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A HAPPY EXCHANGE: THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER AT CROSS AND ALTAR[1]

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> But the glory of our God is precisely that for our sakes he comes down to the very depths, into human flesh, into the bread, into our mouth, our heart, our bosom; moreover, for our sakes he allows himself to be treated ingloriously both on the cross and on the altar (Luther).[2]

Having aligned himself with the Reformation in 1523, Cantor Nicholas Herman (ca. 1480-1561) contributed profusely to the treasure trove which is the hymnody of the Church of the Augsburg Confession. Each Christmas season many North American Lutherans gustily sing Herman's words found in *LW* 44 ("Let all together praise our God"[3]), stanza 4:

> He undertakes a great exchange,
> Puts on our human frame,
> And in return gives us his realm,
> His glory and his name.

An early Reformation musician has here versified Luther's teaching, famously expressed in *The Freedom of a Christian* (1520), of the "happy exchange" (*commercium admirabile*, *der fröhliche Wechsel*) whereby enfleshed God swapped places with us wretched sinners, Himself bearing

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[1] This article first appeared as "Ein fröhlicher Wechsel: Fürst und Bettelmann am Kreuz und Altar", in Jürgen Diestelmann and Wolfgang Schillhahn, eds, *Einträchtig lehren: Festschrift für Bischof Dr Jobst Schoene* (Groß Oesingen: Verlag der Lutherischen Buchhandlung, 1997) 432-42. Luther's treatment of the ancient theme of "deification" has called forth several articles among North American Lutherans in recent years, and I am happy to have arrived at basically the same conclusions as my friend Professor Kurt Marquart, to whose recent *CTQ* contribution on this subject I wish to draw the attention of readers of *LTR*. See Kurt E. Marquart, "Luther and Theosis", *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 64.3 (July 2000): 182-205.

[2] AE 37:72 (1527); WA 23:157.31-33: "Unsers Gotts ehre aber ist die, so er sich umb unser willen auffs aller tieffest erunter gibt, yns fleisch, yns brod, ynn unsern mund, hertz und schos, Und dazu um unsern willen leidet, das er unehrlich gehandelt wird beyde auff dem creutz und altar."

[3] See "Lobt Gott, ihr Christen alle gleich", *Evangelisches Kirchengesangbuch; Ausgabe für die Selbstständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980) 21, st. 4: "Er wechselt mit uns wunderlich: / Fleisch und Blut nimmt er an / Und gibt uns in seins Vaters Reich / Die klare Gottheit dran."

our doom and gracing us in return with a share in His native blessedness.[4] Yet this image of the "happy exchange" was not invented by the Lutheran Reformation, for already at the end of the second century St Irenaeus of Lyons had spoken in similar terms of the Christ "who, on account of His great love, became what we are, so that He might bring us to be what He Himself is".[5]

The Reformer's reminder in the first of the "95 Theses" that our Lord Jesus Christ wills the whole life of believers to consist in repentance applies also to teachers of theology. Throughout my first six years as a seminary professor I unwittingly imparted to my students a piece of inaccurate information which may now be corrected. As is well known, the ancient Fathers were wont to speak of salvation in terms unfamiliar and even shocking to the general run of western Christians. Thus Eastern Orthodoxy has inherited from remote antiquity the startling image of "deification" or *theosis*.[6] When teaching my seminary's first course in historical theology, I have been in the habit of asserting that while, especially in his Christmas hymns, Luther availed himself of deification imagery,[7] the students could rest assured that the Reformer never employed the German or Latin equivalents of the term *theosis* itself.[8] Our religious culture stands under the shadow of John Calvin's Nestorian Christology and of Karl Barth's imbalanced proclamation of divine transcendence; so, since I too breathe in this air, there seemed to be no need to consult the Weimar Edition before confidently pronouncing that Luther would never have given his imprimatur to St. Athanasius' hyperbolic assertion that "He became man so that we might become God."[9]

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[4] AE 31:351f.; WA 7:54.31-55.23 (Lat.).

[5] *Adversus haereses* V, Preface; qtd in *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, ed. and trans. W. A. Jurgens (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1970) 99 (#248).

[6] See J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (4th ed. London: Adam & Charles Black, 1968) 352; Vladimir Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (repr. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1976).

[7] See, e.g., *LW* 35 ("We praise, O Christ, your holy name"), st. 5. The deification nub of the "happy exchange" comes across more clearly in the German original, whose Christology is also stronger than that of the ET: "Der Sohn des Vaters, Gott von Art [The Prince, God's very Son], / ein Gast in der Welt hier ward / und führt uns aus dem Jammertal, / er macht uns Erben in sein'm Saal [And to his royal hall we go]. Kyrieleis." *Evangelisch-Lutherisches Kirchengesangbuch* #15, st. 5.

[8] Cf. Benjamin Drewery, "Martin Luther", in: Hubert Cunliffe-Jones, ed., *A History of Christian Doctrine* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark Ltd., 1978) 326: "The communion is so close that faith, grace, and Christ—the mediator—are one: yet there is no 'deification', after the manner of the Greek Fathers."

[9] A more extended quotation from St Athanasius somewhat qualifies his breathtaking claim: "He became man so that we might become God; and He manifested Himself in the flesh so that we might grasp the idea of the unseen Father; and He endured the insolence of men, so

Since the rubber of dogmatics hits the road of the Church's life in her liturgy and hymnody, a closer look at Nicholas Herman's Christmas song would have afforded me a strong hint that the Reformer, who was neither a Calvinist nor a Barthian, may have been more patristic in his theology than we commonly suppose. For behind the watered-down English translation which specifies Christ's gift in exchange as "his realm, his glory, and his name" stands a German original which proclaims that, in His Father's kingdom, our Lord bestows on us "*die klare Gottheit*", that is, luminous divinity. A first-generation Lutheran here spoke not allusively, but explicitly, of "deification".

A team of Finnish researchers headquartered at the university of Helsinki has over the past decade ploughed a fresh furrow in Luther scholarship, pointing out that the Weimar Edition contains a generous sprinkling of positively used outright deification words spanning from 1514 to the last decade of the Reformer's life.[10] It turns out to be the case that, in his understanding of the ontological foundations and soteriological implications of the "happy exchange", Nicholas Herman was on the same wavelength as Luther himself who, preaching to the Wittenbergers in 1531 on the text Jn 6:51, proclaimed that Christians "eat and drink deifying flesh and blood [*fleisch und blut, das göttert*], which give the manner and power of Godhead".[11] Since it is itself, in the hypostatic union, "a deified flesh [*ein vergöttert fleisch*]",[12] the Lord's flesh "will deify you thoroughly [*wirdt dich durchgöttern*]".[13]

The Reformer discovered by the new Helsinki school in the Weimar Edition is far different from the figure with whom we have become familiar through the many works produced by the so-called Luther Renaissance, which a century ago was gearing up for its finest achievements. Historical data are rarely viewed with the naked eye, being glimpsed mainly through the spectacles supplied by cultural conditioning and confessional sympathy. Many leading scholars of the Luther Renaissance belonged to the theological movement founded by Albrecht Ritschl of Göttingen (1822-1889), who was

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that we might receive the inheritance of immortality." *Treatise on the Incarnation of the Word* 54:3; qtd Jurgens 322.

[10] Simo Peura, "Der Vergöttlichungsgedanke in Luthers Theologie 1518-1519", in: *Thesauraus Lutheri; Auf der Suche nach neuen Paradigmen der Luther-Forschung* [Referate des Luther-Symposiums in Finnland 11. - 12. November 1986; Veröffentlichungen der Finnischen Theologischen Literaturgesellschaft 153 Jahrbuch 1987; in Zusammenarbeit mit der Luther-Agricola Gesellschaft Schrift A 24], ed. Tuomo Mannermaa, Anja Ghiselli, and Simo Peura (Helsinki, 1987) 172, n. 2.

[11] "Sondern issest und trinckest fleisch undt blutt, das göttert, das ist: es gibt die art und krafft der gottheit." WA 33:188.19-22.

[12] WA 33:189.24.

[13] WA 33:188.35-36.

second only to Schleiermacher in the German Liberal Protestantism of the 19th century. The most famous Ritschlian of all was the Berlin church historian, Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930), who argued that the Reformer's greatest achievement was to bring about "the end of dogma". Since the Ritschlians had themselves given up Christian dogma, they readily fell victim to a case of false memory syndrome which persuaded them that their national hero, Luther, had done the same.

Risto Saarinen has uncovered the roots of the fabricated image of the Reformer popularized by much of the Luther Renaissance, pointing to the enormous influence exerted on Ritschl's theology by the Kantian philosopher Hermann Lotze (1817-1881). Lotze took over from Kant and passed on to Ritschl the view that things are completely unknowable in themselves, being indirectly knowable only through their effects, which receive their form from the knowing mind.[14] As applied to theology by Ritschl, the constricting epistemology of Kant and Lotze led to the notion that the biblical and churchly confession of the divinity of Christ says nothing at all about our Lord's eternal and assumed place in the life of God, but merely formulates a "value judgement"' about His impact on ourselves. In Ritschlian thinking, dogma is no longer discourse descriptive of its object, but is rather a way of expressing the existential concerns of its framers.

Some of us received our first exposure to the thought of the Reformer through the pages of Paul Althaus' *Theology of Martin Luther*. Unbeknownst to ourselves, we here made the acquaintance of a Reformer who squirms in the straitjacket woven for him by the Ritschlians of the Luther Renaissance. Issued in English translation by Fortress Press in 1966, Althaus' volume could offer little help to the conservative side in the Missouri Synod conflict which was approaching its climax at that time. The sharp-witted reader should notice something fishy about Althaus' account of the Reformer's understanding of Holy Scripture, Christology, and the Sacrament of the Altar. As he treats all three of these crucial *loci*, Althaus admits that Luther sometimes said things which Liberal Protestants would prefer him to have left unsaid. But as he unfolds the Reformer's teaching on these three closely related topics, Althaus plants the suggestion in his reader's mind that Luther's true opinion was not that Holy Scripture is the Word of God, that our Lord is true God and true man in one person in the sense of Chalcedon, and that the essence of the Blessed Sacrament is Jesus' very Body and Blood under the forms of consecrated bread and wine. Try these quotations for size:

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[14] Risto Saarinen, "Gottes Sein—Gottes Wirken. Die Grunddifferenz von Substanzdenken und Wirkungsdenken in der evangelischen Lutherdeutung", in *Luther und Theosis; Vergöttlichung als Thema der abendländischen Theologie* [Referate der Fachtagung der Luther-Akademie Ratzeburg in Helsinki 30.3-2.4.1989], eds. Simo Peura and Antti Raunio (Helsinki: Hakapaino Oy, 1990) 103-19; 104ff.

> Therewith Luther has in principle abandoned every formal approach to the authority of the Bible.[15]
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> Luther's basic christological confession (that the Father's heart and will are present in Christ) will always be significant. However, his dogmatic theory which describes Christ as true God and true man is not united within itself but displays contradictions. Theology had to go beyond it.[16]

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[15] Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986) 85.

[16] Althaus 198. Pp. 179-198 of Althaus' book merit careful scrutiny. The unwary reader is apt to be caught off guard by such statements as the following: "Luther understands the confession that Christ is God in terms of the christological dogma of the ancient church. He expressly accepts the great ecumenical creeds of Greek and Latin theology. Apart from individual concepts he expresses no criticism of the traditional christological dogmas. He agrees with Athanasius and rejects Arius. … Luther without reservation uses the terminology of the 'two natures' and of their unification in the one person of the Lord to describe the mystery of Christ. … He is as much concerned with the true deity of Christ as Athanasius or Anselm was and in the same sense as they" (179). "… Luther adopts the traditional dogmatic doctrine of the two natures" (193). Two pages into his account of Luther's Christology, Althaus uses high-sounding language to mask deceit: "There is a new emphasis in Luther's doctrine of Christ, even though he accepts the old doctrine. With all orthodox theologians of the church, he accepts the deity of Jesus Christ. However, he gives new and deeper insight into the meaning and significance for man of the fact that Jesus Christ is true God" (181). The Reformer is presented as sharing and yet transcending both St Athanasius' concern for Christ's sharing of God's life with mankind and St Anselm's concern for His achieving atonement between God and man: "At the center of his theology, however, the concern for salvation assumes a new form. What does God intend to do with us sinful men? What is his relationship to me? How does he feel about me? This is therefore no longer a concern about God's incorruptible and unfading life, his power, his atoning and saving grace; rather, Luther is concerned about God Himself, his will, and his heart" (181). Althaus' talk of "Luther's primary concern, to meet the Father in the man Jesus" (182f.) goes hand in hand with Sabellianism at best or Unitarianism at worst. Althaus' true colours come out in his remark that the Reformer's confession of the *genus majestaticum* "remains for the most part in contradiction to the genuine picture of the man Jesus" (197). Dishonesty, hypocrisy, and sarcasm are working overtime as Althaus summarizes Luther's Christology with: "God is this man, and this man is the presence of God for us. Basically, Luther thereby transcends the doctrine of the two natures as inadequate. It says far too little and does not say what is decisive. Luther is ultimately concerned not with the relationship of the divine and the human nature but with the relationship of the person of Jesus to the person of the Father. Luther thus takes the deity of Christ and his incarnation more seriously [!] than anyone since the New Testament writers themselves" (191). Ritschl's ghost stalks the earth in the ultimately meaningless remark that, "God opens his personal being to us only in the human person [!] of Jesus" (191). The unwitting sheep of Christ can easily be led astray by such gobbledy-gook as: "The ancient dogma was concerned with the unity of the two natures in Christ. Luther teaches this as the tradition does. But it is not the 'metaphysical' unity of the two natures but rather the personal unity of the Son with the Father, of the man Jesus with the eternal God, that is ultimately decisive in the matter of salvation. We earthly men know how God thinks about us and how he relates to us only in the earthly reality of someone who is like us, that is, in the human will and activity of Jesus. For this reason, the primary and the only saving truth is that God himself is present for us in the humanity of Jesus Christ. God the Father himself is

And Althaus' treatment of Luther's 1519 sermon on the Holy Supper makes the O. J. Simpson defence team look like honest yeomen:

> The presence of body and blood thus has only symbolic significance. It is not particularly important that the body and blood are received … the eating of the bread … symbolically assures us we are united with Christ and with all the saints. In this context, there is no place for the real presence commensurate with its significance. … [O]ne must agree with Reinhold Seeberg that "Luther probably never again came so close to the genuine meaning of the Lord's Supper as he did in this writing."[17]

With these words Althaus has conveniently proved, by the way, that the Reformer would have not been such a stick-in-the-mud as was Hermann Sasse on the pan-Protestant German Church Union of 1948!

A now laicized English Jesuit took sharp aim a generation ago at Lutheranism in general and at Luther in particular with the observation that:

> The fundamental difference which divides the Catholic conception of God's dealings with man from the Protestant may be described as a theology of *mediation* and *participation*. In Catholic thought, Christ's manhood, and the Church which is his fullness, and the sacraments which are his actions, form a hierarchy of created means by which the God-man communicates to men his saving activity.[18]

Francis Clark charged that the Reformer

> arrived at a theology in which there was no place for any created reality to mediate to men God's saving action, nor for any active sharing by men in the dispensation of grace.[19]

In the opinion not merely of the present writer but also of the venerable recipient of this *Festschrift*, the very heartbeat of Luther's theology consists precisely in the mediation of and participation in the divine manhood of Christ through the means of grace. Moreover, the second quotation from Clark given above is an apt summary of the system of Ulrich Zwingli against which the mature Reformer consistently set his face. Yet we should be wrong to ascribe Clark's sketch of Luther's position to nothing more than pre-conciliar popish malice, for the sometime Jesuit based his account of the

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present and not merely the 'divine nature'. In this sense it is true that the reality of God for us is Jesus Christ 'and there is no other God.' 'I know of no other God except the one called Jesus Christ.' To be certain of this is to believe in Jesus Christ. This unity of Jesus with God and of God with Jesus, the presence of the heart and will of God in Jesus, is the 'deity of Christ' in the fullest sense" (190f.). Althaus appears to have achieved the feat of reconciling Luther with Paul of Samosata!

[17] Althaus 378.

[18] Francis Clark, *Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformation* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1960) 105.

[19] Clark 106.

Reformer's understanding of the Incarnation and the means of grace at least in part on the writings of a contemporary Danish Lutheran, who was obviously much influenced by both Lotze and Ritschl, on the one hand, and by Karl Barth's lifelong aversion to the *analogia entis*, on the other![20] For the sake of both inter-confessional dialogue and intra-confessional integrity, we must ask the real Luther to stand up and reveal himself. The Ritschlian Althaus and the Formula of Concord, which virtually canonizes certain post-1525 writings of the Reformer and makes of this mature Luther a towering Church Father, cannot both be right. One of the two must be suffering from false memory syndrome.

The historical Reformer was no Ritschlian before his time, and with respect to his Christology it is woefully inadequate to describe Luther as simply a loyal follower of the Council of Chalcedon. Already in 1519 the Reformer experienced an exegetical breakthrough at Phil. 2:6-7 which was fraught with momentous Christological implications.[21] Luther must turn in his grave each time the traditional Palm Sunday Epistle is read from NIV, which understands ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ as a reference to the divinity of Christ ("who, being in very nature God"). The Reformer led Western exegesis on a new path—a route manifestly taken by the confessors of 1577 in FC SD VIII:26—by interpreting ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ as speaking of the divine attributes borne by the manhood of Christ. For Luther, therefore, God's becoming man may not itself be equated with Christ's state of humiliation, since "in the form of God" describes the sacred manhood's setting in the matrix of the hypostatic union and thus offers a major *sedes doctrinae* for later Lutheran talk of the communion of natures and the communication of attributes. Tom Hardt has drawn attention to the mainly overlooked but hugely significant fact that through the Wittenberg Reformation "the banner of Cyrillian Christology was once again raised in the West".[22] In other words, Luther not only defied the coming Enlightenment by accepting Chalcedon, but also added insult to injury by interpreting Chalcedon from the diametrically opposite corner to that occupied by Reformed and Liberal Protestantism. The controversy on the real presence moved the Reformer to dot the i's and cross the t's of his Alexandrian-Cyrilline Christology, a process which was brought to its consummation by Martin Chemnitz in his *The Two Natures in*

[20] Illuminating references to K. E. Skydsgaard are to be found in Clark 104, 110, 504, and 510.

[21] See Tom G. A. Hardt, *Venerabilis et adorabilis Eucharistia; Eine Studie über die lutherische Abendmahlslehre im 16. Jahrhundert*, ed. Jürgen Diestelmann (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988) 51ff.

[22] Tom G. A. Hardt, *On the Sacrament of the Altar; A Book on the Lutheran Doctrine of the Lord's Supper* 28.

Christ and in FC SD VIII and its official appendix, the Catalogue of Testimonies.

The Smalcald Articles, which ratify the Trinitarian and Christological confession of the ancient Church, hinge on the "first and chief article" presented in II:1. The Reformer's teaching on justification is the rich fruit of his Christology, in which his study of the New Testament led him in the same direction as the Greek Fathers and his pondering of the Greek Fathers fructified his biblical exegesis. Nothing could be further removed from Ritschlian reductionism than the glorious biblical-patristic Christology which gave Luther a ready answer to his Swiss opponents' objection that, even if the Lord's Body and Blood were present in the sacramental elements, yet they could impart no benefit to believing communicants.[23] In his great eucharistic writing of 1527, the Reformer passionately refuted the sacrilege of subsuming Jesus' Body and Blood under the heading of Jn 6:63 ("The flesh is of no avail"). Realizing that the biblical antithesis of flesh and spirit is not in the same ballpark as the Platonic dualism of body and soul, Luther insists that:

> … Christ's body and flesh certainly are quite compatible with the Spirit; indeed, he [it?] is the Spirit's dwelling place bodily, and through him [it?] the Spirit comes into all others.[24]

What the Lord's Body is determines what the Lord's Body gives to His people in the Holy Supper:

> God is in this flesh. It is God's flesh, the Spirit's flesh. It is in God and God is in it. Therefore it lives and gives life to all who eat it, both to their bodies and to their souls.[25]

> Christ's flesh is full of divinity, full of eternal good, life, and salvation, and he who takes a bite of it takes to himself therewith eternal good, life, full salvation, and all that is in this flesh.[26]

> For it is a blessed, divine, incorruptible flesh, … and where it is, it must bring benefit. For there is pure benefit and good in it, except where it is without faith.[27]

These statements, taken from one of the writings of the Reformer to which the confessors of 1577 "profess [their] adherence",[28] shed light on the explicit deification language used by Luther from the pulpit in the sermon of 1531. I do not propose that recent discoveries in the Weimar Edition should

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[23] AE 37:78-102.
[24] AE 37:95.
[25] AE 37:124f.
[26] AE 37:129.
[27] AE 37:130.
[28] FC SD VIII:3; VII:91.

prompt us to start wreaking confusion among our flocks by jabbering unguardedly about deification; but the fact that the new Finnish Luther scholars are able to plough this furrow at all suggests that we should listen carefully when Rowan Williams, the present Anglican Archbishop of Wales, reminds us that

> it is of first importance to bear in mind that 'deification', for Origen, Athanasius and their successors, did not mean a sharing in the divine 'substance', a quasi-physical participation, but enjoying the divine relation of Son to Father, sharing the divine life. In this sense, it could be argued that any Christian theology worth the name will need a doctrine of 'deification' and it is hard to see how Athanasius' point can be put by. Unless the relation of Father and Son is something eternally holding true of God, the relation of sonship to God cannot be realized.[29]

By the work of the incarnate Lord communicated to us through the means of grace, we may share to the full in the eternal relationship with the Father which the Son brought into this-worldly time and space via the temple of His Body. Becoming flesh of Christ's flesh and bone of His bone is what the "happy exchange" is all about, and we Christians find ourselves on the receiving end of the "happy exchange" when we kneel to receive Jesus' Body and Blood at His altar. Here, says the Reformer in 1527, our Lord "is just as near to us physically as he was to [His disciples]" during His earthly lifetime.[30] In his early writings on the Supper, Luther focused mainly on forgiveness as a benefit conferred through the happy exchange in Holy Communion, picking up a teaching found already in the Liturgies of Chrysostom and Basil and in other ancient Orders. The Lord suffered condemnation so that we may walk free, a fact which emboldened the Reformer of 1520 to paraphrase the words of institution:

> Behold, O sinful and condemned man, out of the pure and unmerited love with which I love you, and by the will of the Father of mercies, apart from any merit or desire of yours, I promise you in these words the forgiveness of all your sins and life everlasting. And that you may be absolutely certain of this irrevocable promise of mine, I shall give my body and pour out my

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[29] Rowan Williams, *Christian Spirituality; A Theological History from the New Testament to Luther and St. John of the Cross* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox Press, 1980) 49. The "point" to which Williams refers is expressed earlier in the paragraph from which this quotation is taken: "Athanasius' argument against the Arians is sometimes reduced to the well-known point that, if salvation is a partaking of divinity (*theosis*, 'deification'), the Word cannot deify if he is not God (see, for example, *de synod*. 51)".

[30] AE 37:94.

> blood, confirming this promise by my very death, and leaving you my body and blood as a sign and memorial of this same promise.[31]

Likewise He endured weakness so that we may be strong, a fact which leads Luther to note in the Large Catechism that the Blessed Sacrament "is appropriately called the food of the soul since it nourishes and strengthens the new man" (LC V:23).[32] And He underwent death so that we may be filled with life:

> His flesh is not of flesh, or fleshly, but spiritual; therefore it cannot be consumed, digested, and transformed, for it is imperishable as is all that is of the Spirit, and a food of an entirely different kind from perishable food. Perishable food is transformed into the body which eats it; this food, however, transforms the person who eats it into what it is itself, and makes him like itself, spiritual, alive, and eternal; as Christ says, "This is the bread from heaven, which gives life to the world" [Jn. 6:33].[33]

> If Christ's flesh is eaten, nothing but spirit comes of it, for it is a spiritual flesh and does not let itself be transformed, but transforms the person who eats it and gives him the Spirit. Since this poor maggot sack, our body, also has the hope of the resurrection of the dead and of the life everlasting, it must also become spiritual, and digest and consume everything that is fleshly in it. And that is what this spiritual food does: when the body eats it physically, this food digests the body's flesh and transforms it so that it too becomes spiritual, i.e. alive and blessed forever as Paul says in I Corinthians 15 [:44], "The body will rise spiritually."[34]

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[31] AE 36:40. See also AE 35:85—"What then is this testament, or what is bequeathed to us in it by Christ? Truly a great, eternal, and unspeakable treasure, namely, the forgiveness of all sins, as the words plainly state, 'This is the cup of a new eternal testament in my blood, which is poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.' It is as if Christ were saying, 'See here, man, in these words I promise and bequeath to you forgiveness of all your sins and the life eternal. In order that you may be certain and know that such a promise remains irrevocably yours, I will die for it, and will give my body and blood for it, and will leave them both to you as a sign and seal, that by them you may remember me.'"

[32] That the "strengthening" benefit of the Sacrament was taught by Luther prior to 1529 is made clear by AE 35:85f.—"… we are thereby strengthened in faith, confirmed in hope, and made ardent in love. For as long as we live on earth our lot is such that the evil spirit and all the world assail us with joys and sorrows in order to extinguish our love for Christ, blot out our faith, and weaken our hope. Wherefore we urgently need this sacrament, in which we may gain new strength when we have grown weak and may daily exercise ourselves unto the strengthening and uplifting of the spirit."

[33] AE 37:100.

[34] AE 37:100f. See also AE 37:134—"We who believe, however, know that the body does avail for us, wherever it is. If it is in the bread and is physically eaten with faith, it strengthens the soul by virtue of the fact that it believes it is Christ's body which the mouth eats, and so faith clings to the body which is in the bread. Now that which lifts, bears, and binds faith is not useless but salutary. Similarly, the mouth, the throat, the body, which eats Christ's body, will also have its benefit in that it will live forever and arise on the Last Day to eternal

As the Reformer jotted down hours before his death, we children of our first parents are beggars indeed; but through the "happy exchange" we are graced and ennobled beggars, castaways elevated unimaginably high to become members of God's Royal Family. A beautiful remark made by Luther in a eucharistic writing of 1533 prompted the title chosen for this essay which seeks to honour Bishop Jobst Schoene, whose whole ministry has been governed by the gnesio-Lutheran Christology which ceases to be a purely academic concern when understood from the vantage point of a celebrant of and communicant at the venerable mystery of the altar. The Prince became a pauper on the cross in order to make us paupers princes and princesses at His altar. Does not Luther imply something along these lines when he says that the royal priesthood present at the Supper "have, as Revelation 4[:4] pictures it, our golden crowns on our heads …"?[35] Truly, when one ponders the depths plumbed in God by the "happy exchange", on the one hand, and the heights to which it raises us, on the other, one has to agree that theology is doxology, an art more aptly practised in the administration of the means of grace than in the groves of academe.

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salvation. This is the secret power and benefit which flows from the body of Christ in the Supper into our body, for it must be useful, and cannot be present in vain. Therefore it must bestow life and salvation upon our bodies, as is its nature."

[35] AE 38:208.