## The Lord’s Supper

Before His crucifixion, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, “Take, eat; this is My body” (Matt 26:26). He then took the cup, blessed it, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins” (Matt 26:27-28). From that time, nearly all Christian denominations have celebrated the Lord’s Supper, recalling the redemptive work of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

In Scripture, this commemoration is known by various names: the breaking of bread, the Lord’s Supper, the table of the Lord, and fellowship in the body and blood of Christ. Often it is called the Eucharist, which derives from the Greek word εὐχαριστία (*eucharistia*), the verbal form of which is translated in Mark 14:23, “give thanks,” recounting when our Lord blessed the bread at the Last Supper.[[1]](#footnote-1) In church history, other designations were added: “communion” (the traditional Protestant designation), “religious service,” “love feast,” “liturgy,“ “sacrifice,” “offering,” and “mass.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

In our discussion of the Lord’s Supper, we will be focusing almost exclusively on the question of Christ’s physical presence in the elements (i.e., “transubstantiation”). In order to do this formidable topic justice, we will briefly present the arguments for and against transubstantiation and then follow with a discussion of the development of this topic throughout the course of church history.

### А. The Question of Transubstantiation

The significance of this ordinance has concerned Christians over the course of church history. All would agree that the participants receive grace through it, but many disagree as to how that grace is imparted. Does one experience God’s grace through the actual eating of the communion elements, or do they merely inspire faith, which is means by which grace comes? The question of the transmission of grace is directly linked to question of the real, physical presence of Christ in the sacrament.

If the elements actually become the body and blood of Christ (i.e., “transubstantiation”), then one may expect a direct, physical impartation of grace through partaking in communion. If the elements remain merely bread and wine, then they only serve to inspire reflection on the sacrifice accomplished on Calvary. So then, the answer to our question of the transmission of grace depends on determining whether the Lord is actually present in the elements of communion.

**1. Evidence for Transubstantiation**

The following verses are employed in favor of the doctrine of transubstantiation:

When He had taken {some} bread {and} given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” And in the same way {He took} the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood” (Lk 22:19-20).

Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink” (Jn 6:53-55).

Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord (1 Cor 11:27).

Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ? (1 Cor 10:16).

Other proofs are offered.[[3]](#footnote-3) Jesus spoke of His future presence among His disciples (Matt 18:20; 28:20). Furthermore, when Jesus spoke in parables, He often explained their meaning. If the Lord’s Supper is symbolic, then why did He not explain its symbolism? Additionally, if Jesus wished to symbolize His death, then why did He employ bread and wine and not the Passover lamb? Defenders of transubstantiation do not deny that the Lord’s Supper is done in remembrance of Christ’s sacrifice, but claim that this does not exclude the possibility of the real impartation of grace through the sacrament as well. Opponents of Christianity in the first century accused Christians of cannibalism. Why did the Church not answer that accusation by explaining that the Lord’s Supper was merely symbolic? Finally, adherents of transubstantiation also appeal to the Church Fathers for support (see below).

**2. Refutation of Transubstantiation**

**a. Re-examination of Key Biblical Texts**

Traditional opposition to the theory of transubstantiation can be found in examining alternative explanations for the key passages mentioned above which support a symbolic view of the Lord’s Supper. In 1 Corinthians 11:27, we observe that in verses 26-28 Paul calls the elements of communion not the body and blood of Christ, but the bread and the cup:

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the *bread* and drink of the *cup*.

We also note that in verse 26, Paul explains the purpose of communion: “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.” Here, it is clear that communion’s goal is remembrance of Christ, in particular, of His sacrificial death for our salvation. Neither Paul, nor Jesus, ever stated that by eating the bread and drinking the cup one would receive forgiveness of sins or spiritual power. No passage of Scripture supports this.

We next comment on 1 Corinthians 10:16: “Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ?” We are interested in the phrase “sharing in the blood of Christ.” Does this mean that there is a real participation in Christ’s body and blood through communion?

In this text, the word “sharing” is κοινωνία (*koinonia*). The word involves sharing or having something in common. It carries various nuances and does not always mean physical participation. For example, in Philippians 3:10 Paul states that he wishes to partake of “the fellowship of His sufferings.” This does not mean that Paul wished to partake of the very same sufferings that Jesus did, but to have a share in similar afflictions. Therefore, when Paul writes that we have κοινωνία (*koinonia*), i.е., a sharing in the body and blood of Christ, he is not necessarily saying that we partake of the actual body and blood of our Lord. It is very possible that we simply share in elements that remind us of Him.

In addition, we can more clearly define Paul’s thought in light of the context of this passage. In 1 Corinthians 10:18, we read, “Look at the nation Israel; are not those who eat the sacrifices sharers in the altar?” Here, Paul compares partaking in communion with the altar and sacrifices of the Old Testament. God’s Old Testament people did not physically partake of the altar, but rather participated in it indirectly by means of the sacrifices offered on it. In other words, having κοινωνία (*koinonia*) with the altar does not mean ingesting it. Similarly, having κοινωνία (*koinonia*) with the body of Christ does not necessarily mean ingesting Him.

Furthermore, in verse 20 we read, “{I say} that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons.” Paul is now contrasting the Lord’s Supper with partaking of demons through participation in idolatrous sacrifices. Again, this does not involve the physical ingestion of demons, but indirect fellowship with them by participation in idol worship. In a similar way, κοινωνία (*koinonia*) with the body of Christ does not involve ingesting His body or drinking His blood.

Based on these observations, we can safely conclude that in this context having κοινωνία (*koinonia*) with Christ’s body and blood does not have to involve a physical partaking. We have fellowship with the body and blood of Christ indirectly through reflection on His sufferings prompted by the symbols of bread and wine.

The next text for our consideration in John chapter 6, where Jesus said, “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink.” Some interpret this text in a sacramental sense as a physical partaking of Christ’s flesh and blood in communion. Yet, we must consider the context of this passage. Jesus had just fed more than five thousand people, and the crowd was seeking Him in order to receive more. Jesus utilized the occasion to compare human physical need with human spiritual need. He employed a figure of speech, ”I am the bread of life,” in order to communicate that He came not only to provide physical nourishment, but also spiritual life.

In John 6:35, Jesus Himself explains the intention of His saying: “I am the bread of life; he who *comes* to Me will not hunger, and he who *believes* in Me will never thirst.” Persons receive eternal life when they come to Christ and believe in Him. This verse sheds light on Jesus words in verses 54 and 55 as well: “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink.” Jesus is speaking of a spiritual partaking through faith, just as He declared to His disciples in verse 63, “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.”

Schweizer comments that throughout the Gospel of John, the Spirit contrasts with the flesh. The flesh is associated with the world and the devil, but the Spirit – with God. Therefore, Schweizer cautions about seeing a sacramental reference in John 6: “We are not to try to take the external element spiritually (cf. the sacraments), nor to seek life in it alone; we can discern glory and find life only in the Spirit’s power.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

In conclusion, we observe that in John’s Gospel we encounter other symbols of salvation beside the image of bread. Water, for example, is connected with the rebirth. Jesus used a variety of images to depict the truths of salvation.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Finally, we must examine Jesus’ words in Lk 22:19-20: “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.… This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.” First, we note that Jesus declared, “Do this in remembrance of Me.” This reminds us of Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 11 that “as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes” (v. 26). Both Jesus and Paul taught that the goal of communion was not to create a new sacrifice of His body and blood, but to recall that once-for-all-time sacrifice on Calvary.

Jesus words, “This is My body,” and, “This is… the new covenant in My blood,” are also to be taken figuratively. In other passages, Jesus speaks of Himself in metaphors. For example: “I am the door of the sheep,” “I am the Good Shepherd,” “I am the light of the world,” and “I am the vine.” He is also the treasure hidden in the field and the pearl of great price. Therefore, it is fair to say that Jesus is speaking metaphorically of bread and wine as His body and blood.

Also significant is that the Lord’s Supper was performed during the Passover Feast. It was clear to all that Passover represented the exodus from Egypt. Every year, the people of Israel celebrated Passover in remembrance of that event. All understood that the blood of the Passover lamb shed during the feast had no power to save, but merely reminded the Israelites of the deliverance that Yahweh accomplished when He struck the first born of Egypt.

The New Testament reveals that the true meaning of Passover includes not only a remembrance of Israel’s deliverance from Egypt, but also a prediction of Jesus’ sacrifice. John the Baptism announced, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (Jn 1:29). Paul penned the following, “Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed” (1 Cor 5:7).

When our Lord celebrated the Passover that we call the Lord’s Supper, He knew well that it represented His redemptive suffering. Therefore, He took advantage of the occasion to show His disciples that Passover, which they considered a feast of remembrance of God’s deliverance from Egypt, also represented His redemptive sacrifice. So then, He took bread and declared (in paraphrase), “This bread, which you break every year, in reality represents My body, which is broken for you. And this cup, which you drink from each year, in reality represents My blood, which is shed for you.”

In light of the symbolic nature of the feast He was celebrating, it is not difficult to see the symbolic nature of Jesus’ actions here. His intention was not to transform bread and wine into His body and blood, but to explain the deeper symbolism of Passover. Thiessen concurs, “The bread was the body of Christ in the same sense as the flesh in the Passover lamb was His body. The Passover lamb pointed forward to Christ.”[[6]](#footnote-6)

**b. Other Arguments in Refutation**

Another important argument concerns the physical presence of Jesus on this earth after his accession. If Jesus’ body is now in heaven, how could it simultaneously be present in the communion elements? After His resurrection, Jesus ascended to heaven. Acts 1:9-11 describes this event: “He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight…. This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.”

Note that the angel promised that Jesus would return in the same way that He departed. Jesus Himself predicted the manner of His return, “Then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory” (Mk 13:26). Therefore, the Bible informs us not to expect the physical presence of Jesus until He returns in the clouds. The Lord warned us, “If they say to you, ‘Behold, He is in the wilderness,’ do not go out, {or,} ‘Behold, He is in the inner rooms,’ do not believe {them}” (Matt 24:26). If Christ is actually present in the elements of bread and wine, then in a certain sense the Second Coming of Jesus has already occurred.

If one objects that the Lord’s body present in communion is not the same body that is now in heaven, then another difficulty arises. If the Lord’s body in communion is only similar to His body in heaven, then it serves as a symbol of His true body, and thereby support is gained for the symbolic view of communion.

In connection with the incarnation, we note another problem. In John 1:14, we read, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” This is the key verse for the doctrine of the Son’s incarnation. According to this doctrine, the eternal Son of God came to earth and was born of a virgin. He is truly God and truly human. If transubstantiation really takes place, then we are dealing with another incarnation of the Son of God. If multiple incarnations are allowed, this threatens the uniqueness of the historical incarnation of God’s Son.

Finally, Boyd notes the following arguments against transubstantiation.[[7]](#footnote-7) First, it is customary for God to establish certain symbols of the covenants He makes with His people (see Gen 9:11-16; 17:9-10; Ex 12:14). Communion, then, serves as a symbol of the new covenant. Second, according to the teaching of Scripture, Jesus is always with us in spirit (Matt 28:20). Why, then, is His physical presence in the elements of communion necessary?

### B. History of the Doctrine and Confessional Positions

**1. Early Church**

The second-century work *Didache* makes mention of the observance of the Lord’s Supper (see *Didache*, 9, 14). It indicates that communion was observed each Sunday. It was accompanied by a special prayer of thanksgiving and petition. Only those baptized could partake, and the partakers must confesses their sins and reconcile with others before receiving the elements so that their “sacrifice may not be profaned.”

Justin Martyr (2nd c.) finds symbolism of the Lord’s Supper in the Old Testament (see *Dialogue,* 41, 70). He claims the same regarding the man cleansed by Jesus of leprosy, since the latter presented a meal offering for His cleansing (Matt 8:1-4). Now, Justin feels that believers are those cleansed from sin. Communion is also the fulfillment of Malachi’s prophecy that among the nations will be “offered to My name… a grain offering {that is} pure.” The mention of bread in Isaiah 33:16 is also understood in this way.

In Justin’s *First Apology*, he details the order of the communion service (see chapters 65-67). The bread and wine, mixed with water, are brought to the “president of the brethren,” who offers prayers with thanksgiving of his own creation (not by rote, as in the *Didache*). At the conclusion of his prayer, the congregation adds their “Amen.” Then, the deacons distribute the elements and keep back a portion for those absent from the service. Only those baptized and living consecrated Christian lives may partake.

Justin also testifies to belief in the transformation of the elements:

For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh (*1 Apology*, 66).

Ignatius (2nd c.), who first called this celebration the “Eucharist,” prescribes that only the bishop is authorized to perform it. He also calls it the “love feast,” which likely refers not only to the Eucharist celebration, but to the feast that accompanied it.[[8]](#footnote-8) Ignatius speaks of the bread as the “medicine of immortality.”[[9]](#footnote-9) He insists even more fervently than Justin that the communion elements become the body and blood of Christ:

I desire the bread of God, the heavenly bread, the bread of life, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became afterwards of the seed of David and Abraham; and I desire the drink of God, namely His blood, which is incorruptible love and eternal life (*To the Romans*, 7).

They (heretics) abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they confess not the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father, of His goodness, raised up again (*To the Smyrneans*, 7)

Next, we examine Irenaeus’ view of the Lord’s Supper. Along with others, he calls this ordinance the “Eucharist” and also speaks of it as a “sacrifice.”[[10]](#footnote-10) Moreover, he equates the bread and wine with the body and blood of the Savior.[[11]](#footnote-11) In the following excerpt, Irenaeus hints at the mechanism of this transformation:

For as the bread, which is produced from the earth, when it receives the invocation of God, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two realities, earthly and heavenly; so also our bodies, when they receive the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of the resurrection to eternity (*Against Heresies*, 4.18.5).

Here, Irenaeus also attempts to explain the value of the Eucharist – it gives “the hope of the resurrection.” Irenaeus links participation in the Eucharist with the resurrection in other passages as well: “…our bodies, being nourished by it, and deposited in the earth, and suffering decomposition there, shall rise at their appointed time, the Word of God granting them resurrection to the glory of God.”[[12]](#footnote-12) Irenaeus also states that partakers of the Eucharist receive “remission of sins and life eternal.”[[13]](#footnote-13)

Although Irenaeus refers to the Eucharist as a sacrifice, we must also keep in mind that for him this sacrifice is apparently a merely symbolic one. In Fragment 37, he states, “The oblation of the Eucharist is not a carnal one, but a spiritual.”

In the works of Tertullian (3rd c.) we encounter an enigma. On the one hand, in his tract *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, he writes, “The flesh feeds on the body and blood of Christ, that the soul likewise may fatten on *its* God” (8). On the other hand, at times Tertullian seems to refer to a symbolic representation of the body of Christ: “Then, having taken the bread and given it to His disciples, He made it His own body, by saying, ‘This is my body,’ that is, the figure of my body” (*Against Marcion,* 4.40).

Tertullian’s symbolic view is even more evident in the following passage:[[14]](#footnote-14)

Because they thought His discourse was harsh and intolerable, supposing that He had really and literally enjoined on them to eat his flesh, He… set out with the principle, “It is the spirit that quickeneth;” and then added, “The flesh profiteth nothing”… devour Him with the ear, and to ruminate on Him with the understanding, and to digest Him by faith (*On the Resurrection of the Flesh,* 37)*.*

The early Alexandrian Fathers, Clement (2nd c.) and Origen (3rd c.), speak of the mystical and symbolic meaning of the Eucharist:

And the blood of the Lord is twofold. For there is the blood of His flesh, by which we are redeemed from corruption; and the spiritual, that by which we are anointed. And to drink the blood of Jesus, is to become partaker of the Lord’s immortality; the Spirit being the energetic principle of the Word, as blood is of flesh. Accordingly, as wine is blended with water, so is the Spirit with man. And the one, the mixture of wine and water, nourishes to faith; while the other, the Spirit, conducts to immortality (Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor*, 2.2).

Elsewhere the Lord, in the Gospel according to John, brought this out by symbols, when He said: “Eat ye my flesh, and drink my blood;” describing distinctly by metaphor the drinkable properties of faith and the promise (Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor*, 1.6).

Origen wrote, “We have a symbol of gratitude to God in the bread which we call the Eucharist” (*Against Celsus,* 8:57). He also asserts that the bread and wine are sanctified by the Word of God and prayer, but they do not sanctify those who do not partake of them worthily (*Commentary on Matt 11:14*). On the other hand, in his homily on Exodus 13.3, he nevertheless acknowledges the real presence of Jesus in the bread.[[15]](#footnote-15)

In his day, Cyprian (3rd c.) made a significant contribution to a sacramental understanding of the Eucharist, considering it to be a true sacrifice of Christ. He wrote:

For if Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, is Himself the chief priest of God the Father, and has first offered Himself a sacrifice to the Father, and has commanded this to be done in commemoration of Himself, certainly that priest truly discharges the office of Christ, who imitates that which Christ did; and he then offers a true and full sacrifice in the Church to God the Father, when he proceeds to offer it according to what he sees Christ Himself to have offered (*Epistles,* 62.14).

Hill comments that in the fourth century, Christian writers began to treat the Eucharist as a true sacrifice, citing Paul in support – the Lord’s Supper is a proclamation of Christ’s death (1 Cor 11:26).[[16]](#footnote-16) Hill feels that considering ministers as “priests” promoted an understanding the Eucharist in an Old Testament sacrificial sense.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Ambrose advances the idea that the transformation of the elements occurs through pronouncing the words of the blessing: “The power of the blessing prevails over that of nature, because by the blessing nature itself is changed.”[[18]](#footnote-18) A similar understanding already existed in the Eastern Church as seen in the teaching of John Chrysostom (4th c.), who claims, “The priest, in the role of Christ, pronounces these words, but their power and grace are God's. This is my body, he says. This word transforms the things offered.”[[19]](#footnote-19)

Another adherent of the sacramental view of communion was Augustine (4th-5th c.): “That bread that you see on the altar, sanctified by the Word of God, is Christ’s body. That cup, or rather the contents of that cup, sanctified by the Word of God, is Christ’s blood. By these elements the Lord Christ willed to convey his body and his blood, which he shed for us” (*Sermons,* 227).[[20]](#footnote-20) He also considers the worship of the elements appropriate (see *Exposition on the Psalms,* 99.8). At times, though, Augustine seems to defend a symbolic view as well (see *Exposition on the Psalms,* 99.8; *Tractates on the Gospel of John*, 26.18).

Augustine introduces into the Church the concept of *ex opere operato*, which means that sacraments communicate grace automatically, independent of the spiritual quality of the one who administers them. In Augustine’s opinion, the priest does not perform the ordinance, but rather Christ Himself. Therefore, it is always effective.[[21]](#footnote-21)

In reflection on the Early Church teaching on the Lord’s Supper, we observe a definite movement toward a sacramental understanding of the ordinance. Early on, the *Didache* only mentions how to conduct the Lord’s Supper. Justin discusses this as well, but also claims that the elements become the body and blood of Christ. Ignatius intensifies this teaching and adds that only a bishop can perform the rite.

Moreover, Irenaeus details the mechanism of the elements’ transformation and claims forgiveness of sins and eternal life through the sacrament. Allison comments on the view of the early Fathers on the Eucharist as a sacrifice: “While it is clear that sacrificial language was associated with the Lord’s Supper, it is not as clear what the early church believed about the nature of the sacrifice.”[[22]](#footnote-22) Cyprian went to the extreme of asserting that the Eucharist is an actual sacrifice of Jesus for sins. Ambrose emphasized the power of the words of blessing to transform the elements. Finally, Augustine advanced the theory of *ex opere operato*.

Clearly, in the course of time the Church Fathers increasingly ascribed to the Lord’s Supper a mystical and sacramental meaning. This marks a deviation from the biblical view of communion as symbol of Christ’s death. However, not all of the Fathers embraced this view. Some, such as Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, and possibly Origen tended toward a symbolic view.

**2. Roman Catholicism**[[23]](#footnote-23)

For Catholics, the Eucharist, along with water baptism and confirmation, is considered a sacrament of “initiation.” The Eucharist is celebrated every Sunday, but can be performed more frequently. Members of the Catholic Church must partake of communion once a year. Only baptized Catholics can participate, who walk in the ways of Christ.[[24]](#footnote-24) Before partaking in the sacrament, Catholics confess their sins before God and sometimes observe a short fast.

Catholics are among those who believe that the bread and wine actually become the body and blood of Jesus: “In the Eucharist Christ gives us the very body which he gave up for us on the cross, the very blood which he ‘poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’”[[25]](#footnote-25) Furthermore, they claim that the Eucharist is not only the “body and blood,” but also “the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ and, therefore, the whole Christ is truly, really, and substantially contained.”[[26]](#footnote-26)

Catholics assign the term “transubstantiation” to the transformation of the communion elements. According to this theory, the external aspects of the bread and wine do not change. They continue to look like and taste like bread and wine. Yet, their essence is changed to the body and blood of Jesus. This teaching became Catholic dogma at the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215.[[27]](#footnote-27)

The doctrine of transubstantiation works off of Aristotle’s philosophical conception of “substance and accidents.”[[28]](#footnote-28) The “substance” is the essential nature of the object, while its “accidents” are its external features. So then, the transformation of the elements occurs not in their accidents, but only in their substance. They retain the look and taste of bread and wine, but in essence they are transformed into Christ’s body and blood.

The priest alone has the authority to perform the Eucharistic rite. He received this authority from the bishop, who received it from the pope, who supposedly received it from the apostles via the so-called “apostolic succession.” The apostles, in turn, allegedly received this authority from Christ during the original Lord’s Supper when He said to them, “Do this in remembrance of Me” (Lk 22:19).

The Catholic Church continues to affirm the doctrine of *ex opere operato*, where grace is automatically communicated by the sacrament. All that is necessary for the Eucharist to be effective is the blessing of the elements by a priest in the apostolic succession and their reception by the worshiper. The spiritual quality of the priest and the recipient have no effect on the Eucharist’s efficacy, except in the case of mortal sin committed by the recipient.

During the Catholic worship service, called the “mass,”[[29]](#footnote-29) the priest, as noted above, utters a special prayer that effects the transformation of the elements. Then, he offers up the bread and wine in sacrifice, which in Catholic thought is an actual sacrifice of Jesus for sins. For this reason, the table on which the mass is performed is called an “altar.” According to the tradition of the Roman Catholic Church, the Catholic priest is truly a priest, who offers a genuine sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. Christ Himself is felt to stand behind this act.

We may further clarify the Catholic understanding of the mass as a sacrifice. It is thought that the unique sacrifice of Christ accomplished on Calvary is reenacted during the mass. In this way, the benefits of Calvary are offered to the recipient of the Eucharist. So then, formally this is not a new sacrifice, but the realization of Christ’s sacrifice on Calvary in a new historical context. Unlike Calvary, though, the mass is called a “bloodless sacrifice.”

The Catechism of the Catholic Church claims that Christ gave the Eucharist “in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again,”[[30]](#footnote-30) and moreover, “As often as the sacrifice of the Cross by which ‘Christ our Pasch has been sacrificed’ is celebrated on the altar, the work of our redemption is carried out.”[[31]](#footnote-31)

Catholics assert that, although Jesus accomplished a single sacrifice on the cross, it is necessary that this one sacrifice becomes actualized in the life of the believer through participation in the Eucharist: “This redemption does not have its full effect immediately… (it is necessary) that man individually come into vital contact with the cross-offering and that thus the merits of it are applied to him.”[[32]](#footnote-32)

In addition, the Church as the Body of Christ also participates with Him in this sacrifice: “(The Church) unites herself to his intercession with the Father for all men…. The lives of the faithful, their praise, sufferings, prayer, and work, are united with those of Christ.”[[33]](#footnote-33) This “unification” includes the departed saints and Mary as well.

According to Roman Catholic teaching, participants in the Eucharist receive forgiveness of sins. However, this applies only to so-called “venial sins.” More serious transgressions, called “mortal sins,” require confession before a priest. The Eucharistic rite benefits not only living believers, but departed souls in purgatory as well.

Along with providing forgiveness of sins, participation in the Eucharist also strengthens relationships with Christ and His Church, demonstrates the unity of the Church, transmits grace for spiritual growth, cleanses from depravity, motivates to good works, and is a foretaste of Jesus’ Second Coming. It also serves as an offering of thanksgiving for God’s gift of creation.

The Catholic Church also teaches that the entire sacrament is represented in each of the elements. This means that one may partake of either the bread or the wine in order to benefit from the full measure of the sacrament’s grace.[[34]](#footnote-34) Consequently, in the Catholic communion service typically the bread only was offered. The Second Vatican Council, however, approved partaking of both elements.[[35]](#footnote-35)

Since the bread and wine are considered the very body and blood of Christ, the priest is very careful in handling them. For example, he must not drop them, and all the elements must either be consumed, or stored in a specially designated container. The elements are also considered worthy of homage and worship. Catholics are required to genuflect (bow on one knee) when entering and leaving the sanctuary in respect for the communion elements that are stored at the altar. Worship is also performed before the elements themselves. The Council of Trent insisted this practice: “In view of the presence of Christ in the eucharist the adoration of the host and the festival of the *Corpus* *Christi* are but natural.”[[36]](#footnote-36) According to Catholic teaching, then, worship is given not to the accidents of the bread and wine, but to Christ.[[37]](#footnote-37)

Let us trace the history of this doctrine’s overall development in the history of Roman Catholicism. The decisive event occurred in the ninth century, when the nature of Eucharist was debated. The main players in this debate were Radbertus and Ratramnus, two French monks who both wrote a work entitled *On the Body and Blood of Christ*. Radbertus believed in the transformation of the communion elements into the body and blood of Christ, while Ratramnus saw them as symbols. After heated debates, the Roman Church hierarchy endorsed Radbertus’ view.

Radbertus summarized his view as follows: “The same who created the human being Jesus Christ in the womb of Virgin Mary without any human seed daily creates the flesh and blood of Christ by his invisible power through the consecration of this sacrament.”[[38]](#footnote-38) In Ratramnus’ opinion, however, during the Lord’s Supper, “the Body of Christ is – revealed. This is not perceived or received or consumed by the physical senses, but only in the sight of the believer.”[[39]](#footnote-39)

In the Catholic teaching on communion, we witness a continuation of the sacramentalism of the Church Fathers. All the elements of the later are present: the transformation of the elements, the need for the bishop’s participation, a real sacrifice of Christ, the transmission of grace, and the forgiveness of sins.

Moreover, with the aid of Aristotelian philosophy, Catholics outlined the mechanism of transubstantiation. They also specified the nature of the sacrifice of the mass – it is not a new sacrifice, but the realization of the sacrifice on Calvary in a new historical context. They also enacted various rules about who can partake of the Eucharist and when. Finally, they introduced the novelty that the entire Church is offered up with Christ in sacrifice. However, each of these claims lack biblical support. They are based on patristic theology, which also lacks support from Scripture in this regard.

For example, the teaching on the sacrifice of the mass contradicts the Bible. There is no need for the sacrifice of Calvary to be reenacted or “realized” in a new historical context. Hebrews 10:14-18 clearly states, “For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified…. Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer {any} offering for sin.” According to Scripture, the single sacrifice of Jesus Christ is sufficient for the salvation of all humanity. It does not need to be repeated or “actualized.” The benefits of Calvary are received by faith.

The Catholic’s insistence on the performance of sacraments only by a priest in the apostolic succession and of the “realization” of Christ’s sacrifice for forgiveness of sins during the mass makes the Church the necessary mediator of the grace of salvation. Yet, the Bible declares, “For there is one God, {and} one mediator also between God and men, {the} man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim 2:5).

**3. Eastern Orthodoxy**

The Orthodox system shares common features with the Catholic view, but several difference are nonetheless worth pointing out. They are similar in the conviction that the communion elements become Christ’s body and blood. Metropolitan Ilarion comments, “The Orthodox Church unconditionally believes that in the Eucharist the bread and wine become the real Body and Blood of Christ and not only a symbol or figure of the Body and Blood.”[[40]](#footnote-40)

John of Damascus (7th-8th c.) affirmed the same: “The bread and the wine are not merely figures of the body and blood of Christ (God forbid!) but the deified body of the Lord itself.”[[41]](#footnote-41) He justifies his conviction as follows:[[42]](#footnote-42)

If God the Word of His own will became man and the pure and undefiled blood of the holy and ever-virginal One made His flesh without the aid of seed, can He not then make the bread His body and the wine and water His blood?

He said in the beginning, *Let the earth bring forth grass*, and even until this present day, when the rain comes it brings forth its proper fruits, urged on and strengthened by the divine command. God said, *This is My body*, and *This is My blood.*

According to Catholic faith, the essence of the bread and wine change, but not their external features. The Orthodox feel, however, that their essence does not change, but rather their orientation or mode of existence changes. Just as through the Fall, Adam and Eve’s life-orientation was altered from God to nature, when the priest sanctifies the communion elements, their orientation changes from nature to God. Their existence is no longer derived from nature, but from God. In this way, they become an incarnation of God and the actual body and blood of Jesus.

Sergey Bulgakov gives special attention to this idea.[[43]](#footnote-43) On the one hand, he speaks of the Eucharist as a mystery into which even the Church Fathers did not delve.[[44]](#footnote-44) On the other hand, he offers the following interpretation. In line with his theory of the “dynamic body” of Christ (see chapter 15), Bulgakov holds that the glorified, “unworldly” body of Christ is not material, but spiritual, and may take on any form, even the form of bread and wine. Although He has already departed this world, by virtue of His incarnation He is still connected to the world, which permits Him to manifest Himself in the form of bread and wine. Therefore, “the Eucharistic elements are the mediatorial form of this manifestation.”[[45]](#footnote-45)

So then, no actual transformation of the elements occurs. The bread and wine merely change their orientation or mode of existence: “The bread and wine, which are elements of this world, remain completely unaltered. However, they no longer belong to themselves or to this world, but to the spiritual, glorified body of Christ.”[[46]](#footnote-46) Therefore, the transformation is “not physical, but metaphysical, it is beyond the bounds of this world.”[[47]](#footnote-47)

Bulgakov also writes,

Here we must not distinguish substance, which allegedly changes, and accidents, which do not change but remain the same. The bread and wine wholly and completely, without any limitation, become the saving body and blood.[[48]](#footnote-48)

We mention still another special feature of Orthodox thought. Although the communion elements truly become the body and blood of Christ, the participants do not partake of God’s essence, but rather of the “glorified humanity of Christ.”[[49]](#footnote-49) Kuraev echoes this thought, claiming that communion is participation in the “deified flesh of Christ.”[[50]](#footnote-50) The conviction that communicants partake of the “glorified humanity of Christ” requires the use of leavened bread. In this regard, Meyendorff writes, “The Eucharistic bread had to be leavened in order to symbolize the *animated* humanity of Christ.”[[51]](#footnote-51)

Another distinctive feature of the Orthodox Eucharist is that it is not the words of the priest that effect the transformation of the elements, but the words of Christ uttered at the first Lord’s Supper. His words effect this transformation for all subsequent occasions of the Eucharistic celebration. Kuraev defends this view: “The miracle of the Eucharist is that we can participate in the very same Supper, during which Christ gave his Cup ‘to all of you,’ not just the apostles.”[[52]](#footnote-52)

The Orthodox position is somewhat complicated by the fact that some prominent Orthodox theologians fail to affirm it. Pseudo-Dionysius, for example, called the elements “symbols.” Maximus the Confessor also spoke of the symbolic nature of communion.[[53]](#footnote-53)

Since the Eucharist is considered a real participation in Christ, Orthodoxy insists that it is necessary for salvation. In the words of Ilarion, “Without the Eucharist, there is no salvation, no deification, no true life, no resurrection in eternity.”[[54]](#footnote-54)

Orthodox faith coincides with Catholic dogma in that both consider the Eucharist to be a true sacrifice of Jesus for sins. Ilarion writes, “Not only the Mysterious Supper, but also the sacrifice of Calvary is renewed at every Liturgy.[[55]](#footnote-55) Lossky concurs, “Christ presents to the heavenly throne the single sacrifice, which is accomplished on the earth at many earthly thrones in the Eucharistic mystery.[[56]](#footnote-56)

Bulgakov adds the thought that at death, the body and blood of Jesus were separated one from another, i.e., He shed His blood. At the Eucharist, however, the bread and wine are taken together – the body and blood of the Savior are re-united, which can serve as a figure of the Lord’s resurrection.[[57]](#footnote-57)

Along with the Catholics, the Orthodox also do homage to the communion elements, considering them to be the body and blood of Jesus. Unlike the Catholic practice, this homage is appropriate only during the performance of the rite itself. Only at that time is Christ really present in the sacrament.[[58]](#footnote-58) In addition, in distinction from the traditional Catholic practice, the Orthodox Eucharist involves partaking of both bread and wine.[[59]](#footnote-59)

The Orthodox understanding of the Eucharist departs from the Catholic view in still another respect. The main benefit that the Eucharist offers, in Catholic thought, is forgiveness of sins.[[60]](#footnote-60) Orthodox, however, anticipate receiving spiritual power for sanctification and deification. Through the sacrament, the human will is liberated from the effect of the Fall and becomes responsive to God. Kuraev comments here, “Christ healed in Himself, in His Divine Person, the human nature that He received, and gives it, which is now healed, to us in Communion, in order to heal each of us though the healing of nature.”[[61]](#footnote-61)

According to Orthodox teaching, the permeation of Christ’s presence into the bread and cup is analogous to the effect of the sacrament on its partakers.[[62]](#footnote-62) Ilarion explains, “As Christ permeates the bread and wine with Himself, filling them with His Deity, He also enters into a person, filling his flesh and soul with His life-giving presence and Divine energies.”[[63]](#footnote-63) John of Damascus comments as well,

The body and blood of Christ are making for the support of our soul and body, without being consumed or suffering corruption, not making for the draught (God forbid!) but for our being and preservation, a protection against all kinds of injury, a purging from all uncleanness.[[64]](#footnote-64)

As already stated, this permeation of the human soul by Christ’s presence (more specifically, His “uncreated energies”) serves the goal of deification. Concerning this, Mantzaridis writes, “This sacramental union is a real union with His deifying grace and energy.”[[65]](#footnote-65) In addition, Vishnevskaya writes,

Thus, through the Eucharistic gifts, the Logos inhabits the soul of the believer and spiritually assimilates it to Divinity. In eating Christ’s flesh and drinking his blood, the faithful are infused with the divine properties that render them like God, save for the essence of being.[[66]](#footnote-66)

Since the Orthodox system in essence coincides with Catholic teaching, the arguments already advanced in refutation of the latter apply to the former as well. In addition, one may challenge Bulgakov’s teaching of the “dynamic” body of Christ (see chp. 15). Finally, we refute the doctrine of deification in chapter 7.

**4. Lutheranism**

How do Lutherans view the Lord’s Supper? First, they reject the idea that only priests or bishops of the Catholic or Orthodox confessions have the right to execute the sacrament. Any minister of the gospel can perform the rite. Lutherans also reject the suggestion that communion is an actual sacrifice of God’s Son. They also reject the teaching of *ex opere operatо*. Faith is necessary to receive benefit from the ordinance. Furthermore, the congregation may partake of both the bread and the wine. Finally, the celebration of the Lord’s Supper in no way benefits the departed.[[67]](#footnote-67)

However, Lutherans do affirm that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus. In the Augsburg Confession, we read, “About the Lord’s Supper our churches teach that the body and blood of Christ are truly present under the forms of the bread and wine and are given to those who eat the Lord’s Supper” (*Article 10*).[[68]](#footnote-68)

In defense of this teaching, Luther argued that if Christ is the God-man, then He enjoys omnipresence. So then, He can be present at the Lord’s Supper.[[69]](#footnote-69) Divine attributes (in particular, omnipresence) can be communicated to Jesus’ human nature. Luther also thought that Paul’s warning about partaking of communion unworthily (1 Cor 11) makes sense only if Jesus was truly present. Melanchthon’s view differed, though. He felt that the body and blood are only associated with the bread and wine.[[70]](#footnote-70)

Luther’s teaching corresponds to the Catholic view in that Christ is present in the elements in a supernatural fashion. Therefore, He can be fully present in each piece of the bread and sip of the wine.[[71]](#footnote-71) Moreover, in line with the Catholic understanding, Lutherans also anticipate receiving forgiveness of sins and “life and salvation” through the sacrament.[[72]](#footnote-72)

Lutherans teach that the transformation of the elements takes place by the mechanism of “consubstantiation.” According to this theory, after the prayer of consecration the elements are thought to both remain bread and wine, and also to become the body and blood of Christ. The body and blood of the Lord are “in” the elements, “with” the elements, and “under” the elements.[[73]](#footnote-73) The elements have at the same time two essences: one from nature and one from God.

Here is how Luther describes the concept of consubstantiation: “The very body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ are, by the word of Christ, instituted and given to us Christians to be eaten and drunk in and under bread and wine.”[[74]](#footnote-74)

Although this formula differs from the Catholic concept of “transubstantiation,” Luther preferred the latter more than the formulation of other Protestant groups. He would rather agree with the pope that the wine is *only* blood, than with the Reformed view that it is *only* wine.[[75]](#footnote-75)

Other benefits expected from participation in the Lord’s Supper include: “strengthening of faith, union with Christ and the Church, growth in holiness, progress in love, increase in perseverance and hope, and joy in confessing Christ.[[76]](#footnote-76)

Lutherans, although they recognize the real, physical presence of Christ in the communion elements, nonetheless refrain from doing them homage. Mueller comments, “The sacramental union occurs only in the sacramental action and not outside of it.”[[77]](#footnote-77) This means that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ only at the moment when the sacrament is performed. Lutherans take the words of Jesus as a confirmation of this idea: “Take, eat… This is My body.” The bread becomes the body only when it is taken and eaten.

In assessing the Lutheran view, we must affirm with many Evangelical believers who feel that Luther began, but did not complete the Reformation.[[78]](#footnote-78) Lutherans rightly reject the more extreme distortions of the doctrine, such as the Eucharist as a sacrifice, the necessity of an officiating priest, benefits for the departed, the concept of *ex opere operatо*, worship of the elements, and others. Yet, they fail to correct the root cause for these errors – the conviction that the elements are the actual body and blood of Christ.

**5. Reformed Faith**

We will next describe the Reformed and Presbyterian understandings of the Lord’s Supper. They reject the teaching that the communion elements become the literal body and blood of Jesus. They remain simply bread and wine. Nevertheless, the elements contain within themselves the spiritual presence of our Lord. These confessions compare the presence of Christ in communion with the relationship of the sun to its rays. The sun is in the heavens, but its rays reach the earth. In a similar way, the Lord Jesus is in heaven, but His presence is also on earth in the communion elements. Partakers “receive, and feed upon, Christ crucified, and all benefits of His death: the body and blood of Christ being then, not corporally or carnally, in, with, or under the bread and wine; yet, as really, but spiritually.”[[79]](#footnote-79)

Calvin explained that Christ is present in the Lord’s Supper by the power of the Holy Spirit. Although he called the bread and wine symbols, he also believed that they are not “empty symbols,” but rather point to a spiritual reality, that is, the body and blood of Christ: “His flesh is meat indeed, and that his blood is drink indeed: by this food believers are reared to eternal life.”[[80]](#footnote-80) The visible symbols of bread and wine are given to inspire faith.[[81]](#footnote-81) Receiving communion results in grace being transmitted from God to the believing heart.[[82]](#footnote-82)

Thanks to the spiritual presence of Christ, believers anticipate receiving through the Lord’s Supper spiritual strength for fruitful Christian living. In particular, the Westminster Confession of Faith details the benefits of communion: “…their spiritual nourishment and growth in Him, their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto Him; and, to be a bond and pledge of their communion with Him, and with each other, as members of His mystical body.”[[83]](#footnote-83)

Along with rejecting the physical transformation of the communion elements, Reformed confessions also reject the pretension that the Lord’s Supper is an actual sacrifice of Jesus for sins. Instead, it is simply a remembrance of what Jesus accomplished on Calvary.[[84]](#footnote-84)

In comparison with the Lutheran view, Calvin and his followers took a step forward in restoring the biblical teaching on the Lord’s Supper. In their understanding, the bread and wine only symbolically represent the body and blood of Christ. Nevertheless, they posit an ontological connection with the body and blood in a spiritual sense. Therefore, we observe in Calvin’s doctrine a remnant of the Catholic view, including the proposition that physical participation in communion communicates grace.

**6. Teaching of Zwingli**

The final position for our investigation was advanced by the Swiss reformer Ulrich Zwingli. It is the preferred view among most Evangelicals today. The benefits of communion are equated with that which one receives by hearing the preaching of the Word or reading the Bible. The Lord’s Supper is a “visible sermon” that demonstrates the completed work of Christ for our salvation. Zwingli wrote, “To eat the body of Christ spiritually is equivalent to trusting with heart and soul upon the mercy and goodness of God through Christ.”[[85]](#footnote-85)

So then, communion symbolically represents the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Believers reflect on His work during the Lord’s Supper and receive inspiration and strengthening of faith. By faith, then, the participant acquires grace from the Lord. Therefore, through communion the partakers receive spiritual strengthening from God, not by means of physically partaking of the elements, but indirectly through inspiration.

Similar to the Reformed position, Zwingli taught that there is no physical transformation of the communion elements. When Jesus said, “This is My Body” and “This is My blood,” He was speaking figurative, as if to say, “This symbolizes my body…” The bread and wine serve merely as symbols and have no ontological connection with the actual body and blood of the Savior.[[86]](#footnote-86) The elements contain neither the spiritual presence of Christ, nor saving grace. Participants receive grace by the inspiration of their faith.

Zwingli would not deny, however, that Christ is present during the communion service.[[87]](#footnote-87) In support, Olson describes the Lord’s Supper as “a commemorative and as a memorial meal in which Christ is present to faith through the Holy Spirit.”[[88]](#footnote-88) Christ may give a special manifestation of His presence during the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, but not in connection with the communion elements. Olsen wisely states, “Surely the grace of Christ can be experienced and Christ himself personally encountered without any change in the elements.[[89]](#footnote-89)

The successor of Zwingli, Heinrich Bullinger, continued the former’s insistence on the symbolic nature of the Lord’s Supper. At the same time, he attempted to make a closer connection between the action of the Spirit in the believers’ hearts and their physical partaking of the elements. In his opinion, “The sacramental signs correspond to simultaneous divine activity.”[[90]](#footnote-90)

Yet, if physical partaking of the elements does not transmit grace, then why did Jesus establish the ordinance? The Lord desired that His people would have a physical symbol of their faith. In this way, believers would not only hear the gospel, but also “see” it. Although the effect of communion does not essentially differ from preaching, nevertheless Olson insists, “This God-ordained ceremony cannot be dispensed with or replaced by something else without losing an important experience of transforming grace.”[[91]](#footnote-91)

Along with inspiring faith, such physical ordinances underscore the historical character of Christian faith. A direct participation in the Lord’s Supper brings to mind that the sufferings of our Savior were real and physical. Some Pentecostals and Charismatics, in fact, expect God’s power to flow during communion for the healing of bodies.[[92]](#footnote-92) The symbolic breaking of Christ’s body can inspire the participants to receive a miracle from the Lord, who suffered for their sicknesses as well.

Finally, we must mention the benefit that the Lord’s Supper provides to promote Christian unity. Martens correctly states, “All believers partake of the bread; all believers partake of the cup. One message from this symbolic action is that members of the community belong together.”[[93]](#footnote-93)

### C. Participation in the Lord’s Supper

The question arises as to whether the unbaptized and children can participate in the Lord’s Supper and partake of the elements of communion. We affirm that the only qualification for partaking in the Lord’s Supper is having received salvation (i.e., the new birth), since if a person has already received salvation itself, he or she is certainly ready to receive the symbols of salvation and give thanks to God for it. Participation in the Lord’s Supper is not something one earns or deserves by having previously been water baptized, but rather a means of spiritual growth that all born again Christians can benefit from.

This does not mean that we should neglect water baptism, but the Bible does not teach that it is a requirement for salvation (see chp. 22). Neither is it a requirement for participation in the Lord’s Supper. The practice of reserving partaking of communion only for the baptized is a throwback to the post-apostolic church, where catechumens completed a three-year preparatory period before being admitted to water baptism. During that probationary period, they could participate in worship services, but not in communion. When the communion service commenced, catechumens were required to exit the sanctuary.

Concerning children, we follow the same principle. As soon as children are truly converted (and, therefore, understand the meaning of salvation), they are ready to fully participate in the communion service.

1. Gavin proposes that the term εὐχαριστία (*eucharistia*) possibly traces back to the Hebrew בָרַךְ (*barach*), i.е., to the blessing done at the Passover meal (see Gavin F. The Jewish Antecedents of the Christian Sacraments. – New York, NY: KTAV Publishing, 1969. – P. 71-72). However, it is more likely that the use of the term εὐχαριστήσας (*eucharistesas*) later in church practice derives from the Greek text of Mark 14:23. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Mueller J. T. Christian Dogmatics. – St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 1934. – P. 507. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Stephenson J. R. The Lutheran View // Smith G. T. The Lord’s Supper: Five Views. – Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2008. – P. 48-50; Boyd G. A., Eddy P. R. Across the Spectrum: Understanding Issues in Evangelical Theology. – Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002. – P. 197. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Schweizer E. πνεῦμα, πνευματικός // Gerhard F., Bromiley G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament / trans. Bromiley G. W. – Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1968. – P. 892. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Riles К. What’s the Difference: Comparing the Вeliefs of Catholics, Protestant and Eastern Orthodox. – P. 84. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Thiessen H. C. Introductory Lectures in Systematic Theology. – Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1949. – P. 428. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Boyd, p. 200. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. *To the Smyrneans*, 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. *To the Ephesians*, 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. *Against Heresies*, 4.18.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ibid., 5.2.2-3; 4.17.5; 5.11.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Ibid., 5.2.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. *Fragments*, 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Riles, p. 86. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Кураев А. Протестантам о православии. – 7-е изд. – Ростов-на-Дон: Троицкое Слово, 2003. – P. 250; Иларион, А. Таинство Веры. – М.: Издательство Братства Святителя Тихона, 1996. – P. 152. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Hill B. R. Exploring Catholic Theology. – Mystic, CN: Twenty Third Publishers, 1995. – P. 291-292. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Ibid., p. 292. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Noted in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, № 1375. https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/\_INDEX.HTM. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Noted in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, № 1375. Also see Lane T. A Concise History of Christian Thought – Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006. – P. 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Taken from Allison G. R. Historical Theology. – Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011. – P. 640. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Ibid., p. 638. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Noted in Catechism of the Catholic Church, № 1322-1419. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Under certain conditions, Eastern Orthodox may participate in the Roman Eucharist, but Protestants may not. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Catechism of the Catholic Church, № 1365. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Ibid., № 1374. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Allison, p. 644. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. This view dates back to the theology of Thomas Aquinas (Hill, p. 300). [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. The term “mass” comes from the Latin word “*missa,*” meaning “sent” (Gros J. The Roman Catholic View // Smith G. T. The Lord’s Supper: Five Views. – Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 2008. – P. 16). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Catechism of the Catholic Church, № 1323. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Ibid., № 1364. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. From *Mediator Dei*, noted in Berkouwer G. C. The Sacraments. – Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969. – P. 269-270. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Catechism of the Catholic Church, № 1368. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Berkhof L. The History of Christian Doctrine. – Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1937. – P. 253-254. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Hill, p. 296. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Berkhof, p. 254. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Note in Gross, p. 28. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. McGrath A. Christian Theology. – 4th ed. – Oxford: Blackwell, 2007. – P. 434. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Иларион, p. 163. Author’s translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. *An Exact Exposition of Orthodox Faith*, 4.13. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Булгаков С. Евхаристический догмат, часть 1-я // Журнал "Путь" №20, 1930. P. 1-48.

    http://www.odinblago.ru/path/20/1. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. John of Damascus writes that this mystery “surpass reason and thought” (*An Exact Exposition of Orthodox Faith*, 4.13). [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Булгаков, p. 11. Author’s translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Ibid., p. 5. Author’s translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Ibid., p. 6. Author’s translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Ibid. p. 5. Author’s translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Meyendorff J. Byzantine Theology. – New York: Fordham University, 1974. – P. 203. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Кураев, p. 98. Author’s translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Meyendorff, p. 204. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Кураев, p. 251. Author’s translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Meyendorff, p. 203. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Иларион, p. 156. Author’s translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Ibid. Author’s translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Лосский В. Н. Богословие и Боговидение / Общ. ред. Владимира Пислякова. – М.: Издательство Свято-Владимирского Братства, 2000. – P. 281-282. Author’s translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Булгаков, p. 7-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Ibid., p. 13-17. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Catechism of the Catholic Church, № 1390. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Nonetheless, Orthodoxy does not deny the forgiveness of sins as well. In the words of John of Damascus, “Wherefore to those who partake worthily with faith, it is for the remission of sins and for life everlasting and for the safe-guarding of soul and body” (*An Exact Exposition of Orthodox Faith*, 4.13). [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Кураев, p. 271-273. Author’s translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Иларион, p. 156. Author’s translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
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