

# The Dangers of Crypto-Calvinism

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On Goodhue County Highway 4, three and one-half miles northeast of the village of Goodhue, Minnesota, a painted sign in front of a white frame building proclaims to the passersby that this is St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, U.A.C. Behind those three letters, whose meaning is probably unknown to most, lie volumes of very involved church history. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession. How, when, and by whom was it written? How, why, when and by whom was it altered? More answers can and will be given, but simply stated, it was altered in the interest of Crypto-Calvinism.

Crypto-Calvinism introduces the name of one of the Protestant reformers, John Calvin. Calvin cannot be spoken of in this connection without referring, to Ulrich Zwingli. These two men cannot be spoken of without becoming involved in their relationship to Martin Luther and his teachings, and to Melanchthon. The life times of a number of these men were not long enough to expose and answer Crypto-Calvinism. Yet other men, meetings and confessions must be spoken of. In other words, the topic "The Dangers of Crypto-Calvinism" opens, up a big, slice of very interesting church history, and a formative period for the doctrines of the Lutheran church.

A short explanation of the Crypto-Calvinistic controversy-in the Lutheran Cyclopedia brings out these points: "Called forth by Melanchthon's vacillating position on the true doctrine regarding, the lord's Supper, his disciples endeavored to displace Luther and on the basis of Melanchthon's errors, unite with the Calvinists, while all the time masquerading as good Lutherans. The Elector August was influenced by his advisors to fill all (church) positions with Philippists (followers of Philip and Melanchthon), He gave legal confessional authority to a collection of Melanchthon's writing in 1560 which contained the altered Augsburg Confession, the altered Apology, the new Loci of Melanchthon. All loyal Lutheran pastors refusing subscription (to this document) were deposed, jailed or banished." When in 1573, Elector August also became ruler of Ducal Saxony, he deposed yet more Lutheran champions and one hundred Lutheran pastors, The success of the Crypto-Calvinists lead to their undoing. In 1573 they gave wide publicity and circulation to an anonymous "*Exegesis Perspicua*". This document openly condemned the Lutheran teachings and advocated the Reformed teachings of Calvin. Finally, Elector August saw the light. He drove the Philippists from their positions, and jailed and banished their Leaders. The Torgau Confession of 1574 was drawn up to express the true Bible and Lutheran position.

There was a two-year relapse from 1589-1591 when a Calvinist was again in power. Again, Lutheran theologians and pastors were persecuted, jailed or banished. However, the previous events had opened the eyes of both leaders and people in Saxony so that the Calvinist teachings could not be maintained. A new administrator, Duke Frederick William, reestablished true Lutheranism. However, parts of Germany had been lost and continued to be lost to the Lutheran cause.

## Luther

What were the Lutheran teachings that the Crypto-Calvinists found so objectionable? How had Luther come to them? In 1524, Luther wrote to the Christians of Strassburg in answer to a question that they had put to him. His former co-worker, Carlstadt, had come up with his own theory about the Sacrament, namely, that it was only bread and wine, and that Jesus had pointed to Himself when He said "This is My body". Luther: "That I admit: if Dr. Carlstadt or someone else had told me five years ago that in the Sacrament there is nothing but mere bread and wine, he would have rendered me a great service. I passed through great inner struggles in that respect, and had to fight hard to overcome that temptation. For I was well aware that by these means I could strike the hardest blow against the papacy...But I am captured by the Word of God and cannot find a way out.

The words are there, and they are too strong for me. Human words cannot take them out of my soul. Yea, even if it should happen today that someone should prove with strong reasons that only bread and wine are there, it would not be necessary to attack me so furiously, For, according to my Old Adam, I am, unfortunately very much inclined to that view.” As Dr. Hermann Sasse concludes (*This Is My Body*), “These are the words of a theologian for whom the only source of Christian doctrine was God’s Word. He would have given up the Real Presence as easily as Zwingli, had it not been for the Word of God, which offered no other choice.” The Word of God carried the field against Luther’s Old Adam. There is no statement anywhere by Luther in which he expresses any doubt that the Body and ‘Blood of Jesus Christ are truly present in the lord’s Supper and distributed to the communicants. This, in spite of the fact that he admitted that accepting the figurative meaning of the words would be far easier. He realized the difficulties, but he was bound by the Word.

Over the years, Luther had seen the error of the Roman teaching of transubstantiation, Again Scripture ruled: “For it is in perfect agreement with Holy Scripture that there is, and remains, bread, as, Paul himself calls it, I Corinthians 10:16, ‘The bread which we break’ and I Corinthians 11:28; ‘Let him so eat of that bread’” In the Smalcald Articles III, 6, he wrote, “Of the Sacrament of the Altar we hold that bread and wine in the Supper are the true body and blood of Christ, and are given and received not only by the godly but also by wicked Christians.” This is the Lutheran teaching following the Words of Christ, “this is My body, this is My blood.” How it is possible or understandable to human intellect, Luther did not state or care. He did not care about building up a theory like transubstantiation. His care was what the Word stated.

What was necessary for the communicant? Luther answers (WA, 11, 450, 8) “That you in faith embrace the words: This is My body which is given for you. Thus eat and drink (spiritually) and nourish your faith. Then take the Body and Blood as a confirmation of such Words of God and say: I have not been ordered to search and to know how God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, or the soul of Christ, is in the Sacrament. It is enough for me to know that the Word which I hear and the Body which I take are truly those of my Lord and God. Let the subtle and faithless sophists search for such inscrutable things and bring the deity into the Sacrament by magic. The Body which you take and the Word which you hear are His who holds in His hand the entire world and is everywhere. Be satisfied with that.” The faith of Martin Luther in these Words of the Sacrament is a faith in the Gospel of Christ.

Christ’s Words of Institution bring the entire content of the Gospel. The eternal Son of God became man for us. He was made flesh and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered and died for the sins of the world. He made a full and complete payment. Though He visibly ascended into heaven, He is not separated from us by space and time. He is the Head and we are the members. He enters our life spiritually (“If a man eats of this bread, he will live forever”, John 7:51.) and bodily (“Take eat, this is My body..”). “It is unspeakable how great and powerful these words are. for they are the sum total of the whole Gospel. “ (WA 1. 1. , 4 3 2, 1. 9 ff). In his “Large Confession” of 1528 (WA 26, 446, 32 ff) Luther says, “I have remained with Thy text as the Words stand. If there should be an obscurity in them, Thou wilt bear with me, if I do not completely understand them, just as Thou didst forbear with Thine Apostles when they did not understand in many things.” Luther and those who follow him could not give up his teaching on the Real Presence without giving up faith in the Gospel of Christ.

Martin became what he was through deep and bitter inner conflict. As the leader of the Reformation, he was often out ahead of his followers. It was often a lonely place to be. Put in the process, he learned to despair of man and believe in God as revealed in the Word. The only begotten Son of the Father has revealed God to us. We can know Him in “is incarnation, yet that becoming flesh remains a mystery. We see Him as a man walking among men on this earth. Yet hidden in His humanity is His deity. “He is hidden in the Christ, as He is hidden in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, where He is most hidden.” (WA 3, 1.24, 37 f).

### **Zwingli**

A brief study of Zwingli’s background and thinking will also help us to understand his position on the Lord’s Supper. How very different from Luther! Zwingli was a product of democratic Switzerland. He had to be

a politician to win the city of Zurich to his side. He did not limit his politicking to Zurich. At the time of the Marburg Colloquy, he was scheming with Philip of Hesse and others on a continental scale. Emperor Charles V was to be dethroned, Philip put in his place, the Roman Catholic King of France was to be an ally, and the fleet of Venice the naval part of the military combination. These schemes surely affected both Zwingli's and Philip's church and theological actions also. Had Luther known of them, he never would have come to Marburg - and he would have given Philip a rousing lecture on mixing politics with doctrine.

Zwingli never studied in a theological faculty. He was most impressed by the thinking of Thomas for whom even God's revelation cannot contradict reason. Luther had found that the Word of God often contradicts human reason. Zwingli said at Marburg, "God is truth and He is light. He gives light and does not lead us into darkness." He was so impressed with humanist thinking that he felt sure that also the great heathen thinkers would also be in heaven, e.g. Aristides, Scipio, Plato, Seneca. Christ and the Gospel were a new law for him. Where Luther said that the minister of the Gospel should not meddle in politics, Zwingli said, "One must help the Lord Jesus to become the ruler of the country." He appeared at Marburg with a sword strapped at his side. He died in 1531 as a soldier on the battlefield of Cappel and he is pictured in the great Reformer Monument at Worms with a sword in one hand and a Bible in the other.

Older Reformed theologians and historians made an effort of showing that Zwingli had always held the same opinion in regard to the Lord's Supper. This does not agree with his own statements. He, too, had accepted the Roman Catholic teachings on transubstantiation. Yet he states "In my opinion no one has ever believed that he eats Christ bodily and essentially, though almost all have taught this, or at least pretended to believe it." He evidently did not take transubstantiation very seriously.

In January of 1523, he wrote a thesis criticizing the Roman Mass. His objections were not against the Real Presence, but against communion with only the bread and against the sacrifice of the Mass. There was nothing of his later figurative interpretation of "This is My body." A Dutch humanist by the name of Cornelis Hoen (or Honius) influenced Zwingli in 1524 through a widespread letter on the Sacrament of the Altar. Hoen interpreted it as a visible pledge added to the promise of the Gospel similar to the wedding ring given a bride to remind her of the groom's promise. He pointed to Matthew 24:23, where Christ said: "If any man shall say unto you; lo, here is Christ, or there, believe it not." He interpreted "is" as "signifies." He referred to examples of figurative language in the Bible, such as "The rock was Christ," to substantiate his figurative interpretation of "This is My body." He called this "alloiosis". An argument of Hoen, repeated by Zwingli is "All miracles performed by Jesus were not contrary to experience." But the miracles of Christ's incarnation, the omnipresence of God, and the regeneration of baptism are beyond our human experience. It is striking that Zwingli's Christology falls far short in regard to the communication of the Divine and human; that he teaches the omnipresence of only the divine nature of Christ, and that baptism also lost its emphasis among his followers.

Carlstadt, the former co-worker of Luther, who was banished from the University of Wittenberg because of the excesses of his reform while Luther was at the Wartburg (smashing statutes, breaking stained glass windows, doing away with clergy gown or robe) had found a place of safety in Strassburg, Here he published anti - Lutheran writings on the Lord's Supper. As before mentioned, he said that Jesus had pointed to Himself when He said, "My body", and he denied that the Supper is a pledge that assures us of the forgiveness of sins. Zwingli did not accept these teachings of Carlstadt, but was grateful that Carlstadt pointed to Augustine's argument that Christ's body is in heaven and cannot at the same time be in the bread. This he used.

We should not give the impression that Zwingli was not concerned about Scripture. During the next years, he sought out and made more use of Scripture passages that he felt agreed with his teaching. John 6:23, "The flesh profiteth nothing," he called his diamond, Exodus 12:11, "This is the Lord's passover" he felt had been revealed to him by God in a dream; and Matthew 26:11, "Me ye have not always" to him said that Christ's body was not truly present. Even though Zwingli agreed that John 6 did not deal with the Lord's Supper, but rather spoke of faith as spiritual eating and drinking, nevertheless, he used it in an effort to show that Christ recognized only spiritual eating and rejected bodily eating.

Zwingli looked upon Luther's teachings on the Lord's Supper as being half a reformation of the Roman Catholic errors. Luther looked upon Zwingli as an enthusiast like the Anabaptists) denying a Sacrament as a means of Grace and turning it into a mere sign of the grace which is being received without the means. Indeed, Zwingli never could realize the necessity for emergency baptism. It is very striking to note that for Luther the Lord's Supper was a wonderful working of Christ in the church. In the Roman Catholic viewpoint, it was a work of man, as a priest offered Christ again in an unbloody manner. For Zwingli, it also became a work of man by which he remembered the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

The difference between Zwingli and Luther can also be illustrated by their different methods of exegesis. For Zwingli, the external word in itself has no power over the human soul. He felt that the Spirit contacts the soul directly and thus enables the soul to understand the real meaning of the Word. The Spirit makes the believer understand when he compares Scripture with Scripture and asks for the analogy of faith. Luther starts, instead, with the Words of Institution as they stand. He agrees that the Bible may use figurative language, but it must be evident that such use establishes something being made. Luther- "Where Holy Scripture establishes something something which is to be believed, it is not permissible to abandon the words as they are, unless a clear article of faith would necessitate a different interpretation or arrangement of the words. What would otherwise become of the Bible? If, for example, we read in Psalm 18:3: "God is my rock", we find the word 'rock', which otherwise means a natural stone. Since, however, faith teaches that God is no natural stone, I am compelled to understand 'rock' in that passage in a way different from the natural understanding. The same is true of Matthew 16:18: "Upon this rock I will build My church.." (*Against the Heavenly Prophets*, part 2, WA 1.8, 1.47, 23ff). In Christ's institution of the Lord's Supper is cannot mean signify because the words are plain words and no other explanation is added, as would have to be done if they were used figuratively,

The controversy we are studying, however, is not called Crypto-Zwinglianism, but Crypto-Calvinism. What were the teachings of Calvin and how was he influenced by Zwingli? Calvin was born later than the other two reformers, on July 10, 1509, in Moyon, France. He studied theology in Paris until the age of twenty, then for two years he followed his father's direction and studied law. In 1531 he returned to Paris to continue theological studies. He experienced what he calls a "sudden conversion", joined the Reformed congregation and was soon its leader. Because of his testimony against the Catholic church, he had to leave France in 1533. In Basel, Switzerland, he wrote the *Institutio Religionis Christianae*. He tried to put into practice a legalistic theocratic government. He was banished from Basel in 1538 because of this. He moved to Strassburg where he got to know Martin Bucer. He got acquainted with Melancthon and other Lutherans in church conventions. He returned to Geneva, Switzerland, September 1541, where he worked at reforming church and government. An anti-Trinitarian by the name of Michael Servetus was burned at the stake here in 1553 at Calvin's urging. During a four year period, 58 were burned at the stake, 76 were exiled; in 1545 during a raging pestilence, 43 women were burned as witches, at a time when Geneva had about 15,000 inhabitants.

Calvin had great admiration for Luther as a servant of Christ. However, he was violently opposed to Luther's teachings both on the Real Presence in the Lord's Supper and the majesty of Christ's human nature. The Reformed church historian, Schaff, says that Calvin's theory took a middle course between Zwingli and Luther, In reality, he taught a polished form of Zwingli's crude teaching, For example, he, too, held that after His ascension, the human nature of Christ was enclosed in heaven far away from the earth, and that Christ's body and blood could not be in the Lord's Supper, However, the phrases which Calvin used came as close to Lutheran teachings as possible. The Formula of Concord says, "Although some Sacramentarians strive to employ words that come as close as possible to the Augsburg Confession and the form and mode of speech in its churches, and confess that in the Holy Supper the body of Christ is truly received by believers, still, when we insist that they state their meaning properly, sincerely and clearly, they all declare themselves unanimously thus: that the true essential body and blood of Christ is absent from the consecrated bread and wine in the Holy Supper as far as the highest heaven is from the earth.... Therefore they understand this presence of the body of Christ not as a presence here upon earth, but only "*respectu fidei*" (with respect to respect to faith), that is, that

our faith, reminded and excited by the visible signs, just as by the Word preached, elevates itself and ascends above all heavens, and receives and enjoys the body of Christ, which is there in heaven present, yea, Christ Himself, together with all His benefits, in a manner true and essential, but nevertheless spiritual only; ...consequently nothing else is received by the mouth in the Holy Supper than bread and wine.” (971,2f) In the *Consensus Tigurinus of Calvin* he says, “We repudiate those (who urge the literal interpretation of the Words of Institution) as preposterous interpreters. For beyond controversy, they are to be taken figuratively.” Calvin and his followers, including the Crypto-Calvinists in Germany, tried to introduce these very different teachings of Zwingli into revisions of the Augsburg Confession as well as other ambiguous writings and confessions. Calvin himself signed the altered Augsburg Confession of 1539, “in the sense in which the author himself (Melanchthon) has interpreted it.”

Calvin’s publication of the *Consensus Tigurinus* of 1549 is described by Staehlein in a biography of Johann Calvin as “the solemn act by which the Zwinglian and Calvinistic reformation were joined in everlasting wedlock as the one great Reformed Church.” Luther had felt very friendly toward Calvin and had not been aware of his opposition to the Real Presence. Lutherans, generally, regarded Calvin as an “Upper German Lutheran”. It was the spread of Calvinism into France, Holland and England and the growing influence of the Calvinist teaching about communion in Bremen, the Palatinate and in Saxony itself that finally alerted Lutherans to the undermining influences which were at work.

Pastor E. Arnold Sitz well states: “It is in the formal approach that we find roughly the chief differences among the early reformers. Zwingli often found his ‘facts’ outside of Scripture, developed his premises from these ‘facts’, and then intruded his conclusions upon Scripture. Calvin, more careful, usually found his premises in Scripture, but believed it legitimate to draw hard and fast conclusions from these premises, conclusions which are not found in the Word of God. This principle of Calvin’s found express statement in the Westminster Confession in the words: “The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man’s salvation; faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture.” (As Luther would say, “*Da liegt die Gift* (There lies the poison).”

Melanchthon was the leader of the Crypto-Calvinists. But he came to this position only through a number of changes in his thinking. At Marburg in 1529, he opposed Zwingli. In his “Opinion” of May 15, 1529, he says, “I am satisfied that I shall not agree with the Strassburgers (Carlstadt and Bucer), all my life, and I know that Zwingli and his compeers write falsely concerning the Sacrament. On June 20, 1529, in a letter, “I would rather die than see our people become contaminated by the society of the Zwinglian cause.” on November 2, 1529, in a letter, “I know that the teachings of Zwingli can be upheld neither with the Scripture, nor with the authority of the ancients concerning the Lord’s Supper, Therefore, teach as Luther does.” In 1537, Melanchthon subscribed to the Smalcald Articles which state, “Dread and wine in the Supper are the true body and blood of Christ, and are given and received not only by the godly, but also by wicked Christians.” These were Melanchthon’s public expressions,—his private views began to change from 1530 forward. Luther blamed Melanchthon’s philosophy. Bente, in his historical introduction, calls him “a wavering reed driven to and fro in the wind, now verging toward Luther, now toward Calvin.” On May 24, 1538, he wrote, “Know that for ten years, neither a night nor a day has passed in which I did not reflect on this matter (Lord’s Supper).” He was influenced by St. Augustine’s speaking about a symbolic interpretation of the Words of Institution. When Luther, in 1534, sent him to Cassel for a conference with Bucer, Luther urged him to defend the Sacramental union and the oral eating and drinking. Upon Melanchthon’s return from this conference, he wrote a friend that he had been a messenger, not of his own, but of a foreign opinion. In reality, he had been won for Bucer’s view. He wrote of Bucer, “He confesses that, When these things, bread and wine, are given, Christ is truly and substantially present. As for me, I would not demand anything further.” Melanchthon, who first tried to compromise with the Roman Catholics at Augsburg, now wanted to bring together Reformed and Lutheran churches on the basis of Bucer’s ambiguous explanations.

The attitude of Philip Melanchthon toward the Augsburg Confession is very difficult for us to understand today. It was his nature to keep revising something that he had written. His own “Loci” of 1521

were extensively changed three times, in 1535, in 1542 and 1548. Unfortunately, he treated the Augsburg Confession as though it, too, were his own private composition, to be changed according to his will. This confession had been signed by eight princes, and two free cities. They signed, not just for themselves, but for the people they represented, Yet, Melanchthon kept changing the Augsburg Confession without consulting the signatories, even, in 1540 and 1542, without indicating that any changes had been made. Melanchthon changed things, not just to clarify, but, also, to make the confession more acceptable to the followers of Zwingli and Calvin, and to please Philip of Hesse, who was in favor of uniting Lutheran and Reformed into one church,. Even in his day, Melanchthon's changes were recognized as unusual. They were deplored by the genuine Lutherans. Roman Catholics said, "They, themselves, no longer know what is the Augsburg Confession and, its proper sense." The Reformed claimed that the later versions corrected the original Confession, according to the views of Calvin. Already in the edition of 1531, printed by a George Rauh, Paul's words that the bread is a communion of the body of Christ, etc., as well as the testimony of Theophylact concerning the presence of the body of Christ in the Supper were omitted. In the "Variata" Augsburg Confession of 1540, the rejection of the Reformed doctrine was omitted, and the Article itself was changed to read "concerning the Supper of the Lord, they teach that with bread and wine are truly exhibited the body and blood of Christ to those that eat in the Lord's Supper." The unaltered Augsburg Confession of 1530 had read thus: "Article X of the Supper of the Lord: They teach that the true body and blood of Christ are truly present under the form of bread and wine, and are there communicated to and received by those that eat in the Lord's Supper. And they disapprove of those that teach otherwise." Not only Melanchthon, but also other influential Wittenberg professors favored Calvin. Shortly before his death, Luther had accused these men of willful silence, "If you believe as you speak in my presence, then speak the same way in church, in public lectures, in sermons and in private discussions, and strengthen your brethren, and lead the erring back to the right way, contradict the willful spirits; otherwise your confession is a mere sham and will be of no value whatever." Luther knew that a great thunderstorm of controversy was ready to break after his death. Lutheranism would have to fight for the truth of God's Word and for its own continuance. But Melanchthon remained silent. Calvin, in 1557, claimed Melanchthon as his ally and beseeched him to give public testimony that the Calvinists and Zwinglians were not teaching anything outside of the Augsburg Confession (altered edition). Melanchthon gave no reply to this request either. He wrote in a letter dated October 15, 1557, "If you will permit me to live at a different place, I shall reply both truthfully and earnestly, to these unlearned sycophants, and say things that are useful to the church."

Leader of those who saw through Calvin's plan to spread his Reformed teachings within the Lutheran churches by using the familiar words and phrases in an ambiguous way was Joachim Westphal of Hamburg. He took it as his duty to warn the Lutheran church. Neve entitles this controversy the "Westphal Controversy" instead of the Crypto-Calvinist controversy. As can be expected, he has been severely criticized by both the Reformed and those Lutherans favoring union with the Reformed. He pointed attention to the basic difference between Calvin and Luther on the Lord's Supper and on the two natures of Christ. Other historians have admitted that if he had not done it, someone else would have. There was a need for the differences to be pointed out. Westphal opened the eyes of Lutheran Germany to the Calvinistic doctrine's infiltration. He also made it very plain that Melanchthon and many others had actually been rejecting Luther's teaching, and substituting those of Calvin. Martin Bucer of Strassburg quietly used his gifts of making these Calvinistic teachings seem innocent and Lutheran. Melanchthon put them into his variations, of the Augsburg Confession and his other writings. Philip was greatly embarrassed by the writings of Westphal, which showed how, he had confessed with Luther during his lifetime and then reversed a number of his confessions after getting to know Martin Bucer and John Calvin. The defeat of Crypto-Calvinism can partly be attributed to the lack of character and consistency in Melanchthon . His teaching on this subject was lacking both in Scriptural basis and in completeness of its statement of dogma. "They could appeal only to those with an indifferent attitude of mind." Westphal wrote a booklet in 1552 called "Medley of Confused and Mutually Dissenting Opinions on the Lord's Supper compiled from the books of the Sacramentarians" (Zwingli, Calvin and their followers, because of their insistent denial of the Real Presence). In this book, written six years after Luther's death, Westphal

demonstrated by Calvin's own words that he denied the Real Presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's just as Zwingli had done. Calvin's writings were more diplomatic and used what seemed to be Orthodox phrases, but they contained the same errors. Westphal's paper also clearly stated and defended the Lutheran doctrine of the Real Presence, the oral eating and drinking of Christ's body and blood, also to their damnation by unbelievers. In 1553, Westphal added another booklet giving the correct faith concerning the Lord's Supper based on the words of the Apostle Paul and the Gospels. He called upon all true followers of Luther to defend his teachings against the Calvinist' attack. Calvin, in 1555, answered Westphal with a paper of his own. He insulted him and called him a mad dog. Westphal published three more books and began to find support from other aroused Lutherans. Calvin wrote again, "A second defense of the pious and orthodox faith against the calumnies of J. Westphal." He dedicated it to "all ministers of Christ who cultivate and follow the pure doctrine of the Gospel in the churches of Saxony and lower Germany." The 'pure doctrine' was his, of course, and the dedication was to those whom history calls the Crypto-Calvinists. In it Calvin said, "I teach that Christ, though absent according to His body, is nevertheless present with us according to His divine power." In 1556 Westphal wrote again. In his first letter he points out the error of trying to change the Augsburg Confession into Zwinglianism, in the second he published opinions given by ministeriums of more than a dozen German cities. All of them supported Luther's doctrine, referring to the Words of Institution as given in the Bible. Calvin answered Westphal and declared that if he would not obey, he would have to be considered a hardened heretic. In his writing he states that we unite with Christ only spiritually. John Brentz in Wuerttemberg and Martin Chemnitz in Brunswick joined Westphal in confessing the Scriptural teaching on the Lord's Supper. In the discussion and publications, the Lutheran and Biblical Christology was further emphasized. Because of the personal union of the divine and the human in the God-man, the humanity of Christ is not only omnipotent and omniscient, but also omnipresent. The human nature of Christ received these attributes from the first moment of the incarnation of the Word. Lying in the manger He had all these powers; while suffering on the cross He yet darkened the sun; while dying on the cross He yet kept alive all the living. "When by a definite word Christ has told, promised and assured that He would be present with His human nature, let us retain this, which is most certainly true, that Christ be with His body wherever whenever and in whatever manner He wills. But we, must judge of His will from a definite, revealed word."

We have looked at the munitions, and armament of the Lutheran-Crypto-Calvinist warfare. What was happening on the battleground of the local churches? It was not all a victory for the Gospel. It has been mentioned that the Palantinate was lost to Lutheranism. The ruler there was Frederick the Third. In 1564 at the Diet of Augsburg, he was accused of having broken the Augsburg Religious Peace Treaty of 1555 by introducing Calvinism. He answered that he had never read Calvin, did not know what Calvinism was, and that he subscribed to the Augsburg Confession (altered). A year before he made this statement, he had replaced Luther's catechism with the Reformed Heidelberg catechism!

Heidelberg Catechism "Question 76. What is it to eat the crucified body and drink the shed blood of Christ?"

"Answer. It is not only to embrace with a believing heart all the sufferings and death of Christ, and thereby to obtain the forgiveness of sins and life eternal; but moreover also, to be so united more and more to His sacred body by the Holy Ghost, who dwells both in Christ and in us, that although He is in heaven, and we on the earth, we are nevertheless flesh of His flesh and bone of His bones, and live and are governed forever by one Spirit, as members the same body are by one soul."

"Question 78. So, then, the bread and wine become the real body and blood of Christ?"

"Answer. No, but as the water, in baptism, is not changed into the blood of Christ, nor becomes the washing away of sins in itself, being only the divine token and assurance thereof; so also, in the Lord's Supper, the sacred bread does not become the body of Christ itself, though agreeably to the nature and usage of sacraments it is called the body of Christ."

“Question 79. Why, then, doth Christ call the bread His body, and the cup His blood; or the New Testament in His blood; and St. Paul, the communion of the body and blood of Christ?

“Answer. Christ speaks thus not without great cause; namely; not only to teach us thereby, that, like as bread and wine sustain this temporal life, so also His crucified body and shed blood are the true meat and drink of our souls, unto Life eternal; but much more, by this visible sign and pledge to assure us that we are as really partakers of His true body and blood, through the working of the Holy Ghost, as we receive by the mouth of the body these holy tokens in remembrance of Him; and that all His sufferings and obedience are as certainly our own, as if we had ourselves suffered and done all in our own persons.”

Obviously, Frederick had believed what Calvin had said, namely, that he was upholding and defending the ‘pious and orthodox’ faith. Elector Frederick the Third made a study of the different views on the Lord’s Supper. He asked Philip Melancthon for his opinion, Melancthon replied, “It is not difficult, but dangerous, to answer.” Frederick decided for the Crypto-Calvinists. Beside the writing and introduction of the Heidelberg catechism, churches were changed by the removal of altars, baptismal fonts, paintings and organs. Opposing ministers were expelled from the country and Reformed ministers imported to take their place.

Two associate pastors served in Bremen. Hardenberg was Calvinistic. He rejected Luther’s doctrine of the Real Presence, refused to accept by oath the tenth article of the Augsburg Confession, calling it a temporizing writing, written to please the Emperor and the Pope. He thought it contained the Roman Catholic teaching of transubstantiation. His co-pastor, Timan, followed Martin Luther and sided with Westphal. Pastor Hardenberg published a fictitious statement attributed to Martin Luther. Completely rejected by historians since that time, this supposed letter of Luther suggested that he had gone overboard in the Lord’s Supper controversy; that he would take back what he had said against Zwingli, except that then his other teachings might also be questioned or might doubted. The Evangelical Church in Bremen believed Hardenberg and joined the Reformed group.

The Crypto-Calvinists had perhaps been working hardest of all in Wittenberg in Electoral Saxony. Melancthon died in 1560, but his followers carried on. They knew that their Lutheran opponents were out to stop them and their teachings. Before Elector August, they made every effort to appear as genuine Lutherans. But behind the scenes, they were scheming and pulling strings to gain total power. We are minded of the liberals within the Missouri Synod against the conservatives. Like Herman J. Otten at St. Louis, two Wittenberg students, Conrad Schluesselburg and Albert Schirmer, in 1568, entered a complaint against two Wittenberg professors, Pezel and Peucer (who was the son-in-law of Philip Melancthon), because of their departure from Luther’s teaching in the doctrine of the Lord’s Supper. The university tried to compel them to admit that these false teachers represented the pure doctrine about the Lord’s Supper. When the two students refused, they were expelled from the university and driven from the city. In the brief overview of this controversy on the first page of this paper, reference is made to the collection of Melancthon’s works which were given official standing by Elector August in 1560. The lengthy title of this collection is very interesting. “The entire sum of the true and Christian doctrine as a testimony of the steadfast and unanimous confession in which the schools and churches of these Electoral Saxon and Meissen territories have remained and persevered in all points according to the Augsburg Confession for now almost thirty years against the unfounded false charges and accusations of all lying spirits, 1560.” Contrary to the title, this collection included only the ecumenical symbols, the altered Augsburg Confession, the altered Apology of 1542, the changed *Loci* and other writings of Melancthon. A more accurate title given to this collection was “*Corpus Philippicum*”. It was forced upon all churches of Electoral Saxony, with all professors, ministers and teachers pledged by an oath to teach according to it. Those refusing were deposed, imprisoned or banished.

As soon as it appeared, it was denounced by loyal Lutherans. Foremost among them were those from the cities of Reuss; Schoenfeld and Jena. Elector August could not help reacting to the increasing outcry. He arranged a colloquy between the theologians of Jena and Wittenberg. Held at Altenburg, it lasted six months, from October 1568 to March 1569, because the teachers at Wittenberg would only allow it to be conducted in writing. In writing of Melancthon’s altered Augsburg Confession, the theologians from Jena declared,



“Melancthon has changed the said Augsburg Confession so often that finally he has opened a window through which the Sacramentarians and Calvinists can sneak into it. One must watch with care, lest in course of time, the Papists, also, find such a loophole to twist themselves into it.” Though the Lutherans declared that the Wittenberg and Leipzig theologians had revealed themselves as false teachers, they had not convinced the Elector, August. The Crypto-Calvinists even were successful in getting the Elector to require yet another subscription by all pastors and teachers to uphold the false teachings.

The followers of Calvin felt secure. They added more writings to strengthen their hold. One in 1570 contradicted the Lutheran teaching concerning the majesty of the human nature of Christ. In the next year, 1571, they added a catechism, supposedly for specially gifted scholars in need of additional instructions. In actuality, it denied and contradicted Luther’s teachings: “Christ’s body is restricted to a certain place.” All Calvinists could easily and quickly accept this catechism’s teachings about the Lord’s Supper.

Again alarmed Lutherans outside of Saxony protested vehemently. Elector August required that his theologians deliver a definite statement of their faith at Dresden, October 10, 1571. This *Consensus Dresdensis* page seemed to satisfy the Elector. It should not have. Once more, the ambiguous language of the catechism and Crypto-Calvinism generally was repeated. Again, Lutherans outside of Saxony protested and wrote against these hypocritical statements. Elector August was not moved. The Crypto-Calvinists had convinced him that they were in entire agreement with Luther and that the Flacians (the Jena theologians who followed their leader, Flacius) were trouble-making, “zealots, fanatics, bigots, wranglers, barkers, alarmists, etc.” Over the years, these Crypto-Calvinists perfected their techniques of dissimulation, adding premeditated deceit, falsehood and perjury. Even a Wittenberg University student who was thoroughly Reformed in his theology, charged the Wittenberg leaders with dishonesty. The famous Luther Works printer of Wittenberg, Hans Lufft, complained that he did not know what to do with all the books of Luther which he had in stock. He added that he could have printed twenty or thirty times as many Calvinistic books and would have sold them all very rapidly.

Even history seemed to favor the Crypto-Calvinists. Duke John William of Ducal Saxony, who had supported and protected faithful Lutherans, died on March 3, 1573. Elector August also took over governing in his territory and guardianship of his two sons. Under the urging of his Crypto-Calvinist advisors, the Elector immediately banished the true Lutherans also from Ducal Saxony.

By the year 1573, then, it seemed that both Electoral and Ducal Saxony were completely Calvinized and totally lost to the Lutheran cause. But God had other plans. In the next year, a writing appeared which changed everything. It was titled “The Perspicuous, and almost complete explanation to the controversy concerning the Lord’s Supper.” Its purpose was to finish off Lutheranism. Its appearance fits well the practices of Crypto-Calvinism. Even though the Calvinistic teachings were made plain, the author, publisher, place of publication and date of publication were purposely omitted; the paper bore a Geneva mark and the lettering was French. Some detective work established that it had been published right in Leipzig, Germany, The printer’s name was Voegelin. At first he said he also had written it, in a public hearing, he had to confess that this was not true. He said that a physician by the name of Joachim Curaeus of Silesia had written it, Yet more detective work established that Curaeus had agreed to accept the responsibility of writing it to protect the real authors, most likely Professors Pezel and Peucer. The professors at Wittenberg said they had nothing to do with it; yet, they were spreading it among the university students.

This unacknowledged orphan was likely the first honest writing that the Crypto-Calvinists produced. It states: “There is no union of the body of Christ with the bread and wine; hence, there neither is nor can be such a thing as oral eating and drinking or eating, and drinking of unbelievers. The omnipresence of Christ’s human nature is a heresy.” The teaching of Calvin and the Reformed Church is highly praised as in agreement with the symbols of the ancient church. Luther is characterized as having frequently gone too far in controversy. The recommendation is to follow the men whom God had placed at the side of Luther and who had spoken more correctly than Luther. Furthermore, this writing urged a union of Reformed and Lutheran, sealed by a formula which “could not create offense.” Yet the Lutheran teachings are called dangerous and should be discontinued.

Again a parallel with recent church history is suggested. The march of the 45 liberal professors off the Missouri Synod campus in St. Louis, leaving behind but a handful of confessional Lutheran professors, finally made plain to all that our Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod's concerns had been valid and accurate. All that Westphal and the other faithful Lutherans had been saying had now been proved true. The King of Denmark, the Duke of Wuerttemberg, other princes and private citizens urged Elector August to take action against the Crypto-Calvinists. Even without their urging, the Elector had seen the light.

An accident confirmed the worst and aroused the Elector's anger against his former advisors. Professor Paucer, Melancthon's son-in-law, was again involved. He had written a letter to a fellow Crypto-Calvinist, Christian Schuetze, court preacher in Dresden. Using some of the tricks and deceit which the Crypto-Calvinists had been practicing many years, he addressed the letter to Professor Schuetze's wife to avoid suspicion. Also in those days, the postal service was not perfect. By mistake, the letter was delivered to the wife of the wrong court preacher, Mrs. Lysthenius, wife of the court preacher of Elector August. She opened the letter, found it was written in Latin and gave it to her husband to read. He was opposed to Calvinism. In the letter, Professor Paucer enclosed a Calvinistic prayer book. He asked his friend, Schuetze, to secretly get it into the hands of Elector August's wife, Anna, explaining "If first we have Mother Anna on our side, there will be no difficulty in winning his Lordship, too."

The Elector was given this book and letter. He now took some action of his own. He seized the correspondence of four of his former advisors, Peucer, Scheutze, Stoessel, and Cracow. These letters confirmed the worst. Cunning, treachery, and dishonesty had been the tools of those who had been implicitly believed by the Elector. He had banished hundreds of faithful servants of Christ's church. The four men were imprisoned.

The bells were rung and thanksgiving services were held throughout Saxony to thank God for the revealing of error and the triumph of genuine Lutheranism. A confession was prepared and published in German and Latin to clarify or reintroduce the Bible teachings. Calvin and many of his followers are mentioned by name and their false teachings rejected. Other Calvinistic professors at Wittenberg were banished and Lutheran advisors were chosen by Elector August. The Elector himself became a leader in formulating and spreading the Lutheran teachings, the crown of his efforts being the production and adoption of the "Formula of Concord."

A later brief lapse of two years into Calvinism was due solely to the principle of "whoever is the ruler, his religion is to be followed." It was short-lived, through the death of the Reformed-leaning ruler.

A visitation was ordered throughout the electorate by Duke Frederick William. Through this visitation, remaining Crypto-Calvinist professors in Wittenberg and Leipzig were exiled. Chancellor to the Elector, Nikolaus Crell, was beheaded after an imprisonment of ten years. "Not on account of his religion, but on account of his repeated treachery" against the Elector.

We are now four hundred years down the road from these events. What is the situation in Lutheran and Reformed churches today? Officially, all Lutheran churches today accept the same Lutheran doctrine on the Sacrament. On the other hand, most of the Reformed churches which trace their history back to these events of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, have deserted their historic confessions. A Swiss Reformed regards those confessions as historic documents. Each pastor or congregation may use or disregard them. Their ministers are to faithfully interpret the Bible according to their best understanding." Archbishop Fischer of Canterbury England stated: "The principal beliefs of the Church of England are expressed in its *Book of Common Prayer* and summarized in the Apostle's Creed." Church of England clergy may teach the Lord's Supper as transubstantiation, consubstantiation, or they may follow Zwingli or Calvin.

In practice, however, also Lutherans are not united on the truths expressed in the Book of Concord. At the third assembly of the Lutheran World Federation in 1957, an expert stated: "We, ourselves, are today perhaps farther than ever removed from complete agreement on traditional Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper." Open communion is practiced by many Lutheran churches. Different types of inter-communion between Lutheran and Reformed have been established. Also, within more conservative Lutheran congregations, communion services seem to have less importance. Confessional services are almost

non-existent; registration in person is less used from year to year; even previous announcement by card, with its opportunity for self-examination and preparation has often been replaced by a sign-up sheet in the entrance hall on Sunday morning. At the same time, the Sacrament of Baptism seems to be losing importance in the thinking of Lutheran parents, who wait longer and longer before—scheduling baptism. The baptismal get-together receives more importance than the early reception of the baby into God's family.

Today, Reformed teachers and lecturers come into our home by television, radio and the printed word. There are no language barriers to keep us from heterodox teachings. To be sure, most Reformed say little about the Lord's Supper, or the two natures of Christ. But by this very neglect, we and our people are influenced. Why should we give so much attention to the Sacraments? Isn't it more important just to preach Christ? And, do we

have to be bound to the words, of Scripture? Isn't the "Word" (Christ) more important? Enlightening is the example of the Missouri Synod River Forest professor who asked his class whether the Bible he was holding was the Word of God, and then, himself, answered "No," threw it on the floor, put his foot upon it, and said "It is only paper and ink; the Word is Jesus Christ." With Calvin, he too felt that the Spirit should work directly outside of the written word. We need constantly to be on our guard for the old errors of Crypto-Calvinism now appearing in modern English.

Thirty-three years ago, Pastor E. Arnold Sitz deplored the lack of sound Lutheran writing in English. Since then, some good Lutheran books in English have been added. But most seminary graduates do not read German, instead, what is available in English is bought and used. Many of us look to Reformed writers for our Old Testament commentaries (Keil-Delitzsh), our Christian Church history (Schaff), our Apologetics (Machan), our old and New Testament Background (Edersheim), our Notes on the Miracles and Parables of Our Lord and Synonyms of the New Testament (Trench), Missiology, our evangelism resource book (*Evangelism Explosion*), various other commentaries, practical books of illustrations and examples, and books on counseling.

Shall we do away with our libraries and operate only with the Word? More use of the Word surely is encouraged and needed. It should be a humbling experience to discover that two current systems of encouraging laymen to read through the Bible in a year with helpful introductions and explanations are being published, not by Lutherans, but one by a Baptist and one by a Presbyterian. It is also humbling to note how few of our members attend Bible study classes which are offered to them. We, as well as our people, need to get more deeply and more regularly into the Word.. But we should also use whatever other helps can be a blessing to us. The sainted Professor Fleischer, once pastor at First Lutheran of Lake Geneva, then, until his death, professor at Northwestern College in Watertown, enjoyed telling us as college students that we would be given our diplomas only after studying and discovering how much there was to be known in this world and admitting that we didn't know anything.

There is so much to be learned from others in so many fields. This knowledge must be tested and tried against the Word of God. One word can change a doctrine and one idea may cancel or becloud a clear and beautiful Scriptural teaching. Especially in this 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary time of the Book of Concord, Lutherans need to read, re-read and study that classic exposition of Scriptural truth. With that sound basis, let Fuller Seminary insights into church growth help our churches at home and abroad to grow. Let Coral Ridge Presbyterian evangelism techniques show us methods and systems. Let Billy Graham's up to date and attention holding sermons remind us to make our sermons not only doctrinally pure, but interesting and timely (Dean Fritz. *Zeit-gemaesz*). Let stewardship techniques of others give us enthusiasm to develop Gospel-centered, joyous methods of helping our people respond to God's boundless mercy. Let family and marriage and other counseling work we do be enriched by the insights of others. Let our services be made less routine and more joyous for young as well as old, new convert as well as third generation Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod member, by using the language of today and some good modern hymns. Let our apologetics be strengthened by the hardhitting writing of others. Let our appreciation of the present be deepened by the lessons of history noted well by others, let our defense of the creation history against evolution find help from other believers in the truthfulness of all Scripture who are also trained and gifted geologists, biologists, zoologists, astronomers, etc.

But in every area, let Scripture rule! With Luther, we find theological fact, premises and conclusion in Scripture! With him, if the Scriptures offer premises from which logic can find conclusions, fight the logic, and search Scripture for the conclusion. Where there is none, leave it “unconcluded”. Trust God’s mystery, by faith. Remember the genius, the education, the close association with Martin Luther that Melanchthon had, and remember his falling into error. Let us never forget the admonition of Christ at the close of His “Sermon on the Mount.” “Let us build our theology and faith on the rock of His Words, putting them into practice as God’s wise men, women and children. (Matthew 7-24 ff)

How thankful we must be that our own Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod subscribes to all of the Book of Concord of 1580, not “in so far as” but “because” it correctly presents Scriptural teachings. It must continue to be true that all of our pastors, at ordination and installation, subscribe to this Book of Concord, not as history, but as a binding confession.

Where we see trends which downgrade the Sacraments or the Scripture, or the person and majesty of Christ, let us speak out clearly and convincingly. History says this is absolutely necessary. Heaven says that it is eternally worth while.

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