JOHN CALVIN'S EUCHARISTIC DOCTRINE

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INTRODUCTION

The Reformation Era witnessed heated debates over the doctrine of the Eucharist. This doctrine was a marvelously convenient focal point for the arguments of the theologians because it embodied doctrinal, ecclesiological, pastoral, as well as ceremonial questions. Thus, many of the basic differences among the reformers and between them and the Roman Catholic Church could be expressed in the forum of the Eucharistic debates. A study of Calvin's Eucharistic doctrine, then, affords the student the opportunity of exploring not only the content of one of Calvin's basic teachings but also provides a means of understanding many features of Calvin's theology against the backdrop of other, contemporary doctrines. This paper will, therefore, begin with a general survey of the non-Calvinist Eucharistic doctrines of the Reformation and proceed to a discussion of Calvin's doctrine, exploring at the same time the points where these doctrines crossed paths with Calvin's thought and contrasting the topics and approaches over which they differed.

Calvin is not of interest solely as a means of gaining perspective on the Reformation, however. His thought, in itself, and the interpretations it has inspired are of equal interest. Having established the interconnections of Calvin's doctrine of the Eucharist with the other positions on the subject, we will be able to address two interpretations of Calvin's Eucharistic doctrine specifically that lend themselves nicely to the background we have covered. Those two can be labelled "polemic" and
"ecumenical" Each has to do with understanding the origins, motivations, colorations, and atmosphere of the development of Calvin's doctrine. One position suggests that Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper, formed in a time of heated polemics, is an obvious product of the controversies. The "ecumenical" position suggests that Calvin was aware that his doctrine occupied a middle position theologically and that he considered it a useful tool in his efforts for uniting the fragmenting Protestant sects.

Both these interpretations isolate Calvin's Eucharistic doctrine and create a theory that in a sense separates it from Calvin's theological system and places it in the forum of the theological controversies between Calvin and various other Protestant thinkers. The other method of approach to his doctrine of the Lord's Supper is to look at it as a part of a greater theological system and see if it connects logically and organically to the rest of Calvin's thought. We will proceed to explore this issue in the last chapter, taking three key points of Calvin's total doctrine and drawing the connections as well as suggesting parallels between them and his Eucharistic doctrine. In so doing we will avail ourselves of the opportunity to survey the directions in which Calvin scholars have gone over the last 130 years in interpreting his entire theological system. The conclusion which then will be drawn indicates that Calvin's Eucharistic doctrine can only be fully appreciated by this final approach of linking it to his entire system of thought.
CHAPTER I

THE MAJOR EUCHARISTIC DOCTRINES OF THE
REFORMATION ERA, A BRIEF REVIEW

The Reformation Era witnessed the development and expression of a veritable spectrum of doctrines concerning the Lord's Supper. The Roman Catholic doctrine, having heretofore been the exclusive and authoritative one, took its place at one end of that spectrum. The chronological order in which the other doctrines appeared does not necessarily represent step by step a systematic, doctrinal movement away from that initial older Roman viewpoint. Thus, in studying the array of 16th century doctrines of the Eucharist it is less helpful to consider them in their chronological order than in terms of their doctrinal relations. For instance, Calvin's doctrine, while chronologically the latest to appear, is closer to the Catholic position than that of some earlier Protestant theologians. He was forced to take into account the positions already elaborated by previous Protestant thinkers, no less than the Catholic position. Any study of Calvin's Eucharistic thought must, therefore, begin by study of the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Zwinglian, Spiritualist and Anabaptist doctrines with which Calvin himself had to deal.

Both the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist and that of other Protestant churches agree by taking as their point of departure the Scriptural teaching that the Eucharist was
instituted by Christ as a sacrament. However, differences among the doctrines are all too immediately apparent. In order to address these differences in an orderly manner we shall raise certain questions about each doctrine.

1) What did each group mean by sacrament?

2) What was each group's definition of the Eucharist? Particular points of importance are as follows:
   A) What is the meaning of the concept of Christ's sacrifice in the context of the Eucharist?
   B) What is the mode of Christ's presence in the Eucharistic elements?
   C) Is the Eucharist a means of grace, a symbol of grace, or both?

3) How does the believer approach the celebration of the Lord's Supper and what are the effects of the Eucharist on the recipient?

4) What are the ideas of each group concerning the role of the Eucharist in Christian life and the administration of the Eucharist?

Spelling out these points will allow us to compare with more clarity the various doctrines.

ROMAN CATHOLIC

The pre-Tridentine Roman Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist was based on the canons put forth at the Fourth Lateran Council of the Roman Church in 1215. The words of the canon which discusses the Eucharist are both useful as a reference point for our discussion and brief enough to quote directly:
There is one Universal Church of the faithful, outside of which there is absolutely no salvation. In which there is the same priest and sacrifice, Jesus Christ, whose body and blood are truly contained in the sacrament of the altar under the forms of bread and wine; the bread being changed (transubstantiatio) by divine power into the body, and the wine into the blood, so that to realize the mystery of unity we may receive of Him what He has received of us. And this sacrament no one can effect except the priest who has been duly ordained in accordance with the keys of the Church, which Jesus Christ Himself gave to the Apostles and their successors. (1)

The nature of the Eucharist in Roman Catholic doctrine must be understood in the light of the High Medieval definition of the sacraments in general. Sacraments were defined as a combination of the sign and the thing signified; a sacramental sign both signifies God's salvation and effects what it signifies in the recipient. In particular, the Eucharist signifies and communicates Christ's sacrifice on the cross. The outward physical sign is the symbol of this inner, spiritual reality. During the course of the celebration of the Eucharist, the historical event of the Crucifixion is not relived. Yet, it is recalled to the mind of the believer, made present again, or "re-presented." Thus, the merits of Christ's sacrifice are applied to the recipient of the Eucharistic elements. Having these sacrificial merits applied to man is a means of grace. As Thomas Aquinas argues,

this sacrament is required for salvation . . . St. Paul says, 'as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you show forth the death of the Lord, until he come...': Therefore, the Eucharist is . . . necessary for salvation . . . (2)

For our purposes it is important to note carefully these points involved in Roman Catholic doctrine: the sacrament is a means as well as a sign of grace and the sacrament "re-presents"
Christ's sacrifice on Calvary.

How then does all this transpire? What are the mechanics involved? First, the Roman doctrine embraces another doctrine, transubstantiation, which was briefly described in the beginning quote. Drawing upon the Aristotelian doctrine of substance and the distinction between substance and accidents, transubstantiation is based on the notion that there is a difference between substance and accidents in the Eucharist. (3)

For a fuller understanding of transubstantiation we shall turn to Thomas Aquinas again. How, indeed, are the bread and wine changed into the body and blood of Christ?

Thomas Aquinas argues that the body of Christ enters the sacrament but not through a change in position. Rather, "the body of Christ can only come to be in the sacrament by means of the conversion of the substance of bread into His body." (4) This conversion is not a natural conversion but is "wholly supernatural, effected solely by the power of God . . . for the whole substance of bread is converted into the whole substance of Christ's body . . . Hence this conversion is properly called transubstantiation." (5) In elaboration, Aquinas adds, "the body of Christ is not in this sacrament according to the proper mode of spatial dimension (quantitas dimensiva) but rather according to the mode of substance . . . Christ's body is in no way locally in this sacrament." (6) As for the accidents of the bread and wine they do remain even after the substance is converted. (7) This transformation occurs in an entirely supernatural, mysterious manner which is not perceptible to the senses or fully comprehensible to the reason. This, then, is the doctrine of
transubstantiation, the Roman Catholic way of explaining how the Real Presence of Christ comes to exist within the elements of the Lord's Supper. This remained the basic teaching of the Catholic theologians in the 16th century.

Our next question is when does this transformation occur and who is capable of mediating it? In Roman Catholic doctrine the priest plays a particularly important role. He alone is empowered by the Sacrament of the Holy Orders to pronounce the Words of Consecration over the elements, at which point the transformation of substance to the body and blood of Christ occurs. Even though the priest be himself sinful, the defects of his moral state do not invalidate either his priestly office or the efficacy of the formula of consecration. The sacrament works ex opere operato, by the efficacy granted to it by God, Who does not allow the failings of His ministers to impede its administration.

Because the bread and wine were believed to contain the substance of the body and blood of Christ, there was great concern that the elements not be violated by spilling or unclean handling. Various practices such as the use of tubes so that the laity did not drink directly from the chalice evolved in order to prevent such accidents. Refusing to serve the chalice to the laity was the ultimate practice and was more and more common in the West from the 12th century on. (8) Dogma was developed to substantiate this practice. There grew a clearer understanding that "per concomitantiam the entire Christ is present under both species" and that the priest, by virtue of his office, could fulfill the command, "Eat and drink" as a representative of the congregation. (9) The net result by the time of the Reformation
was that the chalice communion of the laity was practically forgotten in the Roman Catholic Church and the priest's position was a privileged and select one in contrast to the laity.

Referring back to our set of questions, what are the effects of the Eucharistic celebration on the recipient? If the worshipper comes to the altar in the state of grace, that is, without serious sins on his conscience, with a belief in the Real Presence of Christ, and with appropriate dispositions he will benefit from a fruitful Eucharistic experience. The worshipper is united with Christ through love. The Eucharist will be a means of sanctifying grace for him. The reception of the sacrament increases the flow of those graces into his soul, which conduce toward his sanctification. Within the spiritual life of the partaker, this reception helps to heal, restore, and purify the moral deficiencies within his self. This is not to say it abolishes mortal sin within him. Yet, it strengthens his ability to resist temptation and to cultivate virtue. The recipient is not only united with Christ but also united with his fellow men through the sharing of a sacramental meal and its fellowship.

In addition, the Lord's Supper is a memorial of the death of Christ, bringing it vividly to the mind of the believer, and at the same time being a pledge of his future glory and eternal life.

Those who are not prepared to approach the altar because they are not baptised, because they are in a state of mortal sin, or because they are non-believers should be excluded by the priest if he recognizes their situation. However, if they do manage to partake of the Supper they benefit only in a limited fashion. They will not receive sanctifying grace, although they will be
sharing a certain, though meager, fellowship with their fellow men.

In summary, the identifying characteristics of the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Eucharist include 1) a sacrificial element, 2) the sacrament as simultaneously a symbol and means of grace, 3) transubstantiation as the explanation for the Real Presence of Christ, 4) the necessary role of the priest in consecrating the elements, determining who the recipients should be, and maintaining an office exclusive of his own moral state, and 5) the serving of only the bread to the laity.

MARTIN LUTHER

The Eucharistic doctrine of Martin Luther passed through a number of stages of development reflecting his initial need to argue against Rome and then his mature need to offer an alternative doctrine to replace the criticized Roman one. His later doctrine is of greatest concern to us at this point. Generally, it is distinctive for posing consubstantiation as the alternative to Rome's transubstantiation. Also involved are Luther's denunciations of the Roman Catholic sacrificial interpretation of the Eucharist as well as his criticisms of the Catholic practices concerning the form and ritual of the Lord's Supper.

In order to understand Luther's doctrine of the Lord's Supper, it is worth noting his general conception of sacrament. In The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ, 1519, Luther spells out the three aspects of a sacrament in the context of discussing the Eucharist:

The first is the sacrament, or sign. The second is the significance of this sacrament. The third is the faith required with each of the first two. These three parts must be found in every sacrament. The sacrament must be
external and visible, having some material form or appearance. The significance must be internal and spiritual, within the spirit of the person. Faith must make both of them together operative and useful. (10)

The next year, 1520, Luther wrote The Babylonian Captivity of the Church. In it he discusses sacraments as follows:

\[\ldots\] our signs of sacraments \ldots have attached to them a word of promise which requires faith, and they cannot be fulfilled by any other work. (11)

Luther insists that the sign and the use of the sign are important in that they "symbolize excellent things to be fulfilled in the spirit." (12) Thus, we see that Luther essentially retains the three parts of the sacrament that he uses earlier. Yet, he goes on in the Babylonian Captivity to elaborate this definition. In this work, Luther objects strongly to the conception of the sacrament as a good work or as a sacrifice. Rather, "the mass or Sacrament of the Altar is Christ's testament \ldots a promise made (by Christ) about to die, in which He designates and appoints His heirs." (13) His bequest is the forgiveness of sins and this is bestowed upon those with faith, for "it is faith that makes men heirs." (14) Since it is a promise, "then access to it (by man) is to be gained, not with any works, or powers, or merits of one's own, but by faith alone." (15)

Also in The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, Luther points out that

the church can give no promises of grace; that is the work of God alone. Therefore, she cannot institute a sacrament. (16)

Instead, "we seek sacraments that have been divinely instituted." (17) Because a sacrament is a sign with an attached divine promise, Luther finds only two sacraments in the church, namely baptism and the Lord's Supper. He does add penance at times but
baptism and the Supper are the only two in which "we find both the divinely instituted visible sign and the promise of forgiveness of sins. The sacrament of penance . . . lacks the divinely instituted visible sign, and is, . . . nothing but a way and a return to baptism." (18)

Underscoring these sacramental ideas and fundamental to Luther's interpretation of the Eucharist is his conception of man in relation to God. Of paramount importance was Luther's conception of man as a humble creature who cannot hold God at his beck and call. Man cannot manipulate his situation in relation to God through such means as good works. Faith alone, not the manifestations of faith in good works, is the key to his salvation. This faith is one of the defining elements of the sacraments, as we noted above. The faith of the recipient of the sacrament relies on God's promises of life and salvation.

With these beliefs conditioning his thoughts, Luther in his earlier years began to argue against the common conceptions of the Eucharist as a sacrifice. For man to offer a sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ meant in Luther's mind the claim that man was able to offer to God that which it is only God's to offer. In making such a claim, man is being guilty of gross presumption. As Luther puts it:

We should, therefore, give careful heed to this word "sacrifice" so that we do not presume to give God something in the sacrament, when it is He who in it gives us all things. (19)

The sacrifice involved in the Eucharist is of another sort and one more in keeping with the position of man. Man can offer himself to God with constant prayer, as well as praise and thanksgiving for sacrifice, a thank offering. Yet, man does
not even present these sacrifices to God directly but relies upon Christ to be the mediator for the presentation.

... we do not offer Christ as a sacrifice, but ... Christ offers us. And in this way it is permissible, yes profitable, to call the mass a sacrifice; not on its own account, but because we offer ourselves as a sacrifice along with Christ. (20)

Just as Luther challenged the Roman Catholic notion of a sacrificial interpretation of the Eucharist, so, too, he objected to the Roman view of the priest, his office, and his role in the Eucharistic celebration. Luther firmly supported the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.

For thus it is written in I Peter 2:9 "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, and a priestly royalty." Therefore we are all priests, as many of us as are Christians. But, the priests, as we call them, are ministers chosen from among us. All that they do is done in our name; the priesthood is nothing but a ministry. (21)

Luther continues to point out that ordination is not a sacrament. The ordination of a minister is merely an institutional rite. Priests are not, by virtue of their office, in a unique position within the Church. Luther rejects the notion that the priest alone is empowered to offer the Eucharist.

What a priest celebrates public mass, he should determine to do nothing more than to commune himself and others by means of the mass ... he may (also) offer prayers for himself and others. (22)

Because Christ is our mediator in heaven, He in effect, is our priest, offering our sacrifice to God. Thus, Luther firmly rejects any Roman Catholic ideas that the priest can represent the congregation in the celebration of the Eucharist. In addition, because each Christian with faith offers himself to God in sacrifice through Christ, "each and all are, therefore, equally spiritual priests before God." (23) Finally, because the priest in Luther's opinion does not hold a uniquely priestly office, there is no
reason to argue for the withholding of the chalice from the people. "The sacrament does not belong to the priests, but to all men." (24) Communion in both kinds must be offered to the faithful.

Having dealt with Luther's differences with Rome over the office of priesthood and the forms of the Eucharist, it is time to address the question of what is the character of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, according to Luther. Partially in accord with his notion that it is presumptuous of man to claim that acting as an agent of God he can convert the wine and bread into the substance of the body and blood of Christ, Luther maintains a doctrine of consubstantiation. He further denies the validity of the doctrine of transubstantiation because "it rests neither on the Scriptures nor on reason." (25) Thus, Luther argues, during the Eucharistic celebration the substance of the bread and wine is not eliminated and replaced by the substance of the body and the blood of Christ. Rather, under the species of the bread and wine, the substance of the body and blood of Christ and the substance of the elements co-exist together, simultaneously.

And why could not Christ include his body in the substance of the bread just as well as in the accidents? In red-hot iron, for instance, the two substances, fire and iron, are so mingled that every part is both iron and fire. Why is it not even more possible that the body of Christ be contained in every part of the substance of the bread. (26)

As we have already seen, the priest according to Luther is a minor character with no more power or status than man grants him in an office of ministry. Thus, it is impossible to suppose that the priest has the power to change the substance of the elements by speaking a few words over them. Luther draws the
logical conclusion from this, then, that since the substance is not altered or transformed at the point in the mass when the priest speaks the Words of Consecration, Christ is substantially present in the elements at all times during the service. The commandment that brings the substance of the body and blood of Christ to the Eucharistic elements is in no way the product of man's speech, work, timing, or doing. Christ ordained this institution; man merely administers it. (27)

... the Lord Christ also ordained and commanded that in His church His essential body and blood are to be present in the Lord's Supper, not merely in a spiritual but also in a bodily and yet incomprehensible manner. (28)

It is worth noting that Luther is in a sense arguing that Christ's presence in the Eucharistic elements has no relevance to the timing of the mass. It depends upon the Word of God. This is not to say that God, through Christ, is constantly present in the bread and wine. Such a conception leads to the conclusion that God is present in the very kernel of wheat from which the bread is made. The extension of this is that God is everywhere, which is pantheism. But, Luther insists that we remember that God can do or will anything and man should simply accept it with faith. Thus, Christ's presence in the Eucharist cannot be fixed with a beginning or end in terms of time or place at each celebration of the Lord's Supper. It is God's decision and therefore unexplainable and unpredictable.

Since God's power knows no measure or limit and does things no reason can comprehend, but faith must simply believe, how do we become certain, dear sirs, that a body may not through God's power be in heaven and in the Lord's Supper at the same time? Since He says: "This is My body," how am I to satisfy my heart that God has no way and no power to do what His Word tells me? And although a body is not now visibly
present in many places, God may well know how to render
a body present invisibly, nay, also visibly, in many places
at the same time. ... What God says, that He is able to do
(Rom. 4:21); and nothing, God says, is impossible for Him
(Luke 1: 37) (29)

In Luther's doctrine, the effects of the Eucharistic experience
are to reinforce the believer's faith, to reassure him of God's
promises of eternal life and salvation, and to witness to Christ's
testament that promises to man forgiveness of sin. Thus, the
sacrament is a means of grace. The function of the Eucharistic
celebration is also one of remembrance and the effects of such a
commemorative experience provide a time to "teach and believe in
the power and fruit of his suffering." (30)

In conclusion, Luther's doctrine of the Lord's Supper differs
from the Roman Catholic doctrine, along these crucial lines:
1) the definition of sacrament which emphasizes the necessary faith
of the believer for the sign and the significance of the sign to
be useful and effective, 2) the rejection of the idea that the
sacrifice of Christ is "re-presented" in the Eucharist, though
sacrifices of other sorts are not totally excluded, 3) the altera-
tion of the interpretation of the Real Presence of Christ in the
Eucharist from transubstantiation to consubstantiation, 4) both
doctrines hold the Eucharist to be a means of grace yet the Romans
see this as the application of the merits of Christ's sacrifice
to the recipient while Luther understands it as the forgiveness
of sin through faith because the sacrament is Christ's testament
and because no good works of man, including sacraments, enhance
his/merit in God's eyes, and 5) the elimination of all but two of
the Roman sacraments, and, as a result, the exclusion of unique
powers for the clergy, reflected also in consubstantiation and
and in communion in both kinds for the laity.

ZWINGLI

The doctrine of the Eucharist proposed by Zwingli rests squarely on the assumption that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a sign, a symbol, and nothing else. As he says in his Treatise on the Lord's Supper (1526):

A sacrament is the sign of a holy thing. When I say: The sacrament of the Lord's body, I am simply referring to that bread which is the symbol of the body of Christ who was put to death for our sakes. (31)

From this point, Zwingli moves on to make a crucial distinction that colors the rest of his Eucharistic doctrinal arguments. Zwingli emphasizes that the sign and the thing signified cannot under any circumstances be confused. (32) Therefore, to Zwingli's way of thinking, the elements of the Eucharist cannot be transformed into or identified with the body and blood of Christ, as they would be by such theories as consubstantiation or transubstantiation. The essence of the body and blood of Christ cannot in any way be the same as the elements of the Lord's Supper. The sacrament is a sign only. It is never to be confused with the reality which it signifies.

But the very body of Christ is the body which is seated at the right hand of God, and the sacrament of His body is the bread, and the sacrament of his blood is the wine, of which we partake with thanksgiving. Now the sign and the thing signified cannot be one and the same. Therefore, the sacrament of the body of Christ cannot be the body itself. (33)

Consequently, Zwingli does not teach that Christ is corporally present in the sacrament.

Zwingli insists on this point because of his doctrine of the ubiquity of Christ. He firmly maintains that Christ has two different natures, the divine nature and the human one.
Furthermore, "the proper character of each nature must be left intact . . ." (34) For the human nature of Christ was revealed in His human form, His human sufferings, His human soul. It was this human nature that ascended into heaven and is at the right hand of the Father. For His resurrected body, "it is possible for (it) only to be in the one place." (35) Thus, ubiquity does not pertain to the human nature of Christ. "It belongs only to the divine nature of Christ to be ubiquitous." (36) Zwingli disagreed with Luther over this subject. Luther maintained that the substance of the body and blood of the resurrected Christ was in the elements. Zwingli locates the body and blood of Christ in this resurrected form at the right hand of God exclusively. For Luther, ubiquity is not restricted to the divine nature of Christ as it is with Zwingli.

As a result of this doctrine of ubiquity, the mode of Christ's presence in the Eucharist must be further clarified in Zwingli's thought. Zwingli interprets the Biblical statement in which Christ institutes the Eucharist, "This is my body", in a strictly figurative, symbolic sense.

... the word "is" cannot be taken literally, for the bread is not the body, and cannot be . . . Necessarily, then, it must be figuratively or metaphorically. "This is my body," means, "The bread signifies my body," or "is a figure of my body." (37)

However, the divine nature of Christ being ubiquitous, the attributes of this nature are Christ's "omnipresence, His abiding fellowship with us, His presence in all our hearts, and that all things consist in Him." (38) Thus, Christ's divine nature can, and indeed is present in the Eucharist. This calls for careful consideration of the consistency of Zwingli's doctrine of the separation of the sign and the thing signified. The thing
signified by the elements of the Lord's Supper is the body and blood of Christ, his human nature - not his divine nature. Thus, by having the divine nature present in the Supper there should be no concern that the sign and the thing signified are confused.

(39)

Moving on, Zwingli shares with Luther the view that there can only be one way of salvation and that is justification by faith alone. The Eucharist, though beneficial, is not a good work which enhances the believer's merit in God's sight. It is not a means of grace. The Eucharistic celebration has the function of spiritually uniting man with Christ. But it is the spirit that gives life to the soul of the worshipper. The physical act of eating or drinking the elements of the Supper does not effect this; the belief which he brings to the Eucharistic service does.

But with his own words, Christ teaches us that everything which he says concerning the eating of flesh or bread has to be understood in terms of believing. (40)

Thus, it is the believer's faith which makes the Sacrament of the Eucharist efficacious.

What, then, is the value of the Lord's Supper in Zwingli's thought? Consistent with his distinction between the sign and the thing signified that we noted before, he does not view the Supper as a means of grace but as a community confession of faith, and thanksgiving. Yet it in no way strengthens man's faith. It is a "public testimony of adherence to a religious community." (41)

And when in the thanksgiving, in company with the congregation, you partake of the two elements of bread and wine, all that you do is confess publicly that you believe in Jesus Christ. (42)
The emphasis in Zwingli's doctrine is far removed from the ideas of Real Presence or of sacrifice. The Supper does not provide additional grace, merit, or faith for the worshipper. It merely focuses his attention on the faith and grace he has already received from God.

Zwingli's doctrine, therefore, is distinctive for the following reasons: 1) There is a clear separation of the sign and the thing signified within the sacrament. 2) The Eucharist is strictly a sign and symbol of the body and blood of Christ. 3) The divine nature of Christ is ubiquitous and therefore is present in the Supper. 4) The Eucharist does not function as a means of grace or as a good work. 5) The participant benefits from the Eucharist only if he brings a faith with him. 6) The Supper unites men in a community confession and thanksgiving which affirms their religious life together.

THE ANABAPTISTS AND THE SPIRITUALISTS

In our survey of the spectrum of Reformation Eucharistic doctrine we now arrive at the "left wing of the Reformation;" (43) those proponents of the Radical Reformation. This group of dissenters, however, do not lend themselves to easy categorizing. "Inchoately, the left wing was a veritable banyan tree... Roots and branches, parent stock and offshoots, are difficult to distinguish." (44) For our purposes it would not prove practical or even possible to summarize a particular Eucharistic doctrine to which all these sects adhered. Our best approach is to look carefully at a few selected doctrines because we are primarily interested in identifying the most extreme divergences of thought from the Roman Catholic Eucharistic doctrine in order
to complete our spectrum view. Consequently we shall now explore the doctrines of the Lord's Supper upheld by John Denck and Caspar Schwenckfeld. The former being at one time considered the "pope of the Anabaptists;" though later embracing an evangelical Spiritualism, (45) and the latter being a "chief exponent of an irenic and evangelical Spiritualism," (46) each man in a sense represents one of the major subgroups of the left wing, namely the Anabaptists and the Spiritualists.

John Denck upholds a theology in which "salvation is in man but not of him." (47) As he puts it,

The Word of God is already with you before you seek it, gives to you before you ask; opens up for you before you knock. (48)

It is man's role to imitate Christ and thus realize salvation. This is done through Gelassenheit, "yieldedness to God's will in self-surrender" (49) and leads to "progressive 'divinization and inner lordship over all that is creaturely.'" (50)

One way in which Gelassenheit is realized is through the Eucharist. Christ's role in the Lord's Supper is as a mediator. Christ's assistance combined with man's redirection of his will so that the seeds of salvation in him are not lost under various conceits, are the path to a covenant with God. The Eucharistic sacrament, like baptism has two aspects, the inner and the outer, that are involved in this process.

The living invisible bread strengthens one in the life of righteousness. And whoever is mindful of and drinks from the invisible chalice the wine mixed by God through his Son from the beginning of the world will be satisfied and think no longer of himself, but will become completely "divinized" through the love of God, and God will become "humanized" in him. (51)

As for the outer experience, it is a covenant of man's good
intentions to involve himself with God.

For Denck, the actual celebration of the Eucharist is not necessary for salvation. It is not a means of grace in and of itself. The efficacy of the sacrament derives from man's belief. The outer sacrament is a demonstration of a covenant with God that can also be effected by the inner Eucharistic experience.

Denck, generally, is more concerned with the connection of faith and grace than clarifying a Christology. From our brief discussion, however, though he does not give significant attention to questions of ubiquity and the like, he de-emphasizes the sacraments as means of grace, and therefore undercuts much possibility of the reception by the believer of the substantial body and blood of Christ. Much more depends upon the believer, both his faith and will, to follow the path to salvation.

Caspar Schwenckfeld's understanding of the Eucharistic experience is rooted in ideas reflecting Luther's position of justification by faith. However, Schwenckfeld elaborates upon this, believing that "justification derives from the knowledge of Christ through faith." (52) Furthermore, this knowledge of Christ is Eucharistically based. (53) His Christology, therefore, plays a crucial role in his Eucharistic doctrine. Schwenckfeld believes that Christ has two natures, the human and the divine. This is qualified to include the doctrine of progressive deification of the uncreaturely humanity of Christ's human nature. Christ's human nature consists of more than one stage. The first is the humiliated stage and the second is the glorified, noncreaturely humanity. As for the divine nature of Christ, Schwenckfeld leaves it rather imprecise. (54) He claims that the human nature
is "uncreaturely' and hence is scarcely distinguishable from the divine nature in Christ." (55)

Christ after His crucifixion and resurrection is a new man, the Second Person of the Trinity, made up of the Logos (the divine nature) and the glorified flesh. Man, provided that he has faith can feed on this mystical flesh of Christ. (56) Similar to his Christological doctrine of progressive deification of Christ's humanity is Schwenckfeld's idea that man through feeding on the celestial or mystical flesh of Christ progresses towards deification. In order for man to undergo these events he must believe. Those who through faith are born again in Christ are in a position to feed on Christ and enter into the progressive deification process.

The Eucharistic experience, itself, consists of two kinds of eating.

The feeding and the inner, spiritual eating in faith, . . . properly distinguished from the external, sacramental eating. (57)

The inner eating is not necessarily confined to the specific times of the celebration of the Eucharist. It is a progressive experience by which man gradually "participate(s) abundantly in the divine essence, life, spirit, and nature already here on earth." (58) Schwenckfeld adopts Crautwald's ideas in this regard.

. . . that est must be accented as meaning continuous (perpetuum) and not to be turned into significat. (59)

The outer eating of the bread and wine has a separate and distinct purpose. It is a time for thanksgiving and remembrance of the Lord.

. . . that the believers in Christ thereby might proclaim the death of the Lord and give praise, honor and thanks for his bread and beneficence. (60)
Because the two feedings are distinct, Schwenckfeld was able to encourage suspension of the celebration of the Eucharist without endangering man's communication with God and his progressive deification. Indeed, "the inner contemplative action was in fact enhanced by the suspension of the external sacrament." (61)

Thus, Schwenckfeld's Eucharistic doctrine is of an opposite orientation from the Roman Catholic doctrine and distinct from the other Protestant theologians in parts. Schwenckfeld holds that the service of the sacrament is not in and of itself a means of grace and that it is devoid of such elements as the Roman sacrificial idea. Progressive deification rather than salvation is the hope of man through the Spiritualists' Eucharistic experience. The external rite of the Lord's Supper has value, similar in parts to Zwingli's thought in its commemorative and thanksgiving aspects. Faith is necessary for the participants to have a fruitful Eucharistic experience.

These two representatives of the left wing of the Reformation uphold Eucharistic doctrines that have certain peculiarities but that share ideas which distinguish them from the Roman Catholic and other Protestant thought. First, the idea of man seeking deification is impossible for Luther to accept and is dissimilar to the Roman idea of seeking grace through the application of the merits of Christ's sacrifice to man. Second, the clear distinguishing of the inner and outer Eucharistic experiences by Denck and Schwenckfeld is a strikingly different view from the Roman Catholics, for instance, who make a point of uniting the sign and the thing signified into one Eucharistic
event and experience. Third, the need for man to come to the Supper with faith is similar to Luther and Zwingli's emphasis but does not hold a similar central importance to the Roman Catholic position. Fourth, because of the emphasis on the outer rite, the concern for continuous Eucharistic feeding, the progressive, ongoing deification of man, as well as man's individual role involving his faith and will in his salvation, Denck and Schwenckfeld are not in a position to indicate substantial and necessary powers for a priestly class, as the Roman Catholic doctrine does.

We can see, therefore, that the Eucharistic doctrines defended during the Reformation did represent a full spectrum of doctrinal positions. The one of primary concern to us now is Calvin's doctrine and to this we will turn at this time.
CHAPTER II

CALVIN'S DOCTRINE OF THE EUCHARIST

Having identified these major currents of Eucharistic thought of the Reformation which Calvin had to account for, it is now our task to understand his Eucharistic thought as well. Although Calvin himself was confidant of its clarity, his doctrine of the Lord's Supper is not without ambiguities and difficulties. Calvin's use of the word "substance," for instance, is not consistent and this imprecision creates problems. There are other tensions in Calvin's doctrine aside from the purely terminological confusion. For example, as Kilian McDonnell points out,

Calvin sees no opposition between the assertion that "Christ's body is really... truly given to us in the Supper," and his assertion that the "life-giving virtue from Christ's flesh is poured into us by the Spirit." Here... we meet Calvin's dialectics... (62)

The student, then, must be alert to complications and not assume too much as granted. The tensions exist and cannot be ignored.

One further characteristic of Calvin's thought that must be kept in mind is that, while Calvin is a systematic theologian, he does not feel capable of resolving all the paradoxes of the Christian faith. There is a consciously acknowledged element of mystery that remains at the core of his theology. Speaking of the issue of Christ's presence in the Eucharist he says:

Now if anyone should ask me how this takes place, I shall not be ashamed to confess that it is a secret too lofty for my mind to comprehend or my words to declare... (63)
Having briefly acknowledged the problems involved in studying Calvin's Eucharistic doctrine, it is now appropriate to explore that doctrine itself.

Calvin lived during a time when heated debates on the Eucharist did not fail to shape the nature and form of emerging doctrines. Calvin's own thought on the Eucharist underwent certain development. His original doctrine of the Lord's Supper, stated in the first edition of the Institutes, 1536, was written in France and conceived before he was familiar with other contemporary Protestant positions. The further development of his doctrine, however, took place in an atmosphere of polemics with various Protestant theologians advocating other positions. At times the shifts in his doctrine seem to reflect the atmosphere of debate and Calvin's attempt to address the particular doctrinal controversies that were at hand. In very general terms, despite the shifts in emphasis resulting from the needs of debate, Calvin's doctrine of the Eucharist, nonetheless, remained consistent in substance throughout successive editions of the Institutes. He formulated his views early and retained them staunchly.

Because the majority of Calvin's Eucharistic doctrinal explanations are contained in the various editions of the Institutes, we shall rely heavily on them. In addition, reference will be made to the Geneva Consensus of 1549 and the Confession upon the Eucharist of 1537.

Also for our study it is useful to briefly outline the major divisions within the Institutes, 1559, the final edition.
Book One: "The Knowledge of God the Creator"

Book Two: "The Knowledge of God the Redeemer in Christ, First Disclosed to the Fathers Under the Law and Then to Us in the Gospel"

Book Three: "The Way in Which We Receive the Grace of Christ: What Benefits Come to Us from It and What Effects Follow" This Book includes discussion of such topics as faith, Christian life, bearing the cross, justification by faith, Christian freedom, prayer and election.

Book Four: "The External Means or Aids by Which God Invites Us into the Society of Christ and Holds Us Therein" Topics in this final Book include the Church, the false and true Church, the government of the Church, the Roman Church and papacy, the discipline of the Church, the sacraments, baptism, the Sacred Supper, and finally, civil government.

We will use the same set of question already employed in discussing the non-Calvinist positions treated in Chapter I in analyzing Calvin's own position:

1) What does Calvin mean by sacrament?

2) What is his more specific definition of the Eucharist?

   A) How does the concept of Christ's sacrifice relate to his doctrine of the Eucharist?

   B) What is the mode of Christ's presence in the Supper?

   C) Is the Eucharist a means of grace, a symbol of grace, or both?

3) How does a believer approach the Table and what are the effects of the Eucharist on the recipient?

4) What is Calvin's stand concerning the role of the Eucharist in Christian life as well as its administration?
Calvin, like other Protestant theologians of the Reforma-
tion, defined the sacraments starting with the criterion that 
they were established by God. (64) "The Word of God must precede, 
to make a sacrament a sacrament." (65) Quoting Augustine as 
agreeing on this matter, Calvin insists that there are not seven 
sacraments, as the Roman Catholics claim, but only two, Baptism 
and the Supper. (66) Thus he agrees with the other Protestants 
except Luther's half-hearted acceptance of penance.

Calvin briefly states that sacraments are "outward signs 
by which the Lord seals on our consciences the promises of his 
good will toward us in order to sustain the weakness of our faith." 
(67) The function of a sacrament, therefore, is to 
represent the promises of God graphically. They picture the 
content of the Word, make the promises visible to the eye. (68) 
It is important to note that while a sacrament exists to fulfill 
a preceding promise, it itself adds nothing to the promise. 

For the sacrament was no more than a confirmation of the 
promise to give us additional faith in it. The sacrament, 
therefore, adds nothing to the promise as such but is only 
a means of making us believe it. (69)

Calvin's conception of the sacraments as connected with a divine 
promise is very similar, as we have seen, to Luther's thought. (70)

Sacraments, according to Calvin, then, by confirming God's 
promise are a combination of the sign and the Word. Tied closely 
to the sign, the outward form of bread, wine, or water, yet function-
ally distinct and unique, is the preaching of the Word. The 
Word is actually much more important to Calvin than the sign, for 
without the voice there would be no revelation.

But when God confirmed the vision by His Word, the Prophet 
is enabled to say with advantage, "I have seen the glory of 
God." (71)

Care must be taken to understand that God's Word finds a frequent
but not exclusive medium in preaching. The written word of
the scripture, for instance, is also the Word of God. Yet,
preaching of the Word from the scripture is crucial to the life
of the Church and the ritual of the sacraments. The prophet's
or preacher's speech itself is so closely identified with
God's Word that "it may be said that the mouth of the prophet
was the mouth of God Himself." (72)

What are the conditions under which the Word of God is
heard and is effective?

Man's speech can really become God's Word in the event
of its being communicated to those who are intended to
hear it. (73)

Thus, also closely tied to the subject of the sacraments is:
the doctrine of election. God chooses among men those whom He
wishes to join Christ and to attain salvation. They are the
ones who are receptive and, indeed, when hearing the Word they
respond with faith. However, this is only a partial picture.
The true and full origin of faith is that it is a gift of the
Holy Spirit.

An assurance of the nature of faith is "above the capacity
of the human mind, it is the part of the Holy Spirit to
confirm within us what God promises in His Word." (74)
The outward preaching will be in vain and useless if it
not be accompanied by the teaching of the Spirit. . . (75)
Our Lord must make His Word available by the working of
His Holy Spirit . . . (76)

The Word enlivens the sacraments but only insofar as the Holy
Spirit is at work and the recipients are the elect.

Faith . . . is not a natural response to the Word of God
but is an entirely miraculous act of the Holy Spirit within
the heart of the hearer of God's Word. (77) Let the Word
be added to the element and it will become a sacrament . . .
not because it is said, but because it is believed. (78)

It is essential to understand that faith is not created by
the sign itself. The visible sign has no intrinsic power. Man's salvation is secured through the combined efforts of the Holy Spirit, the Word, existence of election, and his faith. The signs are adjuncts and are of secondary importance.

What, then, is the purpose of signs and what gives them any status or significance? The signs of the sacraments, like the visible church, exist as they do in order to aid man in maintaining, witnessing to, and strengthening his faith.

But as our faith is slight and feeble unless it be propped on all sides and sustained by every means, it trembles, wavers, totters, and at last gives way. Here our merciful Lord, according to his infinite kindness so tempers himself to our capacity that, since we are creatures who always creep on the ground, cleave to the flesh, and, do not think about or even conceive of anything spiritual, he condescends to lead us to himself even by these earthly elements, and to set before us in the flesh a mirror of spiritual blessings... Now, because we have souls engrafted in bodies, he imparts spiritual things under visible ones. (79)

Calvin agrees with Luther that the sacraments are established not out of divine necessity but out of human necessity. Insofar as he considers the sacraments to be gifts, not from man to God but from God to man, Calvin does not accept the Roman concept that the sacraments are, among other things, good works which man can offer to God. (80) Thus faith is the road to union with Christ. The signs augment that faith which was initiated by the Holy Spirit, enlivened by the Word, and received by the elect.

Having noted in Calvin's thought that the sacraments exist in order to confirm promises and to reinforce faith, and having noted what those promises are in the form of the Word, how they are heard and received through the processes of faith, election, and the Holy Spirit, it is worthwhile to note the relation of
Calvin's doctrine on these points regarding faith to the other doctrines discussed in Chapter I. The Roman Catholics, because they place weight on good works and merit to gain grace and favor in God's sight, do not put as much emphasis on the faith of the individual. Justification is not by faith alone. To the Protestants, however, faith is of greater necessity for salvation.

Luther considers faith to be the only path to justification. He agrees with Calvin that the sacraments confirm promises of God but do not originate and effect faith. Unlike Calvin he considers the sacraments to be means of grace. The faith brought to the sacraments by the believer is necessary so that the sacraments can be a means of grace. To Calvin the faith brought to the sacraments is reinforced by the sacraments. Furthermore, it makes the sacraments efficacious. Yet, it does not create a situation whereby the sacraments become means of grace.

Zwingli, as we have seen, concurs with the doctrine of justification by faith and agrees with Calvin that this faith is brought to the Eucharistic celebration, not effected by it. Dissimilar to Calvin's thought, though, is his belief that the sacraments in no way strengthen man's faith. To Zwingli the sacrament, not just the sign, is relatively insignificant in the process of attaining salvation and strengthening faith.

The radical voices of the Reformation also agree with Calvin at points and disagree at others. They are sympathetic to Calvin on the matter of the sacraments not being means of grace. Faith must be supplied by the believer, himself. The differences between them are centered around the source of faith. Calvin's doctrine, as we have spelled out, includes crucial aspects in
the role of the Holy Spirit, the doctrine of election and the importance of the Word. Schwenckfeld, for instance, insists that man's will is involved to a greater extent and that the seeds of salvation are in man without any concern over election by God.

Calvin's doctrine of the sacraments is not limited to a confirmation of God's promises and reinforcement of man's weak faith. The Church is the forum for all this and the sacraments have to be further understood in the Christian life in the context of the Church.

The Church, in fact, is in a sense synonymous with Christ. Calvin identifies incorporation in Christ with incorporation into the Church so closely "that he regards the activity of the Church towards its individual members as being identical with the action of Christ towards the individual," (81) and vice versa. Although Christ has not bound himself to the Church in order that the Church can claim authority in a confident manner, He has chosen the Church for the ministry of His grace. "He has, moreover, attached many promises to the Church so that the individual can have no certainty of obtaining salvation and the benefits of His death and resurrection apart from the Church." (82)

Of utmost importance, however, is it to remember that man simply by belonging to the Church cannot be assured of salvation without a living connection with Christ through faith and prayer." (83)

Church membership avails man of the opportunity to practice regularly the sacraments and to hear the Word. The discipline involved in such membership is to respond appropriately. Not to do so would be to violate the very essence of Christ, Himself.

The sacraments in the context of the Church and Christian life have two aspects, therefore, which R. Wallace summarizes.
First, the sacraments unite man more and more fully with Christ making him a more complete member of the Church. Second, the sacraments "are a spur to practical Christian living (for) they bring home to us . . . the reality and intimacy of our union with . . . Christ so as to lead to practical conduct befitting those who enjoy such high privileges." (84)

What we have discussed thus far as applying to Calvin's doctrine of the sacraments generally can now be applied to Calvin's doctrine of the Eucharist specifically. In addition, in defining his Eucharist doctrine, Calvin agrees with Luther, Zwingli, the Spiritualists, and the Anabaptists in excluding emphatically a sacrificial interpretation of the sacraments similar to the Roman Catholic doctrine. Calvin denies that the Lord's Supper is a sacrifice, objecting to the idea that man, by sacrifice, is able to petition God. There is no room in his theology for such "good works." Also, man is incapable of offering the sacrifice of Christ to God. The sacrifice of Christ was made by Christ for man in the past, once and for all.

... (the) true sacrifice . . . was finally accomplished in reality by Christ alone; and by him alone because no other could have done it . . . And so perfect was it that no place was left afterward for any other sacrificial victims. (85)

As we shall see presently, Calvin cannot accept the idea that Christ's body is available to man. Therefore, he cannot agree with the Roman Catholics that in the Eucharist the merits of Christ's sacrifice can be directly applied to the recipient. Without the presence of Christ's body in the elements the "re-presenting" of the Crucifixion in the Lord's Supper is a shallow and meaningless event.
Calvin sees the sacrificial idea as unthinkable both as an assertion that Christ's crucifixion could be renewed and as an assertion that man can offer something to God of which man is himself the recipient, thereby acquiring merit in God's sight.

I conclude that it is a most wicked infamy and unbearable blasphemy both against Christ and against the sacrifice which he made for us through his death on the cross, for anyone to suppose that by repeating the oblation he obtains pardon for sins, appeases God and acquires righteousness. (86)

However, there is another kind of sacrifice, one of thanksgiving and this, indeed, has a role to play in the celebration of the Lord's Supper according to Calvin.

Under the new covenant, the sacrifice of thanksgiving consists in the offering of ourselves, of our prayers and praises, of "all the offices of charity, by which, while we embrace our brethren, we honour the Lord Himself," notably in almsgiving and liberality. (87)

Thus, Calvin's doctrine has room for the element of sacrifice but not in the Roman sense that the mass is a re-presenting of Christ's sacrifice which bestows His merits on the communicants. Rather, the sacrifice in Calvin's doctrine is a sacrifice of thanksgiving. This, too, the Roman Catholics believe but for Calvin this is the unique sense of sacrifice in the Eucharist.

It will be noted from the passage just quoted that Calvin admits the idea of sacrifice into his Eucharistic doctrine insofar as the Supper is the thankful remembrance of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross for mankind. (88) Thus, we see another, though minor, aspect of Calvin's definition of the Eucharist emerging. The Supper is also to be considered a memorial, a doctrine which is parallel to Zwingli's thought. However, this aspect is only slightly developed in Calvin's thought. Thus, there are varying
minor elements in Calvin's Eucharistic doctrine, namely, the memorial one and the sacrificial one as it relates to thanksgiving.

Having so far addressed ourselves to the subjects of Calvin's sacramental doctrine and general aspects of his Eucharistic doctrine, it is now appropriate to speak to some of those specific questions regarding the nature of Calvin's Eucharistic doctrine which we raised at the outset. Calvin did not find himself in agreement with any of the doctrines discussed in Chapter I regarding the mode of Christ's presence in the Supper. The definition of the Eucharist that introduces us to his position is as follows:

I say, then, that in the Supper, Jesus Christ truly is given to us, under the signs of the bread and the wine, nay even his body and blood in which he fulfilled all righteousness to win salvation for us. And that this is done, firstly so that we might be united in one body; secondly, so that, being made partakers of his substance we should also feel his virtue, by communicating his benefits to all. (89)

Calvin held to this definition throughout his life, in the Institutes of 1536, the Confession of Faith in the Eucharist of 1537, and the Little Treatise on the Lord's Supper of 1541. (90)

Calvin believed 'that in the Supper we do not receive the substance of Christ. Rather, Christ is the substance. The real and natural body of Christ, the bodily substance is not given to man. "Its function was to be the source from which flowed the life that was destined for us . . . ." (91) Man does not enter into a substantial union with Christ in this sense; there is no "transfusion of the natural body of Christ to man." (92) On the
other hand, man is united to the substance of Christ which Calvin considers a spiritual substance, "all the benefits that the Christ offers us in His body," (93) "or one might also say, what the Christ with His death and resurrection communicates to us." (94)

How is this connected to the elements? Calvin rejects any notion of the ubiquity of Christ's human body, the continuation of the corporeal presence of Christ in this world. But association with the corporeal presence is not necessary for participation and union with Christ.

The Lord Jesus extends this benefit to us by his Spirit that we are made one with him, body, spirit, and soul. However, the bond of this union is the Holy Spirit, by whom we are bound together, and who is like the canal or conduit through which all that Christ is or has comes down into us. (95)

Therefore, Christ's presence in the elements is not a substantial one similar to the Roman Catholic or Lutheran understanding.

But we must establish such a presence of Christ in the Supper as may neither fasten him to the element of bread, nor enclose him in bread, nor circumscribe him in any way, (all which things, it is clear, detract from his heavenly glory); finally, such as may not take from him his own stature, or parcel him out to many places at once, or invest him with boundless magnitude to be spread through heaven and earth. (96)

Calvin, then, employs a certain parallelism in the process of the Eucharistic event. The elements of bread and wine, the signs, are symbols of the event of the Eucharist which is union with Christ. This spiritual truth is also 'exhibited' in the signs, presented and offered to the communicant. (97) Parallel to the consumption of the elements is the action of the Spirit of Christ. (98) This action effects the promises heard in the Word of union with Christ, the benefits he has won for us.

The role of the words of consecration is a fairly important one for Calvin. Not only do the words spell out God's promises
but they also effect a change in the function of the elements.

There is then a difference between the bread before consecration, and the bread after consecration; and the difference is to be found in the function of the bread after consecration, namely to be a true instrument of presenting us with the reality which it signifies. (99)

Therefore, because Calvin does not hold to a substantial union with Christ in the medieval sense of substance, we can recognize easily his differences with Rome and Luther on this matter of the mode of Christ's presence. He thoroughly rejects transubstantiation.

... transubstantiation ... the fiction that a conversion of the bread into the body takes place; not that the body is properly made from the bread, but because Christ, to hide himself under the figure, annihilates its substance. (100)

Calvin's differences with Luther on this matter are best summarized by F. Wendel as follows:

Union between the Christ and the Eucharistic elements meant, according to the Lutherans, that there was a real contact between the body and the blood on the one hand, and the bread and wine on the other; according to Calvin, it meant only that the believer received the body of Christ when he consumed the consecrated bread. (101)

On the other hand, Calvin, by maintaining the elements, the signs, not to be the substantial body and blood of Christ and to be distinct from the action of the Spirit, nevertheless does not reduce the Eucharistic experience to the merely symbolic form that Zwingli adhered to. In effect, Calvin employs Zwingli's distinction of the sign and the thing signified but does not reserve the Eucharistic event for only the action of the signs, as unsubstantial, symbolic elements.

Calvin's parallelism in the Eucharistic experience is similar, in a sense, to the left wing ideas of the inner and outer Eucharistic celebration. However, though both reject the
substantial presence of Christ as understood by Luther and the Roman Catholics, Calvin does not tend to de-emphasize the "outer," the actual physical ritual of the Supper as do the Spiritualists and the Anabaptists. Instead, he ties it to another sort of substantial presence of Christ, the communication of His merits to the believer. The left wing turned to a symbolic, covenantal definition of that outer celebration.

Although we have already touched upon some of the material that responds to our question of how the believer approaches the Table and what are the effects, it would serve us well to spell them out specifically so as to compare them with the other Eucharistic doctrine of the Reformation. Just as Calvin found himself at a midpoint between Rome and Luther on one side and Zwingli and the left on the other over the matter of the mode of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, so, too, is he caught between both sides on the matter of the faith of the participant at the Supper and the effects on the partaker. The Lutheran Roman position in Calvin's mind is a Eucharistic doctrine that grants too much power and significance to the Lord's Supper. The other group, however, over-estimates the strength of man's faith, concluding that once one is received into the mercy of God, one's faith is perfected. (102)

Luther and the Roman Catholics are concerned that the partaker approaching the Table be worthy. Otherwise, the Roman priest should exclude him from the Mass. To be worthy according to Luther, one must have faith. He repeats St. Paul's assertion that "the unworthy partakers sin against the body and blood of our Lord and that they will be judged for this." (103) However,
Luther's strict ideas regarding worthiness in terms of faith were tempered after a point.

Luther allows that for all those who unworthily partake of the Lord's Supper, and later, through the grace of God become worthy partakers of it, their former unworthy partaking will not lead to their condemnation."

The strength of faith and existence of worthiness aside, Luther and the Romans upheld Eucharist doctrines that maintain the Supper is a means of grace, as we have seen. Thus, faith is reinforced by the sacrament. The Eucharist plays an effective role in bringing grace to man, reinforcing his faith, leading to his justification and salvation.

Arguing against these conceptions, Calvin says:

The error of the magical conception of the sacraments . . . We must be reminded that . . . there are those who attach to the sacraments some sort of secret powers with which one nowhere reads that God endowed them. (105)

Zwingli and the other members of the radical Reformation minimize the sacrament, particularly the outer rite, to one of memorial, or fellowship, as we noted in Chapter I. Thus, though the partakers are encouraged by such fellowship to follow their lives of faith, the Eucharist in no way adds to their faith. It has already been established and, as we noted with Denck in particular, man's will plays a role as well. Not much is left to the outer Eucharistic experience.

Calvin is in the middle on this matter. He is in basic disagreement with the idea that man can attain a perfect and complete faith in this life. Calvin remains sensitive to the frailties of believers and of the developmental quality of the life of faith. Keeping man on this modest level, Calvin is insistent that one must come to the Table having examined one's
conscience carefully.

Not that these duties both of faith and of love can now be made perfect in us (as a result of such self-examination) but that we should endeavor and aspire with all our heart toward this end in order that we may day by day increase our faith once begun. (106)

Thus, participation in the Eucharistic celebration does not mean a possession of a full, perfect faith and that participation itself helps to strengthen man's faith. To be worthy and able to receive Christ through the Eucharist requires not perfection but love and faith. "For it is a sacrament ordained not for the perfect, but for the weak and feeble, to awaken, arouse, stimulate, and exercise the feeling of faith and love, indeed to correct the defect of both." (107) Thus, Calvin regarded the nature of worthiness to be more a state of receptivity rather than a state of perfection.

One of the effects of the Eucharist, then, is to support the tottering, feeble faith of the individual. The second major effect is one which involves the group, rather than the individual. The Lord's Supper has a particular incentive for the "cultivation of unity and brotherly love." (108) It is particularly a feast of fellowship instituted "especially that we should cultivate charity and concord together as becomes members of the same body." (109) The Lord's Supper is ordained by God for the purpose of uniting man with his fellow man in the church. In Calvin's mind, the Eucharist is central to a well-goverened and ordered church. Thus, the Eucharist is a means of effecting church discipline.

All of the Eucharistic doctrines which we discussed in Chapter I also embraced the concept of the Lord's Supper as a
service of fellowship. Zwingli, probably more so than the others, embraced this fellowship aspect as central to the understanding of the doctrine of the Eucharist.

In order to have a full picture of Calvin's Eucharistic concepts it is necessary to move away from the strict realm of doctrine and into the more practical issues of administration of the sacrament and its role in day by day Christian life. Because Calvin's doctrine emphasized the close connection of the Word and the sacrament as well as the importance of the Eucharist in strengthening faith it is understandable that he recommended that the sacrament be celebrated frequently.

The Supper could have been administered most becomingly if it were set before the church very often, and at least once a week. (110)

Zwingli, on the other hand, because he considered the Supper to be not "the norm of Christian worship but an infrequent confessional of the congregation" (111) only recommended that the Eucharist be celebrated a few times every year.

In actuality, Calvin's Geneva witnessed the celebration of the Lord's Supper only quarterly. There are two reasons for this discrepancy between doctrine and practice. The first is the more practical and demanding. Calvin, when he returned to Geneva in 1541, set to work almost immediately drawing up a draft of regulations for the Genevan Church and Consistory. However, upon submission to the Councils, his draft was revised so that Holy Communion was to be celebrated quarterly, not monthly as Calvin had recommended. The Councils were sensitive to the political situation between Geneva and Berne and insisted upon maintaining certain customs that the two churches shared in common, one being
the number of Eucharistic celebrations per year. (112) Aside from these political reasons are some doctrinal rationalizations by which Calvin modified his desire to see the Lord's Supper celebrated more frequently. He concedes that

since the infirmity of the people is still such that there is danger that this holy and excellent mystery might be brought into contempt if it were celebrated too often . . . it has seemed good to us that the Holy Supper should be celebrated once a month. (113)

Calvin was never able to completely abandon his hopes for a weekly or at least monthly celebration of the Lord's Supper. In his final edition of the Institutes he maintains his pleas for frequency of practice. No doubt the doctrinal reasons which he used to justify the quarterly celebration were excuses for the dictated situation.

With regard to other matters of administration Calvin was not required to alter his stand. However, for the most part, these issues were not of supreme importance to him.

But as for the outward ceremony of the action - whether or not the believers take it in their hands, or divide it among themselves, or severally eat what has been given to each; whether they hand the cup back to the deacon or give it to the next person; whether the bread is leavened or unleavened; the wine red or white - it makes no difference. These things are indifferent, and left at the church's discretion. (114)

Calvin was in agreement with the other Protestant theologians in demanding communion in both kinds for the laity. As we noted particularly with Luther's thought, the role of the priest or minister is not similar to the Roman Catholic conception for Calvin, either. Because there are only two sacraments ordained by God the office of the priest is not one of distinction. It does not have any bearing on the efficacy of the sacraments. Calvin affirmed the concept of the priesthood of all believers and therefore
could not support the serving of the chalice only to the ministers or priests.

Having covered the major areas defining Calvin's Eucharistic doctrine and relating them at the most important points to the other doctrines discussed, we have the doctrinal framework secured so that we can venture on to our next task which is to deal with the following questions: Why is Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper what it is? How have historians answered this question? What can we conclude is the best approach to grasping not just the form but the character and setting of Calvin's Eucharistic doctrine?

Kilian McDonnell in *John Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist*, 1967, is an example of one interpretation that is sympathetic to the idea that polemics had a prominent role to play in the forming of Calvin's doctrine. Because Calvin worked and wrote in an atmosphere of the polemics of the Reformation, McDonnell feels that his eucharistic writings are largely determined by them.

Had Calvin been able to approach the eucharistic problem a little more dispassionately, with less of the defender of the faith's zeal and more of the disinterested but not uncommitted thoroughness of a dedicated theologian in peaceful possession of the faith, Calvin's eucharistic doctrine might have given larger place to the Eucharist as a sacrifice, as memorial, as a covenant, and as thanksgiving. These elements are not missing, but they do not play a large part in Calvin's eucharistic consciousness. (115)

McDonnell's principal argument, in addition to those undeveloped aspects mentioned in the quotation, is about the prominence of the Holy Spirit in the workings of the Eucharist. In Calvin's attempt to counter Roman and Lutheran dogmatics over the substantial existence of the body and blood of Christ in the
elements, Calvin uses the Holy Spirit to make the connection, seal the bond of unity of Christ and the believer.

His invocation of the Holy Spirit and his elaboration of the large role played by the Holy Spirit is anti-Roman and anti-Lutheran in motivation. (116)

The problems with this polemic interpretation is that it is difficult to argue motivations of this sort. The fact that the emphasis in Calvin's doctrine is on some areas rather than others can be used to support the theory. But what real proof is there that Calvin intended to argue for these reasons? McDonnell does not substantiate his claim with evidences of declared intentions of Calvin's part to counter certain doctrines with his own definitions and doctrines. Furthermore, Calvin's doctrine simply did not change substantially throughout his career. His elaboration of certain aspects such as the role of the Holy Spirit did indicate sensitivity to the issues being debated.

In the edition (of the Institutes) of 1536, Calvin limited himself to a very brief exposition of the traditional doctrine of the Trinity . . . In 1539, the disputes aroused by Caroli obliged Calvin to be more emphatic. He multiplied the Biblical quotations in support of the divinity of the Son and of the Holy Spirit . . . Above all he underlined the importance . . . of the divinity of the Holy Spirit for communication with God . . . (117)

Perhaps the best way to deal with this polemic interpretation is to note that Calvin's doctrine was not substantially changed as a result of polemics, yet under the fire of the debates Calvin was impelled to clarify, elaborate, and emphasize certain areas perhaps at the expense of the development of others.

Calvin's doctrine of the Eucharist was originally formed after the crossfires of the major Eucharistic doctrinal debates of the times. The basic integrity and uniqueness of Calvin's
doctrine was maintained over the years while successive editions of the *Institutes* were published elaborating his thoughts on the subject. As we have demonstrated in our earlier discussion, parts of Calvin's Eucharistic doctrine relate to, parallel, and match parts of other doctrines. For instance, he and Luther agree that the sacrament confirms the promises of God but do not originate and effect faith. Yet, as we have also noted, Calvin's doctrinal beliefs, the essential qualities of his doctrine, are unique to him and remained so throughout his career. Having agreed with Luther on those points mentioned above, Calvin goes on to define the Eucharist as an aid to support man's weak faith. The other doctrines find that sacraments increase faith (Luther) or symbolize it and provide an opportunity to confess it (Zwingli). Therefore, Calvin's doctrine cannot be fully appreciated if one views it primarily as a reflection or synthesis of or reaction to the various doctrines of the Reformation Eucharistic controversies. It was neither initiated, nor modified, nor fundamentally flavored by the doctrinal debates.

Did Calvin's doctrine of the Eucharist, however, embody another type of response to those debates? While, on the one hand, there is some recognition by Calvin of others' doctrinal sympathies and a certain sensitivity on his part to them, and while, on the other hand, Calvin maintains the integrity and uniqueness of his own doctrine, some historians have gone to considerable lengths to contend that Calvin's doctrine was formulated as a compromise solution, an alternative position in response to these debates which all Protestants, he hoped, could accept. Jean Cadier and J.T. McNeill are two of the most
outspoken of the scholars who advance this interpretation. Neither of them goes so far as to say that Calvin's doctrine was formulated exclusively for the purpose of promoting the cause of pan-Protestant unity by achieving a common understanding on key doctrinal matters. Focusing attention on the thesis that Calvin was an ecumenical leader and substantiating this by pointing to his Eucharistic doctrine, is, necessarily, not an exhaustive and comprehensive approach to the doctrine. Furthermore, reading their arguments closely one realizes that much of Calvin's ecumenical efforts were to lay the foundations so that he could propose his doctrine in an appropriate forum and atmosphere as a solution to the disputes, as a compromise. He was, however, frustrated from the beginning and never did he realize this hope of offering his doctrine for this purpose.


McNeill's argument runs along the following lines. Calvin throughout his career concerned himself with the need for a unity of the various Protestant sects. Because many of the splits among groups resulted from doctrinal disagreement, Calvin realized that it was consensus on doctrinal matters that was important to aim for. Much of the problem was a lack of understanding and communication between such leaders as Luther and Zwingli.
He supposed, however, that both groups of reformers had been led to extremes by the heat of controversy, and that both had the root of the matter in them, however distorted the upgrowth appeared. He believed too that the two parties in some degree misunderstood each other and that by conferences they might be reconciled. (118)

Calvin understood that his doctrine of the Lord's Supper contained elements of the thought of Zwingli and Luther and could be viewed as a middle opinion, retaining aspects of both, synthesizing Luther's thesis with Zwingli's antithesis. Calvin's doctrine, however, was not formed to play such a part. As McNeill puts it, "it took shape before (Calvin) realized his calling as a moderator of extremes." (119) Yet, Calvin never sacrificed "truth to peace."

Calvin's strategy as a leader in uniting these contending sides was to establish communication through conferences and correspondence as well as to find, document, and sign those points of basic agreement among the groups. Uniting the two sides on the broad, central issues was the first concern. Working out the secondary matters would follow once everyone was under a similar roof. In attempting to overcome the atmosphere of heated polemics, therefore, Calvin warmly approved of Melanchthon's Augustana Variata of 1540, in order to build on his relations with Lutheranism. Likewise, when the sacramental controversies of the 1540's were renewed, Calvin wrote to Bullinger in a tone of a fellow victim of Luther's attacks in the Short Confession of the Lord's Supper, 1544, yet Calvin goes on to say that "were (Luther) to call me a devil, I should continue to venerate him as a distinguished servant of God, who, while excelling in extraordinary virtues, also labors under some great faults."

(120) Thus, Calvin worked to keep communication and understanding alive.
The crowning success to his efforts was the Zurich Consensus, 1549, in which a broad, general, somewhat Zwinglian point of view prevailed in a declaration of ideas regarding the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The document was accepted by the French and German Swiss Protestants, closing the fragmentation to some extent. What was needed next was a similar agreement with the Lutherans. This was eventually frustrated particularly by Calvin's debates with Joachim Westphal. Thus, Calvin was never able to pose his doctrine to a receptive, communicating group.

We can see, therefore, that McNeill has argued that Calvin realized the ultimate value and use of his Eucharistic doctrine as a conciliatory tool. Yet, never was Calvin put to the test of forwarding his doctrine with such an aim in mind. His signature on the Zurich Consensus was not to endorse his own doctrine in a modified form but to support points upon which general agreement could be effected. Calvin continued to retain his own Eucharistic doctrinal beliefs and, frankly, never reached the point of exposing his full doctrine for discussion. To consider it an ecumenical tool is to speculate on what Calvin hoped to realize himself.

The hazards of McNeill's approach for a full understanding of Calvin's Eucharistic doctrine are that it is displayed in an unbalanced setting. The value of the doctrine is sought out in the exceptional and minor expressions of doctrine such as the Zurich Consensus rather than in Calvin's more important and substantial works, the Institutes. Furthermore, the doctrine is being called upon to fit into and substantiate the outwardly imposed thesis of Calvin's ecumenicity, a 20th century concept.
Thus, only one aspect of the doctrine is presented and even that aspect is approached out of context, in the sense that a contemporary idea is applied as an analytical tool for understanding another historical era.

If one admits the limitations of the views that Calvin's Eucharistic doctrine was a result of polemics or was developed, valued, and used as an ecumenical tool, is it possible to discern any other key issue or issues in Calvin's thought to which it is integrally related? As an initial premise, one can only agree with Gerrish in simply starting with Calvin and analyzing his doctrine of the Eucharist on his own terms, in the context of his theological system. (121) Although there are certain mysteries and inconsistencies in Calvin's system, there is, nevertheless, an amazing inner coherence to his theology. Therefore, it is possible to explore his theological concerns and to illustrate the fact that his thought extended outward from basic theological premises to his Eucharistic concerns.

Initially, it is obvious that Calvin's Eucharistic doctrine is an outgrowth of, rather than a central key to, Calvin's theology. An excellent clue to this fact can be found quite easily in the organization of the final edition of the *Institutes*. Here Calvin places his discussion of the Lord's Supper in the last third of the fourth and final book. From our brief outline at the beginning of the chapter we perceive that Calvin's system starts with and orients its doctrine around God, first as Creator and then as Redeemer in Christ. Man's knowledge of God as both is the subject of the first two chapters. In the third and fourth, man's communication with Christ is developed in a
discussion of the way man receives grace and finally the aids
toward union with Christ. Those aids include, among others, the
sacraments. It is readily apparent that the sacraments are not
a primary focus of Calvin's system but one of the extensions
of man's union with God through Christ. Calvin argues that the
Supper supported man's tottering faith but was not a means of
grace and did not effect salvation. Thus, the sacrament of the
Lord's Supper, though important, was not ultimately necessary
for man's salvation. In this sense, also, the sacrament is an
extension of Calvin's system rather than fundamental and
essential to its very nature. Calvin's doctrine of the Eucharist
results from, is supported and qualified by more central theolo-
gical axioms in his system. To three of those we shall now turn.
CHAPTER III
PART I

PRESUPPOSITIONS UNDERLYING CALVIN'S EUCHARISTIC DOCTRINE
AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS:
TRANSCENDENCE OF GOD AND CHRISTOLOGY

From the 1840's on for some 75 years, Calvin scholarship was dominated by an interpretation that predestination was the central premise of Calvin's system. The 20th century, however, has witnessed new developments and shifts in the historiography of Calvin studies. Wilhelm Niesel's *The Theology of Calvin*, 1938, ventures forth that Calvin's doctrine is addressing the "question of the content of all contents - the living God." Yet, his theology is strictly concerned with the theology of revelation and his teaching is completely centered around Christ. Francois Wendel, writing in the 1950's, finds it difficult to speak without reservation of a "'system' of Calvin, owing to the plurality of themes that imposed themselves simultaneously upon its author's thinking." Yet, he finds the dominating motif to be the transcendence of God.

Wendel's approach is, in a sense, the broadest but the most complete manner of understanding Calvin. Indeed, Calvin was concerned about revelation but, nevertheless, one must first be concerned with what is being revealed and not just the Christological aspects of revelation. Surely Christ is crucial for Calvin in dealing with revelation but the revelation of God in
Christ is not the complete story of God and man's relation. More must be understood about God, the Trinity, the reasons for revelation, knowledge of God, man's state, as well as the fact of revelation through Christ.

Being sympathetic to Wendel's interpretation but not being willing to ignore Niesel for his substantial contribution, we shall approach Calvin's doctrine by discussing first his concepts concerning the sovereignty of God, moving from there to Calvin's Christological thought, tying in the subject of revelation as we go, and then pursuing it in his ecclesiolo­gical doctrine. We shall then be in a position to understand not only how Calvin's Eucharistic doctrine is an extension of these other more central fields of thought, an organic outgrowth of his system, but also how the doctrine of the Lord's Supper parallels his other key points.

Calvin's chief concern is not to describe God, explore His nature, or speculate on His Being. "The essence of God is unknown and inaccessible to us, according to Calvin, and all speculations about it are blasphemy." (126) Rather, the knowledge of God is Calvin's emphasis. Gaining insight of the majesty and supremacy of God leaves man more aware of his own circumstance. "Man is never touched and affected by the awareness of his lowly state until he has compared himself with God's majesty." (127)

In other words, Calvin devoted himself not to defining God or merely submitting to him, but to understanding man's relation to his God through knowledge of Him. Thus, Calvin's system constantly harks back to God but then dwells on the extension of God to man. The sovereignty of God is primary.
Man cannot afford to even speculate on its nature but must deal with it. In almost a pragmatic tone, therefore, Calvin urges man first to seek knowledge of God so as to know how to live and how to perceive ourselves in the context of our lowly state.

From the beginning of his work, Calvin places all his theology under the sign of what was one of the essential principles of the Reform: the absolute transcendence of God and his total "otherness" in relation to man. No theology is Christian and in conformity with the Scriptures but in the degree to which it respects the infinite distance separating God from his creature and gives up all confusion, all "mixing", that might tend to efface the radical distinction between the Divine and the human. Above all, God and man must again be seen in their rightful places. (128)

Thus Wendel summarizes Calvin's conception of God and the implications of His transcendence. God is sovereign, divine, and omnipotent. Man, on the other hand, is meagre, tarnished by sin, and as a metaphysical being is totally overwhelmed by God's being which is radically different from, superior to and separated from man's being.

Calvin's concern for knowledge of God was not limited to God as the Creator, the subject of the first book of the Institutes. In addition, Calvin is concerned over man's knowledge of God the Redeemer in Christ and devotes the second book to that subject. Turning to Calvin's Christology, this is a logical step, consistent with Calvin's thought as an outgrowth of the transcendence of God.

Calvin carefully adheres to the idea of the two natures of Christ, one human and the other divine. Stemming from his convictions regarding the importance of God's divinity which we just discussed, Calvin abhors any suggestion of marring, compromising, reducing that divinity. McDonnell puts it, Calvin
is involved in a "life-long struggle to preserve the complete 'otherness' of God intact." (129) He rebels against what he conceives to be the Catholic tendency towards idolatry which reduces God to man's level as well as any temptation to give Him a location or visible form. Thus, because this God is beyond human beck and call He "can only reveal himself as the hidden God." (130) The divinity of Christ assumes, therefore, in Calvin's doctrine crucial position and power.

Humanity is deeply flavored for Calvin by the question of original sin. Calvin maintains that man in his original state had free choice and was, therefore, responsible for his fall. (131) With Adam's fall, man, though remaining with a bare minimum of reason and will that distinguish him from the brute beast, is indeed in a miserable state, empty, and totally estranged from God. Neither is it a passive state of destitution, for man carries the tendency for evil and sin with him constantly.

As a result, between the divinity of God and the basest aspects of man's humanity is Christ's second nature, his humanity which allows him to be a mediator. There are profound gaps between humanity of man and the divinity of God which are moral as well as metaphysical. Yet, in Christ there is a unity of the human and the divine which is essential to His role as mediator.

Christ's divinity stands in sharp contrast to the state of fallen man. Contrasting man's wretchedness with God's divinity brings forth thoughts of the distance between the Creator and the creature, the split caused by the fall, or, in other words, the radical distinction between the two as well as the sin of the creature. (132) Yet, Calvin stresses the importance
of the humanity of Christ. In order to mediate truly between God and man, considering this profound moral gap, Christ must be a human being. Otherwise, man would remain alienated from God for man's utter depravity and sin would hinder him from meeting God. Furthermore, his constant sinning widens the gap more and more.

How could man help himself when by the shameful fall he was degraded to death and hell, sullied with so many stains, fetid with his corruption, and wholly in the power of the curse? (133)

Christ, then, comes in His humanity in order to communicate with man on his own human level, in the flesh. Christ's humanity assures man that he does have a guarantee of reconciliation with God. "The fact that we encounter God in human flesh is an important pledge of our destiny to be related to Him." (134)

The mediator must, therefore, play a dual role. At once through the mediator, God is giving salvation to man.

Because the Holy Spirit who speaks through Paul is so well aware of our weakness, He has used a suitable means of healing in order to meet its needs and has placed the Son in our midst as one of ourselves. (135)

At the same time the mediation effects man's offering of suitable praise to God, giving man confidence and showing him signs of God's promised salvation.

Another gap, however, estranges man from God. Though man has fallen, creating and extending the moral gap between him and his Creator, he can be justified. Yet, even as justified, man is not on the same metaphysical plane as God.

Divinity and humanity are different and separate. The metaphysical gap exists because the being of God is radically different from and superior to the being of man as we noted earlier. Whereas the moral gap emphasizes the distance between
man and God, the responsibility and reason for which lies with man and his sin, the metaphysical gap emphasizes the overwhelming power and position of God above and beyond man, be he justified or in the depths of sin. Because of this situation, a mediator is essential, for God in His graciousness would not choose to bridge this gap and demolish man by revealing Himself directly to man. The humanity of the mediator is essential for it, in a sense, masks the overwhelmingly powerful divinity.

"Christ must become true man since God can only draw near to us in that disguise without annihilating us." (136) "Never should we have been able to contemplate the glory of God face to face had it not been hidden under the veil of humanity." (137)

These two natures, the divine and the human, are united within Christ. However, this does not mean fusion into a third, quasi-human and quasi-divine nature. There can be no "question of separating the Godhead of Jesus Christ from his manhood." (138) Thus, the emphasis is simultaneously on the unity of the God-man and the absolute distinction of the two natures that make up His being. It is a necessity of faith, for Calvin, that God not be separated from Christ. Yet, the distinction between the humanity and the divinity of Christ is mandatory so as not to admit to "a change in the divinity itself, brought about by the fact of the incarnation and necessarily equivalent to a diminution of it." (139)

But this which is said, that the Word was made flesh ought not to be understood as though it were converted into flesh or confusedly mingled therewith, but only that it took from the womb of the Virgin a human body, to be a temple in which he dwelt. And he who was the Son of God was made the Son of Man, not by confusion of substance but by unity of person; that is, he so joined and united his divinity with the humanity that he had taken, that each of the two natures retained its properties; and nevertheless Jesus Christ has not two distinct persons, but only one. (140)
Calvin was well aware of the two heresies, Nestorianism and Eutychianism, into which his doctrine could evolve if it were imprecise. He consciously rejects both, Nestorius' idea of the dualism of Christ and Eutyches' idea of a substantial mingling of the two natures of Christ.

We therefore hold that Christ, as he is God and man, consisting of two natures united but not mingled, is our Lord and the true Son of God even according to, but not by reason of, his humanity. Away with the error of Nestorius, who in wanting to pull apart rather than distinguish the nature of Christ devised a double Christ! . . . Hence, just as Nestorius had justly been condemned at the Synod of Ephesus, so Eutyches was afterward justly condemned at the Councils of Constantinople and Chalcedon. For it is not more permissible to commingle the two natures in Christ than to pull them apart. (141)

At this point we realize that we face in Calvin's doctrine of Christ one of those "paradoxes" as Wendel calls them and for which we were prepared at the beginning of Chapter II. This dialectical opposite is the unity of, yet the distinction between the two natures of Christ.

Digging a bit deeper into Calvin's Christology we recognize another area which first of all happens to emphasize the distinction of Christ's two natures, second, demonstrates why we were correct in addressing Calvin's doctrine of the transcendence of God before discussing his Christology, and third, has implications for Calvin's Eucharistic doctrine. This is the area of the "communication of idioms" or properties. The communication of idioms means to Calvin the "attribution to Christ's humanity of certain properties of his divine nature and, conversely, the attribution of certain properties of his human nature to his divine nature." (142) Calvin did not support such an idea. The communication of idioms, as far as he was concerned, meant the
mingling of human properties with a divine nature. This he disallows and is therefore separating the two natures at all possible points. Furthermore, we can gain more feeling for the strength and force with which Calvin argued the transcendence of God, the majesty of the divinity. By not letting the divine nature be tarnished by reflecting the properties of the human nature Calvin is jealously guarding the divine. The significance as Wendel emphasizes and we support of studying the transcendence of God before clarifying Calvin's Christological doctrine is substantiated. Finally, the communication of idioms stance that Calvin takes affects his Eucharistic doctrine through the resulting ideas on ubiquity. Keeping with his concern to preserve the appropriate idioms or properties with their particular natures (i.e. the divine properties as characteristic of the divine not the human nature) Calvin's doctrine of ubiquity is as follows. Calvin maintains and even accentuates the ubiquity of the single divine nature of Christ in comparison with Zwingli as we noted in Chapter I. In the light of Calvin's urgent desire not to deify anything manlike as well as his general lack of tolerance for the communication of idioms, he "categorically rejected the ubiquity of the body of the Christ." (143) The body of Christ, the resurrected, idealized flesh, remains in heaven, a state of being best understood as simply distinct from earth. The cloud that enveloped Christ at the ascension was a sign that Christ had been removed from the earth and Calvin interprets this story literally. Thus, the characteristic of ubiquity is common to the divine nature of Christ but distinct from, indeed, foreign to, His human nature. It also has implications for Calvin's Eucharistic doctrine as we shall soon see.
In summary, Calvin's chief concerns regarding his doctrines of the transcendence of God Christ include the following major points: 1) the absolute transcendence and sovereignty of God, 2) following from this, the profound gaps between man and God, both moral and metaphysical, 3) the relationship - integrally united yet distinct - of Christ's human and divine natures, 4) the need for Christ not only to partake of both human and divine natures but also to mediate between them, and 5) the communication of idioms as it relates to the ubiquity of Christ. These points all have ramifications, implication, and parallels for Calvin's Eucharistic doctrine.

The simultaneous union and distinction of Christ's human and divine natures is paralleled by Calvin's treatment of the sign and the thing signified, the bread and the wine and the signification of these elements in the Lord's Supper. Just as Christ's human body is the physical sign and form in which His divinity is expressed to man, so the Eucharistic bread and wine are the physical signs and forms through which Christ's merits are transmitted to man.

Second and closely related to the first, Calvin's efforts to distinguish Christ's divinity from His humanity because of the transcendence of God in order that the humanity can in no way dominate, mar, or mingle with the divinity, offer us the foundations for understanding his explanations of a Eucharistic doctrine which is in no manner a tool of man to be used, manipulated, or offered by him. The Eucharist to Calvin is made effective not by man's power but the power of the Holy Spirit. Man is in no position to deify the ordinary, to offer up the Eucharist in or by his name or to control it or its effects by his word.
Calvin's doctrine of Christ thirdly includes the subject of ubiquity as we have seen it qualified. In turn, this imposes some constraints for Calvin's Eucharist doctrine. Given the premise that Christ's body is restricted to heaven, the substantial communication of Christ through the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper has to be qualified in turn. In no sense could Christ be corporally present in the host and the chalice.

For when we deny that Christ could be, as it were, hidden under the bread, this is not because strictly speaking, he would (then) be shut up somewhere, but because being raised above all elements, he dwells outside the world. (145)

However, this does not mean that we can infer that Christ's divine nature was present in the elements because it was granted the condition of ubiquity. As Wendel points out, what Calvin referred to when he spoke of ubiquity was not the omnipresence of God. (146) Rather, he was speaking of the action of the Holy Spirit which is sent by Christ "to fill the vacuum of His absence." (147) Thus, Calvin's doctrine of ubiquity lays the foundations for two important aspects of Calvin's Eucharistic doctrine, the denial of the corporal presence of Christ in the elements and the all too important role of the Holy Spirit.

Fourth, as we have seen, Calvin's Christology stresses the moral and metaphysical gulfs between God and man. Not only do Christ's two natures illustrate the distinction, the gaps between the human and the divine natures, but neatly enough, Christ also embodies the role of mediator between man and God as well. Christ in a sense is the sign of God's willingness to descend and approach man in a way that man can understand and appropriate. His coming in human form helps man to perceive God
and aids in the overcoming of the weaknesses that man labors under in recognizing and relating to God. In a similar sense, the Eucharist is understood by Calvin as a means of communication between man and Christ, indeed, ultimately between man and God. The sacrament is a God-given aid, a means by which God responds to man's limited ability to recognize and appreciate Him and simultaneously extends it. The parallelism is striking.

Having explored two doctrines within Calvin's system that have influenced his Eucharistic thinking, we shall approach the third and final one, his ecclesiology.
CHAPTER III
PART II

PRESUPPOSITIONS UNDERLYING CALVIN'S EUCHARISTIC DOCTRINE
AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS:
ECCLESIOLOGY

For Calvin, the Church is singularly important. The world was "created for the Church and derives, thence, its only significance." (148) What, then, is the Church, its form, function, effects, and its importance for Calvin's Eucharistic principles?

In the broadest terms, the Church is "the sphere of the self-revelation of God and of the encounter between Christ and ourselves." (149) Essentially, it is an aid offered to man by God in order to engender faith. Thus, its purpose is "to be an instrument of our vocation and to come to the aid of our sanctification" (150) by being the forum for the preaching of the Word and the administering of the sacraments, the former of which awakens faith and promotes sanctification and the latter of which maintains the faith of the believers. (151)

Its institutional aspects aside, the Church is the Body of Christ, the mother of believers, a living organism. How then does the Church exist?

. . . through the ministers to whom (Christ) has entrusted this office, and has conferred the grace to carry it out, he dispenses and distributes his gifts to the Church; and he shows himself as though present to be manifesting the power of his Spirit in this his institution, that it be not vain or idle. Thus, the renewal of the saints is accomplished; thus the body of Christ is built up. . . thus, are we all brought into the unity of Christ, if prophecy flourishes among us, if we receive the apostles, if we do not refuse the doctrines administered to us. (152)
Calvin's ecclesiology not only understands the Church to be the living body of Christ but also maintains that the head of the Church must be Christ. Furthermore, neither can the headship be human nor can it be transferrable from Christ. (153)

In order to grasp the fundamentals of Calvin's ecclesiology it is necessary to distinguish the visible and the invisible Church. In the Institutes, Calvin defines the invisible Church as "that which is actually in God's presence... (which) includes not only the saints presently living on earth, but all the elect from the beginning of the world." (154) This community consists of the true members of Christ and "coincides exactly then, with the body of Christ." (155)

The elect are basically those entrusted to Christ, promised salvation, "chosen by God in order to live a holy and stainless life." (156) The separation of "the elect from the reprobate is effected by God, but as far as we are concerned, we cannot clearly distinguish the elect from the reprobate." (157) Election involves granting of perseverance, gifts which enable man to struggle effectually against evil ways, a new zeal for sanctification. Indeed, election is the prior condition to sanctification. (158)

Election is one of the manifestations of predestination.

We call predestination God's eternal decree, by which he determined with himself what he willed to become of each man. For all are not created in equal conditions, rather, eternal life is foreordained for some (the elect), eternal damnation for others. (159)

Embodied in election and predestination is that fact that election in Christ is quite simply the basis of the Church. (160)
... this basis establishes the lordship of Christ in
the Church ... Election in Christ is a pure expression of
sovereignty of God and the lordship of Christ in the
Church. (161)

The visible Church, on the other hand, "is the instrument
by which the invisible Church and its benefits are manifested
in the eyes of man." (162) It is not necessarily so that the
membership of the body of Christ, in the invisible Church,
coincides with the membership of the visible Church. In the
midst of the members of the visible Church are, to be sure, the
reprobates, the unworthy, and those not elected. This is the
Church which is the "object of experience ... the Church as it
appears to us." (163) Thus, the Church is based on the lordship
of Christ rather than on the piety or sanctity of the members.
(164) It cannot be constituted and objectively judged by the
quality of its members "but by the presence of the means of grace
instituted by Christ." (165)

The visible Church can be identified simply by noting if the
sacraments are administered according to Christ's institution
and if the Word is purely preached and heard. Yet, even though
man cannot tell who is and who is not elect and therefore a member
of the invisible Church, he can determine, according to Calvin,
whether Christ is being downgraded in the visible Church. Through
ecclesiastical discipline, those who blasphemy Christ by fouling
his Church are punished. As Wendel points out, discipline functioned
first and foremost as an educational tool to indicate to the
others what would be faults in their conduct or belief. Thus
man is encouraged to seek salvation and justification in a
disciplined manner. Doing so, one can reassure his own weak
faith through regular attendance at the Lord's Supper, participation in the Church. Faith, as we have repeated before is, to Calvin, the key to justification. For him, "union (with Christ) is an effect of faith." (166). Thus, building and increasing our faith through the Church is crucial to the process of salvation. Yet, faith does not work alone for such goals. The preaching of the Word has particular importance as do election and predestination which we have already noted. The Word is spoken to all, yet is received and takes root only in those whom the Lord has chosen. Hence, the Word does not move all those who hear it but is fruitful only upon being heard by the elect. On the other side of the coin we see that the Word in and of itself does not insure salvation or justification. The state of election is required for the Word to perform its saving mission.

For, ultimately, the question is union with Christ because that is the means of communion with the God-head Himself. Predestination, election, faith, justification by faith, the Church are some of the stepping stones of the process of union with Christ.

But how, given the preconditions of election, justification by faith and so on, is union with Christ actually effected? Calvin has incorporated into his theological system a special role and set of duties for the Holy Spirit to meet precisely these needs. The Holy Spirit, instead of Christ's body, descends to man and lifts man's soul to Christ in heaven.

The Lord by His Spirit bestows upon us the blessing of being one with Him in soul, body, and spirit. The bond of connection is therefore, the Spirit of Christ, who unites us to Him and is a kind of channel by which everything which Christ has and is, is derived to us. (167)

The Holy Spirit is the bond, as it were, by which the Son of God unites us to him effectually. (168)
Essentially, Jesus Christ is basic to man's redemption and the Holy Spirit is the means by which this redemption reaches us. For the Holy Spirit gives us the faith we need and "it is by faith, then, that we enter into the indispensable communion with the Son of God." (169)

Summing up Calvin's ecclesiology and some closely related issues we must keep in mind the following: 1) the Church is an aid to engender man's faith, 2) Christ is the head of the Church, 3) the visible and invisible Churches, 4) the role of election and predestination, 5) the Church exists where the sacraments are observed correctly and the Word is preached, 6) discipline as a means to maintain a true Church, 7) the role of the Holy Spirit.

These matters contain implications for Calvin's Eucharistic thought. First, just as the Church exists as a means of engendering faith, so, too, is the Lord's Supper to be considered as aiding in the same purpose. The parallel works nicely.

Second, by insisting that Christ alone can be the head of the Church, Calvin lays the foundation for a crucial aspect of the Eucharist. In Calvin's mind, no priest or clergyman could, for example, be given the power to transform the elements of the Supper into the body and blood of Christ, which was the Roman Catholic belief. In no sense could any man claim to exercise divine power. The Church is the priesthood of all believers, with ministers preaching the Word but no person has the remotest capacity to assume the unique priestly functions of Christ.

Thirdly, Calvin's doctrine regarding the visible and the invisible Church has certain ramifications for his doctrine of the Lord's Supper. In essence, the invisible Church is made up solely of those who are elect, while the visible Church encompasses
the elect and the reprobate. Therefore, although an individual may not be of the elect he is not forbidden membership in the visible Church, despite the fact that he is unable to take full advantage of the benefits of membership. However, if his behavior or beliefs are not such that they can be tolerated for the health of the ecclesiastical community and in light of the respect due to Christ, Calvin's ecclesiastical discipline calls for either strict adherence or else dismissal from the community. Membership in the visible Church, then, is contingent upon a certain disposition, a receptive, disciplined approach on the part of man to seeking union with Christ. If this is lacking a person in Calvin's Geneva had to suffer the consequences of discipline, punishment even severe forms at times. Similarly, in order for a person to be worthy to approach the Table, according to Calvin, he must, as we noted in Chapter II, be in a state of receptivity rather than a state of perfection. Both the Church and sacraments are considered aids for man's faith. Thus, if someone approaches in a receptive, disciplined manner he is not excluded from the visible Church or from the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The parallel is obvious between Calvin's ecclesiology at this point and his Eucharistic ideas.

Fourth, Calvin understands that membership particularly in the invisible Church is based on election, not on man's good works and good merit. Similarly, Calvin's Eucharistic doctrine is not a good work but becomes meaningful for those with faith and a good disposition and attitude toward the effort to strengthen that faith.

Fifth, relative to the emphasis on faith and the de-emphasis on reward for merit or good works is the effect of the two doctrines,
predestination and election. Both reveal the importance of God's choosing man to have faith, be saved, rather than man's attempt to choose God by submitting to routines of good deeds and meritorious actions. The atmosphere generated by this God-oriented attitude is absorbed in the Lord's Supper doctrine in which less importance is attached to the idea that communion was a good duty to fulfill. Calvin allows the Lord's Supper, then, to also be dependent upon God so that God grants the faith, elects man, so that he may benefit from the sacramental experience. The power and motivation find their source consistently in God. Man's role is not to question and probe the issue but to respond to and maintain his faith through the acts of participating in the sacraments. Again, we see substantiation for our sympathies with Wendel's interpretation of Calvin's theology as oriented around the transcendence of God.

Sixth, reviewing the ecclesiological means (preaching the Word, participation in the sacraments) by which man enters the process of salvation and is carried along the path to Christ, we are again reminded that all of these depend upon the power of God, alone. There is no intrinsic power for salvation in anything earthly, be it man or otherwise. So, too, the Eucharist does not in and of itself hold such power. It is not the instigator for salvation. All that is in God's hands. Thus, many of the ecclesiological parallels to the Lord's Supper are extensions of the parallels between the Eucharistic doctrine and our primary orientation, the transcendence of God.

Seventh, one of the most obvious parallels between Calvin's ecclesiology and Eucharistic doctrine is the role of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit endows man with faith so that he participates
in the Church. The Spirit is the underlying mode of communication. So, also, man's experience of the Eucharistic sacrament were it to be void of the Spirit would be an empty one. By means of the Spirit, alone, is Christ communicated to man in the sign and sealing mode of the sacraments.

Finally, as the elect, as members of the invisible Church assured of salvation, man is part of the body of Christ. Yet, this is not a physical relationship. So, too, is the communion with Christ's body in the Supper not one that can be comprehended in a physical sense. The parallel reminds us again of Calvin's overarching consistency and systematic approach.

Having thus enumerated aspects of Calvin's ecclesiology we can recognize a number of parallels and connections with his Eucharistic doctrine. These serve to substantiate our thesis that Calvin's Eucharistic doctrine must needs be considered in light of his entire doctrinal system rather than in a category by itself.
CONCLUSION

Although this is neither a complete study of Calvin's contemporaries and their Eucharistic doctrines nor an exhaustive study of Calvin's doctrine of the Lord's Supper and general system, major points of Calvin's doctrine and major parts of the Reformation Eucharistic debates have been analyzed in order to permit some basis for understanding Calvin's Eucharistic theology and for evaluating some of the scholarly interpretations that have been applied to it. As we noted in Chapter II, Calvin's doctrine did share ideas and approaches with other Reformation thought. Likewise, too, it differed and retained certain unique traits. Yet, to look at only the points of contention, claiming the doctrine was formed and influenced only by Reformation controversies is as necessarily narrow an approach as to emphasize only its aspects that are in harmony with the doctrines of Luther, Zwingli, and the rest of the lot. The doctrine can only be fully understood if studied in its entirety and if the conflicting tendencies be embraced.

The evidence argued in Chapter III indicates that Calvin was, above all, a systematic thinker who was propounding his ideas in a sophisticated orderly fashion. We noted Calvin's problems in the paradoxes he unearths. Yet, he does not shy away from them but admits them frankly. We should also not shy away from eagerly interpreting his theology just because it has certain problems.

As we also discovered in Chapter III, Calvin's doctrine of the Eucharist is best understood in connection with other
doctrines in Calvin's theology to which it is integrally related. To attempt to take one of the doctrines that is an outgrowth of so many others out of the context of Calvin's system and to argue that its character and form were primarily the product of other forces such as the polemics of the time, is not a fully adequate approach. Furthermore, it undermines Calvin as a systematic, complex thinker, for which we just lauded him. Having approached Calvin's Eucharistic doctrine and finding it to be best understood as part of his theological system, therefore, is to meet Calvin in the most sympathetic yet authentic way possible, on his own terms.
FOOTNOTES

1Colman Barry, (ed.), Readings in Church History, (West­

2Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologiae 3a., q.73, a.3.

3Aristotle's understanding of substance is illustrated with
the following quotes:

"The term 'substance' is spoken of, if not in more still
in four main senses. 1) The essense is thought to be the
substance of an individual (Note: The whatness of a thing
is contrasted with its quality or its quantity or its place)

"The term 'a substance' has two senses; it means the ulti-
mate subject which is not predicated os something else, and
also that which is a this and is separable, such being the
shape of the form of each thing." (Aristotle Metaphysics
Book Zeta: 1017b23).

"A substance - that which is called a substance most
strictly, primarily and most of all is that which is
neither said of a subject nor in a subject." (Aristotle
Categories 5: 2all).

Accidents as Aquinas employs the terms are those matters
of quantity, quality, or place. In the Eucharistic elements the
accidents are the sensible attributes of the bread and the wine.

4Thomas Aquinas 3a., q.75, a.2.

5Ibid., 3a., q.75, a.4.

6Ibid., 3a., q.76, a.3.

7Ibid., 3a., q.75, a.5.

8Joseph Jungmann, The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its Origin
and Development, trans. Francis Brunner, (New York: Benziger

9Ibid., p. 364 and p. 385.

10Martin Luther, "The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True
Body of Christ, and the Brotherhoods," 1519, Luther's Works,
Theodore Bachmann and Helmut Lehmann (eds.), (Philadelphia:

12. Ibid., p. 66.


15. Ibid., pp. 38-39.

16. Ibid., p. 108.

17. Ibid., p. 92.

18. Ibid., p. 124.


20. Ibid., p. 99.


22. Ibid., p. 54.


24. Martin Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity . . .," p. 36.

25. Ibid., p. 31.

26. Ibid., p. 32.

27. Ibid., p. 22.


29. Ibid., p. 804.


32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid., p. 213.


36 Ibid., p. 219.

37 Ibid., p. 225.

38 Ibid., p. 214.

39 This is almost a harsh distinction between the two natures that renders Zwingli's Christology somewhat weak because it demands separation of the human and divine natures of Christ. If the two natures are inseparable, then Zwingli's split doctrine of ubiquity (applies to divine but not human natures) would be inconceivable and the sign and the thing signified would be confused in the Supper. Zwingli's doctrine, therefore, verges on an inconsistency at this point.


45 George Williams, The Radical Reformation, pp. 149-150.
46 Ibid., p. 107.


50 Ibid., p. 157.

51 Ibid., p. 154.

52 Ibid., p. 110.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid., p. 333.

55 Ibid., p. 332.

56 Ibid., p. 335.


58 George Williams, The Radical Reformation, p. 335.

59 Ibid., p. 111.


64 Ibid., IV, 19, 2.
65 Ibid.
66 Ibid., IV, 19, 3.
67 Ibid., IV, 14, 1.
70 See footnote #11.
72 Ronald Wallace, Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament, p. 82.
73 Ibid.
79 Ibid., IV, 14, 3.
80 B. A. Gerrish, "John Calvin and the Reformed Doctrine of the Lord's Supper," p. 34.

82 Ibid., p. 236.

83 Ibid.

84 Ibid., pp. 240-41.


86 Ibid., IV, 18, 14.


88 Ibid., p. 114.

89 John Calvin, *Institutes* IV, 17, 11.


91 Ibid., p. 342.

92 Ibid.

93 John Calvin, *Opera omnia quae supersunt* (Corpus Reformatoren), (Brunswick, 1863-1900), I, 123, and *Opera Selecta*, P. Barth and W. Niesel, (eds.), (Munich, 1926-36), I, 142 f, cited by François Wendel, *Calvin*, p. 341.


95 John Calvin, *Opera omnia quae supersunt* (Corpus Reformatoren), 9, 208, cited by François Wendel, *Calvin*, p. 351.

96 John Calvin, *Institutes* IV, 17, 19.

97 François Wendel, *Calvin*, p. 335.

98 Ibid., p. 345.


100 John Calvin, *Institutes* IV, 17, 14.
101 François Wendel, *Calvin*, p. 344.


103 Ibid., p. 244.

104 Ibid., p. 243.


106 Ibid., IV, 17, 40.


110 John Calvin, *Institutes IV*, 17, 43.


112 François Wendel, *Calvin*, pp. 70-71.


114 John Calvin, *Institutes IV*, 17, 43.


116 Ibid., p. 257.

117 François Wendel, *Calvin*, p. 166.


119 Ibid.
120 Ibid., p. 191.


122 François Wendel, Calvin, p. 263. As Wendel notes, Alexander Schweizer in 1844 and Ferdinand Christian in 1847 claimed predestination to be the central doctrine of Calvin's theology. Except for a few exceptions, their interpretation was treated like an "article of faith which did not even need to be verified."


125 François Wendel, Calvin, p. 357.


127 Calvin, Institutes I, 2, 3.

128 François Wendel, Calvin, p. 151.

129 Kilian McDonnell, John Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist, p. 160.

130 Ibid., p. 163.

131 François Wendel, Calvin, p. 186.


133 Calvin, Institutes II, 12, 1.


135 Calvin, Institutes II, 12, 1.


137 François Wendel, Calvin, p. 218.


139François Wendel, Calvin, p. 219.


142 François Wendel, *Calvin*, p. 221.

143 Ibid., p. 224.


146 François Wendel, *Calvin*, p. 145.

147 Ibid.


151 Ibid.


153 Ibid., IV, 6, 8, and 9.

154 Ibid., IV, 1, 7.


157 François Wendel, *Calvin*, p. 266.


161 Ibid.


166 Kilian McDonnell, *John Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist*, p. 178.


168 Ibid., III, 1, 1.

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