

# Menno Simons on the Lord's Supper

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Menno Simons' comments on the Lord's Supper have not evoked lengthy discussion or controversy.<sup>1</sup> The reasons may be several. While Menno Simons devoted major attention to many issues, he wrote rather briefly on the Lord's Supper. Here Menno Simons' general tendency to make statements by scriptural quotation and paraphrase accented the devotional rather than the strictly theological side of the exposition. Although Menno appears to have been well aware of the eucharistic controversies of his own age, he did not seek to participate in a debate, but instead, positively and personally, confessed what he thought to be the heart of the matter.

Generally speaking, Menno Simons can be seen as a participant in Dutch "sacramentarian" perspective.<sup>2</sup> Thoughtfully, he accented an understanding of the Lord's Supper as a memorial of Christ's atonement. At the same time Menno Simons also emphasized the spiritual presence of Christ in the believer's heart through faith, as well as noting the ecstatic character of this experience. And he believed that the experience of the spiritual presence of Christ was to go hand-in-hand with faith and love joined in action.

Menno Simons also listed several traditional insights which he regarded as erroneous, notably transubstantiation, the idea of the eucharist as a sacrifice and the withholding of the cup from the lay people. While Menno Simons' views rested directly on the Bible as he understood it, he also made references to a certain number of traditional theologians. In this article an effort has been made to identify them.

## I

The centre of Menno Simons' interpretation of the Lord's Supper is the atonement, which he regards as the decisive event in the story of salvation. Here the prophetic witness of the Old Testament reaches its full fruition in the New Testament, as we encounter here the miracle of love in which through His vicarious death, Christ, the sinless one, redeems sinful humanity. It was Menno Simons' often expressed concern that in his day the work of Christ's atonement had been in effect brushed aside and replaced by the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. In contrast, Menno Simons believed that the sacraments were not effective in their own right, but instead played only a subsidiary role as signs of the atonement:

Therefore, dear Lord, I confess that I have or know of no remedy for my sins, no works nor merits, neither baptism nor the Lord's supper (although all sincere Christians use these as a sign of Thy Word and hold them in respect), but the precious blood of Thy beloved Son alone which is bestowed upon me by Thee and has graciously redeemed me, a poor sinner, through mere grace and love, from my former walk.<sup>3</sup>

But what was the import of such "signs"? Did the signs serve instrumentally (similar to valid checks which transmit value) or was their role limited to illustration and reminder (something like postcards which inform)? Expressions like "true sacraments"<sup>4</sup> and "a holy sacramental sign"<sup>5</sup> attest to their value, but do not explain their function. Only occasionally did Menno Simons clarify his position. To serve as a sign, the Lord's Supper had to be received in the full context of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit as well as grace and faith:

All then who do not have the pure, unmixed Word of God, genuine active faith, together with the Lord's holy baptism and Supper, in spirit and power, and walk the broad road of the flesh: these are not the congregation and church of Christ. Here neither name nor boasting matters. We must be in Christ and Christ in us; we must be moved by His Spirit, and abide in His holy Word outwardly and inwardly. Otherwise we have no God.<sup>6</sup>

Thus it is made clear that sacraments can be used as signs only among the believers. The inward activity of the Holy Spirit which has generated faith is the ultimate transforming experience. While Menno Simons is prepared to admit to a certain ambiguity as to the precise point of entry into the circle of faith,<sup>7</sup> he is very clear that this point is not to be located in the sacraments. Hence it is not the sacramental elements, but the person of Jesus Christ who is the one and only means of grace:

All those who accept this proffered means of divine grace, Jesus Christ, with believing hearts, enclose Him in the treasure box of their minds.<sup>8</sup>

Viewed in this way, the Lord's Supper, "ordained" by Christ, was significant as an expression of authentic Christian existence. Menno Simons explained:

I ask you for Jesus' sake, in the true fear of God, to reflect with whom, why, and to what end the Lord instituted, ordained, and left this His last Supper to His church. It is so that it may become to you a living and impressive sign, that it might represent and signify the Lord's great and abundant kindness, the heartfelt peace, the love and union

of His church, the communion of his flesh and blood; so that you may die to wickedness and pursue righteousness and godliness, fly from the devil's table and sit down at the Lord's table in the church of Christ, with true faith, a pious, penitent, and regenerated life, and with unfeigned, brotherly love.<sup>9</sup>

In other words, Christ's atonement, while an event which occurred once, had ongoing ramifications in the lives of believers. Their experience of love and unity was joined within an ongoing search for and experience of holiness, including a mystical "communion of his flesh and blood" —pointed to, but basically left unexplained, and soon enough followed up by a warning: "with not so much as a word are we commanded in Scriptures to dispute concerning the visible and tangible sign, what it really is."<sup>10</sup> And yet, while "dispute" is explicitly prohibited, inward and faithful reflection is allowed. Menno Simons advises: "The spiritual judge all things spiritually."<sup>11</sup> In attempting to follow such a course, the following sets of insights emerge.

## II

1. One of the meanings of the Lord's Supper is that of a "memorial."<sup>12</sup> As in the Passover celebration of the Old Testament so also in the Lord's Supper in the New Testament "the sign signifies the reality."<sup>13</sup> Ultimately considered, this "reality" is none other than the atonement of Jesus Christ. Therefore, explains Menno Simons, the Lord's Supper

is an admonishing sign and memorial to the fact that Christ Jesus the Son of God has delivered us from the power of the devil, from the dominion of hell and eternal death, by the sinless sacrifice of His innocent flesh and blood, and has led us triumphantly into the kingdom of His grace, as He himself says: This do in remembrance of me.<sup>14</sup>

Now since the redemptive dying of Christ had been an act of love, the memory of it celebrated in the Lord's Supper is also an occasion "to remember all the glorious fruits of divine love manifested toward us in Christ."<sup>15</sup> Of course, occasions of remembrance are always complex. Without claiming to have noted all the various facets of it, Menno Simons nevertheless underscored the seriousness of the event. Here it is in order to "earnestly show forth and remember His death"<sup>16</sup> as well as to note that it is a "bitter death."<sup>17</sup> And with compassion Menno Simons recalled the witness of the prophet Isaiah [53:8]: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we were healed. He gave His life as a sacrifice of sin."<sup>18</sup> Above all, however, the remembering evokes an awareness of Christ's love. Menno Simons sought to portray its intensity by speaking for Christ in the first person.<sup>19</sup>

2. Having rejected the traditional Roman Catholic and Lutheran definition of the "real presence" of Christ in the Lord's Supper, Menno Simons repeatedly offered a symbolic interpretation. As we shall subsequently indicate, here Menno Simons shared a perspective which had become widely current in his time. Speaking of the genuine believers who partake of the effects of Christ's atonement, Menno Simons declared: "These really eat the flesh, and really drink the blood of Christ, not with their mouths, but believing in the spirit."<sup>20</sup>

Here two comments are in order. First, convinced that the presence of Jesus Christ after the ascension is identical with the presence of the Holy Spirit,<sup>21</sup> Menno Simons was able to affirm the presence of Christ without the least danger of lapsing back into the kind of traditional eucharistic theology which he had so vigorously rejected. Second, it is necessary to keep in mind the particular Christology<sup>22</sup> which Menno Simons had accepted. Here caution is certainly in order as Menno Simons does not make explicit the connection between Christology and the Lord's Supper. In other words, while explicitly Menno Simons goes no further than to interpret the "flesh" and "blood" of Christ in a spiritual sense, it seems plausible that he implies a deeper connection. Namely, insofar as Christ's "flesh" and "blood," according to Menno, were of heavenly origin and not from the Virgin Mary, the spiritual participation in Christ now assures the believer that he, too, participates in a heavenly mode of existence. In this way eucharistic devotion and sanctification are but two divergent approaches to the very same reality. That something like this may very well have been in Menno Simons' mind may be further inferred from two additional perspectives which he records when speaking of divinely redemptive love.

3. This divinely redemptive love is not onesided; it elicits human response. As faith becomes active in love, the process of sanctification begins and is continued. In the midst of such a process there are specific high points of experienced intensity. Referring to the participation in the Lord's Supper, Menno Simons recorded the following profile of the partakers:

their hearts are flooded with joy and peace; they break forth with joyful hearts in all manner of thanksgiving; they praise and glorify God with all their hearts because they with a certainty of mind have grasped it in the spirit, have believed and known that the Father loved us so that He gave us poor, wretched sinners His own and eternal Son with all His merits as a gift, and eternal salvation.<sup>23</sup>

Such ecstatic experiences of partaking of the Lord's Supper, however, do not exhaust its meaning. Faith is immediately expressed through "good works." The ethical consequences are inseparable from the memorial act of faith in the Lord's Supper: the bread of the Lord's Supper

admonishes us to a true regeneration which is of God; to all righteousness, thanksgiving, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, to a blameless life. For it is a communion of the blood and body of Christ, of which no one is or can be a partaker unless he becomes according to God's Word a humble, peace-loving, pious Christian, dead unto sin, and born of God; unless he is in Christ and Christ is in him, flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, a true partaker of the body and blood of Christ.<sup>24</sup>

Consistently, the communion with Christ in the Lord's Supper is described symbolically. The elements of the Lord's Supper point to a specific meaning which is perceived by the faithful partaker. Here Menno Simons made use of the traditional Johannine and Pauline categories, as already used by St. Augustine, speaking of outward/inward, literal/spiritual, and visible/invisible relationships. While the former describe the participants and the elements, it is the latter which refer to the experience and meaning of the Lord's Supper, e.g.:

But where the Lord's church, the dear disciples of Christ, have met in Christ's name to partake of the Holy Supper in true faith, love, and obedience, there the outward perishable man eats and drinks perishable bread and wine, and the inner imperishable man of the heart eats in a spiritual sense the imperishable body and blood of Christ which cannot be eaten nor digested, as was said. Like is benefited by like. This is incontrovertible. The visible man is nourished with visible food, and the invisible man is fed with invisible "bread," as we plainly learn from the words of the Lord in John 6.<sup>25</sup>

Hence, to say that the participants in the Lord's Supper "really eat the flesh, and really drink the blood of Christ" does not refer to the mere consuming of the eucharistic elements, but to the event as a sign. For this reason the actual partaking on the most decisive level is "not with their mouths, but believing in the spirit."<sup>26</sup> At the same time, Menno Simons underscored, that the mere "external use of the sign" cannot and does not in and of itself guarantee that "the thing which is invisibly represented"<sup>27</sup> would be actually present. In other words, the authenticity of the communion depends on the prior fact of atonement and the present reality of the faith of the participants: "This communion consists in the fact that Christ has accepted us in His great love, and we become partakers of Him."<sup>28</sup> ... "therefore none can rightly partake of this Supper except he be a disciple of Christ, flesh of His flesh, and bone of His bone."<sup>29</sup>

4. The fourth important emphasis is on the role of imitation. Here faith and love, joined in action, receive their existential orientation from the life-style of Jesus Christ. Such imitation, however, is not a mere do-it-yourself matter. It is rather from the loving union with Christ in faith that there flows the desire for imitation in the first place. Referring to the Lord's Supper, Menno Simons explained:

The spiritual judge all things spiritually. For of what substance it is, can be felt and seen and tasted. But this we should consider first of all, that we in our weakness must attain, and as much as possible conform ourselves, to the thing signified, to that which is set forth, represented, and taught all true believers by this sign.<sup>30</sup>

At times Menno Simons offered a brief account of the content of this active imitation of Christ:

we have to observe that by the Lord's Supper Christian unity, love, and peace are signified and enjoined, after which all true Christians should seek and strive. For we being many, says Paul, are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread. [I Cor. 10:17]<sup>31</sup>

All the while, however, Menno Simons' accent remained on the atonement, and hence on the prior initiative of Christ. Quoting the words of institution, Menno Simons offered a vivid and powerful exposition of their real content, writing in the first person:

When! He instituted and celebrated the Holy Supper with His beloved disciples Christ said, With desire I have desired to eat this passover<sup>3</sup> with you before I suffer. Then he took the bread and broke it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you. Likewise also the wine: This cup is the New Testament in my blood, etc.; this do in remembrance of me. It was as if He wanted to say: Behold,<sup>3</sup> dear children, so far has that love which I have had for you and the whole human race constrained me, and

ever shall, that I left the glory of my Father, and came into this sad world as a poor slave to serve you. For I saw that you all belonged to the devil, and that there was none to redeem you; that<sup>4</sup> you had all gone astray like erring sheep, and there was none who cared for you; that you were a prey to devouring wolves, and there was none to save you; that you were wounded unto death, and there was none that could heal you. Therefore<sup>5</sup> did I come from heaven, and became a poor, weak, and dying man, in<sup>6</sup> all things like unto you, sin excepted. In<sup>7</sup> my great love I sought you out with zeal, found you miserable, sorrowful, yes, half dead. The services of my love I have demonstrated so heartily toward you; your sores I bandaged; your blood I wiped away;<sup>8</sup> wine and oil I have poured into your putrid wounds; set you free from the jaws of the hellish<sup>9</sup> beasts; I took you upon my shoulders and led you into the tabernacles of peace. Your<sup>10</sup> nakedness I covered; I had compassion on your misery; the law I have fulfilled for you; your sins I took away. The peace, grace, and favor of my Father I proclaimed to you; His good will I revealed; the way of truth I pointed out; and I have powerfully testified to you by my marvellous signs and great miracles that I am the true Messiah, the promised Prince and Saviour.

Behold, beloved children, until now I have walked with you, with my Father's Word have admonished, reprov'd, and kept<sup>11</sup> in His name; but now my hour is at hand; this night I shall be betrayed. All that the prophets said of me has been fulfilled. Since I can serve you no longer with my doctrine and life, I will at the end serve you with my painful sufferings, body, blood, cross, and death.

And this is the very reason why I called you to this Supper, so that I might ordain this usage among you so that you might occasionally come together after my death and commemorate the gracious favors of my fervent love so abundantly manifest toward you, and in particular that I loved you so dearly that I sacrifice my body and shed my blood for you. Greater love<sup>12</sup> hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends. I have obtained everlasting reconciliation, grace, mercy, favor, and peace with my Father as I told you, namely, even as the Son of man came not to be ministered<sup>13</sup> unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."<sup>32</sup>

As may be noted from the Scripture references (inserted in the English text from the Dutch Opera of 1681, and occasionally revised), Menno Simons' exposition of the Lord's Supper is visibly a creative gathering of biblical texts. Yet the gathering has a distinctive thrust: it is the reality of atonement brought about in sacrificial love which Menno Simons seeks to emphasize, and at the same time to connect with pious imitation as our human response. The latter, of course, is not a matter of human initiative, but an experience of divine gift and grace: "it is a heavenly power, a vital moving of the Holy Ghost which ignites the hearts and minds of believers; pervades, comforts, anoints, encourages, rouses, and stirs; makes joyful and happy in God."<sup>33</sup>

### III

Understood symbolically and spiritually, Menno Simons' view of the Lord's Supper stood in explicit opposition to several traditional emphases. In stating his own position, Menno Simons generally followed the polemical posture current in the sixteenth century. Yet, as shall be noted subsequently, he was careful in his

criticisms and represents his opponents' views with notable precision.

1. Taking literally the words of institution and ignoring John 6, "where he instructs us plainly how we are to eat His flesh and drink His blood," "they have made the bread in the Holy Supper into the actual flesh, and the wine into the actual blood of Christ." As well, it has been ignored "that He ascended up to heaven and sits at the right hand of His Father, and that therefore He cannot be masticated nor confined in an alimentary tract nor be consumed by time, by fire or worms, as is the case with the visible bread and wine as one can see."<sup>34</sup>

2. Christ's eternal and unique sacrifice in the atonement has been changed "into a daily sacrifice for sin, as may plainly be read in the canons of the mass."<sup>35</sup>

3. The role of Jesus Christ has been usurped by the priest. Menno Simons' outcry should not be mistaken for mere polemical slander, but can be recognized also as a confession of his own past errors: "In His place we get an unholy, blind, seductive, and carnal idolater with a piece of bread."<sup>36</sup> In his most eloquent and scathing elaboration of this point Menno Simons spells out what he viewed as the central transgression: the priest

buys a hundred wafers for a nickel, takes one at a time, consecrates it as he says, and that mentally without saying a word; he nods to it, he worships it, he prays to it, and he eats it and digests it. And this same thing he believes and teaches to be the true flesh and blood of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Almighty and Living God.<sup>37</sup>

4. Sharing in the polemic against Roman Catholicism already voiced by the magisterial reformers, Menno Simons concentrated his attention on what he regarded as the perversion of the Lord's Supper. He charged and challenged: "Awake, I say, and consider that the supper which you have celebrated till now is not the supper of Christ but that of AntiChrist; not the table of the Lord but the table of the devil."<sup>38</sup>

5. In the process of their celebration of the Lord's Supper, his opponents deny the meaning, experience, and message of what Menno Simons has come to understand as the authentic Lord's Supper. They do not listen that the eucharist is not to be "dispensed by a deceiver, nor ... received by an impenitent and obstinate sinner."<sup>39</sup> Instead, an exercise in blasphemy occurs "where Jesus Christ, His Word and Spirit are not confessed, nothing but unbelief, idolatry, error, and uncertain wavering consciences may be seen."<sup>40</sup>

6. Finally, in clear disobedience to Christ, in the Catholic celebration of the Lord's Supper wine is not given to the lay people:

the cup is withheld from the people among Catholics. If it were the Lord's Supper as they pretend, it should, should it not, take place according to the ordinance of the Lord in both elements. But this custom shows that it is not the supper of Christ but a bewitching seduction of Antichrist.<sup>41</sup>

#### IV

While Menno Simons' understanding of the Lord's Supper was worked out in close reliance on the Scriptures, he also echoed insights of tradition which he found

supportive. Here his main point was that his views were not recent and marginal, but ancient and well attested. He wrote:

As to the blind charge that we are profaners of the sacraments: Some of the learned ones also call us profaners of the sacraments because we do not believe that the bread and the wine of their Supper is the actual real flesh and blood of the Lord; or as some have it, because we do not believe that we through the wine and bread actually partake of the actual flesh and blood of the Lord; although we reverentially administer the Supper to those who (as far as man can judge) are penitent as a figure or sacramental sign with fear and trembling, also with thanksgiving and joy according to the Scripture and according to the practice of the fathers such as Gregory, Augustine, Chrysostom, Tertullian, Cyril, Eusebius, etc.<sup>42</sup>

While Menno Simons may have had the opportunity over the years to become acquainted with the writings of the above named theologians of the Early Church, he could have initially gained the necessary information for a relatively reliable judgment from the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas. If one reads the *Summa Theologiae* in a symbolical-Augustinian perspective,<sup>43</sup> then in the section dealing with the Lord's Supper (3.73-83) one may note a respectable number of quotations which support Menno Simons' judgment: Gregory I (c. 540-604),<sup>44</sup> Augustine (c. 354-430),<sup>45</sup> Chrysostom (c. 347-407),<sup>46</sup> Cyril (c. 315-386),<sup>47</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260-c.340)<sup>48</sup> do at times stress the symbolic meaning of the Lord's supper.

Although Menno Simons was familiar with Sebastian Franck's *Chronica*,<sup>49</sup> he did not appeal to the dissenters from the mainline Roman Catholic position. Franck had listed John Scotus Erigena (c. 810-c.877), Berengar of Tours (c.1010-1088), Peter Waldo (died c. 1205-1218)<sup>50</sup> and from the sixteenth century Thomas Müntzer, Andreas Karlstadt, Huldrych Zwingli, and John Oecolampadius.<sup>51</sup> When Franck notes that the spiritual interpretation of the eucharistic presence was "not new," his list from the Early Church consists of Tertullian, Ambrose, and Chrysostom.<sup>52</sup> Without much doubt, Menno is at this point thinking quite independently.

At the same time Menno Simons could make use of precedent where he found it acceptable. A notable case is his exposition of the statement by the Apostle Paul: "For we being many ... are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread" (I Cor. 10:17). As was fully acceptable in the sixteenth century, Menno then proceeds to explain, without giving a clue that he is borrowing:

Just as natural bread is made of many grains, pulverized by the mill, kneaded with water, and baked by the heat of the fire, so is the church of Christ made up of true believers, broken in their hearts with the mill of the divine Word, baptized with the water of the Holy Ghost, and with the fire of pure, unfeigned love made into one body. Just as there is harmony and peace in the body and all its members, and just as each member naturally performs its function to promote the benefit of the whole body, so it also becomes the true and living members of the body of Christ to be one: one heart, one mind, and one soul.<sup>53</sup>

The origins of this imagery go back to the beginnings of the Early Church and the book of *Didache*, written sometimes between the end of the first and the middle of the second century: "As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains, but was

brought together and became one, so let thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into thy kingdom, for thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever."<sup>54</sup> With echoes of the Apostolic Constitutions 7:25,<sup>55</sup> the imagery in its enriched version is best known through St. Augustine's Sermon 272:

Let us again and again hear what the Apostle himself says, when speaking of this Sacrament: 'We, being many, are one bread, one body' (I Cor. x, 17). Understand and rejoice: unity, truth, piety, charity. One bread, who is this one bread? Being many, one body. Remember that bread is not made of one grain but of many. When you were exorcized, it was as if you were ground in the mill; when you were baptized, it was as if you were moistened with water; when you received the fire of the Holy Spirit, it was as if you were baked. Be what you see and receive what you are. This the Apostle has said about the bread. And what we should understand about the Chalice, though not actually expressed, he sufficiently shows. For just as, in order that the visible shape of bread may exist, many grains are moistened together into one mass, as in the case of believers, of whom Holy Scripture says, they had but one soul and one heart unto God' (Acts iv, 32), so it is with the wine. Brethren, remember from what the wine is made. Many grapes hang on the vine, but the juice of the grapes is mingled into a unity. Thus also has Christ the Lord designated us. He willed that we should belong to Him, and consecrated the mystery of our peace and of our unity on His table.<sup>56</sup>

Other early church fathers record more austere versions of the same. Cyprian (A.D. 253) does it twice:

thus the cup of the Lord is not indeed water alone, nor wine alone, unless each be mingled with the other; just as, on the other hand, the body of the Lord cannot be flour alone or water alone, unless both should be united and joined together and compacted in the mass of one bread; in which very sacrament our people are shown to be made one, so that in like manner as many grains, collected, and ground, and mixed together into one mass, make one bread; so in Christ, who is the heavenly bread, we may know that there is one body, with which our number is joined and united.<sup>57</sup>

For when the Lord calls bread, which is combined by the union of many grains, His body, He indicates our people whom He bore as being united; and when He calls the wine, which is pressed from many grapes and clusters and collected together, His blood, He also signifies our flock linked together by the mingling of a united multitude.<sup>58</sup>

Chrysostom's version is also rather brief:

For as the bread consisting of many grains is made one, so that the grains no where appear; they exist indeed, but their difference is not seen by reason of their conjunction; so are we conjoined both with each other and with Christ: there not being one body for thee, and another for thy neighbor to be nourished by, but the very same for all.<sup>59</sup>

In the sixteenth century all the major writers, both magisterial and radical, made use of this colorful comparison, as for example Martin Luther, Johannes Oecolampadius, Huldrych Zwingli, John Calvin, as well as Balthasar Hubmaier, Andreas Karlstadt, Bernhard Rothmann, Pilgram Marpeck, Dirk Philips, and Peter Ridemann.<sup>60</sup> While the direct source for Menno Simons therefore cannot be readily located, it may be noted that Menno Simons lengthy statement generally follows the precedent of St. Augustine, and yet at the same time succeeds in a creative formulation

of its own.

On other occasions, however, Menno Simons acknowledged his sources. Thus, in order to make clear that the believer's unity with Christ is the result of faith and not a matter of literal eating, Menno Simons quoted St. Augustine (354-430): "Therefore I say once more, He cannot be masticated nor digested in the body of any man. This thing Augustine plainly acknowledges, saying, Why do you make ready teeth and stomach? Merely believe, and you have eaten Him already!"<sup>61</sup> As Menno Simons continued to explain the position of St. Augustine which he here shared, he went on to paraphrase St. Augustine with notable accuracy. Menno wrote: "We know right well, dear reader, that Augustine did not write this of the outward eating of the Holy Supper, but of the inward eating that takes place in the spirit of faith."<sup>62</sup> St. Augustine had put it this way:

In a word, He now explains how that which He speaks of comes to pass, and what it is to eat His body and to drink His blood. 'He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.' This it is, therefore, for a man to eat that meat and to drink that drink, to dwell in Christ, and to have Christ dwelling in him.<sup>63</sup>

On further reflection, St. Augustine elaborates, suggesting that both faith and love serve as means for establishing the saving union with Christ: "And what but love can effect that unity should join us together?"<sup>64</sup> This love, as St. Augustine knows and acknowledges by referring to Rom. 5:5, is the gift and work of the Holy Spirit. In making further observations, St. Augustine can restate his position in terms of faith: "We are united by faith, quickened by understanding."<sup>65</sup>

And when Menno Simons lists the liturgical practices which he regards as completely unacceptable—e.g., "carrying bread in procession, raising it aloft for adoration, praying to it, offering incense to it, requesting it at a given place, and paying divine honor and service to it"<sup>66</sup>—he argues against their admissibility in characteristically Augustinian terms: "there is not a hint either in letter or in spirit in all the Scriptures."

Further similarity with St. Augustine may be noted in Menno Simons' appeal to the ascension as the reason why Christ cannot be literally present in the Lord's Supper: "He was about to ascend to the place where He was before; therefore we are not to understand this eating His flesh and drinking His blood literally but spiritually...."<sup>67</sup> St. Augustine had written:

For they supposed that He was going to deal out His body to them; but He said that He was to ascend into heaven, of course, whole: 'when ye shall see the Son of man ascending where He was before;' certainly then, at least, you will see that not in the manner you suppose does He dispense His body; certainly then, at least, you will understand that His grace is not consumed by tooth-biting.<sup>68</sup>

Now, while it may be tempting on account of Menno Simons' considerable dependence on St. Augustine to label him an "Augustinian," the temptation should be resisted. The entire sacramentarian tradition depended on St. Augustine—however, not as a source but as a famed interpreter who had read the Bible in a similar way! By referring to St. Augustine, Menno Simons could prove his orthodoxy.

At the same time he referred to other Early Church writers as well. Here Tertullian stood out on many occasions, including the Lord's Supper. In recording one of the several dimensions of the Lord's Supper, Menno Simons appealed to a specific Early Church source: "... as a means for inciting to and a demonstration of brotherly love, even as this supper was also called among the ancients, a brotherly Supper, as Tertullian writes."<sup>69</sup> On another occasion Menno explained:

And as the members of a natural body are not disharmonious, but are altogether united and at one among themselves; so it is with all those who are in Spirit and faith true members of the body of Christ. For this reason this same supper was called by Tertullian a brotherly meal or love feast.<sup>70</sup>

Tertullian's celebrated and often quoted text reads as follows:

Our dinner shows its idea in its name; it is called by the Greek name for love (agape). Whatever the cost, it is gain to spend in piety's name, for with that refreshment we help the needy. ... We do not take our places at table until we have first tasted prayer to God. Only so much is eaten as satisfies hunger; only so much drunk as meets the need of the modest. They satisfy themselves only so far as men will who recall that even during the night they must worship God; they talk as those would who know the Lord listens. After water for the hands come the lights; and then each, from what he knows of the Holy Scriptures, or from his own heart, is called before the rest to sing to God; so that is a test of how much he has drunk. Prayer in like manner ends the banquet. Then we break up; but not to form groups for violence nor gangs for disorder, nor outbursts of lust; but to pursue the same care for self-control and chastity, as men who have dined not so much on dinner as on discipline.<sup>71</sup>

Thus, seeing himself in agreement with the authentic tradition of the Church, Menno Simons could readily record his agreement with Philip Melancthon's well known definition of the church and its sacraments. Melancthon had stated in the Augsburg Confession of 1530: "The church is the assembly of saints in which the Gospel is taught purely and the sacraments administered rightly."<sup>72</sup> Menno Simons echoed: "For this is the true nature and power fo the Lord's Word if it be rightly preached, and of His Holy Sacraments if rightly used."<sup>73</sup>

Menno Simons' main concern, however, was neither ancient nor contemporary. Above all, he sought the truth of God and did not shy away from criticising anyone who seemed to oppose it. And, given his hermeneutical presuppositions, he was both precise and outspoken. Even in the instances where Menno appears to be in error, most often he had a point. A good example may be his claim that according to Roman Catholic belief, "the visible bread is actually and physically flesh, and the visible wine actually and physically blood."<sup>74</sup> On occasion, Menno Simons could be scornful: "they have made the bread in the Holy Supper into the actual flesh, and the wine into actual blood, of Christ, and that by virtue of Christ's Word taken literally: Take, eat, this is my body."<sup>75</sup>

While such an interpretation certainly neglects the sophisticated side of the theology of St. Thomas, which speaks of the presence of Christ in terms of a changed substance and rejects local enclosure and local movement, the fact remains that the liturgical language of the *Summa Theologica* tends to speak expressively in terms

of the body and blood of Christ.<sup>76</sup> Hence not only popular misinterpretation, but even a quick glance at the *Summa* could give the impression that Menno Simons had been observant. In any case, Menno Simons was convinced that the Bible offered a clear corrective: “They fail to notice that John says in John 6 (where he instructs us plainly how we are to eat His flesh and drink His blood) that it is useless to eat His flesh literally and to drink His blood.”<sup>77</sup>

Moreover, Menno Simons’ interpretation had had wide precedent. Thus Sebastian Franck, who had criticized Martin Luther’s view of the “real presence,” had noted that Luther was staunchly opposed by Thomas Müntzer, Andreas Karlstadt, and Huldrych Zwingli who denied that “The lord’s bread would be really the literal body of Christ.”<sup>78</sup> Franck supplied several key quotations from Luther, notably: “Christ’s flesh is and remains flesh whether it is in bread, stomach, cross or heaven;”<sup>79</sup> “He who sees this bread, sees the body of Christ. He who touches this bread, touches the body of Christ. He who eats it, eats Christ’s body. He who squeezes or chews this bread with the teeth or tongue, chews the body of Christ. And yet at the same time it remains true that Christ’s body is not seen, touched, eaten, or chewed by anyone.”<sup>80</sup> Similarly, while Menno Simons opposed transubstantiation<sup>81</sup> from his deepest convictions, he stood in a large company. Martin Luther had scorned the term as “a monstrous word and a monstrous idea.”<sup>82</sup> Sebastian Franck complained that Pope Innocent III had in 1200 A.D. made transubstantiation an article of faith.<sup>83</sup> And Menno himself thought the idea to be pagan. He illustrated it with biting humor, which assumed some acquaintance with classical mythology<sup>84</sup> on the part of his readers: “O my faithful reader, do learn rightly to confess Christ Jesus. He does not want to be like Proteus, now being the everlasting Almighty Son of the eternal, Omnipotent God, and then being a perishable creature of bread and wine. Oh, no, what He is He remains to all eternity.”<sup>85</sup> The reference to Proteus emerged in the Reformation as a scornful designation of religious vacuousness and instability. In assailing Erasmus of Rotterdam, Martin Luther in *The Bondage of the Will* (1526), made use of the image of Proteus no less than seven times.<sup>86</sup>

In accord with various currents within the Protestant Reformation, Menno Simons also flatly opposed the Roman Catholic view of the Lord’s Supper as a sacrifice: “...they have instituted unto the destruction and corruption of the true eternal sacrifice of Christ which alone is effective before God, changing it into a daily sacrifice for sin, as may plainly be read in the canons of the mass.”<sup>87</sup> Sebastian Franck had appealed to the Early Church and then vigorously concluded: “Be it then as it may, they are all in agreement that the mass is not a sacrifice.”<sup>88</sup> The reason for this conclusion he found in the general perspective of the New Testament, affirming the unrepeatability of Christ’s sacrifice, and acknowledged by the early church fathers.<sup>89</sup>

Finally, we may note how severely Menno Simons had criticized the Roman Catholic custom according to which “the cup is withheld from the people.”<sup>90</sup> This, too, had become a Protestant commonplace. Already Martin Luther had stated: “That Paul delivered both kinds is so certain that no one has ever had the temerity to say otherwise. Add to this that Matt. [26:27] reports that Christ did not say of the bread, ‘eat of it, all of you,’ but of the cup, ‘drink of it, all of you.’ Mark [14:23] likewise does

not say, 'they all ate of it,' but 'they all drunk of it.' Both attach the note of universality to the cup, not to the bread, as though the Spirit foresaw this schism, by which some would be forbidden to partake of the cup, which Christ desired should be common to all."<sup>91</sup>

## V

In searching out such piecemeal references to Christian tradition, it becomes very clear that Menno Simons was not working out his understanding of the Lord's Supper in a contextual way. Although he quoted and borrowed, criticized and corrected, he was not interested to build his edifice with borrowed bricks. However worthy the source might have been, it was not useable—unless it was the Scriptures.

At the same time, however, it becomes obvious that Menno Simons knows more than he admits to. If one assumed that all of his statements were merely borrowed, it would be possible to "prove" his dependence on either St. Augustine, or Erasmus of Rotterdam, or a mixture of Karlstadt and Zwingli. He often sounds like all of the above. But, without much doubt, Menno Simons does not merely borrow from them. He constructs a basic understanding of the Lord's Supper from the Scripture. While relatable to others in the sacramentalist tradition, Menno Simons' basic insights are his own.

His perspective is Christocentric. In the atonement Christ has laid the basis of human salvation. In sanctification, through grace and the work of the Holy Spirit, the individual is redeemed and grafted into the Body of Christ, the church. The Lord's Supper serves both to attest what has happened and hence serves as a sign of the past, and at the same time challenges toward the future. Holiness while personal is not to be a mere private venture but a group accomplishment.

Menno Simons' greatest strength is the clarity with which he works out the individual themes of the Lord's Supper. Each of them offers a personal challenge to the believer. Each seeks to awaken a particular insight. Menno Simons' weakness may be that he does not weave his several themes into one comprehensible whole. Without such an overview, his total eucharistic message is apt to be misinterpreted in a onesided way. Apparently Menno was prepared to accept such a procedural risk. In this he may have sought to do no more than was done by the Scriptures, which also does not provide a systematic framework—but always points to Jesus Christ as the centre of all faith and life.

In a generation which is weary of theological systems, or at least does not produce them with the same abundance as did the past, Menno Simons' piecemeal approach to various eucharistic themes, all of them centered on Christ, may prove to be both challenging and rewarding. It may challenge us to ongoing faithfulness in terms of the ultimate centre of faith, Jesus Christ, and at the same time free us from a too closely knit, and hence oversimplified, formulation of the great verities which defy oversimplification.

## Appendix

*Martin Luther (1483-1546):*

“To signify this fellowship, God has appointed such signs of this sacrament as in every way serve this purpose and by their very form stimulate and motivate us to this fellowship. For just as the bread is made out of many grains ground and mixed together, and out of the bodies of many grains there comes the body of one bread, in which each grain loses its form and body and takes upon itself the common body of the bread; and just as the drops of wine, in losing their own form, become the body of one common wine and drink—so it is and should be with us, if we use this sacrament properly.”<sup>92</sup>

*John Oecolampadius (1482-1531):*

“The bread is not made except the corn is ground up, and the flour mixed with water and baked with fire; and the wine does not flow together except that the grapes are crushed, all of which present to us the figure of Christ and of those who are Christ’s.”<sup>93</sup>

“Also the grain is ground and broken, in order that it may become a meal. Similarly it is with the wine. As long as it is in a barrel or a large container, it is not drunk, except when it is emptied into chalices or poured. And originally as long as it is in the grapes and husks, it is not a drink, except when it is pressed and trodden in the wine press or the stomp — then it is poured out. These parables no one may deny, they are obvious in the reality of things.”<sup>94</sup>

*Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531):*

“For as bread is made up of many grains and wine of many grapes, so by a common trust in Christ which proceeds from the one Spirit the body of the Church is constituted and built up out of many members a single body, to be the true temple and body of the indwelling Spirit.”<sup>95</sup>

*John Calvin (1509-1564):*

“The bread shown in the Sacrament represents this unity. As it is made of many grains so mixed together that one cannot be distinguished from another, so it is fitting that in the same way we should be joined and bound together by such great agreement of minds that no sort of disagreement or division may intrude.”<sup>96</sup>

*Balthasar Hubmaier (ca. 1485-1528):*

“As one little kernel does not keep its own flour, but shares it with the others, and a single grape does not keep its juice for itself, but shares it with the others, so should we Christians also act—or we eat and drink unworthily from the table of Christ. For the bread which we break means and commemorates the communion of the body of Christ with us, that he is our own, for he gave his body for us through the

drink of the communion of his blood which he poured out for the forgiveness of sins."<sup>97</sup>

*Bernhard Rothmann (ca. 1495-1535):*

"... just as from many kernels one bread would be made, as many kernels ground up, mixed into a heap, are one bread, similarly, those who partake in the Lord's Supper from the one bread and cup of the Lord, should be one body of Christ..."<sup>98</sup>

*Pilgram Marpeck (ca. 1490-1556):*

"Just as one loaf is made of many kernels ground together so as to become mixed with one another and become one loaf, so do they, who eat this loaf and drink this cup with one another in the Lord's Supper, become one with the body of Christ in love and obedience of the faith."<sup>99</sup>

*Dirk Philips (1504-1568):*

"In the bread and the wine are also portrayed and typified the harmony and fellowship of the believers. In order that this fellowship may be better understood, the Lord used and prescribed such emblems in the Supper as are everywhere available, and which by their form and composition point to and suggest such communion. For as the bread is made of many grains broken and ground together, and out of many grains has come a loaf of bread, in which every little kernel has lost its individual body and form, and likewise as the little individual grapes, by changing their form become a common wine and pleasant drink, so also must all Christians be united with Christ and with one another—first with Christ, whom they receive by faith and who becomes their nourishment—for there is no closer intimacy nor anything more inseparable than the union of food with those who are fed; for the food is taken and becomes changed in its nature, and becomes one with or part of, the one fed."<sup>100</sup>

*Peter Rideman (1506-1556):*

"...he teacheth them that they are members of his body, and as the bread is made a loaf by the bringing together of many grains, even so we, many human beings, who were scattered and divided, of many minds and purposes are led by faith into one, and have become on plant, one living organism and body of Christ, cleaving to him in one Spirit..."<sup>101</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> *Mennonitisches Lexikon*, ed. Christian Hege and Christian Neff (Frankfurt am Main and Weierhoff (Palz): Im Selbsverlag der Herausgeber, 1913), 1:9; Cornelius Krahn, *Memo Simons (1496-1561)* (Karlsruhe i.B.: Heinrich Schneider, 1936), pp. 139-142; Gerhard H. Neumann, "The Anabaptist Position on Baptism and the Lord's Supper," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 35(1961):140-148; J.A. Oosterbaan, "The Theology of Menno Simons," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, 35(1961):196; Christoph Bornhäuser, *Leben und Lehre Menno Simons': Ein Kampf um das Fundament des Glaubens [etwa 1496-1561]*, (Neukirchen-Bluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1973), pp. 96-100; Wally Kroeker, "The Element of Unity in the Anabaptist Practice of the Lord's Supper," *Direction*, 12,3 (1983):29-38; Bystrom, Raymond O., "A Converted and Baptized People," *Direction*, 25,2(1986): 9-20; Erwin Penner and John Wall, "The Lord's Supper and the Church," *Direction*, 18,2 (1989):33-43.

<sup>2</sup> George H. Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), pp. 27-37; Christoph Bornhäuser, *op.cit.*, pp. 97-98.

<sup>3</sup> Menno Simons, *Opera Omnia Theologica* (Amsterdam: Joannes van Veen, 1681, rpr. Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1989), [subsequently referred to as *Opera*], p. 173A-B; John Christian Wenger, ed., *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons*, trans. by Leonard Verduin with a biography by Harold S. Bender (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1956), [subsequently referred to as *CW*], p. 79.

<sup>4</sup> *Opera* 30A; *CW* 152.

<sup>5</sup> *Opera* 468B; *CW* 515.

<sup>6</sup> *opera* 51A; *CW* 191.

<sup>7</sup> Egil Grislis, "'Good Works' According to Menno Simons," *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, 5(1987):127-132.

<sup>8</sup> *Opera* 462A; *CW* 505.

<sup>9</sup> *Opera* 24A; *CW* 142.

<sup>10</sup> *Opera* 24B; *CW* 143.

<sup>11</sup> *Opera* 24B; *CW* 143.

<sup>12</sup> *Opera* 126A; *CW* 94.

<sup>13</sup> *Opera* 25A; *CW* 143.

<sup>14</sup> *Opera* 25A; *CW* 143-144.

<sup>15</sup> *Opera* 25A; *CW* 144.

<sup>16</sup> *Opera* 25A; *CW* 144.

<sup>17</sup> *Opera* 25A; *CW* 144.

<sup>18</sup> *Opera* 25B; *CW* 144.

<sup>19</sup> cf. fn. 32.

<sup>20</sup> *Opera* 31A; *CW* 154.

<sup>21</sup> John D. Rempel, *Christology and Lord's Supper in Anabaptism: A Study in the Theology of Balthasar Hubmaier, Pilgram Marpeck and Dirk Philips*, Ph.D. diss., St. Michael's College, Toronto School of Theology, University of Toronto, 1986, notes on p. 302: "Though our subjects were all trinitarian in their dogma and in the working assumptions of their thought, they had different understandings of what trinitarian meant for christology and for eucharistic doctrine. They tended to conflate Christ in his divinity with the being of the Spirit." A similar tendency is noticeable in Menno Simons as well.

<sup>22</sup> Egil Grislis, "The Doctrine of Incarnation According to Menno Simons," *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, 8(1990):16-33.

<sup>23</sup> *Opera* 25B; CW 144.

<sup>24</sup> *Opera* 29A; CW 150.

<sup>25</sup> *Opera* 30B; CW 153.

<sup>26</sup> *Opera* 31A; CW 154.

<sup>27</sup> *Opera* 31B; CW 155.

<sup>28</sup> *Opera* 468B; CW 515.

<sup>29</sup> *Opera* 469A; CW 515.

<sup>30</sup> *Opera* 24B; CW 143.

<sup>31</sup> *Opera* 26A; CW 145.

<sup>32</sup> *Opera* 27A; CW 147:

1 Lk. 22:15; Matt. 28:25.

2 Mk. 14:22; Lk. 22; I Cor. 11:22 and 17.

3 Jn. 3:31; I Jn. 4:9; Rom. 8:3; Phil. 2:7.

4 Isa. 5:9; Ezek. 39:9.

5 Jn. 1:13.

6 Hebr. 5:2.

7 Ezek. 16:6.

8 Lk. 10:34.

9 I Kings 1:36.

10 Matt. 5:9; Rom. 8:32; Isa. 53:7; I Pt. 12:21.

11 Matt. 26:13; Lk. 22:5.

12 I Cor. 11:25; Jn. 15:18.

13 Matt. 20:28.

<sup>33</sup> *Opera* 28A; CW 149.

<sup>34</sup> *Opera* 30B-31A; CW 153.

<sup>35</sup> *Opera* 29B; CW 151.

<sup>36</sup> *Opera* 29B; CW 151.

<sup>37</sup> *Opera* 410A; CW 250.

<sup>38</sup> *Opera* 28B; CW 148.

<sup>39</sup> *Opera* 28B; CW 149.

<sup>40</sup> *Opera* 32B; CW 156.

<sup>41</sup> *Opera* 32B; CW 156.

<sup>42</sup> *Opera* 513A-B; CW 571.

<sup>43</sup> It needs to be noted that the *Summa* while spelling out the detailed defence of the real presence of Christ by way of transubstantiation and all that it entails also included older traditional views as well as perspectives which were rejected. In other words, the *Summa* offered both point and counterpoint, a main current of thought and a countercurrent. Much of radical Protestant thought may be seen as being in continuity with selected congenial insights from the *Summa*. Such might have been the case here.

Thus one may note the references to the Lord's Supper as "our spiritual food" and "spiritual refreshment" (3.73.1 and ad 1; Blackfriars ed. 58:5). Also, the Lord's Supper is "the summit of the spiritual life" (3.73.3; Blackfriars 58:11), and "the effect of this sacrament ... is spiritual joy" (3.74.5; Blackfriars 58:41). "And so this sacrament does for the life of the spirit all that material food and drink

does for the life of the body..." (3.79.1; Blackfriars 59.5). "... through its power the soul is spiritually nourished, by being spiritually gladdened" (3.79.1 ad 2; Blackfriars 59.7). It has been instituted "for spiritual nourishment through union with Christ and his members" (3.79.5; Blackfriars 59.19). Likewise, there is an elaborate discussion of "feeding on him spiritually" (3.80.2; Blackfriars 59:37, and 3.80.11; Blackfriars 59:81).

<sup>44</sup> "On the other hand, Gregory in an Easter sermon says, *the sacramental species are named after those realities which previously existed, namely, the bread and wine.*" S.T. 3.77.1; Blackfriars ed. 58:127.

<sup>45</sup> "Augustine ... wrote, *our Saviour, in order the more strongly to impress on us the value of this sacrament, wished it to be the last thing he would fix in the hearts and memory of his disciples when he was leaving them to go to his passion.*" S.T., 3.73.5; Blackfriars ed. 58:21.

<sup>46</sup> "And commenting on the text of *John, the words that I have spoken to you concerning this sacrament are spirit and life* [Jn. 6:64]. Chrysostom says, *they are spiritual, not to be taken in a carnal sense or according to the laws of nature, but they have been lifted above all earthly necessity and natural laws.*" S.T. 3.75.4; Blackfriars ed. 58:71.

<sup>47</sup> "Cyril says..." *Some are so foolish as to say that the mystical blessing departs from the sacrament, if any of its fragments remain until the next day...*" S.T. 3.76.6; Dominican Fathers trans., 2:2460 i.

<sup>48</sup> "As Eusebius puts it, *because he was about to take away from their bodily sight and to bring to heaven that body which he had hypostatically united to himself, he felt he had to consecrate for us the sacrament of his body and blood on the day of the Last Supper, so that we would be always able to reverence in a sacrament the price then being paid for our salvation.*" S.T. 3.73.5; Blackfriars ed. 58:19. Here the attribution was in error, as the author was Faustus of Riez, cf. Blackfriars ed. 58:18, fn. 8.

<sup>49</sup> *Opera* 21B; *CW* 138 and *Opera* 408B; *CW* 248.

<sup>50</sup> Sebastian Franck, *Chronica* (Ulm, 1536, rpr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1969), II.lxxxviii recto and II.clxj verso.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, II.clxviii verso.

<sup>52</sup> "dz / das von jnen Tertulianus / Ambrosius / Chrysostomus gehalten haben". Then Franck specifies, "namely that the bread of the Lord and the chalice are only a Thanksgiving / a figure / a sign / a sacrament of the body and blood fo Christ, and not the body and blood of Christ itself essentially and bodily" (naemlich / das des Herren brot vnd kelch alleyn ein Eucharistia / figur / zeichen / Sacrament des leibs vnd bluts Christi sei / vnd nit der leib vnd das blut Christi wesentlich / leibhaftig selber). II.clxj recto

<sup>53</sup> *Opera* 26A; *CW* 145.

<sup>54</sup> 9:4; *The Apostolic Fathers with an English Translation* by Kirsopp Lake (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1970), 1:322-323.

<sup>55</sup> *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* ed. by Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Company, 1956), 7:470 [subsequently abbreviated as N P N F].

<sup>56</sup> Erich Przywara, *An Augustinian Synthesis* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), p. 235; Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 38:1247.

<sup>57</sup> 62.13, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of The Writings of the Fathers* down to A.D. 325, ed. by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978). 5:362 [subsequently abbreviated as A N F].

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.6, A N F, 5:398.

<sup>59</sup> The Homilies on First Corinthians, 24.4, A N F 12:140.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Appendix.

<sup>61</sup> *Opera* 31B; *CW* 155; Augustine, *Lectures or Tractates on the Gospel According to St. John*, 25.12; N P N F 7:164.

<sup>62</sup> *Opera* 31B; *CW* 155.

<sup>63</sup> *Lectures or Tractates on the Gospel according to St. John*, 26.18; N P N F 7:173, and "For to believe on in Him is to eat the living bread. He that believes eats; he is sated invisibly, because invisibly is he born again," N P N F 7:168.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.9; N P N F 7:175.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.7; N P N F 7:176.

<sup>66</sup> *Opera* 32A; *CW* 155-156. cf. St. Augustine's "A treatise on the Spirit and the Letters," N P N F 5:83-114; Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 44:201-246. Here one may also observe a general accord with Desiderius Erasmus. Menno Simons had noted: "Therefore (according to Sebastian Franck) the very wise and learned Erasmus of Rotterdam, a man who has read and understood all the worth-while writers of the world, says that the ancient fathers disputed about infant baptism but never settled it," *Opera* 408B; *CW* 248. Erasmus himself had written:

"I am ashamed to report how gullibly most of those people look upon certain mere ceremonies, invented by little men, but not for such purposes, and how odiously they press these ceremonies upon others, how confidently they rely upon them, how boldly they judge other men, how belligerently they eye them. They think they deserve heaven for their punctiliousness in these matters..."

Erasmus, *The Enchiridion*, 14.5, trans. by Raymond Himelick, Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1970, p. 115, cf. also pp. 18-119, 122-129.

<sup>67</sup> *Opera* 30B; *CW* 153.

<sup>68</sup> *Op.cit.*, N P N F 7:174.

<sup>69</sup> *Opera* 445A; *CW* 304.

<sup>70</sup> *Opera* 468B; *CW* 515.

<sup>71</sup> *Apology*, 39, trans. by T.R. Glover, Loeb Classical Library, London: William Heinemann Ltd. and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953, p. 181.

<sup>72</sup> *The Book of Concord*, trans. and ed. by Theodore G. Tappert and others (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 32.

<sup>73</sup> *Opera* 28A; *CW* 149.

<sup>74</sup> *Opera* 442B; *CW* 301.

<sup>75</sup> *Opera* 30B; *CW* 153.

<sup>76</sup> According to St. Thomas Christ is "contained in this sacrament" (S.T., 3.73.6; 3.74.3 Blackfriars ed.), "in the sacrament of the altar, after the consecration, there is nothing other than the body and the blood of Christ" (S.T., 3.74.8), Christ "promises us his bodily presence" (S.T., 3.75.1), "Some people ... declared that Christ's body and blood were only symbolically in this sacrament. But we must reject this position as heretical... (S.T., 3.75.1), "The body of Christ remains in this sacrament not only until the morrow, but also in the future, so long as the sacramental species remain" (S.T., 3.76.6), "this consecration consists in the change of the substance of the bread into the body of Christ" (S.T., 3.78.2), "we have under this sacrament--under the appearance of the bread--not only the flesh, but the whole body of Christ, that is, the bones and nerves and all the rest" (S.T., 3.76.1 ad 2; cf. 3.78.3), "If a fly or a spider fall into the chalice ... after the consecration, the insect ought to be cautiously caught, thoroughly washed, and burnt, and the ablutions and ashes together poured into the piscina" (S.T., 3.83.6 ad 3).

<sup>77</sup> *Opera* 30B; *CW* 153.

<sup>78</sup> "die wolten nicht / das in dem brot / oder das des herren brot der wesentlich leiplich leib Christi wer." *Chronica* II.clxviii verso.

<sup>79</sup> "Christus fleysch ist vnd bleibt fleysch / es sei im brot / bauch / creütz oder himmel." *Chronica*, II.clxiiij recto.

<sup>80</sup> “Wer disz brot sihet / der sihet Christus leib / Wer didz brot angreiff / der greiff Christus leib an / Wer disz iszt / der iszt Christus leib / Wer disz brot mit den zaenen oder zung zertrucket oder zerbeiszt / der zerbeiszt den leib Christi / vnd bleibt doch gleich wol war / das Christus leib niemant sihet / greiff / iszt oder zerbeiszt.” *Chronica*, II.clxxij recto.

<sup>81</sup> *Opera* 31B; CW 154.

<sup>82</sup> *Luther's Works* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), 36:31.

<sup>83</sup> *Chronica*, II.cclij recto.

<sup>84</sup> “Some there are, bravest of heroes, whose form has been once changed and remained in its new state. To others the power is given to assume many forms, as to thee, Proteus, dweller in the earth-embracing sea. For now men saw thee as a youth, now as a lion; now thou wast a raging boar, now a serpent whom men would fear to touch; now horns made thee a bull; often thou couldst appear a stone, often, again, a tree; sometimes, assuming the form of flowing water, thou wast a stream, and sometimes a flame, the water's enemy.” Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, VIII.728-737, trans. Frank Justus Miller, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press and London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1977), p. 457.

<sup>85</sup> *Opera* 31A; CW 154.

<sup>86</sup> *Luther's Works*, 33:15-307.

<sup>87</sup> *Opera* 29B; CW 151; cf. Francis Clark, S.J., *Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformation* (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press and London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1960).

<sup>88</sup> “Yedoch sei dem wie jm woell / so seind sy in dem all eins / das dies messz kein opfer sey”, *Chronica* II.ccl verso.

<sup>89</sup> Hebrews 10:12, cf. *Chronica*, II ccxlvij verso.

<sup>90</sup> *Opera* 32B; CW 156.

<sup>91</sup> *Luther's Works*, 36:20. This had also been a major criticism by Sebastian Franck, who could appeal to as ancient a source as Jerome (c.342-420) (II, cxxij verso) and a recent one as John Huss (c.1372-1415), Jerome of Prague (c. 1370-1416) (II, clvij verso), and Martin Luther (clxxv verso).

<sup>92</sup> Martin Luther, *The Blessed Sacrament of the Holy and True Body of Christ, And the Brotherhoods*, 1519, *Luther's Works* 35:58. *D. Martin Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. Weimar: Hermann Böhlau, 1884, 2:748:6-14.

<sup>93</sup> “Das prott wirt nit gemacht / die kernlein sein dann zermalen / unn das mel vermisch mit wasser vnd gepachen mit fewer / unn der weyn fleist nit zue samen / dann die weynpoerlein sein zerknisch / woelliche ding vnsz fürtragen ain figur Christi vnd der die auch Christi sein.” *Ain Predig vnd ermanung Joannis Oecolampadij von wirdiger ereenbietung dem Sacrament des fronleichnam christi*. Augsburg, 1521, D recto.

<sup>94</sup> “Es wirt auch das korn gemalen vnd gebrochen / damit es zu einer speisz werde. Deszgleichen ist es mit dem weyn / so lang er im fasz oder grossen kanten ist / wrdt er nit getrunken / aber so er in die becher geschütt oder gegossen wirt / Vnnd anfencklich so lang er in den weynberen vnnd hülsen ist / so ist er kein tranck / aber so er gepreszt vnd getrottet writ in den keltern oder trothen / denn wirt er auszgossen. Die gleichnuszen mag nieman leugnen / sy sind offenbarlich in der natur.” page CXXVII recto. *Uber D. Martin Luthers Buch / Bekentnus genant / zwo antworten / Joannis Oecolampadij vnd Huldrychen Zuinglis*, Im M.D. XXVIII. jar Getruckt zu Zürich by Christoffel Froschouer.

<sup>95</sup> *Fidei Christianae Expositio* [1536] in Huldrici Zuinglii *Opera: Completa Editio Prima*, ed. by Melchior Schuler and Johannes Schulthess, Zürich: Ex Officina Schulthessiana, 1841, 4:2:57; *Zwinglii and Bullinger: Selected Translations with Introduction and Notes* by G.W. Bromiley, The Library of Christian Classics, 24, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953, 24:263.

<sup>96</sup> *Opera Selecta*, ed. Petrus Barth and Guilelmus Niesel, *Institutionis Christianae religionis* 1559, Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1962, 4:17.38, vol. 4:402:14-19, *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion* ed. by John T. McNeill, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960, 21:1415.

<sup>97</sup> Balthasar Hubmaier, *Several Theses Concerning the Mass* [1525], in *Balthasar Hubmaier: Theologian of Anabaptism*, trans. and ed. by H. Wayne Pipkin and John H. Yoder, Scottdale, PA and Kitchener, ON: Herald Press, 1989, p. 75. "Wie nur ain kernlin sein aygen mel nit behalt, sonder es gibts dem andern, vnd ein weinberlin sein gesafft im nit behelt, sonnder dem andern mittaylt, also sollen wir christen auch thuen, oder wir essen vnnnd trincken vnwirdigklich von dem tusch Christi. Dann das brot, das wir brechen, ist inn der bedeutung vnd inn der widergedechtnusz die gemeinschaft des leybs Christi mit vns, das er vnser aygen sey, wann er ye den selben für vns hab dar geben durch das tranck dz gemeinschafts sein bluts, das er zu uerzeihung vnser sind vergossen hat." Balthasar Hubmaier, *Elliche Schlussreden vom Unterricht der Messe*, 1525, in *Schriften*, ed. by Gunnar Westin and Torsten Bergsten [Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte, 29], (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1962), p. 103.

<sup>98</sup> "... gelyck als uith voellen koernerer eyn broith gemaket woert, als voelle koerne gemalen tho hope vermenghet eyn broith syn, also, de tsamen van eyne brode und kelcke des heren geneten in dem nachmaele soellen eyn lijf christi syn ... Bernhard Rothmann, *Bekentnis von beiden Sakramenten*, 1533, in *Die Schriften Bernhard Rothmanns* ed. by Robert Stupperich (Münster in Westfalen: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1970) [Die Schriften der Münsterischen Täufer und Ihrer Gegner, I], p. 178.

<sup>99</sup> Pilgram Marpeck, *The Admonition of 1542*, in *The Writings of Pilgram Marpeck*, Trans. and ed. by William Klassen and Walter Klaassen (Kitchener, Ont. and Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1978), p. 267.

<sup>100</sup> Dietrich Philip, *Enchiridion or Hand Book of the Christian Doctrine and Religion, compiled (by the grace of God) from the Holy Scriptures for the benefit of all lovers of the Truth*. Trans. by A.B. Kolb (Alymer, Ontario and LaGrange, Indiana: Pathway Publishing Corporation, 1910, rpr. 1978), pp. 79-80. *Bibliotheca Reformatoria Neerlandica: Geschriften uit den tijd der hervorming in den Nederlanden*, ed. by S. Cramer and F. Pijper, *De geschriften van Dirk Philipsz ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1914)*, 10:122.

<sup>101</sup> Peter Rideman, *Account of Our Religion, Doctrine, and Faith*, [1565] trans. by Kathleen E. Hasenberg (London: Hodder and Stoughton in conjunction with The Plough Publishing House, n.d.), p. 86. Cf. Lydia Müller, *Der Kommunismus der mährischen Wiedertäufer*, *Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte*, 45,1 (Nr. 142) (Leipzig: M. Heinsius Nachfolger Eger & Sivers, 1927), p. 41.