch nicht Christus reich, wie er ist an allen orten, und wie Paulus spricht, erfüllet alles Ephe. 1.' (6)

Strikingly, Luther immediately subjoins a double qualifier to this, his first formulation of the doctrine of the omnipresence of Christ's humanity in the context of the real presence. First, he cautions against inquisitive prying into the modality of the eucharistic presence, and, secondly, he reiterates his untiring insistence that the basis of this article of faith is the clear Word of God.[7]

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4. ibid., 17-18: 'Summa, der tolle geyst gehet mit den kinder gedancken umb, alls fare Christus auff und nydder.'

5. WA 9. 631, 26-28: 'Dan darumb ist er weck gen hymel gefaren "ut impleret omnia". Do er hie was, konth er nicht an allen Orten gesein, do must er essen, trincken, itzunth hie lerhen, itzund dort. Aber nun ist er uberal.'

6. WA 18. 206, 18-20

7. ibid., 20-22: 'Uns ist nicht befolhen zu forschen,

The infant doctrine of ubiquity crops us again several pages later, as the Reformer replies to Karlstadt's use of Mt. 24:23 ('Then if anyone says to you "Lo, here is the Christ!" or "There he is!" do not believe it.') against a real presence of the body and blood in the Sacrament. A glance at the verses immediately preceding the Lucan parallel to this verse (Lk. 17:23; 20-21) is sufficient to convince Luther of the implausibility of Karlstadt's appeal to Mt. 24:23 against the real presence. For, according to S. Luke, Jesus warns against identifying the kingdom of God with any specific external phenomena, stressing instead the hiddenness of the kingdom 'which is within you'. Comparison of the First and the Third Evangelists leads Luther to propose that the 'Christ' of Mt. 24:23 must be taken in the broad sense of the totus Christus to mean not simply the person of Christ, but his whole kingdom. Much more is involved in the latter than in the 'body and blood' specified in the institution narratives. Mt. 24:23 therefore cannot have anything to do with the hidden presence of the body and blood in the Sacrament.[8] From the fact that the kingdom of Christ is not necessarily bound to specific external places, times, persons and works, we are not to

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wie es zugehe, das unser brod Christus leyb wird und sey, Gottes wort ist da, das sagts, da bleyben wir bey und gleubens.'

8. WA 18. 211, 6-14: 'Es ist gar viel eyn anders, wenn ich rede von Christo und von Christus leyb und blut, Denn da der Euangelist spricht "Hie odder da ist Christus" und der gleichen, ist von dem gantzen Christo, das ist von dem reich Christi geredt, wie das mit gewalt erzwingt der text Luce 17., da er spricht: "Das reich Gottes kompt nicht mit eusserlichen geberden, Man wird auch nicht sagen, sihe hie, sihe da ists", Wilchs die andern Euangelisten also ausreden: Hie odder da ist Christus, Das ist

conclude that Christ himself is nowhere. On the contrary, as Eph. 1:23b teaches, 'he is everywhere and fills all things', but in such a way that he is not bound to any particular place.[9] The Reformer argues that Mt. 24: 23 is appropriately to be understood of an alleged unevangelical restriction of Christ's saving presence to certain places, times and persons on the part of the Roman Church.[10] Such forcing of the transcendent Christ into a local straitjacket is, however, to be distinguished from the evangelical belief in the hidden presence of the body of Christ in the Sacrament. According to this conception, the exalted Christ, who is present everywhere, is free to impart his body and blood through bread and wine wherever he wills:

> 'Aber wyr leren nicht, das Christus leyb und blut sichtbarlich ynn eusserlichen stetten sey, sondern verborgen ym Sacrament, So sagen wir auch nicht, das er müsse und solle an sonderlichen orten und nicht an allen frey seyn, sondern er sampt dem brod und weyn müge und solle frey seyn an allen orten, stetten, zeyten, personen.' (11)

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alles so viel gesagt, Christus reich steht nicht ynn eusserlichen dingen, stetten, zeytten, personen, wercken, sondern wie er daselbst sagt "Das reich Gottes ist ynnwendig ynn euch".'

9. ibid., 14-18: 'Daraus folget nicht, das Christus nyrgent sey, Sondern das er allenthalben sey und alles erfulle, Ephe. 1. Er ist aber an keynen ort gepunden sonderlich, das er da müuste seyn und sonst nyrgent, wie die thun, die unser gewissen nicht frey lassen, sondern an sonderliche stette, werck und personen binden.'

10. WA 18. 212, 7-11: 'Darumb mus dieser spruch "Hie und da" verstanden werden Erstlich von leyblichen, eusserlichen stetten und dingen, Zum andern von solchen leyblichen stetten, die ynn sonderheyt fur andern ausgezogen und nöttig zur seligkeyt gemacht werden durch falsche propheten, das nicht alle stette frey bleyben, wie bis her mit uns unter dem Bapstum gehandelt ist.'

11. ibid., 11-16.

Luther's teaching here would seem to be that the God-man is omnipresent according to both his natures, albeit in such a way that he remains transcendent of while also immanent in the creaturely order. On the basis of this omnipresence, Christ is free to be present among his people in a variety of modes, for example, through the preaching of the Gospel and through the bodily presence in the eucharist.[12]

2. Sermon von dem Sacrament des leibs und bluts Christi, widder die Schwarmgeister (1526)

The incipient eucharistic controversy obliges the Reformer to forgo his usual preference for concentrating on the proper spiritual use of the Sacrament[1] in favour of a wholehearted defence of the Obiectum fidei,[2] namely the real presence itself. Luther proclaims to his congregation his firm belief that the verba testamenti unambiguously teach the real presence: 'Wenn solche wort nicht klar sind, weis ich nicht, wie man deutsch reden sol.'[3] A mere child can have no doubt that the eucharistic words intend to propound the real presence,[4] and, since the meaning of the words is crystal clear, the Reformer proposes to 'shut his eyes and switch off his senses',[5] obediently clinging to the Word in faith. In principle, then, the issue is settled:

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12. ibid., 17-26.

1. WA 19. 482, 18-20: 482, 25-483, 14.

2. WA 19. 482, 16-18; 20-25.

3. WA 19. 485, 13; cf. ibid., 12-28.

4. ibid., 17.

5. ibid., 24-25.

> 'wenn ich die wort habe, wil ich nicht weiter sehen noch gedencken. Was er sagt, das wil ich halten.' (6)

Whatever arguments Luther will advance during this Sermon, his central concern is to inculcate in his congregation reverence for the clear Word of God, in which they are to abide 'like a child in its cradle':

> 'Darumb sey das die Summa, sihe nur, das du auff Gottes wort acht habest und darynn bleibest wie eyn kind yn der wiegen.' (7)

But Luther has ascended the pulpit this Eastertide not only to reiterate, but also to defend biblical truth. His brief is to rebut the charge that the real presence is 'unfitting'.[8] The Reformer notes that 'es koste mühe'[9] to interpret the eucharistic words in a non-literal sense, and at the same time he is aware of the offence to natural reason involved in the statement 'This is my body'. For:

> 'Wir wissen ja, was Christus leib ist, nemlich von Maria geporen, der gelidden hat, gestorben und aufferstanden ist.' (10)

For the element of bread to <u>be</u> the actual body of Christ we must suppose that the latter is miraculously extended throughout the world, and this, allege the opponents of the real presence doctrine, is 'an unseemly thing':

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6. <u>ibid</u>., 8-10.

7. <u>WA</u> 19. 498, 11-12.

8. <u>WA</u> 19. 486, 11-12: 'Zum ersten sagen sie, Es schicke sich nicht, das Christus leib und blut sol im brod und wein sein.'

9. <u>WA</u> 19. 483, 27f.

10. <u>WA</u> 19. 485, 27-28.

> 'solt Christus ym brod und wein sein und so weit ausgebreitet werden ynn der welt und ein iglicher solt den Christum essen, das were ein ungeschickt ding.' (11)

Characteristically, Luther begins his reply to the charge of 'unseemliness' by fastening on the parallel between God's presence in the humanity of Jesus and Christ's presence in the elements. If the latter is 'unfitting', the same must surely be said of the condescension in which the Illimitable stooped to self-limitation and of the humility in which the Lord of glory suffered crucifixion at the hands of wicked men:

> 'Auffs erste mochte ich gerade so viel sagen: Es reimet sich nicht, das Gott herab solt von himel steigen und sich geben ynn mutter leib, das der da alle welt speiset, erhelt und beschleust, lesset sich speisen und beschliessen von der Jungfrawen. Item das Christus, ein konig der ehren, dem alle Engel mussen zu fussen fallen und alle creaturn fur yhm zittern, sich so herunter wirffet unter alle menschen und soll sich lassen ans creutz hencken fur einen allerschendlichsten ubelthetter, darzu von den ergisten, verzweiffelsten menschen. So wolte ich auch daraus schliessen, Gott were nicht mensch worden, odder der gecreutzigte Christus were nicht Gott.' (12)

As the Reformer reports their views, not only do his unnamed opponents deem the real presence incongruous with Christ's dignity in his state of glory, but they also consider it wholly unfitting that, in order to achieve a real presence in the Sacrament, Almighty God should be obliged to perform a stupendous miracle without parallel in the rest of the economy of salvation:

> 'So sagen sie, es schicke sich nicht, das Gott ynn dem Sacrament so viel wunderwerck sol thun, als die er sonst nirgent thut. Denn das wir glewben,

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11. WA 19. 484, 28-30.

12. WA 19. 486, 14-22.

> das der einige leib Christi an hundert tausent enden sey, so viel brod gebrochen wird, und das die grossen beine da sollen verborgen sein, das sie niemand sihet noch fulet, Das halten sie fur ungeschickt ding, machen grosse wunder darvon.' (13)

Luther is by no means disposed to minimise the miracle of the real presence:

> 'Denn so bald Christus spricht "Das ist mein leib", so ist sein leib da durchs wort und krafft des heiligen geiste.' (14)

Even so, his tactic in this Sermon is to bring the real presence out of undue isolation among the mighty works of God in creation and redemption. A pulpit survey of the marvellous works of the Creator in the natural order and of the various modes of presence which he has ordained for the purpose of inter-human and also divine-human communication seeks to strip away from the real presence the quality of the exceptional. The Reformer's argument is cumulative in kind, his analogies becoming increasingly apposite as he suggests that, in comparison with various natural phenomena, the real presence is inherently feasible, while, in comparison with a central supernatural mystery of the faith, it seems to be almost a minor miracle of God.

Luther informs his congregation that, if only they will take the trouble to reflect carefully on the creatures of God, they will find a host of miracles as great as, if not greater than, the real presence.[15] The first example offered is the human soul, simultaneously pre-

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13. ibid., 22-27.

14. WA 19. 491, 1-2.

15. WA 19. 487, 14-16: 'Denn wenn ich solt und kunde die Creaturen ausmessen und mit worten ausstreichen, soltestu eben so grosse, ja noch grossere wunder darinne sehen als ynn diesem Sacrament.'

sent in each single part of the body.[16] If the soul can enjoy such a presence throughout the body, ought not Christ to be able to be equally present at all places in the Sacrament?[17] The Reformer's second, agrarian image directs attention to the creative power of God: how can we explain the phenomenon of a single wheat plant, which grows from a single seed to bear, in its ear, a host of replicas of itself?[18] Perhaps Luther thought up his third analogy as he looked at the congregation in the nave before him. With his two eyes he takes in all the heads in his field of vision, and he can encompass the same phenomenon with just one eye. Likewise one eye can focus on a thousand wheat plants, while a thousand eyes can focus on a single wheat plant.[19] The Reformer builds up to his clinching apologetic argument by dwelling on the act of speaking itself. The preacher has but a weak voice, a mere transitory breath of wind, but this voice can be imparted whole and undivided to hundreds or even thousands of listeners. If we were not so accustomed to this multi-presence of the human voice, which is not diminished by being shared among many hearers, we should undoubtedly regard it as a miracle:

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16. ibid., 16-19.

17. ibid., 19-21: 'Kan nu eine seele ugleich ynn allen geliedern sein, wilchs ich nicht w s wie es zugehet, Solt denn Christus das nicht vermügen, s er zu gleich an allen orten ym Sacrament were.'

18. WA 19. 488, 9-12: 'Sihe an ein l auff dem felde und sage mir, wie gehet das zu, das d halm aus der erden wechst aus einem einigen korn und viel körnlin auff der ehrn tregt und einem iglicher eine gestalt gibt. Es sind ynn einem körnlin viel viel wunderwerck, der sie keines warnemen noch achten.'

19. ibid., 12-16: 'Item wie gehet das zu: Ich habe nur

> 'Ich habe eine kleine stim, so sind da etlich hundert oder tausent oren, noch fasset ein iglich or die gantze und vollkommene stim. Die teile ich nicht also aus, das ihe ein or ein stuck davon hat, sondern ein iglichs hat sie gar. Solchs sehen sie und haltens fur kein wunder, ja, wenn wirs nihe gesehen hetten, were es das groste wunderwerck.' (20)

The previous analogies were designed to demonstrate that there is nothing greatly exceptional about the real presence, but, with the example of the human voice which can be wholly and undividedly present to many ears, Luther feels that he has laid his finger on something even more remarkable than the illocal multilocality of Christ's body. The effectual multipresence of the human voice is, after all, something accomplished through a purely natural organ, while the multipresence of Christ's body is predicated of a 'glorified', supernaturally enhanced substance.[21] Having thus laid the foundation for a comparison of the real presence with God's mode of saving activity through the Word, the Reformer goes on to ponder the presence of the whole and undivided person of Jesus in the heart of each believer, a presence which Luther professes to find more miraculous than his presence in bread and wine. In the event of preaching,

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zwei augen und fasse doch alle heubte ynn meine augen auff ein mal, ja ich kans gleich so wol mit einem auge thun als mit beiden. Also kan ein auge auff tausent körnlin zielen, und widderumb auff ein körnlin konnen tausent zielen.'

20. ibid., 22-25.

21. WA 19. 488, 26-489, 8: 'Kan nu das meine stim zuwegen bringen, das sie alle oren fullet und ein iglicher so viel darvon nimpt als der ander und das wort sich so weit austeilet: Solt es Christus nicht viel mehr können thun mit seinem leib? Wie viel ein erleuchter ding ists umb einen verklerten leib denn umb die leibliche stim! Dergleichen findestu viel mehr wunder ynn den Creaturn, das wer eine creatur recht ansihet, der wird sich diesen artickel nichts lassen yrren.'

Christ is formed in the hearts of believers and the presence of the indwelling Christ is not local in kind, as when a man sits on a chair, but is identical with the supernatural mode of presence according to which our Lord is enthroned at the right hand of the Father:

> 'Item ich predige das Euangelion von Christo und mit der leiblichen stim bringe ich dir Christum ins hertz, das du ihn inn dich bildest. Wenn du nu recht glewbist, das dein hertz das wort fasset und die stim drinne hafftet, so sage mir, was hastu im hertzen? Da mustu sagen, du habest den warhafftigen Christum, nicht dass er also darin sitze, als einer auff einem stul sitzet, sondern wie er ist zur rechten des Vaters. Wie das zugehet, kanstu nicht wissen, dein hertz füllet ihn aber wol, das er gewislich da ist, durch die erfarung des glaubens.' (22)

If Christ thus distributes his whole and undivided self without diminution to many through the Word, what is so incongrous about his distributing himself through the medium of bread?[23] The presence of the whole Christ in the heart through faith in the Word,[24] as a result of which the believer is already truly in heaven,[25] strikes Luther as a far greater miracle than the real presence in the elements. After all, the 'heart is much more subtle than the bread'.[26] The 'heart, spirit and soul' of man offer much more resistance to the presence of God than does a 'bodily thing', which is much more readily 'open' to the Spirit.[27]

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22. WA 19. 489, 9-16. cf. ibid., 24-30.

23. ibid., 16-23. 24. WA 19. 490, 2-5.

25. WA 19. 489, 30-490, 2.

26. WA 19. 490, 13: 'Ist nicht das hertz viel subtiler denn das brod?'

27. WA 19. 493, 22-24: 'Kan er ins hertz und geist reissen und inn der seele wonen, so kan ihm viel geringer weise das leiblich ding offen stehen, sintemal das hertz viel subtiler ist.'

The multipresence of Christ in his people and in the eucharistic elements is, according to the Reformer, a matter of actualising an implicit omnipresence which he enjoys as the God-man, according to both his natures. Luther expresses his belief in the real perichoresis of the human by the divine nature of Christ, instructing his congregation that precisely the man Jesus is the ubiquitous and omnipotent Lord of all things:

> 'Ist nicht allein nach der Gottheit sondern auch nach der menscheit ein Herr aller ding, hat alles in der hand und ist uberal gegenwertig.' (28)

This ubiquity of the Lord's human nature is propounded as the teaching of S. Paul in Eph. 4:10b:

> 'Item wir gleuben, das Jhesus Christus nach der menscheit sey gesetzt uber alle creaturen und alle ding erfulle, wie Paulus sagt Ephe. 4.' (29)

The Reformer cites the vision of the dying S. Stephen as indicative of the mode of presence enjoyed by the exalted Lord: the protomartyr did not need to strain his eyes to espy a remote Jesus located above the starry firmament, for 'Er ist umb uns und ynn uns an allen orten'.[30] Christ's presence in the world is such that all things are immediately present to him and he is closer to the creature than is any creature to another:

> 'Darumb hat er nu alle ding fur augen, mehr denn ich habe, ist uns neher denn keine creatur der andern.' (31)

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28. WA 19. 490, 18-20.

29. WA 19. 491, 17-18.

30. ibid., 22-25.

31. WA 19. 492, 12-13.

One of Luther's metaphors to express the omnipresence of Christ seems so to stress his immanence in the created order as to lay open the Reformer to the charge of pantheism:

> 'Himel und erde ist sein sack; wie das korn den sack fullet, so fullet er alle ding.' (32)

Two elements of Luther's teaching in this Sermon demonstrate that his conception of the omnipresence of Christ's human nature is much more refined than any sentimental pantheism: the ubiquitous humanity transcends the created order as much as it is immanent within it, and the universally available presence of the exalted Christ is apprehensible only through the medium of the dominically instituted means of grace. Christ's being exalted to the right hand of the Father should not lead us to suppose that he climbed into heaven as one climbs up a ladder into a house. Rather, Jesus exchanged one mode of presence for another, according to which he is as much 'above' and 'outside' as he is 'within' all creatures. The Ascension was simply an external sign of the transition from one mode of presence to another:

> 'Davon verstehen yhene nichts, sprechen auch, Er sitze zur rechten Gottes; was es aber ist, Christum gen hymel faren und sitzen, wissen sie nicht. Es gehet nicht also zu, wie du auf steigest auff einer leitern yns haus, sondern das ists, das er uber alle creaturen und yn allen und ausser allen creaturn ist.' (33)

The dialectic of 'above' and 'outside' with 'within' is reflected in the fact that, although the exalted Christ is everywhere present, his gracious presence cannot be apprehended according to the random whim of sinful man.

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32. WA 19. 493, 9-10.

33. WA 19. 491, 25-29.

He is undoubtedly present in stone, fire, water and rope, but he does not will us to plunge into fire or water or to hang ourselves with rope in order to gain fellowship with him. Rather, his implicit universal presence becomes actual for us when we seek him in his Word:

> 'Denn wie wol er uberal ist in allen creaturen und ich mochte ihn im stein, im fewr, im wasser odder auch im strick finden, wie er denn gewislich da ist, will er doch nicht, das ich ihn da suche on das wort und mich ins fewr odder wasser werffe odder an strick henge. Uberal ist er, er will aber nicht, das du uberal nach ihm tappest, sondern wo das wort ist, da tappe nach, so ergreiffestu ihn recht. Sonst versuchstu Gott und richtest abgotterey an. Darumb hat er uns eine gewisse weise gestellet, wie und wo man ihn suchen und finden sol, nemlich das Wort.' (34)

Luther's overwhelming pastoral concern shines through his rhetorical question, What would become of one if Christ were not present in his Word as one faces 'dungeon, martyrdom and death'? If we can believe in the mode of Christ's presence in the Word, what is to prevent our trusting him to be bodily present, as he promised, in the bread and wine?[35] The Reformer here clearly conceives of

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34. WA 19. 492, 19-26.

35. WA 19. 492, 29-493, 9: 'Wenn Christus nicht bei mir were im kerker, marter und tod, wo wolt ich bleiben? Er ist gegenwertig da mit dem wort, wie wol nicht also wie hie ym Sacrament, da er sein leib und blut mit dem wort anbindet ym brod und wein auch leiblich zu entpfahen. Wenn wir solchs glewben, ist das auch leicht zu fassen und glewben.' Luther here makes a clear distinction between the indwelling of the God-man through the Word in the faithful and the eucharistic gift, which is specifically of the body and blood of Christ. A few pages later, however, the Reformer insists that the Lord is also present elsewhere (viz., in his indwelling of the faithful through the Word) in his body and blood: 'Drumb

Word and Sacrament as the means through which God realises the indispensable saving presence of Jesus Christ for the Church. The intimate connection between the person and work of Christ and the presence of that person along with the fruits of his work in the means of grace is the true centre of Luther's theology, and it is in terms of this pastoral and evangelical emphasis that we must understand his doctrine of the ubiquity of the human nature of the Son of God.

3. Dass diese Worte Christi 'Das ist mein Leib etc.' noch feste stehen, wider die Schwärmgeister (1527)

After claiming victory over his Swiss interlocutors on the strength of the clear text of Scripture,[1] Luther announces his willingness, chiefly in order to stiffen the resolve of his own adherents, to demonstrate that the simultaneous presence of Jesus' body and blood in heaven and on the Church's altars is not at variance with Scripture or the articles of faith:

> 'Doch umb der unser willen zu stercken, wil ich weiter handeln, wie der schwermer grund und ursachen nichts sind und zum uberflus beweisen, das

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lasse sie faren und uns bey den worten bleiben, wie sie lauten, Das ym brod der leib Christi und ym wein warhafftig sein blut sey. Nicht das er sonst nicht auch anders wo mit seinem leib und blut sey. Denn er ist gantz mit fleisch und blut ynn der glewbigen hertzen' (WA 19. 498, 30-499, 35). Be it noted that Luther can unaffectedly avail himself of explicitly eucharistic language to describe the indwelling of Christ in the faithful, while he can also conceive the proprium of the Sacrament of the Altar as the impartation of 'Christ' himself rather than of his 'body and blood' through the elements. There are two strains in Luther's conception of the eucharistic gift, which it is impossible perfectly to harmonise.

1. WA 23. 129, 20-30.

> nicht widder die schrifft noch artickel des glaubens sey, das Christus leib zugleich ym hymel und ym abendmal sey.' (2)

In his apology for the coherence of the real presence with the other articles of faith, the Reformer is obliged to defend this doctrine against two principal charges, first, that the presence of the sacred body and blood in the Holy Supper is impossible in view of the local presence of our Lord's glorified humanity in heaven, and, secondly, that the bodily eating of Christ's flesh in the eucharist can, according to Jn. 6:63, bring no spiritual benefit to the communicant:

> 'das Christus gen hymel gefaren und sitzet zur rechten hand Gotts ynn seinen ehren. Item, Das fleisch essen kein nütz sey, Johann. vi "Fleisch ist kein nütz".' (3)

Luther's reply to the first of these objections will occupy us in this section. As is well known, he countered the Swiss Reformers' appeal to the local presence of Christ's humanity in heaven by arguing that the exaltation of the man Jesus to the 'right hand of the Father' in fact entails his full release from any local mode of presence and his translation, precisely as a man, to a mode of omnipresence which shares fully in Almighty God's transcendence of and immanence in the created order. Nevertheless, the Reformer was careful to avoid advancing his distinctive theory of the ubiquity of Christ's humanity as the eternally valid and unimpeachable answer to the problem of the multipresence of the sacred body and blood. After outlining the nature of God's presence in the world (in which, according to the theory of ubiquity,

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2. ibid., 30-33.

3. WA 23. 115, 21-23.

the man Jesus is believed to participate), the Reformer urges that God may well employ yet another mode of presence to effect the multipresence of the body of his Son.[4] After all, the simultaneous presence of Christ's body in heaven and on the altar is a small affair in comparison with the incomprehensible miracle of God's sovereign presence in the whole created order.[5] Luther does not shrink from a simple appeal to the almighty power of God in his witness to the possibility of the real presence. His opponents are humorously but scornfully depicted as burglars who have broken into heaven armed with lantern and skeleton key at the dead of midnight, 'when God was sound asleep', breaking open the chests which contain the powers of God, and weighing the latter on a set of golden scales, only to find that there is in fact no divine power that could effect the simultaneous presence of a body in heaven and on the altar.[6] Against

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4. WA 23. 137, 31-139, 2: 'Hat er nu die weise funden, das sein eigen göttlich wesen kan gantz und gar ynn allen creaturn und ynn einer iglichen besondern sein, tieffer, ynnerlicher, gegenwertiger denn die creatur yhr selbs ist, und doch widderumb nirgent und ynn keiner mag und kan umbfangen sein, das er wol alle ding umbfehet und drynnen ist, Aber keines yhn umbfehet und ynn yhm ist, solt der selbige nicht auch etwa eine weise wissen, wie sein leib an vielen orten zu gleich gantz und gar were und doch derselbigen keines were, da er ist?'

5. WA 23. 137, 3-5: 'Es ist geringe gegen diesem stuck, das Christus leib und blut zu gleich ym hymel und abendmal ist.'

6. WA 23. 119, 1-8: 'Wir stiegen ein mal heymlich ynn den hymel eben zur mitternach, da Gott am tieffsten schlieff, wir hatten eine laterne und einen dietrich mit uns, brachen yhm ynn das aller heymlichst kemerlin und schlossen alle kasten und laden auff, da seine gewalt ynnen lag. Da namen wir eine gold wage, das wirs ja gewis treffen und gnaw abwegeten, Wir funden aber keine gewalt, die das vermocht, das ein leib zu gleich ym hymel und ym abendmal sein kündte.'

any such rationalistic scrutiny of the divine prerogatives, the Reformer unashamedly invokes God's power to keep his word:

> 'Was Gott sagt, das kan er thun, Ro. iiii. Und ist kein wort fur Gott unmuglich, Luce i. Weil er denn hie sagt: "Das ist mein leib", so kan ers werlich thun und thuts.' (7)

Moreover, at the close of his section on the ubiquity of Christ, Luther takes pains to point out that his teaching that the man Jesus shares in the divine omnipresence of the Father is meant simply to point to just one feasible mode according to which the multipresence of the sacred body and blood might be realised. With the theory of ubiquity, the Reformer does not intend to subject the power of God to mathematical measurement, but simply to outline one way in which Almighty God may choose to fulfil his word of promise:

> 'Eben der selbige artickel beschirmet und erhelt unsern verstand ym abendmal, wie wir gehöret haben. Nicht das ich hiemit Gotts gewalt also wolte, wie die schwermer thun, mit ellen messen und umbspannen, als hette er nicht auch wol mehr weise denn ich itzt beweiset habe, einen leib an viel orten zu halten (Denn ich gleube seinen worten, das er mehr thun kan denn alle Engel mügen begreiffen) Sondern habe solcher weise eine angezeigt, den schwermern das maul zustopffen und unsern glauben zuverantworten.' (8)

Luther begins his eloquent account of God's presence in the world,[9] which will flower in his confession of the

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7. WA 23. 117, 26-28.

8. WA 23. 153, 14-20. n.b. Luther's insistence in the same writing that, 'Wie aber das zu gehe odder wie er ym brod sey, wissen wir nicht, sollens auch nicht wissen. Gotts wort sollen wir gleuben und yhm nicht weise noch mas setzen' (WA 23. 87, 32-34).

9. Heinrich Bornkamm notes that Luther's reply to the Swiss objection based on the dextera Dei led to 'einigen

ubiquity of Christ's humanity, by enquiring into the Swiss understanding of the 'right hand of God'. With their view that Christ's exaltation to this state involves a local presence far removed from this world, the Reformer fancies that his opponents entertain a ludicrously childish literal conception of artistic representations of heaven:

> 'Wenn wir sie nu hie fragen was sie Gottes rechte hand heissen, da Christus sitzt, acht ich, sie werden uns daher schwermen, wie man den kindern pflegt fur zu bilden einen gauckel hymel, darynn ein gülden stuel stehe und Christus neben dem vater sitze ynn einer kor kappen und gülden krone, gleich wie es die maler malen.' (10)

Luther now makes a logical leap which makes perfect sense in terms of his own, but not of his opponents' Christology. After lamenting the 'kindische fleischliche gedancken'[11] concerning the right hand of God which he deems the root of the Swiss denial of the real presence, the Reformer declares that the 'Schwärmer' must, if consistent, conceive of God himself as existing locally in heaven, since 'apart from Christ there is no God, and where he is there is the Godhead wholly and completely':

> 'Aus welchen kindischen gedancken mus denn weiter folgen, Das sie auch Gott selber an einen ort ym hymel auff den selbigen gülden stuel binden, weil ausser Christo kein Gott ist, Und wo Christus ist, da ist die Gottheit ganz und gar, wie Paulus sagt: "Es wonet ynn yhm die ganze Gottheit leibhafftig.' (12)

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der grossartigsten sprachlichen Ausbrüche, die wir von ihm haben' (Martin Luther in der Mitte seines Lebens, p. 471).

10. WA 23. 131, 9-13.

11. ibid., 14.

12. ibid., 18-22.

Then follows the reductio ad absurdum: since 'in him we live and move and have our being', we ourselves must also be bound to that golden chair in heaven, perhaps in the role of the fleas and lice in the divine cape:

> 'Aus dem wil noch weiter folgen, Das auch wir und alle creatur ynn dem selbigen stuel Gotts sitzen, villeicht wie die leuse und flöhe ynn seiner korkappen, weil Paulus sagt Act. xvij. "Wir sind seiner art, Und ynn yhm leben, weben und sind wir.' (13)

After this typical injection of satirical humour into theological debate, Luther turns his mind to the subject of the nature of divine presence in the world, which he will discuss under the rubric of the 'right hand of God'.

The reader of these pages may be perplexed by the fact that, in his account of the nature of divine presence in the created order, the Reformer alternates between ascribing this presence to 'God' and to the 'right hand of God'. This terminological variation should occasion no confusion, however, since Luther uses the two expressions synonymously. God's 'arm, hand, essence, countenance, Spirit and wisdom' are all one thing, since the simple essence of Godhead is the sole reality that exists outside the order of creaturely being. What before the creation was simply the 'essence of God' is now, in relation to that creation, his 'power and hand':

> 'Wir wissen aber, das gotts gewalt, arm, hand, wesen, angesicht, geist, weisheit sc. alles ein ding sey, Denn ausser der creatur ist nichts denn die einige einfeltige Gottheit selbs. Und ist on zweiffel also fur der creatur schöpffung Gotts gewalt und hand Gotts wesen selbs gewesen, so wird sie noch der creatur schepffung nicht etwas anders worden sein.' (14)

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13. ibid., 24-27.

14. WA 23. 139, 12-17.

The Reformer challenges his opponents' alleged local understanding of the 'right hand of God', charging that the latter is not a particular place, but rather the almighty power of God, which is at once everywhere and nowhere:

> 'Die schrifft aber leret uns, das Gotts rechte hand nicht sey ein sonderlicher ort, da ein leib solle odder müge sein, als auff eym gülden stuel, Sondern sey die almechtige gewalt Gotts, welche zu gleich nirgent sein kan und doch an allen orten sein mus.' (15)

The dialectic of 'everywhere' and 'nowhere' is the key to a proper understanding of Luther's conception of the omnipresence of God and Christ. God's almighty power or right hand (which is purely and simply identical with himself[16]) can be present 'nowhere' because (local) presence would involve the physical circumscription and limitation of something intrinsically 'outside and above' creaturely reality:

> 'Nirgent kan sie an einigem ort sein, spreche ich. Denn wo sie yrgent an etlichem ort were, müste sie daselbs begreifflich und beschlossen sein, wie alles das ienige, so an einem ort ist, mus an dem selbigen ort beschlossen und abgemessen sein, also das es die weil an keinem ort sein kan. Die Göttliche gewalt aber mag und kan nicht also beschlossen und abgemessen sein, Denn sie ist unbegreifflich und unmeslich, ausser und uber alles, das da ist und sein kan.' (17)

Should 'presence' be understood as no more than what Luther in the following year will call <u>esse circumscriptive</u>, then it is more appropriate to deny God's presence

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15. <u>WA</u> 23. 133, 19-22.

16. <u>WA</u> 23. 139, 17-19: 'Er macht ja nichts denn durch sein wort, Gene. 1. Johan. 1. das ist seine gewalt. Und seine gewalt ist nicht ein beyl, axt, segen odder feylen, dadurch er wircke, sondern er selbs.'

17. <u>WA</u> 23. 133, 22-28.

in the created order than to affirm it. Conversely, if presence is understood as something more than an esse circumscriptive, it is appropriate to affirm God's presence in the created order. After all, Almighty God did not delegate the work of creation to any angel or other functionary, but himself brought all things out of nothing. Accordingly, as Creator, he must be present in the whole created order, down to the 'humblest tree-leaf':

> 'Widderumb mus sie an allen orten wesentlich und gegenwertig sein, auch ynn dem geringsten bawmblatt. Ursach ist die: Denn Gott ists, der alle ding schafft, wirckt und enthellt durch seine allmechtige gewalt und rechte hand, wie unser glaube bekennet. Denn er schickt keine amptleut odder Engel aus, wenn er etwas schaffet odder erhellt, sondern solchs alles ist seiner Göttlichen gewalt selbs eigen werck. Sol ers aber schaffen und erhalten, so mus er daselbst sein und seine creatur so wol ym aller ynnwendigsten als ym aller auswendigsten machen und erhalten.' (18)

The Reformer breaks into pulpit doxology as he explains that nothing can be more intimately present in any creature than 'God himself with his power':

> 'Darumb mus er ja ynn einer iglichen creatur ynn yhrem allerynnwendigsten, auswendigsten, umb und umb, durch und durch, unden und oben, forn und hinden selbs da sein, das nichts gegenwertigers noch ynnerlichers sein kan ynn allen creaturen denn Gott selbs mit seiner gewalt. Denn er ists, der die haut macht, Er ists, der auch die gebeine macht, Er ists, der die har auff der haut macht, Er ists auch, der das marck ynn den gebeinen macht, Er ists, der ein iglich stücklin am har macht, Er ists, der ein iglich stücklin am marck macht. Er mus ja alles machen, beide, stuck und ganzes. So mus ja seine hand da sein, die es mache, das kan nicht feylen.' (19)

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18. WA 23. 133, 28-135, 2.

19. WA 23. 135, 3-10.

Luther is concerned to present this view of God's presence in the world, not as the result of the reasoning process of the natural theologian, but as a resumé of biblical truth. He calls on the support of Isa. 66:2[20] and Ps. 139:7ff.,[21] interpreting them to mean that the world is veritably 'full of God', albeit in such a way that the created order in no sense encompasses him, he retaining his absolute transcendence the while:

> 'Was kan odder wil nu Jesaia mit diesem spruch (wie S. Hilarius auch hierüber spricht) Das Gott sey wesentlich gegenwertig an allen enden ynn und durch alle creatur ynn all yhren stucken und orten, das also die wellt Gottes vol ist und er sie alle fullet, Aber doch nicht von ihr beschlossen odder umbfangen ist, sondern auch zugleich ausser und uber alle creatur ist? Dis sind alles gar uber alle mas unbegreiffliche ding, Aber doch sind es artickel unsers glaubens, hell und mechtiglich ynn der schrifft bezeuget.' (22)

Given Luther's understanding of the 'right hand of God', the ubiquity of Christ in his human nature follows as a corollary from his sessio ad dexteram Patris. Were one to understand this article of faith simply in terms of the Apostles' Creed and in the light of certain strands of the New Testament witness, then one might suppose that the Reformer took the ubiquity of Christ as dating from his resurrection and exaltation. A glance at but two of his ubiquity formulations will prove that this was not the case, however. In one of these, Luther states that the meaning of Christ's being at the 'right hand of God' is that he shares in the divine go-

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20. ibid., 12-13.

21. ibid., 13-18.

22. WA 23. 135, 34-137, 3.

vernment of the world. Christ cannot participate in this rule unless he also participates in the omnipresence of the 'right hand of God'. That he has this dignity is declared, not only at the Resurrection, but by the Lord himself in his self-witness in the Gospels:

> 'Das wil auch Christus, so offt er ym Euangelion bekennet, das yhm alles sey ubergeben vom vater und alles unter seine fusse gethan, Psal. viij. Das ist: er ist zur rechten Gotts, welchs ist nicht anders denn das er auch als ein mensch uber alle ding ist, alle ding unter sich hat und drüber regiert. Drumb mus er auch nahe da bey, drynnen und drumb sein, alles ynn henden haben sc. Denn nach der Gottheit ist yhm nichts ubergeben noch unter die füsse gethan, so ers zuvor alles gemacht und erhellt. Sitzen aber zur rechten ist so viel als regiern und macht haben uber alles. Sol er macht haben und regiern, mus er freilich auch da sein gegenwertig und wesentlich durch die rechte hand Gotts, die allenthalben ist.' (23)

Our second instance of Luther's formulation of the ubiquity of Christ comes from his treatment of Jn. 3:13, which Oecolampadius had interpreted of the divine nature of Christ. The Reformer clearly understands this verse as teaching the ubiquity of Christ's human nature even during the Incarnate Life:

> 'Damit er ja zeygt, das sein leib zu gleich ym hymel und auff erden, ja schon bereit an allen enden ist, Denn er ist durch seine verklerung nicht ein ander person worden, sondern wie vorhin so auch hernach allenthalben gegenwertig.' (24)

When we recall that, as far as Luther is concerned, the 'right hand of God' is synonymous with the divine nature, it is clear that he must understand Christ's being at the right hand of God as being identical with the perichore-

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23. WA 23. 145, 3-12.

24. WA 23. 147, 29-32.

sis of the human by the divine nature. Our Lord's being ad dexteram Dei implies 'das, wo und was Gotts rechte ist und heisst, da ist Christus, des menschen son'.[25] Hans Grass has shown that it was not only during the eucharistic debate that the Reformer taught the perichoresis of the human by the divine nature already during the status exinanitionis. As early as his lecture on the opening verses of Romans in 1515, Luther was propounding just such a Christology, insisting that the divine prerogatives were already conferred on the Lord's humanity at his conception, being exercised secretly until the Resurrection, at which point their association with his human nature was revealed to the Church.[26]

If one were not mindful that the Reformer's teaching on the ubiquity of Christ's human nature is to be interpreted in terms of his understanding of the omnipresence of God himself, two of his formulations of the ubiquity of Christ in this work might be apt to lead to a suspicion that, with his syllogistic proof of Jesus' omnipresence, Luther has 'proved too much' and fallen victim to a dangerous pantheising tendency. Moreover, we are bound to pay heed to the context in which these assertions of Christ's ubiquity were made. The Reformer recalls that his opponents deem the sessio ad dexteram the cardinal, indeed unbeatable, weapon in their arsenal. For his part, the Reformer considers the appeal to this article of the Apostles' Creed a 'Goliath's sword' when used against the real presence doctrine. He therefore proposes to use it for, rather than against

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25. WA 23. 145, 1-2.

26. see Die Abendmahlslehre bei Luther und Calvin, pp. 69-72. cf. also WA 56. 168, 25-28; 167, 13-22.

the traditional doctrine, hoping to turn it into a kind of David's sling. Luther thus proves the presence of the sacred body and blood at table even apart from the recitation of the words of institution:

> 'Nu lasst uns mit yhn reden. Sie bekennen, das Christus sey zur rechten hand Gotts, Und damit wollen sie gewonnen haben, das er nicht sey ym abendmal. Das ist freylich das grewliche schwerd des Risen Goliath, darauff sie pochen. Wie aber, wenn wir euch eben dasselbige schwerd nemen und schlügen euch damit den kopff ab und beweiseten eben mit dem spruch, das Christus leib müsse ym abendmal sein, damit yhr wolt beweisen, er müsse nicht da sein, wolt yhrs nicht fur ein recht Davids thetlin halten? Wolan sehet und höret uns zu. Christus leib ist zur rechten Gotts, das ist bekand. Die rechte Gotts ist aber an allen enden, wie yhr musset bekennen aus unser vorigen uberweisung, So ist sie gewislich auch ym brod und wein uber tissche.' (27)

In a further, somewhat unrestrained formulation of ubiquity, Luther is nevertheless careful to use the verb <u>mögen</u> (may) rather than <u>müssen</u> (must):

> 'Was wil nu hie werden? Es wil das draus werden: Wenn Christus ym abendmal diese wort "Das ist mein leib" gleich nie hette gesagt noch gesetzt, so erzwingens doch diese wort "Christus sitzt zur rechten Gotts", das sein leib und blut da müge sein wie an allen andern örten.' (28)

If these bold statements are understood as unqualifiedly asserting the ubiquity of the body and blood of Christ without reference to the mediating and revelatory function of the means of grace, then the Reformer would undoubtedly seem to have thrown caution to the winds and, through an implicit devaluation of Church and Sacraments, to have become, in his own terminology, an outright <u>Schwärmer</u>. But Luther himself formulated the most pung-

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27. <u>WA</u> 23. 143, 23-32.

28. <u>WA</u> 23. 145, 13-16.

ent objection to the most extravagant interpretation of his ubiquity speculations:

> 'Ist denn Christus leib an allen enden, Ey so wil ich yhn fressen und sauffen ynn allen weinheussern, aus allen schüsseln, glesern und kannen, So ist kein unterschied unter meinem tissch und des HERRN tissch.' (29)

The Reformer's reply consists in a consistent application to the humanity of Christ of the dialectic of 'everywhere' and 'nowhere' that applies to the omnipresent divine essence, coupled with a stern reminder that the Word alone can surely direct us to a gracious self-revelation of the transcendently-immanently ubiquitous God-man. To begin with, Luther reiterates that the right hand of God is as much nowhere as everywhere, informing us that there is a distinction between God's presence and our apprehension of that presence. The omnipresent God does not stand before us like a miscreant in the pillory:

> 'Droben habe ich gesagt, Das die rechte Gotts an allen enden ist, aber dennoch zugleich auch nirgent und unbegreifflich ist, uber und ausser allen creaturen. Es ist ein unterscheid unter seiner gegenwertickeit und deinem greiffen. Er ist frey und ungebunden allenthalben wo er ist, und mus nicht da stehen als ein bube an pranger odder hals eisen geschmeidet.' (30)

Just so with Christ. His ubiquity does not involve his immediate availability everywhere. The dialectic of 'everywhere' and 'nowhere' involved in his sharing the sovereign presence of God means that he is perfectly capable of eluding the creaturely grasp:

> 'Also auch Christus: ob er gleich allenthalben da ist, lesst er sich nicht so greiffen und tappen. Er kan sich wol aus schelen, das du die schale da-

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29. WA 23. 149, 16-19. 30. WA 23. 151, 1-5.

> von kriegest und den kerne nicht ergreiffest. Warumb das? Darumb, das ein anders ist, wenn Gott da ist, und wenn er dir da ist.' (31)

A resumé of theophanies and Christophanies recorded in Holy Scripture persuades the Reformer 'das beide Gott und Christus nicht ferne, sondern nahe sind, und ist alleine umbs offenbaren zu thun'.[32] This process of 'revelation' makes clear what is involved in the distinction between 'wenn Gott da ist' and 'wenn er dir da ist'. Hans Grass has pointed out that Luther could not but regard the omnipresence of God as a fearful thing, as the presence of the Deus nudus, the wrathful God of the law.[33] Even the omnipresence of the glorified Christ is not necessarily the occasion of gracious divine self-disclosure, unless he clothe himself in Word and Sacrament. The Reformer rejoices that the omnipresent, hidden Cosmocrator graciously discloses himself in the Word:

> 'Denn aber ist er dir da, wenn er sein wort dazu thut und bindet sich damit an und spricht: Hie soltu mich finden. Wenn du nu das wort hast, so kanstu yhn gewislich greiffen und haben und sagen: Hie hab ich dich, wie du sagest.' (34)

A twofold movement on the part of Almighty God is to be distinguished here. First, there is the decision to

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31. ibid., 10-14. Hans Grass observes that, 'Für das geringe Fassungsvermögen des Menschen bedeutet das Allenthalben schliesslich ein Nirgends (op.cit., p. 63).

32. WA 23. 147, 24-25

33. 'Des weiteren aber steht hinter der Meinung, dass wir Gott nur da suchen sollen, wo er sich angebunden hat der für Luther ganz zentrale Gedanke, dass der ungebundene Gott nicht nur der unbegreifliche Gott ist, sondern der Deus nudus, der furchtbar zornige Gott, vor deren Majestät wir vergehen müssen' (op.cit., p. 63).

34. WA 23. 151, 14-17.

commit the 'right hand of God', that is, God himself in his relation to the world, to the humanity of Christ as the supreme revelatory medium between God and man:

> 'Gleich als ich von der rechten Gotts sage: wie wol die selbige allenthalben ist, wie wir nicht leucken mügen, Noch weil sie auch nirgent ist, wie gesagt ist, kanstu sie werlich nirgend ergreiffen, sie binde sich denn dir zu gut und bescheide dich an einen ort. Das thut sie aber, da sie sich ynn die menscheit Christi begibt und wonet, Da findestu sie gewis, sonst soltu wol alle Creatur durch und durch lauffen, hie tappen und da tappen und dennoch nymmer mehr nicht finden, ob sie gleich da ist warhafftig, Denn sie ist dir nicht da.' (35)

But, in his present mode of being, our Lord is himself beyond the reach of our creaturely grasp (unbegreifflich). Hence we shall not partake of him simply by tucking into our supper, but must wait on his sovereign pleasure, according to which he has in fact directed us to a 'special table through his Word':

> 'Also auch, weil Christus menscheit zur rechten Gotts ist und nu auch ynn allen und uber allen dingen ist nach art Göttlicher rechten hand, so wirstu yhn nicht so fressen noch sauffen als den kol und suppen auff deinem tissch, Er wölle denn. Er ist nu unbegreifflich worden, und wirst yhn nicht ertappen, ob er gleich ynn deinem brod ist, Es sey denn, das er sich dir anbinde und bescheide dich zu eim sonderlichen tissch durch sein wort und deute selbs das brod durch sein wort, da du yhn essen solt, Welchs er denn thut ym abendmal und spricht "Das ist mein leib".' (36)

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35. ibid., 17-24.

36. ibid., 25-32. cf. Hans Grass: op.cit., p. 63: 'Durch seine Bindung an einen konkreten Ort - und für Luther ist dieser konkrete Ort in grundlegender Weise die Menschheit Christi, in abgeleiteter Weise sind es dann die durchs Wort qualifizierten Gnadenmittel - offenbart Gott sich und seine Barmherzigkeit, und zwar die Barmherzigkeit mir unserm geringen Fassungsvermögen und mit uns, den Sündern, die die göttliche Majestät nicht ertragen können.'

Luther's ubiquity speculation, ostensibly the product of a biblically based syllogism and in fact the upshot of his application of the ancient patristic conception of a perichoresis of the human by the divine nature of Christ, here proves competent to provide an ontological foundation for the heart of the Reformer's understanding of the Christian faith, namely the gracious presence of Jesus Christ in his means of grace, the Word and Sacraments.

4. Vom Abendmahl Christi. Bekenntnis (1528)

In the christological section of this work,[1] Luther gives the most refined and sustained presentation to date of his doctrine of the ubiquity of Christ's humanity. The need to develop this theory in an apologetic setting prompted the Reformer to pen some of his most beautiful and profound observations on the mystery of the person of Christ. At the outset of his discussion of the christological implications of the real presence doctrine, Luther repeats his consistent insistence that the notion of the ubiquity of our Lord's human nature is not meant to serve as a humanly conceived basis of an article of faith; rather, it is a theological proposition developed to counter the Swiss assumption that, even in his state of exaltation, the man Christ can enjoy only a local mode of presence. Jesus' elevation to the omnipresence of God's right hand is but one mode among many according to which it might please Almighty God to achieve the multipresence of the body of his Son:

> 'Denn das ich beweisete, wie Christus leib allenthalben sey, weil Gotts rechte hand allenthalben ist, das thet ich darumb (wie ich gar öffentlich

1. WA 26. 317, 6-349, 34.

> daselbst bedinget) das ich doch ein einige weise anzeigete, da mit Gott vermöcht, das Christus zu gleich ym hymel und sein leib ym abendmal sey, und vorbehielt seiner göttlichen weisheit und macht wol mehr weise, dadurch er dasselbige vermöcht, weil wir seiner gewalt ende noch mas nicht wissen.' (2)

After an opening blast against Zwingli's Christology, Luther gives four reasons for his acceptance of the doctrine of the real presence. First, the bodily presence in the eucharist is predicated, not of a mere man, but of one in whose person Godhead and manhood are inseparably and indivisibly united. Secondly, God's right hand is omnipresent. Thirdly, God's Word (viz., 'This is my body') is neither erroneous nor mendacious.[3] Fourthly, the Reformer asserts that in the economy of God there are more ways for a thing to be present than that which the philosophers call 'local'. For the scholastics rightly distinguish at least two further modes of presence, 'definitive' and 'repletive':

> 'Der vierde, Das Gott mancherley weise hat und weis etwa an einem ort zu sein und nicht allein die einige, da die schwermer von gauckeln, welche die Philosophi Localem nennen, Denn die Sophisten reden hie von recht, da sie sagen: Es sind dreyerley weise, an eim ort zu sein, Localiter odder circumscriptive, Diffinitive, Repletive.' (4)

An account of Luther's discussion of the relationship between these three modes of presence and the presence of Jesus' body and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar will form a fitting introduction to the chief theme of this section, namely the Reformer's presentation of ubiquity in the setting of the hypostatic union.

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2. WA 26. 318, 1-6.

3. WA 26. 326, 29-33.

4. WA 26. 326, 33-327, 22.

Luther informs his readers that a thing is present somewhere 'circumscriptively' or 'locally' (the German equivalent he gives for 'local' is 'begreifflich') when there is a perfect congruence of place and thing present. The Reformer mentions the presence of wine or water in a barrel and that of a log or tree thrown into a river: the liquid occupies just as much space as is offered by the containing vessel, and just as much space is surrendered by the river water as is required to accommodate the timber. Likewise a man in motion displaces just as much air as his body has volume.[5] Christ himself submitted to the constraints of this mode of presence during the Incarnate Life, having employed it in his Resurrection appearances and looking set to use it once more on the Last Day.[6] Luther does not seriously suppose that the bodily presence in the eucharist is local in kind, but he is concerned to offer a convincing point by point refutation of any arguments advanced by his Swiss opponents. Such is the Reformer's reverence for the power of God that he dare not deny the possibility of God's achieving even the local mutipresence of a single object. Since such spiritual beings as angels and poltergeists can see, travel and hear just as easily through an iron wall as Luther can hear or see through glass or air, the Reformer is disposed to speculate that, even if Jesus' body were locally present in heaven, all creatures might nevertheless be immediately present to him 'just like clear transparent air'.[7] Luther ventures three examples in proof of the thesis

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5. WA 26. 327, 23-32.

6. WA 26. 335, 30-38.

7. WA 26. 336, 28-337, 8.

that a thing may be both locally circumscribed and multi-present at the same time. First, he recalls having looked in amazement at crystal and opal. In these precious stones Luther has noticed a 'little spark or flame', a 'little cloud or bubble', finding that, whichever way the crystal or opal has been turned, the flash of light has always seemed to be near that part of the surface at which he happened to be looking, even though he knew quite well that it was in fact situated at the centre of the stone. Now if Christ were locally situated at the centre of creation, could not God miraculously cause his body to appear likewise in many places, as, for example, when the Word directs us to bread and wine?[8] Secondly, Luther invokes an analogy formulated by Laurentius Valla. During a sermon the preacher's voice is at one and the same time in his mouth and in the ears of up to ten thousand hearers, 'just as if his mouth and their ears were one place, with nothing in between'. If God can achieve this with a human voice, why cannot he perform a similar feat in the case of the body of his Son, even if the latter is locally present in heaven? After all, Jesus' body is 'much nimbler and lighter than any voice', and his passage through 'sealed stone' at the Resurrection proves that it is easier for him to permeate solid objects than for our voices to permeate the air.[9] Thirdly, the Reformer notes how a mirror can be broken into a thousand pieces and yet the visage which formerly appeared in the single mirror now remains in its entirety in each fragment. If God can naturally

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8. WA 26. 337, 9-23.

9. WA 26. 337, 32-338, 9.

produce such a multipresence of a locally circumscribed face, why cannot he also achieve a sacramental multipresence of the body of his Son, which is alleged to exist locally in heaven?[10]

The second mode of presence specified by Luther marks the transition from a local to an illocal mode of presence. A thing is said to be present somewhere 'definitively' (diffinitive) when it itself does not correspond to the measurements and proportions of the place where it is present.[11] In this case the present object can be equally at home in both spacious and cramped surroundings. Angels and devils, for example, can be present both in a 'whole house or city' and 'in a nutshell'.[12] Sound and light belong appropriately in this category of presence[13] (their inclusion, for the purpose of argument, under the heading of 'circumscriptive' presence was somewhat forced). The Reformer thinks that Christ himself shared in the mode of 'definitive' presence, which allows for the presence of a thing without calling for the diminution or transformation of the place where it is present. The most obvious instance in which the body of Christ shared in this mode of presence was at the time of his Resurrection, when he passed through a sealed tomb and closed doors without causing any change to these solid objects.[14] Another example which occurs to Luther is our Lord's birth, in which the Church has traditionally supposed the virginity

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10. WA 26. 338, 18-30.

11. WA 26. 327, 33-35.

12. WA 26. 327, 35-328, 23.

13. WA 26. 335, 38-336, 4.

14. WA 26. 328, 31-329, 26.

of blessed Mary to have remained unimpaired.[15] While Christ differs from mere mortals in having exercised this mode of presence at the time of his Resurrection, Luther does not believe that he thereby exercised to the full the divine prerogatives conferred on his humanity at the Incarnation. For the 'definitive' mode of presence is used 'daily' by poltergeists, and will be enjoyed by all the glorified saints in heaven.[16] Nevertheless, the Reformer is content to place the presence of the body and blood in the eucharist under the heading of 'definitive' presence:

> 'Eben also ist und kan auch Christus ym brod sein, ob er gleichwol daneben sich kan begreifflich und sichtbarlich zeigen, wo er wil, Denn wie der versiegelt stein und die verschlossen thür unverendert und unverwandelt blieben, und doch sein leib zu gleich war an dem ort, da eitel stein und holtz war, also ist er auch ym sacrament zu gleich, da brod und wein ist, und doch brod und wein fur sich selbs bleiben unverwandelt und unverendert.' (17)

Luther follows the scholastics in teaching that there is a third, 'repletive' mode of presence, whose exercise does not fall within the range of the natural powers bestowed on any creature, angelic or human. The Reformer immediately translates the Latin Repletive with the German ubernatürlich, 'supernatural', mindful as he is that this mode of presence, according to which a thing is present at all places while being itself nowhere circumscribed by space, is properly ascribed to Almighty God alone. So marvellous is this mode of presence that it is sheerly incomprehensible to human reason, being accessible solely to Word-oriented faith:

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15. WA 26. 336, 6-7.

16. WA 26. 335, 13-17.

17. WA 26. 329, 20-26. cf. also 336, 5-6.

> 'Zum dritten ist ein ding an ørten Repletive, ubernatürlich, wenn etwas zu gleich gantz und gar an allen örten ist und alle örte fullet und doch von keinem ort abgemessen und begriffen wird nach dem raum des orts, da es ist. Diese weise wird allein Gotte zu geeigent, wie er sagt yhm Propheten Jeremia: "Ich bin ein Gott von nahe und nicht von ferne, Denn hymel und erden fulle ich" sc. Diese weise ist uber alle mas uber unser vernunfft unbegreifflich und mus allein mit dem glauben ym wort behalten werden.' (18)

Luther contends that, as a result of the union of the assumed humanity of Jesus with the person of the Eternal Son, this uniquely blessed human nature shares in the omnipresence of the Godhead itself. Everything is 'full of Christ through and through', and that not only according to his divinity, but also according to his humanity:

> 'Nu er aber ein solch mensch ist, der ubernatürlich mit Gott eine person ist, und ausser diesem menschen kein Gott ist, so mus folgen, das er auch nach der dritten ubernatürlichen weise sey und sein müge allenthalben, wo Gott ist, und alles durch und durch vol Christus sey auch nach der menscheit, nicht nach der ersten leiblichen begreifflichen weise, sondern nach der ubernatürlichen göttlichen weise.' (19)

With these words the Reformer has made no claims for Christ's humanity which were not made in the Sermon of 1526 or in the work of 1527. In these earlier publications, however, Luther taught the omnipresence of the divine humanity either as the plain teaching of Scripture (e.g., Eph. 1:23, 4:10) or else as the necessary correlate of the scriptural doctrine of the right hand of God taken in conjunction with Jesus' exaltation thither. By contrast, in this his last major contribution to the first eucharistic controversy, the Reformer, while

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18. ibid., 27-33.

19. WA 26. 332, 18-23. cf. also 334, 26-335, 28; 336, 8-27.

appealing to biblical texts throughout his argument, conspicuously grounds his presentation of the omnipresence of the human nature of Christ in an understanding of the hypostatic union which clearly stands in the tradition of Alexandrine Christology. In outlining the Christology advocated by Luther in the work of 1528, we shall not only indicate how he conceived of the hypostatic union as the matrix of Christ's bodily presence on the Altar, but shall also point to the incarnational heart of the Reformer's theology as a whole.

Luther's reflections here on the mystery of the union of divinity and humanity in the person of Jesus Christ are explicitly conceived as a reply to the understanding of the two natures doctrine propounded in Ulrich Zwingli's Amica exegesis and Dass diese Worte ...ewiglich den alten Sinn haben werden of 1527. Added to his conception of the biblical antithesis of flesh and spirit, Zwingli's Nestorianising Christology proved to be the last straw for the Reformer. Zwingli emerges as Luther's principal opponent in the dispute on the real presence, and so deep is the rift between the two men's grasp of the essence of Christianity that Luther is constrained to condemn Zwingli as a total apostate, as a teacher whose doctrines are infinitely more destructive of Christian substance than were any of the corruptions of the Papal Church:

> 'Ich bekenne fur mich, das ich den Zwingel fur einen unchristen halte mit aller seiner lere, denn er helt und leret kein stuck des Christlichen glaubens recht und ist erger worden sieben mal, denn da er ein Papist war ...Solch bekendnis thu ich, auff das ich fur Gott und der welt entschüldigt sey, als der ich mit Zwingels lere nicht teilhafftig bin noch sein wil ewiglich.' (20)

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20. WA 26. 342, 21-27.

This unmitigated condemnation stands in marked contrast to Luther's admission that, however grievously it had obscured the presentation of the Gospel, the Roman Church had nevertheless managed to preseve the Christian religion in all its fullness:

> 'Wir bekennen aber, das unter dem Bapstum viel Christliches gutes, ia alles Christlich gut sey, Und auch derselbs herkomen sey an uns, Nemlich wir bekennen, das ym Bapstum die rechte heilige schrifft sey, rechte tauffe, recht Sacrament des altars, rechte schlussel zur vergebung der sunde, recht predig ampt, rechter Catechismus, als das Vater unser, Zehen gebot, die artickel des glawbens.' (21)

At the very outset of the christological section of the work of 1528, the Reformer warns his readers to avoid Zwingli's books as the 'poison of hellish Satan':

> 'Ich kan auff dis mal nicht alle yrthum des geistes angreiffen, Das sage ich aber, wer sich wil warnen lassen, der hüte sich fur dem Zwingel und meide seine bücher als des hellischen Satans gifft, Denn der mensch ist gantz verkeret und hat Christum rein abe verloren, ...' (22)

Moved by such words as these, the young John Calvin refrained for some years from reading Zwingli's works.[23] In explaining his condemnation of the Zürich churchman, Luther swiftly fastens on the technical term ἀλλοίωσις, which had emerged in ancient rhetoric, and which in the late 1520s became the preferred rubric under which Zwingli advanced his conception of the two natures doctrine. Luther understands Zwingli to teach that Holy Scripture employs the figura or tropus ἀλλοίωσις in christological contexts, naming one nature while meaning the other:

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21. WA 26. 147, 13-18.

22. WA 26. 317, 19-22.

23. see T. H. L. Parker: John Calvin (London, 1975), pp. 23, 136f.

> 'So kompt der liebe geist her und bringet seine figur Alleosis, da durch er alles wil schlecht machen, Leret uns, wie ynn der schrifft werde eine natur fur die andern genomen ynn Christo, ...' (24)

The factor that prompted Zwingli to discern an imprecise use of language in Holy Scripture's statements concerning Jesus Christ was his preconceived notion of just what may appropriately be ascribed to divine and human nature respectively.[25] The idealistic philosophy which Zwingli brought with him to the sacred text made it impossible for him to accept many Scriptural teachings in their plain, natural sense. For example, his Platonising misinterpretation of Jn. 6:63 made it imperative for Zwingli to rewrite Jn. 6:55. In teaching that, 'my flesh is food indeed', Jesus was employing the figure of speech ἀλλοίωσις. What he meant to say was, 'my divinity is food indeed':

> 'Ut cum Christus ait: "Caro mea vere est cibus", caro proprie est humane in illo nature, attemen per commutationem hoc loco pro divina ponitur natura. Quantenus enim filius dei est, eatenus est anime cibus; ait enim; "Spiritus est, qui vivificat".' (26)

Further light is shed on Zwingli's Christology by his assertion that Scripture also uses the rhetorical figure of speech ἠθοποιία of our Lord's actions. Zwingli defines ἠθοποιία as the ascription to someone of habits which are not his by nature, a figure of speech em-

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24. WA 26. 317, 12-14.

25. see Hilgenfeld: op.cit., p. 349: 'Als Kriterium zum Aufspüren der Uneigentlichkeit dient ihm ein festumrissener Begriff der Menschheit bzw. der Gottheit und der diesen wesentlich zukommenden Eigenschaften. Eine alloiosis liegt überall da vor, wo sich der Begriff der Menschheit bzw. Gottheit mit den entsprechenden Ausführungen nicht deckt.'

26. CR XCII (CR Zw V), p. 681, 1-4.

ployed for the purpose of making things intelligible.[27] Under this heading we may subsume Scripture's anthropomorphic way of talking about Almighty God himself. In Zwingli's view, ἠθοποιία is also at work in such a crucial christological text as Jn. 3:13. Like Oecolampadius, he interprets this text, which Luther understands of the unique, privileged humanity of Christ, of his divine nature:

> 'Also ist ouch das ein sittendichten, da er seyt, der sun des menschen sye von himmel kommen, für: gottes sun ist von himmel kommen.' (28)

Zwingli's Nestorianising Christology ran clean counter to the Cyrilline emphasis on the unity of person which embraces the two natures, an emphasis without which Luther believed the reality of salvation to stand in peril. Should we so divide the natures that we suppose Holy Scripture to employ the figure ἀλλοίωσις in christological contexts, then, in the Reformer's opinion, we have demoted Christ effectively to the status of a mere man and robbed the Christian confession of its power:

> 'Hüt dich, Hüt dich, sage ich, fur der Alleosi, sie ist des teuffels larven, Denn sie richtet zu letzt ein solchen Christum zu, nach dem ich nicht gern wolt ein Christen sein, Nemlich das Christus hinfurt nicht mehr sey noch thu mit seinem leiden und leben, denn ein ander schlechter heilige, Denn wenn ich das gleube, das allein die menschliche natur fur mich gelidden hat, so ist mir der Christus ein schlechter heiland, so bedarff er wol selbs eines heilands, Summa, es ist unsaglich, was der teuffel mit der Alleosi sucht.' (29)

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27. CR XCII (CR Zw V), p. 938, 6-10: 'das ist: gemeiner sitten dichtung, unnd wirt gebrucht, da man einem einen sitten andichtet, den er von natur nit hat. Aber derselb sitt ist brüchig unter denen, vor welchen man dieselben sittendichtung umb verstands willen darthut.'

28. CR XCII (CR Zw V), p. 939, 1-3.

29. WA 26. 319, 33-40.

Luther understands the full reality of the hypostatic union to rule out the possibility of Scripture's using ἀλλοιωσις in its statements concerning Jesus Christ.[30] The Reformer begins his attack on Zwingli's Christology by recalling those passages where Holy Scripture (indeed, the Holy Spirit!) predicates human activity and suffering precisely of the Son of God:

> 'Also spricht aber der heilige geist Johan. 3 "Also liebet Gott die welt, das er seinen einigen son dahin gibt". Ro. 8. "Er hat seines eigen sons nicht verschonet, sondern fur uns alle dahin gegeben". Und so fort an alle werck, wort, leiden und was Christus thut, das thut, wirckt, redet, leidet der warhafftige Gottes son, und ist recht gered: Gottes son ist fur uns gestorben, Gottes son predigt auff erden, Gottes son wesscht den iüngern die füsse, wie die Epistel Ebre. 6. sagt: "Sie creutzigten yhn selbs den son Gottes", I Cor. 2. "hetten sie erkand, sie hetten nymer mehr den Herrn der ehren gecreutzigt".' (31)

The 'old weather witch, Lady Reason, Alleosis' Grandmother' might intervene at this point, urging that the immortality and impassibility of the divine nature preclude the predication of suffering and death of the Son of God. Luther will gladly concede that God in himself can neither suffer nor die, but must insist that the question of the impassibility of God cannot be posed abstractly, but only in the light of the assumption of an entire human nature into the person of the Son. In virtue of the personal union, it is appropriate to affirm the suffering and death of God himself in the passion of Christ:

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30. ibid., 27-31: 'Du aber, lieber bruder, solt an stat der Alleosi das behalten: weil Jhesus Christus warhafftiger Gott und mensch ist ynn einer person, so werde an keinem ort der schrifft eine natur fur die ander genomen, Denn das heist er Alleosin, wenn etwas von der Gottheit Christi gesagt wird, das doch der menscheit zu stehet.'

31. WA 26. 320, 29-321, 18.

> 'Ob nu hie die alte wettermecherynn fraw vernunfft, der Alleosis grosmutter, sagen würde: Ja, die Gottheit kan nicht leiden noch sterben, Soltu antworten: Das ist war, Aber dennoch, weil Gottheit und menscheit ynn Christo eine person ist, so gibt die schrifft umb solcher personlicher einickeit willen auch der Gottheit alles, was der menscheit widderferet und widderumb, Und ist auch also ynn der warheit. Denn das mustu ia sagen: Die person (zeige Christum) leidet, stirbet, Nu ist die person warhafftiger Gott, drumb ists recht gered: Gottes son leidet, Denn obwol das eine stück (das ich so rede) als die Gottheit, nicht leidet, so leidet dennoch die person, welche Gott ist, am andern stücke, als an der menscheit.' (32)

It is well to note that, in his affirmation of the suffering of the Son of God in the suffering of the man Jesus, Luther did not become a theopaschite in the strict sense.[33] Rather, the Reformer predicates the suffering of Christ of his human nature, reverently asserting that it may truly be predicated of his divine nature also in virtue of the mystery of the personal union.[34] But, while the distinction of the two natures is uncompromisingly upheld, it is for Luther a matter of life or death that the subject of the activity and suffering of the man Jesus is none other than the Second Person of the Trinity. As we have seen already, the Reformer follows SS. Athanasius and Anselm in believing that only the superabundant power of the Creator, only the infinite merit of the Godhead

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32. WA 26. 321, 19-28.

33. see Jürgen Moltmann: The Crucified God (London, 1974), p. 234f.

34. WA 26. 322, 20-22: 'Und ist dazu auch die warheit, Denn ynn der warheit ist Gottes son fur uns gecreutzigt, das ist, die person, die Gott ist, Denn sie ist, Sie (sage ich) die person ist gecreutzigt nach der menscheit.'

itself, can work the salvation of fallen mankind. In Luther's view, Zwingli's Nestorianising Christology, summed up under the heading ἀλλοωσις , calls in question the divine commitment to and involvement in the work of Christ which can only be safeguarded through a thoroughgoing stress on the hypostatic union:

> 'Nu leucket der Zwingel nicht allein diesen höhesten nöttigsten artickel "das Gottes son fur uns gestorben sey", Sondern lestert dasselbige dazu und spricht: Es sey die aller grewlichst ketzerey, so yhe gewest ist. Da hin furet yhn sein dünckel und die verdampte Alleosis, das er die person Christi zurtrennet und lest uns keinen andern Christum bleiben, denn einen lautern menschen, der fur uns gestorben und uns erlöset habe, Welchs Christlich hertz kann doch solchs hören odder leiden? Ist doch damit der gantze Christliche glaube und aller welt selickeit aller dinge weggenomen und verdampt, Denn wer allein durch menscheit erlöset ist, der ist freylich noch nicht erlöset, wird auch nymer mehr erlöset.' (35)

While the Reformer shies away from Zwingli's ἀλλοιωσις, which threatens the unity of the person of the God-man by stressing the disjunction of his two natures, he is nevertheless anxious to maintain the differentiation between the two natures. Accordingly, while the one person of the Eternal Son is the sole subject of his speech, activity and sufferings, it remains appropriate to specify the nature through which the Eternal Son speaks, acts and suffers. Luther grants that a language which mirrors this unity in distinction is in a sense 'figurative', but he insists that any such 'figurative speech' be treated under the heading of synecdoche, according to which the whole may be named in place of the part, and

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35. WA 26. 342, 11-20.

vice versa.[36] Synecdoche would point to a Cyrilline way of speaking, while ἀλλοιωσις must inevitably be the mask under which lurks Nestorian heresy. But the Reformer is adamant that we may only speak of 'synecdochal' use of language when talking of the 'works and deeds' of the two natures. With reference to the person of the Incarnate Son, we can admit no figurative use of language, whether in terms of ἀλλοιωσις or synecdoche. In virtue of the union of an entire human nature with the hypostasis of the Son, we must say that God is man and man is God:

> 'Denn wenn gleich die Alleosis bestünde, das eine natur fur die andern genomen würde, so betreffe doch solchs allein die werck odder geschefft der naturn und nicht das wesen der naturn, Denn ob gleich ynn den wercken, wenn man spricht: Christus predigt, trinckt, bettet, stirbt, möcht Christus fur die menschliche natur genomen werden, So kans doch nicht so sein ym wesen, wenn man spricht: Gott ist mensch odder mensch ist Gott, Hie kan ia kein Alleosis, ia auch kein Synecdoche odder einiger tropus sein, Denn da mus Gott fur Gott, mensch fur mensch genomen werden.' (37)

In the next sentence Luther remarks that his assertion of the communicated omnipresence of Christ's body belongs to those statements which must be made 'nicht von wercken

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36. WA 26. 322, 30-33: 'Warumb bleibt er nicht bey dem alten tropo, den die schrifft und alle lerer bisher haben hie gebraucht? nemlich Synecdoche, als: Christus ist gestorben nach der menscheit, sc.' Luther claims that 'synecdochal' use of language in the sphere of Christology is wholesomely scriptural, patristic and ancient (322, 25), charging that Zwingli's introduction of the figure ἀλλοιωσις is symptomatic of an unhealthy penchant for innovation (322, 33-333, 12).

37. WA 26. 325, 33-326, 22. cf. also WA 39 II. 112, 13-19: 'Non potest idem praedicari de Deo et homine. Ergo sc. R. Est philosophicum argumentum. Nulla est

der naturn, sondern vom wesen der naturn'.[38] That is to say, the attribution to the Lord's body of the 'repletive' mode of presence is necessarily involved in the statement of the hypostatic union. This section is therefore fittingly concluded with an examination of the Reformer's understanding of just what is involved for Christ's human nature through its subsistence in his eternal, divine Person.

A single paragraph from the christological section of the work of 1528 affords ample proof that Luther's understanding of the person of Christ places him in the school of S. Cyril of Alexandria, and not in that of the Monophysite Eutyches. While his opponents allege that he confounds the two natures of Christ into one essence, the Reformer insists that he wholeheartedly respects the irrevocable distinction between the two natures. He does not 'mix' the two natures into a third 'essence' which would be a monstrous conglomeration of divinity and humanity, but follows the Church's tradition in 'mixing' the two integral natures in the single 'person' of the Son:

> 'Sie schreyen uber uns, das wir die zwo natur ynn ein wesen mengen, Das ist nicht war, Wir sagen nicht, das Gottheit sey menscheit odder Gottliche natur sey menschliche natur, welches were die natur ynn ein wesen gemenget, Sondern wir mengen die zwo unterschiedliche natur ynn ein einige person und sagen: Gott ist mensch und mensch ist Gott.' (39)

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proportio creaturae et creatoris, finiti et infiniti. Nos tamen non tantum facimus proportionem, sed unitatem finiti et infiniti.'

38. WA 26. 326, 22-24.

39. WA 26. 324, 19-23.

If pressed, adherents of traditional Christology would find it difficult to uphold the real distinction between Christ's divine 'person' and his divine 'nature'. After all, the divine 'nature' of the Son of God is nothing other than the unknowable divine 'essence' which the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity eternally receives from the First ('Qualis pater, talis filius'). Thus it may be asked whether Luther's bold speech about the 'mixture' of the two natures in the 'person' of the Son is anything other than covert Monophysitism. Before this potential objection can be answered, we must frankly recall that the problem - or, rather, mystery - before which theology is faced here was not invented by either the Reformer or S. Cyril of Alexandria. On the contrary, the substance of this question is already given in the New Testament: the Gospels acknowledge only a single, not a dual, consciousness in Christ, and the earliest strata of the New Testament, namely the Pauline Epistles, know no historical Jesus who is not the human incarnation of the Eternal Son of God (see, e.g., Rom. 8:3; Gal. 4:4). As one who intended to be a faithful expositor of Scripture, Luther was therefore unable to picture the manhood of Christ apart from its subsistence in the person of the Son. At the same time, the Reformer, like the New Testament and the tradition, was careful to observe the distinction between the two natures within the person of the Son, which is the sole subject of the activity and suffering of Christ. While the person of the Son is the sole subject of the activity and suffering of the historical Jesus, we rightly distinguish those things which he did and suffered through the agency of the assumed humanity. As will presently become clearer still,

Luther was able to locate the personal unity of our Lord in the person of the Son, while at the same time staunchly teaching the creatureliness and finitude of the assumed humanity through which he acted and suffered. The Reformer could avow his allegiance to a Cyrilline form of Chalcedonian orthodoxy with an appropriate adaptation of the terminology of the Athanasian Creed:

> 'Denn die person ists, die alles thut und leidet, eins nach dieser natur, das ander nach ihener natur, wie das alles die gelerten wol wissen, Drumb halten wir unsern Herrn Christum also fur Gott und mensch ynn einer person non confundens naturas nec dividendo personam, das wir die naturn nicht mengen und die person auch nicht trennen.' (40)

In Luther's teaching, the orthodox doctrine of the hypostatic union involves the belief that, while it remains a distinct, finite creature, the humanity of our Lord is so nurtured within the womb of his eternal Godhead that, through the perichoresis of the human nature by the divine, the humanity of Jesus attains a full share in the omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence of Almighty God himself. The Incarnation, in the Reformer's understanding, involves a decisive and irrevocable change in the relationship between Creator and creature. Talk of God as the 'Wholly Other' can therefore no longer be the starting-point of the doctrine of God; at most, it can bear witness to the fact that, even in the Incarnation of the Son, God retains and does not shed the transcendent mystery of his being. The only God whom Luther will acknowledge is the One who is 'gantz und gar mensch nach der einen person, nemlich des sons',[41] and in the mystery

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40. ibid., 30-35.

41. WA 26. 340, 20-21.

of Godmanhood the Reformer will adore the enhancement of Jesus' humanity through its unqualified enhypostasis in the person of the Son. Distinctively Lutheran Christology is often associated with the axiom finitum capax Infiniti. Hermann Sasse rightly pointed out that the order of this formula may fittingly be reversed to read, Infinitum capax finiti.[42] Sasse's observation faithfully reflects the teaching of Luther himself: the initiative in the perichoresis of the human nature by the divine is all of God, so that the Reformer can speak of Jesus' humanity as 'sheerly and utterly drawn into God.'[43] Luther points out that the mere statement of the hypostatic union already implies much more about the humanity of our Lord than does the proclamation of his exaltation to heavenly glory. After all, Jesus' state of celestial glory is shared with angels and glorified saints. The fact of the hypostatic union entails Jesus' sharing in the life of God much more intimately than had any saint or angel 'from his mother's womb':

> 'Ein frum Christen sage mir, obs nicht höher und grösser ist, das die menscheit ynn Gott, ia mit Gott eine person ist, denn das sie ym hymel ist? Ist Gott nicht höher und herlicher denn der hymel? Nu ist ia Christus menscheit von mutter leib an höher und tieffer ynn Gott und fur Gott gewest, denn kein Engel, So ist sie freylich auch höher ym hymel gewest denn kein Engel.' (44)

Several times in these pages the Reformer forcefully contends that to deny the communicated omnipresence of

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42. 'Inkarnation und Realpräsenz', Corpus Christi, p. 116.

43. WA 26. 340, 14-16: 'weil Christus Gott und mensch ist, und seine menscheit mit Gott eine person worden und also gantz und gar ynn Gott gezogen uber alle creatur, das er gleich an yhn klebt.'

44. WA 26. 344, 26-31.

the assumed humanity of our Lord would involve positing a breach in the hypostatic union. Where death and the devil had failed to wrench the assumed humanity from its divine hypostasis, the neutral creaturely order of space would have succeeded. If the humanity of Christ is bound to the person of the Son at only one place, then in all other places the Incarnation is an irrelevant non-event, so that God would by and large remain the same discarnate God who confronted mankind before the sending of the Son. Luther counters such an assumption by avowing his own intention to know only the God who is man, asserting that the indissoluble union of the two natures in the person of the God-man necessarily entails the universal presence of the manhood of Christ:

> 'Ist er nu natürlich und personlich wo er ist, so mus er daselbs auch mensch sein, denn es sind nicht zwo zurtrennete personen, sondern ein einige person, Wo sie ist, da ist sie die einige unzurtrennete person, Und wo du kanst sagen: Hie ist Gott, da mustu auch sagen: So ist Christus der mensch auch da. -- Und wo du einen ort zeigen wurdest, da Gott were und nicht der mensch, so were die person schön zurtrennet, weil ich als denn mit der warheit kund sagen: Hie ist Gott, der nicht mensch ist und noch nie mensch ward, Mir aber des Gottes nicht. Denn hieraus wolt folgen, das raum und stette die zwo naturn von einander sonderten und die person zurtrenneten, so doch der tod und alle teuffel sie nicht kundten trennen noch von einander reissen, Und es solt mir ein schlechter Christus bleiben, der nicht mehr denn an einem eintzelen ort zu gleich eine Göttliche und menschliche person were, Und an allen andern orten muste er allein ein blosser abgesonderter Gott und Gottliche person sein on menscheit. Nein geselle, wo du mir Gott hinsetzest, da mustu mir die menscheit mit hyn setzen, Sie lassen sich nicht sondern und von einander trennen, Es ist eine person worden und scheidet die menscheit nicht so von sich, wie meister Hans seinen rock aus zeucht und von sich legt, wenn er schlaffen geht.' (45)

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45. WA 26. 332, 28-333, 10. cf. also 336, 15-23; 340, 14-34.

There was nothing accidental about the disagreement between Luther, on the one side, and Karlstadt, Zwingli and Oecolampadius, on the other, on the correct understanding of the eucharistic words of Jesus. The dissension concerning the sense intended by Christ in the words of institution was not the cause of the parting of the ways amongst the several advocates of reform. On the contrary, the impression made by the verba testamenti on such men as Luther, Karlstadt, Zwingli and Oecolampadius simply uncovered and brought to prominence the unbridgeable theological differences that existed between Luther and the forerunners of the Reformed understanding of Christianity. Both sides brought distinct preconceptions to the sacred text, although both sides would insist that their preconceptions were themselves the result of a saturation in Holy Scripture and Christian piety. We have to do here with a fundamental difference in the understanding of the hypostatic union, which was bound to result in divergent conceptions of Christ's eucharistic presence. As far as Luther was concerned, the multipresence of Christ's body and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar is a perfectly feasible corollary of the 'taking up of manhood into God'. As the Reformer sees it, the Incarnation involves the exaltation of a particular, privileged human nature into the transcendent life of God, a process in which the faculties and potentialities of that human nature are enhanced to an extent beyond the power of the merely creaturely imagination to conceive, while at the same time not forfeiting their finite, creaturely quality:

> 'Wollen wir Christen sein und recht von Christo dencken und reden, so mussen wir ia also von yhm dencken, Das die Gottheit sey ausser und uber allen creaturen, Zum andern müssen wir dencken, das

> die menscheit (wie wol sie auch eine creatur ist), aber weil sie alleine und sonst keine also an Gott klebet das sie eine person mit der Gottheit ist, so mus sie auch höher, uber und ausser allen andern creaturn sein, doch unter Gott alleine.' (46)

Luther considers that the Godward pull exerted by the hypostatic union on Christ's human nature brings the latter into 'another country' than this earth. The humanity of Jesus here shares in the Creator's transcendent-immanent omnipresence in the whole created order:

> 'Hie komen wir nu mit Christo ausser allen Creaturn, beide nach der menscheit und Gottheit, Da sind wir ynn eym andern lande mit der menscheit, denn da sie auff erden gieng, nemlich, ausser und uber allen Creaturn, blos ynn der Gottheit, Nu las den glauben hie richten und schliessen, Ausser den Creaturn ist nichts denn Gott, und diese menscheit ist darnach auch ausser den Creaturn. So mus sie sein, da Gott ist, das feylet nymer mehr, Wesentlich aber kan sie nicht Gott sein, aber weil sie oben aus uber alle Creatur an den wesentlichen Gott reicht und klebt und ist, da Gott ist, so mus sie zum wenigsten personlich Gott sein und also auch an allem ort sein, da Gott ist.' (47)

On this understanding of the Incarnation, the real presence doctrine is in harmony with the Creed of the Church.

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46. WA 26. 340, 35-341, 2.

47. WA 26. 341, 3-12.

CHAPTER SIX:

THE REAL PRESENCE IN THE SETTING OF THE INDIRECT MODE OF THE DIVINE SELF - IMPARTATION IN CHRIST AND OF THE CHURCH'S APPROPRIATION OF CHRIST IN WORD AND SACRAMENT

Introduction

Luther's understanding of the perichoresis of the human by the divine nature of Christ - namely, his emphasis on the glory which overflows from the Eternal Son to the assumed humanity of Jesus, enriching and enhancing the life and being of this manhood - caused him to have no difficulties with the doctrine that, through the use of the words of institution as a formula of consecration, the very body and blood of Christ are illocally multipresent on the Church's altars. Two elements are to be distinguished in the continuation of the Incarnation which is the Christian Eucharist: first, the sovereign decision of Almighty God to commit the fullness of his Godhead to the humanity assumed into the person of the Son; and, secondly, our Lord's gracious promise to bestow himself and his benefits through such external media as the gospel, holy baptism, absolution and the bread and wine of the Holy Supper. In each case, through a merciful condescension whereby he accommodates himself to the level of his creatures, Almighty God reveals and imparts himself through what is not God. In a word, he

discloses and bestows himself indirectly. The humanity of Jesus and the means of grace are the locus where the Father deals graciously with us in the Son, the place in which God reveals himself; but, since God reveals himself precisely by veiling himself in the humanity of the Son and in the means of grace, the revelation of God is at the same time his self-concealment, his hiding himself in what is not God. Luther's distinctive presentation of this common Christian theme is aptly presented under the heading theologia crucis. We shall briefly review his conception of God's revealing himself by hiding himself (in Christ and in the means of grace) and note his insistence on the hiddenness of the Object(s) of faith, going on to enquire into the relationship between these emphases and the Reformer's doctrine of the hidden presence of Christ's body and blood in the eucharistic elements.

In the proto-confession which forms the concluding Part Three of the work of 1528, Luther is careful to propound the mystery of the Lord's Supper under the rubric of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The Reformer unreservedly confesses the full Deity and distinct personality of the Holy Spirit, aligning himself with the Western tradition in accepting the Filioque clause.[1] The Holy Spirit is for Luther Deus ut donum, God bringing men and women to God by endowing them with 'faith and other spiritual gifts', God forgiving sin and raising the dead:

> 'Durch den selbigen als eine lebendig, ewige, göttliche gabe und geschencke werden alle gleubigen mit dem glauben und andern geistlichen gaben gezieret, vom tod auff erweckt, von sunden gefreyet und frö-

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1. WA 26. 505, 29-31: 'Zum dritten gleube ich an den heiligen geist, der mit Vater und son ein warhafftiger Gott ist und vom Vater und son ewiglich kompt, doch ynn

> lich und getrost, frey und sicher ym gewissen gemacht, Denn das ist unser trotz, so wir solchs geists zeugnis ynn unserm hertzen fulen, das Gott wil unser Vater sein, sunde vergeben und ewiges leben geschenckt haben.' (2)

Having reached the Third Article of the Creed, the Reformer rejoices in 'die drey person, und ein Gott, der sich uns allen selbs gantz und gar gegeben hat, mit allem das er ist und hat'.[3] In the beginning, the Father gave himself to us, with heaven and earth and all our fellow creatures. Through Adam's fall, this gift was 'obscured', whereupon the Son gave himself to us, ascribing to our account 'all his works, suffering, wisdom and righteousness'. The Son reconciled us to the Father so that we, renewed in righteousness, might once again know ourselves and share in the gift of the created order as the children of his Father.[4] But the work of Christ would have been in vain if God's entry into our history had come to an end with his raising Jesus from the tomb. The Father gives himself to us in the work of creation, and the Son gives himself to us by bringing us back into filial relation to the Father in his work of redemption. The opera ad extra are consummated in the work of the Holy Spirit, who, by uniting us with Christ, effectually restores us to the stream of the divine life:

> 'Weil aber solche gnade niemand nütze were, wo sie so heymlich verborgen bliebe, und zu uns nicht komen kündte, So kompt der heilige geist und gibt sich auch uns gantz und gar, der leret uns solche

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einem göttlichen wesen und natur ein unterschiedliche person.'

2. ibid., 31-37. 3. ibid., 38-39.

4. WA 26. 505, 39-506, 3.

> wolthat Christi, uns erzeigt, erkennen, hilfft sie empfahen und behalten, nützlich brauchen und austeilen, mehren und foddern, ...' (5)

Luther expressed his distinctive conception of the work of the Holy Spirit with concise eloquence in the Small Catechism of 1528. I cannot 'by my own reason or strength' come to our Lord, but am utterly dependent for the attainment of this goal on the prevenient grace of God as expressed in the call of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit 'calls, illuminates, gathers and sanctifies' the whole of Christendom, engrafting it into Jesus Christ, so that it may daily experience the forgiveness of sin and at the last be perfectly restored through the resurrection of the dead and the enjoyment of the life of the world to come:

> 'Ich gläube, dass ich nicht aus eigener Vernunft noch Kraft an Jesum Christ, meinen Herrn, gläuben oder zu ihm kommen kann, sondern der heilige Geist hat mich durchs Evangelion berufen, mit seinen Gaben erleuchtet, im rechten Glauben geheiliget und erhalten, gleichwie er die ganze Christenheit auf Erden berüft, sammlet, erleucht, heiliget und bei Jesu Christo erhält im rechten einigen Glauben, in welcher Christenheit er mir und allen Gläubigen täglich alle Sunde reichlich vergibt und am iüngsten Tage mich und alle Toten auferwecken wird und mir sampt allen Gläubigen in Christo ein ewiges Leben geben wird; das ist gewisslich wahr.' (6)

In his summary of the First Article the Reformer praises God as the sole Fount, Creator and Giver of all things, and in his summary of the Second Article he rules out all synergism by celebrating, through his emphasis on solus Christus, God as the sole agent of reconciliation. In his comment on the Third Article, Luther focusses on

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5. WA 26. 506. 3-7.

6. BS KK 511, 46-512, 13.

the third moment of God's sharing his life with the creatures made in his image: it is by God that we go to God. Here too the Reformer finds Pelagian error in a synergism that would draw attention to human works. As Karlstadt was warned in 1525, what takes place in the means of grace is not our coming to the Spirit, but the Spirit's coming to us.[7] In the work of 1528, Luther makes a twofold distinction in the Holy Spirit's work of bringing men and women to Christ and hence to the Father. First, there is the inward work of the Spirit, his invisible operation in the hearts of the faithful: 'Ynnerlich durch den glauben und ander geistlich gaben.'[8] Secondly, there is the outward work of the Spirit, through which he performs his inward work in the faithful. We are dealing here with the fulfilment of the Incarnation in the external means of grace:

> 'Eusserlich aber durchs Euangelion, durch die tauffe und sacrament des altars, durch welche er als durch drey mittel odder weise zu uns kompt und das leiden Christi ynn uns ubet und zu nutz bringet der seligkeit.' (9)

The second section of this closing Chapter will accordingly enquire into the role which Luther ascribes to the presence, exhibition and distribution of the sacred body and blood in the Holy Supper in believers' appropriation of Christ and his benefits. We shall examine the function of the real presence in the bestowal of the forgiveness of sin, in the union of our death-oriented flesh with the life-giving flesh of Christ, and in the mystical union of our indigent souls with the superabundant life of the God-man.

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7. WA 18. 137, 15-16: (the devil) 'will dich leren, nicht wie der geyst zu dyr, sondern wie du zum geyst komen sollt.'

8. WA 26. 506, 8-9. 9. ibid., 10-12.

A. THE HIDDEN PRESENCE OF THE SACRED BODY AND BLOOD IN THE DIMENSION OF THE 'THEOLOGIA CRUCIS'

1. The 'theologia crucis' as the centre of Luther's epistemology

Dr. Rowan Williams begins his section on 'The Young Luther' in The Wound of Knowledge by observing that:

> 'Much of the perennial interest of Martin Luther lies in his understanding of the relation between "worldly" fact and transcendent saving truth.' (1)

Elsewhere in the same volume Dr. Williams encapsulates the essence of the Athanasian theology of the fourth century as follows:

> 'The Athanasian God "transcends His transcendence" to be encountered in human shape: his hiddenness and unknowability are grasped in and through the weakness of the flesh of Christ. We return again to the theme of the oblique character of Christian knowledge of God, discerning God as hidden in what is not God, knowing him as the One who does not let himself be known, and so forth. We do not begin from innate or intuitive ideas of the absolute or the transcendent; we are drawn into a transformed life, speech and activity in which the inexhaustible resource of the God who draws us is gradually discovered. And the agent of that "drawing" is the historical figure of Jesus, through the relations with himself which he establishes in Church and Sacrament.' (2)

For 'Athanasian' we might substitute 'Lutheran', and Dr. Williams will be found to have summarised all that continues to be profitable and edifying in the Reformer's theology and churchmanship. The Heidelberg Disputation of 1518 presents us with a concise manifesto in which Luther pointed to the humanity of the crucified Jesus as the place where God is God for us, the place where God conceals his Godhead while at the same time utterly

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1. The Wound of Knowledge, p. 142.

2. op.cit., p. 50.

revealing it, the place where God renounces his Godhead while at the same time - paradoxically - affirming it to the utmost. For Luther, as for Athanasius before him, the revelation of the world-embracing inner-trinitarian love of God in the assumed humanity of Jesus Christ is not primarily a past event which is the proper preserve of the historical specialist. Rather, the Reformer sees the human confrontation by and integration into the God-suffused humanity of Jesus as continuing in the life and mission of the Church. This statement can be proved by recalling the subject-matter of the second half of the Small Catechism of 1529. After expounding the first three 'chief parts' of Christian doctrine by offering his deceptively simple 'explanations' of the Decalogue, the Apostles' Creed and the Our Father, the Reformer rounds off his introduction to the Christian Faith by summarising the essence of baptism, confession and Lord's Supper. As a celebrated nineteenth-century Lutheran, the Dane, N. F. S. Grundtvig, would put it, these sacramental ordinances are the place where each believer hears for himself the Word of God, the authoritative and creative message of reconciliation. For Luther, the Incarnation and the dominically instituted means of grace belong together: neither can be understood without the other.

At the Heidelberg Disputation, Luther called his contemporaries away from speculative theology to a theology which would know God in and through the humanity of the Incarnate Son. The Reformer appeals to the experience of Moses, recorded in Ex. 33:21ff., to indicate just what is the proper concern of one 'worthily called a theologian':

> 'Non ille digne Theologus dicitur, qui invisibilia Dei per ea, quae facta sunt, intellecta conspicit, Sed qui visibilia et posteriora Dei per passiones et crucem conspecta intelligit.' (3)

Luther presently makes plain what he means by the 'visible things and back parts of God' by alluding to I Cor. 1:21ff:

> 'Posteriora et visibilia Dei sunt opposita invisibilium, id est, humanitas, infirmitas, stulticia.' (4)

Christ crucified is accordingly highlighted as the true measure of all genuine theology: 'Ergo in Christo crucifixo est vera Theologia et cognitio Dei.'[5] The meaning of this principle is that we are not to seek God in his 'glory and majesty', but in the 'humility and degradation of the Cross'. Accordingly, the God who has revealed himself is at the same time the God who has hidden himself. The Reformer goes to Isa. 45:15 to make his message plain:

> 'ita ut nulli iam satis sit ac prosit qui cognoscit Deum in gloria et maiestate, nisi cognoscat eundem in humilitate et ignominia crucis. Sic perdit sapientiam sapientum &c. sicut Isaias dicit: Vere absconditus tu es Deus.' (6)

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3. WA 1. 354, 17-20.

4. WA 1. 362, 4-5.

5. ibid., 18-19.

6. ibid., 11-14. Mention must be made here of the seminal and indispensable study by Walther von Loewenich: Luthers Theologia Crucis (1st ed., 1929; quoted here from the 5th ed., Witten, 1967). von Loewenich convincingly argued that the theologia crucis advocated in 1518 was not simply a passing fad typical of a yet 'monastic' Luther, which would presently be overcome and superseded by a decreasingly 'ascetic' Reformer: 'Dann ergibt sich aber, dass wir es in der theologia crucis durchaus nicht nur mit Umschreibungen des mönchischen Demutsideals zu

Walther von Loewenich correctly points to the unity of the dialectic of hiddenness and revelation in Luther's understanding of God with his statement that, 'Precisely as the God of revelation, God is the hidden God'.[7] Confusion must enter into any accurate presentation of Luther's understanding of the pairing of Deus revelatus with Deus absconditus when it is recalled that, in the de servo arbitrio of 1525, the Reformer developed an application of the dialectic of Deus revelatus and Deus absconditus which utterly bypassed the Incarnate Son and threatened the whole fabric and foundation of his joyful proclamation of the irreversible Christlikeness of God. The theology of the young Luther had worked within the polarity of man's utter bondage to sin and God's commitment in the Gospel freely to forgive and restore the lost creature. The anthropological side of this dialectic found characteristic expression in the Reformer's scornful denial of the freedom of the will, at any rate with respect to the relationship between creature and Creator. The thirteenth of the Heidelberg Theses argues that, as a result of the Fall, free will is an empty word. Hence, when fallen man 'does what in him lies', he cannot but compound mortal sin with mortal sin:

> 'Liberum arbitrium post peccatum res est de solo titulo, et dum facit quod in se est, peccat mortaliter.' (8)

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tun haben, sondern mit einem eigenartigen theologischen Erkenntnisprinzip, das seine genaue Entsprechung in der Kreuzestheologie des Apostels Paulus hat' (op.cit., p. 16). von Loewenich locates the heart of the theologia crucis in the principle that the knowledge of God is indirect, mediated knowledge (op.cit., pp. 10, 20).

7. 'Denn Gott ist eben als der Gott der Offenbarung der verborgene Gott' (op.cit., p. 22).

8. WA 1. 354, 5-6.

Given this emphasis on the unfreedom of the will to love God and perform the good, Luther was obliged to reject any idea that the soul can voluntarily dispose itself for the reception of grace. If man is not free to decide for or against the Gospel, and if faith is a sheer gift of Almighty God bestowed on some but not on others, it follows that the predestinating and electing will of God is what best prepares man for the reception of grace:

> 'Optima et infallibilis ad gratiam praeparatio et unica dispositio est aeterna dei electio et praedestinatio.' (9)

Luther was just as much an advocate of S. Augustine's doctrine of double predestination as were S. Thomas Aquinas and John Calvin. As is well known, those who advocate this teaching can appeal to the straightforward arguments of the Apostle Paul in Rom. 9-11. But those who hope for the ultimate reconciliation of all men with their Creator can invoke such texts as Rom. 11:32 and I Cor. 15:22. And the synergist can point to I Tim. 2:4, which is little more than a sick joke if the will is in fact unfree and if Almighty God has indeed predetermined a fixed number of the creatures made in his image to endure his eternal wrath. In the controversy between Erasmus and Luther on the freedom or otherwise of the human will, Erasmus sought to counter Luther's uncompromising Augustinianism by urging the full force of such texts as Ezek. 33:11. How can God take no pleasure in the death of a sinner, if this is precisely what he has foreordained from eternity? Luther's response was to give a new and sinister twist to his distinction between Deus revelatus and Deus absconditus. While, in other contexts, the revealed God is the same as the hidden God,

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9. WA 1. 225, 27-28.

and vice versa, in the de servo arbitio the Reformer threatens the unity of God by sundering Deus revelatus from Deus absconditus. Luther quotes II Thess. 2:4 to make the point that there is in God that which transcends God as he is worshipped and proclaimed in the Church, that is, God in Christ. In this case the Reformer would point to a Deus absconditus who lurks behind God in Christ, the Deus revelatus, a God whose will is not identical with the saving will announced in the Gospel:

> 'Aliter de Deo vel voluntate Dei nobis praedicata, revelata, oblata, culta, Et aliter de Deo non praedicato, non revelato, non oblato, non culto disputandum est. Quatenus igitur Deus sese abscondit et ignorari a nobis vult, nihil ad nos. Hic enim vere valet illud: Quae supra nos, nihil ad nos.' (10)

The revealed God preached by the Church works to save men from sin and death, but the God hidden in majesty neither deplores nor removes the death that comes to all creatures through their involvement in sin. This Deus absconditus is the God of the 'double decree':

> 'Hoc enim agit Deus praedicatus, ut ablato peccato et morte salvi simus. Misit enim verbum suum et sanavit eos. Caeterum Deus absconditus in maiestate neque deplorat neque tollit mortem, sed operatur vitam, mortem et omnia in omnibus. Neque enim tum verbo suo definivit sese, sed liberum sese reservavit super omnia.' (11)

With this distinction between the two wills in God, Luther has, to say the least, put a question mark behind the magnificent confessions of solus Christus which are such an admirable feature of his eucharistic works of 1527 and 1528. He has denied his own bold claim that

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10. WA 18. 685, 3-7.

11. ibid., 19-24.

'ausser diesem menschen kein Gott ist',[12] and he has conceded that there are areas of the divine mind and heart into which the assumed humanity of Jesus is not 'drawn' by the love of the Son.[13] In 1528 the Reformer would exclaim that he is totally disinterested in any God apart from the Incarnate Son. Not for him any discarnate God! Should a discarnate God appear at any point, then the hypostatic union has - God forbid! - been dissolved:

> 'Und wo du einen ort zeigen wurdest, da Gott were und nicht der mensch, so were die person schön zurtrennet, weil ich als denn mit der warheit kund sagen: Hie ist Gott, der nicht mensch ist und noch nie mensch ward, Mir aber des Gottes nicht. Denn hieraus wolt folgen, das raum und stette die zwo naturn von einander sonderten und die person zurtrenneten, so doch der tod und alle teuffel sie nicht kundten trennen noch von einander reissen, ...Nein geselle, wo du mir Gott hinsetzest, da mustu mir die menscheit mit hin setzen, Sie lassen sich nicht sondern und von einander trennen, Es ist eine person worden und scheidet die menscheit nicht so von sich, wie meister Hans seinen rock aus zeucht und von sich legt, wenn er schlaffen geht.' (14)

It may be conceded that Luther discourages all speculation concerning the alleged reprobating will of God: 'Quae supra nos, nihil ad nos.' Nevertheless, with his distinction of Deus revelatus from Deus absconditus in the interests of the doctrine of double predestination, the Reformer has pointed to an area in God's mind and heart where 'he is neither man, nor has he yet become man'. We are faced here with a momentous and terrible

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12. WA 26. 332, 19-20.

13. WA 26. 340, 15-16.

14. WA 26. 332, 33-333, 10.

crisis within Luther's understanding of the mystery of Christ. To be more precise, we are faced with the conflict between Luther the christocentric evangelical and Luther the adamant biblicist. Should the Reformer retain his conviction that the will is unfree in matters affecting salvation and at the same time resolve to tackle the doctrine of the Last Things in terms of his basic christological-evangelical starting-point, then he would be bound at length to share the universalist hope entertained in the ancient Church by Origen and S. Gregory of Nyssa. In this case, the later Karl Barth would appear as Luther's consistent disciple, as the Protestant theologian in whose thinking Luther the evangelical triumphs boldly over Luther the biblicist and the potential grandfather of fundamentalism. On the other hand, had he overcome his conviction of the total bondage of the will in matters affecting salvation - a doctrine based, not only on Holy Scripture, but also on ancient philosophical determinism! - then the Reformer could, by taking the path of synergism, have held to both God's efficacious will to draw all men into his inner-trinitarian life in love and the tragic fact that some men will spurn the gracious offer of salvation. With his severance of Deus revelatus from Deus absconditus, Luther simply achieved the worst of all possible worlds. Moreover, the unwholesome tension within his conception of God at this point gives us insight into the spiritual dimension of Anfechtung that accompanied his walk with God from youth to old age. In his treatment of the second, sinister Deus absconditus within the Reformer's theological thinking, von Loewenich frankly concedes that, 'This Deus absconditus is the God of double predestina-

tion'.[15] Notwithstanding this admission, von Loewenich endeavours to make the best of a bad job by seeking to uncover some spiritually profitable truths in Luther's pointing to a second Deus absconditus. As von Loewenich sees it, the teaching of the de servo arbitrio attests the fact that 'mysteries remain, even within the revealed God'.[16] The thought that our present knowledge of God in Christ is but a starting-point and not yet our final goal is indeed salutary, and appeal can be made at this point to I Cor. 13:12. Nevertheless, the Deus absconditus of the de servo arbitrio is not Luther's most apt testimony to this motif, which is most movingly expressed in the thoughts which the Reformer jotted down only hours before his death on Feb. 18th 1546. Luther's last thoughts offer a striking parallel to the parting remarks of S. Thomas Aquinas, whose own Summa struck him as little worth in comparison with the experience of the glory of God vouchsafed him shortly before his death. In this life, mused Luther, we cannot search out the fullness of the Aeneid of the Incarnate Life, but may do little more than worship the footprints of Incarnate God. We are in truth beggars, wrote Luther, as he made ready to die in hope:

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15. 'Dieser Deus absconditus ist der Gott der doppelten Prädestination' (op.cit., p. 34).

16. von Loewenich contends that the Deus absconditus of 1525 ultimately complements, and does not contradict, the earlier emphasis on Deus simul revelatus et absconditus: 'Der Unterschied der beiden Linien lässt sich so zusammenfassen: dort bedeutet der Gedanke des Deus absconditus, dass Offenbarung prinzipiell nur in der Verhüllung möglich ist, hier, dass auch im offenbaren Gott Geheimnisse bleiben. Beide Linien schneiden sich im Glaubensbegriff' (op.cit., p. 38).

> 'Hanc tu ne divinam Aeneida tenta, sed vestigia pronus adora. Wir sein pettler. Hoc est verum.' (17)

The God who reveals himself by hiding himself in the assumed humanity of Jesus Christ can be apprehended by men and women solely through the Spirit-infused attitude of faith. Since faith is the correlate of the God who is simul revelatus et absconditus, it is hardly surprising that, in his definition of faith, the Reformer should focus on the 'hiddenness' of the Object(s) of belief revealed in the Word. Taking as his starting-point the assertion of Heb. 11:1 that 'faith is the conviction of things not seen', Luther asserts that, in order for there to be room for faith, it is necessary that all the Objects of belief be hidden. Indeed, these must be hidden so deeply that they are veiled under an entirely antithetical object, sense and experience. Thus our God is the one who kills to make alive, who justifies by making guilty, and who brings souls to heaven by taking them to hell:

> 'Altera est, quod fides est rerum non apparentium. Ut ergo fidei locus sit, opus est, ut omnia quae creduntur, abscondantur. Non autem remotius absconduntur, quam sub contrario obiectu, sensu, experientia. Sic Deus dum vivificat, facit illud occidendo; dum iustificat, facit illud reos faciendo; dum in coelum vehit, facit id ad infernum ducendo, ut dicit Scriptura: Dominus mortificat et vivificat, deducit ad inferos et reducit. I Re. 2.' (18)

But what is the relationship between the 'hiddenness' of the articles of faith and the fact that, as Dr. Williams puts it, 'God overthrows speculative theology by

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17. WATR 5. 318, 1-3.

18. WA 18. 633, 7-12.

making himself a worldly reality'?[19] In other words, does the Reformer's stress on the 'hiddenness' of the articles of faith represent a docetic threat to the 'worldly reality' of God Incarnate? At first glance, a famous ecclesiological statement of Luther's might seem to reduce the one holy catholic and apostolic Church to an ethereal civitas Platonica: 'Abscondita est ecclesia, latent sancti.'[20] A statement from the polemical tract Wider Hans Worst of 1541 is equally insistent on the hiddenness of the Church, which, through its inclusion in the Third Article of the Creed, is just as much an article of faith as is belief in the Incarnation or in the Holy Spirit. But in believing in the Incarnation we believe in the Godhead hidden in the lowly, rejected and crucified man, Jesus of Nazareth. Just so, states the Reformer, in believing in 'one holy catholic and apostolic Church' we predicate a hidden, supernatural quality of an external, ambivalent community which can be discerned through various outward rites:

> 'Es ist ein hoch, tieff, verborgen ding die Kirche, das sie niemand kennen noch sehen mag, Sondern allein an der Tauffe, Sacrament und Wort fassen und gleuben mus.' (21)

For Luther, then, the ecclesia abscondita is one and the same thing as the ecclesia revelata: faith perceives the 'revealed' Church as 'hidden' in a community existing in space and time and distinguishable by certain external 'marks'. Let the hiddenness in an external object of

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19. The Wound of Knowledge, p. 146.

20. WA 18. 652, 23.

21. WA 51. 507, 31-33.

articles of faith revealed in the Word be recalled as this section is brought to a close with Luther's definition of 'sacrament' in the Von den Konziliis und Kirchen of 1539:

> 'Aber es ist gros geheimnis und mus mit dem glauben begriffen werden, Es lesst sich nicht sehen, noch greiffen, darumb ists ein Sacrament, das heist ein heimlich ding, mysterium, unsichtbarlich, verborgen.' (22)

2. Theologia crucis and real presence

With his distinction of theologia crucis from theologia gloriae, Luther had simply proposed a new conceptual framework for a subject-matter which was already the common property of Christendom. As applied to the mystery of the eucharistic Christ, the Reformer's stress on the hiddenness of a supernatural object that can be discerned by faith alone had already found eloquent expression in the hymnody and theology of S. Thomas Aquinas. Notwithstanding the many differences of emphasis and attitude between Luther and Aquinas, there is an unmistakable kinship between the two in the devotion of each man to the eucharistic Christ. In his Summa Theologica, S. Thomas pointed to the fittingness of the hidden presence of the sacred body and blood, alluding to Heb. 11:1 to express a meditation on the ways of God which would later be echoed independently by Luther. The real presence, surmises Aquinas, is in keeping with the 'perfection of faith', to which Christ now displays his human nature just as, in the days of the Incarnate Life, he displayed his essential Godhead, that is, 'invisibili modo':

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22. WA 50. 641, 9-12.

> 'Tertio, hoc competit perfectioni fidei, quae, sicut est de divinitate Christi, ita est de eius humanitate: secundum illud Io. 14,1: "Creditis in Deum, et in me credite." Et quia fides est invisibilium, sicut divinitatem suam nobis exhibet Christus invisibiliter, ita et in hoc sacramento carnem suam nobis exhibet invisibili modo.' (1)

S. Thomas stressed that the miraculous transformation of the elements into Christ's body and blood is a mystery hidden from sense-perception, being knowable solely by a faith which lets itself be instructed by the word of Jesus. In the fourth stanza of his Pange lingua, Aquinas offered the following teaching and counsel:

> 'Verbum caro, panem verum
> Verbo carnem efficit:
> Fitque sanguis Christi merum:
> Et si sensus deficit,
> Ad firmandum cor sincerum
> Sola fides sufficit.'

The same sentiments are repeated in the sixth stanza of the Lauda Sion:

> 'Dogma datur Christianis,
> Quod in carnem transit panis,
> Et vinum in sanguinem:
> Quod non capis, quod non vides,
> Animosa firmat fides,
> Praeter rerum ordinem.'

Goaded by the crudely rationalist polemic of Karlstadt and the Swiss, Luther reiterated these very emphases in his eucharistic works of the mid and late 1520s, finally stating at Marburg in 1529 that the hidden presence of the sacred body and blood is perfectly in accord with the analogia fidei.

In Wider die himmlischen Propheten of 1525, the Reformer calmly reminded his interlocutor of the Church's

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1. ST III, qu. 75, art. 1.

teaching that Christ's body and blood are present, not visibly, but invisibly, in the Sacrament of the Altar:

> 'Aber wyr leren nicht, das Christus leyb und blut sichtbarlich ynn eusserlichen stetten sey, sondern verborgen ym Sacrament.' (2)

Indicative of a note sounded throughout his polemical writings on the Holy Supper is Luther's stress, in the work of 1527, on the inaccessibility of the miracle of the real presence to the natural reason. The presence of the body and blood cannot be perceived by the senses, but by a faith that clings solely to the words of Christ:

> 'Wie aber das zu gehe odder wie er ym brod sey, wissen wir nicht, sollens auch nicht wissen. Gotts wort sollen wir gleuben und yhm nicht weise noch mas setzen. Brod sehen wir mit den augen, Aber wir hören mit den oren, das der leib da sey.' (3)

In a highly sarcastic passage of the same writing, the Reformer accuses the Swiss opponents of the real presence doctrine of standing Heb. 11:1 on its head through their demand for visible proof of the presence of the body and blood.[4] And in a most significant section later on in the same writing, Luther links the eucharistic presence to the definition of faith which we have already met in the de servo arbitrio of 1525. Through the eating and drinking of Christ's body and blood in the eucharistic action, urges the Reformer, the Church is vouchsafed the physical presence of its Lord just as surely as were his contemporaries in first century Palestine, who were suffered to see, hear and touch him.

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2. WA 18. 212, 11-13. 3. WA 23. 87, 32-35.

4. WA 23. 117, 6-12: 'Danck habt, lieben herrn. Ich wuste nicht, das man ynn artickeln des glaubens muste nichts nach Gotts wort fragen, sondern die leiblichen augen auffthun und mit den selbigen der vernunfft nach urteilen, was zu gleuben sey. Nu verstehe ich was das

The purpose of the real presence is that Jesus 'uns ja so nahe sey leiblich als er yhnen gewest ist'. Luther immediately goes on to qualify this assertion by insisting that such an intimate presence of Christ with his Church across the boundaries of space and time would be impossible if it had to be exercised according to the visible, tangible mode employed during his earthly lifetime. 'Another mode' must be employed for Christ to share his presence with an infinitely greater multitude than the apostolic band and their associates. 'Seeing Jesus' is not denied us, but rather promised us, yet this blessing will not be granted us until the Last Day. This tension between Already and Not Yet, Christ's tarrying in a hidden mode of presence among his people until the visible revelation of his rule, has to do with the manner of knowledge of God in Christ characteristic of Christians bound to the conventions of this-worldly time and space. The Lord is hidden from our senses 'auff das der glaube rawm habe':

> 'Also hat er nach seinem gefallen, wem er gewolt hat, gesehen, gehort, geborn, gesaugt, getragen, angerüret und der gleichen leiblich und geistlich gehandelt werden. Aber von uns wil er hie widder geborn noch gesehen noch gehöret noch angerüret, sondern alleine geessen und getruncken werden beyde leiblich und geistlich, Das wir durch solch essen ja so viel haben und so ferne komen sollen als ihene mit geberen, sehen, hören, tragen sc. komen sind, und uns ja so nahe sey leiblich als er yhnen gewest ist, on das eine andere weise must sein umb des willen, das er ynn aller wellt so nahe sein kündte, welchs nicht sein kundte, wo er sichtbarlich

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heist, "fides est non apparentium", Das ist auff newe auslegung dieser geister so viel gesagt: Der glaube sol nicht mehr noch weiter gleuben denn yhm die augen mit fingern zeigen und die vernunfft messen kan.'

> erschiene. Dazu hat er uns das sehen auch nicht versagt sondern zugesagt, alleine das es auff gezogen und gespart wird bis auff den Jüngsten tag, auff das der glaube rawm habe und wir nicht hie selig seyn ynn dem elenden leben. Was sol er doch mehr thun?' (5)

The distinction between the visible and invisible modes of Christ's presence was explored in greater detail and with the explicit use of specialist terminology in the Confession of 1528. The ascription to our Lord of 'circumscriptive' (visible) presence and 'definitive', 'repletive' (invisible) presence, which has already been sketched in the previous Chapter, is to be seen as an attempt by Luther to justify the meaningfulness of talk of an invisible presence of a creaturely reality which is usually visible and tangible. Accordingly, the Reformer's discussion of the scholastic distinctions between several modes of presence can be read under the heading of the theologia crucis and the essence of faith as fides non apparentium. At least one further passage from the Confession of 1528 is informative in the present context. Luther confesses the miraculous quality of the presence of the body and blood, which is 'perceived' by the Word and faith:

> 'Freylich ists ein wunderzeichen, das Christus leib und blut ym sacrament sind, noch ists nicht sichtbarlich da, Ist uns aber gnug, das wirs durchs wort und glauben empfinden, das er da sey.' (6)

The Reformer is here concerned to argue against his Swiss opponents that the real presence is truly a miracle, albeit not in the sense of the verifiable physical miracles wrought by Christ, but in the sense of such 'invi-

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5. WA 23. 193, 4-16.

6. WA 26. 478, 15-17.

sible' mysteries as the Incarnation itself. The Lucan and Pauline accounts of the cup-saying, which describe the eucharistic chalice as the 'New Testament in the blood' of Christ, prompt Luther to set forth the eucharist in the context of the progression of sacred history from shadow to fulfilment. Christians must enjoy the full reality of the New Testament, and not simply a 'figure or sign' thereof. But, while the New Testament must be 'truly present', the Reformer sees no reason why, under the conditions of our earthly pilgrimage with its tension between Already and Not Yet, it should not be present 'hiddenly, under an alien form'. This formulation alludes unmistakably to the theologia crucis programmatically outlined in 1518; and since Luther, in these pages of the work of 1528, equates the 'New Testament' with the 'blood of Christ' (indeed, it is only on account of the presence in it of Christ's blood that the chalice can be called 'the New Testament'), we may here make a direct link between the theologia crucis and the real presence:

> 'Denn Christen sollen das newe testament an yhm selbs on figur odder zeichen haben. Verborgen mügen sie es wol haben unter frembder gestalt, Aber warhafftig und gegenwertig müssen sie es haben.' (7)

At the Marburg Colloquy of the following year, the Reformer pronounced the real presence congruous with the analogia fidei. Christ is substantially present in the Sacrament, but - and here Luther alludes to Heb. 11:1 - at the same time, hiddenly:

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7. ibid., 31-33.

> 'Substantialiter, ut natus est e virgine, est in sacramento. ...Dicit hic esse perfectissimam analogiam fidei, quia hic fides est rerum non apparentium.' (8)

The Reformer's consistent and unyielding confession of the real presence cannot, therefore, be construed as a 'foreign body' in his thought, for not only is adherence to this doctrine in keeping with his understanding of the development of Christ's human nature in the matrix of his eternal Godhead, but it also corresponds to his conception of the indirect mode of God's self-giving in Christ and of the creaturely apprehension of the Object(s) of the fides quae through the Spirit-infused fides qua, themes which Luther treated under the rubric theologia crucis.

B. THE FRUITS OF THE RECEPTION OF CHRIST'S BODY AND BLOOD BY BELIEVING COMMUNICANTS IN THE MASS

Luther was aware of the need to defend the doctrine of the real presence against two sets of doctrinal objections: first, against the charge that the multipresence of Jesus' body and blood is 'absurd' and 'unseemly'; and, secondly, against the complaint that the presence, exhibition and distribution of the sacred body and blood in the Mass is 'unnecessary'.[1] The second set of objections stemmed from the 'spiritualising' conception of the Christian religion propounded by the Swiss churchmen, Zwingli and Oecolampadius. Zwingli found offensive the

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8. WA 30 III. 132, 2-5.

1. WA 19. 486, 11-12: 'Zum ersten sagen sie, Es schicke sich nicht, das Christus leib und blut sol im brod und wein sein. Zum andern, Es sei nicht von noten.' cf. also WA 19. 461, 2: 'Absurditas et nulla necessitas.'

view that salvation is mediated to believers through external means, even though the latter be nothing less than the crown of the created order, namely the assumed humanity of Jesus Christ. Against Luther's teaching that the life-giving flesh and blood of Christ are imparted through the elements of bread and wine, Zwingli retorted that 'Spirit eats Spirit'.[2] Moreover, he alleged that participation in the Lord's Supper is simply a public testimony to a grace that the believer has already received 'privately', and hence immediately.[3] This 'spiritualising' devaluation of the humanity of Christ and of the external means of grace is apparent in Oecolampadius' appeal to Luther at Marburg that the Reformer should not cling to Jesus' humanity, but rather ascend to the contemplation of his divinity.[4] Since they approached the New Testament with such preconceptions as these, Zwingli and Oecolampadius were unable to see what spiritual benefit could be gained from eating and drinking Christ's body and blood in the Holy Supper. They thus posed to Luther in an acute and urgent form a question to which he had hitherto given little disciplined thought: what is the relationship between eating and drinking the sacred body and blood and the reception of supernatural grace? Indeed, just what are the benefits conferred by Almighty God on the believing communicant? One cannot avoid the impression that, in his eucharistic works of 1520, the Reformer had

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2. see WA 30 III. 118, 12-13.

3. see CR XCIII/2 (CR Zw VI/2), p. 803, 5-15.

4. see WA 30 III. 132, 20-22.

simply tacked on his distinctive understanding of justification to a straightforward confession of the real presence. At this early stage, there is no inner relation between the believer's reception of his Lord's body and blood and his reception of justifying grace. Luther here teaches that the sacred body and blood are given as a 'pledge' and 'seal' of the forgiveness of sins promised by Christ in the verba testamenti. This would seem to be an act of senseless profligacy on the part of Almighty God, for it is surely superfluous to confirm one invisible gift by another. The Platonising conception of Christianity advocated by Zwingli and Oecolampadius acted as the spur which obliged Luther to rethink the whole issue of the fruits of the Sacrament. In the process the Reformer made great advances over the incoherent scheme outlined in 1520, but one cannot suppress the thought that his account of the benefits of the real presence remained incomplete. A half-finished job is not, however, the same as the erection of an uneven and shaky structure. In 1527 Luther laid the foundation of an understanding of the fruits of the real presence in the context of his overall conception of the Incarnation and its consequences. Here, and in scattered remarks of both previous and subsequent years, he built on this foundation. Even so, he never did more than lay the odd brick here and there, leaving to others the task of dotting his is and crossing his ts. To some extent this task was performed by such men as Chemnitz and Gerhard in the age of Orthodoxy, and by such teachers as Vilmar and Löhe in the nineteenth century. That the development of Luther's teaching at the hands of these theologians is not widely reflected

in the doctrine and practice of contemporary Lutheran Christendom, is doubtless partly responsible for the feeling of some Roman Catholic and Anglican writers that Lutheran eucharistic theology is incomplete and internally incoherent. Since the Reformer's forward-pointing teaching on the subject of the fruits of the bodily presence was evoked by the Platonising theology of Zwingli and Oecolampadius, it is well to begin this Section with an account of Luther's challenge to the starting-point advocated by the Swiss, that is, with his distinctive understanding of the biblical antithesis of 'flesh' and 'spirit' in its bearing on one's approach to the assumed humanity of our Lord and to the external means of grace.

1. Luther's understanding of the biblical antithesis of 'flesh' and 'spirit'

In the work de servo arbitrio, Luther noted that Scripture uses the word 'flesh' in two distinct senses. At times the Bible speaks of the 'flesh' as an order that is antithetical to the 'spirit' absolutely, in which case the term has no negative overtones whatever. For example, man and wife become 'one flesh', Christ teaches that 'My flesh is food indeed', and S. John confesses that 'The Word became flesh'. The Reformer points out that Hebrew employs but one word where Latin has the choice between caro and corpus, and expresses the wish that biblical translators would use their commonsense by opting for the neutral term 'body' in some contexts, and, where appropriate, for the negatively-loaded term 'flesh' in others:

> 'Summa, id observabis in scripturis, ubicunque de carne agitur per antithesin ad spiritum, ibi fere per carnem intelligas omnia contraria spiritus, Ut ibi: Caro non prodest quicquam. Ubi vero ab-

> solute tractatur, ibi conditionem naturamque corporalem significare scias, ut: erunt duo in carne una. Caro mea vere est cibus. Verbum caro factum est. In his locis poteris mutato Ebraismo corpus pro carne dicere. Ebraea enim lingua uno vocabulo Carnis significat, quod nos duobus carne et corpore significamus. Et vellem sic fuisse translatum distinctis vocabulis totum ubique scripturae canonem.' (1)

In Luther's view, there is nothing intrinsically questionable or demeaning about corporeity as such: the material creation and the bodily constitution of man are the good creatures of God. Only when, through a perversion of man's soul, mind and heart, the material creation and the bodily constitution of man are set at enmity with God, do they become 'flesh' in the perjorative sense of the order that is at war with the 'spirit'. As the Reformer put it in 1527, all things are 'spiritual' that proceed from the Holy Spirit, no matter how external or material they may be; conversely, all things are 'carnal' that proceed, apart from the Spirit, from the 'natural power of the flesh', no matter how inward or refined they may be:

> 'Das alles geist, geistlich und des geists ding ist und heist, was aus dem heiligen geist kompt, es sey wie leiblich, eusserlich, sichtbarlich es ymer sein mag, Widderumb fleisch und fleischlich alles, was on geist aus natürlicher krafft des fleischs kompt, Es sey wie ynnerlich und unsichtbar es ymer sey.' (2)

Luther lapses into Latin in order to summarise his understanding of 'spirit': 'Obiectum non est semper spirituale, Sed usus debet esse spiritualis.'[3] The Reformer

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1. WA 18. 735, 31-736, 2.

2. WA 23. 203, 7-11.

3. WA 23. 185, 6.

accounts all things 'spiritual' that occur within the triangle Word, Spirit and faith:

> 'So fort an alle das ienige, so unser leib euserlich und leiblich thut: wenn Gotts wort dazu kompt und durch den glauben geschicht, so ists und heist geistlich geschehen, Das nichts so leiblich, fleischlich odder eusserlich sein kan, es wird geistlich, wo es ym wort und glauben gehet, Das geistlich nicht anders ist Denn was durch den geist und glauben ynn und durch uns geschicht, Gott gebe, das ding, da mit wir umb gehen, sey leiblich odder geistlich. Scilicet in usu, non in obiecto spiritus est, Es sey sehen, hören, reden, greiffen, geberen, tragen, essen, trincken odder was es wolle.' (4)

The Schwärmer, charges Luther, mistakenly suppose 'spirituality' to be the polar opposite of corporeity, when, in fact, the very opposite is the case. The Reformer proposes that the Spirit cannot be found except in such bodily, external things as the word of the gospel, the water of baptism, the eucharistic species and the people of God on earth:

> 'Aber unser schwermer haben den schwindel und fladdern geist, meinen, es müge da nichts geistlichs sein, wo etwas leiblich ist, geben fur, fleisch sey kein nütze, So das widderspiel warhafftig ist, Das der geist bey uns nicht sein kan anders denn ynn leiblichen dingen als ym wort, wasser und Christus leib und ynn seinen heiligen auff erden.' (5)

Rejecting any Platonic misconstruction of the biblical antithesis of flesh and spirit, Luther had no problems with the view that external, material media are aptly employed by the Holy Spirit to impart to men and women a share in the life of God. The mediation of the life of God, however, is not simply a two-way process between the Holy Spirit and ordinary creaturely reality. Rather,

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4. WA 23. 189, 8-15.

5. WA 23. 193, 28-33.

what is mediated by the Holy Spirit through, for example, the human voice and the elements of bread, wine and water is the humanity of Christ, the divinely ordained point of contact between transcendent God and the creaturely order. Since the humanity of Jesus is the source and starting-point of God's gracious dealings with mankind in the Church, the Reformer was scandalised at the appeal made by Karlstadt and Zwingli to Jn. 6:63 to back up their contention that nothing of spiritual value could be gained from a bodily eating of Christ's body and blood in the eucharist.[6] The flesh of Christ, retorts Luther in 1525, is the Sanctissimum: 'das doch das aller heyligst ist.'[7] In the work of 1527, the Reformer insists that the flesh of Christ cannot belong under Jn. 6:63b, but must of necessity be understood as referred to in Jn. 3:6b - 'that which is born of the Spirit is spirit':

> 'Aber wir armen sunder und des "gebacken Gotts" diener sagen also, Das Christus fleisch gehöret unter den spruch: "Was aus geist geborn ist, das ist geist". Denn sein fleisch ist nicht aus fleisch, sondern aus dem heiligen geist geborn, wie auch die kinder und alle wellt ym glauben bekennet und spricht: "Ich gleube an Jhesum Christ unsern herrn, der empfangen ist vom heiligen geist".' (8)

Luther can invoke another proof text in support of his view, namely Lk. 1:34, where the Archangel Gabriel addresses the Mother of God:

> 'Hie hörestu ja, das Christus leib aus dem geist geboren wird und ist heilig.' (9)

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6. WA 18. 192, 1-3. WA 23. 115, 22-23.

7. WA 18. 193, 3-4.

8. WA 23. 201, 13-18.

9. ibid., 25-26.

In short, the flesh of Christ is a 'geistlich fleisch';[10] indeed, it is not only the dwelling-place, but also the channel of the Holy Spirit:

> 'Nu vertregt sich ja Christus leib und fleisch fast wol mit dem geist, Ja er ist des geistes wonung leibhafftig und durch yhn kompt der geist ynn alle andere.' (11)

The Reformer insisted against Karlstadt that the bodily presence of Christ in the Sacrament is always 'intrinsically useful, salutary and good', although he was careful to qualify this claim by pointing out that unbelief bars man from profitably availing himself of this life-giving presence of incarnate God.[12] Luther compares the relationship of unbelief to the sacramental presence with the blind man's inability to see the shining sun:

> 'Er ist ymer dar nütze, wo er ist, ob er wol meyns unglaubens halben myr nicht nütze sey. Die sonne scheynet ymer dar, ob sie wol der blinde nicht sihet.' (13)

In 1527 the Reformer conceives the bodily presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar as an extension of the Incarnation: although <u>invisibly</u> present in the elements, through his sacramental presence Jesus enjoys precisely the same degree of physical intimacy with us now as he enjoyed (visibly) with his disciples in first century Palestine.[14] Since the physical presence of

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10. <u>WA</u> 23. 203, 15.

11. <u>WA</u> 23. 195, 3-5.

12. <u>WA</u> 18. 193, 34-37: 'Sage myr aber du lügengeyst, wenn odder wo haben wyr geleret, das das Sacrament (wie wol es an yhm selbst ymer nütze, heylsam und gut ist) yemands nütze sey, er neme es denn ym glauben durch die wort Gottes, die drynnen sind?' cf. also <u>ibid</u>., 9-21.

13. <u>WA</u> 18. 194, 30-195, 1.

14. <u>WA</u> 23. 193, 4-16.

Incarnate God vouchsafed visibly to the Apostles and invisibly to the post-Pentecost Church is the presence of one and the same Lord, Luther looks to the Gospels to establish just how the physical presence of Incarnate God was profitably enjoyed by the saints of that time. Implicit in this enquiry is the view that the post-Pentecost Church may and should imitate the figures of the Gospel history in their believing physical fellowship with our Lord. The Reformer seeks edification, first, from the example of the blessed Virgin Mary. The Second Eve is, of course, a special case in her relationship to her Son. Luther states that blessed Mary's conception of her Son was at once spiritual and physical; indeed, if the Virgin had not first conceived Christ spiritually in her heart by believing the angel's word of promise, she would not have been able to conceive him physically in her womb. The Reformer seems to have lapsed (or advanced?) into synergism with his emphasis on Mary's voluntary consent to her vocation to be Mother of God:

> 'Mit dem selbigen glauben ynn des Engels wort empfieng und gebar sie ym hertzen Christum geistlich, zu gleich da sie yhn ynn yhrem leibe empfieng und gebar leiblich, Denn wo sie nicht hette Christum ynn yhrem hertzen empfangen geistlich, hette sie yhn nymer mehr empfangen leiblich. Wie wol Gott hette mügen von yhrem leibe machen Christus leib ynn yhrem schlaff on yhr wissen, wie er Heva von Adam macht, Aber da were sie nicht seine mutter worden, gleich wie Adam nicht Heva mutter ist.' (15)

While Mary is unique as Mother of God, her believing attitude to the physical presence of Christ within her makes her, in Luther's view, the paradigmatic communicant. The

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15. WA 23. 185, 11-18.

Virgin conceives Christ bodily, yet her body is ignorant of the identity of the child in her womb. Mary's heart is aware of the dignity of the fruit of her womb, through her faith in the angel's word. The Virgin's two-fold pregnancy is one and the same thing, viewed spiritually and physically respectively:

> 'Yhr leib weis nicht, was er empfehet, Denn er vernympt des Engels wort nicht, Aber yhr hertz vernympt wol, was der leib empfehet. Da ist sie nu zweifeltig schwanger, geistlich und leiblich, und doch mit einerley frucht. Und das leibliche schwanger sein, were yhr kein nütze gewest, wo es on das geistlich schwanger sein geschehen were.' (16)

Two further instances listed by the Reformer are relevant in the present context. The shepherds at Bethlehem and S. Simeon at Jerusalem see the infant Christ with their physical eyes. The latter are not aware of the identity of the infant, which the shepherds and Simeon perceive with their believing hearts, which have been instructed by the word of the angelic host and by private revelation respectively. Here too, one physical reality is perceived in two dimensions:

> 'Hie ist nu das ding leiblich und doch ein geistlich sehen neben dem leiblichen.' (17)

And Luther is edified by the example of the woman with the flow of blood, who was healed by touching the hem of our Lord's garment as he passed on his way to Jairus' house. The suffering woman's physical touching of Christ's garment was accompanied, says the Reformer, by a spiritual touching of Christ. She has heard the reports concerning Jesus, and comes to him believing in his power to heal where the physicians have failed:

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16. ibid., 22-26.

17. WA 23. 187, 9-10.

> 'Einerley ist das leibliche kleid, und sind doch da zweyerley anrüren, geistlich und leiblich.' (18)

With these reflections, Luther has laid a solid foundation for a convincing account of the benefits of the believing reception of the sacred body and blood in the Holy Supper. It is in the character of Christ to do good, wherever he is, both in the days of his public ministry in first century Palestine and in his sacramental presence in the elements. Suppliant faith alone is needed for men and women to apprehend Christ, along with the reconciliation and healing that he brings:

> 'Zwar da er auff erden gieng, war er so nütze, das wen er anrüret durch sein fleisch, dem halff er. Er rieff durch seinen leib mit leiblicher stym Lazaro aus dem grabe, Er rüret den aussetzigen an und macht yhn rein, Er gieng auff dem meer und reicht dem sinckenden Peter die hand Und zoch ym land umbher und thet eitel wunder und wolthat. Es ist auch seine art und natur, das er wol thu, wo er ist. Wie keme er nu dazu, das er ym brod solt unnütze sein, So es doch dasselbige fleisch, dasselbige wort und der selbigen art ist und mus eitel gut und nütz sein?' (19)

With the exception of the raising of Lazarus, all the examples from the Gospel history listed in the foregoing paragraph have in common the theme that, through faith in the Word either of or concerning Jesus, men and women are united with Christ in such a way that his bodily presence among them is the instrument through which they receive such blessings as spiritual strengthening, forgiveness and healing. The unspoken master concept here is therefore 'union with Christ'. One of the

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18. ibid., 21-22.

19. WA 23. 257, 24-31.

strangest features of Luther's publications on the eucharist is the almost total absence of explicit mention of this central, indeed indispensable, theme. Admittedly, it already found expression in the Sermon vom Sakrament des Leichnams Christi und von den Brüderschaften of 1519. To receive the Sacrament of the Altar, urges the Reformer here, is to receive 'a sure sign' of union 'with Christ and his saints' and of being a beneficiary of the accumulated merits of the totus Christus:

> 'Czum sechsten, Alsso yn dissem sacrament wirt dem menschen eyn gewiss tzeychen von gott selber geben durch den priester, das er mit Christo und seynen heyligen soll alsso voreynigt und alle ding gemeyn seyn, das Christus leyden und leben soll seyn eygen seyn, dartzu aller heyligen leben und leyden.' (20)

This core concept of 'union with Christ' subsequently goes underground in Luther's eucharistic writings, appearing only occasionally, and, even then, often largely implicitly. The enjoyment of Jesus' sacramental presence, the earthly fruition of 'union with Christ', is clearly in the forefront of the Reformer's mind in his significant formulation of 1527: 'und uns ja so nahe sey leiblich als er yhnen gewest ist.'[21] And this idea pulsates through his statement, in the same writing, of his intentions as a communicant, a passage where Luther underscores the togetherness of the manducatio sacramentalis with the manducatio spiritualis:

> 'Ich wil seinen leib mit dem brod leiblich essen und ym hertzen dennoch zu gleich gleuben, das es sey der leib, der fur mich gegeben wird zur vergebung der sunden, wie die wort lauten: "Das ist mein leib, fur euch gegeben", Welchs yhr doch selbst heisst geistlich essen. Ist nu geistlich essen da, so kan

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20. WA 2. 744, 8-11.

21. WA 23. 193, 10-11.

> das leibliche essen nicht schaden, sondern mus auch nütze sein umb des geistlichen essens willen.' (22)

In the Eastertide sermons of 1526, Luther would seem to lay a perfect foundation for forging the obvious link between 'union with Christ' and the reception of the Sacrament. He here adumbrates Calvin's later emphasis by teaching that, through faith, men and women are already truly in heaven.[23] The same eschatological note is sounded at least once, albeit in parenthesis, in the work of 1528.[24] But in neither passage does the Reformer make the obvious connection between faith's proleptic enjoyment of God's future in Christ and the believing reception of the eucharistic gift. Before one discerns a massive deficiency in Luther's eucharistic theology at this point, it is well to consider the possibility that the theme of 'union with Christ' is in fact the latent presupposition of all Luther's statements about the fruit of the real presence. After all, he had built a magnificent foundation for just such an understanding of the consequences of the eucharistic gift in the devotional pamphlet de libertate christiana of 1520. The third great benefit of faith, writes the Reformer, is that it unites the soul with Christ just as a bride is united with her husband in marriage. Faith's union with Christ is indeed the most perfect of marriages, for here both spouses truly share all things in common, Christ freely taking to himself the 'sins, death and hell' that

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22. WA 23. 179, 10-15.

23. WA 19. 489, 24-490, 2.

24. WA 26. 345, 25-28.

are the dowry of his bride, while his bride, on the strength of the unbreakable matrimonial bond, takes to herself his 'favour, life and health'. Since Christ in the Mass gives to his bride 'his body and himself', how shall he withhold from her anything that is his?

> 'Tertia fidei gratia incomparabilis est haec, Quod animam copulat cum Christo, sicut sponsam cum sponso. Quo sacramento (ut Apostolus docet) Christus et anima efficiuntur una caro. Quod si una caro sunt verumque inter eos matrimonium, immo omnium longe perfectissimum consumatur, cum humana matrimonia huius unici figurae sint tenues, Sequitur, et omnia eorum communia fieri tam bona quam mala, ut, quaecunque Christus habet, de iis tanquam suis praesumere et gloriari possit fidelis anima, Et quaecunque animae sunt, ea sibi arroget Christus tanquam sua. Conferamus ista, et videbimus inaestimabilia. Christus plenus est gratia, vitae et salute, Anima plena est peccatis, morte et damnatione, Intercedat iam fides, et fiet, ut Christi sint peccata, mors et infernus, Animae vero gratia, vita et salus: oportet enim eum, si sponsus est, ea simul quae sponsa habet acceptare et ea quae sua sunt sponsae impartire. Qui enim corpus suum et se ipsum illi donat, quomodo non omnia sua donat? Et qui corpus sponsae accipit, quomodo non omnia quae sponsae sunt accipit?' (25)

These words from the de libertate christiana end with an unmistakable eucharistic reference, as Luther crowns his presentation of faith's 'union with Christ' by pointing to our Lord's giving of his body and blood to communicants at the Holy Supper. 'Union with Christ' would indeed be the best of all possible rubrics under which the Reformer might set forth his teaching that believing appropriation of the sacred body and blood involves the impartation to God's indigent creatures of the reconciliation wrought in Christ's death and resurrection, along with the joining of the death-oriented bodily constitu-

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25. WA 7. 54, 31-55, 6.

tion of all earthly communicants with the life-giving flesh of the God-man, over which death no longer has any dominion. But, while such an organisation of Luther's teachings on the fruits of the real presence might be acceptable in terms of systematic theology, would it at the same time represent a faithful exposition of the Reformer's own teaching? Subsumption of the motifs of the forgiveness of sin and the joining of the flesh of Christians with the flesh of their Lord under a rubric taken from a devotional pamphlet of 1520 might well strike even the most sympathetic of readers as little more than arbitrary special pleading. Such an arrangement of Luther's account of the fruits of the real presence can in fact be justified by reference to a passage from his Maundy Thursday sermon of 1525. We recall that the Reformer never wrote de eucharistia, just as he never completed de iustificatione. Luther did his thinking on his feet or at his desk, developing his theology in response to the needs of the moment and not in the detached form of a Ph.D. thesis. By and large, the Reformer leaves to his interpreters the task of discerning the threads of systematic coherence that tie his apprehension of the mystery of Christ into a consistent whole. In his Maundy Thursday sermon of 1525 Luther explicitly invokes the 'union with Christ' motif developed in 1520, proclaiming the benefits of the eucharistic gift in the context of the commutatio felicissima, through which Christ and the communicant are 'baked into each other':

> 'Corpus autem et sanguinem Christi certissime habeo per verbum dei: "Hoc est corpus meum, quod pro vobis", "Hic est sanguis meus, qui pro vobis effunditur" sc. Quare ita dat mihi corpus et sanguinem suum Christus, ut ea in eternum habeam. Si ergo hoc verum est, item hoc, quod iusticia Christi et omnia, quae habet, mea sit, et longe certius, quam quod corpus meum et sanguis mea sint mea, necesse est, ut credam illud pro me datum, hunc pro me effu-

sum esse. Et hoc est, quod Christus dicit Ioh. 6: "Qui manducat carnem meam et bibit sanguinem meum, manet in me et Ego in eo". Denn Christus und ich werden so in ein ander gebacken, das mein sund und tod sein werden und sein gerechtigkeit und leben mein eigen werden. In summa fit hic commutatio felicissima.' (26)

2. The real presence and believing appropriation of the righteousness of Christ

If the resurrection appearance of Jesus should be understood as nothing more than the haunting of a revenant spirit, then one might, humanly speaking, expect the post-Easter appearances of Christ to SS. Peter and Paul to have had the object of revenge. Peter had reneged on his pledge not to desert Jesus in his hour of danger (Mk. 14:29), going on to repudiate all association with his Lord three times as Christ submitted himself to the condemnation of the high priest (Mk. 14: 66-72). And Paul had crowned his consent to the martyrdom of S. Stephen (Acts 8:1) with a campaign of active persecution of the brethren of Jesus (Acts 9:1ff). Should the exalted Christ have been minded to exercise his authority after the manner of earthly sovereigns, then the treachery of Peter and the hostility of Paul would fittingly be countered by the just revenge of their victim. But, paradoxically, the appearances of the wronged risen Jesus to SS. Peter and Paul were an unquenchable source of joy and renewal to both men, being experienced by both, not as condemnation, but as absolution. Significantly, the gracious quality of the appearances of the risen Jesus seems to have been deduced by SS. Peter and Paul, not exclusively from the visual experience as such, but from the verbal explanation of the latter, gi-

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26. WA 17 I. 174, 21-175, 10. cf. also 175, 17-19: 'Hactenus tantum audimus de fide illa historica, quod sit

ven to Peter by our Lord himself (Jn. 21:15-19) and to Paul by the Damascene disciple, Ananias (Acts 9:10-19). The Word-interpreted presence of the risen Jesus brought Peter and Paul into believing relationship with him, bestowing forgiveness and reconciliation on both men in such a way that the memory of past guilt was not obliterated, but transformed.[1] If this significant theme so characteristic of the Resurrection narratives may fittingly be related to the eucharistic celebrations of the New Testament Church, then Martin Luther's discernment of the forgiveness of sins as a major benefit inherent in the believing reception of Christ's body and blood may not be written off as an arbitrary intrusion of the Reformer's pet concern (or, as some would see it, obsession) into the exposition of the central rite of the Church's life.

In two of his eucharistic publications of 1520, Luther's association of the real presence with the gift of the forgiveness of sins bears all the marks of an unreflecting scissors and paste job and is, on closer inspection, thoroughly unconvincing. The invisible presence of Jesus' body and blood in the elements is understood as stemming from Christ's gracious will to assure his brethren of his wholehearted commitment to honour the promise of the forgiveness of sins made in the words of institution.[2] Two acts of faith seem to be required of

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corpus et sanguis in coena domini sc. Ultra hanc, ut dixi, requiritur fides, quae certo statuit hoc verum esse, quod Christus dicit: "In ME manet et Ego in eo"'; and 176, 7: '"Indigne sumit", qui fidem hanc non adfert, das er ein kuch wird mit Christo.'

1. see Dr. R. D. Williams: Resurrection (London, 1982), especially chs. 1 and 2.

2. see, e.g., WA 6. 358, 14-24; 515, 17-26.

the communicant who approaches the Lord's Table with a sin-burdened conscience. To begin with, he is to trust in the promise of forgiveness, and then he is to believe in the miraculous impartation of the sacred body and blood along with the bread and wine, which are so to say the 'seal' placed by Christ on his dying 'testament'. In these writings, the forgiveness of sins appears as ancillary to, rather than inherent in, the eucharistic body and blood. By the end of the decade Luther came to understand the gift of forgiveness as inherent in the presence of the body and blood. No longer do the latter feature as an afterthought to the Word, but the Word is understood as supplying the needful evangelical explanation of the presence of the body and blood pro nobis. Even though the Reformer's mature conception of the gift of forgiveness as inherent in the presence of the sacred body and blood is carefully set forth in the Large Catechism of 1529, too many contemporary Lutheran preachers notoriously fail to accompany the Reformer on the progress which he made during the controversy of the mid and late 1520s. The result is a shrouding of baptismal grace and an unremitting stress on the need for assurance of forgiveness which can have the opposite effect to that intended by the preacher: the divine will to forgive no longer seems at all assured, and, paradoxically, the Lutheran conception of the eucharist is exposed to objections which Luther himself forcefully expressed against the doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass.

Already in his sermon of Maundy Thursday 1521, Luther points to a closer association of the sacred body and blood with the forgiveness of sins than he had been able to pinpoint in his eucharistic writings of the previous year:

> 'ich soll vorgebung aller sundt haben, durch deyn leyp und blut, so ichs essze und trincke ynn dissem sacrament.' (3)

In the work against Karlstadt of 1525, the Reformer develops his understanding of the relationship between the eucharistic gift of the body and blood and the distribution of the forgiveness of sins in the wider context of an outline of the doctrine of the means of grace. Luther discerned in Karlstadt an unhealthy tendency to devalue the mediated work of the Holy Spirit in the means of grace in favour of an emphasis on an alleged immediate work of the Holy Spirit in the soul of each believer. The Reformer counters Karlstadt's 'spiritualism' by distinguishing a twofold work of the Holy Spirit, whereby He acts outwardly in the proclamation of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, and inwardly in the bestowal of faith and other spiritual gifts. The inward working of the Holy Spirit occurs only through the mediation of the external means of grace, so that, in Luther's understanding, the external work of the Holy Spirit is logically, if not necessarily chronologically, prior to his internal work:

> 'So nu Gott seyn heyliges Euangelion hat auslassen gehen, handelt er mit uns auff zweyerley weyse. Eyn mal eusserlich, das ander mal ynnerlich. Eusserlich handelt er mit uns durchs mündliche wort des Euangelij und durch leypliche zeychen, alls do ist Taufe und Sacrament. Ynnerlich handelt er mit uns durch den heiligen geyst und glauben sampt andern gaben. Aber das alles, der massen und der ordenung, das die eusserlichen stucke sollen und müssen vorgehen. Und die ynnerlichen hernach und durch die eusserlichen komen, also das ers beschlossen hat, keinem menschen die ynnerlichen stuck zu geben on durch die eusserlichen stucke. Denn er will niemant den geyst noch glauben geben on das eusserliche wort und zeychen, so er dazu eyngesetzt hat ' (4)

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3. WA 7. 695, 6-7.

4. WA 18. 136, 9-18.

In the means of grace the Holy Spirit applies the benefits achieved by the active and passive obedience of Christ. The Reformer accordingly distinguishes between the acquisition and the distribution of the forgiveness of sins, which is the matrix of all other spiritual gifts. Christ achieved the reconciliation of the world with his Father through his death on the Cross, but the fruits of his finished work are distributed, not by Christ on Calvary, but by the Holy Spirit working through the Word. This word of reconciliation, asserts Luther, has been proclaimed from the beginning of the world, and it features in a particularly intimate form in the Holy Supper:

> 'Von der vergebunge der sünden handeln wyr auff zwo weyse. Eyn mal, wie sie erlangt und erworben ist, Das ander mal, wie sie ausgeteylt und uns geschenckt wird. Erworben hat sie Christus am creutze, das ist war, Aber er hat sie nicht ausgeteylt odder gegeben am creutze, Im abentmal odder Sacrament hat er sie nicht erworben, Er hat sie aber daselbst durchs wort ausgeteylet und gegeben, wie auch ym Euangelio, wo es predigt wird, Die erwerbunge ist eyn mal geschehen am creutze, Aber die austeylunge ist offt geschehen vorhyn und hernach von der wellt anfang bis ans ende, Denn weyl er beschlossen hatte, sie eyn mal zuerwerben, gallts bey yhm gleich viel, er teylet sie aus zuvor odder hernach durch seyn wort, wie das leichtlich mit schrifften zu beweysen ist, Aber itzt nicht nott noch zeyt.' (5)

The Reformer states that Christ has placed the virtue of his suffering into the Sacrament of the Altar. Christians are therefore urged to apprehend the benefits of Christ at the Holy Supper, whither they have been directed by the Word:

> 'Denn Christus hat die krafft und macht seynes leydens yns Sacrament gelegt, das mans daselbst sol holen und finden nach laut der wort "Das ist meyn

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5. WA 18. 203, 28-38.

leyb, der fur euch geben wird zur vergebunge der sünden," ...' (6)

All the mystical techniques in the world will fail to lay hold of the forgiveness of sins, which is imparted in the Sacrament, albeit neither through the elements of bread and wine nor through the sacred body and blood present in the bread and wine, but through the Word. The Word (here to be understood as the words of institution) announces and imparts to the believing communicant the reality of reconciliation.[7] At this juncture it may seem that, even in 1525, Luther cannot yet discern the connection between the real presence and the gift of forgiveness. This misconception can be dispelled by glancing at another passage in which, again, the Reformer begins by highlighting the Word as the instrument through which forgiveness is imparted. Spiritual comfort is to be gained from neither the elements nor yet from the body and blood, but from the Word which discloses and vouchsafes to the communicant the body and blood of Christ as given and shed for him. Here, then, the Word announces the gift of forgiveness which is inherent in the presence and distribution of the body and blood. If one wishes to receive the forgiveness of sins, urges Luther, then

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6. WA 18. 200, 15-17.

7. WA 18. 202, 32-203, 2: 'Das ist aber unser lere, das brod und wein nichts helffe, Ja auch der leyb und blut ym brod und wein nichts helffe, Ich will noch weytter reden, Christus am creutze mit alle seynem leyden und todt hilfft nichts, wenns auch auffs aller "brünstigest, hitzigest, hertzlichst erkant und bedacht" wird, wie du lerest, Es mus alles noch eyn anders da seyn. Was denn? Das wort, das wort, das wort, hörestu du lügen geyst auch, das wort thuts, Denn ob Christus tausentmal fur uns gegeben und gecreutzigt würde, were es

one must not flee to the foot of the Cross or indulge in mystical techniques:

> 'sondern zum Sacrament odder Euangelio, da finde ich das wort, das myr solche erworbene vergebunge am creutz, austeilet, schenckt, darbeut und gibt. Darumb hat der Luther recht geleret, Das wer eyn böse gewissen hat von sunden, der solle zum Sacrament gehen und trost holen, Nicht am brod und weyn, Nicht am leybe und blut Christi, sondern am wort, das ym Sacrament myr den leyb und blut Christi alls fur mich gegeben und vergossen darbeut, schenckt und gibt. Ist das nicht klar gnug?' (8)

The reader of Luther's works on the eucharist may be perplexed that, at times within the space of a few lines, he can highlight now the Word, and now the body and blood,[9] as the instrument through which the gift of forgiveness is imparted. To locate a genuine contradiction at this point, however, could only stem from positing an antithesis between Word and Sacrament that is utterly alien to the Reformer's thinking. As far as he is concerned, the interpreting Word and the mystery of Christ's sacramental presence belong most intimately together in a relationship of mutual dependence. The Word directs the communicant to the fitting spiritual appropriation of the sacramental presence, which is received into the body of the believer. One might say that, in Luther's view, the Word is to be understood sacramentally, while the Sacrament is to be understood verbally. The Reformer counsels against positing a dichotomy between the Word and the sacramental presence, for:

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alles umb sonst, wenn nicht das wort Gottes keme, und teylets aus und schencket myrs und spreche, das soll deyn seyn, nym hyn und habe dyrs.'

8. WA 18. 204, 2-9.

9. see, e.g., WA 19. 507, 29-33.

> 'So hats doch Christus also nicht eyngesetzt, sondern beides zu samen gethan, Wort und seinen leib, geistlich mit dem hertzen und leiblich mit dem munde zu essen.' (10)

The unity of Word and sacramental presence is clearly set forth in the work of 1528,[11] towards the end of which Luther contends that, in the eucharist, the Word, the New Testament, the sacred body and blood, the forgiveness of sins, and life and salvation all come together into a 'single sacramental essence'. Apart from the Word, the eucharistic bread and cup would have no special significance, while, apart from the elements of bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ could not be distributed to communicants. Moreover, unless the sacred body and blood are present, we cannot speak meaningfully of the presence of the New Testament at the Lord's Supper. Finally, the availability of the forgiveness of sins flows from the presence of the New Testament, while the forgiveness of sins is the matrix of the 'life and salvation' which are imparted at the eucharist. The Reformer here achieves a coherent, systematic conception of the relationship between the real presence and its fruits:

> 'Ist nu das newe testament ym abendmal, so mus vergebung der sunden, geist, gnade, leben und alle seligkeit drynnen sein, Und solchs alles ist yns wort gefasset, Denn wer wolt wissen, was ym abendmal were, wo es die wort nicht verkündigten? Darumb

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10. WA 23. 181, 36-183, 1.

11. WA 26. 294, 30-36: 'Darumb sagen wir, ym abendmal sey vergebung der sunden nicht des essens halben, odder das Christus daselbs der sunden vergebunge verdiene odder erwerbe, sondern des worts halben, dadurch er solche erworbene vergebung unter uns austeilet und spricht "das ist mein leib, der fur euch gegeben wird", Hie hörestu, das wir den leib als fur uns gegeben essen und solchs hören und gleuben ym essen, drumb wird vergebunge der sunden da ausgeteilet, die am creutz doch erlanget ist.'

> sihe, welch ein schön, gros, wunderlich ding es ist, wie es alles ynn einander henget und ein sacramentlich wesen ist. Die wort sind das erste, Denn on die wort were der becher und brod nichts, Weiter, on brod und becher were der leib und blut Christi nicht da, On leib und blut Christi were das newe testament nicht da. On das newe testament were vergebung der sunden nicht da, On vergebung der sunden were das leben und seligkeit nicht da, So fassen die wort erstlich das brod und den becher zum sacrament, Brod und becher fassen den leib und blut Christi, Leib und Blut Christi fassen das newe testament, Das newe testament fasset vergebung der sunden, Vergebung der sunden fasset das ewige leben und seligkeit.' (12)

The progress made between 1520 and 1528 was sustained in the Large Catechism of 1529. The sacred body and blood are here presented as the 'treasure, in and through which we receive the forgiveness of sins'.[13] But, while the reader who has accompanied this account of Luther's eucharistic theology thus far might agree that the Reformer did indeed discern an inner connection between the distribution of the body and blood and the gift of forgiveness, he might also by this stage be tempted to credit Luther with an unhealthy obsession with the 'forgiveness of sins'. The Reformer's unremitting insistence on hammering home the good news that sins are graciously forgiven for Christ's sake could, after all, be interpreted as indicative of inner insecurity rather than assurance on his part. Do we have here nothing more than a half-despairing, frantic plea for mercy made to an angry God? We may not minimise Luther's realisation that 'The law always accuses', nor may we underestimate his first-hand experience in his conscience of the wrath of God. Against this background of painful Anfechtung, we can

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12. WA 26. 478, 33-479, 6.

13. BS GK 711, 39-42: 'darümb gehen wir zum Sakrament,

grasp the practical importance to Luther of his baptism, of his use of auricular confession, and of his devotion to the eucharistic Christ. Through these means he gained assurance of sins forgiven. There is a great danger, though, that one may dwell so exclusively on the consciousness of sin that drove Luther to crave forgiveness as to forget that the 'negative' formulation 'forgiveness of sin' is but the reverse side of a coin whose obverse bears the 'positive'-sounding inscription that the 'righteousness of Christ' is imputed and imparted to the believer: The catchphrase simul iustus et peccator could be, and has been, interpreted to imply that the 'alien righteousness of Christ', which is 'outside of ourselves', is merely forensically imputed to the believer, who, even after justification, continues in sin as before. But, if this caricature faithfully represents the Reformer's actual conception of justification, how can we account for his strict admonition that justifying faith is expunged by the deliberate commission of mortal sin? Luther considers that, on account of original sin, the Christian may be severely tempted to commit such grave trespasses as 'adultery, murder and blasphemy'. Even so, the Christian is called to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in resisting such temptation. Should the Christian fall into mortal sin, he thereby falls from grace itself:

> 'Darümb ist vonnöten, zu wissen und zu lehren, dass, wo die heiligen Leute über das, so sie die Erbsunde noch haben und fühlen, dawider auch täglich büssen und streiten, etwa in offentliche Sunde fallen als David in Ehebruch, Mord und Gotteslästerung, dass alsdenn der Glaube und Geist weg ist gewest; denn

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dass wir da empfahen solchen Schatz, durch und in dem wir Vergebunge der Sunde überkommen.'

> der heilige Geist lässt die Sunde nicht walten und überhand gewinnen, dass sie vollnbracht werde, sondern steuret und wehret, dass sie nicht muss tun, was sie will. Tut sie aber, was sie will, so ist der heilige Geist und Glaube nicht dabei ...' (14)

Add to this the Reformer's understanding of the implications of the Christian's daily renewal of baptism, and it becomes crystal clear that the formula simul iustus et peccator was not intended as a blank cheque for a life of unrestrained profligacy:

> 'Es bedeut, dass der alte Adam in uns durch tägliche Reu und Busse soll ersäuft werden und sterben mit allen Sunden und bösen Lüsten, und wiederumb täglich erauskommen und auferstehen ein neuer Mensch, der in Gerechtigkeit und Reinigkeit für Gott ewiglich lebe.' (15)

Such robust admonitions to match faith with practice as these make it plain that Dietrich Bonhoeffer's seemingly 'un-Lutheran' stress on 'works' in his The Cost of Discipleship is to be understood as an attempt to rescue Luther's teaching from one-sided misrepresentation.

Albrecht Peters has rightly called for the Reformer's emphasis on the forgiveness of sins to be rescued from an unbecoming 'isolation'.[16] Peters directs us to Luther's forthright attack on antinomian error in Von den Konziliis und Kirchen. In this work the Reformer complains that, while the antinomians concede the antecedens, namely the reality of Christ-wrought redemption, they inconsistently refuse the consequens of this premise, namely the striving to achieve sanctification in Christ:

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14. BS SA 448, 19-29.

15. BS KK 516, 32-38.

16. Realpräsenz, p. 145.

> 'Aber dis consequens fliehen sie wie der Teufel, das sie den Leuten sagen solten vom dritten Artickel, der Heiligung, das ist vom neuen Leben in Christo.' (17)

Antinomians are fine Easter preachers, but dreadful Pentecost preachers:

> 'sind wol feine Oster prediger, aber schendliche Pfingst prediger, Denn sie predigen nichts de sanctificatione & vivificatione Spiritus sancti, von der Heiligung des Heiligen Geists.' (18)

Luther beseeches his readers not to curtail the fruits of Christ's work. Our Lord has merited not only our restoration to the Father's favour, but also our endowment with the gift of the Holy Spirit. Hence not only do we receive forgiveness of sin, but also the power to desist from sin:

> 'Denn Christus hat uns nicht allein gratiam, die gnade, sondern auch donum, die gabe des Heiligen geists, verdienet, das wir nicht allein vergebung der sunden, sondern auch auffhören von den sunden hetten.' (19)

Significantly, the Reformer devotes a whole paragraph of the eucharistic section of the Large Catechism to expounding the gift of the body and blood in the setting of the sanctification of the justified Christian. The body and blood are a 'spiritual food', which 'strengthens and sustains the new man', who was formed in holy baptism. Luther conceives the new life as consisting in a progressive sanctification of the believer, who receives 'new strength and refreshment' from the sacramental gift, so that he can successfully withstand the unremitting attacks of the devil:

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17. WA 50. 599, 8-10.

18. ibid., 25-27.

19. ibid., 32-35.

'Darümb heisset es wohl ein Speise der Seelen, die den neuen Menschen nähret und stärkt. Denn durch die Taufe werden wir erstlich neu geboren, aber darneben, wie gesagt ist, bleibt gleichwohl die alte Haut im Fleisch und Blut am Menschen, da ist soviel Hindernis und Anfechtung vom Teufel und der Welt, dass wir oft müde und matt werden und zuweilen auch strauchlen. Darümb ist es gegeben zur täglichen Weide und Futterung, dass sich der Glaube erhole, und stärke, dass er in solchem Kampf nicht zurückfalle, sondern immer je stärker und stärker werde. Denn das neue Leben soll also getan sein, das es stets zunehme und fortfahre. Es muss aber dagegen viel leiden. Denn so ein zorniger Feind ist der Teufel, wo er siehet, dass man sich wider ihn legt und den alten Menschen angreifft und uns nicht mit Macht überpoltern kann, da schleicht und streicht er auf allen Seiten ümbher, versuchet alle Künste und lässet nicht abe, bis er uns zuletzt müde mache, dass man entweder den Glauben lässet fallen oder Hände und Füsse gehen lässet und wird unlüstig oder ungedültig. Dazu ist nu der Trost gegeben, wenn das Herz solchs fühlet, dass ihm will zu schwer werden, dass er hie neue Kraft und Labsal hole.' (20)

3. The body and blood of Christ as the 'medicine of immortality'

In de captivitate babylonica of 1520, Luther had sharply denied that Christ's 'Bread of Life' discourse in Jn. 6 is properly to be interpreted of the eucharist. The somewhat ludicrous appeal made by the Leipzig Franciscan, Augustinus Alveld, to Jn. 6:51 in claiming dominical support for the distribution of Holy Communion under one kind[1] would seem to have imbued Luther with an unshakeable prejudice against interpreting the obviously eucharistic verses Jn. 6:51-58 of the Sacrament of the Altar. The Reformer irritatedly asserts that 'not a syllable' of the whole of Jn. 6 refers to the Lord's Supper.[2]

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20. BS GK 712, 11-39.

1. WA 6. 499, 22-27. 2. WA 6. 502, 7-10.

Luther consciously adhered to this view throughout his career. 'We confess even at the present day', wrote the Reformer in 1528:

> 'das Christus, da er von seinem fleisch anfehet durch und durch, fur und fur, bis ans ende des Capitels Johan. vi rede vom geistlichen essen seines fleischs.' (3)

The exegetical Part Two of this work ends with the curt observation that, since Jn. 6 'makes no reference at all to the Supper', it will not be discussed alongside the Pauline and Synoptic accounts of the institution.[4] Significantly, Luther invoked precisely Jn. 6:55 against Karlstadt's use of Jn. 6:63b in support of his view that a bodily participation in Christ's flesh and blood 'profiteth nothing'.[5] Moreover, Luther unaffectedly quotes the eucharistic verses of Jn. 6 in those sections of the work of 1527 where he seeks to develop the doctrine of the 'bodily benefits' inherent in the believing reception of the body and blood. It would seem, therefore, that, despite his public protestations to the contrary, the Reformer was subliminally aware of the eucharistic significance of Jn. 6:51-58.

The Reformer's half-conscious realisation that Jn. 6:51-58 refers to the Sacrament of the Altar can be demonstrated from the work of 1527. Immediately after expounding the genuine sense of the biblical antithesis of flesh and spirit, Luther goes on to extol the flesh of Christ as a 'spiritual, eternal, imperishable food'.[6]

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3. WA 26. 372, 27-29.

4. WA 26. 498, 27-31.

5, WA. 193, 6-8.

6. WA 23. 203, 14-19.

Taking his cue from Jn. 6:51, the Reformer describes the life-giving flesh of Christ as a spiritual food that can be neither 'consumed, digested nor transformed'. The perishable food on which we depend for the sustenance of our everyday existence is transformed into the body of its eater, but the life-giving flesh of Christ transforms those who eat it into itself, making them 'spiritual, living and eternal':

> 'Item "wer mich isset, der lebt ewiglich". Und so fort an durchs ganze Capitel leret er, wie sein fleisch sey die rechte lebendige ewige speyse, die da lebendig mache und behalte alle die sie essen, Und wer sie nicht isset, der musse sterben sc. Warumb das? Darumb: sein fleisch ist nicht aus fleisch noch fleischlich, sondern geistlich, darumb kan es nicht verzeret, verdewet, verwandelt werden, denn es ist unvergenglich wie alles was aus dem geist ist, Und ist eine speise gar und gantz ander art denn die vergengliche speise. Vergengliche speise verwandelt sich ynn den leib, der sie isset, Diese speise widderumb wandelt den, der sie isset, ynn sich und macht yhn yhr selbs gleich, geistlich, lebendig und ewig, wie sie ist, als er sagt: "Dis ist das brod vom hymel, das der wellt leben gibt.' (7)

Luther asserts that the life-giving flesh of Christ can be eaten in two ways. On the one hand, it may be 'allein mit dem hertzen geistlich geessen durchs wort',[8] while, on the other, the Reformer can write of:

> 'die selbige unvergengliche speise, die ym abendmal mit mund leiblich und mit hertzen geistlich geessen wird nach Christus einsetzunge.' (9)

Admittedly, Luther explicitly associates the first kind of eating Christ's flesh with the great discourse in

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7. ibid., 19-30.

8. WA 23. 205, 1.

9. WA 23. 203, 32-205, 1.

Jn. 6,[10] but he wastes no time in refuting Zwingli's subsumption of the flesh of Christ under Jn. 6:63b by presenting it as the 'medicine of immortality':

> 'wird Christus fleisch geessen, so wird nichts denn geist draus, denn es ist ein geistlich fleisch und lesst sich nicht verwandeln, sondern verwandelt und gibt den geist dem, der es isset. Weil denn der arme maden sack, unser leib, auch die hoffnung hat der aufferstehung von todten und des ewigen lebens, so mus er auch geistlich werden und alles was fleischlich an yhm ist, verdewen und verzeren. Das thut aber diese geistliche speise: wenn er die isset leiblich, so verdewet sie sein fleisch und verwandelt yhn, das er auch geistlich, das ist ewiglich lebendig und selig werde.' (11)

The Reformer had already introduced the theme of the eucharistic body and blood as the 'medicine of immortality' in an earlier section of the work of 1527, where he was concerned to refute Oecolampadius' claim that the ancient fathers adhered to a figurative interpretation of the words of institution. Luther here quotes passages from SS. Irenaeus of Lyons[12] and Hilary of Poitiers[13] which link the believing reception of the body and blood with the hope of resurrection. The Reformer's principal

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10. WA 23. 205, 2.

11. ibid., 9-16. cf. ibid., 17-25: 'Denn ynn diesem essen gehets also zu, das ich ein grob exempel gebe, als wenn der wolff ein schaff fresse, und das schaff were so eine starcke speise, das es den wolff verwandelt und macht ein schaff draus. Also wir, so wir Christus fleisch essen geistlich und leiblich, ist die speise so starck, das sie uns ynn sich wandelt und aus fleischlichen sundlichen sterblichen menschen geistliche heilige lebendige menschen macht, wie wir denn auch bereid sind, aber doch verborgen ym glauben und hoffnung, Und ist noch nicht offenbar, Am Jüngsten tage werden wirs sehen.'

12. WA 23. 229, 25-30; 233, 21-35; 235, 9-21; 235, 35-237, 1.

13. WA 23. 237, 8-16.

aim in adducing these quotations, however, is not to highlight the patristic conception of the eucharist as the 'medicine of immortality', but to demonstrate that the ancient fathers firmly believed in the real presence of the body and blood in the Sacrament of the Altar. Later on in the treatise Luther reverts to the patristic conception of the 'medicine of immortality' as he offers a summary of the threefold benefit of the Sacrament.[14] The 'medicine of immortality' motif is here sandwiched between the assertion that the invisible presence of the body and blood is a fitting reproof to 'hochmütige kluge geister und die vernunfft'[15] and the teaching that justification and sanctification are mediated afresh through the body and blood encompassed in the divine Word.[16]

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14. WA 23. 255, 14-29: 'Zum andern haben wir droben gehort, Wie Ireneus und die alten veter haben den nutz angezeigt, das unser leib mit dem leibe Christi gespeiset wird, auff das unser glaube und hoffnung bestehe, das unser leib solle auch ewiglich leben von der selbigen ewigen speise des leibs Christi, den er leiblich isset, Welchs ist ein leiblicher nutz, aber dennoch aus der massen gros und folget aus dem geistlichen. Denn Christus wird ja auch unsern leib ewiglich, lebendig, selig und herlich machen, welchs viel ein grösser ding ist denn das er seinen leib ein kleine zeit auff erden uns zu essen gibt. Drumb wil er ynn uns natürlich sein (spricht Hilarius) beyde ynn der seele und leybe nach dem wort Johan. vi. "Wer mich isset, der bleibt ynn mir und ich ynn yhm". Isset man yhn geistlich durchs wort, so bleibt er geistlich ynn uns ynn der seele, Isset man yhn leiblich, so bleibt er leiblich ynn uns und wir ynn yhm, Wie man yhn isset, so bleibt er ynns uns und wir ynn yhm, Denn er wird nicht verdawet noch verwandelt, sondern verwandelt on unterlas uns, die seele ynn gerechtickeit, den leib ynn unsterblickeit. So haben die veter von dem leiblichen essen geredt.'

15. ibid., 1-13.

16. WA 23. 255, 30-257, 11.

Luther's teaching that, through the believing reception of Christ's body and blood, the death-oriented flesh of Christians is united with the life-giving humanity of our Lord in such a way that, through the mysterious and hidden working of Almighty God, the mortal bodily constitution of believers is given a sure, albeit invisible, pledge of future resurrection, can easily be rescued from any accusation of 'sacramental magic'. For the Reformer manifestly does not picture the 'bodily benefits' as accruing to the communicant simply in virtue of a performance of the Sacrament ex opere operato. On account of the dignity of Christ himself, the body and blood distributed in the eucharist must contain 'eitel nutz und gut', but Luther significantly goes on to underline the paramount need for the sacramental gift to be received by faith:

> 'Und wo es (viz., the flesh of Christ) ist, da mus es nütze sein, Denn es ist eitel nutz und gut drynnen, On wo es on glauben ist, Denn on glauben ist nichts nütze, wie S. Paulus sagt: "den unreinen ist alles unrein" Und Ro. xiiij. "Was des glaubens nicht ist, das ist sunde".' (17)

The 'bodily benefit' of the eucharistic gift follows from the 'spiritual',[18] so that there can be no doubt that Luther conceives the reception of the eschatological, bodily benefit as contingent on the proper spiritual use of the Sacrament. Two moments must therefore be distinguished in Luther's understanding of what is involved in the believing reception of the sacred body and blood. First, there is the creaturely resolve to use the Sacrament aright. The Reformer beseeches would-be communi-

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17. WA 23. 253, 1-4.

18. WA 23. 255, 18-19.

cants to include themselves in the universal FUR EUCH which describes the scope of Christ's saving work:

> 'Denn da stehen die freundliche, liebliche Wort: "Das ist mein Leib, FUR EUCH gegeben", "Das ist mein Blut, FUR EUCH vergossen zur Vergebunge der Sunden." Diese Wort, habe ich gesaget, sind keinem Stock noch Stein gepredigt, sondern mir und Dir, sonst möcht' er ebenso mehr stillschweigen und kein Sakrament einsetzen. Drümb denke und bringe Dich auch in das "EUCH", das er nicht ümbsonst mit Dir rede. Denn da beut er uns an alle den Schatz, so er uns von Himmel bracht hat, dazu er uns auch sonst locket auffs allerfreundlichste.' (19)

Where the Sacrament is used aright, it proves to be 'sheer healthful comforting medicine', which 'bestows life on both soul and body'. Luther decisively regards the soul as the first to be healed by the body and blood comprised in the divine Word, considering the 'bodily benefit' to flow from the spiritual healing.[20] The Reformer's thinking here is thoroughly biblical: the Jahwist in Gen. 3 presents mankind's bodily woes as the punishment for the sinful disobedience of our first parents, so that we might suppose the abrogation of the curse pronounced on the fallen creation to be implicit in the divine forgiveness of human guilt. This very theme is developed by S. Paul in Rom. 8, and it is authoritatively enacted by our Lord when he backs up the

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19. BS GK 720, 45-721, 5.

20. BS GK 721, 14-20: 'Man mus je das Sakrament nicht ansehen als ein schädlich Ding, das man darfur laufen solle, sondern als eitel heilsame, tröstliche Arznei, die Dir helfe und das Leben gebe beide an Seele und Leib. Denn wo die Seele genesen ist, da ist dem Leib auch geholfen.' cf. BS KK 520, 29-30: 'denn wo Vergebung der Sunde ist, da ist auch Lehen und Seligkeit.'

promise, 'My son, your sins are forgiven you' with the command 'Arise, take up your bed and walk' (Mk. 2:1-12). Secondly, where the sacramental gift is received in faith, Luther confesses that a 'secret energy and benefit proceeds from Christ's body into our body', conferring 'life and salvation' on the bodily constitution of believers both now and hereafter:

> 'Desselbigen gleichen der mund, der hals, der leib, der Christus leib isset, sol seinen nutz auch davon haben, das er ewiglich lebe und am Jüngsten tage aufferstehe zur ewigen selickeit. Das ist die heimliche krafft und nutz, der aus dem leibe Christi ym abendmal gehet ynn unsern leib, Denn er mus nütze sein und kan nicht umb sonst da sein, Darumb so mus er das leben und selickeit unserm leibe geben, wie seine art ist.' (21)

With his teachings on the fruits of the believing reception of Christ's body and blood, Luther brought out the relationship between the real presence and the Incarnation. The assumption by the Eternal Son of an entire human nature in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ is here interpreted as bestowing reconciliation, new life and unbounded future hope on creatures who exist in a tragic bondage to self from which they are impotent to set themselves free. And all three aspects of the

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21. WA 23. 259, 4-10. cf. A. F. C. Vilmar: Die Theologie der Thatsachen wider die Theologie der Rhetorik, p. 65: 'es (viz., the Sacrament of the Altar) ist weit ausschliesslicher eine eigene That Gottes, als das Wort. Dazu kommt indes weiter, dass das Wort durch den Geist, von oben, auf den Menschen wirkt; das Sacrament dagegen ist eine leibliche That Gottes an dem Menschen: dasselbe wirkt von unten, durch die Leiblichkeit, auf die ganze Persönlichkeit des Menschen nach Leib und Geist (oder, wie man will, nach Geist, Seel und Leib) zur Erlösung des ganzen Menschen an Geist und Leib.'

Incarnation as mediated by the Holy Spirit to the Church are viewed as seminally contained in the eucharistic gift of Christ's body and blood. In his confession and development of the doctrine of the real presence, Martin Luther appears as a churchman from the past whose thinking bears great ecumenical potential for the future. For, as he expounded the mystery of the Eucharist, whether in penitence, in awe, or in doxology, Doctor Martin Luther proved himself to be a theologian of the Incarnation.

CONCLUSION

In his valuable study of Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformation, Dr. Francis Clark has succinctly defined the point of difference between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism (including Lutheranism) as follows:

> 'The fundamental difference which divides the Catholic conception of God's dealings with men from the Protestant may be described as a theology of mediation and participation. In Catholic thought, Christ's manhood, and the Church which is his fullness, and the sacraments which are his actions, form a hierarchy of created means by which the God-man communicates to men his saving activity'. (1)

Luther, according to Dr. Clark:

> 'arrived at a theology in which there was no place for any created reality to mediate to men God's salutary action, nor for any active sharing by men in the dispensation of grace'. (2)

The present writer hopes that the account of the Reformer's theology advanced in the above pages on the strength of ample quotation from the Weimar Edition is a convincing refutation of this claim. Luther's observation, in his Large Catechism of 1529, that 'creatures' are the 'hands, channels and means'[3] through which Almighty God distributes his blessings to humanity is a summary formulation of a principle which is just as important an ingredient of his theology as is the distinction of law from gospel or the

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1. Francis Clark: Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformation. 1st. ed. London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1960, p. 105.

2. op.cit., p. 106.

3. BS GK 566, 20-22.

doctrine of justification 'by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith'. At the very heart of the Reformer's understanding of the Christian faith lies the conviction that Almighty God deals with the creatures made in his image not immediately, but through the mediation of secondary causes. In the 'kingdom of the Father's right hand', the chief vessel of such mediation is the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, an integral human nature assumed into the unity of the person of the Eternal Son of God. And the sacred humanity of Christ, which is the exclusive locus of God's life-giving presence for us, is itself mediated in its turn, through the work of the apostolic Ministry, in the preached gospel, and in the sacraments of baptism, Holy Communion and absolution. CA IV is not to be understood as an erratic block in the principal confessional document of Lutheran Christendom: 'justification' is the gift bestowed on the men and women who appropriate the content of CA III through the means described in CA V. The realisation that the Reformer's chief theological concern was to celebrate the 'mediation' of and 'participation' in the life of the God-man means that we must seek to expound his insistent solifidianism as the anthropological corollary of his conception of the person and work of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in Word and Sacrament. Any exposition of Luther's doctrine of justification that does not focus simultaneously on the related areas of Christology and the means of grace is nothing more than a wilful truncation of the Reformer's most passionately held beliefs.

The two closing Chapters of this thesis in particular have sought to uncover the mystery of the Incarnation as the centre of Luther's conception of Christianity. Such an understanding of the Reformer's theology must at some

stage confront the question of the relationship between the centrality of the Incarnation in the Lutheran tradition - for the claims made for Luther himself can be advanced with equal force for Chemnitz and Gerhard, Grundtvig, Löhe and Vilmar - and the centrality of the very same dogma for the Anglican tradition from Richard Hooker through the Lux Mundi school to Michael Ramsey. Similar strains of piety and theology can be detected in both traditions, which, after all, have listened to the same Holy Scriptures in the setting of the same heritage of Western Christendom (and, on questions of Christology and Sacraments, at least, Luther was an eager pupil of the Greek fathers: the Catalogus Testimoniorum prepared by Martin Chemnitz and printed as an appendix to the Book of Concord is a monument to a little-publicised yet crucial ingredient of Lutheran Christendom). But, at any rate when we compare Luther's understanding of the Incarnation with that characteristic of the Lux Mundi school, we cannot but be struck by the essential incompatibility between two Incarnational theologies. Perhaps one might express the differences thus: what a recent Anglican school understood as the consummation of the potentialities of man, Luther conceived as in first place a rebuke of and contradiction to (fallen) man. Notwithstanding the quotation given on p. 476 above, one is inclined to surmise that the Lux Mundi school would expound the virginal conception of our Lord under the heading of Mary's free Yes to the call of God, while Luther would sense in the same mystery of faith an authoritative divine rebuke to the House of David, an unanswerable sovereign refutation of synergism.

Whatever may be the differences between typically Anglican and characteristically Lutheran understandings

of the doctrine of the Incarnation, it is an open secret that the essential Christian belief that Jesus Christ is the Incarnate Son of God is currently being called into question and even brusquely denied by theologians of both traditions. Modern Lutherans of the Bultmann school and the five Anglican contributors to the symposium volume entitled The Myth of God Incarnate are at one in contending that the historical-critical methodology which is the heritage of the European Enlightenment does not provide the honest scholar with a convincing basis for the momentous claims that Christendom has unanimously made for Jesus of Nazareth. No sane believing Christian would presume to 'prove' the truth of the Church's dogma by the application of historical method alone. No matter how historically reliable one may judge the New Testament writings to be, the Eternal Godhead of our Lord, his virginal conception and bodily resurrection are part of the impenetrable mystery of God, unseen realities hidden in the ambiguous phenomena of a crucified free-lance rabbi, the suspicious pregnancy of a betrothed woman, and the equivocal sign of an empty grave. Historical method cannot probe transcendent divinity, but can merely lead educated folk to the verge of decision by pointing to a community of men and women whose whole outlook was challenged and transformed by Jesus of Nazareth. Conscience, heart and mind together are the place where the Holy Spirit creates faith in the apostolic claims concerning Jesus Christ. The historical data alone are not decisive, whether for believer or unbeliever, the academic or the uninstructed. Since Martin Luther lived and bore witness and died well before the advent of historical-critical method, it would be futile to expect him to discharge the tasks that are so admirably fulfilled by a Grillmeier or

a Pannenberg. But we may legitimately look to Luther the churchman to point a way beyond what the present writer can only think the sterile and tragic impasse highlighted by The Myth of God Incarnate. Luther's eloquent and sustained costly witness to the bodily presence of our Lord in the Eucharist (along with his equally valuable understanding of the spoken gospel, baptism and absolution) forcefully remind us that, in company with all the notable divines of the past, the Reformer was a devout churchman before he was a theologian. Luther would have had no Christian convictions to impart in the lecture-room if he had not already sensed the irresistible attraction of Incarnate God under the pulpit, at the altar and on his knees. Not his own 'reason or strength' as a scholar, but the call of the Holy Spirit in Word and Sacrament made Martin Luther a Christian. The Reformer's clear testimony that the dominically instituted means of grace are the bridge thrown by the Holy Spirit across the 'ugly wide ditch' that separates our Now from the irreversible pastness of first century Palestine points to the sheer inadequacy of historical scholarship for the task of appraising the truth claims of the New Testament. Unless he is rooted in and sustained by the common life of the universal Church, the theologian, no matter how great his intellectual gifts, is sheerly unfitted for his calling. The only way we can know the Subject of the Second Article of the Creed is by ourselves forming part of the Third.

In comparison with the Oxford Movement, the Lutheran confessional revival associated with Harms, Grundtvig, Kliefoth and Löhe must be judged only a partial success; so that the eucharistically oriented Anglican Communion is better placed to heed Luther the theologian of the means

of grace than is a Lutheran Christendom where weekly celebration of the Eucharist is, alas, still the exception rather than the rule. The Lutheran Confessions[4] and the age of Lutheran Orthodoxy were unable to conceive a Sunday bereft of eucharistic celebration, and this liturgical practice reflects a deep and unmistakable conviction that the right understanding of Christ's person and work and of the justification of the sinner are inseparable from the frequent believing reception of the true body and blood in which the Lord Jesus died, rose again and ever lives to make intercession for us. It is impossible for the present writer to close this study without paying tribute to the extraordinarily fruitful contribution made to Lutheran and ecumenical theology over the past half century by the late Dr. Hermann Sasse, whose many writings - which centred so strongly on the mystery of the eucharistic Christ - illuminated the evangelical and catholic themes which join indissolubly to form the substance of the Lutheran Confession. Sasse pointed untiringly to the coming together of biblical authority, Christology and justification by grace through faith in Luther's doctrine of the real presence, and by his forceful calls for the restoration of the Lord's Supper to the centre of Lutheran liturgical life he directed his co-religionists to the God-given source of refreshment and renewal. Blessed be Jesus Christ in the most holy Sacrament of the Altar.

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4. see, e.g., BS AC 349, 30-36 ('Von der Messe'): 'Erstlich müssen wir aber dies hie zum Eingange sagen, dass wir die Messe nicht abthun. Denn alle Sonntag und Feste werden in unser Kirchen Messen gehalten, dabei das Sacrament gereicht wird denjenigen, die es begehren, doch also, dass sie erst verhört und absolvirt werden.'

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