

Timothy Kelly

Christ and the Church: *Duo in Carne Una*

A study of the union of Christ and the members of His Mystical
Body from the vantage point of its Bodiliness

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“See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have” (Luke 24: 39).

“Glory be to Christ’s body; Glory to the body of the Word made Flesh; Glory to the body suckled at the Blessed Virgin’s breasts; Glory to Christ’s body in its beauty; Glory to Christ’s body in its weariness; Glory to Christ’s body in its Passion, death and burial; Glory to Christ’s body risen; Glory to Christ’s body in the Blessed Sacrament”.

Gerard Manley Hopkins SJ

"...and all the crowd sought to touch him" (Luke 6: 19).

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Abbreviations

AAS	<i>Acta Apostolicae sedis</i>
ACO	<i>Acta Conciliorum Œcumenicorum</i>
CCL	<i>Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina</i>
CSCO	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium</i>
CSEL	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i>
DS	H. Denzinger and A. Schönmetzer SJ (eds.), <i>Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum</i>
PG	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i>
PL	<i>Patrologia Latina</i>
SC	<i>Sources Chrétiennes</i>
ST	St Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologiae</i>
SCG	St Thomas Aquinas, <i>Summa Contra Gentiles</i>
<i>Sent.</i>	St Thomas Aquinas, <i>Scriptum super libros Sententiarum</i>
<i>In Jo.</i>	St Thomas Aquinas, <i>Lectura super Johannem</i>
<i>In Joh.</i>	St Cyril of Alexandria, <i>Sancti patris nostri Cyrilli Archiepiscopi Alexandrini in d. Joannis Evangelium</i>

General Introduction

In the Andalusian cities of Sevilla, Málaga and Granada, in the early decades of the seventeenth century, there emerged an artistic genre unique in all of Christendom. Little studied, and largely unknown beyond its native Spain, this art of the Spanish Counter Reformation has been called the art of “the palpable”,¹ the art of “the sacred made real”,² evoking a realism —a “hyperrealism”³— surpassing even that of Caravaggio.

The objective of the artists⁴ was not simply to depict the Christian mysteries in their visible, concrete historicity, but to convey the Church’s faith in the Word made Flesh and his Redemptive action from the vantage point of its bodily truth. Accordingly, the movement was not confined to painting,⁵ but most vibrantly realised in sculpture, polychrome sculpture, where the artists were able both to render their subjects in palpable, three-dimensionality, and to paint and embellish them in such a way that they represented each particular mystery with a graphic, almost forensic accuracy: Christ scourged, Christ bearing his cross, Christ crucified and Christ entombed, were the central redemptive episodes these sculptors and polychromers depicted in their cathedrals, basilicas and churches. Their preoccupation with the mystery of the Incarnation in its fleshly palpability led them to develop a technique of sculpture-painting directly inspired by the Word’s enfleshment: the method they called *encarnación* (“incarnation”), which consisted in the exact rendering of flesh tones, was complemented by the deployment of other materials that would contribute to the depiction of physical realities: glass eyes and tears, ivory teeth, finger nails made from bull horn, eye lashes from human hair, crimson tree bark to simulate the effect of coagulated blood.

¹ *The Sacred Made Real: Spanish Painting and Sculpture 1600-1700*, ed. Xavier Bray (London: National Gallery in London and Yale University Press, 2009), p. 17.

² *Ibid.* p. 15.

³ *Ibid.* p. 17.

⁴ Alonso Cano (1601-1667); Gregorio Fernández (1576-1636); Francisco Antonio Gijón (1653-1721); Juan Martínez Montañés (1568-1649); Pedro de Mena (1628-1688); Juan de Mesa (1583-1627); José de Mora (1642-1724); Francisco Pacheco (1564-1644); Francisco Ribalta (1565-1628); Jusepe de Ribera (1591-1652); Diego Velázquez (1599-1660); Francisco de Zurbarán (1598-1664).

⁵ Those who painted within this genre even tried to make their figures look like three-dimensional, palpable sculptures. Most impressive in this respect is Francisco Zurbarán’s painting of Christ on the Cross (1627) in the sacristy of the Dominican friary of San Pablo in Sevilla. As the painter Antonio Palomino (1653-1726) remarked, “there is a crucifix from [Zurbarán’s] hand which is shown behind a grille [*reja*] of the chapel (which has little light), and everyone who sees it, and does not know, believes it to be a sculpture” (A.A. Palomino de Castro y Velasco, *Lives of the Eminent Spanish Painters and Sculptors*, trans. N. Ayala Mallory (Cambridge, 1987) cat. No. 2, pp. 76-7).

Such an uncompromising affirmation of the reality of the sacred humanity and, in particular, of the Son's dereliction in the flesh, was not a result of mere artistic curiosity but grounded in firm theological principles and spiritual concerns. In 17th century Spain it was an emphasis both in harmony with the homilies and spiritual writing of the time⁶ and with the decrees of the Council of Trent. Trent's instruction that religious art was not only to be faithful to Catholic doctrine, not only to be historically true and life-like, but also to enkindle the heart with love and awe,⁷ was fulfilled to a supreme extent in the realism of this artistic genre of baroque Spain. The artists' peculiar preoccupation with the bodily truth of the sacred humanity of Christ, their aspiration to depict sacred realities with a renewed sense of their incarnate palpability and realism, was thought to be art in the service of the faith,⁸ ultimately ordered to awakening in the beholder a new sense of wonder at the truth of God's humble enfleshment in Jesus of Nazareth, and the extent of his abasement for man.⁹ Indeed, by this visibly rendered theology of the sacred flesh, the Christian was to be led not only to a greater sense of the historicity of the depicted mystery but moved to marvel at the scandal of God's condescension into earthly, human weakness, and the prodigal lengths of his merciful love.¹⁰

This artistic genre theologically complements our own study. Like the painters and sculptors of 17th century Spain, here we will consider particular aspects of the Christian Mystery that, among certain exegetes and dogmaticians, have been the subject of somatically realistic interpretations. But our interest in this question is not a wide-ranging one but follows a particular line of enquiry. First of all, as our title indicates, we do not intend to undertake a

⁶ *The Sacred Made Real*, p. 52. See also M.A. Núñez Beltrán, *La oratoria sagrada de la época del barroco: doctrina, cultura y actitud ante la vida desde los sermones sevillanos del siglo XVII* (Seville, 2000); and M. del P. Dávila Fernández, *Los sermones y el arte* (Valladolid, 1980).

⁷ The Council of Trent, session 25. See *The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Oecumenical Council of Trent*, ed. and trans. J. Waterworth (London: Dolman, 1848), 'On the Invocation, Veneration, and Relics, of Saints, and on Sacred Images', pp. 233-236. The great compatriot of these artists, St John of the Cross, who lived just a few decades before the emergence of this art, wrote: "The use of images has been ordained by the Church for two principal ends —namely, that we may revere the saints in them, and that the will may be moved and devotion to the saints awakened by them. When they serve this purpose they are beneficial and the use of them is necessary; and therefore we must choose those that are most true and lifelike, and that most move the will to devotion." (*The Ascent of Mount Carmel* 3, 53, 3).

⁸ Like the great Iconographers of the Christian East, the Catholic craftsmen who developed this unique genre of sacred art considered it both a form of Christian evangelisation and a holy exercise, preparing themselves by "prayer, fast[ing], penitence, and communion" (A.A. Palomino de Castro y Velasco, *Lives of the Eminent Spanish Painters and Sculptors*, trans. N. Ayala Mallory (Cambridge, 1987) p. 829).

⁹ One art historian has named it "the art of devotion", an art that was, uniquely for the period, "essentially religious" (Alfonso Rodríguez G. De Ceballos, 'The Art of Devotion' in *The Sacred Made Real*, p. 45).

¹⁰ For a greater sense of the religious impact of this art see the visual demonstration provided by following exhibition DVD: *The Sacred Made Real: Spanish Painting and Sculpture 1600-1700* (National Gallery of London, 2009; ISBN 1857094664). For further information, see: <http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/about-us/press-and-media/sacred-made-real-spanish-painting-and-sculpture>

general study of the role of the flesh in Christian Redemption, nor even of the great Patristic axiom of the flesh as “the hinge of salvation”;¹¹ such more ambitious studies than our own have already been successfully completed in recent times.¹² Rather, our focus is upon the union of Christ and the members of his Mystical Body from the specific perspective of its bodiliness.¹³ This will take the form of a dogmatic exposition of an argument that, most

¹¹ “Caro salutis cardo est”. Tertullian, *On the Resurrection of the Dead*, 8, 2; *Corpus Christianorum*, Series Latina, II, 931.

¹² The Lutheran pastor and theologian Adam G. Cooper has recently published two studies on the somatic dimension of Christianity. The first, *The Body in St Maximus the Confessor: Holy Flesh, Wholly Deified* (Oxford University Press, 2005) considers Maximus’ doctrine of corporeality from the perspective of deification. Yet through this patristic vantage point Cooper sets out a broad ranging thesis, considering not only the question of corporeality and Christ, the Church and the Christian, but also the body’s relation to epistemology and the whole cosmos, based upon the principles of Maximus. The second, most recent work of Cooper’s is his *Life in the Flesh: An Anti-Gnostic Spiritual Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, 2008). This is a general consideration of Christianity’s understanding of the body through a wide range of perspectives, its place in Scripture and Tradition, and then, as he expresses it, “in philosophy and life”. Cooper’s consideration of the theological questions involves a general survey of the theme in the Fathers (Irenaeus, Tertullian, Maximus and Cyril) followed by the anthropology of Thomas Aquinas, and finally the Christology and Eucharistic theology of Martin Luther. The compilation of essays, *Religion and the Body*, ed. Sarah Coakley (Cambridge University Press, 1997) includes two general studies that are relevant to us: Kallistos Ware’s ‘My helper and my enemy: the body in Greek Christianity’ (pp. 90-110) and Andrew Louth’s ‘The body in Western Catholic Christianity’ (pp. 111-130). For a thorough, historical analysis see Benedict Ashley OP, *Theologies of the Body, Humanist and Christian* (Braintree: The Pope John Center, 1985). The famous Wednesday Audiences of Pope John Paul II, between September 1979 and December 1984, comprise a vast ‘theology of the body’, rooted in the creation narrative of Genesis 2. This theological anthropology has been collected and translated into English in *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, ed. and trans. Michael Waldstein (Boston: Pauline Books, 2006). Finally, as a more strictly theological work, mention should be made of the study of Cypriano Vagaggini OSB, *Caro Salutis Est Cardo — Corporetà, Eucaristia e Liturgia* (Rome: Desclée & Co., 1968) which is built on the centrality of Christ’s physical body in Christian soteriology, and its continuing operation in and through the sacraments of the Church. Vagaggini develops the notion of the flesh as the instrument of the Godhead in a brief survey of the most relevant Fathers and St Thomas Aquinas, finally considering its implications for the Liturgy.

¹³ Other than the studies we shall be alluding to in chapter one, the theme has appeared within more general studies of dogmatic theology. The Thomist theologian Colman O’Neill OP did not devote a specific study of this theme but, like Cypriano Vagaggini before him (op cit.), developed a sacramental theology based upon a vivid understanding of the continued contact exerted upon sinners by the physical body of Christ. This can be seen in his *Sacramental Realism: A General Theory of the Sacraments* (Princeton: Scepter Publishers, 1998), and in more detailed fashion in his *Meeting Christ in the Sacraments*, rev. ed. (New York: St Paul’s, 1991). Here, in his Eucharistic theology, O’Neill argues for a somatically real understanding of the union of Christ with his members, who are said to constitute his mystical body “when united with the physical body of Christ” (Ibid. p. 42). The soteriological centrality of the physical body of Christ and a highly realistic understanding of its contact with us is consistently stressed by O’Neill. See particularly pp. 23-42; pp. 77-82; pp. 161-184 of *Meeting Christ* (Ibid.). As O’Neill states, “the sublimity of loving God is anchored in bodily contact with the humanity of Christ and in eating what appears to be bread” (Ibid. p. 165). Another Thomist theologian, Jerome Hamer OP, dedicated a part of his study of ecclesial communion to our theme. See his *The Church is a Communion*, trans. Ronald Matthews (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964), particularly pp. 49-68, and pp. 76-82. Mention should also be made of J.M.-R. Tillard’s *Chair de l’Église, chair du Christ: Aux sources de l’ecclésiologie de communion* (Paris: Cerf, 1992), which presents a theology of ecclesial communion based upon union with the flesh of Christ,

recently, has been proposed by biblical scholars. As we shall explain in greater detail in the introduction to part one (which follows this), our dogmatic enquiry takes as its point of reference a number of scriptural exegetes who are united by a common affirmation, namely, the belief that the corporate ecclesiology of the New Testament consists not only in the pneumatic dimension of Pentecost, but most essentially in “the real, physical union of the body of the Christian with the body of Christ”,¹⁴ implying a bodily union that “must be understood with great realism”.¹⁵ Our task will be to illuminate the dogmatic credibility of such a thesis. The dogmatic sources will be Patristic, medieval, and modern: St Cyril of Alexandria (†444), St Thomas Aquinas (†1274), and Matthias Scheeben (†1888), all of whom are united by an intellectual kinship that allows them to elucidate and develop our theme in significant ways. Their important theological relationships, and the reasons why they can be juxtaposed in our study, will be exposed at the relevant stages of our enquiry, from the standpoint of both doctrine and history. In the writings of Cyril and Scheeben our theme is raised to a special prominence, whilst in the Christology and Sacramentology of St Thomas we encounter crucial distinctions and precisions which lend the thesis a metaphysical and dogmatic coherence. As we shall see, Thomas explicitly draws upon and clarifies the intuitions of Cyril, allowing us to grasp both the theological import and the limitations of the rich imagery and metaphorical language by which Cyril elucidates his theology of union-in-the-flesh, whilst Scheeben seeks to draw our two doctors into a synthesis, articulating a Eucharistic somaticism reminiscent of Cyril’s in force of expression, yet informed by the principles and more sober, technical argumentation of Thomas.

Our study therefore comprises two parts: the first part, where we introduce the theme from the standpoint of the scriptural exegetes, anticipates the second, dogmatic part. In the first part, however, we do more than present the exegetical viewpoints, but also consider certain fundamental anthropological and theological questions which any thesis of ‘bodily union’ between Christ and the Christian must presuppose. After these initial reflections we come to our dogmatic study. This second part is made up of three chapters, corresponding to our three theologians, and comprises the chief part of our dissertation. By proceeding in this way, from the conclusions of scriptural exegetes to the arguments of speculative theologians,

principally through recourse to certain texts of St Augustine, St John Chrysostom and St Cyril of Alexandria.

¹⁴ Pierre Benoit, ‘Corps, Tête et Plérome dans les épîtres de la Captivité’, *Revue Biblique* 63 (1956), p. 112.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

we will attempt to “overcome the dualism between exegesis and theology” identified by Pope Benedict XVI,¹⁶ allowing exegetical and dogmatic considerations to interrelate in a manner mutually informative and enlightening.

We should note here that our theme has held the attention not only of certain modern exegetes and ancient Fathers¹⁷ but has emerged too in the lives and writings of several of the masters of the Mystical Life. For example, according to Blessed Raymond of Capua, “for as long as she lived in the body” St Catherine of Siena yearned for frequent reception of the Eucharist, “so that not only her spirit might be united with the Eternal Spouse but also her body with His body”.¹⁸ Likewise, St Francis de Sales instructed his charge not only to aspire towards spiritual union with her Lord, but specifically to cultivate a desire for “union with his life-giving flesh”, and to long for this more comprehensive contact on those occasions Holy Communion was out of reach.¹⁹ As another theologian of the Mystical life puts it, writing within the Thomistic tradition, “what is peculiar to the Eucharist [is] that it enables us to share in the divine nature by means of the flesh ... flesh which was taken from the Blessed Virgin.”²⁰ Indeed, as he reminds the reader in Cyrillian terms, “the direct vehicle of divine life in this sacrament is not the soul of Jesus Christ, but His adorable body”.²¹ Accordingly, St Mary Magdalen de Pazzi understood the Eucharist to be the “knot of the matrimonial bond” not only in reference to the sublimity of its divine communications but specifically because “it obtains for us a special union with the humanity of our Lord”.²² Thus, if Christ and the Christian soul were, before Eucharistic communion, “spouses in a certain manner

¹⁶ *Address of Pope Benedict XVI* (14th General Congregation of the Synod of Bishops, Synod Hall, October 14th 2008). As he said further, “when exegesis is not theological, scripture cannot be the soul of theology, and *vice versa*. ... Biblical exegesis and theology are two dimensions of one reality we call ‘theology’”.

¹⁷ Our particular focus shall be upon Cyril of Alexandria though the theme emerges occasionally in many of Fathers. For example, “Omnis enim ecclesia sponsus Christi est cuius principium et primitiae caro Christi est; ibi iuncta est sponsa sponso in carne” (St Augustine *In Joan. Epist.* tract II, 2; PL 35, 1990). For further texts, see Cooper, *Life in the Flesh* (Ibid.) pp. 59-83; and Vagaggini (Ibid.) pp. 65-94.

¹⁸ *The Life of St Catherine of Siena*, Bl. Raymond of Capua, trans. George Lamb (Rockford, Illinois: Tan Books, 1960) p. 111. As he continues, “She knew, in fact, that though the adorable Sacrament of the Body of the Lord produces spiritual grace in the soul and unites it to its Saviour, this union being the end for which the Sacrament was instituted, nevertheless anyone who truly feeds on it is at once united with His Body Therefore wishing to unite herself ever more closely with the most noble object of her love, she determined to receive Holy Communion as often as she possibly could” (Ibid).

¹⁹ *Introduction to the Devout Life*, trans. Michael Day Cong. Orat. (Wheatthampstead: Anthony Clarke, 1990) p. 83.

²⁰ Ven. Juan Arintero OP, *The Mystical Evolution in the Development and Vitality of the Church*, trans. Jordan Aumann OP (Rockford, Illinois: Tan Books, 1978), p. 337.

²¹ Ibid.

²² *De Sacramento Altissimo* I, chap. 33 (quoted in Juan Arintero OP, *The Mystical Evolution*, p.334).

through grace, through the Eucharist they become ‘two in one flesh’.”²³ Indeed, the “mystical marriage of the Word with the soul” is not simply a communion of spirits but “is culminated in the body”.²⁴ Importantly for our study, such a mutual exchange and union has led Jacques-Benigne Bossuet to remark that, by virtue of the Eucharist, “his body is not now His, but ours; and our body is no longer our own, but Jesus Christ’s”.²⁵

From the perspective of the Christian who, with St Paul, longs to be “delivered from this body of death” (Rom. 7: 24) these doctrines are compelling yet, by themselves, inadequately formulated and explained. The same is true of the exegetical findings we shall be presenting; these assert a closely related thesis that needs to be accounted for, and rendered coherently, from a dogmatic perspective. Such a task concerns us in this study.

²³ Ibid. p. 333.

²⁴ Ibid. p. 333.

²⁵ Jacques-Benigne Bossuet, *Médit. Sur l’Evang., La Cène*, 24 (cited by Arinterro OP, *The Mystical Evolution*, p. 334).

Introduction

General Procedure

The doctrine of Christ and the Church as *duo in carne una*,¹ considered from the vantage point of its bodiliness, is founded upon certain presuppositions. In this first part of our study we shall endeavour to consider some of these preliminary questions before expounding upon the doctrine and developing our thesis in part II. These initial reflections will be centred upon the relevant aspects of St Paul's doctrine of "the body of Christ" which, in its theological richness and versatility, can be said to represent the *nexus mysteriorum* of his teaching. One exegete, who has a particular interest in the theme of somaticism in Paul, has observed:

In its closely interconnected meanings, [in Paul's theology] the word *sōma* knits together all his great themes. It is from this body of sin and death that we are delivered; it is through the body of Christ on the Cross that we are saved; it is into His body the Church that we are incorporated; it is by His body in the Eucharist that this Community is sustained; it is in our body that its new life has to be manifested; it is to a resurrection of this body to the likeness of His glorious body that we are destined.²

In light of this theological versatility and richness, recourse to distinct avenues of investigation (exegetical, dogmatic, and anthropological) will be necessary for us in order to prepare for our later, dogmatic considerations. There, in the three chapters of part II, the exegetical conclusions we propose at the end of part I will be expounded upon dogmatically.

¹ We take this phrase not only from Paul's application of "one flesh" of Gen. 2:24 to describe the union of Christ and the Church in Eph. 5:31, but also from the example of certain Fathers who occasionally use it to emphasise the physical realism by which they understand the union of Christ to the Christian. For example, in stressing the idea of unity with Christ which is found in the Eucharist, Ignatius of Antioch replaces the more typically Pauline "one body" (ἐν σῶμα) by "one flesh" (μία σάρξ) (see *Philad.*, 4). According to Lucien Cerfaux, this is "probablement parce que σῶμα (qu'il emploie pour l'Église, cf. *Smyrn.*, 1, 2) n'exprimerait pas assez le réalisme eucharistique". See his *La Théologie de l'Église suivant saint Paul* (Paris: Cerf, 1948) p. 226, fn. 1. See also St John Chrysostom: "with this [Eucharist] we are fed ... and we are made one body and one flesh with Christ", *Hom.* 82, 5 (*In Matt.* 26:26-28). More recently, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger has expressed it in this way: "In the light of Genesis 2:24, where man and woman become 'two in one flesh' the image of the Bride merges with the idea of the Church as the Body of Christ—an analogy derived from the Eucharistic liturgy. The unique Body of Christ is prepared; Christ and the Church will be 'two in one flesh,' one body" (*from* "The Ecclesiology of Vatican II", address given by Cardinal Ratzinger at the opening of the Pastoral Congress of the Diocese of Aversa, Italy, 2001).

² John A.T. Robinson, *The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1952) p. 9.

Anthropological Considerations

This initial reflection of ours on Paul's use of corporeal vocabulary to describe the union of Christ and the Church does not only involve exegesis and theology but also anthropology. After all, Paul's theological use of *sōma* in its various instances (in reference to the individual body of Christ, the Sacrament, or to the ecclesial body) presupposes a specific understanding of human bodiliness and its capacities. Relevant also, therefore, are the words of Eucharistic Institution, where loving offering and donation is spoken of in bodily terms alone. As we shall see, both Paul's general deployment of *sōma* throughout his epistles and the words of Eucharistic Institution imply an understanding of man that is incompatible with the prevailing, Cartesian assumptions of modern times, and with our "modern linguistic sensibilities".³ Indeed, such is the extent of this incompatibility and the pervasiveness of its influence on our anthropological assumptions that certain exegetes have been compelled to demonstrate the historically obvious point that "Descartes' distinction between *res cogitans* and *res extensa* was ... unknown in the apostle's times".⁴ Indeed, another commentator has shown how it is frequently the case that St Paul's accounts of the bodily resurrection "is read as built on a Cartesian dichotomy of physical versus spiritual".⁵ Joseph Ratzinger has also perceived the difficulties a contemporary audience faces in accepting the full truths of the Incarnation, in light of the incompatible nature of current anthropological assumptions:

We are, even now, deeply influenced by the Cartesian division of reality: we do not want matter to have any part in our relationship with God. We do not consider it capable of becoming the expression of our relationship with God or *a fortiori* the medium through which God touches us. We are tempted as much as ever to restrict religion to spirit and mind.⁶

³ Joseph Ratzinger, *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today*, trans. Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), p. 38.

⁴ Jean Héring, *The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians* (London: Epworth, 1962) p. 119.

⁵ Dale Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995) p. 127.

⁶ Joseph Ratzinger, *Theologische Prinzipienlehre: Bausteine zur Fundamentalthologie* (München: Erich Wewel Verlag, 1982) p. 30. (ET: *Principles of Catholic Theology*, trans. Sr. Mary Frances McCarthy S.N.D. (San Francisco, 1987) p. 29). "Wir bis zur Stunde tiefgehend von der kartesischen Teilung der Wirklichkeit bestimmt: In das Gottesverhältnis wollen wir die Materie nicht hineinnehmen. Wir halten sie für unfähig, Ausdruck der Gottesbeziehung oder gar Medium zu werden, durch das Gott uns berührt. Wir sind nach wie vor versucht, Religion allein auf Geist und Gesinnung zu beschränken."

Therefore, in this first part of our investigation, certain anthropological reflections will be necessary, both in order to come to a clearer understanding of Paul's corporeal vocabulary and the words of Eucharistic Institution, and to counter the prevailing anthropological assumptions of a Cartesian anthropology which is deeply inimical to the thesis we are endeavouring to present.

Order of Enquiry

But the principal anthropological issues which need to be addressed by us are determined by certain prior conclusions which we will reach through both exegetical and dogmatic means. It is these we must consider first. Primary among these is how the physical, human body of Christ *natum de Maria*, relates to the 'body of Christ' that is the Sacrament and, more problematically, the 'body of Christ' that is the Church. Though modern exegesis is frequently perplexed by these questions, recourse to the wider theological tradition and to the Catholic Magisterium will enable us to recognise not only the necessary distinctions, but also to perceive a certain "chronological and ontological priority"⁷ for the individual body of Christ present in the Eucharist in relation to the ecclesial sense of the term.

Only with these clarifications in place may we go on to consider some of the anthropological presuppositions and implications of the corporeal vocabulary that concerns us. In continuity with our prior exegetical and dogmatic consideration, where we shall identify the causal relation that exists between the physical, sacramental and ecclesiological senses of 'body of Christ', we shall consider the words of Eucharistic Institution and the anthropology they presuppose. As we have already implied, these words (interpreted by the Christian Tradition to express personal totality through a reference to human bodiliness alone) would appear to indicate an anthropology which regards the union of body and soul in substantial terms, what we might call a non-materialist, anthropological monism. Through the doctrine of *concomitantia naturalis*, which provides an interpretation of the word "body" in its Eucharistic sense, we shall attempt to show how the anthropological legacy of modern Cartesian dualism cannot accommodate the words of Institution and, by extension, the ecclesiological sense of the term 'body of Christ'.

In light of these conclusions, it is worth recognising the Semitic anthropology which underlies the words of Eucharistic Institution, and which also underlie the corporate

⁷ Benedict XVI, Post Synodal Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* I, 14.

ecclesiological doctrine of Paul. Important here is the work of Rudolph Bultmann, in (it seems to us) a positive and negative sense. In his New Testament exegesis, he both insists upon an understanding of 'body' according to a holistic anthropology, yet illogically denies the notion of physicality which we hold to be essential to the word. In light of the dogmatic tradition, we shall endeavour to demonstrate how this dematerialising tendency of Bultmann (and others) is profoundly contrary to the full truth of the doctrine of Christ's union with the Church and her individual members. Thus, along with the dualistic anthropology of Descartes, we will attempt to show how the existential anthropology of Bultmann is incompatible with the full, somatic implications of Paul's corporate, ecclesial doctrine.

These dematerialising tendencies will enable us to approach the heart of our investigation, where we shall present the conclusions of certain recent scriptural exegetes who, frequently based upon Paul's exhortation, "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?" (1 Cor 6:15), propose a somatically realistic interpretation of Paul's corporeal vocabulary to describe union with Christ. This is a bold thesis which, without the precisions of the dogmatic tradition, remains inadequately formulated. As Albert Schweitzer observed, Paul's teaching here "shows that [he] is prepared to accept in the fullest measure the implications of the union of believers with Christ as a physical bodily union".⁸ Pierre Benoit makes the same observation, though with an added precision: "by physical contact he unites the faithful to himself, even their bodies, and 'incorporates' them into himself. ... Christians are the members of Christ because their union with him joins their bodies to his body".⁹ It is, furthermore, he says, "not through a more or less superficial or ephemeral contact, but through the most intimate and lasting way there can be in this life: the assimilation of food".¹⁰ It is this somaticism we shall endeavour to expound dogmatically in part 2 of our study.

⁸ *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, trans. William Montgomery (London: A&C Black, 1931) p. 127

⁹ *Jesus and the Gospel* (vol. 1) trans. Benet Weatherhead (London: DLT, 1973) p. 118.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 115

1. The Physical Body of Christ and the Ecclesial Body of Christ: Unity and Difference

1.1 Exegetical Perplexities

The meaning of the phrase ‘the Body of Christ’ in the epistles of St Paul, and the different senses of its various applications, is one of the great disputed questions of biblical exegesis.¹ It is an expression which refers to the human body of Jesus (crucified and risen), the Eucharist, and the Church,² and is sometimes understood to denote two senses at once.³ But even before considering how each application relates theologically to the other, the apparently simple question of the basic sense of specific instances of the phrase frequently

¹ On the enormous versatility of the term (especially in relation to the accompanying adjective ‘mystical’) see Henri de Lubac SJ, *Corpus Christi: L’Eucharistie et l’Église au moyen âge* (Paris: Aubier, 1959). Within the field of exegesis, the literature on this subject is understandably immense. The following are some of those exegetes who specifically attempt to deal with the senses of the term ‘body of Christ’, and whose writing has important bearings on the question of somatic realism we shall be examining: P. Benoit, ‘Corps, Tête et Plérome dans les épîtres de la Captivité’, *Revue Biblique* 63 (1956); R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, pt. II, trans. Kendrick Grobel (New York, Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1951); B. Byrne S.J., ‘Sinning Against One’s Own Body: Paul’s Understanding of the Sexual Relationship in 1 Corinthians 6: 18’, *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 45, 4 (1983) pp. 606-616; L. Cerfaux, *La Théologie de l’Église suivant saint Paul* (Paris: Cerf, 1948); E. Ellis, ‘Soma in First Corinthians’, *Interpretation* 44 (1990) pp. 132-144; E. Käsemann, *Leib und Leib Christi* (Tübingen, 1933); and *Essays on New Testament Themes*, trans. W.J. Montague (London: SCM Press, 1964); R. H. Gundry, *Sōma in Biblical Theology, with Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); L. Malevez S.J., ‘L’Église, Corps du Christ. Sens and provenance de l’expression chez saint Paul’, *Science Religieuse, Travaux et Recherches* 32 (1944) pp. 27-94; T.W. Manson, ‘A Parallel to a N.T. Use of σωμα’, *Journal of Theological Studies* 37 (1935); D. Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (Ibid.); E. Percy, *Der Leib Christi (soma Christou) in den paulinischen Homologoumena und Antilegomena*. Lunds Universitets Arsskrift (Lund: Harrassowitz, 1942); A.E.J. Rawlinson, ‘Corpus Christi’, in *Mysterium Christi*, ed. G.K. Bell and A. Deismann (London: 1930) pp. 225-244; J.A.T. Robinson, *The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology* (London, 1952). L.S. Thornton, *The Common Life in the Body of Christ* (Westminster: 1944).

² For the instances where Paul’s use of the word ‘body’ is disputed to be either in reference to the Church, the human body of Jesus, or the Sacrament, and for a summary of these arguments, see Son Sang-Won, *Corporate Elements in Pauline Anthropology: A Study of Selected Terms, Idioms, and Concepts in the Light of Paul’s Usage and Background* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2001) pp. 92-102. Explicit references to the Church as the “body of Christ” occur in 1 Cor. 12:27, Eph. 1: 22-23, 5:30; and Col. 1:24 (and probable allusions occur in 1 Cor. 6:15, 17, 10:16, 11:24-29, Eph. 4:12; and Col. 2:17). The Church is identified as “one body in Christ” in Rom. 12:5 (cf. Eph. 3:6), and also simply as “the body” (Eph. 5:23, Col. 1:18), or simply as “one body”, without allusion to Christ, in 1 Cor. 10:17, Eph. 2:16; 4:4, Col. 3:15. The related notion of Christ’s headship of the Church occurs exclusively in Ephesians and Colossians (Eph. 1:22, 4:15-16, 5:23; Col. 2:19).

³ This is frequently the conclusion of exegetes. For example, commenting on 1 Cor 10: 14-22, C.D.F. Moule writes, “It is not improbable that Paul here is using *soma* with a *double entendre*, to mean not only the body of Jesus sacrificed on the cross and participated in at the Lord’s Supper through the Spirit, but also the body which is the Church: the selfishness and greed which he is castigating in 1 Corinthians 11 constitute a failure to discern both the physical body of Christ as surrendered on the cross and the metaphorical body of Christians gathered at the Lord’s supper”. *The Origin of Christology* (Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 73.

puzzles exegetes. Albert Schweitzer, for example, despaired of ever finding clarity. When remarking on the versatility of the phrase in Paul, he observed that “all attempts to distinguish ... are inevitably doomed to failure”.⁴ One recent study came to a similarly forthright conclusion: “It is exegetically impossible to make a complete distinction in Paul between σῶμα that refers to the individual body of Christ, and σῶμα that refers to his ecclesial body”,⁵ and that “to equate them or to distinguish them completely creates a confused exegesis”.⁶ Accordingly, certain commentators have settled on abandoning distinctions altogether, frequently identifying the ecclesial references to the ‘body of Christ’ with the physical body of Christ born of Mary, crucified and risen. J.A.T. Robinson, for example, insists that the Church “is *no other* than the glorified body of the risen and ascended Christ”, and that the baptised “are in *literal fact* the risen organism of Christ’s person”.⁷ Ernst Percy also resists applying distinctions, teaching that the individual, personal body of Christ is strictly identical with the Church; the Church is indistinguishable to that body which died on the cross and rose on the third day.⁸

The exegetical perplexities on this subject do not end there. Even for those exegetes who uphold distinctions, and for whom the senses of Paul’s various applications of ‘body of Christ’ are generally clear, the theological *relation* of one to the other often remains indistinct and unintelligible for them. As one Anglican scholar lamented, “Nor is it by any means clear whether the use of the phrase in regard to the Eucharist has little or much or nothing or everything to do with its use in reference to the Church”.⁹ Together with these specifically exegetical problems, and possibly compounding them, are certain anthropological assumptions which cause Paul’s ecclesial, corporate vocabulary to seem unintelligible from the beginning. As one writer has observed, “Descartes’ dichotomy [i.e. *res cogitans* and *res extensa*] has misled countless readers in their reading of ancient texts, Paul especially”,¹⁰ requiring, therefore, that interpreters today “wipe clean our slate of corporeal vocabulary”.¹¹

⁴ Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, trans. William Montgomery (London: A&C Black, 1931) p. 118.

⁵ Sang-Won (Aaron) Son, *Corporate Elements in Pauline Anthropology*, p. 108.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ J.A.T. Robinson, *The Body* p. 51 (my emphasis).

⁸ Ernst Percy, *Der Leib Christi (soma Christou) in den paulinischen Homologoumena und Antilegomena*. Lunds Universitets Arsskrift (Lund: Harrassowitz, 1942) p. 44.

⁹ Geddes MacGregor, *Corpus Christi, The Nature of the Church according to the Reformed Tradition* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958) p. 157.

¹⁰ Dale Martin, *The Corinthian Body*, p. 6.

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 8

Joseph Ratzinger has made the same observation, claiming that contemporary anthropological presuppositions serve to make the term 'body of Christ' "largely incomprehensible to us today".¹²

1.2. Principles in the wider theological tradition

Yet despite these exegetical difficulties, there are certain consistent principles present in the wider theological tradition that illuminate the question. For example, on the difficulty of what causal relation exists between the different applications of 'the body of Christ', the history of Christian doctrine shows us that their relationship will be greatly determined by how each is perceived independently. As was demonstrated in the first and second centuries, a Gnostic or Docetistic understanding of the human body of Christ will greatly determine one's understanding of the word 'body' when applied to the Eucharist, and ultimately, to the Church.¹³ Likewise, a purely figurative or spiritual interpretation of the words 'body of Christ' in their Eucharistic sense will in consequence usually find a correspondingly figurative or spiritual interpretation when 'body of Christ' is read in its ecclesiological sense. Much contemporary, protestant exegesis testifies to this.¹⁴ Conversely, as one commentator has recently observed, "Ecclesial realism appears deeply rooted in Eucharistic realism".¹⁵ The same principle is often evident in the reverse direction. For example, whilst Rudolph Bultmann regards the phrase 'body of Christ' (taken in its ecclesiological sense) to be *merely* an adaptation of a Gnostic (and therefore anti-material) motif,¹⁶ and uses this theory to

¹² *Introduction to Christianity*, trans. J.R. Foster (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990) p. 176.

¹³ On Gnostic resistance to the Eucharist in light of their Christology, see Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Smyrnaeans* 7.

¹⁴ The influence one's interpretation of the Last Supper narrative has on one's interpretation of Paul's ecclesiology can be seen in the work of the Pauline scholar Robert H. Gundry. When attempting to provide a theological explanation for the ecclesiological positions of such exegetes as P. Benoit, L. Cerfaux, and J.A.T. Robinson, who stress that ecclesial union is not constituted merely by moral or social bonds but is based on some kind of contact with the individual, risen body of Christ (a position we shall be expounding in due course), Gundry states that only an "appeal [to] old-fashioned transubstantiation would pose a possible solution [to their thesis]." "But", he writes, "it is precisely the literalism of such transubstantiation which makes the [ecclesiological] doctrine problematic". *Sōma in Biblical Theology, with Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) p. 237.

¹⁵ Gilles Emery OP, 'The Ecclesial fruit of the Eucharist in St Thomas Aquinas', in *Nova et Vetera* (English Edition), vol. 2, no. 1 (2004) p. 47.

¹⁶ Rudolph Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, pt. I, (Ibid.) pp. 178-9. Similarly, Ernst Käsemann thinks that Paul's "distinctive combination" of the Eucharist and "the Church as the Body of Christ" can be explained "only on the basis" of his adoption and adaptation of "the gnostic myth of an Archetypal Man". See his 'The Pauline Doctrine of the Lord's Supper' in *Essays on New Testament Themes*, p. 109.

determine his views on St Paul's ecclesiology, Lucien Cerfaux and others¹⁷ perceive in the ecclesial sense of 'body of Christ' a linguistic and theological allusion to the words of Eucharistic Institution.¹⁸ Correspondingly, whilst the likes of Cerfaux and Ratzinger¹⁹ understand the ecclesiological sense of 'body of Christ' to be theologically related to the Eucharistic sense, and even to allude to a certain corporeality involved in the union between Christ and Christians,²⁰ Bultmann's ecclesiological doctrine is characterised by its heightened spirituality.²¹

Inevitably, exegetical differences on this term of Paul's are frequently due to certain dogmatic presuppositions through which the Scriptures have been read since the Reformation. The invisibility of the Church in the ecclesiologies of Zwingli and Calvin can be said to be theologically related to their rejection of transubstantiation.²² As Calvin famously taught on the sacrament of the Eucharist, "since this mystery [of the Lord's Supper] is heavenly, there is no need to draw Christ to earth that he may be joined to us".²³ His ecclesiology corresponds to this purely heavenly principle for, as he wrote, "[some] always demand a visible and apparent form of the Church ... We, on the contrary, affirm that the Church can subsist without visible appearance".²⁴ Accordingly, as one commentator has

¹⁷ See also A.E.J. Rawlinson, "Corpus Christi", in *Mysterium Christi*, ed. G.K.A. Bell and Adolf Deismann (London: Longmans, 1930), pp. 227-30. Hans Conzelmann, *An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1969) p. 262; J.A.T. Robinson, *The Body*, pp. 56-7. P. Benoit, 'Corps, Tête et Plérome dans les épîtres de la Captivité', *Revue Biblique* 63 (1956) pp. 123-4.

¹⁸ Lucien Cerfaux, *La Théologie de l'Église suivant saint Paul* (Paris: Cerf, 1948) p. 224.

¹⁹ "The formula 'the Church is the body of Christ' ... states that the Eucharist, in which the Lord gives us his body and makes us one body, forever remains the place where the Church is generated, where the Lord himself never ceases to found her anew". See Joseph Ratzinger, *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today*, trans. Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), p. 36 ff.

²⁰ Lucien Cerfaux, *La Théologie de l'Église suivant saint Paul*, p.234.

²¹ We shall be considering this in greater detail shortly. As we shall see in more detail shortly, Bultmann interprets the phrase 'body of Christ' (when applied to the Church) as the designation of a "supramundane", "transcendental" eon or sphere. See his *Theology of the New Testament*, pp. 310-11. Basing Paul's ecclesiology entirely on Gnosticism might seem to lead, inevitably, to an exaggeratedly spiritual understanding of the Church. As Robert Jewett writes, "the Gnostic conception had no place for actual corporal unity since its underlying dualism involved a negation of the material world as the root of evil". See his *Paul's Anthropological Terms: A Study of their use in Conflict Settings* (Leiden: Brill, 1971) p. 217.

²² For an analysis of this ecclesiology in reference to its Eucharistic principle see Charles Journet, *L'Église du Verbe Incarné*, (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1951) vol. 2, pp. 977-987. See also E.L. Mascall, *Christ, the Christian and the Church: A Study of the Incarnation and its Consequences* (London: Longmans, 1946) p. 113. Also, Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: Dacre Press, 1945) p. 633.

²³ *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, bk. IV (chap. 17, 30-31), in *The Library of Christian Classics*, vol. 21 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977) pp. 1402-3. As Gregory Dix puts it, according to Calvin the "final meaning [of the Eucharist is] Jesus bestows His Spirit on the spirit of the individual who believes in Him". Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* p. 633.

²⁴ *Letter to the King of France in Opera Omnia, Corpus Reformatorum*, 1844 vol iii, pp. 26-7.

observed, the “real Eucharistic action is for Calvin individual and internal, not corporate”.²⁵ Thus, in such instances, the ecclesiological sense of the term ‘body of Christ’ adapts and corresponds to a symbolic, or purely spiritual Eucharistic principle, or is otherwise constructed independently from this principle altogether.²⁶

1.3. A Traditional Versatility

But even prescinding from the great dogmatic disputes which inform one’s interpretation of the term ‘body of Christ’, biblical exegesis within the Catholic Tradition itself has manifested a certain interpretive versatility when it comes to this phrase. This has been frequently alluded to in recent times.²⁷ For example, according to the exegetical works of some of the Fathers, a *triforme corporis Christi* can be discerned in the New Testament, where a reference to the ‘body of Christ’ born of Mary according to the literal sense of the passage can also, simultaneously, designate the ‘body of Christ’ that is the Church and the sacramental ‘body of Christ’ present under the appearances of bread and wine. It is, at the same time, to be distinguished from them.

St Ambrose’s commentary on the Gospel of Luke is a good example of this way of interpreting the word ‘body’. Commenting on a single line (Lk.17:37: “Where the body is, there the eagles will be gathered”), Ambrose is able to discern three senses in which “body” can be understood here. First of all, he reads the passage as referring to the human body of Christ, crucified, dead, and buried; asking the reader (“above all”) to “remember that Joseph received [that] body from Pilate”; secondly, he interprets it as a reference to the ‘body of Christ’ that is the Church, teaching that “the body is the women and Apostles gathered together around our Lord’s sepulchre”; and thirdly, he interprets it as the ‘body of Christ’

²⁵ Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, p. 633.

²⁶ Good examples of this tendency can be found in the interpretations of the modern Lutheran exegetes Rudolph Bultmann and Ernst Käsemann. See Bultmann’s *Theology of the New Testament*, (Ibid.) pp. 310-11. His ecclesiological understanding of the $\sigma\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$ $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\tilde{o}\tilde{\upsilon}$ (which is largely Gnostic) has no specific connection with his existentialist (and largely symbolist) interpretation of the body Christ spoken of in the words of Institution. In the exegesis of E. Käsemann there is a similar disconnection between Eucharist and Ecclesiology. Whilst he rejects Bultmann’s existential, introvertive interpretation of ‘body’ when applied to the body of Christ of the Last Supper narratives, and (rightly) understands $\sigma\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$ as signifying the possibility for communication, rather like Bultmann he traces the ecclesial ‘body of Christ’ not to the gift of the body of Christ *natum de Maria* but to the pre-historical, “Ur-Anthropos” of Gnostic mythology. See his *Leib und Leib Christi* (Tübingen, 1933) p. 50ff.

²⁷ Most famously, Henri De Lubac SJ, *Corpus Mysticum* (Paris: Aubier, 1959), pp. 297-339; ET: trans. Gemma Simmonds CJ (University of Notre Dame, 2006) pp. 265-301; see also Jean Borella, *The Sense of the Supernatural*, trans. G. John Champoux (T&T Clark: Edinburgh, 1998) pp. 69-112.

present sacramentally, teaching that “the body is that of which it was said, ‘My flesh is meat indeed’”.²⁸ According to Ambrose, the ‘body of Christ’ that was crucified, the ‘body of Christ’ that is the Church, and the ‘body of Christ’ that is the Eucharist, are three distinct though legitimate senses in which the one word “body” can be understood in this single instance of its usage.

1.4. Dogmatic Clarifications

Yet this exegetical versatility is to be read according to the dogmatic principles which precede and underlie it. Though it was common for the Fathers to speak of the ‘body of Christ’ in three ways,²⁹ it is clear that two of these senses were consistently taught to be ontologically identical, and distinguishable only according to modality. A representative sample of texts from the Fathers expresses this quite clearly.³⁰ As St Augustine writes, “He received flesh from the flesh of Mary; ... He walked here in very flesh and gave that very flesh [*ipsam carnem*] to us to eat for our salvation”;³¹ or as Ambrose teaches in reference to

²⁸ “De corpore autem dubitare non possumus, maxime si meminerimus quod a Pilato ioseph corpus accepit. Nonne tibi videntur aquilae circa corpus, mulieres apostolorumque conventus circa Domini sepulturam? Nonne tibi videntur aquilae circa corpus, quando veniet in nubibus, et videbit eum omnis oculus? est autem corpus, de quo dictum est: caro mea vere est cibus. Circa hoc corpus aquilae sunt, quae circumvolant spiritualibus alis. Sunt etiam circa corpus aquilae, quae credunt Iesum Christum in carne venisse. Est etiam ecclesia, in qua per baptismi gratiam spiritu renovamur” (*In Lucam*, 17:37; quoted in St Thomas’s *Catena Aurea*, cap. 17, lect. 10).

²⁹ See De Lubac (*Ibid.*) pp. 297-339; Borella (*Ibid.*), pp. 69-77. The threefold doctrine of the Fathers is said to receive its first systematic presentation in St Paschasius Radbertus’s *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini* 7, written between 831 and 833. See *Christianorum Continuato Mediaevalis*, (Belgium: Turnout, 1953), vol. 16, p. 38, line 26.

³⁰ For example, Ignatius of Antioch, *Smyrn.* 7, I; *Philad.* 4; Justin Martyr, *Apol.* 66, 2; Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adv. Haer.* V 2, 2; St Cyril of Jerusalem, *Myst. Cat.* IV and V; John Damascene, *De Fide Orth.* IV, 33; Hilary of Poitiers, *De Trin.* VIII, 14. Writing in the ninth century, St Paschasius Radbertus stated emphatically: “[the body in the Sacrament] is clearly no other Flesh than that which was born of Mary and suffered on the Cross and rose from the tomb” (*De Corpore et Sanguine Domini* I, 45-52).

³¹ *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 98, 9 (*CCL*, 39, p. 1385)). The whole passage reads: “Suscepit enim de terra terram; quia caro de terra est, et de carne Mariae carnem accepit, et quia in ipsa carne hic ambulavit, et ipsam carnem nobis manducandam ad salutem dedit. Nemo autem illam carnem manducat, nisi prius adorauerit; inuentum est quemadmodum adoretur tale scabellum pedum Domini, et non solum non peccemus adorando, sed peccemus non adorando”. One could add the following teaching of Augustine: “Hoc agnoscite in pane, quod pependit in cruce” (“Recognise in the bread that which hung on the Cross”). The whole passage from this sermon emphatically expresses his belief in the identification of the Eucharist with the body of Jesus *natum de Maria*: “Christus ergo Dominus noster, qui obtulit patiendo pro nobis quod nascendo accepit ex nobis, princeps sacerdotum factus in aeternum, sacrificandi dedit ordinem quem uidetis, corporis utique et sanguinis sui. nam percussum lancea corpus eius aquam et sanguinem emisit, quo peccata nostra dimisit. huius gratiae memores, uestram ipsorum salutem operantes, quoniam deus est qui operatur in uobis, cum timore et tremore ad participationem huius altaris accedite. hoc agnoscite in pane, quod pependit in cruce: hoc in calice, quod manauit ex latere.” (*Sermon Denis* 3; PL 46, 827).

the Eucharist, “it is the true Flesh of Christ that was crucified and buried: therefore truly this is the Sacrament of that Flesh”.³² The Patristic doctrine of the three-fold body of Christ has, therefore, to be understood in light of their teaching that the body born of Mary is substantially indistinguishable from the body into which the bread is converted. Importantly, the ‘body’ *quod est ecclesia* is not identical to this body but relates to it as an effect to its principle, deriving its being and unity from the donation of the *corpus verum* in its sacramental mode.³³ Such a theme is articulated clearly, once again, in the teaching of St Augustine: “The spouse of Christ is the whole Church, whose principle [*cuius principium*] ... is the flesh of Christ: there the bride is joined to the bridegroom in bodily union [*ibi iuncta ... in carne*]”.³⁴ Accordingly, “it is that flesh [*illi carni* - the Word’s] to which the Church is joined [*adiungitur ecclesia*]”.³⁵ This is echoed by St Cyril of Alexandria when he writes, “Through the mystery of the Eucharist He makes us of the same Body with Himself and with each other.”³⁶

These simple Patristic distinctions lend a theological coherence to the theme that has, as we saw earlier, perplexed so many recent thinkers. The ‘body of Christ’ spoken of in reference to the Eucharist is substantially and numerically identical to the physical body of Christ crucified, buried and risen, whilst the ‘body of Christ’ spoken of in reference to the Church is not identical to this body but is intrinsically and essentially related to it, as effect to cause.³⁷ Where there is a distinction in these Patristic sources between the body of Christ

³² St Ambrose, *De Mysteriis* 53 (CSEL 73, pp. 114). “Vera utique caro Christi, quae crucifixa est, quae sepulta est: vere ergo carnis illius sacramentum est”.

³³ A collection of Patristic texts on this theme and some theological analysis can be found in J.M.-R. Tillard OP, *Flesh of the Church, Flesh of Christ: At the source of the Ecclesiology of Communion*, trans. Madeleine Beaumont (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2001), pp. 33-82; and Cypriano Vagaggini OSB, *The Flesh: Instrument of Salvation*, trans. Charles Underhill Quinn (New York: Society of St Paul, 1969), pp. 47-95. See also Bruno Forte, *La Chiesa nell’Eucaristia: Per un’ecclesiologia eucaristia alla luce del Vaticano II* (Naples: M.D.’Auria, 1988). As Gregory Dix writes, “[in the Patristic era] the twin realities of the sacrament and the Church ... were regarded in a sense as cause and effect”. *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: Dacre Press, 1945) p. 251.

³⁴ “Omnis enim ecclesia sponsus Christi est cuius principium et primitiae caro Christi est; ibi iuncta est sponsa sponso in carne” (*In Joan. Epist.* tract II, 2; PL 35, 1990).

³⁵ *Ibid.* “Verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis. ...illi carni adiungitur ecclesia et fit Christus totus, caput et corpus”.

³⁶ St Cyril of Alexandria, *In Joh.* 11:11 (PG 74, 560).

³⁷ Of course, the causal relation exists on both sides (the Eucharist not only brings into effect the Church, but the Church brings into effect the Eucharist). This is alluded to in John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* 33. However, as we shall see, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* and certain other magisterial documents have explicitly emphasised the causal priority on the side of the Eucharist. In writing of the “striking interplay between the Eucharist which builds up the Church and the Church herself which ‘makes’ the Eucharist”, Benedict XVI insists that “the primary causality” is from the Eucharist on the Church (*Sacramentum Caritatis* I, 14).

born of Mary and the body present under the sacramental species of bread and wine, it is a distinction according to modality rather than to identity; a distinction between the true body considered in itself and the same true body present in its sacramental mode.³⁸ Consequently, subsequent to the Patristic witness, certain further clarifications emerge in the sacramental theology of St Thomas Aquinas in continuity with the principles found in the Fathers.³⁹ The body of Christ *natum de Maria* and present under the sacramental species of bread and wine relates to the body of Christ *quod est ecclesia* in three precise ways according the three-fold structure of the sacrament.⁴⁰ Important for us here is St Thomas' clear articulation of the distinction and causal relation between the body born of Mary (*corpus verum*) and the 'body' that is the Church (*corpus mysticum*):⁴¹ "the unity of the mystical body", he writes, "is the fruit of the true body received".⁴² Indeed, the ultimate effect of the gift of the true body and blood is to procure the very unity which its sacramental signs outwardly express to us: as the many grains of wheat come together to form a single loaf, so the Eucharist brings together a diverse multitude into a single reality under Christ, *multi unum in Christo*:⁴³ the perfect union

³⁸ Present, therefore, as both reality and sign. In St Paschasius Radbertus' presentation of the threefold body of Christ, the identity between the two is clear. As one commentator has pointed out, "for Radbertus, the 'primary analogue' is the risen body of Christ, with which the sacramental body is identical". James T. O'Connor, *The Hidden Manna: A Theology of the Eucharist* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988) p. 88.

³⁹ For evidence of this continuity, see Sebastian Tromp SJ, *Corpus Christi quod est Ecclesia* (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1946) vol. 1. For more on Thomas's theology of the ecclesial fruits of the Eucharist, see Felicísimo Martínez, 'La Eucaristía y la unidad de la Iglesia en Santo Tomás de Aquino', *Studium* 9 (1969), pp. 377-404; and Gilles Emery OP, 'The Ecclesial fruit of the Eucharist in St Thomas Aquinas' (Ibid.), pp. 43-60.

⁴⁰ On this, see Gilles Emery OP, 'The Ecclesial fruit of the Eucharist in St Thomas Aquinas' (Ibid.) First of all, the sensible sign of the sacrament (*sacramentum tantum*; the many grains that constitute the bread, and the many grapes that constitute the wine) outwardly signify what the Eucharist effects: namely, the forging of unity from a scattered multitude (the unity of the Church; *ex multis unum*). Secondly, the true body of Christ is at once the sign and the first effect of the sacrament (*sacramentum et res*) for it both signifies ecclesial unity and procures it by being given to us in holy communion. Thirdly, the ultimate effect or fruit of the Eucharist (*res tantum*) is the grace of man's union with Christ, his conversion or incorporation into him, the intimate union of head and members. As we shall see later in our study, and as Emery shows, "Thomas formulates the proper effect of the sacrament in terms of nutrition or food (*cibus*). Here, however, the food is not transformed into the one who eats it, but rather the one eating is changed (*convertitur*) into the food which he eats" (Ibid. p. 47).

⁴¹ As Henri De Lubac has shown in *Corpus Mysticum* (Ibid. pp. 89-135) before the Berengarian controversy the term *Corpus Mysticum* was frequently used in reference to the Eucharist. It was in light of this controversy that the term *Corpus Mysticum* began to be used in reference to the *corpus quod est Ecclesia*, and the Eucharist as the *corpus verum, natum de Maria*. On the three senses of the adjective 'mystical', see Louis Bouyer, "Mystique" Essai sur l'histoire d'un mot", in *La Vie Spirituelle*, Suppl. no. 9, May 15, 1949, pp. 1-23.

⁴² ST III 82, 9 ad. 2: "... unitas corporis mystici est fructus corporis veri percepti". And (Ibid. obj. 2): "corpus Christi verum figurativum est corporis mystici" ("the true body of Christ is figurative of his mystical body").

⁴³ ST III 82, 2 ad. 3.

of head and members,⁴⁴ Christ and the Church, *duo in carne una*,⁴⁵ *quasi una persona mystica*.⁴⁶

As we have been saying, then, the donation of the *corpus verum*, risen and glorified, therefore relates to the *corpus mysticum* as cause, exerting its influence in both an instrumental, efficient manner and by virtue of its glorious exemplarity. These are issues we shall have to return to in greater detail later in our study. Here, for the sake of clarity, it is worth noting that the sacred humanity of Christ can be said to act upon the sinner both in an efficient instrumental way through sacramental contact, and also by way of the grace of assimilation (i.e. as an exemplary cause): through the communion of the Christian with Christ in the sacramental eating of his true body, the risen and glorified Christ conforms the Christian to himself, “changing our lowly body to be like his glorious body” (Phil. 3: 21).⁴⁷ As one commentator has put it, this is nothing less than “the transformation (*transformatio*) of man into Christ by love, the transmutation (*transmutatio*) of the one who eats into the food which is eaten, our *conversio* into Christ”.⁴⁸ This positioning of the Eucharist in relation to the Church in Thomas’ theology, the *corpus verum* establishing and maintaining the *corpus mysticum*, allows us to see how St Albert’s eminently simple conclusion complements the ecclesiology of his student: “One can see no reason why the Church should be named the body of Christ, and should in fact be so, except that by [Christ] giving her his body”.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ ST III 73, 3 ad. 3. The Eucharist is the *vinculum perfectionis* (Ibid.)

⁴⁵ *Catena Aurea in Matthaem*, cap. 9, lect. 1

⁴⁶ ST III 48, 2 ad. 1. It is important to state here that the personal, individual effects of Eucharistic communion constitute, on a personal level, the very same reality as the ecclesial fruits. For it “is not as though there were an ecclesial effect of the sacrament on the one hand, and a personal and individual effect of the sacrament on the other hand, added to or juxtaposed to the first”. In fact, the same reality of grace, that is, incorporation of the person into Christ, “is at once both food of personal spiritual refreshment and, by its very nature, the building up of the Church” (Emery OP, Ibid. p. 49). Emery includes the following statement from Cajetan: “When we hear that the fruit (*res tantum*) of the sacrament is grace, and that that which is to be received is the unity of the Church or the mystical Body of Christ, we do not see two separate realities there, since it is all nothing more than the grace of God in his faithful” (*In Tertiam Partem Summae theologiae*, q. 73, a. 1; Leon. ed., vol. 12, 139).

⁴⁷ See ST III 73, 3 ad. 2. For more on the risen body of Christ as *causa exemplaris*, see ST III 56, 1.

⁴⁸ Gilles Emery OP, ‘The Ecclesial fruit of the Eucharist’, p. 47.

⁴⁹ St Albert the Great, *De Eucharistia*, dist. Iii, tract. I, ch. v, 5.

1.5. Magisterial Verifications

These fundamental principles, implicit in the Fathers and stated emphatically by Thomas, have been verified by the Magisterium,⁵⁰ and in recent times can be said to have undergone a theological exposition in the writings John Paul II and Benedict XVI. The distinction and relation between the *corpus verum* and the *corpus mysticum* are implicit in much of the encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*,⁵¹ where the causal power of the Eucharist in relation to the Church is stated emphatically: “there is a causal influence of the Eucharist at the Church’s very origins”,⁵² and the Church “draws her life from the Eucharist”.⁵³ Benedict XVI, in his post synodal Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*, expounds the relation more thoroughly. In referring to the “interplay between the Eucharist which builds up the Church, and the Church herself which ‘makes’ the Eucharist”,⁵⁴ he states that “the primary causality is expressed in the first formula”; indeed, the “causal influence of the Eucharist at the Church’s origins definitively discloses [its] chronological and ontological priority”.⁵⁵ What is *first*, insists Benedict XVI, is Christ’s gift (cf. 1 Jn. 4:19), and thus all the Church’s power is, he teaches, “*completely rooted in Christ’s self-gift to her [totum in donatione fundatur]*”.⁵⁶ Benedict is then able to shed helpful light upon the question of terminology: since the Church derives its very being from the Eucharist, we are able to understand the identical term used for all three aspects of the *triplex modus corporis*:

The Eucharist is ... constitutive of the Church’s being and activity. That is why Christian antiquity used the same words, *Corpus Christi*, to designate Christ’s body born of the Virgin Mary, his Eucharistic body *and* his ecclesial body. This clear datum of the Tradition helps us to appreciate the inseparability of Christ and the Church.⁵⁷

⁵⁰ See the Council of Trent, Session XIII, Oct. 11th 1551: *Decree on the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist* (chaps. 2 and 8); and Session XXII, Sept. 17th 1562: *Teaching on the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Mass* (chap. 7). From Vatican II, see *Lumen Gentium*, 3, 11 and 26; and *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 2 and 15. For the necessary distinctions between the physical, glorified body of Christ and the ‘body’ that is the Church, see Pius XII’s *Mystici Corporis Christi* 58-66 (*Acta Apostolicae Sedis* (AAS) 35 (1943) 221-225).

⁵¹ In *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* see particularly pt. II, 23, for an exposition of the relation between the *corpus quod est ecclesia* and the *corpus natum de Maria*.

⁵² *Ibid.* 21: AAS 95 (2003) 447.

⁵³ *Ibid.* 1: AAS 95 (2003), 433.

⁵⁴ This echoes the phrase “the Eucharist ‘makes’ the Church” which is to be found in the Catechism (CCC 1396), which itself can be said to recall the phrase of Henri De Lubac, “Au sens le plus strict, l’Eucharistie fait l’Église”. *Méditation sur l’Église* (Paris: Aubier, 1953), p. 113 and 129.

⁵⁵ *Sacramentum Caritatis* I, 14.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.* 15.

It is an “inseparability” forged upon the irrevocable gift of the physical, individual body of Christ. It is for this reason that the Catholic Magisterium has taught elsewhere, “Through the Eucharist the Church ... receives her name ‘Body of Christ’”.⁵⁸

1.6. A Corresponding Exegesis

Certain biblical exegetes of the mid-twentieth century, though prescinding from any explicit allusion to the wider dogmatic tradition in their expositions, have nevertheless sought to demonstrate and expound the same doctrine through an analysis of Paul’s various applications of $\sigma\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$. Frequently in response to those who propose a merely sociological interpretation of Paul’s use of ‘body’ for the Church, several exegetes have sought to illuminate the causal relationship that exists, theologically and sometimes terminologically, between the $\sigma\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$ of the Last Supper narratives and the $\sigma\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$ used to designate the Church.⁵⁹

In a work that motivated much later scholarship on the same subject,⁶⁰ A.E.J. Rawlinson noted that the word $\sigma\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$ does not appear in pre-Christian usage to denote the idea of a ‘society’, or even a ‘body corporate’, with ‘members’. “There appear to be no pre-Christian analogies. ... [Consequently] Paul’s use of the phrase $\sigma\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$ Χριστοῦ appears quite extraordinary”.⁶¹ Though later scholarship has proposed an instance in pre-Christian secular antiquity where ‘body’ appears to have been used to designate a ‘community’ in a purely moral and social sense,⁶² even this instance is debated.⁶³ Furthermore, as J.A.T. Robinson has

⁵⁸ *Vatican Response to WCC Document: Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry: An Appraisal* (quoted in *Origins* 17, no. 23, p. 411). In an address in 2001, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger stated, “For St Paul and the Fathers of the Church the idea of the Church as the Body of Christ was inseparably connected with the concept of the Eucharist in which the Lord is bodily present and which He gives us His Body as food”. *The Ecclesiology of Vatican II*, an address given by Cardinal Ratzinger at the opening of the Pastoral Congress of the Diocese of Aversa, Italy (2001).

⁵⁹ Mention should also be made of the arguments of Joseph Ratzinger, who has in more recent years proposed the same thesis as the earlier commentators we are considering. As he writes, “The oft-repeated assertion that Paul merely applied to the Church an allegory widely current in the Stoic philosophy of the time is totally false. ... St Paul’s conception of the Body of Christ does not exhaust itself in considerations of sociology or moral philosophy ... the real roots of the Pauline idea of the Body of Christ are entirely inner-biblical”. Ratzinger then identifies the Eucharist as the “true basis of this doctrine ... [where] “the Lord gives us his body and makes us one body”. See his *Called to Communion* (Ibid). pp. 36-37.

⁶⁰ P. Benoit, in his ‘Corps, Tête et Plérome dans les épîtres de la Captivité’, in *Exégèse et Théologie* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1961) vol. 2, p 107-153 (first published in *Revue Biblique* 63 (1956)), lists Rawlinson’s essay among the “travaux importants” (fn. 1, p.107). See also L. Cerfaux, *La Théologie de l’Église suivant saint Paul* (Paris: Cerf, 1948) pp. 226-230.

⁶¹ A.E.J. Rawlinson, ‘Corpus Christi’ in *Mysterium Christi*, ed. K.A. Bell and A. Deissmann (London: 1930) p. 226.

⁶² See T.W. Manson, ‘A Parallel to a N.T. use of $\sigma\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$ ’ in *Journal of Theological Studies* 37 (1935) p. 385; and W.L. Knox, ‘Parallels to the N.T. use of $\sigma\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$ ’ (*JTS*) 39 (1938), p. 243 ff.

stated, such an application would not have been theological, and “the words of institution at the Last Supper, ‘This is my body’, contain the only instance of a quasi-theological use of the word which is certainly pre-Pauline”.⁶⁴ Whatever the sense of the secular pre-Pauline passage, a single instance of sociological usage before Paul’s epistles could not alter the fact that his application of $\sigma\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$ in this way is most unusual.⁶⁵ For Rawlinson, Paul’s doctrine of the Church as the body of Christ is both theologically and terminologically related to his doctrine of the Eucharist:

That the Church itself may be rightly described as the Lord’s ‘Body’ is an idea which I believe to have been suggested by the language used with regard to the Eucharist. Between the use of the phrase ‘Body of Christ’ as a description of the Church and the use of the same phrase as a description of the sacramental ‘loaf’ of the Eucharist it is permissible to suspect a connection; and the rite, surely, precedes the doctrine.⁶⁶

This allows him to make the following observation:

The conception of the Church as the Messiah’s ‘Body’ is ... quite extraordinary. It is not at all obvious or (according to Greek ideas) an at all natural metaphor; and we must dismiss, I think, from our minds the familiar associations of the word ‘corporate’ in modern speech. We must attempt, by a deliberate effort, to make real to our minds the extreme violence of the metaphor involved in the description of the Church as a ‘body’, a $\sigma\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$. The phrase would in Greek suggest primarily the ideas not of social organisation or corporate life, but of corporeality; visible, concrete reality; unity (as it were) of a ‘bodily’ kind. The unity, in other words, of the Church is for St Paul not simply a ‘spiritual’ unity: it is at the same time a ‘bodily’ unity. And it is ‘bodily’, because sacramental.⁶⁷

⁶³ Jewett denies that there are any pre-Christian examples (see his *Paul’s Anthropological Terms* (Leiden: Brill, 1971) pp. 229-30). See also F. De Visscher’s comments on the parallel, secular use of *soma* in his *Les Édits d’Auguste découverts à Cyrène* (Louvain, 1940), pp. 91-3. He writes, “En dépit de nos recherches, il nous a été impossible de découvrir un seul exemple où ce mot servirait à désigner une collectivité. $\Sigma\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$ indique une unite, un tout, jamais une collectivité. Et je pense pouvoir affirmer que ce sens n’est pas grec” (p. 91).

⁶⁴ *The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology*, p. 56. Robinson argues that Paul’s doctrine of the “body of Christ, under all its forms, is a direct extension of his understanding of the Incarnation” (Ibid.).

⁶⁵ It is widely accepted, of course, that certain similes and analogies between a human body and social harmony are present in ancient, pre-Christian literature. See R.I. Hicks, “The Body Political and the Body Ecclesiastical”, in *Journal of the Bible and Religion* 31 (January 1963) pp. 29-35. Hicks traces the idea as far back as Aesop. As has been well documented, there is also a certain anticipation of Paul’s corporate ecclesiological vocabulary in the Old Testament conception of ‘corporate personality’. See T.W. Manson, *The Servant-Messiah* (Cambridge: 1953) p. 74; H.W. Robinson, *Corporate Personality in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964); J. de Fraine, *Adam and the Family of Man* (New York: Alba House, 1965) pp. 13-233; A.R. Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet and Israel’s Psalmody* (Cardiff: The University of Wales Press, 1979), pp. 10-11.

⁶⁶ ‘Corpus Christi’, p.227.

⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 231.

In the following two decades, Lucien Cerfaux developed this exegesis at length, and supported Rawlinson's claim that Paul's application of the term 'body' to the Church was principally drawn from Eucharistic usage.⁶⁸ For Cerfaux, when Paul uses the term *σῶμα* in its different senses, his chief point of reference, his primary analogue, is the "corps physique ou au corps dans l'eucharistie".⁶⁹ Therefore, to refer to the Church as 'body' (be it "one body", or "the body of Christ", or "one body in Christ") is not primarily to designate a social collectivity through its similitude with a human body.⁷⁰ Rather, to speak of it in this way is to provide both a direct allusion to its principle of unity (the body of Christ born of Mary), and an account of the particular *kind* of unity which persists in consequence of this bodily principle: "L'Église n'est un 'corps' que par allusion au principe d'unité qui est le corps du Christ";⁷¹ "Le mot ['corps'] ne désigne l'Église que par une référence toujours perçue au corps réel du Christ".⁷² As he explains further,

Ce corps du Christ avec lequel se fait l'identification mystique ... il n'est point autre que le corps *réel et personnel* qui a vécu, qui est mort, est glorifié et auquel, dans l'eucharistie, le pain est identifié. Les chrétiens s'identifient à ce corps, d'une façon très réelle, quoique mystique encore, dans l'eucharistie et d'une autre manière par le baptême. Identifiés à ce corps unique, ils sont un entre eux, tous "un" par référence au même corps du Christ.⁷³

If we turn again to the wider theological tradition, we will recall in this exegetical conclusion the very doctrine to be found in the Eucharistic-ecclesiology of St Thomas. There, the ecclesial unity designated by the term "one body" is the "fruit of the true body received", the consequence of sacramental communion with the individual, risen body of Christ.⁷⁴

⁶⁸ See *La Théologie de l'Église suivant saint Paul* (Ibid.) p. 224. "C'est dans la Cène que la formule 'le corps du Christ' a reçu la frappe qui en fait une expression chrétienne caractérisée. Les paroles de Notre Seigneur *τοῦτό μου ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα* remontent en effet à la tradition des apôtres galiléens (1 Cor. 11, 23 ff. et la tradition évangélique) et elles se sont imposées à l'ensemble des églises".

⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 233.

⁷⁰ See also the arguments of Ratzinger, *Called to Communion*, pp. 34-36.

⁷¹ Ibid. p. 232. "Nous avouons obéir à des reflexes analogues en refusant obstinément de voir dans *σῶμα* une désignation de corps social".

⁷² Ibid. p. 287.

⁷³ Ibid. p. 234 (my emphasis).

⁷⁴ This same principle leads Cerfaux to conclude, "C'est ce corps réel qui est le centre et l'origine de l'unité du monde chrétien" (Ibid. p. 236).

Pierre Benoit OP, following Cerfaux a decade later, was to root his own thesis of “le réalisme physique de notre union au Christ”⁷⁵ upon these very same principles.

Cette expression [Corps du Christ] conserve toujours une référence de base au corps personnel de Jésus, ce corps mort et ressuscité auquel le chrétien doit s’unir pour participer au salut.⁷⁶

l’idée fondamentale que nous avons discernée à la base du thème ‘Corps du Christ’, ... [est] l’union physique, sacramentelle, des chrétiens au corps mort et ressuscité du Christ.⁷⁷

In identifying the “corps personnel de Jésus, mort et ressuscité” at the origin of Paul’s conception of the “l’Église, qui est son Corps”, Benoit was able to illuminate the efficient and exemplary causal relation between the donation of the crucified and risen body and the existence of the ecclesial body. Commenting upon the doctrine of unity of 1 Cor. 10:17, Benoit insists that,

Il est trop clair, en effet, que ce corps [qu’un pain], c’est d’abord le corps individuel du Seigneur, mort et ressuscité, auquel ils communient en recevant le pain eucharistique.⁷⁸

Consequently,

En recevant dans leur corps, par le rite sacramental, le Corps du Christ, ils sont, tous ensemble, un seul corps.⁷⁹

En s’unissant à lui, ils deviennent tous ensemble le ‘corps unique’. ... Ce sont le deux ensemble, indissoluble liés.⁸⁰

Benoit’s clear exposition of the causal relation implicit in Paul’s understanding of the Eucharist and the Church, where —again in harmony with St Thomas— the corpus *quod est ecclesia* is the *fructus corporis veri percepti*, leads him to affirm what is already implied: namely, the essential distinction to be maintained between the two fundamental senses of ‘body of Christ’: “Car, si le corps se rattache à sa tête par un lien indissoluble, il ne lui est

⁷⁵ ‘Corps, Tête et Plérome dans les épîtres de la Captivité’, pp. 110-128.

⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 114.

⁷⁷ Ibid. pp. 123-4.

⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 117.

⁷⁹ He adds here that “le contexte interdit de ne voir dans ce corps unique formé pas les chrétiens qu’une métaphore de leur collective unie dans le Christ” (Ibid. p. 117).

⁸⁰ Ibid. pp. 125-6

pourtant pas identique”.⁸¹ Though the Church subsists only ἐν Χριστῷ, “[n]éanmoins elle ne lui est pas identique”.⁸²

These are exegetical conclusions in profound harmony with the dogmatic formulations of the Fathers, St Thomas and the Magisterium itself. According to these biblical scholars, the unity of Christians with Christ, constituting for Paul “the body of Christ”, is the effect of the donation of Christ’s physical body, the very “body” of the Last Supper, communicated to the Church in its sacramental mode. It is to some of the anthropological presuppositions which underlie this claim to which we now turn.

2. “This is my Body”: Anthropological Presuppositions and Implications

In our consideration of the different senses of ‘body of Christ’ (section 1), we have identified the individual, physical body of Christ to stand in relation to the ecclesial ‘body of Christ’ as principle, with a necessary “chronological and ontological priority”.⁸³ These are formulations characterised by a marked corporeal emphasis; no mention has been made of the human soul of Christ, nor even of his divinity, upon which the entire theology of the Eucharist and the Church stands.⁸⁴ When considered in light of certain features of modern, dualistic anthropology, this bodily emphasis is unusual, and even unintelligible.⁸⁵ Yet it is, however, a procedure in accordance with the very words several exegetes have identified as the origin of Paul’s corporate, ecclesiological vocabulary: “this is my body which is for you” (1 Cor. 11:24; cf. Matt. 26:26; Mk. 14:22; Lk. 22:19). Here, donation is spoken of in bodily terms alone, and therefore expresses a certain anthropology. If, for example, the formulation is read according to Cartesian principles, where “body”, *res extensa*, is considered to be a separate substance and to designate sheer externality,⁸⁶ it presents significant problems of

⁸¹ Ibid. p. 128.

⁸² Ibid. p. 127. As he goes on, “On le voit bien dans le beau passage d’Eph. 5, 23-32 où elle apparaît en face du Christ comme son Épouse, unie étroitement à lui certes, mais enfin distincte de lui, qu’il aime, pour qui il se livre, qu’il purifie et sanctifie”.

⁸³ *Sacramentum Caritatis* I, 14.

⁸⁴ As Athanasius reminds us, “We are divinised not by partaking of the body of a [mere] man, but because we receive the body of the Logos”. *Ep. Ad Maximum philosophum*, 2 (PG 26, 1088 C).

⁸⁵ As Michael Waldstein has observed, “The scientific rationalism spearheaded by Descartes is above all an attack on the body. Its first principle is that the human body, together with all matter, shall be seen as an object of power.” *John Paul II: Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, trans. Michael Waldstein, (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2006) p. 95 (from Waldstein’s introduction). We shall be considering this very question in due course.

⁸⁶ See in particular, Descartes’ *Meditations* 6; *Oeuvres de Descartes*, ed. Adam and Tannery (AT); Paris, 13 vols. 1897-1913). vii, 78.

interpretation. This difficulty helps us to recognise, however, that the words of Eucharistic Institution themselves reveal certain anthropological presuppositions, and imply a certain understanding of bodiliness and its capacities. These words are intelligible only by virtue of a certain understanding of the human body, its relation to the divine person whose body it is, and its sacramental and unitive possibilities. We shall now consider these presuppositions, firstly by examining certain features of the dogmatic tradition, and secondly through recourse to certain exegetical enquiries.

2.1 The Anthropological Presuppositions of the doctrine of “Concomitantia Naturalis”

The classical Christian interpretation of the words of Eucharistic Institution does indeed rest upon certain anthropological principles, which in turn (as we shall see) underlie the ecclesiological consequences that follow. St Thomas’ doctrine of Eucharistic concomitance, which states that the very person of Christ is present under the accidents of bread and wine by virtue of the presence of the substances of his body and blood,⁸⁷ does not rest upon the miracle of transubstantiation, but upon a certain anthropological presupposition. It is based upon the assumption that the living body of a man naturally signifies and conveys the entire person.⁸⁸ The recourse to a principle of the natural order, rather than to the words of Eucharistic Institution themselves, is demanded by the revealed data: Christ’s words, “this is my *body*”, are taken by St Thomas, and the Fathers of Trent,⁸⁹ directly and as they stand. As one Thomistic commentator has observed, the “words used by Christ fix our attention on these corporeal details”.⁹⁰ It is not Jesus’ soul, nor his divine nature, nor any unbodily aspect of his person whatsoever which, through the “power of the sacrament”, is made present; but

⁸⁷ ST III 76, 1. Though the principle of concomitance applies to both the body and blood of Christ, for reasons which will become clear, we shall limit discussion to the body.

⁸⁸ It is therefore precisely this same anthropological principle, the relation between the body and the *person* whose body it is, which also accounts for the presence of his divinity, the *concomitantia supernaturalis*. In Christ’s case, the person is the eternal Son. But for reasons which will become clear, here we are limiting our study to the *concomitantia naturalis*: the natural accompaniment of the whole man Christ with the presence of his living body.

⁸⁹ St Thomas’s teaching was endorsed by the Council Fathers at Trent. They too threw light upon the essential difference between the meanings of the words *ex vi verborum* and *per concomitantiam*. By virtue of the words of consecration, or *ex vi verborum*, that only is made present which is expressed by the words of Institution, namely the Body and the Blood of Christ. But by reason of a natural concomitance (“per concomitantiam”), there becomes simultaneously present all that which is physically inseparable from the parts just named, and which must, from a *natural connection* with them, always be their accompaniment. See Session XIII, canon iii. (DS 876).

⁹⁰ Colman E. O’Neill OP, *Meeting Christ in the Sacraments*, rev. ed. (New York: St Paul’s, 1991) p. 164.

simply his body. *Ex vi sacramenti*, in strict accordance with the *verba formae*, the bread is converted into the *verum corpus Christi*, and nothing more.

St Thomas, and the Council Fathers following him, were able to interpret Jesus's words in this way, and apply this interpretation to their understanding of the power of the sacramental form, because of the anthropological principles which they believed to underlie them. Since this is the body of a living person,

His soul is always really united with His body [*anima eius semper est realiter corpori unita*]. And therefore in this sacrament the body indeed of Christ is present by the power of the sacrament, but His soul from real concomitance [*anima autem ex reali concomitantia*].⁹¹

Christ's soul is in this sacrament by real concomitance, because it is not without the body [*anima Christi est in hoc sacramento ex reali concomitantia, quia non est sine corpore*]: but it is not there in virtue of the consecration [*non autem ex vi consecrationis*].⁹²

For St Thomas, when a man is alive, the soul *semper est realiter corpori unita*.⁹³ Here, the anthropology of the *prima pars* comes to the service of the consideration of the sacrament of the Lord's body in the *tertia pars*. Thomas's doctrine of the soul as the substantial form of the body⁹⁴ informs his teaching on the personal mediating function of the human body of Christ. Through this human body, which like any human body is "really" and "naturally" united to its intellectual soul (*realiter sunt coniuncta*), constituting in this unity a single essence, the whole person Jesus Christ, eternal Son and Word of the Father, is necessarily conveyed.⁹⁵

⁹¹ ST III 76, 1 ad 1

⁹² ST III 84, 4 ad 3. Consequently, Thomas can make the following conclusion: "And therefore, if this sacrament had been consecrated or reserved when His soul was really separated from His body, Christ's soul would not have been under this sacrament, not from any defect in the form of the words, but owing to the different dispositions of the thing contained" (ST III 84, 4 ad. 3).

⁹³ Ibid. 76, 1 ad 1. As he puts it elsewhere, "By natural concomitance, all other things are there, which are not the term of the change but are really united to that term" (SCG IV, 64). See also *In Joannem VI*, 6 n. 962.

⁹⁴ See ST I 76, 1.

⁹⁵ As we have mentioned, by virtue of the hypostatic union, we must speak also of a *concomitantia supernaturalis*, the presence of his divinity by virtue of the presence of his living body. For in the case of the human body of Christ, it is not only substantially united to his soul but, in consequence of the hypostatic union, is united personally to the divine Word. As the Greek Fathers frequently pointed out (see, for example, the anti-Nestorian arguments of Cyril of Alexandria in *Adversus Nestorii blasphemias*, IV § 5)) it is precisely for this reason that this human body is divinely efficacious for us (after all, "the flesh [alone] profits nothing", Jn. 6:63).

2.1.1. St Thomas' Anthropology and the Verba Formae of Eucharistic Institution

A brief glance at Thomas's anthropology will show how well it accommodates the *verba formae* of the words of Eucharistic Institution. At the very beginning of his treatise on man in the *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas's immediate perception is towards man's corporality, to such an extent that, as Anthony Kenny observes, he does not even approach the question "with a concept of 'soul' which has the notion of immateriality built into it".⁹⁶ This explains the unexpected formulation of the first question on the nature of the soul, *utrum anima sit corpus*, whether the soul *is a body*; a question which, though obviously answered in the negative, already implies the hylomorphic anthropology he will go on to develop.⁹⁷ Indeed, though the principle of life is not itself bodily but spiritual, Thomas will show that this animating principle is nevertheless the perfection *of* the body and, in a manner of speaking, can be said to be *in* the body.⁹⁸ The soul is essentially *referable* to its body, existing "as its act",⁹⁹ in virtue of which the body is determinately some thing, actually "*such*, as distinct from not such".¹⁰⁰ As one commentator observes, a certain corporeal emphasis is evident in Thomas' account of man: when he considers him as a single and complete substance, we see that "what actually exists [in Thomas' view] is a living *body*", rather than, say, a soul which is embodied.¹⁰¹ After all, the existence of the soul is, for Thomas, already implied by the word "living" qualifying the word "body". This tendency to grant a certain priority to the outward aspect, the living body, is evident again later when Thomas draws upon the maxim of Aristotle that "a thing seems to be chiefly what is principal in it [*principale in ipso*]". Thomas makes the point that what is principal in man is neither his soul nor body (perceived independently) but rather the whole *man*, in his totality. Yet he admits that, just as one naturally perceives superiority in the soul, one could *secundum quid* legitimately apply a certain principality to the body, as the outward aspect of the one human substance most

⁹⁶ *Aquinas on Mind* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993) p. 129.

⁹⁷ St Thomas will explain later that, because of man's *essential* bodiliness, the soul alone cannot be said to *be* man (cf. I 75, 4 and 29, 1 ad. 5). See also ST I 76, 1, where, in teaching that the soul is the form of the body, Thomas also shows that the two together therefore constitute a single essence. Thus, as the formulation of 75, 1 already implies, the species 'man' is not composed of body and soul as two separable parts of himself (in the way that toe or finger are indeed separable parts of man) but that the species 'man' is precisely the *result* of the union of the two. The soul "cannot be called an 'individual substance', or a 'hypostasis' or 'first substance' any more than a hand or any other part" (Ibid. 29, 1 ad. 5). And, "a hand or a foot cannot be called a hypostasis or person. Nor, likewise, can the soul" (Ibid. 75, 5 ad. 2).

⁹⁸ See SCG II 62-63.

⁹⁹ ST I 75, 1

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. (my emphasis).

¹⁰¹ David Kelsey, 'Aquinas and Barth on the Human Body' in *The Thomist* vol. 50, 1986, pp. 643-689.

evident to sense perception, the *homo exterior*.¹⁰² Though neither primary in value nor necessity, Aquinas insists that the *living* body is itself the human being, since at once it implies the totality of the human composite, in the way the soul alone does not.

In his Commentary on 1 Corinthians, Thomas makes two further points of fundamental importance, both of which develop what we see in the *Summa Theologiae*. In accordance with 75, 4 of the *prima pars*, he insists that man is not to be identified with his soul: *anima mea non est ego*, “my soul is not I”.¹⁰³ But he makes a further claim that suggests that though man cannot be called “a soul”, he may with certain qualifications be called “a body”: for Aquinas, the soul is not merely only a part of man but, since a living body has a certain phenomenological identification with the entire living person, it can be said to be a *part* of the body of man. This is precisely what Thomas says: *anima autem cum sit pars corporis hominis*.¹⁰⁴ Thus, according to Thomas, not only the man but the soul itself must, in a certain sense, be termed corporeal: for “the soul does not possess the perfection of its own nature [*non habet perfectionem suae naturae*] except in union with the body [*nisi in unione ad corpus*]”.¹⁰⁵ These two statements could be deduced from the anthropology of question 76 of the *prima pars*: that, strictly speaking, man is not both a body *and* a soul, but simply a living body; but *living* because animated by the intellectual soul. The formal structure of the one human being is therefore an integral body-soul unity in *harmony*, and “not a unity-in-dialectical-tension”.¹⁰⁶ This inner concord or fittingness of the body for the soul is, according to Thomas, one of the special qualities which grants the human body its unique dignity: “Such a body has a dignity of its own precisely in that it is remote from contraries [*remotum a contrariis*].” By virtue of such ontological harmony, the “[human] body resembles a heavenly body [*assimilatur corpori caelesti*]”.¹⁰⁷

Thomas is therefore free to construct an anthropology which stems from what he initially knows through his sense perception: the fundamental, bodily reality of man. For him, the living body, as the material principle of man’s essence, is that which presents outwardly,

¹⁰² ST I 75, 4 ad. 1.

¹⁰³ Hence, a soul separated from the body is not to be called a “person” (see ST I 29, 1 ad. 5).

¹⁰⁴ *In I Cor XV*, lect. 2: “the soul is part of the body of man”. The whole passage is: “Constat quod homo naturaliter desiderat salutem sui ipsius, anima autem cum sit pars corporis hominis, non est totus homo, et anima mea non est ego; unde licet anima consequatur salutem in alia vita, non tamen ego vel quilibet homo”. Thomas makes a similar point elsewhere: “the soul cannot be called ‘individual substance’, or a ‘hypostasis’ or ‘first substance’ any more than a hand or any other part [of man]” (ST I 29, 1 ad. 5).

¹⁰⁵ *Quaestiones Disputatae, De Spiritualibus Creaturis* 2 ad. 5.

¹⁰⁶ Kelsey, ‘Aquinas and Barth on the Human Body’, p. 660.

¹⁰⁷ ST I 76, 5 ad. 2

in space and time, his substantial person. It is for this reason that the words of Eucharistic Institution find in his anthropology a certain handmaid and illuminator. That Christ should speak of the term of Eucharistic conversion to be his *body*, and not his “body and soul” is, as we have seen, accommodated by at least three features of Thomas’s thought: his own epistemology, his understanding of both the psycho-somatic, substantial unity of man, and the nature of the body as the outward aspect of the entire living composite.

2.2 The Body as Machine versus the Body as Constitutive of the Person: Cartesian Anthropology versus Eucharistic Institution

As we have seen, the words of Eucharistic Institution presuppose an underlying anthropological body-soul unity, which is able to interpret personal totality through a reference to human bodiliness alone. It is therefore not surprising that the intelligibility of Christ’s words, their implication for the accompanying totality of his personal presence, does not inevitably follow upon all anthropological positions, as we suggested earlier. We shall take as our example of this the radically dualistic anthropology of René Descartes, which we believe does not provide a philosophical framework which accommodates and fittingly interprets the words of Eucharistic Institution. This consideration will serve not only to illuminate our previous conclusions but all the expository paths that will follow.

In the philosophical anthropology of Descartes, body and soul are *defined* in terms of mutual exclusivity and incompatibility,¹⁰⁸ setting up an ontological dualism which presents a much greater divergence of the bodily and spiritual orders than even Plato’s well-known *sōma-sēma* position.¹⁰⁹ In direct contrast to Aquinas’s position as stated in his Commentary on 1 Corinthians, (“my soul is not I”), Descartes insisted that “this ‘I’ —that is to say, my

¹⁰⁸ See Gilbert Ryle’s account of Descartes’ position on the relationship of soul and body (“the ghost in the machine”) in ‘Descartes’ Myth’, *The Concept of Mind* (London: Hutchinson, 1949). See also Anthony Kenny, *The Metaphysics of Mind* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1989) pp. 1-31.

¹⁰⁹ As Henry Chadwick, *Early Christian Thought and Christian Tradition; Studies in Justin, Clement, and Origen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966) says: “The Platonic idea of the relation between spirit and matter was capable of being interpreted either in an optimistic or pessimistic way. It could be construed to mean that the visible world mirrors the glory of the supra-sensible world. It could also be taken (as by the Gnostics) to justify a radical rejection of the material order as an accidental smudge, resulting from a mistake”, p. 113. We should also remember that, in Plato’s *Symposium*, the love of the body is the first, and necessary, rung on the ladder that leads to the glimpsing of the eternal form of beauty. According to Benedict Ashley OP in *Theologies of the Body, Humanist and Christian*, (Braintree: The Pope John Center, 1985), Descartes advanced Plato’s dualism “in the crudest terms. ... Of [Plato’s] dualism Cartesianism is the *reductio ad absurdum*”. For Plato on the body, see his *Gorgias* (493a); and *Phaedo* (66c), where he describes the body as “fastened and glued”, “nailed” and “riveted” to him (*The Dialogues of Plato*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953)).

soul by which I am what I am— is entirely and absolutely distinct from my body”.¹¹⁰ If Thomas, the Council Fathers of Vienne,¹¹¹ and by implication, Trent, held that the spiritual soul is essentially the form of the body, and therefore constitutes in its union with it a single substance, in dividing man into *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, Descartes was led to regard soul and body as complete substances in themselves:

Taken alone, they are complete [substances]. And I know that thinking substance is a complete thing no less than that which is extended.¹¹²

Thought and extension can be regarded as constituting the natures of intelligent substance and corporeal substance, and then they must be considered as nothing else but thinking substance itself, and extended substance itself – that is, as mind and body.¹¹³

Though the presence of “thinking substance” and “extended substance” in the human composite constitutes a certain unity on a phenomenological level,¹¹⁴ ontologically speaking this is not so in Descartes’ opinion: the subject is to be identified solely with the *res cogitans*: “I am simply a thinking, non-extended thing”;¹¹⁵ “absolutely nothing else belongs to my nature or essence except that I am a thinking thing”.¹¹⁶ Thus, the body which is ‘joined’ to him, that “extended, unthinking substance”, is not a constitutive part of his identity or person. “I have a clear and distinct idea of myself, in so far as I am simply a thinking, non-extended thing and on the other hand I have a distinct idea of body, in so far as this is simply an extended, non thinking thing. And accordingly it is certain that I am really distinct from my body”.¹¹⁷

This radical dissociation of his body from what he considered to be his incorporeal “I” led Descartes into two positions which we consider inimical to the anthropological

¹¹⁰ *Meditations* 6; *Oeuvres de Descartes*, ed. Adam and Tannery (AT); Paris, 13 vols. 1897-1913). vii, 78.

¹¹¹ The Council of Vienne (1311-1312) condemned as heretical: “quod anima rationalis seu intellectiva non sit forma corporis humani per se et essentialiter” (DS 902 (481), cf. 738, 1655). Pius XI confirmed the same notions in 1867 against the theories of Anton Günther (DS 2828 (1655)) and Leo XIII in 1893 in his review of certain propositions of Rosmini (DS 2828 (1941)). This teaching is reaffirmed in John Paul II’s *Veritatis Splendor*, 48.

¹¹² *Replies to Objections* 4, I (AT, vii, 222).

¹¹³ *Principles* I 63 (AT viii, 31). For a summary of Descartes’ attempts to reconcile his position on the question of substance with those of the Church, see Frederick Copleston SJ, *A History of Philosophy* (vol. iv): *Descartes to Leibniz* (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne Ltd., 1958) pp. 116-123.

¹¹⁴ Descartes admits this in *Meditations* 6 (AT, vii, 81 cf. ix, 64).

¹¹⁵ *Meditations* 6 (AT vii, 78).

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

assumptions which underlie the Church's understanding of the words of Eucharistic Institution. The first is that the human body has merely an accidental relation to the human person (mind and body comprising a *unitas compositionis* rather than a *unitas naturae*),¹¹⁸ and the second is his teaching that the living human body has an analogous relationship with a machine, and is therefore to be explained by the same principles which are employed in regard to inanimate bodies.¹¹⁹

The first problem (i.e. the accidental nature of the union) is evident from what we have already quoted from Descartes, though he further expounds this doctrine by going so far as to posit a spatial location, an actual bodily organ, where he believed mind and body to interact.

I think I have clearly established that the part of the body in which the soul directly exercises its functions ... is the innermost part of the brain, which is a certain very small gland situated in the middle of the brain's substance and above the passage through which the spirits in the brain's anterior cavities communicate with those in its posterior cavities.¹²⁰

Descartes' choice of a physical organ where the soul directly exercises its functions on the body is the pineal gland or *conarion*. This identification of an actual bodily point as the location of immaterial-material interaction is not only clearly problematic from a logical standpoint, but it also underlies the rigorous dualism of his anthropology. It both confirms the radically tenuous nature of the body's union to the thinking subject, and also implies the disposability of the body as an attached, exclusive and separate substance from the human mind.

The second teaching we wish to illuminate, namely the conviction that the human body has an analogous relation to machines or automata, stems logically from this position. On one level, this argument seemed obvious to Descartes in light of such "automatic" bodily activities as respiration, digestion, and the circulation of the blood; but he insisted that even those bodily movements which originate from thought and deliberation do not come from the immaterial principle of man immediately. Rather, the movements of the human body are thought to have their own physical explanation and are thereby to be considered to be

¹¹⁸ See Walter Riese, "Descartes' Ideas of Brain Function", in *The History and Philosophy of Knowledge of the Brain and Its Functions* (Amsterdam: B.M. Israël, 1973) pp. 115-134.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 154.

¹²⁰ *Passions of the Soul* I, 30-1 (AT xi, 351-2).

movements strictly independent of any spiritual, animating principle. The mind influences what he calls the “animal spirits”¹²¹ (material bodies of “extreme minuteness”) at the pineal gland, which themselves are the principles of movement, and responsible for all bodily change. Here lies the doctrine that the body’s “life” or *anima* is not the intellectual soul but rather a certain material, energising principle of purely physical, mechanical functioning. This energy can be applied *by* the thinking man, in the way a workman operates a machine external to him.

The body of a living man differs from that of a dead man just as does a watch or other automaton (that is, a machine which moves of itself), when it is wound up and contains in itself the corporeal principle of those movements for which it is designed along with all that is requisite for its action, from the same watch or other machine when it is broken and when the principle of its movement ceases to act.¹²²

So, according to Descartes, the body of a living man differs from a corpse merely in regard to the “corporeal principle of those movements for which it is designed”. The corpse is analogous to a broken machine whereas the body of a living man is analogous to a machine which functions.

This anthropology cannot accommodate the words of Eucharistic Institution as interpreted by the Christian Tradition. The fundamental contention lies in Descartes’ notion of the essential incompatibility of the human body with what he considers to constitute man’s ontological identity, his entirely spiritual “I”. This incompatibility between the bodily and spiritual orders of man, their mutual exclusivity, ensures that the human body cannot be said to signify outwardly the human soul, which *is* for Descartes his essential, personal identity. As Thomas teaches, to relate as sign to signified implies, by definition, a certain logical correspondence between the two.¹²³ Yet there is no possibility for any such correspondence between the two in the anthropology of Descartes. As he writes, “This ‘I’ —that is to say, my soul by which I am what I am— is entirely and absolutely distinct from my body”.¹²⁴ Thus, the offering of the *body* of Christ, considered both in its capacity as an outward sign of an

¹²¹ These so-called “animal spirits” are what inflate muscles and cause bodily movement. They are “the most animated and subtle portions of the blood” which enter into the cavities of the brain. They are material bodies “of extreme minuteness”, which “move very quickly like the particles of the flame which issues from a torch”; and they are conducted into the nerves and muscles “by means of which they move the body in all the different ways in which it can be moved”. See *Treatise on Man* (AT xi, 165) and *Passions* I, 10 (AT xi, 334-5).

¹²² *Passions* I, 6 (AT xi, 330-1).

¹²³ See ST III 60, 1

¹²⁴ *Meditations* 6; (AT vii, 78).

invisible, spiritual reality, and as constituting the gift itself, must lack in Descartes' anthropology all coherence and intelligibility. By definition, therefore, according to their mutual exclusivity, incompatibility, and absolute distinction, the human body cannot logically be said to signify, or represent, the intellectual soul or the purely spiritual subject whose body it is.

2.2.1. Philosophical Implications of "Hoc est"

Descartes' conviction that *res cogitans* and *res extensa* constitute two distinct substances involves significant difficulties when considered in light of the philosophical implications of the words *hoc est* in the *verba formae*. The anthropological presuppositions which Aquinas and the Council Fathers of Trent bring to their interpretation of the words of Eucharistic Institution allow them to maintain certain philosophical conventions of language contained in the grammar. According to their interpretation, the demonstrative pronoun *hoc*, or "this", signifies and indicates the presence of a substance of some kind.¹²⁵ The accompanying noun, *corpus*, signifies what the substance signified by *hoc* actually is. So whilst the demonstrative pronoun points only to the fact that it is some substance, the accompanying noun announces its specific identity. This leads to the straightforward conclusion that it is only the body of Christ that is made present by the words of consecration over the bread. If the words had been, "this is my body and my soul", then according to the direct sense of the language, the sentence would have caused both his body and soul to be present. In the interpretations of Aquinas and the Council of Trent, there is a strict faithfulness to the conventions of language made possible by their anthropology. Because they do not regard the human body to constitute a separate substance, but rather the outward aspect of the single psycho-somatic substance "man", they are free to accept the words of Institution as they stand. The anthropology which they perceive to be implicit in these words, expressed through the doctrine of *concomitantia naturalis*, automatically renders the sentence intelligible; it is taken to be an act of personal donation effected and expressed through a man's body.

According to these principles, applied with the presuppositions of Descartes' anthropology, the words of Institution (taken as they stand) are essentially unintelligible. Since that which is made present and administered is the human *body* of Christ (according to

¹²⁵ ST III 78, 5

the function of the words *hoc est*), it is, therefore, the making present of what Descartes considers to be *res extensa*, extended substance; i.e. unconscious, brute matter. Accordingly, this reality which is the term of the consecration (the “extended substance” that is “body” and therefore *not* the soul) is, for Descartes, comparable to a machine, and to be explained by the same principles which are employed in regard to inanimate bodies. According to this anthropology, the words *hoc est corpus meum* cannot be understood as a statement which implies totality of personal gift or presence, nor therefore can it be understood to convey and, indeed, effect, an act of personal communication to another bodily, human subject.

3. The Semitic Context of the words of Eucharistic Institution

If Christ’s words of Eucharistic Institution are unintelligible according to a dualistic, Cartesian anthropology, they are (as we have demonstrated) intelligible when read according to the anthropology of St Thomas Aquinas, the Council of Vienne, and the classical Christian tradition. Therefore, as one scholar has insisted on historical grounds, it comes as no surprise that “Descartes’ distinction between ‘res cogitans’ and ‘res extensa’ was ... unknown in the apostle’s times”.¹²⁶ Indeed, the anthropological presuppositions which we have seen to accommodate and interpret the words of the Last Supper correspond profoundly to the chief Semitic assumptions from which the words were spoken.

Most Scriptural scholarship of the last century testifies to this. Though “for many centuries a dualistic view of man, greatly influenced by Greek philosophy, had been widely accepted as Paul’s view”¹²⁷ there emerged in the early twentieth century a new sensitivity

¹²⁶ Jean Héring, *The First Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians* (London: Epworth, 1962) p. 119.

¹²⁷ Sang-Won, *Corporate Elements in Pauline Anthropology*, p. 1. John Calvin, for example, was an advocate of Platonic dualism. As he wrote in a typically Platonic vein, “set in the body, [the soul] dwells there as in a house” *Institutes of Christian Religion*, trans. F.L. Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960) I, xv, 6, p. 192. See also pp. 185-186 for Calvin’s dualistic interpretations of certain New Testament texts, such as 2 Cor. 7: 1 and 1 Pt. 1: 9 (*Institutes*, I, xv, 2). For a later example of an exegete working within these anthropological categories, see the work of the nineteenth century Calvinist exegete Charles Hodge. Hodge understood the creation accounts in Genesis to present a markedly dualistic teaching on man. Commentating on Genesis 2: 7, he writes, “According to this account, man consists of two distinct principles, a body and a soul” and accordingly “*Consciousness* reveals the existence of *two substances* in the constitution of our nature” (*Systematic Theology* (London: Thomas Nelson and sons, 1873) p.42 and 49 (my emphasis)). For a critique of the anthropological presuppositions with which Hodge approaches Scripture, see Gerrit Berkouwer’s *Man, the Image of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962) p. 215. Other Christian writers who thought Paul regarded the body to be inherently evil and salvation as deliverance from the body are C. Holsten, in *Zum Evangelium des Paulus und des Petrus* (Rostock, 1868) and H. Lüdemann, *Die Anthropologie des Apostels Paulus und ihre Stellung innerhalb seiner Heilslehre* (Kiel, 1872); in the twentieth century, see H.J. Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch der Neutestamentlichen Theologie*, 2nd ed.

towards the anthropological presuppositions of the Jewish authors of the Old and New Testaments, a distrust of the hermeneutic reliability of the dualistic anthropologies of both Christian Platonism and the post-Cartesian era, and an insistence that, for the Hebrews and St Paul, the individual was conceived along substantially non-dualistic,¹²⁸ or at least holistic-dualistic lines.¹²⁹ H. Robinson Wheeler and Johannes Weiss in the first and second decades of the century,¹³⁰ and Johannes Pedersen in the 1920s,¹³¹ can be said to have initiated this awareness. They sought to demonstrate how biblical scholarship was frequently undermined by flawed presuppositions which exegetes brought to their reading of the Scriptures; dualistic anthropological presumptions either Cartesian, or at least of a weaker, neo-platonic kind.

(Tübingen, 1911) 2: p. 12 ff., pp. 29-30, p. 42 ff. More recently, see J. Klausner, *From Jesus to Paul* (Boston, 1961) pp. 486-95; 521-2.

¹²⁸ By “non-dualistic” we do not mean the absence of the belief that the soul survives its separation from the body, but rather the absence of the belief that man’s body and soul are mutually exclusive in essence, related accidentally, and that their separation is to be considered a liberation. By ‘dualism’ we mean the *ontological* dualism we have considered in Descartes. For the various different ways in which the term ‘dualism’ is used by exegetes, see John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul and Life Everlasting: Biblical Anthropology and the Monism-Dualism Debate* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000) pp. 1-49; 73-94.

¹²⁹ For an exhaustive historical and systematic analysis of this topic, see Robert Jewett, *Paul’s Anthropological Terms* (Leiden: Brill, 1971). See also John W. Cooper (Ibid.) Cooper provides a thorough analysis of the arguments and the key texts, and asserts that Paul should be regarded as a “holistic dualist”, meaning that he regards body and soul in man as substantially united, but that the soul survives death: “If Paul is a dualist ... he is not a body-soul dualist” (Ibid. p. 156). For the Jewish background to Paul’s anthropology, see W. D. Stacey, *The Pauline View of Man* (London: Macmillan, 1956), pp. 121-241; and W.D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (London: SPCK, 1955). As J.A.T. Robinson put it, “however much Paul may have drawn on Hellenistic sources for other parts of his doctrine, he is at any rate in his anthropology fundamentally what he describes himself, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. ... The basic categories with which he works derive from the Old Testament view of man” (*The Body*, p. 11). See also Gerrit Berkouwer’s *Man, the Image of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962) who observes that a “fairly general consensus of opinion has arisen among theologians” in support of (a non-materialistic) Hebrew holism rather than Greek dualism (Ibid. p. 200). He also writes, “It appears clearly ... that Scripture never pictures man as a dualistic, or pluralistic being. ... There can be no idea of an essential dualism in Paul.” (Ibid. p. 203, 207).

¹³⁰ For H. Wheeler-Robinson, see his *The Christian Doctrine of Man* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1911); for Johannes Weis, see his *Der erst Korintherbrief* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1910) p. 161. Wheeler-Robinson asks the reader to “put aside the interpretation natural to ... a Calvin ... and to read the Old Testament in its original sense” (p. 5).

¹³¹ Johannes Pedersen, *Israel, Its Life and Culture* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926).

Prescinding from some of their more exaggerated conclusions,¹³² these exegetes and the majority of those following, insist that the body-soul antithesis inherent in both Platonic and Cartesian anthropologies was foreign to the Hebrew mind. In so doing, their research reveals the significant convergences that exist between Hebrew anthropology and the anthropological doctrines of St Thomas and the Council Fathers of Vienne and Trent. For example, Wheeler-Robinson made the thoroughly Thomistic observation that, according to Hebrew thought, “the idea of personality is an animated body, and not an incarnated soul”,¹³³ whilst Pedersen, in his conclusions equally Thomistic in this respect, insisted that, according to the Scriptural data of the Old Testament, “the soul is more than the body, but the body is a perfectly valid manifestation of the soul; ... the body is the soul in its outward form”.¹³⁴

In regard to the anthropological presuppositions of Paul and the other writers of the New Testament, scholars have long debated whether they were influenced more by Hellenistic or by Jewish categories.¹³⁵ Yet research into the specific case of Paul’s use of *σῶμα* has consistently exposed the continuity of his understanding of the bodiliness of man with the basic conception found in the Old Testament.¹³⁶ Rudolph Bultmann, following the work of the earlier exegetes on Hebrew anthropology, endeavoured to demonstrate this

¹³² For example, in their insistence on the holistic anthropology of the Hebrews, Wheeler Robinson and Pedersen are led from this to reject the presence in the Old Testament of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. As Robinson insists, according to the Hebrew mind, “the soul has no existence apart from the body” (‘Hebrew Psychology’ in *The People and the Book* ed. A.S. Peake (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925) p. 366). Elsewhere for Wheeler Robinson, see ‘The Eschatology of the Individual’ in *The Christian Doctrine of Man*, pp. 39-42; for Pedersen, see *Israel*, pp. 460-470. More recently, the emphasis upon the holistic nature of Hebrew anthropology has led several exegetes to go so far as to regard it as a kind of spirit-denying materialism. For a consideration of this tendency, and a refutation of it, see John W. Cooper, *Body, Soul and Life Everlasting*, pp. 23-72.

¹³³ ‘Hebrew Psychology’, p. 362.

¹³⁴ *Israel* (I-II), p. 171. cf. pp. 170-81. Cf. “... in Israelite thought man is conceived, not so much in dual fashion as ‘body’ and ‘soul’, but synthetically as a unit of vital power or (in current terminology) a psychophysical organism”, A.R. Johnson, *The Vitality of the Individual in the Thought of Ancient Israel*, (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1949) p. 88.

¹³⁵ Once again, the most comprehensive study of the issues, and a review of the debates, is to be found in R. Jewett, *Paul’s Anthropological Terms* (Ibid.) As Ernest Best stated mid-way through the twentieth century, “It is now generally recognised that in his anthropology Paul is a Jew rather than a Greek”, *One Body in Christ* (London: SPCK, 1955) p. 215. See also W.D. Stacey, *The Pauline View of Man* (Ibid.) pp. 40-55.

¹³⁶ As Best writes, “Paul’s usage of *σῶμα* is determined by its Hebraic usage” (Ibid. p. 221). And Pierre Benoit OP: “... c’est dans l’Ancien Testament et le judaïsme qu’il conviendrait de chercher la principale source de ces catégories de pensée pauliniennes. ... le réalisme physique qui ne conçoit jamais l’homme sans son corps et associe étroitement celui-ci à toute l’oeuvre du salut eschatologique” (‘Corps, Tête et Plérome dans les épîtres de la Captivité’, in *Exégèse et Théologie* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1961) vol. 2, p. 122-3). See also Albert Schweitzer, *Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1930) pp. 110-140.

continuity. As one whose views on this particular matter have inspired a wide following and subsequent exposition,¹³⁷ we shall take him as our representative.

For Bultmann, despite the fact that there is no direct equivalent to $\sigma\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$ in Hebrew,¹³⁸ Paul's use of it "rests upon a point of view that is current both in the Old Testament ... and in Judaism".¹³⁹ Like Wheeler-Robinson and Pedersen before him, Bultmann is able to articulate Paul's understanding of man in a way that, in its fundamental features, corresponds with the anthropology which underlies the teaching of St Thomas and the Council of Trent on the sacrament of the Lord's body.¹⁴⁰ Whilst Bultmann's understanding of $\sigma\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$ in its Eucharistic and soteriological context is drastically different from the understanding of Thomas and Trent,¹⁴¹ an aspect of his understanding of it in relation to New Testament anthropology largely corresponds to the anthropology upon which Thomas and Trent rely in their interpretation of the words of Eucharistic Institution. For example, in accordance with Aquinas, he states that, in the writings of St Paul, "it is clear that *sōma* is not something that clings [*äußerlich*] to a man's real *self* (to his soul, for instance), but belongs to his very essence [*wesenhaft*]",¹⁴² and that, contrary to the Cartesian notion of *res extensa*, "[a man's] body is not a 'thing' [*ein Ding*] like the objects of the external world, but is precisely *his* body [*eben sein Leib*]",¹⁴³ Accordingly, Bultmann helps us to see how Paul's doctrine lies in sharp distinction to the Cartesian principle of *cogito ergo sum* for, according to his Semitic anthropology, "[man] gets his primary experience of himself [*primäre Erfahrung seiner selbst*]" not by experiencing his thoughts, but "by experiencing

¹³⁷ W.D. Stacey in his *The Pauline View of Man* writes of "Bultmann's conclusive treatment of this point" (p. 182). Similarly, Robert H. Gundry writes: "So influential has been the authority of Bultmann and so pervasive his and [J.A.T.] Robinson's discussions that it has become orthodoxy among NT theologians to say that in Pauline literature, ... *soma* refers to the whole person". *Sōma in Biblical Theology, with Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) p. 5.

¹³⁸ For more on this point, see James Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (London: T&T Clark, 2005) pp. 55-56.

¹³⁹ *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (Tübingen: Verlag J.C.B. Mohr, 1961), p. 197. English Translation (ET): *Theology of the New Testament*, pt. II, trans. Kendrick Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951) p. 196.

¹⁴⁰ But as we did before (in regard to Wheeler Robinson and Pedersen), whilst we endorse these principles which Bultmann exposes in reference to Paul's anthropology, we do not thereby share some of the positions which Bultmann develops later.

¹⁴¹ See *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, p. 314 (ET p. 313). For Bultmann, "the efficacy of the sacrament [of the Eucharist] ... rests upon the doing of this act as an act of 'proclamation'", rather than the bread being converted into the true body of Christ and eaten.

¹⁴² *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, p. 195 (ET p. 194).

¹⁴³ *Ibid.* p. 197 (ET p. 196).

his body”.¹⁴⁴ For Bultmann, therefore, “Paul did not dualistically distinguish between man’s self (his ‘soul’) and his bodily *sōma* as if the latter were an inappropriate shell [*Hülle*] a prison [*Kerker*] to the former; nor does his hope expect a release of the self [*eine Befreiung des Ich*] from its bodily prison [*aus dem Gefängnis des Leibes*]”.¹⁴⁵ Wholly consistent with St Thomas, Bultmann goes on to argue that, for Paul, “the only *human* existence that there is ... is somatic existence”,¹⁴⁶ and “if man were no longer *sōma* ... he would no longer be man”.¹⁴⁷ Thus, we can say in these respects that Bultmann’s investigations uphold those anthropological assumptions which underlie Thomas and Trent’s doctrine of natural concomitance. For, according to him, “Man, his person as a whole, can be denoted by *sōma*”;¹⁴⁸ and this truth lies in strict continuity with the Semitic context in which the words of Institution were spoken: “The fact that *sōma* can denote both the body [*den Körper*] and the whole man [*ganzen Menschen*], the person [*die Person*], rests upon a point of view that is current both in the Old Testament ... and in [Paul’s] Judaism”.¹⁴⁹ We shall now see how Bultmann’s own conclusions divert from his original findings.

4. Christ and the Church: Retaining the notion of Corporality

Bultmann’s teaching on Paul’s understanding of *sōma* enables us to move closer to the heart of our study. Yet it does so not in reference to those positions of his we have been presenting with approval, but rather to certain further conclusions he makes, which are strictly inimical to our thesis. Bultmann, as we shall see, seeks to identify Paul’s use of *sōma* not with man as a bodily being, but rather with the more abstract categories of ‘human existence’ (*menschlichen Existenz*) or ‘personality’ (*Persönlichkeit*) and he does this to such an extent that he seeks to deprive the word of physical associations. This will lead us, later in this chapter, to present certain significant exegetical conclusions which are in strict opposition to Bultmann’s. These insist upon a somatically real understanding of St Paul’s ecclesial vocabulary, and of the Christian’s union with Christ. As we shall consider in later chapters, this theory has significant support, and undergoes a profound theological exposition, in the

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. p. 197. “Er macht sowohl die primäre Erfahrung seiner selbst an seinem Leibe” (ET p. 196).

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. p. 202. “... es gibt menschliches Sein ... nur als somatisches” (ET p. 201).

¹⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 193-4 (ET p. 192; my emphasis).

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 199. “Wäre der Mensch nicht mehr *sōma*, ... so wäre er kein Mensch mehr” (ET p. 198).

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. p. 196 (ET p. 195)

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 197 (ET p. 196).

wider theological tradition. We shall come to examine this after having established the relevant exegetical conclusions here.

4.1. *Sōma* as ‘personality’: Bultmann and the elimination of materiality

Whilst Bultmann illuminates both the continuity between Old Testament and New Testament anthropology, and Paul’s Hebraic conception of man as a psycho-somatic unity, his strict identification of $\sigma\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$ with ‘person’ allows him to compromise the essential materiality implied by its use.¹⁵⁰ An example of this can be seen in his understanding of the resurrection where, according to Bultmann, Paul’s “real intention” was not to affirm the resurrection of the body “as the phenomenon of the material body” or “a thing of material substance”, but the resurrection of the body “in the basic sense of that which characterises human existence [*menschlichen Seinscharakter*]”.¹⁵¹ This strict identification of ‘body’ with ‘human existence’ or ‘person’ allows Bultmann to escape the doctrine of physical resurrection, and see it as an event that “has to do with transformation of the personality rather than with transformation of the physique”.¹⁵² Thus, his insistence on the holistic definition of ‘body’ in Paul illogically includes a denial that the term necessarily implies the notion of materiality.¹⁵³ Rather, it is to be interpreted existentially: “Man is called *sōma*”, writes Bultmann, not principally insofar as he is a bodily being, but insofar as he “experiences [*erfährt*] himself as the subject to whom

¹⁵⁰ Bultmann’s former teacher, J. Weiss, also sought to dematerialise the meaning of *soma*. He writes of the “Immaterialität” of an “übermaterielle” *soma* in *Der erste Korintherbrief*, Meyer 5, 9th ed. (Göttingen, 1910) p. 160-1.

¹⁵¹ *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, p. 199 (ET p. 198). As we shall see, in a thoroughly Cartesian turn of phrase, Bultmann explains that that which “characterises human existence” is man’s “relationship to himself”.

¹⁵² Robert H. Gundry, *Sōma in Biblical Theology, with Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) p. 165. As Gundry writes, “dematerialising and existentialising *sōma* entails dematerialising and existentialising the resurrection”. Ibid. p. 168.

¹⁵³ A number of writers who advocated the holistic definition of $\sigma\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$ in Hebraic and Pauline anthropology, followed Bultmann in using it to evade the essential attribute of physicality, as well as the physicality of the order of redemption. See Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (Edinburgh, 1956) 4/1: p. 335; his *Die Auferstehung der Toten*, 2nd ed. (Zollikon-Zurich, 1953) pp. 75-84. According to the exegete E. Güttgemanns, for example, Paul does not use $\sigma\tilde{\omega}\mu\alpha$ to materialise the resurrection, but to distinguish between Christ and Christians (against their pneumatic merging in Corinthian Gnosticism) and thus to put a temporal distance between their resurrection and Christ’s. See his ‘Der leidende Apostel und sein Herr’, *Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments* 90 (Göttingen, 1966) pp. 53-94. See also, H.Grass, *Ostergeschehen und Osterberichte*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen, 1962) pp. 146-73; G. Schunack, *Das hermeneutische Problem des Todes*, *Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie* 7 (Tübingen, 1967) passim.

something happens”.¹⁵⁴ With this heightening of the rejection of materiality in the meaning of ‘body’, Bultmann’s language becomes both increasingly existential and, in certain features, reminiscent of Descartes: according to him, to speak of “body” indicates not that man is a material being, but rather that he has “a relationship to himself” (*Verhältnis zu sich selbst*), is able “to distinguish himself from himself” (*von sich selbst distanzieren*), “the self with whom he can deal as the object of his own conduct”.¹⁵⁵ “It is”, Bultmann concludes, “as such a self that man is called *sōma*”.¹⁵⁶ As J.A.T. Robinson observed, despite Bultmann’s insistence on Paul’s Semitic anthropology, he is ultimately unfaithful to it in his conclusions. His existential, introverted understanding of ‘body’ can only be described as “essentially un-Hebraic and indeed post Cartesian”.¹⁵⁷

4.2. A Disembodied ‘Body of Christ’

It is, therefore, not surprising that Bultmann’s understanding of ‘body’ in its ecclesial sense is characterised by its immateriality. In this way, it faithfully corresponds to the strict, Gnostic theory upon which he grounds his reading of Paul’s phrase ‘the Body of Christ’, but we can also say that it corresponds, at least in part, to his anthropology.¹⁵⁸ He writes of Paul’s doctrine of the Church in insubstantial and strictly disembodied terms: the Church as the ‘body of Christ’ is, Bultmann argues, a “supramundane” [*überweltlich*], “transcendental” [*jenseitiges*], and “cosmic thing” [*eine kosmische Größe*], which pre-exists all its members and subsists over and above them.¹⁵⁹ As one commentator observed, such is the absence of the Incarnation in this ecclesiology, that, as “Bultmann defines it, the body of Christ has nothing specifically Christian about it”.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁴ *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, p. 196. “... sich selbst als Subjekt eines Geschehens, eines Erleidens erfährt” (ET p. 195).

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.* p. 196 (ET p. 195-6). The passage reads: “Er heißt *sōma*, sofern er sich selbst zum Objekt seines Tuns machen kann oder sich selbst als Subjekt eines Geschehens, eines Erleidens erfährt. Er kann also *sōma* genannt werden, sofern er ein Verhältnis zu sich selbst hat, sich in gewisser Weise von sich selbst distanzieren kann; genauer: als der, gegen den er sich in seinem Subjektsein distanziert, mit dem er als dem Objekt seines eignen Verhaltens umgehen und den er wiederum auch als einem fremden, nicht dem eigenen Willen entsprungenen Geschehen unterworfen erfahren kann, — als solcher heißt er *sōma*.”

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p. 196. “... als solcher heißt er *sōma*” (ET p. 196).

¹⁵⁷ See *The Body: A Study in Pauline Theology*, pp. 12-13.

¹⁵⁸ Sang-Won Son agrees: “Bultmann’s interpretation of Paul’s ‘body of Christ’ concept is clearly influenced by his extreme individualistic and existentialist understanding of man”. *Corporate Elements in Pauline Anthropology*, p. 107

¹⁵⁹ *Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, p. 310-11 (ET p. 310; 308-312).

¹⁶⁰ J Macquarrie, *An Existentialist Theology: A Comparison of Heidegger and Bultmann* (London: SCM, 1965) p. 220.

But Bultmann is not alone in wanting to deny a bodily dimension in Paul's doctrine of the Church as the body of Christ. Adolph Deissmann, for example, did not hold that the glorified, human body of Christ endured as an essential principle of the nature of the Church. Fellowship with Christ is to be understood on pneumatic grounds alone, which allows Deissmann to propose a description of the union of Christ and Christians through the analogy of air: as people live in the air and the air is in them, he teaches, so believers are in Christ and Christ is in believers.¹⁶¹ This has some similarities with the view of Bultmann's teacher, Johannes Weiss, who taught that, in St Paul's understanding, Christ's union with Christians is impersonal and pantheistic. According to him, Paul's doctrine of being "in Christ" is only intelligible if "the idea of Christ becomes vague and if his personality is dissolved in a pantheistic manner".¹⁶² Accordingly, he concludes that the related doctrine of incorporation indicates that "the fixed outlines of the personality [of Christ] have been softened and dissolved, and replaced by the idea of a formless, impersonal, all-penetrating being".¹⁶³ Weiss concludes his radically disincarnate understanding of Paul's ecclesiology in the most extreme fashion possible: he formally identifies Christ with the Holy Spirit. After stating how the Christian is "fully *absorbed* ... in union with Christ", he writes,

in this union the personality loses its individuality, and the thought of Christ penetrating all (2 Cor 3: 17) takes place. In Paul's eyes Christ the Person is metaphysically identical with the impersonal Spirit.¹⁶⁴

Without going quite so far as this, recent variations of this thesis have been proposed, where Paul's doctrine of incorporation in Christ is separated from all corporeal associations and understood to mean simply "in Christ's sphere of power".¹⁶⁵ Similarly, other recent commentators have proposed that it signifies an affective union with Christ, denoting merely a "life in an atmosphere informed by love".¹⁶⁶ Finally, others have attempted to reduce the

¹⁶¹ "Just as the air of life, which we breathe, is 'in' us and fills us, and yet we at the same time live in this air and breathe it, so it is with the Christ-intimacy of the Apostle Paul" (*Paul: A Study in Social and Religious History*, trans. William E. Wilson (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1957) p. 140. See also *Die Neutestamentliche Formel "in Christo Jesu"* (Marburg-Lahn: N.C. Elwer Verlag, 1892) p. 77-98.

¹⁶² Quoted by Alfred Wikenhauser in *Pauline Mysticism* (London: Nelson, 1960) p. 81, from Weiss' *Der. I Korintherbrief* (1910)

¹⁶³ Johannes Weiss, *The History of Primitive Christianity* (vol. 2) (trans. and ed. Frederick Grant) (New York: Wilson-Erickson, 1937) p. 465.

¹⁶⁴ Quoted in Wikenhauser, *Pauline Mysticism*, from *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* (1920), p. 139 ff.

¹⁶⁵ J.A. Zisler, *Pauline Christianity* (Oxford: University Press, 1990) p. 63

¹⁶⁶ Eduard Schweizer, *Jesus*, trans. David E. Green (London: SCM Press, 1971) p. 107.

doctrine of incorporation in Christ to the level of subjective “experience”, claiming that it signifies simply “religious experience as experience of Christ”, and “a sense that Christ is thoroughly involved in the situation or action in question—a *consciousness of Christ*.”¹⁶⁷

4.3. The essential attribute of physicality implied by the word “Body”

We have seen that, under Bultmann’s use, the sense of the term ‘body’ in Paul undergoes a thorough redefinition. Despite his insistence on the Hebraic assumptions that must underlie Paul’s use of it, Bultmann’s own existential interpretations are, as we have suggested, essentially disloyal to that thesis, and to the basic intuitions of Semitic anthropology.¹⁶⁸ Thus, many scholars have come to dispute his teaching that the element of physicality is not essential to the word.¹⁶⁹ As we shall now come to consider, exegetes such as Pierre Benoit and Lucien Cerfaux build much of their understanding of Paul’s ecclesiology upon his consistently realistic application of the principle of corporality.¹⁷⁰ Contrary to Bultmann, their position, and the doctrine we have been advocating (as contained in the doctrine of *concomitantia naturalis*) does not hold that living “body” simply *means* person or personality (without any further explanation), but rather that ‘body’ necessarily implies the accompanying presence of the whole person. As one commentator has written, “For the Jew, man acts always as a body-person, with an ambit of activity which *necessarily includes* a physical and sensible aspect”.¹⁷¹ Robert Gundry’s study of *sōma* in Paul avoids the exaggerations of Bultmann’s existentialist interpretation on the one hand or a Cartesian

¹⁶⁷ James D.G. Dunn, *Jesus and the Spirit: A Study of the Religious and Charismatic Experience of Jesus and the First Christians and Reflected in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975) p. 324.

¹⁶⁸ Robert H. Gundry has amassed a large body of evidence to demonstrate “Paul’s exceptionless use of *sōma* for a physical body”. See his *Sōma in Biblical Theology*, p. 168.

¹⁶⁹ In recent times, see Dale Martin, *The Corinthian Body* (Ibid.) and Earle Ellis, ‘Soma in First Corinthians’, in *Interpretation* 44 (1990) pp. 132-144. Martin has written that “Modern commentators on 1 Corinthians tend to be preoccupied with arguing that Paul’s resurrected body is not a ‘physical’ body. They take Paul’s term ‘pneumatic’ to be equivalent to the modern English term ‘spiritual’, which usually designates something that is not ‘physical’ or ‘natural’. The entire chapter, therefore, is read as built on a Cartesian dichotomy of physical versus spiritual” (p. 127). Earle Ellis writes that, in Paul, “‘body of Christ’ is no mere metaphor, nor a simple theological conception, but is at least as real as any other body” (pp. 140-141).

¹⁷⁰ See P. Benoit, ‘Corps, Tête et Plérome dans les épîtres de la Captivité’; and L. Cerfaux, *La Théologie de l’Église suivant saint Paul* pp. 223-240, 275-289. ET: *The Church in the Theology of St Paul*, trans. G. Webb and A. Walker (New York: Herder, 1959) pp. 262-281, 325-345.

¹⁷¹ Barnabas Mary Ahern C.P., ‘The Christian’s Union with the Body of Christ in Cor, Gal, and Rom’, in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, vol. 23, no. 2, April 1961, p. 204.

ontological dualism on the other, and helps us perceive the harmony between Paul's use of 'body' and the anthropological presuppositions of Aquinas and Trent:

The *sōma* may *represent* the whole person simply because the *sōma* lives in union with the soul. But *sōma* does not *mean* 'whole person', because its use is designed to call attention to the physical object which is the body of the person.¹⁷²

As another biblical commentator has expressed it, writing within the Thomistic tradition, "[in St Paul] the notion 'body' stands for the entire 'self' but stresses the 'corporeal' aspect of man, as the body is the means by which man manifests himself, expresses himself, relates to others".¹⁷³ Other exegetes have formed precisely the same conclusions, upholding the truth of a complex, non-materialist Hebraic monism, whilst at the same time preserving the inherent physicality of bodiliness. Ernst Käsemann, though a student of Bultmann, developed a thesis which thoroughly rejects his teacher's existentialist reading of *sōma*. According to him, since the notion of physicality is an inescapable aspect of the correct, holistic definition, "σῶμα does not mean for the Apostle what it means for the modern idea of person or personality".¹⁷⁴ This is true to such an extent that, in accordance with 1 Cor 6: 15, "our bodies can become members of the Body of Christ".¹⁷⁵ This principle, observes Käsemann, is to be maintained in any interpretation of the words of Eucharistic Institution, where Christ "claim[s] our bodies sacramentally".¹⁷⁶ Pierre Benoit insists on the same. Since body firstly *means* body, there is always a certain physical dimension when the word is used: "étant bien entendu que ce corps-personne a pour base le corps physique et même souligne cet aspect sensible de l'homme".¹⁷⁷ For Benoit, both the existential anthropology of Bultmann and the anthropological legacy of Descartes are both contrary to "le monisme anthropologique essentiel à la pensée sémitique et biblique",¹⁷⁸ and to the full, somatic realism implied by Paul's bodily vocabulary for the union of Christ and Christians. The following statement of F.X. Durrwell summarises our position well, both in its insistence upon the personal totality implied by the body, and the aspect of materiality necessary to it:

¹⁷² *Sōma in Biblical Theology* p. 80 (author's emphasis).

¹⁷³ M. Miguens, 'Christ's 'members' and Sex' in *The Thomist*, vol. 39, 1975, p. 29.

¹⁷⁴ Ernst Käsemann, *Essays on New Testament Themes*, 'The Pauline Doctrine of the Last Supper', trans. W.J. Montague (London: SCM Press, 1964) p. 132.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.* (my emphasis).

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.* p. 135.

¹⁷⁷ P. Benoit, 'Corps, Tête et Plérôme' p. 111, fn. 2.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.* p. 54

The Pauline idea is not precisely the same as our conception of the body. The Semitic mind has a more comprehensive intuition of human nature, and does not separate the body from the principle that gives it life and is expressed through it. Hence St. Paul can use a personal pronoun for the body, because it is extended to mean the whole human person. “So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself” (Eph. 5: 28). Belonging to the body of Christ is therefore synonymous with belonging to Christ himself. However, *the accent remains on the material element*; ... The body may designate the whole man, but only because the human being is present and expresses himself in his ‘bodiliness’. ... To be the body of Christ means, therefore, to be ‘in Christ’, but in a bodily Christ.¹⁷⁹

5. A Corresponding Doctrine of Somatic Realism

Implied by these arguments, and often explicitly stated, is a physically realistic understanding of Paul’s doctrine of the union of Christ and the members of the Church. We have glimpsed several of these arguments already, and they are frequently based upon the principles we outlined earlier: that Paul’s application of the phrase ‘body of Christ’ to the Church provides not only an allusion to the body of Christ in the Eucharist, but also an expression of the particular *kind* of unity which persists in consequence of this true, bodily principle. As one exegete has put it, “The ‘many’ are ‘one body’ because communion makes one con-corporeal with Christ”.¹⁸⁰

In accordance with the argument for the Eucharistic source of Paul’s ecclesiology, many of these same exegetes have endeavoured to stress that, behind Paul’s use of ‘body’ to convey the union of Christ with the members of the Church, lies a “*réalisme physique que notre mode de penser moderne est trop porté à édulcorer*”.¹⁸¹ This “*édulcorer*” or ‘softening down’ of physical realism is understood to be the effect of the very tendency to which we alluded earlier: certain mistaken anthropological presuppositions through which the ecclesiology of Paul is interpreted.¹⁸² Several exegetes have asserted in bold terms the bodily realism implied by Paul’s conception of ecclesial union, without attempting to engage in precise expositions of how and in what manner this realism exists (such a task concerns us in

¹⁷⁹ F.X. Durrwell, C.S.S.R., *The Resurrection, A Biblical Study*, trans. Rosemary Sheed, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1964) p. 174-5 (my emphasis).

¹⁸⁰ Barnabas Mary Ahern C.P., ‘The Christian’s Union with the Body of Christ in Cor, Gal, and Rom’, in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, vol. 23, no. 2, April 1961, p. 205

¹⁸¹ P. Benoit, ‘Corps, Tête et Plérôme’ p. 111.

¹⁸² As Benoit states, an “*attitude intellectualiste s’observe bien dans la conception luthérienne de la justification qui régnait chez les protestants jusqu’à une époque récente; elle a pénétré même chez certains théologiens ou exegetes catholiques, d’une façon plus ou moins consciente*” (Ibid., p. 111, fn. 1).

our dogmatic considerations in Part 2). In writing about Paul's presentation of the sacramental economy as a whole, Benoit insists on the following principle of interpretation:

Tout cela doit être entendu avec un grand réalisme. De même que Paul ne songe pas un instant à une résurrection seulement 'spirituelle' du Christ, mais qu'il tient son corps 'pneumatique' pour très réel, d'une réalité physique encore que transformée, de même c'est à une union bien réelle, physique, du corps du chrétien au corps du Christ qu'il songe comme à la condition essentielle du salut.¹⁸³

What unites all the exponents of realism is the conviction that, for Paul, the physical body of Christ (crucified and risen) is the principle of ecclesial unity. According to them, by virtue of the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist, each member of the Church, in and through his or her own corresponding bodiliness, comes to be united and, indeed, conformed to, the physical body of the risen Christ. "The unity ... of the Church is for St Paul not simply a 'spiritual' unity: it is at the same time a 'bodily' unity. And it is 'bodily', because sacramental".¹⁸⁴ "[Paul] knows and he has said clearly that every Christian is united really and corporally to the risen body of Christ";¹⁸⁵ hence, "[Paul] constantly brings back the thoughts of his readers to the fundamental fact that each one is *syssōmos* with Christ".¹⁸⁶

5.1. *Distinction in Unity*

As these statements indicate, a somatically real understanding of the union of Christ and the members of the Church does not, in our understanding, imply a strict identification between the two bodies, the 'body of Christ' *natum de Maria*, and the 'body of Christ' *quod est ecclesia*. As we alluded to earlier, certain exegetes have proposed such a thesis, where the 'body of Christ' *quod est ecclesia* is "in fact no other than the glorified body of the risen and ascended Christ".¹⁸⁷ Such a position is obviously replete with theological difficulties,¹⁸⁸ and

¹⁸³ 'Corps, Tête et Plérôme', p. 112.

¹⁸⁴ A.E.J. Rawlinson, 'Corpus Christi' in *Mysterium Christi*, ed. K.A. Bell and A. Deissmann (London: 1930) p. 231.

¹⁸⁵ Ahern, 'The Christian's Union with the Body of Christ', p. 206.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.* p. 206.

¹⁸⁷ Robinson, *The Body*, p. 51. This is also the view of Ernst Percy in his frequently cited work, *Der Leib Christi (soma Christou) in den paulinischen Homologoumena und Antilegomena* (*Ibid.*) pp. 18-46.

¹⁸⁸ Within the field of exegesis, some of these difficulties are mentioned by Robert Gundry in *Soma*, pp. 228-40. As he states, "to equate the present physical body of Christ with believers wreaks havoc with the temporal distinction Paul carefully makes between the pastness of Christ's resurrection and the futurity of believers' resurrection (see esp. 1 Cor. 15:20-8; cf. 2 Tim 2: 17-18)."

contrary to the distinctions proposed by the Magisterium.¹⁸⁹ But to preserve the necessary distinctions does not mean compromising the true nature of the union. Absolute identification and indistinction is not to be replaced by a doctrine of juxtaposition or mere moral union. As Gundry correctly states, “merely to attach [Christians to Christ] would fail to do justice to Paul’s statements that the Church *is* the body of Christ and that the individual believers make up the specific organs and limbs”.¹⁹⁰ Rather,

If equation and non-equation of believers with Christ’s body are both wrong, a distinction between two bodies of Christ has to be drawn—an individual body, distinct from believers, in which he arose, ascended, and lives on high, and an ecclesial body, consisting of believers ... [which is] just as physical as the individual body of Christ, not because it consists in the individual body of Christ but because it consists of believers whose bodies (as well as spirits) belong to Christ (1 Cor 6: 15: 19-20).¹⁹¹

But the necessary refutation of the false doctrine of somatic identification is itself often made on mistaken theological grounds. For example, in considering the sources of Robinson’s exaggerated notion that the individual and ecclesial bodies of Christ are to be absolutely identified with each other, Gundry suggests that “old-fashioned transubstantiation would pose a possible solution”, but that “it is precisely the literalism of such transubstantiation which makes the doctrine problematic” in the first place.¹⁹² According to him, Robinson’s thesis of absolute, corporeal identification would be explicable only through the “magic” of transubstantiation.¹⁹³ Other exegetes have dismissed entirely any notion of bodiliness in the union of Christ and the Christian on the basis of an entirely figurative interpretation of the Eucharist. Herman Ridderbos resists attributing any theological, causal connection between the Eucharistic body and the ecclesial body, on the grounds that, when Paul speaks of the Eucharist (in 1 Cor 10: 16-17) “it is not the (historical) body of Christ that is ... described”.¹⁹⁴ Rather, in Ridderbos’ opinion, this Eucharistic body is not itself the individual body of Jesus but a symbol which only “denote[s] the body once surrendered in death”. Such a symbol simply “calls to mind” his “voluntary self-surrender”.¹⁹⁵ On these grounds, with a

¹⁸⁹ See Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis* 60.

¹⁹⁰ Gundry, *Soma*, p. 228.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² Gundry, *Soma*, p. 237.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.* p. 236

¹⁹⁴ Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard de Witt (London: SPCK, 1977) p. 374.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 374.

figurative understanding of the words of Eucharistic Institution, it is perfectly true that one could not interpret the union of Christ and the Church in any somatically real way.

5.2. “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?” (1 Cor. 6:15)

Despite the concerns of such exegetes as Gundry, who regards the exaggerated doctrine of corporeal identification between Christ and the Church to be the natural outcome of those who uphold what he calls the “magic” of transubstantiation, we emphatically reject the notion of absolute, corporeal identification between Christ and the Church, whilst stressing the identification of the human body of Christ and the Eucharist. Indeed, it is precisely this latter identification which accounts for the necessary distinction in the ecclesial sense. As we have already argued, and as we shall be considering in greater detail in the second part of this thesis, it is precisely in the sacramental contact with the risen body of Christ *natum de Maria* that the Church can, derivatively, be called the ‘body of Christ’, and that members of it can be said to have a ‘bodily’ union with Christ. “The Church is indeed united with the personal body of the Lord, understood in the literal sense (e.g. in the Eucharist), yet it is itself not that body, but it is that body as the totality of those with whom Christ makes himself one”.¹⁹⁶

Several exegetes ground their arguments for such realism upon Paul’s doctrine of 1 Cor. 6:15, where an alarming comparison is made between the union effected through sexual intercourse with a prostitute and the union between Christ and each member of the Church.¹⁹⁷ As Schweitzer observes, through establishing such a parallel, “it shows that Paul is prepared to accept in the fullest measure the implications of the union of believers with Christ as a physical bodily union”.¹⁹⁸ The union with a prostitute is presented as the antithesis of the Christian’s union with Christ, inviting the reader to regard the corporality of his or her union with Christ with the same literalness. Paul opposes the sin of fornication by appealing to another bond which the Christian has already contracted, the “bond between his *sōma* and the *sōma* of the glorified Christ, which is as real as the union between a man and a harlot”.¹⁹⁹ As Cerfaux plainly states, “C’est union de corps physique à corps physique qu’il s’agit dans les

¹⁹⁶ These are the words of Herman Ridderbos (though not his personal convictions) in *Paul: An Outline of his Theology*, p. 364.

¹⁹⁷ As Benoit comments in reference to 1 Cor. 12-20 (and also Rom. 8: 11, 23; 1 Cor. 15:44-49), “On voit donc en ces quelques versets comment Paul conçoit de façon réelle, corporelle, cette union au Christ” (‘Corps, Tête et Plérôme’ p. 117).

¹⁹⁸ *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, trans. William Montgomery (London: A&C Black, 1931) p. 127.

¹⁹⁹ Ahern, ‘The Christian’s Union with the Body of Christ’, p. 202.

rappports avec la courtisane et Paul oppose, en antithèse, l'union avec le corps du Christ".²⁰⁰ If we are to be faithful to Paul's own reasoning, we cannot avoid concluding here that "Christ" is the corresponding element in the antithesis to "prostitute", and that a simple choice between mutually exclusive unions is proposed:

Le terme 'Christ' est ... exactement l'antithèse de 'courtisane', et comment ne pas le comprendre, en plein réalisme, du Christ personnel? Le parallélisme antithétique se poursuit encore. On s'unit (κολλώμενος, coller, se souder) à la prostituée, ou l'on s'unit (κολλώμενος) au Christ.²⁰¹

F.X. Durrwell, helpfully drawing upon the anthropological principles we have already discussed, puts it this way:

Because he always sees man as a unity, the Apostle can say not merely that the faithful are members of Christ, but that their bodies are members of Christ. Even in his material being, the Christian is a member of Christ, and it is of Christ in his physical being that we are members in our bodies. Furthermore, the parallel he puts forward between the two unions —with Christ and with the harlot— demands that we be quite literal in understanding the body of Christ to which we are united. ...This union is an absolutely real one, and Christ is thought of as a corporeal being.²⁰²

In response to this juxtaposition of Paul's, Ernst Käsemann makes the very same conclusion as Cerfaux, but goes further in attempting an explanation:

[T]here is the double possibility: shall I become ἐν σῶμα with the prostitute or with the Christ? Shall I become a member of the one or the other? This potential can only ever become act in the body, i.e. either by sexual intercourse with a prostitute or by that total concrete bodily obedience to Christ which is grounded in the sacramental transaction. In both cases I am laid hold upon ... in and with my body and as the result of a bodily process.²⁰³

For Käsemann, the bond effected through the eating of the sacrament of the Lord's body ("the sacramental transaction") implies a "bodily process", establishing a shocking parallel between the two unions. Fornication is intrinsically inimical to the Christian life since Christ

²⁰⁰ *La Théologie de l'Église suivant saint Paul*, p. 235.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.* p. 236.

²⁰² *The Resurrection*, p. 176.

²⁰³ 'The Pauline Doctrine of the Last Supper' (*Ibid.*), p. 133.

has himself formed a union with the Christian's body that is quasi-marital;²⁰⁴ he has "claim[ed] our bodies sacramentally for service in his body",²⁰⁵ and "the bodily self-impacting of Christ in the sacrament claims for us concrete obedience in our bodies with the Body of Christ".²⁰⁶

The risen Christ continues to do, according to Käsemann, "what the Incarnate and Crucified one has already done", which is to "exist for us in the body";²⁰⁷ yet in and through the sacrament of his body there is a further development, for through it "he gives us bodily participation in himself". This is not in spite of the Incarnation, but very much by virtue of it. For, according to Käsemann, it is precisely "the corporeality of the risen one which makes it possible for him to give himself to us in the sacrament",²⁰⁸ a corporeality which establishes the very "possibility of communication".²⁰⁹ In other words, through the humanity of Christ, man can now be claimed for God in the entirety of his psycho-somatic nature. As Barnabas Ahern has observed, because of this implicit sense of totality in Paul's conception of salvation, he "therefore teaches clearly that Christian life involves a real and personal union between the individual *sōma* of the Christian and the individual *sōma* of the glorified Christ".²¹⁰ "No union could be more intimate", he observes, "because no dependence could be more complete. All that the Christian has as a Christian he receives in the total surrender of his body-person to the body-person of Christ."²¹¹

From this vantage point we can sympathise with Ahern's belief that "the teaching of Paul on the body of Christ is eminently simple". This is because ecclesial union is simply

²⁰⁴ As Schweitzer writes, "To what extent the union with Christ is conceived of as physical is evident from the fact that it is thought to be of the same character as the bodily union between man and wife. Paul does not hesitate to use the same word *kollasthai*, 'cleave', derived from Genesis 2:24 —of bodily union between man and woman and union with Christ (1 Cor 6: 16-17). He represents the two connections as of so much the same character that the one may be either included in the other, or may exclude it. In the case of morally blameless physical union between man and wife the connection with Christ continues through it; in the case of immoral intercourse the connection of Christ is broken by it" (*The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* p. 127). As Ahern points out, "It is significant that the 'cleaving' of the Christian to Christ in this text is the *kollasthai* of man cleaving to his wife in God's decree of permanence in marriage (Gn. 2:24)" ('The Christian's Union with the Body of Christ', p. 202). On this parallel, see also M. Miguens, 'Christ's 'Members' and Sex' (Ibid.), p. 32.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. p.135.

²⁰⁶ Ibid. Gundry expresses it in this way: "although the believer's relationship to the Lord is not sexual, it is of the same kind as union with a prostitute insofar as both deal with the body". *Sōma in Biblical Theology*, p. 69 (fn. 1).

²⁰⁷ 'The Pauline Doctrine of the Last Supper', p. 133.

²⁰⁸ Ibid. p. 134.

²⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 133.

²¹⁰ Ahern, 'The Christian's Union with the Body of Christ', p. 204.

²¹¹ Ibid. p. 203

“the surrender of the body of the Christian in the Semitic sense of self to the body-self of the risen Saviour, thus forming with him only one body”.²¹² As we saw earlier, it is a simplicity already glimpsed by St Augustine and St Albert:

One can see no reason why the Church should be named the body of Christ, and should in fact be so, except that by giving her his body.²¹³

The spouse of Christ is the whole Church, whose principle ... is the flesh of Christ: there the bride is joined to the bridegroom in bodily union.²¹⁴

Conclusion

These preliminary considerations of part 1 have established the foundations which allow us to proceed with greater assurance in our investigation. First of all, in response to certain confusions within recent exegesis, we have endeavoured to clarify the distinctions implicit in Paul’s versatile use of the term ‘body of Christ’ by recourse to principles present in the wider theological tradition. In this way we are able to perceive, at least superficially at this stage, how the sacramental and ecclesial senses of ‘body of Christ’ are fundamentally related to each other, whilst being numerically and ontologically distinct. This basic distinction must underlie any argument which proposes a somatically realistic understanding of Christ’s union with each member of the Church, so as to avoid the errors of exaggeration or defect. Secondly, we took time to consider some of the anthropological presuppositions of this consistent allusion to corporeality in St Paul, particularly in reference to the redefinition of bodiliness found both in Descartes and in the existentialist exegesis of Rudolph Bultmann. We have sought to highlight how any Cartesian reduction of the body to the level of mere material externality is strictly incompatible with the fundamental Christian understanding of the body, as demonstrated in the Eucharist and the words of Institution. Incompatible, too, is the anthropology which emerges from Bultmann’s exegesis, where the body is redefined in existentialist terms, allowing him to eliminate all aspects of materiality from its meaning. As we attempted to show, this has important consequences on the ecclesiological sense of the ‘body of Christ’, inspiring a number of commentators to form an entirely disincarnate

²¹² Ibid. p. 208.

²¹³ St Albert the Great, *De Eucharistia*, dist. Iii, tract. I, ch. v, 5.

²¹⁴ St. Augustine, *In Joan. Epist.* tract II, 2: “omnis enim ecclesia sponsus Christi est cuius principium et primitiae caro Christi est; ibi iuncta est sponsa sponso in carne”.

conception of its meaning, divorced from its Eucharistic principle. Thirdly, we presented the arguments of a number of exegetes who, on the basis of clear anthropological and Eucharistic principles, present the doctrine of Christ's union with the Church with a marked, bodily realism. This is not an argument which seeks to identify physically Christ and the Church, Christ and the Christian, in any terms incompatible with the teachings of the Magisterium and the theological tradition.²¹⁵ Rather, based upon a Christological and Eucharistic realism, and maintaining the necessary interpersonal distinctions, it seeks to present the Apostle's teaching on the union of Christ and each member of the Church as a reality which is not only spiritual but also bodily. Our task now is to examine this idea further. Indeed, without recourse to the dogmatic tradition, the proposal that "every Christian is united really and corporally to the risen body of Christ"²¹⁶ remains vague and insufficiently defined. We now proceed to the first of our dogmatic enquiries.

²¹⁵ See Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi*, 86.

²¹⁶ Barnabas Mary Ahern C.P., 'The Christian's Union with the Body of Christ', p. 206.

PART II

Chapter 1

Somatic Union with Christ according to the Eucharistic Doctrine of Cyril of Alexandria

Introduction

From our general considerations of Part 1, we now proceed to the first of our three dogmatic considerations in Part 2.

We concluded Part 1 by presenting the thesis of several mid-twentieth century exegetes who, in their reading of St Paul, propose a somatically realistic understanding of Christ's union with the members of the Church. "By physical contact", writes one such exegete, Christ "unites the faithful to himself, even their bodies, and 'incorporates' them into himself."¹ Accordingly, "Christians are the members of Christ because their union with him joins their bodies to his body".² However, such a thesis requires careful exposition. As we observed in Part 1, an understanding of the somatic dimension of Christ's union with the members of the Church, if it is to be in harmony with the proposals of the Magisterium, involves both a careful preservation of distinctions, and a precise application of anthropological, Christological, and sacramental principles. Without this vigilance it is, as we have seen, a thesis which commonly suffers from either intense exaggeration or theological disregard. As Benoit, Cerfaux, Ratzinger, Héring, and Martin have all pointed out, the absence of certain presuppositions, or the application of incompatible ones, has rendered the full extent of the doctrine obscure and confusing to modern thought.³

In response to the conclusions of our exegetes, our task now is to consider the dogmatic grounds for such a thesis. As the exegetes themselves indicate, the fundamental principles of their argument are Christological, sacramental, and anthropological, though they do not grant these elements any significant theological exposition in their writings. Therefore, through recourse to the dogmatic tradition, we shall now investigate the dogmatic credibility and reliability of such an argument.

¹ Pierre Benoit, *Jesus and the Gospel* (vol. 1) tr. Benet Weatherhead (London: DLT, 1973) p. 118.

² Ibid.

³ For our exegetes, Paul's corporate language to convey the union of Christ with the members of the Church has, in the words of one of their group, a "réalisme physique que notre mode de penser moderne est trop porté à édulcorer". P. Benoit, 'Corps, Tête et Plérôme' p. 111.

We turn first to the Eucharistic theology of the 5th century Patriarch of Alexandria, St Cyril. Here we shall encounter a doctrine of union with Christ which explores identical theological territory to that investigated by our exegetes some 1500 years later. Though our exegetes present their arguments mainly as an interpretation of the ecclesiological and Eucharistic thought of St Paul, Cyril's own analysis is formed principally through his reading of St John, particularly the great Eucharistic and ecclesiological narratives of John 6 and 15. However, Cyril strives to express the thesis he forms in its theological harmony and coherence with Paul's own thought. We shall witness this in Cyril's habit of alluding to Paul in his expositions of John, where a teaching of the former serves to clarify and support a proposed interpretation of the latter. But as we shall see, Paul is frequently present in his own right, as in, for example, Cyril's commentary on 1 Corinthians, and in particular his reading of the important passage of 1 Cor 6:15.

As we shall be considering, throughout Cyril's Christology, Eucharistic theology and soteriology, the principle of human bodiliness, either as the instrument of divine love and restorative power, or the seat of weakness and corruptibility, is fundamental. Of all the great Patristic theologians of the Incarnation, the pivotal character of the sacred flesh of Christ, in vital contact with the sinful flesh of Christians, and effecting a salvific union with them, is arguably the most developed and pronounced.⁴ This preoccupation with the flesh of the Word and the somatic dimension of Christian redemption is, as we shall shortly witness, grounded in his Christological concerns. From the principles he establishes there he articulates a doctrine of somatic union with Christ through communion in His sacred flesh. This is no peripheral doctrine for Cyril, but one which emerges naturally from Christological and Eucharistic orthodoxy, and a doctrine in deep harmony with Cyril's understanding of the love of God for sinful mankind and the redemptive purpose of the Incarnation. It is, therefore, a doctrine repeatedly insisted upon by him.

Our order of enquiry in this chapter will be determined by Cyril's own line of thought. The effects of the gift of Christ's body are theologically coherent only in light of the unique capacities of that body, and the corresponding nature of man who receives it in Holy

⁴ According to Cipriano Vagaggini, on "the importance of corporeity ... [the theology of] Cyril may be considered the summit of Patristic thought". *The Flesh: Instrument of Salvation*, trans. Charles Underhill Quinn (New York, Alba House: 1969), p. 67. Similarly, in Cyril's working out of the relation between the Incarnation, the Eucharist, and the Mystical Body of Christ, Emile Mersch SJ writes that "Cyril of Alexandria brings the doctrine of the Mystical Body to the highest perfection that it attains in the oriental tradition". *The Whole Christ: The Historical Development of the Doctrine of the Mystical Body in Scripture and Tradition*, trans. John R. Kelly SJ (London: Dennis Dobson, 1938) p. 337-8.

Communion. Therefore, certain Christological and anthropological principles of Cyril's must be established before we may consider his doctrine of somatic union. In light of this, it is worth briefly observing here a common anthropological concern which unites our previous section with this one. Just as we have highlighted the dangers of any ontological body-soul dualism for the doctrine of the Church as the 'Body of Christ', so Cyril's doctrine of ecclesial unity is shaped by his resistance to a dualistic Christology, and his insistence on Christ's unity: His unity of Person, and His unity of operation. As radical anthropological dualism cannot accommodate the classical doctrine of the Eucharist and Paul's ecclesiology, so Cyril articulates a theology of the unitive capacities of Christ's flesh, and man's bodily relation with Christ, in conscious repudiation to a Christological dualism which sought to sever the unity of Christ, either as both God and Man, or (in His humanity) as a unified body and soul.⁵ Since both Christology and anthropology provide such important foundations to Cyril's doctrine of somatic union with Christ, we shall take time to consider these principles. With these established, we will finally present the thesis which most concerns us towards the end of this chapter.

1. The Christological Principles

The thesis proposed by our exegetes in part one does not stand in isolation from the theological tradition. In the fifth century St Cyril of Alexandria developed a theology of the life-giving capacity of Christ's flesh upon which he was able to articulate both the possibility and the salvific efficacy of union with the Incarnate Word of a "fleshly kind" (κατὰ σάρκα). "If it is said that we do not have any union [with Christ] of a fleshly kind, we can prove this to be in flagrant contradiction with the inspired Scriptures", he insists.⁶

Yet, given that "the flesh alone profits nothing" (Jn. 6:63), Cyril formulates this doctrine in strict theological harmony with the truth of the essential impotence of human flesh in itself.⁷ The apparent contradiction is, of course, not peculiar to Cyril, but belongs to

⁵ As Eric Mascall has observed, "The Christological parallel to [Cartesian dualism] is, of course, Nestorianism". *Christ, the Christian, and the Church: A Study of the Incarnation and its Consequences* (London: Longmans, 1946) p. 11.

⁶ *In Joh* 15: 1; Pusey, ii. 543-4.

⁷ Cyril tells us that he uses *sarx* [σάρξ], "flesh", in these Christological and Eucharistic contexts, in the manner of St John. According to him it has a two-fold significance: it both expresses the whole of man, body and soul ("when we say 'flesh' we mean 'man'") (*Second Letter to Succensus* 2; *Epistolae* 46; ACO 1, 1, 6 pp. 157-62) and also the weakness and poverty of human nature, which are Christ's simply as a

the fundamental message of John 6: “the flesh alone profits nothing” yet, despite this, “the bread which I shall give for the life of the world *is my flesh*” (6:51) and he who “eats my flesh has eternal life” (6:54). In conformity with John 6, Cyril proposes his doctrine of somatic union with Christ principally as an effect of eating the true flesh of Christ in the sacrament of the Eucharist,⁸ a doctrine which is itself, as we shall now consider, indebted to his Christology⁹ and dependent upon and illuminative of his anthropology (which we shall investigate in due course). This interrelation of Christology and Eucharistic doctrine, and indeed, the very interrelation which gives all coherence to Cyril’s Eucharistic doctrine, is conveniently summarised in this extract from his *Third Letter to Nestorius*:

We proclaim the fleshly death of God’s only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, we confess his return to life from the dead and His ascension into heaven when we perform in church the unbloody service, when we approach the sacramental gifts and are hallowed participants in the holy flesh and precious blood of Christ, Saviour of us all, by receiving not mere flesh (God forbid!) or flesh of a man hallowed by connection with the Word in some unity of dignity or possessing some divine indwelling, but the personal, truly vitalising flesh of God the Word Himself. As God, He is by nature Life, and because He has become one with his own flesh he declared it vitalizing; and so, though he tells us ‘truly I say to you, unless you eat of the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood’, we must not suppose it belongs to one of us men (how could man’s flesh be vitalizing by its own nature?) but that it was made the personal possession of Him who for us has become and was called ‘Son of Man’.¹⁰

consequence of human nature, and our own as a consequence of Original Sin. It is this ‘flesh’ which is to be elevated precisely by virtue of its assumption by the Word. As Weinandy observes, “Commenting on the Johannine term that the Word became ‘flesh’ rather than ‘man’, Cyril held that John proclaimed that the Son of God did assume a whole man, body and soul, but that he was here designating and so emphasising the weakness, vulnerability and woundedness of fallen humanity ... [As Cyril writes] ‘That in my opinion, is the most probable reason why the holy Evangelist, indicating the whole living being by the part affected, says that the Word of God became flesh. It is so that we might see side by side the wound together with the remedy, the patient together with him who raised it up towards life, that which had been overcome by corruption together with him who drove out corruption, that which had been mastered by death together with him who was superior to death, that which was bereft of life together with him who is the provider of life’”. Thomas Weinandy OFM Cap., ‘Cyril and the Mystery of the Incarnation’ in *The Theology of St Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation* (London: T&T Clark, 2003) p. 26.

⁸ But also, in a different sense, Cyril sometimes speaks of ‘somatic union’ as a consequence of the Word being made Flesh, prescinding from the sacramental order. We shall consider this later.

⁹ Though, as is common in the Fathers, the dependency lies in the opposite direction as well. As Henry Chadwick has pointed out, Cyril’s Christological doctrine is frequently formulated in light of the repercussions Antiochene doctrine had “upon the doctrines of the Eucharist and the atonement” (Henry Chadwick, ‘Eucharist and Christology in the Nestorian Controversy’, *Journal of Theological Studies (New Series)*, (October, 1951) p. 153).

¹⁰ *Third Letter to Nestorius*, 7. *St Cyril of Alexandria: Selected Letters*, ed. and trans. L. Wickham (Oxford, OUP, 1983) p. 23.

Condensed into this extract are the fundamental principles of Cyril's theology of Jesus' vivifying human flesh. For, as the passage implies, the salvific efficacy of this flesh and the very desirability of union with Christ *κατὰ σάρκα* are dependent upon certain unique conditions. Indeed, "Of all men it is true that the 'flesh profits nothing'; of Christ alone it is not true".¹¹ We shall now elucidate these conditions, and illuminate the aspects of Cyril's Christology which form a basis for his doctrine of Christ's vivifying flesh. These, as we shall see, underlie the theory of somatic union which follows in his sacramental theology.

1.1. "The Personal, truly vitalising flesh of God the Word Himself"

The theological connections to be found between Cyril's Christology and his Eucharistic theology have been the subject of numerous studies.¹² Our specific concern is how Cyril's Christology allows him to develop, in his sacramental theology, a somatically real account of the Christian's union with Christ, where he can claim that we "partake of a communion [κοινωνία] with [Christ], not only spiritual [πνευματικῶς], but also somatic [σωματικῶς]".¹³

When we consider the principles laid down by Cyril in his Christological disputations with Nestorius, we understand that both the desirability and efficacy of such bodily contact with Christ is based not upon the nature of flesh itself, but on the dignity and power granted to this flesh by virtue of its hypostatic union with the eternal Word. This first principle is, for Cyril, nothing less than the fundamental reality of the Incarnation: the Word, "having united to Himself [ἐνώσας ἑαυτῶ] in His own hypostasis [καθ' ὑπόστασιν] ... flesh animated with a rational soul, became Man".¹⁴ The consequences of this union of flesh and Godhead as subsisting in the eternal hypostasis of the Word, as opposed to a "union of divine favour, of

¹¹ *In Joh.* 6: 63. Pusey, i. 551.

¹² Recently, Lawrence Welch, *Christology and Eucharist in the Early Thought of Cyril of Alexandria* (San Francisco: Catholic Scholars Press, 1994); H. Chadwick, 'Eucharist and Christology in the Nestorian Controversy', in *Journal of Theological Studies* (NS) 2 (1951) pp.145-164. And then earlier, see E. Steitz, 'Die Abendmahlslehre der griechischen Kirche' in *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie*, 9-13, (1867), pp. 235-245; E. Michaud, 'Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie et l'eucharistie' in *Revue internationale de théologie* 10 (1902) pp. 599-614, 675-692; J. Mahé, 'L'eucharistie d'après saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie' in *Revue d'Histoire Ecclésiastique* 8 (1907) pp. 677-696; A. Struckmann, *Die Eucharistielehre des heiligen Cyrill von Alexandrien* (Paderborn, 1910) p. 123ff; 157ff; P. Battifol, 'Nestorius et Cyrille d'Alexandrie' in *Etudes d'histoire et de théologie positive* (1930), 2nd ser., 10th ed. pp. 454-480.

¹³ *In Joh.* 15: 1. Pusey, ii. 543-4.

¹⁴ *Second Letter to Nestorius*, 3. Wickham, p. 7.

good will, [or mere] outward appearance”¹⁵ is that the flesh assumed is strictly and truly the personal flesh of the Word. It is the ἰδία σάρξ of the divine Λόγος, the Word’s very “own body”,¹⁶ His “personal possession”.¹⁷ Thus, in Cyril’s account of the Incarnation, two infinitely unequal and separated orders of existence, human nature and divine nature, created and uncreated, flesh and divinity, are —“without confusion or change, without division or separation”¹⁸— united in the one eternally divine subject of the Second Person of the Trinity. They have entered a union at once “hypostatic”,¹⁹ “natural or physical”,²⁰ “real”, “true”,²¹ and “inseverable”.²²

According to Cyril, the “theophanies” of the Old Covenant, the ancient figures and types, the prophets and patriarchs in whom God “dwelt”²³ therefore find their final perfection in this unsurpassable and definitive union of the uncreated and created orders. In this case, argues Cyril, we have a heavenly manifestation and divine embodiment not only infinitely exceeding in degree, but distinct in *kind*, from all the holy types and figures of the Old Covenant, including that of the holy tabernacle of Israel.²⁴ Though Cyril likes to compare Christ with the holy tabernacle, and interpret it as a figure of Christ,²⁵ according to his own principles the body of Christ is not a tabernacle in the strict sense; rather, by virtue of its assumption into personal union with the Word it is, unlike a tabernacle, an immediate object of the profoundest adoration. Thus, in distinction to the great tabernacle of Israel, in beholding or touching this body, Christ’s contemporaries in Galilee did not behold or touch an extrinsic bearer of sanctity and power, but rather the very eternal *Logos* Himself, “the

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ For Cyril’s use of *idion soma* [ἰδίον σῶμα] see *Epistola IV* (PG 77, 47A); (ACO 1.1.1.271.17).

¹⁷ See page 36 (2.4) of Ezra Gebremedhin’s *Life-Giving Blessing: An Inquiry into the Eucharistic Doctrine of Cyril of Alexandria* (Uppsala, 1977) for the background of the term *idios* [ἰδίος].

¹⁸ The words from the Symbol of Chalcedon (451); (DS 302)

¹⁹ ACO 1.1.6 118 15 1.8ff.; 24. 1.29ff.

²⁰ On ‘natural union’ see ACO 1.1.6 118 1.24 ff.

²¹ PG 72, 484B. For further details see H. du Manoir, *Dogme et Spiritualité chez Saint Cyrille d’Alexandrie* (Paris, 1935) p. 125.

²² As Cyril himself points out, Nestorians sometimes described the union as “inseparable” but, as he continues, “the extra word ‘inseparable’ they add may seem to have our orthodox sense, but that is not how they intend it. ...They say that the man in whom the Word has made His home is inseparable from Him in equality of honour, identity of will and authority” (ACO 1.1.6 162 1.18ff.). For more on Cyril’s theme of “unbreakable” or “unbroken union” see *Sources Chrétiennes* 97, 336 1.15 (G.M. Durand ed., ‘Cyrille d’Alexandrie: Deux dialogues christologiques’ (Paris, 1964)).

²³ See *Pascal Homily 17* (PG 77, 776Df.).

²⁴ See Cyril’s *Commentary on Isaiah 3: 3* (PG 70, 752A) and his *Adoration in Spirit and in Truth* 10 (PG 68, 692Df.).

²⁵ See *In Joh.* 6: 68. Pusey, i. 566.

Word-enfleshed-within-history”²⁶ or, understood according to Cyril’s true intention, the “one incarnate nature of the Son”.²⁷ Accordingly, so as to illuminate the fundamental distinction between this divine enfleshment and all previous visible, divine manifestations and theophanies, Cyril explains his reluctance to use such imagery as divine ‘home’ and ‘dwelling place’ to describe this unique instance of human bodiliness:

We do not say ... that the Word of God has made his home in an ordinary man born of the holy Virgin lest Christ should be deemed a divinely inspired man. Though the Word ‘dwelt amongst us’, indeed, and ‘all the fullness of the Godhead’ is asserted to have made its ‘bodily’ home in Christ, yet we recognise that ‘being made flesh’ is not to be defined by us as meaning a residence of the Word in Him precisely comparable with His residence in the saints. No, He was actually united with flesh, without being changed into it, and brought about the sort of residence in it which a man’s soul is said to have in relation to its body.²⁸

Here we can begin to detect the basic principles that lie behind Cyril’s theology of the body of Christ; principles which will allow him, in his Eucharistic writings, to insist upon the salvific efficacy and desirability of union with Christ *κατὰ σάρκα*. The human body of the Word is not (in the manner of the saints) the Word’s dwelling place or temple, as something extrinsic to him, but rather His own human body, “the flesh of the eternal God”.²⁹ As one commentator has put it, such is the extent of personal identification with the assumed nature implied in Cyril’s doctrine of hypostatic union, that we must say that “Christ’s flesh

does not merely represent an opportunity, a suitable circumstance in the area of created things, to ascend through this analogy to the creative *Logos* as he is “in himself”. Faith has no need to strip Christ of his humanity in order to discover his divinity; ... Christ’s humanity thus is not a veil concealing his divinity; instead, it is ‘the flesh of God’, it is

²⁶ John McGuckin, *Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Heresy* (New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2004) p. 202.

²⁷ This well-known phrase of Cyril’s (μίαν τὴν τοῦ υἱοῦ φύσιν σεσαρκωμένην) as found in his *Letter to Eulogius*, (Wickham, p. 62), is not to be understood in an Apollinarian or Monophysitist way. See the 8th Canon of the Second Council of Constantinople (553); (DS 429; Neuner and Dupuis, n. 620/8). As McGuckin explains, he means “this concrete reality (*physis*) is what stands before the Christian observer; it is a single concrete reality enfleshed before us: *Mia Physis Sesarkomene* ... In short, by using the phrase Cyril is attributing the person of the Word as the single subject of the incarnation event. ... For Cyril, the *physis* in this sense of concrete personal individual is synonymous with *hypostasis*”. See *Saint Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Heresy* (New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2004) p. 207-212, and H. du Manoir, *Dogme et Spiritualité chez Saint Cyrille d’Alexandrie* (Paris, 1935) p. 505 ff.

²⁸ ACO 1.1.1 36 1.6f. (Wickham, p. 19).

²⁹ *On the Unity of Christ* (PG 75, 1265A).

in a certain sense the *Logos* Himself —to such an extent does the Word identify Himself with the flesh.³⁰

1.2. The Images and Similes

Of particular relevance to our investigation are certain bodily similes and analogies Cyril employs to illustrate specific truths which proceed from the hypostatic union. These serve to illuminate the doctrine we have been outlining; namely, how two things which are intellectually discernable and distinct in themselves can be, without confusion, combined into one concrete reality.³¹ The metaphors also serve to convey how certain composite unities can be said to have what Cyril calls a ‘natural union’,³² in that they mutually engage on one another and bring about one visible function. Two images, that of enflamed wood or iron, and the union of soul and body in the one essence, man, are particularly relevant to our study in how they illuminate the special role of the assumed body of the Word in Cyril’s Christology. Through the analogy of fire and wood³³ (or more specifically, the precise stage in the process before fire has consumed the wood), Cyril demonstrates two truths which stem from the hypostatic union: the active interpenetration of hitherto distant properties, and the act of transformation without destruction, allowing the wood to partake in the properties natural to the fire. The wood signifies the humanity of the Word, the fire the transforming power of the divinity, which deifies the flesh of the Logos without destroying it. The enflamed wood illustrates the profound transformation of the lower element (the flesh of the Logos) allowing it to participate in the power of the higher (the Godhead). Here Cyril employs the same reasoning using the example of iron:

³⁰ Christoph Schönborn OP, *God’s Human Face: The Christ Icon*, trans. Lothar Krauth (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994) p. 84.

³¹ Other than the two images we present here, Cyril also employs certain other beautiful metaphors such as the light from a precious stone (*Hom. Pasch.* 17; PG 77, 776) and the scent of the lily (*Scholia de incarnatione Unigeniti* 9; PG 1369-1412). Like a precious stone and the beautiful light it emits a divine radiance shines through the human and bodily life of the Incarnate Lord. Just as the light and stone are distinct but inseparable, so it is with Christ. Cyril also uses the lily and its heavenly scent to illustrate the union. The incorporeal fragrance and the corporeal lily are inseparable, yet radically different in state. Without its incorporeal and its corporeal aspects (its fragrance and specific shape) it could not be a lily. Here Cyril attempts to illustrate how a dynamic interpenetration of distinct properties can constitute one reality. The divine nature is like the heavenly perfume, whilst the human, bodily form of Christ is the materiality and visible shape of the lily. Through this created, material medium, the perfume of the deity emanates.

³² This is ‘nature’ (φύσις) taken in the sense of hypostasis, since there is no absorption or destruction of one nature by the other.

³³ *Apol. Ad Theodosium* (PG 76, 408); *Scholia* 9 (Ibid).

Since the Word of God is Life by nature, He made what was naturally corruptible His own body, in order to transform it to incorruptibility ... just as iron, when vigorous fire is applied to it, changes its colour so as to assume immediately the form of the fire, and gives birth to the power of the prevailing fire, so the nature of the flesh, having welcomed within it the incorruptible and life-giving Word of God, remained no longer in the same condition but became thereafter superior to corruption.³⁴

Enflamed with the power of the divinity, the body of Jesus, in contact with the bodies of mankind, is able to transmit the power of the Logos as its personal instrument. We shall return to investigate this doctrine further in our consideration of the privileges of the Lord's body.

More frequently employed by Cyril is the analogy of the union of soul and body in man to illustrate certain truths of the hypostatic union. Whilst conscious of the important dissimilarities the body-soul union has with the hypostatic union, Cyril nevertheless regards this analogy to demonstrate two important Christological principles: the union without confusion of divine and human natures in Jesus,³⁵ and the divine-human, 'theandric'³⁶ quality of His human life.

The suitability of this analogy lies in the following: if, in a human being, two distinct realities co-exist, mutually inhere and, as it were, combine, without destroying or compromising the integrity of either, so it is in the union of divine and human natures in the one hypostasis of the Word. There, he writes, "each nature is understood to remain in all its natural characteristics, though they are ineffably and inexpressibly united [as] one"; for, after all, "the term 'one' can be properly applied not just to those things which are naturally simple, but which are compounded in a synthesis". He then makes the comparison:

³⁴ *Hom. Pasch 17, 4* (PG 77, 785-88).

³⁵ This is Cyril's most recurring image for the hypostatic union. See McGuckin, *Cyril of Alexandria* p. 198.

³⁶ Though this word has been used to articulate certain monophysite and monoenergist positions, we use it in accordance with the clarifications provided by St Maximus the Confessor and the Lateran Synod of 649 (DS 515). There are three distinct kinds of activity to be distinguished in Christ: (i) the purely divine activities (the *Logos* as *principium quod*, the divine nature *as principium quo*) such as Creation, Preservation, Government etc.; (ii) the human activities (by which the *Logos* acts as *principium quod* with the human nature as *principium quo*) such as eating, weeping, dying etc.; (iii) the divine-human activities, which the *Logos* (as *principium quod*) operates through the divine nature using his human nature as an instrument (*instrumentum coniunctum*) such as the miraculous healings, the raising of corpses from the dead. Both the second and third kind of activities can be called 'theandric' (the second in a wider sense, the third in a proper and narrower sense). For a fuller explanation, see Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (Rockford, Tan Books: 1974) p. 149.

Such is the case of a human being who comprises body and soul. These are quite different things, and they are not consubstantial with each other, yet when they are united they constitute the single nature of man.³⁷

He then applies the analogy further:

We do not divide out the sayings of Our Saviour, in the Gospels, as if to two subjects or persons. The one, unique Christ has no duality though he is seen as compounded in inseparable unity out of two differing elements in the way that a human being, for example, is seen to have no duality but to be one, consisting of the pair of elements, body and soul. We must take the right view and maintain that both the human as well as the divine sayings were uttered by one subject.³⁸

Just as soul and body combine to effect a new condition and new possibilities (without destroying the integrity of the respective elements) so, in the Incarnation, deity and flesh come together in union (without compromising either nature) to effect a new condition: not of course forming the divine Person of the Word but, rather, forming the *Incarnate Word*, “God-enfleshed-in-history”.³⁹ A vitally important truth follows from this comparison, for through it the essentially divine-human, ‘theandric’ character of the Incarnate Word’s activity is conveyed. Just as an individual human being cannot perform any single act which is purely spiritual or purely physical (granting that in certain activities one may predominate over the other), and that all a man’s acts involve at some level his body and soul in a continuous and unbroken union, so “within this new condition and new possibility of being God-enfleshed, the deity now works in continuous and unbroken union with his humanity, and *vice versa*.”⁴⁰ One can perceive here a vital consequence of Cyril’s theology of the Incarnation: there are no *purely* divine or *purely* human acts in the one Incarnate Word, Jesus Christ. Rather, “each and every single act of the incarnate Lord was, for Cyril, an act of God enfleshed within

³⁷ *Third Letter to Nestorius*, 8 (Wickham, p. 25).

³⁸ Ibid. As McGuckin adds: “What he is insisting is that the term ‘union’ is a very precise one. It means nothing less than it suggests. If two things are ‘joined’ to one another, or related in any other kind of fashion, it might be logically possible still to continue to call them, and regard them as, two. But if a ‘union’ takes place, something that by definition means ‘a making one of different realities’, then there is no sensible point in calling them two after the union has been effected. To insist that they are one does not deny the inherent characters of what has been united, on the other hand to keep on talking about those different characters separately, as if they had not been united, suggests to the hearer that the speaker does not really admit that a union has taken place at all. This is exactly what Cyril accused Nestorius of believing, and found all the latter’s insistence on the discreet natures to be merely a smokescreen for his refusal to accept the notion of the personal unity of Christ”. *Cyril of Alexandria*, p. 205

³⁹ This is McGuckin’s phrase. See p. 200.

⁴⁰ Ibid. McGuckin p. 200

history; and thus an act where deity and humanity were synchronised as one theandric reality”.⁴¹

This has tremendous implications for our own investigation. According to Cyril’s conception of the union of Godhead and manhood in the one hypostasis of the Word, the human nature of Christ is, not unlike the body in its relationship with the soul, subject to radically enhanced conditions of existence: whilst retaining all its fragility and passibility, Jesus’ human body participates in the omnipotence of the Person whose body it is. We shall now consider certain aspects of this doctrine of Cyril’s.

1.3. The causal privileges belonging to the body of Jesus: the efficacy of his touch

In light of these principles laid down by Cyril, it comes as no surprise to him that, at certain moments, the glory, the δόξα of God, should break forth from this human body,⁴² or that through verbal utterance and, principally, physical touch, miracles are performed. This latter phenomenon is an important preoccupation of Cyril’s. Throughout his gospel commentaries, Cyril is keen to highlight those episodes which recount Christ’s life-giving potency through physical contact. He observes, for example, how Peter’s mother-in-law could have been healed by a simple command, but in order to demonstrate “the efficacy of the touch of His holy flesh”,⁴³ Jesus “touched her hand” as a “proof that His own flesh possessed the power of healing, as being the flesh of God”.⁴⁴ Likewise, when considering the episode of the raising from the dead of the young man of Nain, Cyril asks, “how was not a word enough for raising him who was lying there?”; why did Jesus “not effect the miracle by a word only, but also touched the bier?”.⁴⁵ Christ’s desire to mediate His divine power through the touch of his sacred body is, for Cyril, an expression of the ineffable union of manhood and Godhead in the one hypostasis of the Son, resulting in the μία ἐνέσθλη of Logos and flesh: as he states, this was “that you might learn that the holy body of Christ is effectual for the salvation of man. For the flesh of the Almighty Word is the body of Life. ... [Therefore] May our Lord Jesus Christ also touch us”.⁴⁶

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² *Is.* 1: 3 (PG 70, 129Bf.).

⁴³ *In Luc.* 4: 38, Sermon 12 (Smith, i. 71; PG 72, 552B, 549D).

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ *In Luc* 7: 11. Sermon 36 (Smith, i. 135; PG 72, 577C).

⁴⁶ Ibid.

The raising of Jairus' daughter, through the same sensible means, manifests the same reality of the "one kindred operation"⁴⁷ of divinity and flesh:

[through] giving life through the touch of His Holy Flesh, He shows that there was one kindred operation. ... Not only to His word does He give power to give life to the dead, but in order to show that His own body was life-giving (as I have said already), He touches the dead, thereby infusing life into those already decayed.⁴⁸

We arrive back, therefore, at Cyril's original insistence that though the "flesh alone profits nothing" (Jn. 6:63), "of Christ alone it is not true"⁴⁹ since in him "it is raised to the power of the Word".⁵⁰ The sacred humanity is presented here as the living instrument of the divinity,⁵¹ manifesting and freely applying the infinite power of the eternal Logos through this finite and passable body. It is by virtue of this elevation of human flesh into hypostatic union with the Word that Cyril frequently predicates certain attributes of the created humanity which are

⁴⁷ Cyril's expression here is δι' ἀμφοῖν ἐπιδείκνυσι τὴν ἐνέργειαν; *In Joh.* 6: 53. Pusey, i. 530.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *In Joh.* 6: 63. Pusey, i. 551.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Cyril occasionally speaks of the sacred humanity as the "instrument" (ὄργανον) of the Word (e.g. *De Incarnatione Unigeniti*, PG 75, 1212D), but generally avoids this way of speaking. Though, as we shall see, this concept is taken up and clarified by St Thomas Aquinas (in line with Cyril) most observers assume that Cyril avoids describing Christ's humanity as the Word's "instrument" because of the various Adoptionist, Apollinarian or Nestorian misunderstandings that could result. Cyril himself cites caution in his *Letter to Monks*. Here he speaks of the dangers of applying instrumentality to Christ the *person*, but then also to his sacred humanity: "Anybody who should assign to Christ the role of instrument only, would he not, even without such an intention, deprive Christ of his true sonship? Suppose someone has a son who knows how to play the lyre and who sings beautifully. Would he ever treat the lyre with the same respect as he treats the son? Wouldn't such a thing be absurd? The lyre is used to display one's artistry. But the son remains son even without his instrument. If, then, certain people declare that the man born of the woman was assumed (by the Logos) as instrument, in order to work miracles through this instrument and to proclaim the gospel, should they not consider every one of his holy prophets equally as an instrument of God ...? In this case, Christ would of course be in no respect superior to them; in no way would he have surpassed his predecessors, if Christ would have been used as instrument in the same sense as the prophets. ... For this reason, we avoid saying that the temple [i.e. the Flesh] taken from the Virgin Mary was used as an instrument. We rather follow the Faith proclaimed by the sacred Scriptures and the Fathers and declare that the Word has become flesh" (PG 77, 32D-33B; 36B). As Christoph Schönborn observes, if one were to understand 'instrumentality' in its usual way (as a passive tool to be taken up and used), and apply it to the Incarnation, "[the flesh] would remain extraneous to the Word, as extraneous as a lyre to the musician. This is the very same argument used by Eusebius, but in reverse. Eusebius used the example of the lyre in order to show that the Logos remained untouched by the suffering of the instrument, the flesh, the same way as the musician is not hurt when the strings of his lyre snap. The same point Eusebius is making with this comparison prevents Cyril from applying this comparison with Christ. What would happen to the Easter mystery if the Word himself did not suffer in his flesh? ... [Cyril] sees the intimate union between Word and flesh in the fact that the flesh does not remain extraneous but is totally appropriated by the Son. The flesh, as it is intimately united to the Son who is consubstantial with God the Father, thus becomes 'the flesh of God'." See *The Human Face of God*, p. 98.

typically designations of uncreated, active power: as we shall see in greater detail when we consider the Eucharist, according to Cyril the vivifying power of Christ's body is by virtue of its participation in the ἐνέργεια and δύναμις of the Logos.⁵² Without ceasing to be truly human and passable, the body of the Word participates, as a created instrument, in these uncreated attributes of God, causing that which is by nature frail and impotent to be Life-giving.⁵³ According to Cyril's exegesis of John 6:63, filled with this power and energy, Christ is able to call His own flesh "Spirit", not because it ceases to be flesh, but rather because it is not *mere* flesh but the personal flesh of infinite Spirit, the eternal Logos himself. As Cyril states, "He fills His own body with the vivifying energy of the Spirit. For He now calls the flesh Spirit".⁵⁴ So the Lord's contrast between flesh and Spirit in John 6:63 is "equivalent to the contrast between mere flesh (or the flesh of any earthly being) and the flesh united to the Logos".⁵⁵

Cyril applies further divine attributes to the sacred body of Christ and, consistent with the principles of the hypostatic union, seeks to demonstrate their origin in the Father. In predicating of the flesh of the Word such qualities as 'Life' (ζωή) and the compound verb ζωοποιεῖν ('to make alive') he demonstrates that the divine powers of this human body rest not only upon its personal union with the Life-giving Word, but on the Word being ὁμοούσιος with the Living Father. Christ is "Life by nature in as much as He was begotten of the *Living* Father [ζωὸς Πατήρ]", and His sacred body is therefore "no less vivifying being in a manner gathered and ineffably united with the Word who vivifies all".⁵⁶ Both the Son and the Father are, for Cyril, Life-by-nature and Life-giving, but the Word is such only

⁵² For Cyril's application of these terms to describe the vivifying operation Christ's flesh, see *In Joh.* 3: 6 (Pusey, i. 475 1.25ff.); *In Luc.* 4: 38, Sermon 12 (Smith, i. 71; PG 72, 552C). For a brief presentation of the Trinitarian background to these terms, see Gebremedhin, *Life-Giving Blessing*, p. 48 (3.2). On the use of *dynamis* (δύναμις) in Patristic theology, see G.W.H. Lampe (ed.), *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961) p. 389ff. These terms also have various controversial and heretical associations. *Dynamis* is found in Gnosticism where it is applied to the Son or Spirit in their capacity as subordinate mediums of the Supreme God. The Gnostic-Ebionite Cerinthus applied the term δύναμις both to God Himself and to what he considered to be the impersonal emanations of God (the Son and the Spirit). See H.A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers 1: Faith, Trinity, Incarnation* (Cambridge, Mass. 1970) p. 532 ff. A Nestorian application of ἐνέργεια, by which the union of Godhead and flesh is falsely designated, was condemned at Constantinople II (DS 424), and mono-energism was condemned at the Council of Lateran (649) (DS 501).

⁵³ See the 11th Anathematism of Cyril against Nestorius (DS 262).

⁵⁴ *In Joh.* 4: 3. Pusey, i. 552.

⁵⁵ Gebremedhin, *Life-Giving Blessing*, p. 50. According to Cyril's exegesis, the "Spirit" here is not a reference to the Person of the Holy Spirit but to the Person of the Word.

⁵⁶ *In Joh.* 6: 53. Pusey, i. 529

because the Father is himself the life-giving *root* (ρίζα ζωοποιός) who communicates everything that is His (but paternity) to His eternal Word. Thus, whilst the theology of the Word's vivifying flesh has its immediate origins in the hypostatic union of flesh and divinity, it has its remote origins in the all-vivifying Father, the fountain-head of Life: for "he who receives me in himself by the participation of my flesh shall live, being wholly remodelled into me, who am able to give life, because I am from a life-giving root, that is God the Father".⁵⁷

As we are beginning to perceive, and as will become increasingly evident in our consideration of the Eucharist, for Cyril the entire soteriological purpose of the Incarnation, the regenerative mission of the Son and His communication of sanctifying grace in the Sacraments, is strictly inexplicable without this doctrine of the assumption of the flesh into the unity of the person of the Word. "In no other way was it possible", he argues, that humble flesh "should become vivifying, being of its own nature subject to the necessity of decaying unless it became the own flesh of the Word who vivifies all things".⁵⁸ It would, according to Cyril, be more difficult to explain if the assumed humanity of the Word did *not* enjoy these sanctifying privileges, for "how does *not* the Word, being God, ... put His own vivifying power and energy into His own flesh —the flesh to which it is united, which He has made His own, without confusion and change?".⁵⁹ By virtue of being the Word's personal flesh, the divine ἐνέργεια and δύναμις which is the Word's by nature is manifested and mediated through the frail and passible body He has assumed. As we shall soon consider, it is this very δύναμις of the sacred flesh which renders those who receive it in its sacramental mode 'con-corporal' (συσσώμους)⁶⁰ with the Incarnate Word.

⁵⁷ *In Joh.* 6: 57. Pusey, i. 538.

⁵⁸ *Quod unus sit Christus* (*Sources Chrétiennes* 97, 510 1.26ff). As Cyril continues, the Word "effects that which is His [i.e. His flesh], being pregnant with His vivifying power (τὴν ζωοποιὸν αὐτοῦ δύναμιν ὠδινῆσασα)". As Grillmeier observes, "As in the writings of Athanasius, ... we see in Cyril's picture of Christ the divine *energeia* [ἐνέργεια] of the Logos flowing directly into His body. The body of Christ is conjoined with the life itself and is therefore also itself life-giving". *Christ in the Christian Tradition* (vol. 1): *From the Apostolic Age to Chalcedon*, trans. John Bowden (London: A.R. Mowbray, 1975) p. 476.

⁵⁹ *Quod unus sit Christus* (*Sources Chrétiennes* 97, 510 1.34ff.).

⁶⁰ According to Lampe, συσσώμους can mean "body to body, in bodily contact". See Lampe's *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford, 1961) p. 1348. See *In Joh.* 11: 11. (Pusey, ii. 734-6; PG 74. 557D).

2. The Anthropological Principles

The union with Christ κατὰ σάρκα, which we shall be considering in greater detail shortly, rests not only upon these Christological principles but also upon certain anthropological ones. This is our second and final presupposition to Cyril's doctrine of somatic union.

We have already glimpsed something of Cyril's anthropology in his employment of the body-soul union in man as an illustration of certain features of the hypostatic union of divine and human natures in the one Christ. In both unions, Cyril insists, two distinct realities co-exist, mutually inhere and, as it were, combine, without either nature being reduced in its essence or capacities. This recurring comparison of Cyril's is not only the one he employs most often in the service of his Christology,⁶¹ but it is also our principal source for understanding his anthropology.⁶² Through these Christological writings there emerges a consistent doctrine of man's unity, yet always as a unity-in-duality, a composite whole. It is this notion of composite unity that Cyril will draw upon to elucidate his doctrine of somatic union with Christ in his Eucharistic theology.

When Cyril appeals to the psycho-somatic union of man to illuminate the hypostatic union of flesh and divinity in the Word we see a consistent willingness to distinguish in order to unite: to differentiate between the bodily and spiritual orders, yet to insist upon their essential unity in man. This is evident in his Commentary on John where he asserts that man is "by nature a composite being, not simple, a blend of two: a sensible body and an intellectual soul".⁶³ Yet, though composed of body and soul, he is one in essence: "We are compounded into one man made up of soul and body".⁶⁴ Similarly, he insists later that, "the body is one thing, and the soul in the body another, but they combine to form one living being, and after their union they admit of no division whatsoever".⁶⁵ In Cyril's Christological disputations these same formulations emerge consistently. There, he observes that

[if we] take a normal human being, we perceive in him two natures [φύσεις]: one that of the soul, a second that of the body. We divide them, though, merely in thought, accepting the difference as simply residing in fine-drawn insight or mental intuition;

⁶¹ As Lionel Wickham observes, apart from Cyril's biblical images, "take away the body-soul analogy and there is nothing which Cyril offers to explain the nature of the union". 'Cyril of Alexandria and the Apple of Discord', *Studia Patristica* 15 (1984) p. 391.

⁶² See H.M. Diepen, *Aux Origines De L'Anthropologie de Saint Cyrille D'Alexandrie* (Desclée De Brower, 1957) p. 7-9.

⁶³ *In Joh. 2: 1*. Pusey, i. 219.

⁶⁴ *In Joh. 2: 1*. Pusey, i. 219.

⁶⁵ *In Joh. 12: 1*. Pusey, ii. 155.

we do not separate the natures out or attribute a capacity for radical severance to them, but see that they belong to one man so that the two are two no more and the single living being is constituted by the pair of them.⁶⁶

According to this, man is one, yet he is a composite, psycho-somatic unity: “a single living being ... constituted by the pair of them”. Naturally, these fundamental anthropological principles have to be present in Christ if we are to confess his perfect humanity: contrary to Apollinarius, it is only the unified body and rational soul together that ensure Christ’s true human nature.⁶⁷ The eternal Word is said to have assumed precisely *human* nature only because he had at once the passions of the flesh and the passions of the rational soul.⁶⁸

Cyril, then, is no ontological dualist, for “the two are two no more”.⁶⁹ Though soul and body are for him each distinct and discrete realities, neither independently comprise man.⁷⁰ Rather, ‘man’ is what you have when a body is animated by a rational soul, “combin[ing] to form one living being”.⁷¹ In these matters we see an anthropology which, in its general lines, is consistent with the basic insight of the biblical and scholastic positions we presented earlier.⁷²

⁶⁶ *Second Letter to Succensus* 5 (Wickham, p. 93); (*Epistulae* 46; ACO 1, 1, 6, 162 1.4f).

⁶⁷ *Formula of Reunion; Epistulae* 39, 5; (ACO 1, 1, 4, 17). (Wickham, p. 222)

⁶⁸ *In Joh.* 12: 26-28. Pusey, ii. 315-320.

⁶⁹ *Second Letter to Succensus* 5 (Wickham, p. 93); (*Epistulae* 46; ACO 1, 1, 6, 162 1.4f). As one commentator has observed, “the dualist language that prevailed at the time was as nuanced as possible in Cyril’s texts, more so than any of his Alexandrian predecessors, Clement, Athanasius or Apollinarius. Cyril speaks of flesh rationally ensouled, for example, rather than using Clement’s phrase, ‘souls employing bodies’”. Caroline Farey, *A Metaphysical Investigation of the Anthropological Implications of the Phrase, ‘Ipse Enim, Filius Dei, incarnatione sua cum omni homine quodammodo se univit’* (*Gaudium et Spes* 22). Pontificia Universitas Lateranensis (Rome, 2008; unpublished doctoral thesis).

⁷⁰ Diepen expresses Cyril’s position in this way: “Dans l’homme les deux pôles de l’univers, l’invisible et le visible, l’esprit et la matière, le ciel et la terre, en somme, comme dit souvent Cyrille, deux “natures”, se trouvent harmonieusement synthétisés dans une même ‘nature’.” H.M. Diepen, *Aux Origines De L’Anthropologie de Saint Cyrille D’Alexandrie* (Desclée De Brower, 1957). p. 72.

⁷¹ *In Joh.* 12: 1. Pusey, ii. 155.

⁷² These similarities of Cyril’s anthropology with Aristotle’s hylomorphic anthropology are not, according to several scholars, coincidental. Norman Russell believes that Cyril would have read Aristotle via the 2nd-3rd century commentator Alexander Aphrodisias (see Norman Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria* (London: Routledge, 2000) p. 5). On this, Farey makes the observation that, since Alexander Aphrodisias tended to emphasise Aristotle’s refutation of Plato, it “enabled Christian thinkers like Cyril to free themselves more easily from Platonic ideas when Aristotle and Plato were sharply contrasted. It is clear in Cyril’s understanding of the unity of body and soul, for example, that he more closely follows Aristotle rather than Plato without ever saying so explicitly” (*A Metaphysical Investigation*, p. 85). Ruth Siddals perceives frequent recourse to Aristotle’s writings (particularly the *Categories* and *Organon*) in Cyril’s theology (see Ruth Siddals, ‘Logic and Christology in Cyril of Alexandria’, in *Journal of Theological Studies* 38.2 (October, 1987) p. 342). Diepen sees a connection between Cyril’s anthropology and Aristotle’s understanding of matter and form, rather than a platonic theory of forms (see his *Aux Origines*, p. 72).

2.1. Sanctification in accordance with the composite nature of Man: Sōmatikōs and Pneumatikōs

Cyril's theology of the sanctification of man is developed in light of this anthropology. Divine life is received, teaches Cyril, according to the nature of the recipient, and therefore "we are sanctified in a twofold way".⁷³ Arguing both *ex convenientia* in light of the nature of man, and from the revealed Scriptures, Cyril distinguishes two spheres of activity in the one gift of sanctification.

The most frequent terms Cyril employs to convey this dual mode of human sanctification are πνευματικῶς and σωματικῶς.⁷⁴ as he teaches, "we are partakers of [Christ] both spiritually and bodily [πνευματικῶς τε καὶ σωματικῶς]";⁷⁵ "we partake of a communion with him, not only spiritual but also somatic"⁷⁶; "we are made alive and blessed, both bodily and spiritually [καὶ πνευματικῶς καὶ σωματικῶς]."⁷⁷ This distinction of Cyril's reflects both the dual mode of sanctification in the recipient of grace and the dual mode of Christ's operation, though we shall explicitly consider the duality of Christ's operation only later. For the present we shall concern ourselves with the former, establishing how Cyril understands the duality of *reception* of Christ's vivifying work, and show how it provides an important theological platform for his presentation of union with Christ κατὰ σάρκα.

Not surprisingly, St Paul's assertion that our "bodies are members of Christ" (1 Cor 6:15) provides Cyril with a straightforward opportunity to apply this distinction. Given that it is by virtue of his rational soul that man receives grace, "how might our *bodies* be members

⁷³ *In 1 Cor. 6: 15*, Pusey, iii. 263-4.

⁷⁴ Other than the *pneumatikos* (πνευματικῶς) and *somatikos* (σωματικῶς) pairing, Cyril occasionally uses the paired terms *noētōs* (νοητῶς) and *aisthētōs* (αἰσθητῶς) to convey the same dual modality. Bernard Meunier, in his *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1997) p. 169, lists eleven texts in Cyril where one or other of these paired terms are used: *De Ador.* iii (PG 68, 297d); *In Matt.* 26: 26-8 (Reuss, 255); *In Luc.* 22: 17-22 (Reuss, 208-9); *In Joh.* 3:5 (Pusey, i. 219); 15: 1 (Pusey, ii. 543-4); 17: 20-1 (Pusey, ii. 734); 17: 22-3 (Pusey, iii. 2-3); 20: 21 (Pusey, iii. 131); *In Rom.* 8: 3 (Pusey, iii. 213); *In 1 Cor. 6: 15* (Pusey, iii. 263); *Adv. Nest.* iv. 5 (ACO 1. 1. 6, 87).

⁷⁵ *In Rom.* 8: 3. Pusey, iii, 213.

⁷⁶ *In Joh.* 15: 1 Pusey, ii. 543-4.

⁷⁷ *In Luc.* 22: 17-22. Reuss, 208-9; Smith, 568.

of Christ?” Cyril asks.⁷⁸ In his explanation he introduces a distinction in the order of sanctification: the one Christ enjoys a dual mode of presence in the one Christian, which he believes to correspond with the composite, bodily-spiritual nature of man: “We have him [i.e. Christ] in ourselves sensibly [αἰσθητῶς] and spiritually [νοητῶς]”.⁷⁹ Cyril then goes on to state how this twofold mode of presence is in accordance with man’s nature, to which salvation is fittingly accommodated: “on the one hand, he dwells in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, and on the other we are partakers [μετεσχήκαμεν] also of his holy flesh”. Thus, writes Cyril, the one man is “sanctified in a twofold [διττῶς] way”.⁸⁰

Cyril explicitly parallels anthropology and sanctification on several occasions in his Commentary on John, though here we see the distinctions presented in greater detail. The principle is consistent: though man is essentially one, his dual composition of spirit and matter, body and soul, requires a correspondingly dual remedy in the order of sanctification. As man’s composition comprises a single essence, so the sanctifying effect is one, though the spheres of activity are distinguishable. This is evident firstly in his reading of John 3:5 (“unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God”), where he understands the agents of rebirth (“water” and “Spirit”) to correspond to fundamental truths about man:

For since man is compound [σύνθετον] by nature, and not simple, being mingled of two, plainly of a sensible [αἰσθητοῦ] body and an intellectual [νοεῶς] soul, he required for rebirth a twofold healing, having in some way kinship [συγγενῶς πως ἐχούσης] to both of those indicated. For by the Spirit, the spirit of man is sanctified, and again by the sanctified water, his body.⁸¹

In this one sanctifying act, Cyril perceives a duality which reflects the duality in human nature: the spiritual aspect of human nature corresponds to the Holy Spirit and the bodily aspect corresponds to the water. Accordingly, the human spirit is said to be sanctified and healed by the Holy Spirit, the human body sanctified and healed by the Spirit-empowered

⁷⁸ *In 1 Cor. 6: 15*, Pusey, iii. 263-4.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* As we shall see later, this notion of a *participatio* plays an important role in Cyril’s Eucharistic soteriology. See the ‘Excursus: the notion of participation in Cyril of Alexandria’ in Luise Abramowski, ‘The Theology of Theodore of Mopsuestia’ in *Formula and Context: Studies in early Christian Thought* (Brookfield, Vt.: Variorum, 1992) pp. 17-22.

⁸¹ *In Joh. 3: 5*. Pusey, i, 219.

water, which “through the working of the Spirit [has been] transformed [μεταστοιχειοῦται] to a certain divine and effable power”.⁸² So, despite the obvious duality in Cyril’s presentation, the effect is one (the whole man’s sanctification), and it is a work of God alone, for the water derives its power to sanctify the body not from its own properties but rather from the same uncreated divine Spirit which sanctifies man’s created, human spirit. It is God who is the author of baptism’s effect, though His divine power is conveyed through the tangible instrumentality of water. This doctrine of instrumental causality which Cyril applies to the waters of baptism is analogous, though not identical, to the causality we have already seen him attribute to the Word’s own flesh. Both water and flesh are elevated to participate in the divine power, though with important differences. Whilst the sacred flesh is His personal, hypostatically conjoined and living instrument, freely conveying the power of the divinity, Cyril presents the waters of baptism as a separated instrument which, at a certain moment in the hands of the minister, participates in the divine power.⁸³

2.2. Union with the Incarnate Word according to a shared corporality

We see these very same principles at work in his commentary on the Bread of Life discourse of John 6, though here they are extended and deepened. Just as the waters of baptism were seen to have an association and kinship with the fallen body of the neophyte, so the sacred flesh of the Word is seen to have a kinship with the sinful flesh of the communicant, though here the effect on the body is more extensive and profound than that effected by the waters of baptism. Where those waters effected a certain cleansing “through the working of the Spirit”,⁸⁴ the bread of Life, as the Word’s personal flesh, does not in this instance transmit a specific power for a specific effect, but brings about union with the enfleshed Logos strictly speaking; for in eating “the flesh of the Son of Man” there is, writes Cyril, effected a “material and kindred participation” (συγγενῆς μετάληψις) with Christ.⁸⁵ We shall be examining this doctrine in greater detail later. But once again we see here how Cyril

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ As St Thomas will later come to express it in accordance with these very same principles, baptism “contain[s] a certain instrumental power which is a share of Christ’s power” (ST III 65, 3); and “whereas the Eucharist contains something which is sacred absolutely, namely, Christ’s own body; the baptismal water contains something which is sacred in relation to something else, namely, the sanctifying power” (Ibid. 73, 1).

⁸⁴ *In Joh. 3: 5*. Pusey, i, 219.

⁸⁵ *In Joh. 6: 53*. Pusey i, 531

perceives an important distinction that is grounded in anthropology, where the whole man is to be sanctified according to his composite nature, though here the sanctification is seen to be by virtue of the Word effecting union with man according to a *shared corporality*:

... it was indeed necessary, not only for the soul to be re-created to newness of life through the Holy Spirit, but also that this material and earthly body be sanctified through the more material and kindred participation and called to incorruption.⁸⁶

This “more material and kindred participation” is brought about by eating the flesh of the Word. With the body of the sinner coming into vital contact with the body of the Logos, the sinner’s “material and earthly body” is sanctified and, as we shall consider later, “called to incorruption”.

2.3. The Bodily and Spiritual: an inseparable and unconfused harmony

But as man is a complex unity for Cyril, so these means of sanctification are not mechanically and strictly distributed between soul or body. The effect is integrated, just as man is integrated. Though the sinful flesh of the Christian has a special kinship with the sacred flesh of the Word, granting him this “material and kindred participation” with the assumed humanity of the Son, the communication of this body in the Eucharist necessarily affects the whole essence of man,⁸⁷ sanctifying him “in both body and soul”.⁸⁸ Accordingly, though it is through the power of the Spirit that the sacred body becomes present on the altar,⁸⁹ it is also through this same sacred body that the Holy Spirit is conveyed to man,⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ For accounts of the holistic effects of the Eucharist, see *In Joh.* 6: 35, 37, 56 (Pusey, i. 470-6); *In Joh.* 13: 27 (Pusey, ii. 369); *In Joh.* 19: 23-4 (Pusey, iii. 88); *In Luc.* 4: 38 (Reuss, 241-2; Smith, 99-101); *In Luc.* 22: 17-22 (Reuss, 208-10; Smith, 568-571); *In Rom.* 8: 3 (Pusey, iii. 213).

⁸⁸ *In Joh.* 6: 48-63. Pusey, i. 440. The food which endures to everlasting life sanctifies “in body and soul”. Cyril also describes the Eucharist as “spiritual blessing” (εὐλογία πνευματική) (*De Ador.* 6, PG 68, 416D-417A); “spiritual worship” (πνευματική λατρεία) (*In Zach.* 11.7 (PG 72, 188B)); “spiritual burnt offering” (όλοκαύτωμα πνευματικόν) (*In Am.* 5:22; PG 71, 505D-508A); “spiritual nurture” (πνευματική εὐτροφία) (*Ps.* 22:5; (PG 69, 841C).

⁸⁹ *In Matt.* 26: 26-8 (Reuss, 255-6). “It was necessary that Christ, by the action of the Holy Spirit, be in us as mixed with our bodies in a manner suitable to God, by his holy flesh and precious blood”. Meunier interprets this as a reference to the epiclesis (see Meunier, *Le Christ de Cyrille d’Alexandrie*, p. 167). For a detailed account of Cyril’s interpretations of the Eucharistic Institution narratives in Matthew and Luke, and his understanding of the epiclesis, see Gebremedhin, *Life-Giving Blessing*, p. 59-66.

⁹⁰ Ibid. (Reuss, 256): “He gave us ... his own body and blood, so that through them also the power of corruption might be destroyed, and that he might dwell in our hearts through the holy Spirit, and that we might become partakers of sanctification”. As Daniel Keating writes, this implies that “the coming of the

either in the Word's earthly ministry, his Sacramental presence, or his breathing of the Spirit on the disciples after the resurrection,⁹¹ indicating "l'idée d'une participation spirituelle intérieure à la participation corporelle".⁹² In this we see again the clear lines of symmetry in Cyril's thinking between God's incarnate activity and man's incarnate mode of reception: for just as, in the sacramental order, man's spirit comes to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of matter, so the Word transmits the Holy Spirit through His own vivifying body. According to Cyril, in both Christ's vivifying operation and man's reception of it, the body is the consistent principle of mediation.

But Cyril observes reciprocation in the reverse direction too: just as the effects of contact with the sacred body extend to the soul, so the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is not for the benefit of the soul only, but rather effects a renewal and transformation of the whole man, preserving him from "death and corruption",⁹³ and maintaining the body for incorruption.⁹⁴ It is therefore noteworthy that Cyril applies the word εὐλογία ('blessing') not only to the Eucharistic body of Christ,⁹⁵ but also to the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the soul,⁹⁶ whilst the doctrine of the soul's spiritual participation in the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4) is given a Eucharistic interpretation by him.⁹⁷ In fact, for Cyril the true *eulogia* is not principally one of

Spirit is interior to and dependent on the physical communion through the Eucharist", *The Appropriation of Divine Life in Cyril of Alexandria* (OUP, 2004) p. 84.

⁹¹ *In Joh.* 20: 22 (Pusey, iii. 672). Cyril prioritises John 20: 22 over Acts 2 in his account of the bestowal of the Holy Spirit. On this, see G.M. de Durand, 'Pentecôte johannique et pentecôte lucanienne chez certains Pères', *Bulletin de Littérature Ecclésiastique*, 79 (1978) p. 124. Another commentator makes the following observation: "C'est donc un fait: le Christ a donné l'Esprit à ses apôtres en soufflant et en parlant corporellement. Mais ce fait suggère la question, que Cyrille se pose d'ailleurs aussi: pourquoi le Christ a-t-il donné l'Esprit par une insufflation corporelle? On conviendra que le pouvoir de communiquer le Saint-Esprit ressortit exclusivement à l'activité divine. Mais parce que le Verbe incarné s'est uni un corps, qui est devenue le sien proper par l'union hypostatique, il lui accorde la gloire de la puissance divine. C'est pourquoi, il met la communication de l'Esprit en quelque sorte en commun avec l'économie de la chair qu'il s'est unie: c'est par son soufflé corporel qu'il a donné l'Esprit." L. Janssens, 'Notre Filiation Divine d'après Cyrille d'Alexandrie', *Ephemerides theologicae Lovaniensis* 15 (1938) p. 263

⁹² Meunier, *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie*, p. 167. And that, "l'Esprit comme intérieure à la communion physique, comme si l'eucharistie 'véhiculait' l'Esprit."

⁹³ *In Joh.* 7: 24 Pusey, i. 641.

⁹⁴ *In Joh.* 6: 33. Pusey, i. 458. "[Christ] too, through the working of the Spirit [διὰ τῆς τοῦ Πνεύματος ἐνέργειας] gives life to the soul, and not only this, but even maintains the body for incorruption [αὐτὸ τὸ σῶμα συνέχων εἰς ἀφθαρσίαν]."

⁹⁵ *In Joh.* 3: 36. Pusey, i. 259.

⁹⁶ See *In Joh.* 17: 3 Pusey, ii. 669; and *In Joh.* 17: 20-1; Pusey, ii. 730. As Daniel Keating has observed, whilst "Cyril frequently employs the term εὐλογία to refer to the Eucharist, ... he also uses it to refer to the gift of the indwelling Spirit". *The Appropriation of Divine Life in Cyril of Alexandria*, p. 67.

⁹⁷ "For in [receiving the Eucharist] we shall also overcome the deceit of the devil, and having become partakers of the divine nature we shall mount up to life and incorruption" (*In Joh.* 6: 53; Pusey, i. 476). And later: "So that they [the Gentiles], partaking of the blessing (εὐλογία) from him, might be constituted

the divine Word's effects, but rather is the one Christ himself, "the blessing [εὐλογία] from above and from the Father".⁹⁸

All this clearly demonstrates that, though Cyril distinguishes two spheres of activity in the restoration of man, he makes this distinction within the one process of sanctification. As we have frequently witnessed, he observes this duality within the donation of the Word's flesh in its Eucharistic mode, for through this sacred body, composite man is sanctified *σωματικῶς καὶ πνευματικῶς*.⁹⁹ As one commentator has observed, "[Cyril] finds an unreduced, an unabbreviated Christ on all levels of his theology",¹⁰⁰ and this is particularly apparent here. For just as he insists upon the inseparable and unconfused harmony of the somatic and pneumatic aspects of the one Incarnate Word—the divine and human, the Spirit and flesh—so the bodily and spiritual aspects of Christ's vivifying work are maintained in an inseparable and unconfused harmony. "Both spiritually and somatically", insists Cyril, "Christ is the vine and we are the branches".¹⁰¹ As we shall come to see in greater detail shortly, these Christological principles inform his understanding of the Eucharist, "which is conceived of as something comprehensive of both the pneumatic and somatic modes of operation of Christ."¹⁰² Composite man, through his contact with the one God-man, is vivified at once in two manners, *σωματικῶς* and *πνευματικῶς*, a truth in accordance with the nature of both the earthly recipient and the dual natured heavenly giver.

already partakers of the divine nature" (Pusey, i. 479). See also Bernard Meunier, *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1997) p. 166.

⁹⁸ *In Luc.* 9: 12-17 (sermon 48); Pusey, 48, 209.

⁹⁹ *In Luc.* 22: 17-22 (Reuss, 208-9; Smith, 568). The nature and extent of this duality is debated by scholars. H. du Manoir, for example, does not stress the *πνευματικῶς* / *σωματικῶς* distinction within the Eucharist, but simply associates the former with baptism and the latter with the Eucharist (see *Dogme et spiritualité chez S. Cyrille d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Vrin, 1944)) pp. 190-195. Weigl does the same, though he also argues for the superiority of the Eucharist on the grounds that it also effects spiritual communion (see *Die Heilslehre des hl. Cyrill von Alexandrien* (Mainz: Kirchheim, 1905) pp. 140-155). Keating argues that whilst *πνευματικῶς* / *σωματικῶς* are "in a majority of instances applied by Cyril to the twofold reception of Christ in baptism and the Eucharist ... they are also employed to identify a dual manner of reception within the Eucharist" (*The Appropriation of Divine Life in Cyril of Alexandria*, p. 93). Keating gives considerable attention to Christ's duality of presence (see pp. 74-89).

¹⁰⁰ Gebremedhin, *Life-Giving Blessing*, p. 85.

¹⁰¹ *In Joh.* 15: 1 (Pusey, ii. 543-4; my emphasis).

¹⁰² Ezra Gebremedhin, *Life-Giving Blessing*, p. 82.

3. Somatic Union with Christ

We have outlined the two principle presuppositions behind Cyril's doctrine of union with the Incarnate Son according to the flesh. The first is his doctrine of the union of flesh and divinity in the one hypostasis of the Word: this accounts for the unique privileges granted to the body of Jesus, allowing it to participate as a created instrument in such divine prerogatives as the *δύναμις* and *ἐνέργεια* of the Godhead.¹⁰³ By virtue of Cyril's doctrine of the hypostatic union, contact with the sacred body of the Word means contact with the very divine Person of the Word; this truth accounts not only for the efficacy of His physical touch, but also for Cyril's insistence on the objective desirability of union with him *κατὰ σάρκα*. The second presupposition we considered concerned the anthropological foundations present behind Cyril's soteriology. Divine life is received, teaches Cyril, according to the nature of the recipient, and therefore composite man is "sanctified in a twofold way".¹⁰⁴ In light of the testimony of Scripture, the natural endowments of man, and the principles which flow from the Incarnation, Cyril distinguishes two spheres of activity, bodily and spiritual, in the one gift of sanctification.

3.1. *'Brothers-in-the-flesh': mankind's fleshly solidarity with the Incarnate Word*

Having considered these presuppositions we are now able to turn to our principle concern: Cyril's doctrine of man's somatic union with Christ. As we shall see, this is predominantly associated by Cyril with the effects of the Eucharist, though a prior, related somaticism is also evident in Cyril's treatment of the effects of Incarnation alone. According to Cyril, by virtue of the Logos assuming flesh into the unity of His divine person, a natural solidarity between Christ and mankind is said to be forged, quite independently from the sacramental order.¹⁰⁵ This underlies the somaticism that characterises his subsequent Eucharistic doctrine, which we shall be considering shortly.

¹⁰³ "While [Cyril] puts the privileges of the Sacred Humanity in strong relief, he does not view them as attributes superadded to our nature or as a sort of complication arising independently of the Incarnation. They are present in the humanity of Jesus simply as the effect of its union with the Word of Life. Thus both doctrinal formulas and theological explanation come to correspond more and more exactly with the data of revelation". Emile Mersch SJ, *The Whole Christ*, tr. John Kelly SJ (London: Dennis Dobson, 1938) p. 342-3.

¹⁰⁴ *In 1 Cor. 6: 15*, Pusey, iii. 263-4.

¹⁰⁵ The theme of natural solidarity with Christ by virtue of the Incarnation alone is a theme present in St Paul. For example, Ephesians 3:6: "the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers

Cyril demonstrates this teaching of man's (non-salvific) fleshly solidarity with Christ through the Incarnation alone by recourse to the common Patristic theme of the *admirabile commercium*, the “wonderful exchange” of human and divine attributes: God, whilst remaining God, humbles himself to share in our humanity so that we, whilst remaining human, may be raised to share in His divinity; for “though he was rich, for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich” (2 Cor 8:9). Such an exchange, argues Cyril, can only occur on the basis of a physical, or natural, solidarity between God and man, where He who becomes consubstantial with man according to His humanity remains substantially God, and is therefore able to restore and deify fallen humanity through a created communication of the divine nature. For “in appropriating what is our own, He gives us in return what is His”.¹⁰⁶

Though the full fruits of the exchange are only received by man through faith and the sacraments of faith, Cyril insists that the solidarity which underlies this exchange follows immediately from the hypostatic union. In becoming flesh, the Word truly becomes “one of us”,¹⁰⁷ whilst remaining consubstantial with the Father.¹⁰⁸ The first and universal principle of creation has become, therefore, a part of His creation; and consequently, a natural association or kinship is automatically established between the enfleshed Word and all His fellow members of the human race. By “inserting Himself ... in our nature”,¹⁰⁹ by becoming one member of the race of man, it can be said that the Logos lived in *all* men.¹¹⁰ Thus, by virtue of the Incarnation alone, all men —through the assumed flesh of the Son— are related to him as his brothers-in-the-flesh. As one commentator on St Cyril has put it:

Avant le moment de l'Incarnation, la distance entre les hommes et le Verbe, exempt de la chair, était trop grande pour parler de fraternité. ... Mais quand il est devenu homme, —et donc une partie de la création,— il nous a jugés dignes d'être appelés ses frères; depuis qu'il participe à la chair et au sang, il est devenu le frère de ceux qui sont dans

of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel”. “Same body” is “σύσσωμα” in the original Greek (translated in the Vulgate as *concorporales*). It also forms a part of the teaching of *Gaudium et Spes*, 22: “Ipse enim, Filius Dei, incarnatione sua cum omni homine quodammodo se univit.”

¹⁰⁶ *In Joh.* 20: 17. Pusey, iii. 119. And elsewhere, “being at the same time God and Man, in order that, uniting as it were in Himself things widely opposed by nature, and averse to fusion with each other, He might enable man to share and partake of the Nature of God” (*In Joh.* 17: 20-21).

¹⁰⁷ *In Joh.* 12: 29. Pusey, ii. 321.

¹⁰⁸ “Pour Cyrille la question de la solidarité et de l'échange entre le Verbe incarné et nous se ramène donc à celle de la consubstantialité du Christ avec le Père et avec les hommes”. L. Janssens, ‘Notre Filiation Divine d'après Cyrille d'Alexandrie’, *Ephemerides theologicae Lovaniensis* 15 (1938) p. 237

¹⁰⁹ *In Joh.* 10: 2. Pusey, ii. 618.

¹¹⁰ *In Joh.* 1: 14. Pusey, i. 141.

la chair et le sang. Il s'est donc incarné pour nous octroyer la dignité de frères, en nous unissant physiquement à lui par la parenté de la chair.¹¹¹

As brothers of the Son, we are therefore able to become sons of the Father.¹¹² Through our natural association with His flesh, the eternal Son is able, in the order of grace, to “vouchsafe to our nature the dignity that is in a special and peculiar sense His own, calling Him who begot Him the common Father of us all”.¹¹³ This solidarity-in-the-flesh with the Incarnate Word necessarily gives new meaning to all the passages and mysteries of Christ’s life. Through our racial kinship with the Son, all humanity is involved, for example, in His glorious Ascension to the Father.¹¹⁴ It is, after all, “not that He may present *Himself* before the presence of God the Father that Christ has ascended up on high”.¹¹⁵ Rather, consistent with the entire economy of the Son, “He has done [so] on *our* account and for *our* sakes”.¹¹⁶ By ascending to the Father in His glorious and risen flesh, the Son obeys on our behalf—as our representative and brother—the Father’s command to ‘Sit Thou on My right hand’; by doing this, He “may transfer the glory of adoption through Himself to all the race”.¹¹⁷ As Cyril continues,

He has presented Himself therefore as man to the Father on our behalf, that so He may restore us (who had been removed from the Father’s presence by the ancient transgression), again as it were to behold the Father’s face. He sits there in His position as Son, so that we also through Him may be called sons and children of God.¹¹⁸

By virtue of this racial solidarity, it follows logically that all the Word achieved in the flesh is potentially efficacious for man. As one of the human race and, indeed, its head and

¹¹¹ Janssens, ‘Notre Filiation Divine’, p. 240.

¹¹² “Pour Cyrille, c’est une vérité évidente que nous sommes apparentés au Père par la chair du Verbe incarné” (Janssens, p. 240). As Cyril writes, “the appellation of sonship is bestowed by Him as of grace upon us who lie under the yoke, and are by nature slaves: but Christ is the true Son, that is, He is the Son of God the Father by nature, even when He had become flesh: for He continued, as I have said, to be that which He had ever been, though He took upon Him that which He had not been”. *In Luc.* 2, 7 (PG 72, 485CD).

¹¹³ *In Joh.* 20: 17. Pusey, iii. 119.

¹¹⁴ Eph. 2: 6: “God ... raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (καὶ συνήγειρεν καὶ συνεκάθισεν ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ).

¹¹⁵ *In Joh.* 19: 2, 3. Pusey, iii. 81 (PG 74, 184CD). Emphasis mine.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* Emphasis mine.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

representative,¹¹⁹ all that He undergoes and does, however insignificant, is the “common patrimony of humankind”.¹²⁰ By virtue of His dual consubstantiality, we are, Cyril insists, “to regard the events that happened in the life of Christ as common to the whole race”,¹²¹ and that all His holy actions and stages have the power to sanctify.¹²² Not only on the cross where the enfleshed Word “bore us through His own flesh”,¹²³ or in His resurrection where He raises the whole of human nature with him,¹²⁴ but even the “prières, les actions et jusqu’aux affections corporelles du Christ ont une signification pour l’humanité comme telle, parce que le Christ, en tant qu’il est devenu homme, a porté la même chair que nous”.¹²⁵

3.1.1. Yet “the Flesh Alone Profits Nothing”

But despite these advantages, such solidarity in the flesh is not sufficient for salvation, insists Cyril. After all, the resurrection to which Cyril is referring “is common to saints and sinners” alike.¹²⁶ The impotence of mere racial kinship is highlighted for Cyril in the case of the Jewish people, for whilst they “are united in a family relationship with the faithful Abraham”,¹²⁷ this alone does not help them: since many “were unbelieving, [they] were deprived of that kinship with him on dissimilarity of character”.¹²⁸ Indeed, as Cyril has frequently reminded us, “the flesh alone profits nothing” (Jn. 6:63). This situation of the Jews in relation to Abraham is analogous to our natural kinship with the Incarnate Word, for as Cyril observes, “Any one might say that, inasmuch as the Word has become Man, He brought all men into friendly relationship [with Him] by being of the same race”.¹²⁹ Yet this racial

¹¹⁹ As Cyril writes, by the Incarnation “the Creator devised as it were a second root of our race ... [he is] the second beginning” (*Glaphyra in Genesim* 1 (PG 69, 28-29).

¹²⁰ Mersch, *The Whole Christ*, p. 342.

¹²¹ *In Joh.* 19: 2, 3. Pusey, iii. 81 (PG 74, 184CD).

¹²² As Cyril writes, “He was scourged unjustly, to deliver us from the chastisement that we justly deserved; He endured mockery and blows, in order that we might be able to resist Satan and to escape the sin that we had incurred through [Adam’s] fall. For we believe, and with reason, that all Christ’s sufferings took place because of us and for us, and that they have the power to turn aside and destroy the evils which we deserve because of sin. Just as it was enough to free all from death, that He who knew not death should offer His own flesh to death (since the one Christ died for all), so in like manner we must say that in order to deliver all from stripes and ignominy, it is enough that our Lord has endured them for us”. *In Joh.* 12. Pusey, ii. 155 (PG 74, 628).

¹²³ *In Joh.* 10: 2. Pusey, ii. 618.

¹²⁴ *In Joh.* 6: 1. Pusey, ii. 233.

¹²⁵ Janssens, ‘Notre Filiation Divine’, p. 239.

¹²⁶ *In Joh.* 6: 1. Pusey, i, 220.

¹²⁷ *In Joh.* 10: 26. Pusey, ii. 251 (PG 74, 20BC).

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

kinship alone is not adequate to effect this friendship, for just as the relation of friends involves willing reciprocity, so God's loving condescension must be received in loving faith if it is to be for man's salvation. Thus, irrespective of racial solidarity, without conformity of mind and heart, "they are alienated from Him, who do not preserve the correspondent image of His holiness".¹³⁰

From this it can be seen how, according to Cyril, man's natural consubstantiality with the Incarnate Word, his first 'concorporality' with us in the flesh, is the condition that determines not only the just man's highest joy but also the impenitent sinner's eternal penalty. Though all men will rise bodily, not all will rise in bodily glory.¹³¹ Whilst the general resurrection is by virtue of our solidarity-in-the-flesh with the Son, our glorious resurrection is the fruit of our soul's graced conformity with him (cf. Rom. 8:29). As Cyril insists, "it is not to all indiscriminately that the favour of honour and glory [will be given]"; rather, the wicked "will continue in their dishonourable form, for one purpose: punishment".¹³² The refashioning of our lowly bodies to Christ's glorious body has its remote cause in His racial kinship with us, but its immediate, formal cause in the greater gift of divinisation: it is a glorious consequence only for those who, already related to the Father's Son through a common human nature, have, through virtue and grace, gone on spiritually to "become 'conformed to the image of His Son'".¹³³ Without this second gift of supernatural conformity, the first gift of natural solidarity with the flesh of the Word even becomes a source of alienation for the sinner, for his bodily resurrection serves to manifest his sinfulness and exacerbate his suffering; it amounts, paradoxically, to "receiving life unto disgrace alone".¹³⁴ For such mere 'brothers-in-the-flesh' to remain unresurrected would be preferable, for "bitterer than death is resurrection unto punishment".¹³⁵ In Cyril's analysis of man's natural, racial kinship with the Incarnate Word, we see that the crime of man's rejection and ingratitude assumes a new gravity and seriousness in proportion to the magnitude and greatness of the gift of God's love in assuming our humanity.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Cf. *In 1 ad Cor. 7* (Pusey, *In Joh.* iii, 309)

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid. As one commentator has observed, "In his conception of incorruptibility ... Cyril distinguishes a universal ἀφθαρσία, the resurrection of the flesh, which is itself a gift of God, and a selective ἀφθαρσία, the glorification of the flesh, which is a blessing (ἀγαθόν) of God." W.J. Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man according to Cyril of Alexandria*, Studies in Christian Antiquity 14, (Washington D.C., 1957) p. 94.

¹³⁴ *In Joh.* 6: 51. Pusey, i. 520 (PG 73, 285D).

¹³⁵ Ibid.

3.2 Bodily Union with the Incarnate Word through the Sacrament of His Body

The bodily kinship between the enfleshed Word and mankind, inaugurated in the womb of Mary, is the *condition* for man's restoration and sanctification. Through uniting in His very divine person manhood and divinity, "things widely opposed by nature",¹³⁶ the eternal Son establishes wonderful possibilities: by it, "He might enable man to share and partake of the Nature of God".¹³⁷ The enfleshment of the Word is itself not therefore enough for us, but "a beginning and a way whereby we may partake of the Holy Spirit and union with God".¹³⁸

We have already seen how, by virtue of its assumption into hypostatic union with the divine person of the Logos, the assumed body participates in several of His divine prerogatives. This fact alone is not sufficient for our restoration. Yet vital contact with this flesh is indeed sufficient for, to repeat, through its participation in the vivifying power of the Godhead, the body of Christ is Life-giving, imparting natural and supernatural life to those faithful who are touched by it.¹³⁹ That mankind can indeed, after the bodily Ascension of Christ into heaven, come into vital contact with this same sacred body is the fundamental intuition behind Cyril's doctrine of the Eucharist. We shall now consider this.

3.2.1. The Sacramental Modality of the Word's own Flesh

A prominent characteristic of Cyril's exegetical writings is how the Eucharistic doctrine contained there emerges seamlessly and apparently inevitably from his Christological discussions.¹⁴⁰ Allusions to the Word's body in its sacramental mode follow naturally and logically from discussions on the privileges and powers of the historical body in the Gospel

¹³⁶ *In Joh.* 17: 20-1. Pusey, ii. 551.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ As we have already considered, it is "the flesh of Life" (ἡ σὰρξ τῆς ζωῆς), being "the body of Him who is Life by nature" (σῶμα τῆς κατὰ φύσιν ζωῆς) *Ep.* 55 (ACO 1.1.4 60 1.10f.)

¹⁴⁰ Henry Chadwick even regards Cyril's Christological disputations with Nestorius to have been inspired principally by the need to safeguard the doctrine of the Eucharist (see his 'Eucharist and Christology in the Nestorian Controversy', *JTS, NS* 2 (October, 1951) p. 152-3). Chadwick's views on Cyril are generally controversial, however. Whilst we share his argument that Cyril's Christology is informed by certain Eucharistic, and soteriological concerns in general, we cannot agree that his chief motivation behind his Christological writings was "solely to shatter the power of the rival See of Constantinople" (p. 146), or that Christian doctrine was not a "subject in which Cyril himself had any very profound interest" (p. 144), nor, given the evidence, can we admit, as Chadwick does, that Cyril did not "have any real interest in maintaining the unity of Christ's person" (p. 153).

commentaries. The following extract, for example, begins as a reference to the flesh of the Lord which, through its touch, has healed Simon's mother-in-law and those "sick with various diseases" (cf. Lk. 4:38-40). It concludes with an aspiration for the same flesh in its sacramental mode:

For it was necessary, most necessary, for us to learn that the holy flesh which He had made His own was endowed with the activity of power of the Word, by His having planted power into it in a manner befitting God. Let it then take hold of us, or let us take hold of it, by the mystical eulogy [the Eucharist].¹⁴¹

Just as Cyril wishes to "take hold" of this body so, in the same way, the very historical body of Jesus of Nazareth which, through its touch, raised from the dead the son of the widow of Nain,¹⁴² is the object of Cyril's desire: "May our Lord Jesus Christ also touch us",¹⁴³ he hopes. These great aspirations for the historical body of Jesus to be present and available to Cyril in his own life and the lives of his readers are articulated here precisely in light of their fulfilment. According to Cyril, such a hoped-for encounter is properly realised in the sacramental modality of this flesh.

The first principle upon which this doctrine is developed is the real identity of the historical, glorified body of Jesus with the body present under the appearances of bread and wine. Cyril is adamant about the non-metaphorical, non-figurative sense of Christ's language in the words of Institution, and the correspondingly substantial, not simply symbolic, presence of Christ in the sacrament of His body and blood.¹⁴⁴ As he states plainly,

¹⁴¹ *In Luc.* 4: 38. Sermon 12 (Smith, i. 71; PG 72, 552B, 549D).

¹⁴² *In Luc* 7: 11. Sermon 36 (Smith, i. 135; PG 72, 577C).

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ The most comprehensive and systematic account of Cyril's Eucharistic doctrine is still Adolph Struckmann's *Die Eucharistielehre des heiligen Cyrill von Alexandrien* (Paderborn, 1910). Struckmann holds that, according to Cyril, that which is received in the Eucharist "is fully identical with the glorified body of Christ, not only according to operation and effect but also according to essence or substance" (see Gebremedhin, p. 80). This is the most obvious and therefore most common reading of Cyril. It is that held by Henry Chadwick: "The theme which is recurrent throughout Cyril's exegetical and polemical writings is that in the Eucharist we receive the flesh of Christ, the selfsame body that he took from Mary" ('Eucharist and Christology in the Nestorian Controversy', *JTS*, NS 2 (October, 1951) p. 153). This is also the view proposed in the recent studies on Cyril, such as Daniel Keating, 'Divinisation in Cyril: the Appropriation of Divine Life' in *The Theology of Cyril of Alexandria: A Critical Appreciation* (London: T&T Clark, 2003) pp. 162-170; and Normal Russell, *St Cyril of Alexandria* (London: Routledge, 2000) pp. 19-2, 45. Ezra Gebremedhin insists on the same. Arguing against those who reckon that Cyril only held to a *dynamic*, spiritual presence of Christ in the Eucharist, he writes: "For Cyril it is the whole Christ, Spirit and flesh who is present and received in the Eucharist" (*Life Giving Blessing* (Uppsala, 1977) p. 85). The following, much older, studies all maintain that Cyril holds to a substantial, corporeal presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist: F.C. Baur, *Vorlesungen über die christliche Dogmengeschichte*, 1:2 (Leipzig,

Christ said, ‘This is my body’. He did not say that what you see is a figure [τύπον εἶναι τὰ φαινόμενα], but rather that the elements are truly transformed into the flesh and blood of Christ, so that by partaking [in them] we receive the life-giving and sanctifying power of Christ.¹⁴⁵

In receiving this eulogy we truly “eat the flesh of the Word Incarnate”,¹⁴⁶ insists Cyril, and therefore, rather than simply receiving His effects,¹⁴⁷ “one receives Christ, the true bread of life”.¹⁴⁸ Hence, all the powers he has identified to reside in the flesh of the Logos, as manifested in the great miracles fashioned by His touch in the Gospels, are to be transferred to the Eucharist; all that differs, for Cyril, is the modality of presence.¹⁴⁹

1865) p.415ff.; G. Thomasius, *Die Dogmengeschichte der alten Kirche* (Erlangen, 1874) p. 419ff.; ; J. Mahé, ‘L’Eucharistie d’après saint Cyrille d’Alexandrie’ in *Revue d’Histoire Ecclésiastique* 8, pp. 677-696 (Louvain, 1907); P. Battifol, ‘Nestorius et Cyrille d’Alexandrie’ in *Etudes d’histoire et de théologie positive*. 2e sér. 10e éd. (Paris, 1930) pp. 454-480. H. du Manoir’s general study on Cyril, *Dogmé et Spiritualité chez saint Cyrille d’Alexandrie* (Paris, 1944) has excellent chapters on Cyril’s Eucharistic doctrine, and he also insists that Cyril taught Christ’s strict, substantial presence in the Eucharist. See chapter 4, ‘La Présence Réelle’ (pp.197-203). A handful of scholars have argued that Cyril teaches something less than a substantial presence, rather a *dynamic* presence, where Christ’s divine power alone is conveyed, rather than it being mediated through the real presence of His body. For this, see E. Michaud, ‘Saint Cyrille d’Alexandrie et l’eucharistie’ in *Revue internationale de théologie* 10 (Berne, 1902) pp. 599-614 and 675-692, and G.E. Steiz, ‘Die Abendmahlslehre der griechischen Kirche’ in *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie* (1867) pp. 235-245. See Mahé’s study for a direct response to these views.

¹⁴⁵ *In Matt.* 26: 27 (PG 72, 452C)

¹⁴⁶ *De Ador.* 7 (PG 68, 501B).

¹⁴⁷ A small minority of protestant commentators (Steiz and Michaud, in the works cited) have proposed that Cyril held Christ’s Eucharistic presence to be not in substance but in *effect*: that the bread and wine are not actually converted into the body and blood of Christ, but rather into the efficacy or energy of the flesh of the Logos. This is based on the following verse of Cyril’s interpretation of Luke 22: 17-22: “It was fitting therefore for Him to be in us divinely by the Holy Ghost, and also, so to speak, to be mingled with our bodies by His holy flesh and precious blood: which things also we possess as a life-giving Eucharist, in the form of bread and wine. For lest we should be terrified of seeing (actual) flesh and blood upon the holy tables of our churches, God, humbling Himself to our infirmities, infuses into the things set before us the power of life, and transforms them into the efficacy of His flesh, that we may have them for a life-giving participation, and that the body of (Him who is the) Life may be found in us a life-giving seed” (*In Luc.* 22: 19; PG 72, 912A). J. Mahé and A. Struckmann, in the works already cited, respond to these views by bringing together many other of Cyril’s Eucharistic texts. See, for example, Mahé, p.692, and Struckmann, p. 151.

¹⁴⁸ *De Ador.* 7 (PG 68, 501B).

¹⁴⁹ Cyril’s commentary on the episode of Mary Magdalen’s attempt to “touch” (or “grasp”) the risen body of Jesus demonstrates this theology. He applies it directly to the Church’s refusal of the unbaptised to receive the sacred body of Christ in the Eucharist. On the line, “Jesus said to [Mary], ‘touch me not; for I am not yet ascended unto my my Father’”, Cyril comments: “Hence the type [i.e. this episode] is applicable to the Churches. Therefore we too drive away from the holy table those who are indeed convinced of the Godhead of Christ, and have already made profession of faith, that is, those who are already catechumens, when they have not as yet been enriched with the Holy Spirit. For He does not dwell in those who have not received Baptism. But when they have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, then indeed there is nothing to hinder them from touching our Saviour Christ. Therefore, also, to those who wish to partake of the blessed Eucharist, the ministers of Divine mysteries say, ‘Holy things to the holy’; teaching that

But together with this first and fundamental insistence of Cyril's is his further belief that something is actually gained by Christ's sacramental mode of presence. For grounded in the doctrine of the ontological identity of the body born of Mary with the body of the Eucharist is the accompanying observation that the Incarnate Word does not, under the appearances of bread and wine, merely touch us, as he once touched Jairus' daughter or the widow's son. Rather, the superficial contact available to Christ's historical contemporaries is, by giving "us his flesh to eat" (Jn. 6:52), radically deepened through the action of eating. Through His sacramental modality, the divine Word is able to effect a new and far-reaching level of interaction with the faithful where the healing contact of His touch is extended and perfected by an entire bodily bestowal. Cyril is full of wonder at the implications of this new mode of presence and contact: "if mere contact with the sacred flesh gives life to a dead body, how should we not profit more richly by the life-giving eulogy [i.e. Eucharist] when we taste it?".¹⁵⁰ We shall now consider how Cyril answers this question.

3.2.2. Natural Concorporality and Baptismal Incorporation: Unions ordered to their Eucharistic Perfection

In Cyril's sacramental theology the distinctiveness of Eucharistic communion is illuminated by two prior doctrines: as we have already considered, the first is our natural kinship with Christ by virtue of our birth into the human race, and the second is our adoptive sonship of the Father by virtue of our supernatural rebirth in the sacrament of baptism. The coherence and intelligibility of Cyril's teaching on the extent of the unitive effects of the Eucharist, and its particularities, depend upon these initial realities.

Cyril refers to these two kinds of relationships, natural and supernatural, in his commentary on John 1:12-13, where a distinction is made between the natural relation through "blood [and] the will of the flesh" (Jn. 1:13), and adoptive sonship through grace, "those born of God" (Jn. 1:13). Though the literal sense of the passage would appear to be a general distinction between natural, human sonship and divine, adoptive sonship, Cyril seems to apply this distinction to our natural and supernatural relationships to God: that relationship which persists according to our brotherly solidarity with His Incarnate Son, and that filial relationship which exists according to supernatural adoption by a participation in the divine

participation in holy things is the due reward of those who are sanctified in the Spirit" (*In Joh.* 20:17. Pusey, iii. 119 (PG 74, 695CD).

¹⁵⁰ *In Joh.* 4: 3. Pusey, i. 530.

nature. The first is the condition which allows for the second, whilst the second is, as we shall see later, the condition which allows for its perfection in Eucharistic communion.

The rebirth to which John refers in the prologue of the gospel is, according to Cyril, effected in baptism. There, “regenerat[ed] by the Spirit through faith, [we] are called and are begotten of God”.¹⁵¹ The fraternal solidarity an unbaptised man already has to Christ through the flesh He has assumed is perfected in baptism by way of a real participation in the divine nature:¹⁵² this new relationship to the Son inaugurated in baptism determines our filial status before the Father. If by being born into the human race a man enjoys a certain, distant filial relation to the Father through the flesh of His Son, by baptism he is ontologically regenerated as an adopted son by partaking of the Son’s very divine nature, and is therefore—in this conformity with the eternal and natural Son—a true and adopted son of the Father (cf. 1 Jn. 3:1). As Cyril writes, through “a participation [διὰ μετοχής] with the true Son”, the Christian is supernaturally reborn as the Father’s adoptive son and thereby raised “to the dignity which is in the Son by nature”.¹⁵³

Significantly for our study, Cyril tends to appropriate this new Christological configuration of man to the mission of the Holy Spirit. It is a “regeneration [ἀναγέννησιν] by the Spirit”,¹⁵⁴ a “circumcision of the Spirit”,¹⁵⁵ a “cleansing through the Holy Spirit”,¹⁵⁶ a restoration in which we are “newly formed [ἀναμορφούμενοι] to the ancient beauty through and in the Spirit”.¹⁵⁷ But though the divine person of the Holy Spirit is apparently dominant in Cyril’s considerations of baptism, we are of course “baptised ... into the Trinity itself”,¹⁵⁸ and the prominence granted to the Paraclete is insofar as He accomplishes all the fruits of the Son’s redemption in us. Indeed, in and through this operation of the Spirit, Cyril perceives baptism as a Christological mystery, where the post-Ascension faithful are not to be without Christ, nor subject to a disincarnate ministry, but both to undergo Christ’s

¹⁵¹ *In Joh.* 1: 12-14. Pusey, i. 136.

¹⁵² In his baptismal interpretation of John 1:11-13, Cyril alludes to Peter’s teaching (2 Pet. 1:4) that we are “made partakers of the Divine Nature” (Pusey, i. 136).

¹⁵³ *In Joh.* 1: 12-14. Pusey, i. 136.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *In Joh.* 7: 24. Pusey, i. 632

¹⁵⁶ *In Joh.* 7: 24. Pusey, i. 641

¹⁵⁷ *In Joh.* 3: 3-6. Pusey, i. 219

¹⁵⁸ *In Joh.* 1: 12-14. Pusey, i. 136. “For when our Saviour Christ dwells in us by the Holy Spirit, surely there too will be also His Father; for the Spirit of Christ is the Spirit of the Father Himself” (*In Joh.* 14:23. Pusey, ii. 497).

operation and brought into union with him.¹⁵⁹ So, though this sacrament is a “spiritual circumcision”, it is nevertheless “[Christ] who circumcises our hearts by the Holy Spirit”.¹⁶⁰ It is the Spirit who, by His agency, seeks to bring the Christian into deeper communion with the Incarnate Lord, for we are “partakers [μέτοχοι] of Christ through the Spirit”,¹⁶¹ and the Spirit’s work is to bring the soul into ever deeper conformity with the risen Son, for He is “the giver of sanctification and intimate relationship [οἰκειότητος] with Christ”.¹⁶² It is, as the Lord insisted, even “for your advantage that I go” (Jn. 16:7), for by the indwelling Spirit the glorious and Ascended Son has “come to dwell in us”.¹⁶³ As one commentator has well observed, in Cyril’s presentation of Christian divinization, “the agency of the Spirit is not other than the agency of Christ because the Spirit is the Spirit of Christ”.¹⁶⁴ The gift of the indwelling Spirit is the means by which “Christ now accomplishes our cleansing and sanctification and imparts to us new life”.¹⁶⁵

3.2.3. The Pneumatic emphasis of Baptism ordered to its Somatic, Eucharistic consummation

For our particular enquiry it is important to notice this Christological orientation of baptism in Cyril’s theology. By this sacrament, we are configured to Christ the eternal Son,

¹⁵⁹ Charles Journet often insists on the same. For example, in considering the Church after the Ascension and Pentecost (which he calls the ‘Age of the Holy Spirit’), he makes the following important observation: “The Age of the Holy Spirit is the age of the Eucharist and the hierarchy. Two new mysteries will mark the coming of the age of the Holy Spirit: the mystery of the Eucharistic presence and the mystery of the institution of the hierarchy. In order that he himself [i.e. Christ], endowed with all the riches of the redemption, might continue to reside corporally among us, the glorified Christ renders Himself present under the appearances of bread and wine. St John links to the Eucharist that life of the Christian in Christ and the life of Christ in the Christian, whereas St Paul sees the Mystical Body itself: ‘He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me’ (Jn. 6:56). And in order that he may continue to approach us with the same intimacy as during the days of his mortal life, Jesus leaves in our midst the mediation of the hierarchic powers and the sacramental rites, which prolong his sensible contact with the whole world, and under the species of which he will send the fullness of grace and truth: “Go ... make disciples of all nations, baptising them ..., teaching them. ... Behold, I am with you always, to the close of the age” (Matt. 28: 19-20). It is at the moment, therefore, when the Church is carried to the highest point of visible mediation that the Spirit fills her with the purest spiritual riches –those that configure her most intimately to Christ, her Saviour”. Charles Cardinal Journet, *The Theology of the Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004) p. 24-25.

¹⁶⁰ *In Joh. 7: 24.* Pusey, i. 632

¹⁶¹ *In Joh. 7: 24.* Pusey, i. 632

¹⁶² *In Joh. 7: 24.* Pusey, i. 641

¹⁶³ *In Joh. 1: 12-14.* Pusey, i. 141

¹⁶⁴ Keating, *The Gift of Divine Life*, p. 63.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

participating in His natural Sonship of the Father, and brought into “intimate relationship” with him by the Holy Spirit.¹⁶⁶ Indeed, “In order that Christ may rest and lodge in us, let us receive the saving waters”,¹⁶⁷ Cyril exhorts, “for where the waters [of baptism] enter, there Christ lodges”.¹⁶⁸ But it is significant that this effect of baptism is shown to be chiefly pneumatic in character, particularly so in relation to the somaticism that, as we shall see, characterises Cyril’s treatment of Eucharistic communion. For “how, and in what manner” Cyril asks, does Christ “lodge in us” through these waters? “[B]y participation in the Holy Spirit”, Cyril responds.¹⁶⁹ Though, as we saw earlier, he regards the touch of the water on the body of the neophyte to have a certain sanctifying effect on his body,¹⁷⁰ Cyril’s emphasis here is on Christ’s spiritual mode of contact. As we have seen him state before, it is the sacrament where, “by the Spirit, the spirit of man is sanctified”.¹⁷¹ Fundamental to Cyril’s understanding of the progressive ordering of union with Christ, from the cleansing and adoption of baptism to communion in the Word’s flesh in the Eucharist, is the fact that in baptism the water remains water. Consequently, in his encounter with the risen Lord in baptism, the body of the Christian does not come into direct contact with His life-giving flesh. By emphasising in this sacrament the operation of the Holy Spirit, Christ’s spiritual mode of contact, and the human spirit’s correspondence with the Holy Spirit, Cyril is able to imply how baptism is ordered to a further perfection. By considering the Christological principles of Cyril we can deduce, from a certain theological fittingness, that a more complete assimilation with the Incarnate Son is still to be had after the supernatural cleansing and adoption of baptism; a union more comprehensively expressive of, and in harmony with, the enfleshment of the Word and the bodily nature of man. Accordingly, Cyril insists that baptismal cleansing is intrinsically ordered towards Eucharistic communion. How this perfection is achieved shall become clearer as we proceed.

¹⁶⁶ *In Joh.* 7: 24. Pusey, i, 641

¹⁶⁷ *In Luc.* 22: 7-16 (Sermon 141). Smith, 661.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ *In Joh.* 3: 5. Pusey, i, 219. “For since man is compound [σύνθετον] by nature, and not simple, being mingled of two, plainly of a sensible [αἰσθητοῦ] body and an intellectual [νοεράς] soul, he required for rebirth a twofold healing, having in some way kinship [συγγενῶς πως ἐχούσης] to both of those indicated. For by the Spirit, the spirit of man is sanctified, and again by the sanctified water, his body”.

¹⁷¹ *In Joh.* 3: 5. Pusey, i, 219.

3.2.4. “The Son is in us corporeally as Man, spiritually as God.”

Earlier in our investigation we observed how Cyril identifies a two-fold participation in the one Christ, where we partake of him “both spiritually and bodily” (πνευματικῶς τε καὶ σωματικῶς).¹⁷² As we have shown, His spiritual mode of presence is said to be effected by the agency of the Holy Spirit, whilst the bodily mode of union is understood to be an effect of receiving His flesh in the Eucharist:

We have him [i.e. Christ] in ourselves sensibly [αἰσθητῶς] and spiritually [νοητῶς] for, on the one hand, he dwells in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, and on the other we are partakers [μετεσχήκαμεν] also of his holy flesh.¹⁷³

As should already be clear, Cyril tends to identify the πνευματικῶς mode of Christ’s presence in the Christian with baptism,¹⁷⁴ where “the soul is re-created to newness of life through the Holy Spirit”.¹⁷⁵ Though we shall shortly be observing how Cyril attributes to Eucharistic communion a somatic mode of union with Christ, it is important to recall how, alongside this, he identifies the bodily-spiritual duality within the effect of the Eucharist,¹⁷⁶ the “food through which, being sanctified in both body *and* soul, we live in [Christ]”.¹⁷⁷

Of immediate concern to us here is how Cyril often associates divinity and humanity with these spiritual and bodily modes of Christ. Briefly observing this will lead us to a greater understanding of the somaticism of his doctrine of Eucharistic communion in its relation to baptism. For example, though Cyril insists that Christ is present to the faithful in

¹⁷² *In Rom.* 8: 3. Pusey, iii, 213.

¹⁷³ *In 1 Cor.* 6: 15, Pusey, iii. 263-4.

¹⁷⁴ The connection between baptism and the πνευματικῶς means of divine indwelling is evident in the following passages: *In Joh.* 6: 35 (Pusey, i. 470-1); *In Luc.* 22: 17-22 (Smith, 568-71; Reuss, 208-10); *In Joh.* 17: 18-19, 20-1 (Pusey, ii. 717-737; iii. 1-4).

¹⁷⁵ *In Joh.* 6: 53. Pusey, i. 531.

¹⁷⁶ See Hubert de Manoir’s brief passage on the spiritual effects of the Eucharist (“Efficacité de l’Eulogie mystique sur les âmes”) in his *Dogme et Spiritualité chez Saint Cyrille*, p. 187-188.

¹⁷⁷ *In Joh.* 6: 27-37. Pusey, i. 440 (my emphasis). Also, at the “holy tables [i.e. the altars] we are blessed, both somatically and pneumatically [καὶ πνευματικῶς καὶ σωματικῶς]” (*In Luc.* 22: 17-22; Reuss, 208-9; Smith, 568). Cyril teaches, in his commentary on the emergence of blood and water from the pierced side of the crucified Christ, that both the sacrament of Baptism and the Eucharist have their source in the Incarnate Word: “... as they had a faint suspicion that He might not be dead, they pierced His side with a spear, which sent forth blood mingled with water; God presenting us thereby with a type, as it were, and foreshadowing the mystery of the Eucharist and Holy Baptism. For Holy Baptism is of Christ, and Christ’s institution; and the power of the mystery of the Eucharist grew up for us out of His Holy Flesh” (*In Joh.* 19: 36-37. Pusey, iii. 103). As Gebremedhin observes, “It is Christ who makes the faithful participate in Himself corporeally and spiritually. [In Cyril] Christ is the one subject of our affirmations. Both Baptism and Eucharist have their origin in the Incarnate Word”. *Life-Giving Blessing*, p. 104.

both His divinity and humanity, he is not present to us in the same way. Whilst His divine nature is invisible to our earthly eyes, after His bodily Ascension into heaven the Incarnate Word is, albeit in a sacramental mode, still visible to us: “Christ visits us and appears unto us all, both invisibly and also visibly; invisibly as God, but also visibly in the body”.¹⁷⁸ Cyril applies this same divine-human distinction to Christ’s spiritual and bodily modes of union with the faithful. His spiritual union with the soul of man is consistent with His divinity, whilst any union of a corporeal nature is consistent with His manhood: “In the Eucharist the Son is in us corporeally as man [ὡς ἄνθρωπος] ... and spiritually as God [ὡς Θεός] by the energy of His own Spirit [τῆ τοῦ ἰδίου Πνεύματος ἐνέργεια].”¹⁷⁹ And, “God must be mingled with us in a manner befitting God [Θεοορεπῶς] through the Holy Spirit, and mingled with our bodies through His holy flesh”.¹⁸⁰ These distinctions of Cyril’s do not deny the intrinsic unity of Christ’s operation nor, as we have already observed in Cyril’s writings, the role of the sacred humanity of Christ in sending the Holy Spirit into souls.¹⁸¹ Rather, in conformity with Christ’s unity of operation and the living instrumentality of His flesh, Cyril is making the complementary observation that, since God is Spirit, He operates in a spiritual way; accordingly, in vivifying the faithful spiritually, Christ is said to operate in a manner proper to His divinity. On the other hand, the union He can effect with us κατὰ σάρκα is a direct fruit of the Incarnation, of having assumed flesh into the unity of His very Person, and sacramentally communicating this flesh to the faithful.

These divine-human, pneumatic-somatic distinctions, provide a foundation to Cyril’s understanding of both the temporal priority of baptism and the perfections of Eucharistic communion. The latter union is reserved for those already sanctified in the Spirit and united to Christ by the agency of the same Holy Spirit in baptism. In receiving the grace of adoption in that sacrament, the faithful are, only then, permitted to receive the very Life-giving body of the Son in Eucharistic communion. “When they have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit [in baptism], then indeed there is nothing to hinder them from touching our Saviour Christ”.¹⁸² This indicates a progressive ordering of union and intimacy. Only those already

¹⁷⁸ *In Joh.* 20: 26, 27. Pusey, iii. 144-145.

¹⁷⁹ *In Joh.* 17: 22-23. Pusey, iii. 2-3.

¹⁸⁰ *In Luc.* 22: 17-22. Reuss, 209-10; Smith, 571.

¹⁸¹ See, for example, *In Joh.* 20: 22. Pusey, iii. 672.

¹⁸² *In Joh.* 20: 1. Pusey, iii. 119. This is from Cyril’s interpretation of Mary Magdalen’s attempt to hold on to the body of the risen Christ, to which we referred earlier. Cyril equates that encounter with that of the unbaptised, who are unable to receive the body of Christ in the Eucharist. As Janssens remarks, “... cette

adopted as sons of the Father, whose souls have been sanctified by the action of the Holy Spirit, are able to partake bodily and spiritually of the eternal Son's vivifying flesh. Communion with the body of the Word presupposes union with the Word in the Spirit. Hence, the initial union with Christ which, as we have seen, predominantly involves the operation of the Holy Spirit upon man's human spirit (an operation "befitting God", Θεοπρεπῶς) is the prerequisite for the subsequent "more material" and therefore more "kindred participation" (συγγενής μετάληψις)¹⁸³ with the Word through communion in His own, personal flesh. There, as we shall now see, the whole God-man comes into direct contact with the whole Christian.

3.3. Union according to a "common nature"

We are beginning to see how, in the theology of Cyril, there is a discernable progressive ordering in the stages of man's restoration and divinisation. As we have seen, the Son's natural consubstantiality with us in the flesh is the ground upon which our supernatural relationship with God is built; yet even after receiving this grace of adoption there is further conformity and intimacy to be gained: the supernatural rebirth of baptism (a principally spiritual participation, befitting God who is Spirit) is ordered towards communion with the natural Son in and through His vivifying flesh (a simultaneously bodily and spiritual participation, befitting God-made-man). As we are going to see now, for Cyril this is the high point of the Christian's earthly life, where the entire body-soul composite of the Christian is brought into union with the entire, glorious and risen God-Man, in a manner exceeding all the other sacraments.

Cyril highlights the comprehensive nature of Eucharistic communion in his commentary on the vine and branches allegory of John 15. Here he challenges an imaginary Arian opponent who seeks not only to divide the one divine nature and activity of the Father (the vine-dresser) and the Son (the vine), but to reduce the union of the Christian with Christ

seconde forme de la grace presuppose la participation du Saint-Esprit. La communion est réservée à ceux qui sont déjà sanctifiés dans l'Esprit, et le Christ ne donne sa chair et son sang qu'aux baptisés, qui ont déjà reçu la grâce de l'adoption. La nécessité de cette seconde forme de la grâce n'est donc que relative. Elle présuppose l'union au Christ par l'Esprit. Mais elle devient ultérieurement l'achèvement de la perfection surnaturelle, et nous devons la considérer ici, pour autant qu'elle ajoute une nuance spéciale à notre participation à la nature divine". L. Janssens, 'Notre Filiation Divine d'Après Cyrille d'Alexandrie', p. 251. We shall see how it adds this 'special nuance' shortly.

¹⁸³ *In Joh. 6: 53*. Pusey i, 531

merely to the level of the spirit and affections. According to the Arian, the Christian's union with Christ—a union of branches to the vine—is not fleshly [σαρκικός], but only spiritual [πνευματικῶς], a union grounded solely in faith and mind.¹⁸⁴ In his reply, Cyril argues that the Arian is blind to the supreme fittingness of Jesus's chosen metaphor of vine and branches. For just as these are united by a common principle of life, and subsist together in a union of common natures, so by faith and the sacraments the faithful are united to Christ in a common supernatural life (the Christian's participation in the divine nature) and, uniquely in the Eucharist, bound together in a union of common, bodily natures, analogous to the that of a vine to its branches.

The elevation to the supernatural life is already established in baptism, for those who receive the flesh of the Word “are already partakers in His nature through their participation in the Holy Spirit”.¹⁸⁵ This, as we have observed, is the ground upon which Eucharistic union is founded. The Eucharist augments and intensifies this life communicated in baptism, though it also effects a new bond: for by virtue of the communication of His sacred flesh to the sinful flesh of the communicant, there is brought about for the Christian what Cyril calls a “physical [i.e. natural] participation” (μέθεξις φυσική) with the enfleshed Word.¹⁸⁶ In accordance with the full reality of the Word made flesh and the bodily nature of the man, this “physical participation” with the God-man is necessarily not only pneumatic but also somatic in character. Such is the importance of this for Cyril that the spiritualising doctrine of his Arian opponent would, in his opinion, render the Eucharist superfluous: after all, given the spiritual mode of union in baptism, “why [else] do we receive [the Eucharist] within us? Is it not that it may make Christ to dwell in us corporeally ... by participation and communion of His Holy Flesh?”.¹⁸⁷ As Cyril insists, the great fittingness of the metaphor of vine and branches to illustrate the Christian's union with Christ lies in its ability to convey, at once, the corporeal and spiritual quality that is peculiar to Eucharistic communion:

Christ has been shown to us to be the Vine in this sense, and we the branches, inasmuch as we partake in a fellowship with Him that is not merely spiritual but also corporeal ... For that which proceeds from the vine is of like nature with it. And this we say, not as attempting to deny the possibility of union with Christ by faith and

¹⁸⁴ *In Joh.* 15: 1. Pusey, ii. 543-4.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.* Pusey, ii. 535.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.* Pusey, ii. 543-4

sincere love, but rather in order to point out that, both spiritually and corporally [καὶ πνευματικῶς καὶ σωματικῶς], Christ is the Vine and we are the branches.¹⁸⁸

Here we find the decisive feature of Eucharistic communion for Cyril. Through such exquisitely intimate contact with the flesh of the Word, a contact more comprehensive and pervasive than that fashioned by the healing touch of His sacred body in the Gospels, Christ and the Christian are bound together according to a common nature, according to the flesh (κατὰ σάρκα). This perfection is not present in the analogous relation Cyril perceives between the Spirit of God¹⁸⁹ and the correspondingly spiritual nature of the soul of the believer.¹⁹⁰ In that encounter, Cyril admits of no “natural participation”, since there is no such consubstantiality between the finite human spirit and the infinite Spirit of God. Here, though, Cyril observes a union of common natures brought about in Eucharistic communion, and it moves him to apply the most strikingly corporeal similes to convey its characteristics. It is, he teaches, comparable to the material incursion of leaven in the bread dough,¹⁹¹ or the forging of two pieces of wax, warmed and pressed together.¹⁹² In such a blending of two common bodies, the malleable pieces of wax enter into a material bond, whilst remaining distinct (Cyril is careful to add that one would “surely see the one in the other”).¹⁹³ Granting this distinction, Cyril is not afraid to apply the image to the union forged between Christ and those who lovingly receive his body, for they too, whilst remaining distinct are, in a manner of speaking, “commingled and mixed [συνανακτινόμενος, ἀναμιγνύμενος] with Him through the participation”.¹⁹⁴ Cyril employs the same image elsewhere, using it to shed light upon St Paul’s own use of somatic vocabulary to describe the Christian’s union with Christ.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. According to Cyril the Arian’s position is quintessentially heretical, since he selects and amplifies one truth (union through faith and charity) at the expense of another (union with His sacred flesh). In so doing, his doctrine is not consistent with the testimony of the sacred Scriptures: “It is certainly very true that we are united to Christ spiritually [πνευματικῶς] by perfect charity, a true and unshakable faith, by the love of virtue, and by a pure and virtuous conscience. We too declare that this is perfectly correct. However, if it is said that we do not have any union of a fleshly kind [κατὰ σάρκα], we can prove this to be in flagrant contradiction with the inspired Scriptures” (*In Joh.* 15: 1. Pusey, ii. 543-4).

¹⁸⁹ As in Cyril’s Eucharistic theology, by “Spirit” we mean both the divinity in general and the Third Person of the blessed Trinity.

¹⁹⁰ *In Joh.* 3: 5. Pusey, i, 219.

¹⁹¹ *In Joh.* 6: 56. Pusey, i 535

¹⁹² Both *In Joh.* 6: 56. Pusey, i 535; and *In Joh.* 15: 1. Pusey, ii. 545.

¹⁹³ *In Joh.* 6: 56. Pusey, i 535.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

He draws particular attention to Paul's use of the term *σύσσωμα*, 'concorporal',¹⁹⁵ to describe this bond (Eph. 3:6), as well as his insistence that, parallel to the bodily union established sinfully with a prostitute, the faithful Christian's body is, with an analogous bodily involvement, a "member of Christ" (1 Cor 6:15):

For Paul writes that '*the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body [σύσσωμα] and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus*' How are they shown to be 'concorporal' [σύσσωμα] with Christ? Because, being admitted to share the Holy Eucharist, they become one body with Him, just as each one of the holy Apostles did. For why did St Paul call his own members, and the members of all, ... the members of Christ? For he writes thus: '*Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? God forbid*'. And the Saviour Himself says: '*He who eats my Flesh and drinks my Blood, abides in Me, and I in him*'. For here it is especially to be observed that Christ says He shall be in us, not by a certain relation only, as entertained through the affections, but also by a natural participation. For as, if one entwines wax with another [piece of] wax and melts them by the fire, there results of both one. So, through the participation of the Body of Christ and of His precious Blood, He in us, and we again in Him, are co-united.¹⁹⁶

By means of this real contact between the body of the Christian and that of the Word, a "special nuance and a most exalted intimacy"¹⁹⁷ are added to all the Christian's existing supernatural relations. For the Christian as *viator* this represents the highpoint of the supernatural life since, as we have repeatedly stated, the holy flesh given to him as food is not only flesh consubstantial with the flesh of man, but the *ἰδία σάρξ* of the eternal Logos, and thereby charged with divine energy and power. Thus, this mode of divine-human union which Cyril frequently designates *σωματικῶς* is, in harmony with the *πνευματικῶς* mode common to both baptism and the Eucharist, a union with the divine nature, yet mediated through the common nature of the flesh.

¹⁹⁵ Bernard Meunier shows that Cyril prefers to use the term '*σύσσωμα*' to denote Eucharistic communion, even though (as we have seen) he also uses it (along with other Patristic authors) in reference to the racial bond established between the Word and mankind by virtue of the Incarnation alone. See his *Le Christ de Cyrille d'Alexandrie* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1997) p. 181-8.

¹⁹⁶ *In Joh.* 15: 1. Pusey, ii. 545

¹⁹⁷ L. Janssens, 'Notre Filiation Divine d'Après Cyrille d'Alexandrie', p. 253: "... l'Eucharistie achève notre parenté avec le Verbe, notre communion avec le Père, notre participation à la nature divine, en ajoutant à ces relations surnaturelles déjà existantes une nuance spéciale et un caractère souverainement intime, puisqu'elle les réalise moyennant un contact très réel entre notre corps et celui di Verbe."

3.3.1 “Participation” in the Word through communion in His sacred Flesh

The intermingling of common natures, the life-giving body of the Word with the body of the Christian, is the principal means by which Christ ensures the Christian’s salvific ‘participation’ in him. This repeated notion of a μετάληψις,¹⁹⁸ a ‘participation’ or ‘sharing’, is one of the great recurring themes in Cyril’s Eucharistic theology. “Let us approach the divine and heavenly grace and ascend unto the holy participation (εἰς ἁγίαν μετάληψιν);”¹⁹⁹ “Christ implants (ἐμφυτεύειν) in us His own life through the participation of His own Flesh”;²⁰⁰ “He shall be in us, not by a certain relation only, as entertained through the affections, but also by a natural participation [μέθεξις φυσικήν]”.²⁰¹ Similarly, the idea of salvific participation is frequently conveyed by Cyril without explicit recourse to this notion of a μετάληψις by his recurrent allusions to Christ dwelling (ἐνοικεῖν) in the Christian bodily by the communion (κοινωνία) of His holy flesh,²⁰² or of Christ, through bestowing His own vivifying flesh to the faithful, “settling” in them, “inhabiting them” (κατοικεῖν), as “Life and Life-giving”.²⁰³ The happy consequence of this salvific sharing or participation in the Word through a natural (φυσικῶς) communion in His personal flesh is the gift of glorious bodily incorruptibility.²⁰⁴ As our final consideration, we shall now turn our attention to this.

¹⁹⁸ See Struckmann, *Die Eucharistie*, pp. 22-41.

¹⁹⁹ *In Joh.* 6: 35. Pusey, i. 476

²⁰⁰ *In Joh.* 10: 28. Pusey, ii. 252

²⁰¹ *In Joh.* 15: 1. Pusey, ii. 535

²⁰² *In Joh.* 15: 1. Pusey, ii. 545

²⁰³ *In 1 Cor 6: 15* (PG 74, 809CD).

²⁰⁴ As we shall consider shortly, Cyril emphasises the body’s gift of incorruptibility (over the soul’s) because, according to him, the Fall caused the *body*, not the soul, to suffer the loss of the gift of immortality. As Cyril teaches, with the emergence of sin the Holy Spirit departed from man, and man became subject to death, but “death of the flesh alone, the soul being preserved in immortality (αθανασία), because it was to the flesh alone that it was said, ‘Dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return’ (Gen. 3:19). Therefore, that in us which is especially in danger had to be rescued the sooner, and by being intertwined with Life-by-nature be recalled to incorruptibility [ἀφθαρσίαν]” (*In Joh.* 1: 9 (Pusey, i. 138-9)). Cyril has a paradoxical doctrine of the soul’s immortality. Insofar as it is created, it is naturally mortal, but insofar as God has created it in a certain way, it is naturally immortal. As Burghardt explains, “Man, as Cyril sees him, is a fascinating blend of the mortal and the immortal, the corruptible and incorruptible. (a) If we regard man as a human being and nothing more, his body will necessarily be abandoned by the soul and will dissolve; for dissolution is innate in flesh. Man, the composite, is mortal and corruptible. Human life must end. (b) The soul’s status is paradoxical. In one sense it is naturally impermanent: since it is a creature, whatever permanence it has is a free gift from God. In another sense it is naturally permanent: God has freely elected to root permanence in the soul’s constitution, in its very texture. The soul’s life cannot end.” (W.J. Burghardt, *The Image of God in Man according to Cyril of Alexandria*, p. 90).

3.3.2. *Bodily incorruptibility through contact with the body of Life*

We have already seen how, by virtue of the Word becoming flesh, the entire race of man is guaranteed a certain corporal endurance. All men, saints and unrepentant sinners alike, are destined to rise bodily by virtue of the natural, physical kinship the Incarnate Logos has with each man simply by virtue of His enfleshment. As Cyril teaches, “He bore us through His own flesh ... in so far as He became man”²⁰⁵ and accordingly, in His own resurrection, He has raised all men with him.²⁰⁶ But as we have already seen Cyril teach, though all the dead will rise in ἀφθαρσία, not all will rise in δόξα.²⁰⁷ To repeat Cyril’s teaching, this gift of natural kinship is not sufficient in itself for man’s restoration, but is simply the indispensable foundation of supernatural, salvific ‘participation’ (μετάληψις). According to the theology of Cyril, the enfleshed Word’s original bodily kinship with us is ordered towards its supernatural perfection, where bodily incorruptibility is intended to be a glorious, Christ-conformed incorruptibility. Mere fleshly duration does not, in Cyril’s thought, represent victory over death. As he writes, “death, properly so called, is not the death which separates the soul from the body, but the death which separates the soul from God. God is Life, and He who is separated from Life is dead.”²⁰⁸ Consequently, as we briefly considered earlier, the bodily duration granted to those who die in unrepented hostility to God is itself deathly: weighed down eternally in their “dishonourable form”,²⁰⁹ their unredeemed, unglorified, bodies only manifest their fallen spiritual condition and exacerbate their sufferings. It is a

²⁰⁵ *In Joh.* 10: 2. Pusey, ii. 618. Victory over corruption was given initially to flesh when the Word Himself assumed it. As Cyril writes: “Since the Word of God is Life by nature, He made what was naturally corruptible His own body, in order to transform it to incorruptibility by disabling the power of deadness [νεκρότητος] within it; for, just as iron, when vigorous fire is applied to it, changes its colour so as to assume immediately the form of the fire, and gives birth to the power of the prevailing fire, so the nature of the flesh, having welcomed within it the incorruptible and life-giving Word of God, remained no longer in the same condition but became thereafter superior to corruption”. *Homiliae paschales* 17, 4 (PG 77, 785-88). At that moment the victory was communicated to human nature as a whole: “So then, in order to free from corruption and death the man who had been condemned through that ancient curse, He became man, inserting Himself as it were in our nature, He who is Life by nature; for it was in this way that the dominion of death was defeated and the power of the adventitious corruption in us is destroyed; and, inasmuch as the divine nature is absolutely free from inclination to sin, He bore us through His own flesh—in Him, you see, all of us were, in so far as He became man—in order to put to death the ‘members which are on earth’ (Col. 3:5), that is, the passions of the flesh, and nullify the law of sin that tyrannises in our members ...” (*In Joh.* 10:2. Pusey, ii. 618).

²⁰⁶ *In Joh.* 6: 1. Pusey, i. 233.

²⁰⁷ *In 1 ad Cor.* 7. Pusey, *In Joh.* iii, 309.

²⁰⁸ *Homiliae Diversae* 14 (PG 77, 1088-89).

²⁰⁹ *In 1 ad Cor.* 7. Pusey, *In Joh.* iii. 316-317.

condition worse than annihilation for, though it is a form of life, it signifies subjection to the powers of death; death dominating, “tyrannizing savagely over us”.²¹⁰

Man’s glorious, Christ-conformed incorruptibility is the principle fruit of the salvific ‘participation’, (μετάληψις) in Christ, a participation effected first in baptism²¹¹ and then, most perfectly, in sacramental communion with His risen and glorious flesh. According to Cyril, in receiving into his naturally corruptible body the body of him who is Life by nature (Cyril’s “intermingling of common natures”), the whole Christian is brought into graced conformity with his risen and victorious Head. Indeed, such are the properties of this flesh, and the directness and comprehensiveness of its contact with the sinner²¹² that, when received in faith it is, in Cyril’s view, “impossible that [Christ] should not endow those with Life those in whom he comes to dwell.”²¹³ As we have shown, the bodily reception of the Word’s personal flesh by those already united to him spiritually (in baptism) brings about a mysterious co-inherence or ‘commingling’²¹⁴ between the body of the Christian and the body of the risen Christ. This vital assimilation confers, ultimately, a glorious incorruptibility on the body of the recipient for, like a “spark buried amid much stubble”,²¹⁵ the consumed body of the Word “hides” (ἐναποκρύπτειν) divine life in the faithful and will, over time, “lay hold” of the corruptible flesh of the communicant and revitalise it with its sanctifying

²¹⁰ *In 1 ad Cor. 7.* Pusey, *In Joh.* iii. 315.

²¹¹ Though, in Cyril’s writings, glorious bodily incorruptibility is fittingly appropriated primarily to the effects of the Eucharist, it is clear that he regards it to be first accomplished in baptism. For it is through our “adoptive sonship” (*In Joh.* 1: 9; Pusey, i. 133-4) of the Father that we first receive the grace glorious bodily incorruptibility. As Cyril writes, “Those who bore the image of the earthy (cf. 1 Cor 15: 49) could not escape corruption, had not the image of the heavenly been stamped on us through the vocation to adoptive sonship; for, made partakers of [Christ] through the Spirit, we have been sealed to His likeness ... [and through this and through virtue] we shall be superior to the evils that have struck us in consequence of the [original] transgression” (*Ibid.*). Cyril alludes to the Life-giving power of Christ’s flesh outside of the Eucharist and, importantly, in reference to baptism. He does this, for example, in his exposition of the healing of the blind man in John 9: 6-7 (Pusey, ii. 157-8). There, the anointing of the blind man’s eyes is identified with the anointing and enlightening prior to baptism, and the subsequent command of Christ’s to “go, wash in the pool of Siloam” is, for Cyril, “an image of holy Baptism” (*ibid.*). Here, the man’s contact with the body of Christ, and the salvific power that comes from it, is associated with the effects of baptism rather than the Eucharist, and the event itself as a symbol of baptism.

²¹² As we have seen, Cyril likes to compare the healing touch wrought by Christ during His earthly ministry, and the more complete and pervasive contact with Him effected in Eucharistic communion: “If mere contact with the sacred flesh gives life to a dead body, how should we not profit more richly by the life-giving eulogy [i.e. Eucharist] when we taste it?” (*In Joh.* 4: 3. Pusey, i. 530).

²¹³ *In Joh.* 6: 54. Pusey, i. 533.

²¹⁴ The communicant is “commingled and mixed [συνανακτιζόμενος, ἀναμιγνύμενος] with Him through the participation” (*In Joh.* 6: 56. Pusey, i. 535).

²¹⁵ *In Joh.* 6: 55. Pusey, i. 533

energy.²¹⁶ This gradual and deepening *μετάληψις* operates as a “seed of immortality” (*σπέρμα ἀθανασίας*), which, in “abolishing the whole corruption that is in us”,²¹⁷ will flower gloriously at the consummation of the world, when the bodies of the redeemed participate definitively in Christ’s life and glory.²¹⁸

3.3.3. *Why this bodily emphasis?*

Cyril’s preoccupation here with the consequences of the Eucharist on the flesh of the Christian, rather than his soul, is easily explained through recourse to certain important theological presuppositions of his. First, he takes it for granted that the Eucharist restores and regenerates the whole man, body and soul, as is testified by certain other statements of his we witnessed earlier.²¹⁹ Secondly, as we observed at the outset, Cyril uses ‘flesh’ here in a holistic, Johannine sense: for, “when we say ‘flesh’ we mean ‘man’”, he insists.²²⁰ This corporeal emphasis, then, does not imply a preoccupation with mere matter, but rather with the body as both the mediating principle of divine love and that which signifies the whole man, in his corruption and restoration, allowing us “to see, side by side, the wound together with the remedy, the patient together with the physician”.²²¹ Thirdly, such an emphasis reflects his understanding of the principal consequences of the sin of Adam. There, the departure of the Holy Spirit from the soul of man in consequence of his transgression meant the “death of the flesh alone”;²²² the soul, according to its intrinsic properties, “[was] preserved in immortality (*ἀθανασία*)”.²²³ Accordingly, Cyril insists that “the words ‘thou art

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Cf. *In 1 Cor 7* (Pusey iii, 266) and *In 2 Cor 3, 1* (Pusey, iii, 347). Man’s participation in the victorious incorruptibility of Christ is endured in “in the midst of an ongoing corruptibility” (Gebremedhin, p. 102), but it is a defeated corruptibility. The immortality conferred by the flesh of Christ is both present and hoped for. As Cyril writes, “We have been enriched with the unfading hope of immortality, the proud title of sons of God, grace here, and the reign of Christ hereafter” (*In Os. 2:14*; PG 71, 84A).

²¹⁹ “[The Eucharist is] the food through which, being sanctified in both body and soul, we live in [Christ]” *In Joh. 6: 27-37*. Pusey, i, 440. Also, at the “holy tables [i.e. the altars] we are blessed, both somatically and pneumatically [*καὶ σωματικῶς καὶ πνευματικῶς*]”. *In Luc. 22: 17-22* (Reuss, 208-9; Smith, 568).

²²⁰ *Second Letter to Succensus 2; Epistolae 46*; ACO 1, 1, 6 pp. 157-62.

²²¹ *In Joh. 1: 14*. Pusey, i, 138.

²²² *In Joh. 1: 9*. Pusey, i, 138-39. As he writes elsewhere, “the rational soul of man is immortal (*ἀθανατον*); ... death does not corrupt the soul together with (*συγκαταφθείρει*) the bodies of the earth” (*De Adoratione 10*; PG 68, 697).

²²³ Ibid.

dust and unto dust thou shalt return’ were uttered to the flesh alone, and not the soul”.²²⁴ It is for this reason that he regards the Christian’s assimilation with the flesh of the Logos in the Eucharist to be the perfect remedy for the dissolution caused by sin. As he argues, “that in us which was especially in danger had to be rescued the sooner, and by being intertwined with Life-by-nature be recalled to incorruptibility”.²²⁵ Consequently, the divine Word “preserves” (συνέχειν)²²⁶ those bodies with whom His own glorious flesh has been mixed; through the sacrament of His body He “expels” (ἐξελαύνειν) death and “disposes” (ἐξιστάναι) of corruption;²²⁷ its presence “vanquishes” (νικᾶν) bodily corruption in us²²⁸ and transforms (μεταποιεῖν) into immortality those who partake of it.²²⁹ Such a communion in the Lord’s risen body —“not only spiritual but also somatic”²³⁰— is the pledge of future resurrection.

Conclusion

These considerations of the Eucharistic theology of St Cyril of Alexandria indicate that the thesis of somatic realism proposed by our exegetes in Part 1 has an important precedent in the theological tradition. Like our exegetes, Cyril is able to find all the evidence he needs from the testimony of Scripture; it is, after all, the spiritualising Arian of John 15 who, in denying any union with Christ “of a fleshly kind” teaches “in flagrant contradiction with the inspired Scriptures”.²³¹ But though we have seen Cyril’s doctrine to be in harmony with that of our exegetes, he is able both to verify their conclusions and develop them. He does this not simply by virtue of his authority as a Father and Doctor of the Church, but by grounding the doctrine of ‘physical participation’ in Christ in the principles of the Incarnation and the nature of man, the object of His redeeming love. In Cyril’s theology, the efficacy of Christ’s flesh for man’s glorious restoration, and the very desirability of union with him κατὰ σάρκα, emerge harmoniously from both the doctrine of the hypostatic union of Logos and flesh, and the body-soul composite of the sinner with whom He seeks to be united.

²²⁴ *In Joh.* 1: 9. Pusey, i. 138-9.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*

²²⁶ *In Joh.* 6: 35. Pusey, i. 475.

²²⁷ *In Joh.* 6: 52. Pusey, i. 520.

²²⁸ *In Joh.* 15: 1. Pusey, ii. 543.

²²⁹ *In Joh.* 6: 54. Pusey, i. 533.

²³⁰ *In Joh.* 15: 1 Pusey, ii. 543-4.

²³¹ *Ibid.*

Yet as we have seen, this doctrine does not only proceed logically and consistently from these anthropological and Christological principles, but it also serves to give them heightened expression. For among its many virtues, the greatness of Eucharistic communion for Cyril lies partly in its comprehensiveness. Through union with the flesh of the Word, the whole man (body and soul) is brought into vital, sanctifying contact with the whole God-Man (body, blood, soul and divinity). Such a transaction expresses most fully, above all the other sacramental acts, both the reality of the enfleshment of the Word, and the corresponding reality of man. As Mersch observes, for Cyril “the Eucharist is the *act* of this all-vivifying humanity”,²³² most eloquently expressing the self-emptying (κένωσις) of the Son in condescending to become flesh for us. In becoming flesh, and uniting himself with man in and through that sacred flesh, the eternal Word places himself in contact with the sinner at the precise point of the sinner’s woundedness and weakness. As Cyril observes, such a coming together allows us to behold the wound together with the remedy, the patient together with the physician.²³³

It is this basic intuition which governs Cyril’s understanding of the progressive levels of intimacy in the order of sanctification. As we have seen, the cleansing and regeneration of baptism, founded on the prior natural kinship Christ has with man through the Incarnation, brings about a bodily but principally spiritual union with the eternal Son through the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. Without this rebirth in the Spirit there can be no communion in the sacred flesh. Indeed, this adoptive cleansing is ordered to its perfection, to a more comprehensive and intensively intimate level of contact.²³⁴ This is realised in Eucharistic communion where, in consuming the flesh of the Logos under the form of bread, we have a ‘like-to-like’ mingling of substances: the ἰδία σάρξ of the eternal Word with the corruptible flesh of the sinful Christian. In Cyril’s thought, this gives to Christ’s eucharistic manner of dwelling a virtue and particularity all its own; for, like the moulding together of two pieces of wax, the Eucharist binds the Christian to Christ according to a common nature, and thereby effects what Cyril calls a natural or physical participation (μέθεξις φυσική) in

²³² Emile Mersch SJ, *The Whole Christ*, p. 337 (emphasis in the original). “L’Eucharistie est l’acte de cette humanité universellement vivifiante”.

²³³ *In Joh.* 1: 14. Pusey, i. 138.

²³⁴ As De Lubac observes, this corporeality marks, for Cyril, an intensification of the union, taking it beyond a merely spiritual union, ‘even bodily’: “Le *sômatikôs* de Cyrille ne se situe donc pas en deçà, mais en quelque sorte au-delà de son *pneumatikôs*: ‘même corporellement’, ‘par une participation non seulement spirituelle, mais corporelle’. *Corpus Mysticum* (Paris: Aubier, 1949) p. 363.

him. Like a spark buried in stubble or a seed of immortality planted deep in the corruptible nature of the Christian, the hidden influence of this flesh's divine power will flower triumphantly at the consummation of the world, in the glorious resurrection of the Christian's body.

In this theology of St Cyril of Alexandria we have witnessed a dogmatic exposition, rooted in Christology, anthropology and Eucharistic theology, of the exegetical thesis proposed by our commentators in Part 1. Those exegetes we considered insist, in manifest conformity with Cyril, that “[C]’est à une union bien réelle, physique, du corps du Chrétien au corps du Christ”, and accordingly, “tout cela doit être entendu avec un grand réalisme.”²³⁵ Though, as these recent scholars admit, such arguments are not in harmony with contemporary presuppositions, we now see that their proposal is not uttered in isolation from the theological tradition, but finds a voice in the fifth century doctor and patriarch, St Cyril of Alexandria. We shall now continue by proceeding to the thirteenth century, and a consideration of the relevant themes in the thought of St Thomas Aquinas. There we shall see many of these intuitions of Cyril expounded with a new metaphysical precision.

²³⁵ Benoit, ‘Corps, Tête et Plérôme’ p. 112.

Chapter 2

The Physical Body of the Word: Salvation and Eucharist in St Thomas Aquinas

Introduction: from St Cyril of Alexandria to St Thomas Aquinas

From the Christology and Eucharistic theology of St Cyril of Alexandria we proceed to related themes in the Christology and Sacramental theology of St Thomas Aquinas.¹ Our particular focus will be upon St Thomas' understanding of the Christian's salvific contact with the crucified and risen body of Christ; an understanding which, in its mature expression,² draws upon and clarifies the doctrine of the Christian's union with the Word *κατὰ σάρκα* we have encountered in St Cyril. Indeed, "it pertains to the greatest glory of God" argues St Thomas, "to have raised a weak and earthly body to such sublimity".³ We shall provide a more detailed outline of these plans shortly, after some historical observations.

Our movement from Cyril in the fifth century to Thomas in the thirteenth is not arbitrary, but based upon an important intellectual kinship between the two doctors,⁴ manifest

¹ Proceeding from the patristic authority of St Cyril to the medieval scholasticism of St Thomas is in keeping with the pedagogical principles laid down by Thomas himself. Given the importance of theological authority for Thomas, his discovery of Cyril, the 'doctor of the Incarnation' as Pope Leo XIII later called him, would have been of decisive importance in the formation of his own Christological doctrine. As we know from the first question of the *Summa Theologiae*, for Thomas it is essentially proper to sacred theology to argue from authority, inasmuch as its principles are received by revelation. "Sacred doctrine" he argues, "properly uses the authority of the canonical Scriptures as an incontrovertible proof, and the authority of the doctors of the Church as one that may properly be used, though merely as probable" (ST I, 8 ad. 2; my emphasis). The good theologian "must carefully, frequently and reverently apply his mind to the teachings" of such doctors (ST II-II 49, 3 ad 2). Though the writings of the Fathers as such do not carry absolute authority, their arguments, unlike those of the philosophers, are developed at the level of theological science, and—in representing the authority of the Apostles—there is a certain continuity of thought between them and the sacred Scriptures. See G. Geenen, 'Le fonte patristiche come 'autorità' nella teologia di S. Tommaso', in *Sacra Doctrina* 77, 7-67, p. 18.

² There are discernable lines of development in St Thomas's understanding of the kind of causality to be attributed to the humanity of Christ in the sacraments, from the early *Commentary on the Sentences*, through to the *De Veritate*, the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, all the way to the *tertia pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*, where his most developed thinking on this question is found. We shall touch on these matters later. For an account of these developments see Bernard Blankenhorn OP, 'The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louis-Marie Chauvet', in *Nova et Vetera*, vol. 4, No. 2 (2006), pp. 255-94.

³ ST III 5, 2 ad. 3

⁴ See I. Backes, *Die Christologie des hl. Thomas von Aquin und die griechischen Kirchenväter* (Paderborn, 1931). From the 7th century to the 13th, knowledge of Cyril in the West was very limited. For the period until St Thomas Aquinas see N.M. Haring, 'The Character and Range of the Influence of St Cyril of Alexandria on Latin Theology (430-1260)', *Medieval Studies* 12 (1950), pp. 1-19. For Thomas's debt to

most explicitly, as with become clear to us, in the Christological and Sacramental studies of the *tertia pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*. Relative to St Thomas' own time, this is an unexpected theological association. Among his Latin predecessors and contemporaries, familiarity with the Greek Fathers is negligible.⁵ Thomas's own discovery of the Christological and Eucharistic writings of St Cyril occurred only in his intellectual maturity; principally, it seems, through his discovery of the *Acts* and *Minutes* of the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon some time between 1260 and 1263,⁶ and the acquisition of Latin translations of certain passages by Cyril during his composition of the *Catena Aurea*.⁷ It is St Thomas' careful investigation of the Magisterial texts which has particularly caught the attention of historians of theology.⁸ Not only is he regarded as the first Latin author to have

the Greek Fathers also see Gilles Emery OP, 'Saint Thomas d'Aquin et l'Orient chrétien', in *Nova et Vetera* (French) 74 / 4 (1999) pp. 19-36.

⁵ See Leo J. Elders, 'Thomas Aquinas and the Fathers of the Church', in *The Reception of the Church Fathers in the West: From the Carolingians to the Maurists* (vol. 1). Ed. Irena Backus (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997) p. 344. As Elders points out as an example, in the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard there are around 1000 references to Augustine, 90 to Ambrose, 85 to Hilary, 55 to Gregory and 50 to Jerome. To John Damascene and Chrysostom there are just 27 and 17 respectively. For those Latin authors who did show an acquaintance with the Greek Patristic tradition (such as John Scot Eriugena in his *De divisione naturae*) see W. Otten, 'The Texture of the Tradition', *supra*, pp. 3-50. For Thomas's uniqueness in this respect, see Jean-Pierre Torrell OP, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1, *The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), pp. 102-3, p. 115.

⁶ Between the years 1260 and 1263 Thomas must have had access to the acts and proceedings of the first five ecumenical councils. It is taken for granted by Thomas's biographers that, when he was assigned to the Dominican priory at Orvieto, next to the papal palace and library, Thomas would have had access to many ancient texts housed in the latter, including numerous patristic and conciliar documents of which most scholastics would have had little knowledge. There he would have come across a collection of citations and paraphrases of the works of St Cyril, as well as St Athanasius and St John Chrysostom. It is also commonly assumed that, whilst he was still at Naples, Thomas would have had access to the 12th century manuscript in the library of Monte Cassino which contains a Latin translation (by Rusticus) of the acts of Ephesus and Chalcedon. The illumination of the West by the theology of the Greek Patristic tradition is well described by M.-D. Chenu in *La Théologie au Douzième siècle* (Paris, 1957) pp. 274-322. See chapter 12, 'L'entrée de la théologie grecque' and chapter 13, 'Orientale Lumen'.

⁷ James Weisheipl speaks of "the service of an unknown Greek scholar" for much of the *Catena*, and that "we don't know who aided Thomas in procuring more and better translations from the Greek Fathers" (*Friar Thomas D'Aquino*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974) p. 371 and 173). See Aidan Nichols' OP introduction to the 1997 republished edition of the *Catena Aurea* (Saint Austin Press, 1997) p. ix. See also Weisheipl's introduction to the *Commentary on the Gospel of St John* (part 1), (New York: Magi Books, 1980) p. 9. It is generally supposed that Thomas did not know enough Greek to read the Greek texts, but relied on Latin translations (see the arguments of R.A. Gauthier, in *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, ed. Leon., 47 (Rome, 1969), pp. 259-68; and Weisheipl's *Friar Thomas D'Aquino* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974) pp. 163-4). In his preface to the *Catena Aurea*, John Henry Newman is open to the possibility that Thomas did know enough Greek to be able to read it in the original, but notes, "however this may be, he has in several instances quite missed the sense of the Greek". *Catena Aurea, Vol. 1: St Matthew* (The Saint Austin Press, 1997) vii.

⁸ See James A. Weisheipl OP, *Friar Thomas D'Aquino*, op. cit., p. 168, pp. 309-310; Jean-Pierre Torrell OP, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, op. cit. p. 102-3, p. 115; Gottfried Geenen, 'The Council of Chalcedon in the theology of St Thomas' in *From an Abundant Spring: The Walter Farrell Memorial Volume of The Thomist* (New York, 1952); and his 'En Marge du Concile de Chalcedoine. Les Textes du quatrième

cited the actual texts, the *ipsisima verba*, of the first five ecumenical councils of the Church,⁹ but it is also historically unprecedented that a Latin author should have subjected the *Acts* and *Minutes* of the early councils —Ephesus and Chalcedon in particular— to such scrupulous inspection.¹⁰ In these, St Thomas encountered the thought of Cyril, both in the actual writings of his incorporated into the conciliar documents, or those approved texts of Cyril’s alluded to by the Council Fathers, which Thomas purposely sought out and studied.¹¹ It is through such texts that, despite his lack of Greek and the often faulty translations at his disposal, St Thomas demonstrated his exceptional ability to grasp the *intentio auctoris*, the sense intended by St Cyril.¹²

The Scope of this Chapter

These important advances in St Thomas’ intellectual life are verified by certain critical developments in his theology.¹³ As we shall consider, a doctrine of efficacious contact which the body of Jesus, rooted in the Greek patristic axiom of the flesh of the Word as the *instrumentum coniunctum divinitatis*, underlies Thomas’ sacramental theology, and is said to

Concile dans les oeuvres de Saint Thomas’, in *Angelicum* (1952). In the latter (p.50), Geenen states that there are thirty passages in Thomas’s works that explicitly use the texts of Chalcedon in discussing the error of Eutyches.

⁹ This is according to the Quaracchi editors of the *Summa Theologica* of Alexander of Hales. See Alexander of Hales, *Summa Theologica*, IV, Prolegomena (Quaracchi, 1948), xc.

¹⁰ Gottfried Geenen, ‘The Council of Chalcedon in the theology of St Thomas’, op. cit. p. 196, describes how Thomas “read attentively and cited scrupulously” the *Acts* and *Minutes* of the Council of Chalcedon. See particularly Geenen’s ‘En Marge du Concile de Chalcedoine’ op. cit., pp. 43-59. As Weisheipl remarks, “In theology Thomas was not at all concerned about procuring a better translation of the Bible than the Vulgate he owned, but he was deeply concerned about understanding the precise meaning of the councils of the Church and of the Greek Fathers” (*Friar Thomas D’Aquino*, p. 164). See also I. Backes, *Die Christologie*, op. cit. pp. 29-30.

¹¹ Where reference is made to texts of Cyril without a transcription of the text (such as Cyril’s Second and Third Letters to Nestorius, which were read at Ephesus in 430 and then “received”, or approved at Chalcedon) Thomas sought out the texts and examined them. This is particularly evident in Thomas’s exposition of the doctrine of the filioque in *Summa Contra Gentiles* IV, c. 24 and the *de Potentia*, q. 10, a. 4, ad. 13. See Geenen’s ‘The Council of Chalcedon in the Theology of St Thomas’, pp. 191-198.

¹² Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas*, p. 163-4. Weisheipl observes how, despite Thomas’s reliance on Latin translations (which were often faulty), he “had an uncanny ability to grasp the *intentio auctoris*, the sense intended by a Greek author ... which far surpasses that of [other] schoolmen.”

¹³ Biographers identify this discovery to be of immense importance in both the development of St Thomas thought, especially (as we shall consider shortly) in relation to his Christology and sacramentology, and of Catholic dogma in general. Eschmann describes Thomas’s discovery of the Greek Fathers as a turning point “in the history of Catholic dogma”. See Ignatius T. Eschmann, ‘A Catalogue of St Thomas’ Works: Bibliographical Notes’, in E. Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Random House, 1956) p. 397. In light of the acquisition of Latin translations of the Greek fathers, Weisheipl identifies the writing of the *Catena* as “a turning point in the development of Aquinas’s own theology” (*Friar Thomas*, op. cit. p. 173).

reach its greatest realisation in the Eucharist. After some preliminary Christological and Sacramental considerations, our principal focus will be on his Eucharistic doctrine, with three related themes providing particular interest for us: (i) how the theme of corporality is developed and intensified in Thomas' doctrine of transubstantiation, particularly in the notion of contact with Christ's body through sacramental touch and taste; (ii) the relationship Thomas perceives between what he calls Christ's "bodily presence" in the Eucharist and the perfections of human love and friendship; (iii) how the totality of Christ's presence *per modum substantiae* both corresponds with the demands of love, and ensures a spiritual depth of contact which ensures the whole man, body and soul, is taken up into this union with the risen Christ.

At certain moments of our exposition we shall draw upon arguments found in St Thomas' metaphysical analysis of love in the *prima secundae* of the *Summa Theologiae*, particularly those concerning love's unitive effects and the pursuit of the perfections to be found in what Thomas calls *unio realis*, "real union". Since Thomas seeks to elucidate particular aspects of his Eucharistic doctrine in connection to the perfections of friendship and love,¹⁴ and the specific demands of these, we believe his philosophical reflections on these matters can shed light upon his Eucharistic doctrine, and relate in important ways to some of the trends and lines of argument we encountered in Cyril's doctrine of Eucharistic communion. We shall endeavour to show how the theology which emerges from Thomas' Eucharistic doctrine serves to clarify and develop, albeit with rather less exuberance of language and imagery, Cyril's key insights concerning the somatic dimension of the Christian's union with the Incarnate Word.

Before we arrive at our main points of focus we must consider certain preliminary questions. The first involves a consideration of Thomas' Christology both in relation to the pedagogical structure of the *Summa Theologiae*, and in the language of corporeal realism he employs there, which seems to us to anticipate certain features of his Eucharistic theology. We shall also consider certain aspects of the office of Christ's headship, before investigating how —throughout Thomas' mature Sacramental theology— the incarnate Word is said to exert an instrumental, 'physical' causality upon the members of the Church. This will lead us fittingly into our Eucharistic considerations.

¹⁴ See, for example, ST III 75, 1: "because it is the special feature of friendship to live together with friends ... He promises us His bodily presence as a reward".

1. The Christological Principles

1.1 The centrality and realism of the assumed Flesh of the Word in St Thomas

Two features of St Thomas' Christology have particular relevance for our study and deserve some attention before we embark upon our more detailed considerations. The first concerns the place Thomas gives to the Incarnation, and particularly the assumed bodily humanity, in his general theological plan of the *Summa Theologiae*. This, at the outset, manifests a fundamental continuity between his own Christology and Cyril's, where the flesh of Christ is granted a central theological focus in light of the hypostatic union. The second feature we wish to consider relates to this, and invests it with significance. It concerns the peculiar stress Thomas lays upon the *reality* of this humanity, to the point of adopting strongly corporeal, even biological, language. The pronounced realism of his exposition of the bodily humanity of Christ has important implications for the sacramental and soteriological matters which follow upon his Christology, and which we shall be investigating later.

1.1.1. "The Way that Leads to God"

St Cyril's preoccupation with the flesh of the Word as the expression and instrument of divine love for sinful man is in theological harmony with the general plan of St Thomas' theological pedagogy in his *Summa Theologiae*. According to the *ordo disciplinae* of that work, "Christ, *as man* [*secundum quod homo*], is our way to God".¹⁵ The coherence of the *exitus-reditus* pattern in which Thomas sets this entire work hinges on the salvific efficacy of the assumed flesh of the Word, the very efficacy we have seen repeatedly expounded by St Cyril. In similar fashion to Cyril's theology of the salvific mysteries of Christ's human life, Thomas states that "Christ gives life to the world through the mysteries he accomplished *in his flesh*"¹⁶ and so, accordingly, "we obtain the fruit of the resurrection through those things which Christ did *in the flesh*".¹⁷ This is, as we witnessed in Cyril, not mere flesh but flesh

¹⁵ ST I 2, prol. (my emphasis).

¹⁶ *In Jo.* 6, lect. 4, n. 914 (my emphasis). "... per mysteria quae Christus in carne sua complevit, dat vitam mundo".

¹⁷ *In Jo.* 6, lect. 5, n. 939 (my emphasis). "... per ea quae Christus in carne sua gessit, consequimur resurrectionis fructum".

partaking of the power of the Godhead through hypostatic union with the Word and is, therefore, —in terminology reminiscent of Cyril— “life-giving”.¹⁸ Thus, by virtue of the hypostatic union and the privileges that flow from it, “the humanity of Christ is the way that leads to God”.¹⁹

This Christological principle is the axis upon which turns the *reditus* movement of Thomas’s pedagogical scheme, the means by which man, having come from God, returns to him in glory. Later in the *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas makes explicit what is already implicit here in this initial pedagogical outline: the assumed flesh of the Son is the way that leads to God and also, therefore, the means to man’s final supernatural fulfilment in face-to-face vision of God, for “men are brought to this end of beatitude by the humanity of Christ”.²⁰ This final glory, won in and through the sacred flesh of Jesus, takes hold of the whole sinner, body and soul: “through the mysteries Christ accomplished in his flesh, we are restored [both] to an incorruptible life in our bodies, [and] also to a spiritual life in our souls.”²¹

If the whole *Summa* can be said to move toward Christ,²² and identify his sacred humanity as man’s point of contact with his final end,²³ the ordering and emphases of the Christological section of the *tertia pars* are similarly illuminating for our enquiry. Again, the prologue is helpful in recognising the fundamental lines of emphasis. In his Christological reflections, Thomas proposes two major points of focus: the first concerns the Incarnation itself (*Deus factus est homo*), and the second concerns the historical events of the God-man’s human life, what he “did and suffered in the flesh” (*acta et passa Christi in carne*).²⁴

¹⁸ *In Jo.* 6, lect. 4, n. 914. “Et quia caro Christi ipsi Verbo Dei unita est, habet etiam quod sit *vivificativa*, unde et corpus, sacramentaliter sumptum, *vivificativum* est”. In St Thomas’s soteriology, the hypostatic union accounts not only for the sacred humanity’s efficiency in causing our salvation, but also for its moral exemplarity. (See ST III, 1, 2).

¹⁹ *In Jo.* 7, lect. 4, n. 1074. “Christi humanitas sit nobis via tendendi in Deum”.

²⁰ ST III 9, 2.

²¹ *In Jo.* 5, lect. 5, n. 791. “... per mysteria quae in carne Christi completa sunt, reparamur non solum quantum ad corpora ad vitam incorruptibilem, sed etiam quantum ad animas ad vitam spiritualem”.

²² See J-P Torrell OP, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 2, *Spiritual Master*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), p. 102.

²³ The place taken by the Incarnation in the *Summa Theologiae* corresponds perfectly with Jesus’ affirmation: “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (Jn. 14:6). As St Thomas comments on this passage: “With a single stroke, [Christ] unveils to them [i.e. the Apostles] the way and the goal of the way. ... The way, as we have seen, is Christ. We understand this because it is through him that we have access to the Father (Eph. 2:18). ... But this way is not distant from the goal, the one touches the other; that is why Christ adds: ‘the Truth and the Life’. He is simultaneously the one and the other: the way, according to his humanity; the goal according to his divinity” (*In Jo.* 24, 6, lect. 2-3, nn. 1865-70).

²⁴ ST III, prol.

We can see here how the initial ontological and speculative considerations underlie the concrete and historical ones (*operari sequitur esse*), and, noteworthy for us, both are characterised by a recurring emphasis upon the reality of this sacred humanity. After the initial arguments *ex convenientia* for the Son uniting to Himself a true human nature (qq. 1-3), St Thomas moves on to examine the *assumpta* (qq. 4-6), the Word's assumption of such essential elements of human nature as a true human body and soul; this is followed by a consideration of the *coassumpta* (qq. 7-15), the non-essential elements freely assumed by the Word, such as the fragility and mortality of his human body, the passibility of his soul, and his perfection of grace. There remains, finally, a consideration of the *consequentia unionis* (qq. 16-26), the necessary consequences of the Word's possession of a true and integral human nature, such as his divine and human wills, and a sensitive appetite subject to movements of passion.

This speculative beholding of the contours and features of the Word's true humanity finds an ideal theological complement in what follows: a consideration of the Word's concrete and historical *acta et passa*, his human experiences in the poverty of the flesh. The ontological reflections on the real humanity presented in the opening sequences of the *tertia pars* is here, in this latter section, revealed in all its historical and human particularity, covering all that the Word did, endured, and experienced in our human condition.²⁵ As we have pointed out, we witnessed this theology at work in the writings of Cyril, where all the episodes and details of the Word's enfleshed life are, however small, understood to be illuminated with revelatory significance and salvific efficacy. Here, again, the prior consideration of the hypostatic union gives theological coherence to the subsequent reflection on these "acts and sufferings of Christ in the flesh". As we saw in Cyril, the eternal Word's dual consubstantiality with the Father and with every man renders objectively salvific all the mysteries accomplished in his sacred flesh: as Thomas states, "Christ gives life to the world through the mysteries he accomplished in his flesh".²⁶ Such mysteries are, therefore, of inexhaustible theological significance.²⁷

²⁵ Torrell, *Thomas Aquinas: The Person and his Work*, p. 264.

²⁶ *In Jo.* 6, lect. 4, n. 914. And as we have already quoted, "we obtain the fruit of the resurrection through those things which Christ did in the flesh" (*In Jo.* 6, lect. 5, nn. 936, 939).

²⁷ See John-Pierre Torrell's *Le Christ en ses mystères: La vie et l'oeuvre de Jésus selon saint Thomas d'Aquin*, 2 vols. (Paris: Desclée, 1999). See also L. Scheffczyk, 'Die Stellung des Thomas von Aquin in der Entwicklung der Lehre von den Mysteria Vitae Christi', in *Renovatio et Reformatio: Wider das Bild vom 'finsternen' Mittelalter. Festschrift für Ludwig Hödl zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. M. Gerwing and G. Ruppert

This decision of Thomas to give such attention to this aspect of the Incarnation²⁸ concretises and lends a vital realism to this sacred humanity he presents to us. By it, we see him arguing not only for the true humanity of the Word, but an affirmation of its human particularity and concreteness, an insistence that he “was made man in a most human way”.²⁹ This is especially illuminated by the internal structure of this second section. As if to emphasise the enfleshed Word’s consubstantiality with the human race, Thomas’ arrangement of this sub-section reflects the *exitus-reditus* movement not only of the entire *Summa* but also, therefore, of the life of every individual Christian. In this exposition of the mysteries of Christ’s life, St Thomas traces his entrance into the world (*ingressus*) (qq. 27-29), the course of his life (*progressus*) (qq. 40-45), his passion and death (*exitus*) (qq. 46-52), and his resurrection and exaltation (*exaltatio*) (qq. 53-59). By repeating and condensing here the very pattern of the *Summa*, the implication is that this human life of the eternal Son is, in its general trajectory, also the potential life of the Father’s adopted sons, the very pattern to be imitated by the Christian (cf. Phil. 3: 10-11).³⁰ In other words, the human life of the Word is presented here as the life of the head of the Mystical Body, the one who goes before, and on behalf of, his members.

1.1.2. “Corpus carneum et terrenum”: a Christological Realism

These characteristics of the Christology of the *tertia pars* combine to reveal how this ‘way that leads to God’ is no abstraction or phantasm, but a humanity consubstantial with our own. “Nothing implanted in our nature by God”, maintains Thomas, “was lacking in the human nature assumed by the Word of God”.³¹ Thomas repeatedly insists upon the *truth* of this

(Münster: Aschendorff, 1986), pp. 44-70; and G. Lohaus, *Die Geheimnisse des Lebens Jesu in der Summa Theologiae des hl. Thomas von Aquin* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1985).

²⁸ Historians of theology and of the thought of St Thomas have observed how this is arguably the most original part of his Christology. Torrell points out how, though this aspect of Christology is rooted in the tradition of the Fathers, and not unknown among the scholastics, Thomas’s treatment of it is fresh. What sets him apart from his scholastic predecessors and contemporaries is that “he is the first and only one for a long time ... to deal with these things apart from speculative christology and to organise them in a coherent fashion. There is here certainly a deliberate will to construct what might be called a concrete or existential christology”. (*Thomas Aquinas: The Person and his Work*, p. 264).

²⁹ Torrell, *Thomas Aquinas: The Person and his Work*, p. 263.

³⁰ “...that I may come to know him and the power of his resurrection, and partake of his sufferings by being moulded to the pattern of his death, striving towards the goal of resurrection from the dead” (Phil. 3: 10-11).

³¹ ST III 9, 4. And, “The Son of God assumed human nature together with everything that pertains to the perfection of human nature” (ST III 18, 2); “Christ assumed everything natural that follows upon human nature” [*Christus assumpsit omnia naturalia que consequuntur humanam naturam*] (III Sent. 14, 3, 3);

condescension into flesh, affirming the “truth of the human nature” (*veritas humanae naturae*) in Christ,³² the “truth of the Incarnation” (*veritas incarnationis*),³³ the “perfection of the human nature” (*perfectionis humanae naturae*),³⁴ and his possession of all the common elements “which belong to the truth and integrity of human nature” (*ad veritatem et integritatem humanae naturae*).³⁵ That the body of Christ is emphatically a *true* body (*corpus verum*) is not a passing matter for Thomas: in two articles this is stated by him nine times,³⁶ whilst the possibility that this body might have been heavenly (*caeleste*) or illusory (*phantasticum*) is rejected on fourteen distinct occasions in these same two articles.

But St Thomas does more than uphold the truth of the Word’s humanity. A closer inspection of his recurring Christological vocabulary appears to reveal a conscious effort to demonstrate not only the reality of this human body, but to emphasise its earthliness and tangibility. This humanity is not angelic or nebulous, but materially (*materialiter*) composed of earthly elements; it is a “carnal and earthly body” (*corpus carneum et terrenum*), made up of “flesh and bones and blood” (*caro et ossa et sanguis*). In accordance with this strongly anti-docetic language,³⁷ Thomas’ preferred designation for the sacred humanity is “flesh”, *caro*, which he uses in reference to Christ 228 times in the *tertia pars* alone.³⁸

This special defence of the corporeality of the sacred humanity prepares the reader for the suffering it will endure in the Passion (qq. 46-48), and the most vividly naturalistic

“Christ possessed all the perfections of human nature” [*in Christo fuerunt omnia quae sunt de perfectione humanae naturae*] (III Sent. 17, 1).

³² E.g. ST III 5, 1 ad. 1

³³ E.g. ST III 5, 4

³⁴ E.g. ST III 4, 2 ad. 2

³⁵ E.g. ST III 54, 3 ad. 3

³⁶ ST III 5, 1-2.

³⁷ A pronounced anti-docetism in the Christology of the *Summa* has also been observed by G. Lafont, in *Structures et méthode dans la ‘Somme théologique’ de saint Thomas d’Aquin* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1996), p. 349; also, Paul Gondreau, ‘Anti-Docetism in Aquinas’s *Super Ioannem*: St Thomas as Defender of the Full Humanity of Christ’, in *Reading John with St Thomas Aquinas: Theological Exegesis and Speculative Theology*, ed. Michael Dauphinais and Matthew Levering (Catholic University of America Press, 2005), pp. 254-276.

³⁸ ST III 16, 2. “Christus secundum carnem est homo”. According to one commentator on St Thomas’s Christology, this is a feature which sets Thomas’s work on the Incarnation apart from that of his contemporaries. As he shows, more typical is the phrase “the truth of the human nature” assumed by Christ (see Paul Gondreau, ‘The Humanity of Christ, the Incarnate Word’, in *The Theology of Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Van Nieuwenhove and Wawrykow (University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), p. 272. Gondreau points out the following examples to compare with Thomas: Peter Lombard, *Sent.* Bk. III, d. 15, ch. 1 (Quaracchi Edition, vol. 2, 95); Alexander of Hales, III *Sent.* d. 15, n. 25, *Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi*, vol. 14 (Quaracchi: Edited by the Fathers of the College of St Bonaventure [1954], p. 159); Albert the Great, III *Sent.* d. 15, a. 6 (Borgnet, vol. 28, 276 ff.); Bonaventure, III *Sent.* d. 15, a. 1, qq. 1-2, and dub. 2 (Quaracchi Edition, vol. 3, pp. 331-41).

vocabulary of the *tertia pars*. Here, a graphic exposition of the violence inflicted upon it is combined with a theological account of the sacred flesh's special fragility and passibility, qualities which make it especially "fit for immolation".³⁹ Thomas begins by explaining how the unique perfections of this flesh grant it a correspondingly unique capacity for suffering. Since it was "fashioned miraculously by the operation of the Holy Spirit" the body offered up on the Cross "was endowed with a most perfect constitution",⁴⁰ and was therefore distinctly vulnerable to pain: "Christ's sense of touch, the sensitiveness of which is the reason for our feeling pain, was most acute [*maxime viguit*]"⁴¹ The focus St Thomas gives to this heightened sensitivity of the Word's flesh is another example of his forthright Christological realism; the bodily susceptibilities of the assumed humanity are not moderated by its unique graces, but rather intensified.⁴² In its uniquely keen physical sensitivity, the sacred humanity is—even in the bodily order—more perfectly and truly alive to the human condition than all his brothers in the flesh. And "the more sensitive the sufferer" argues Thomas, "the more acute will the pain be."⁴³

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that St Thomas expounds upon the extent and nature of the bodily sufferings of Christ in the Passion with a corresponding realism and vividness. Here, even the precise method of Christ's execution is of theological interest to him, since it indicates at once the extreme nature of the suffering endured and its peculiar compatibility to the heightened bodily sensitivities of Christ, to which Thomas has already alluded. As he observes, as opposed to other forms of torture, those who are crucified, "are pierced in nervous and highly sensitive parts, such as the hands and feet,"⁴⁴ furthermore, such is the shape of the cross and the posture of the victim that "the weight of the suspended body intensifies the agony".⁴⁵ The comprehensiveness of these bodily agonies is theologically significant since they demonstrate not only the reality of the assumed flesh but also how,

³⁹ ST III 48, 3 ad 1: "ex eo quod erat passibilis et mortalis, apta erat immolationi."

⁴⁰ ST III 46, 6. "Nam et secundum corpus erat optime complexionatus, cum corpus eius fuerit formatum miraculose operatione spiritus sancti".

⁴¹ Ibid. "... in eo maxime viguit sensus tactus, ex cuius perceptione sequitur dolor".

⁴² Christ did not only assume a human nature especially susceptible to pain, but also the bodily passibility and mortality of human nature. This was, in him, a consequence of human nature rather than a consequence of Original Sin. By his divine consent, "the flesh suffered what belongs to a passible nature" (ST III 14, 1 ad. 2).

⁴³ ST III 46, 6 obj. 3. "... quanto aliquod patiens est magis sensibile, tanto maior sequitur dolor passionis".

⁴⁴ ST III 46, 6. "... mors confixorum in cruce est acerbissima, quia configuntur in locis nervosis et maxime sensibilibus, scilicet in manibus et pedibus".

⁴⁵ Ibid. "... et ipsum pondus corporis pendentis continue auget dolorem". Furthermore, compared to other forms of execution (such as the sword) crucifixion "increases the duration of suffering because they do not die at once" (Ibid).

secundum genus, Christ can be said to have endured all the sufferings a man can endure.⁴⁶ Once again, in expounding upon these sufferings, Thomas chooses to focus upon particular physical details: beneath Christ's general torment, each of his bodily members is implicated in the Passion, each undergoing a trauma compatible with its own specific sensitivity. "In His head", observes Thomas, "He suffered from the crown of piercing thorns"; in "His hands and feet, from the fastening of the nails; on His face from the blows and spittle; and from the lashes over His entire body".⁴⁷ This comprehensiveness extends to the senses, which are engulfed with evils especially odious to each faculty. Again, Thomas describes these with a marked realism and attention to detail:

He suffered in all His bodily senses: in touch, by being scourged and nailed; in taste, by being given vinegar and gall to drink; in smell, by being fastened to a gibbet in a place reeking with the stench of corpses [*in loco fetido cadaverum mortuorum*]; ... in hearing, by being tormented with the cries of blasphemers and scorners; in sight, by beholding the tears of His mother and of the disciple whom He loved.⁴⁸

Here, the forthright Christological realism of the earlier ontological considerations of the *tertia pars* is carried over to the Passion, allowing us to perceive a gradual unfolding of argument. Whilst the *prima pars* identifies the principle of mankind's *reditus* movement to be the assumed humanity of the Word, in the *tertia pars* Thomas shows this to be no intangible abstraction or concept,⁴⁹ but a concrete human nature consisting of a "carnal and earthly body" made up of "flesh and bones and blood". The exposition of the Passion intensifies this realism further, for the assumed flesh is said to be not only carnal and earthly,

⁴⁶ ST III 46, 5.

⁴⁷ Ibid. "Passus est enim christus in capite pungentium spinarum coronam; in manibus et pedibus fixationem clavorum; in facie alapas et sputa; et in toto corpore flagella".

⁴⁸ Ibid. "Fuit etiam passus secundum omnem sensum corporeum, secundum tactum quidem, flagellatus et clavis confixus; secundum gustum, felle et aceto potatus; secundum olfactum, in loco fetido cadaverum mortuorum, qui dicitur calvariae, appensus patibulo; secundum auditum, lacessitus vocibus blasphemantium et irridantium; secundum visum, videns matrem et discipulum quem diligebat flentes."

⁴⁹ Cf 1 John: 1: "That which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life: for the life was manifested; and we have seen and do bear witness and declare unto you that the life eternal which was with the Father, and hath appeared to us". As Fr Emile Mersch SJ comments in light of this, "Their [i.e. the apostles'] title of apostle, *apostolus Iesu Christi*, informs us, not that they profess a metaphysic, but that they are representatives and heralds of a person. ... Their formation was the product, not of courses taken in a school, but of contact with the Master. They had seen Him, they had eaten and drunk with Him, they had been His companions from the first days of His preaching to His ascension". *The Theology of the Mystical Body*, tr. Cyril Vollert SJ, (Herder: London, 1958) pp. 55-56.

but both uniquely susceptible to suffering and, indeed, to have undertaken the severest and acutest of bodily torments possible for any flesh to endure.

St Thomas continues this line of emphasis in his consideration of the Resurrection. Again, an affirmation of the concrete materiality of the assumed flesh characterises his exposition, a feature of the incarnation vitally compatible with the state of glory.⁵⁰ The inflicted wounds are a good example of this: though, after the resurrection, they are present as signs of victory and glory, “trophyes of His power”,⁵¹ they do not cease to have the physical properties of wounds: Thomas observes with a physician’s eye for detail that, even in the risen body, “the openings of the wounds break the continuity of the tissue.”⁵² As he reminds us, the apostle Thomas “not only saw, but handled the wounds”.⁵³ The qualities of the glorified body must not, St Thomas insists, be understood to militate against its corporeal reality: the risen body possesses “whatever goes with the nature of a human body”,⁵⁴ “flesh, bones, blood, and other such things ... were in Christ’s body when he rose again”.⁵⁵ Not only

⁵⁰ The enduring bodiliness of the ascended Christ, at the right hand of the Father, has been the subject of heretical rejection and Patristic affirmation. As St John Damascene taught in his *De Fide Orthodoxa*, “We say, ‘Christ sits bodily at the right hand of God the Father’, but we do not teach the existence of any localised right hand of the Father. ... when we speak of [this], ... we understand it to mean the splendour and glory of the Godhead, in which the Son of God exists from eternity as God and consubstantial with the Father, and in which he now, after having become flesh in these last times, also sits bodily, since his flesh has been glorified along with him. For he is adored together in his flesh.” (*Expos. fidei* 4, 2; PG 94, 1104 D). The Gnostics rejected this. As Apelles put it, “[After his resurrection], he left his body behind; he gave it back to the earth from which he came. He did not take anything alien with him but gave back to its own everything that he had made use of for a time, when he unloosed the bonds of the body: he gave what was warm back to what was warm, what was cold to what was cold, what was liquid to what was liquid, what was solid to what was solid: then he went to the good Father, leaving behind this seed of life in the world to the believers through his disciples.” (Hippolytus, *Ref.* 7, 38; Orbe, *Cristologia Gnostica*, 538). As Augustine teaches, “Where and in what manner the body of the Lord exists in heaven is surely the most inquisitive and superfluous question. It suffices simply to believe that that he is in heaven. Our weakness is not permitted to seek to penetrate the mysteries of heaven; rather, it belongs to our faith to think high and reverent thoughts of the dignity of the body of the Lord” (*De Fide et symbolo* 5, 131; PL; Perl, 23).

⁵¹ ST III 54, 4 ad 1. “... cicatrices illae quae in corpore Christi permanserunt, non pertinent ad corruptionem vel defectum, sed ad maiorem cumulum gloriae, in quantum sunt quaedam virtutis insignia.”

⁵² Ibid. ad 2. “... illa apertura vulnere, quamvis sit cum quadam solutione continuitatis”. Thomas adds that, despite this, “the greater beauty of glory compensates for all this, so that the body is not less entire, but more perfected” (Ibid).

⁵³ ST III 54, 4 ad 2. In the second objection it is suggested that Christ ought not to have risen with his wounds, but that it would have been better merely for “the traces of the wounds [to] remain [*vulnerum insignia*], which would itself satisfy the beholder”.

⁵⁴ ST III 54, 3. “... quidquid ad naturam corporis humani pertinet, totum fuit in corpore Christi resurgentis.”

⁵⁵ ST III 54, 3. “Manifestum est autem quod ad naturam corporis humani pertinent carnes et ossa et sanguis, et alia huiusmodi. Et ideo omnia ista in corpore Christi resurgentis fuerunt. Et etiam integraliter, absque omni diminutione”. Thomas adds, “to say that Christ’s [risen] body had neither flesh, nor bones, nor the other natural parts of a human body, belongs to the error of Eutyches, Bishop of Constantinople, who maintained that *our body in that glory of the resurrection will be impalpable, and more subtle than wind*”

these, but even the blood shed during the scourging and crucifixion is restored to him: “all the blood which flowed from Christ’s body, belonging as it does to the integrity of human nature, rose again with His body”.⁵⁶ On this question of corporeal restoration, Thomas is exacting: not only the Lord’s flesh, bones and blood, but also the tiniest elements, “all the particles” which belong “to the truth and integrity of human nature” are present.⁵⁷

To conclude these initial observations of St Thomas’ Christology, we should note how this recurring realism, and the consistently graphic depictions of the Word’s *acta et passa in carne*, even in the state of risen glory where the flesh is subject to spirit, serve an important theological purpose for St Thomas. As our study proceeds, we will see that the implications of this realism are not only for his theology of the Incarnation, but also for the redemptive purpose of the sacred body as the conjoined, living instrument of the divinity. Even at this initial stage of our enquiry we can already perceive the important truth for Thomas that man’s “way to God”, the very mediating principle of divine love and restorative power, is no abstraction or concept, but a concrete, tangible, bodily humanity, even endowed with an unsurpassable sensitivity to the conditions of human corporality. Sinless, and formed miraculously through the agency of the Holy Spirit, the assumed flesh is so perfectly constituted as to grant it an inimitably “acute sense of touch”, rendering it uniquely susceptible to pain, and therefore particularly “fit for immolation”.⁵⁸ If we apply this insight of Thomas’ further, we must also conclude that this flesh was not only most alive to the torments of the Passion, but also to the contact exercised freely and purposely by the Word throughout his healing ministry,⁵⁹ or his acts of sanctification,⁶⁰ where he chose to direct his

and air: and that our Lord, after the hearts of the disciples who handled him were confirmed, brought back to subtlety whatever could be handled in Him.” (Ibid.).

⁵⁶ Ibid. ad 3. “totus sanguis qui de corpore christi fluxit, cum ad veritatem humanae naturae pertineat, in christi corpore resurrexit”.

⁵⁷ Ibid. “omnibus particulis ad veritatem et integritatem humanae naturae pertinentibus”.

⁵⁸ ST III 48, 3 ad 1: “ex eo quod erat passibilis et mortalis, apta erat immolationi.”

⁵⁹ ST III 44, 3 (particularly ad. 2): “Christus venerat salvare mundum non solum virtute divina, sed per mysterium incarnationis ipsius. Et ideo frequenter in sanatione infirmorum non sola potestate divina utebatur, curando per modum imperii, sed etiam aliquid ad humanitatem ipsius pertinens apponendo. Unde super illud Luc. IV, *singulis manus imponens curabat omnes*, dicit Cyrillus, *quamvis, ut deus, potuisset omnes verbo pellere morbos, tangit tamen eos, ostendens propriam carnem efficacem ad praestanda remedia*. Et super illud marci VIII, *exspuens in oculos eius impositis manibus* etc., dicit chrysostomus, *sputum quidem et manus imponit caeco, volens ostendere quod verbum divinum, operationi adiunctum, mirabilia perficit, manus enim operationis est ostensiva, sputum sermonis ex ore prolati*. Et super illud Ioan. IX, *fecit lutum ex sputo et linivit lutum super oculos caeci*, dicit Augustinus, *de saliva sua lutum fecit, quia verbum caro factum est*. Vel etiam ad significandum quod ipse erat qui ex limo terrae hominem formaverat, ut chrysostomus dicit.”

⁶⁰ ST III 39, 1.

divine power through the touch of his body. “Some one touched me; for I know that power has gone forth from me” (Lk. 8: 46). As will become clearer, it is not without soteriological significance that the risen and glorified flesh of the Word forever remains, Thomas insists, concrete and tangible, to which the actions of the apostle Thomas bear witness. Indeed, wholly consistent with a Christology which insists not only on the reality of this flesh, but upon its materiality and tangibility, the resurrected body of Christ still has all the “tangible qualities such as the nature of a human body requires”⁶¹ and can, therefore, as it was in its passible state by the “crowds [that] sought to touch him” (Lk. 6: 19), and in its glorious state by the unbelieving apostle Thomas (Jn. 20:27), “naturally be handled”.⁶² As St Cyril hoped, therefore, “May our Lord Jesus Christ also touch us”.⁶³

1.2. “Power has gone forth from me” (Lk. 8: 46): the Flesh of the Word as the Conjoined Instrument of the Divinity

Throughout the *tertia pars*, the vivid naturalism of Thomas’ depictions of the assumed flesh of the Son is presented side-by-side with statements of its unsurpassable dignity. Despite the palpable earthliness and fragility of this passible body in Thomas’ exposition it is, nevertheless, said to “surpass all spiritual substances in dignity”.⁶⁴ Hence, according to him, “a higher place is due to [this body] above every spiritual creature”.⁶⁵ The esteem in which Thomas holds this body is not, of course, according to its intrinsic bodiliness, but rather according to the limitless dignity invested in it by virtue of its hypostatic union with the Person of the Son; *secundum rationem unionis*, it is infinitely more exalted than any created spirit.⁶⁶ St Thomas stresses this in his reply to the objection that Christ’s Passion could not

⁶¹ ST III 54, 2. “habens in se tangibiles qualitates, secundum quod requirit natura corporis humani, et ideo naturaliter erat palpabile”.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ *In Luc* 7:11. Sermon 36 (Smith, i. 135; PG 72, 577C).

⁶⁴ ST III 57, 5.

⁶⁵ Ibid. Related to these matters is Thomas’s observation that “such was the dignity of Christ’s life in the body ... that its loss, even for one hour, would be a matter of greater grief than the loss of another man’s life for howsoever long a time” (ST III 46, 6 ad. 4).

⁶⁶ “The grace of union is infinite, as the Person of the Word is infinite” (ST III 7, 11). On the other hand, the habitual grace of the sacred humanity is finite in one way, though infinite in another. First of all, since the holiness of the Word’s flesh is a quality inherent in a human nature, it is an essentially finite holiness, as the human nature itself is finite. As Thomas writes, “The fullness of grace is attributed to the soul of Christ according to the capacity of the creature and not by comparison with the infinite fullness of the Divine goodness” (ST III 7, 9 ad. 3). Yet, in its own finite order, the holiness of the human nature is infinite; it corresponds to an infinite dignity. As Thomas teaches, when viewed according to the specific nature of grace (*secundum propriam rationem gratiae*), “the grace of Christ can be termed infinite, since it

have effected man's salvation by way of atonement, since his sufferings were endured not in his infinitely dignified Godhead, but in the limitations and finitude of the flesh. As Thomas states in reply,

The dignity of Christ's flesh is not to be estimated solely from the nature of flesh, but also from the person assuming it —namely, inasmuch as it was God's flesh [*caro Dei*], the result of which was that it was of infinite worth.⁶⁷

This is the very argument we encountered frequently in St Cyril, where we saw him often repeat that though “the flesh profits nothing” (Jn 6:63), of “Christ alone it is not true”,⁶⁸ since by its assumption into the very unity of the divine hypostasis of the Word it is strictly “God's flesh”. Thus, as Thomas observes elsewhere, “to adore the flesh of Christ is nothing else than to adore the Incarnate Word”.⁶⁹

For St Thomas, this union of infinitely remote orders, the passible flesh with the omnipotent divinity is, after that of the blessed Trinity, the strongest and most intimate union possible.⁷⁰ Such a communion of frailty and power is, he admits, one of the glorious paradoxes of the Incarnation.⁷¹ In reference “to *that in which* they are united” (*ex parte eius in quo coniunguntur*)⁷² this union is, by definition, unsurpassable: for the unity of the person to which this flesh is united is itself perfect, an “uncreated and self-subsisting unity”, having in itself “whatever pertains to the nature of unity”.⁷³ For human flesh to be assumed into *this*

is not limited, i.e. it has whatsoever can pertain to the nature of grace, and what pertains to the nature of grace is not bestowed on Him in a fixed measure; seeing that according to the purpose of God to Whom it pertains to measure grace, it is bestowed on Christ's soul as on a universal principle for bestowing grace on human nature, according to Ephesians 1:5,6, ‘He hath graced us in His beloved Son’; thus we might say that the light of the sun is infinite, not indeed in being, but in the nature of light, as having whatever can pertain to the nature of light” (ST III 7, 11).

⁶⁷ ST III 48, 3 ad 3. “... dignitas carnis Christi non est aestimanda solum secundum carnis naturam, sed secundum personam assumentem, in quantum scilicet erat caro Dei, ex quo habebat dignitatem infinitam.”

⁶⁸ Cyril of Alexandria, *In Joh. 6: 63*. Pusey, i. 551. (PG 73, 701).

⁶⁹ ST III 25, 2.

⁷⁰ ST III 2, 9.

⁷¹ As the 2nd objection of ST III 2, 9 states, “the greater the distance between things united, the less the union. Now, the things united by this union are most distant - namely, the Divine and human natures; for they are infinitely apart. Therefore their union is the least of all.” (obj. 2). In his reply Thomas admits this, but argues for the greatness of the union not in regard to the things united, but from “the Person in whom the union takes place” (ad. 2).

⁷² ST III 2, 9.

⁷³ Ibid. ad. 1 (emphasis mine). “Nam unitas divinae personae est unitas per se subsistens, non recepta in aliquo per participationem, est etiam in se completa, habens in se quidquid pertinet ad rationem unitatis.”

unity implies, therefore, the “greatest unity” [*maximam unitatem*], greater than the union of body and soul in man,⁷⁴ greater than numerical unity,⁷⁵ indeed, “the greatest of all unions”.

This doctrine of the perfect communion of infinitely separated orders, the weak flesh and omnipotent Godhead, provides a vital doctrinal background to the teaching we must now consider: St Thomas’ application of the Greek Patristic axiom that the assumed flesh is both personally assumed by the Word and functions, in all its activities, as his hypostatically united instrument, *instrumentum coniunctum Divinitatis*. It is, therefore, noteworthy that Thomas’ first allusion to this doctrine in the *tertia pars* comes not in his overtly soteriological concerns but in his exposition of the mode of union of human and divine natures in Christ (q. 2). As he insists here in his reply to an objection, unlike most instruments we encounter, this notion of instrumentality found in the Greek Fathers does not imply any accidental union of flesh and divinity, but flesh assumed hypostatically, *ad unitatem hypostasis*.⁷⁶ Maintaining this at the outset is vital, since Nestorius himself had employed the doctrine erroneously, holding that the flesh had been assumed by the Word merely as an instrument (*solum per modum instrumenti*), and not as an instrument assumed into the unity of the hypostasis (*ad unitatem hypostasis*). The occasional caution we observed in Cyril of Alexandria in relation to the doctrine of instrumentality is precisely due to this Nestorian misapplication.⁷⁷

St Thomas’ mature understanding of the purpose and efficacy of the assumed flesh of the Word, the kind of causality it exerts, and the nature of the contact possible with each member of the Church, is based upon this doctrine. We shall elucidate and expound upon this, though not before tracing some of the developments in Thomas’ understanding, which

⁷⁴ Even when the body of Jesus was separated from his soul at death, it was not separated from the person of the Word. There remained on the cross and in the tomb the corpse of the Word made flesh. See ST III 50, 2. As we observed in our chapter on St Cyril, the enlightening comparison between the union of body and soul in the man and the hypostatic union includes this fundamental difference: whereas body and soul are two parts of human nature, the humanity and divinity of Christ are not parts of a single nature, but they are united in the same person.

⁷⁵ Which is always a “part of number, and shared in by the things numbered” (Ibid. ad. 1).

⁷⁶ ST III 2, 6 ad. 4.

⁷⁷ Thomas quotes Cyril’s response to Nestorius’ notion of the accidental instrumentality of Christ: “Nestorius held that the human nature was assumed by the Word merely as an instrument, and not into the unity of the hypostasis. And therefore he did not concede that the man was really the Son of God, but His instrument. Hence Cyril says (*Ep. ad Monach. Aegyptii*): ‘The Scripture does not affirm that this Emmanuel,’ i.e. Christ, ‘was assumed for the office of an instrument, but as God truly humanized,’ i.e. made man” (ST III 2, 6 ad. 4). As we have seen and shall see further, Cyril’s soteriology is based entirely on the doctrine of the flesh as the hypostatically united instrument of the divinity.

serve to cast considerable light on the import of his mature understanding of it in the *tertia pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*.

1.2.1. From Disposing to Efficient Causality: the development of Thomas' understanding of our salvific contact with the flesh of the Word

After witnessing in our previous chapter St Cyril's doctrine of the vivifying power of Christ's flesh, and the prolongation of this sensible healing ministry of the enfleshed Word through the corporality of the sacramental order, St Thomas' initial understanding of the causal relation between the assumed flesh of the Word and man's salvation seems peculiarly detached from both the activity of Christ's historical humanity and the Gospel narratives upon which Cyril developed and expounded this soteriology.⁷⁸ When he came to write his *Scriptum* on the *Sentences*, the doctrine of the instrumentality of the assumed humanity was known to Thomas through St John Damascene, though interpreted with a caution that granted the Word's flesh a profoundly restricted level of causal power: in the *Scriptum*, the sacred humanity *merits* grace for us, but does not *give* it. Thomas states these positions in connection to the doctrine of Christ's Headship, where it is taught that Christ as man cannot cause grace *efficienter*, but only *meritorie*:

Christus secundum quod homo est caput nostrum; ergo nobis aliquid influit. Sed non nisi meritorie.⁷⁹

Christus secundum quod homo est causa meritoria nostrae iustificationis; sed secundum quod Deus est causa influens gratiam.⁸⁰

At this early stage of Thomas' understanding of the salvific power of the sacred flesh, the sanctification of the members of the Church from Christ the Head always involves a double action: on the one hand, the meritorious action of Christ's humanity and, on the other, the action of God causing grace *efficienter*.⁸¹ At this nascent, pre-Cyrrilline stage of Thomas'

⁷⁸ This will become clearer as we proceed. It has been noted before how, in the commentary on the *Sentences*, St Thomas's understanding of the causality of Christ's humanity, and of sacramental causality, is formulated almost entirely without recourse to sacred Scripture. The later influence of Cyril will coincide with a more explicitly biblical approach to the notion of sacramental causality. See Blankenhorn, 'The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments: Thomas Aquinas and Louise-Marie Chauvet', p. 268.

⁷⁹ III *Sent.*, d. 18, q. 1, a. 6, qua. 1, *sed contra*.

⁸⁰ IV *Sent.*, d. 1, q. 1, a. 4, sol. 3, ad. 1.

⁸¹ It is for this reason that Thomas, at this early stage, held that Christ's headship of the Mystical Body pertained him by reason of his double status as God *and* man. Though Christ as man merits and satisfies,

thought, it is not the flesh of God but rather God alone who causes grace efficiently in man.⁸² The efficacy of the sacred humanity is restricted to one of disposing, moral causality: it prepares the Christian for the exclusively divine infusion of sanctifying grace:

Deus immediate format mentem nostram quantum ad ipsam perfectionem gratiae; et tamen potest ibi cadere medium disponens; et sic gratia fluit a Deo mediante homine Christo; ipse enim disposuit totum humanum genus ad susceptionem gratiae.⁸³

Likewise, as St Thomas teaches earlier in his *Scriptum*, just as the soul of man is created *effective* immediately by God, so also is it re-created immediately by him: “Oportet enim quod sicut anima immediate a Deo creatur effective, ita etiam immediate ab ipso recreetur”.⁸⁴ A univocal interpretation of ‘creation’ (cf. 2 Cor. 5: 17; Gal. 6: 15), where sanctifying grace too is thought to be created *ex nihilo*,⁸⁵ excludes the possibility of it having any created and finite efficient cause.⁸⁶ The underlying principle here is the axiom stated by Augustine: “only God causes grace”,⁸⁷ and affirmed here by St Thomas.⁸⁸ The activity of the flesh of the Word, meriting, making satisfaction, disposing, and teaching, ultimately remains extrinsic to the supernatural efficiency of the Word in his divinity.

Despite Thomas’ knowledge of the doctrine of the instrumentality of the sacred humanity at this early stage, it remains here a profoundly limited instrumentality; the

and cooperates in a moral manner, he confers grace efficiently only through his divinity. Since both abilities are required for ‘headship’, consequently it is an office which pertains to Christ as God and man. This will be modified in the *Summa Theologiae*, in light of the instrumental efficiency predicated of Christ as man. See Emilio Sauras OP, ‘Thomistic Soteriology and the Mystical Body’, in *The Thomist*, XV, 4, pp. 546-554.

⁸² This understanding of Christ conferring grace as God (but not as man) was typical of the time. St Albert teaches the same doctrine: “Christus dicitur caput secundum quod est persona una in dua naturis, ut per divinitatem sit principium vitae spiritualis et per humanitatem sit conformis cum membris” (*De Incarnatione*, tr. 5, q. 2, a. 5; ed. Geyer, vol. 26, p. 217). And, “si autem consideretur (Christus) ut principium influens effective tantum, tunc est caput omnino secundum deitatem” (III *Sent.*, d. 13, a. 2; ed. Borgnet, vo. 28, p. 238).

⁸³ III *Sent.*, d. 13, q. 2, a. 1, ad. 3.

⁸⁴ II *Sent.* d. 26, q. 1, a. 2. Here Thomas is appealing to the Pauline doctrine of a “new creation” (interpreting the term ‘creation’ in a univocal way).

⁸⁵ Later, Thomas will come to see that the production of grace is not *ex nihilo* but the modification of an already existing substance (grace being an accidental quality rather than a substance); hence, it will become evident to Thomas that it is not metaphysically impossible for a created agent to be an instrumental cause of grace.

⁸⁶ On this, see Theophil Tschipke OP, *Die Menschheit Christi als Heilsorgan der Gottheit: Unter Besonderer Berücksichtigung der Lehre des Heiligen Thomas von Aquin* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1940), p. 107. The doctrine of the redeemed soul as a “new creation” (2 Cor. 5: 17; Gal. 6: 15) is Thomas’ chief Scriptural argument against creaturely participation in the causality of grace.

⁸⁷ See *De Trinitate* XV, c. 19.

⁸⁸ III *Sent.* d. 13, q. 2, a. 1, ad. 1-3.

operating capacities of the assumed flesh are restricted, acting only alongside the work of the primary agent (the divinity), and enjoying no ontological participation in it. As commentators have observed,⁸⁹ there appears to be no conception of the unity of human and divine operation at this stage, even at times placing St Thomas in opposition to Damascene.⁹⁰

In the *De Veritate* there are signs of a deepening appreciation of Damascene's (and thus, Cyril's) teaching on the sacred humanity's living instrumentality. Here, unlike in the *Scriptum*, the Greek Father's very language is adopted:

Damascene says (*De fide orth.*, III, 15 (PG 94:1060)) that in Christ His human nature was like a tool of His divinity [*organum divinitatis*], and thus His human nature shared somewhat [*aliquid communicabat*] in the working of the divine power. By touching a leper, for instance, Christ made him clean. The very touch of Christ thus caused the health of the leper instrumentally.⁹¹

Likewise, in discussing the headship of Christ as man, two questions later, Thomas indicates a certain efficiency in Christ's (human) causality, stating that he is head as man *ratione influentiae gratiae*, as "a spring is called the head of a river" (*sicut fons dicitur caput fluminis*).⁹² Indeed, though it "belongs to God alone to pour grace into the members of the Church", Thomas adds that, *instrumentaliter*, "the humanity of Christ is also is the cause of that in-pouring".⁹³ This, again, is based upon the teaching of Damascene:

just as iron burns because of the fire joined to it, the actions of Christ's humanity were salutary because of the divinity united to it, of which the humanity was like an instrument (*quasi organum*).⁹⁴

⁸⁹ See Bernard Blankenhorn OP, 'The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments' op cit., p. 268-9. As he observes (p. 268), "The treatment of instrumental causes is dominated by Aristotelian analogies between strictly finite agents such as a human lord and his servant or a human artist and his tool" (see II *Sent.* d. 40, q. 1, a. 4, ad. 4; IV *Sent.* d. 44, q. 1, a. 2, q1a. 1, ad. 3). As he also observes, in Thomas's understanding of instrumentality of the sacraments and of Christ's humanity, "Aristotle, ... Augustine, and ... Avicenna, seem to take absolute priority over Scripture" (p. 268-9).

⁹⁰ III *Sent.* d. 18, q. 1, c., and ad 4.

⁹¹ *De Veritate* 27, 4. c.: "Damascenus in libro III dicit quod humana natura in Christo erat velut quoddam organum divinitatis; et ideo humana natura aliquid communicabat in operatione virtutis divinae, sicut quod christus tangendo leprosum mundavit; sic enim ipse tactus christi causabat instrumentaliter salutem leprosi."

⁹² *Ibid.* 29, 4.

⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.* "Alio modo instrumentaliter: et sic etiam humanitas Christi causa est influentiae praedictae; quia, ut Damascenus dicit, sicut ferrum urit propter ignem sibi coniunctum, ita actiones humanitatis christi erant propter divinitatem unitam, cuius quasi organum erat ipsa humanitas."

All this would appear to take the function of the assumed flesh beyond the level of disposing cause, to that of a real instrumental, efficient cause of salvation. This would seem to be supported by the ontological connection Thomas makes in the *De Veritate* between the historical humanity of the Word and the sacraments.⁹⁵ The power of the assumed flesh is applied to us, argues Thomas, spiritually through faith and corporeally through the sacraments.⁹⁶ Such a distinction is based upon the nature of the assumed flesh which, as spirit and body, still exerts its healing and sanctifying influence upon us in an integrated, incarnate way.⁹⁷ If Christ, when on earth, healed through his touch, through sensible contact, he wills to act in this manner for all time. Accordingly, such is this logic, the very logic of the Incarnation, that “the most perfect sacrament is that in which the body of Christ is really contained, the Eucharist”.⁹⁸ This is the *perfectissimum sacramentum* because, according to these arguments of Thomas, it most completely conveys the twofold efficacy, the corporeal and spiritual power, of the assumed flesh of the Word, and places man into direct contact with it. Such convictions as these, forged through an extrapolation of Damascene, are strongly reminiscent of Cyril, even if Thomas has still to encounter the actual writings of Cyril for himself.

But despite these teachings, there are still certain ambiguities and hesitations in the *De Veritate*. In spite of the deployment of Damascene’s doctrine of the instrumental causality of Christ’s humanity, it does not seem to be fully and unambiguously integrated into St Thomas’ general Christological and Sacramental thought.⁹⁹ He still appears to limit the instrumental causality of the sacraments to one of a disposing instrumentality; they are, he writes, the *causa gratiae per modum instrumentorum disponentium*.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, as in the *Scriptum*, a number of principles derived from Aristotle are used to deny any efficient,

⁹⁵ *De Veritate* 27, 4.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* Or in other words, the instrumentality of Christ’s humanity is corporeally applied to whoever receives the sacraments, and also spiritually applied to whoever receives the sacraments with faith.

⁹⁷ *De Veritate* 27, 4. “Et sic humanitas christi est instrumentalis causa iustificationis; quae quidem causa nobis applicatur spiritualiter per fidem, et corporaliter per sacramenta: quia humanitas christi et spiritus et corpus est; ad hoc scilicet ut effectum sanctificationis, quae est christi, in nobis percipiamus.”

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* “Unde illud est perfectissimum sacramentum in quo corpus christi realiter continetur, scilicet Eucharistia”.

⁹⁹ Commentators seem divided on to what extent *De Veritate* represents the true turning point in Thomas’s Christology and Sacramentology on this matter. J-P Torrell OP thinks Thomas attributes a properly efficient, instrumental causality of grace to Christ as man in the *De Veritate* (see his *Le Verbe Incarné in ses Mysteres*, vol. 4, (Paris: Cerf, 2005), p. 337). Other commentators do not think so, generally for the same reasons we observe. See Jean-Philippe Revel, *Traité des sacrements I, Baptême et sacramentalité: 2. Don reception de la grâce baptismale* (Paris: Cerf, 2005) pp. 96-101; Tschipke OP, *Die Menschheit Christi*, pp. 127-133; and Blankenhorn, ‘Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments’, pp. 269-271.

¹⁰⁰ *De Veritate* 27, 4 ad. 3.

mediating causality of grace.¹⁰¹ For example, on the side of the agent itself, there is the argument that “advancing a thing beyond the state of its nature” (*rem ultra statum naturae promovere*) is the work of “him alone”¹⁰² whose business it is “to establish the degrees of nature and set their limits” (*cuius est gradus naturae statuere et limitare*). Consequently, at any level, “no creature can create grace [efficiently]” (i.e. as a principal efficient cause; *nulla creatura potest creare gratiam effective*), except that of creaturely ministerial or moral action that orders toward a reception of grace.¹⁰³ Secondly, since the effect must be proportioned to the agent, “a creature cannot perform any supernatural action” because the “natural potentiality of a creature does not go beyond natural perfections” (*potentia autem naturalis creaturae non se extendit ultra perfectiones naturales*).¹⁰⁴ Alongside these arguments, there are also reasons for denying any efficient causality in the assumed flesh of the Word on the part of the recipient: the operations of created agents presuppose a form in the patient’s potency, for “no created power acts without presupposing the potentiality of matter” (*nulla virtus creata agit nisi praesupposita potentia materiae*); since supernatural grace can never be a form in the potency of man, it can only ever be conferred by God alone. Finally, there is a reason *ex fine ipsius gratiae*, for the “end is proportioned to the principle which is acting”; consequently, “just as the first action by means of which things come into being, creation, is from God alone”, so “the conferring of grace, by means of which a rational mind is immediately joined to the last end, is from God alone”.¹⁰⁵ In other words, since an effect must

¹⁰¹ *De Veritate* 27, 3 c.: “Dicendum, quod simpliciter concedendum est, quod nulla creatura potest creare gratiam effective; quamvis aliqua creatura possit aliquod ministerium adhibere ordinatum ad gratiae susceptionem. Cuius ratio triplex est. Prima sumitur ex conditione ipsius gratiae. Gratia enim, ut dictum est, art. 1 huius quaest., est quaedam perfectio elevans animam ad quoddam esse supernaturale: nullus autem effectus supernaturalis potest esse ab aliqua creatura, duplici ratione. Primo quidem, quia eius solius est rem ultra statum naturae promovere, cuius est gradus naturae statuere et limitare; quod solius dei constat esse. Secundo, quia nulla virtus creata agit nisi praesupposita potentia materiae, vel alicuius loco materiae. Potentia autem naturalis creaturae non se extendit ultra perfectiones naturales; unde nullam supernaturalem operationem aliqua creatura efficere potest. Et inde est quod miracula sola divina virtute agente fiunt, quamvis ad miraculi expulsionem aliqua creatura cooperetur vel orando vel qualitercumque aliter ministerium adhibendo. Et propter hoc nulla creatura effective gratiam causare potest.”

¹⁰² Though St Thomas will also speak of “God alone” causing grace in the *Summa Theologiae* (ST I-II, 112, 1) what he means there is God alone *as principal cause* causes grace. This is clear since, as we shall see, he teaches in the *tertia pars* the instrumental efficient causality of grace by Christ’s humanity and the sacraments.

¹⁰³ “Christ as God imparts grace effectively, but as man by His ministry” (“quod Christus, secundum quod Deus, infundit gratiam effective: secundum quod homo, ministerio”) *De Veritate* 27, 3 ad. 5.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*: “Finis enim proportionatur principio agentis, eo quod finis et principium totius universi est unum; et ideo, sicut prima actio, per quam res in esse exeunt, scilicet creatio, est a solo deo, qui est creaturarum primum principium et ultimus finis; ita gratiae collatio, per quam mens rationalis immediate ultimo fini coniungitur, a solo deo Est.”

be proportioned to the first agent, the final effect of our immediate union with God requires his *exclusive* causality of grace.

All these restrictions Thomas gives to the causality of created and finite agents have important bearings upon his understanding of the efficacy of the sacred humanity. The Christological implications would appear to be confirmed in a passage which, in what seems to offer an exhaustive catalogue of the Word's supernatural efficacy as man, limits this efficacy to the order of merit:

God is said to justify us in two ways: principally by His own action inasmuch as He is the efficient cause of our salvation, and also by our operation inasmuch as He is the end known and loved by us. In the same way, then, Christ as man is said to justify us in two ways: (1) By His own action, inasmuch as He merited and atoned for us. In this respect He could not be called the head of the Church before the Incarnation. (2) By our operation in His regard, in the sense that we are said to be justified by faith in Him.¹⁰⁶

1.2.2. St Thomas' mature position: "the whole of the one same effect is also attributed to the instrument".

In our earlier historical survey of St Thomas' thought in relation to the theology of St Cyril of Alexandria, we highlighted the early 1260s as the critical years in this development. The new access Thomas had to patristic and conciliar documents, and the research into Greek theological sources for the *Catena*, coincides with significant developments in his understanding of instrumental causality, as we will now see manifested in the two principle works of this period: the *Summa Contra Gentiles* and the *Summa Theologiae*.¹⁰⁷ The

¹⁰⁶ Ibid. 29, a. 4, ad. 9: "Christus, secundum quod homo, mediator est inter deum et homines, ut dicitur I Tim. II, 5. Unde, sicut deus dupliciter nos iustificare dicitur, principaliter scilicet per actionem suam, in quantum est causa efficiens nostrae salutis, et etiam per operationem nostram in quantum est finis a nobis cognitus et amatus; ita etiam christus, secundum quod homo, dupliciter nos iustificare dicitur. Uno modo secundum suam actionem, in quantum nobis meruit et pro nobis satisfecit; et quantum ad hoc non poterat dici caput ecclesiae ante incarnationem. Alio modo per operationem nostram in ipsum secundum quod dicimur per fidem eius iustificari".

¹⁰⁷ Whilst the *Summa Theologiae* was certainly begun at Santa Sabina in Rome (1265-67), and left unfinished around 1273 in Naples (and therefore long after the encounter with Greek sources during the Orvieto period of 1261-65), the dating of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* is rather more uncertain. It is generally held, however, that at least a significant part of it was written during, or after, the Orvieto period. Historians usually give three periods in its composition: Paris (1258-59), Naples (1259-61), and Orvieto (1261-65), completed in 1264 under Pope Urban IV. For a summary of opinions, see Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas*, p. 360. Weisheipl himself thinks that the *earliest* possible completion date of the *contra Gentiles* is 1263.

advances are both of the philosophical and theological orders: they relate to the general metaphysics of instrumental causality and, on this foundation, to the Greek patristic doctrine of the instrumentality of the sacred flesh of the Word. With this metaphysical clarity, Thomas is able to endorse and expound upon the Greek patristic doctrine with a new assurance.

In Thomas' treatment of divine and natural causality in book 3 of the *contra Gentiles* there is a new understanding of the latter in its relation to the former, which will significantly influence his later approach to the salvific power of the humanity of the Word. One particular development stands out: Thomas now argues that, whenever a principal cause makes use of an instrument, "the whole effect proceeds from each, though in different ways".¹⁰⁸ The one effect does not come from two isolated or externally collaborating causes, "as though part was effected by God and part by the natural agent",¹⁰⁹ but rather, in its own proper way, the instrumental cause is seen to contribute *wholly* to the effect. Whilst, as Thomas held before, the whole effect is to be attributed to the principal agent, now the same is also said to be true of the instrumental cause: "the whole of the one same effect is [also] attributed to the instrument".¹¹⁰

This new dignity recognized in an instrumental cause is due to its *participatio*, its "sharing", in the "power of the principal cause", granting it a proper (if secondary) attribution of the whole effect.¹¹¹ *Instrumentum participat de virtute principalis agentis*.¹¹² As Thomas states by way of illustration, a chisel can be said to be the cause of a sculpture, not because the specific shape which emerges from the stone can be explained by the sharpness of the chisel as such, but rather to the extent that the chisel is guided in its movement by the directing power of the artist, and participates in his power and skill.¹¹³ In such a causal

¹⁰⁸ *Summa Contra Gentiles* (SCG) III, 70: "Patet etiam quod non sic idem effectus causae naturali et divinae virtuti attribuitur quasi partim a deo, et partim a naturali agente fiat, sed totus ab utroque secundum alium modum: sicut idem effectus totus attribuitur instrumento, et principali agenti etiam totus."

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* "... effectus totus attribuitur instrumento".

¹¹¹ SCG III, 78: "Whatever creature executes the order of divine providence, does so in so far as it has a share of the power of the supreme providence [*habet in quantum participat aliquid de virtute primi providentis*]: even as the instrument has no movement except in so far as through being moved it has a share in the power of the principal agent [*sicut et instrumentum non movet nisi in quantum per motum participat aliquid de virtute principalis agentis*]."

¹¹² SCG IV, 74 (this is from Thomas's consideration of the Sacrament of Order, and the instrumentality of the priest).

¹¹³ This image is taken from the *De Potentia*, generally recognised to have been written around 1265-6, sometime therefore after the *Summa Contra Gentiles*: "Instrumentum enim est causa quodammodo effectus principalis causae, non per formam vel virtutem propriam, sed in quantum participat aliquid de virtute principalis causae per motum eius, sicut dolabra non est causa rei artificatae per formam vel virtutem propriam, sed per virtutem artificis a quo movetur et eam quoquomodo participat." (De Pot. 3, 7).

relation, the operation proper to the instrument is *raised* by that of the principal cause to produce an effect which the instrument's power could not have achieved on its own. But importantly, throughout this action, the power of the principal agent is not extrinsic to the instrumental cause, but is intimately present to the instrument's operation, both elevating it and working in harmony with its inherent capacities. Therefore, in performing its own proper function, the very instrument itself can be said to bring about the effect both by virtue of its own form, *per formam suam*, and the power of the principal agent working within it: "the immanence of the power of the principal cause [allows] the instrument's power ... to produce the effect."¹¹⁴ As Thomas teaches, "the activity of anything, even of an instrument, must flow forth from its own power".¹¹⁵

Such a teaching of Thomas illuminates another important feature of the nature of an instrumental cause, which will have significant implications for its use in Christology: despite its need to participate in the power of the principal agent, an instrument always possesses an intrinsic suitability for its operation. To continue with Thomas' example, the specific shape and sharpness of the chisel make it particularly suitable for cutting and sculpting, and this inherent aptitude waits to be actualised through being raised by the power of the principal agent. In being actualised in this way, the chisel does not perform an action that is alien to it, but is able to perform its *own* native action. The formation of the beautiful statue means that the chisel has been raised to a level of effect that has exceeded its own power yet, precisely by virtue of this participation, it has been able to perform its own proper action of chiselling. It is already possible to perceive how these metaphysical arguments have significant Christological implications, both in relation to the intrinsic suitability of the assumed flesh to bring about to man's salvation-in-the-flesh, and the doctrine of the Word's flesh as the conjoined instrument of the divinity,¹¹⁶ participating in the power of the Godhead. These implications will become clearer as we proceed.

¹¹⁴ Rudi A. Te Velde, *Participation and Substantiality in Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995) p.166.

¹¹⁵ De Pot. 3, 4.

¹¹⁶ The notion of an instrument obviously has to be treated analogically when it is applied to the Word's human nature, and therefore purified of the material conditions attaching to material instruments. So, unlike the chisel and the artist, this instrument with its activity is not a distinct subject from God. Furthermore, as Thomas writes, "The humanity of Christ is the instrument of the Godhead - not, indeed, an inanimate instrument, which nowise acts, but is merely acted upon; but an instrument animated by a rational soul [which therefore possesses its own initiative]" (ST III 7 1 ad 3).

1.2.3. *The Christological Application*

If we turn to the Christology which follows the consideration of uncreated and created causality in the *contra Gentiles*, it is noteworthy that Thomas now refrains from attributing any dispositive causality to the Word's humanity, but instead places his entire emphasis upon its effective instrumentality. Just as we witnessed earlier in the *Summa Theologiae*, it is not an explicit soteriological concern that provokes this consideration of the instrumentality of the sacred humanity, but a general consideration of the mode of union of human and divine natures: any instrumental power attributed to this flesh, Thomas insists, is entirely rooted in its hypostatic union with omnipotent divinity.¹¹⁷ The reasons for this connection between the mode of union and the instrumentality of the flesh should be clear: given, as Thomas has clearly stated, the power of an instrument is determined by the extent to which it participates in the power of the principal cause, the doctrine of the hypostatic union ("the greatest of all unions"¹¹⁸) inevitably allows for the most radical of creaturely participations possible in divine operations.

To illustrate the extent of this participation-through-union, Thomas employs the Athanasian and Cyrilline analogy of the union of soul and body, a comparison we considered in our previous chapter on Cyril. "In all created things", states Thomas, "nothing bears so great a resemblance to this union, as the union of soul and body",¹¹⁹ a resemblance not in regard to the union of body and soul as matter and form but rather as "regards the union of soul with the body as its instrument [*anima unitur corpori ut instrumento*]"¹²⁰ Significantly, Thomas also states now that he uses this analogy with the full authority of the Patristic tradition: having discovered the comparison in the writings of Athanasius and Cyril, Thomas is able to appeal not merely to the authority of Damascene but rather to a Patristic consensus, *dicta antiquorum doctorum concordant*, revealing a new awareness of the importance of the doctrine of the sacred humanity's efficient instrumentality in the wider theological tradition.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ SCG IV, 41.

¹¹⁸ ST III 2, 7

¹¹⁹ SCG IV, 41

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ It is significant, therefore, that Thomas includes in his *Catena Aurea* the teaching of St Cyril on this very doctrine: "Quamvis autem ut Deus potuisset omnes verbo pellere morbos, tamen tangit eos, ostendens propriam carnem efficacem ad praestanda remedia, nam caro Dei erat. Sicut enim ignis appositus vasi aeneo imprimit ei propriae caliditatis effectum; sic omnipotens Dei Verbum, cum univit sibi veraciter assumptum templum ex Virgine animatum et intellectivum, particeps suae potestatis, eius effectum

Since, as Athanasius, Cyril, and Damascene all teach, the sacred humanity relates to the divinity in the way the body (as the instrument) relates to the soul (as principal agent), it follows that the assumed flesh of the Word can be said to be the *instrumentum animatum*¹²² of the divinity, performing properly visible or audible human actions that convey a hidden, divine efficacy. We shall expound upon this further in due course. It is worth noting at the outset, however, that the analogy serves the more immediate purpose of illustrating the profound unity of distinct modes of action in Christ: just as the union of body and soul in man means he is unable to perform any merely bodily or spiritual actions, so the actions of the enfleshed Word are, though from distinct human and divine principles, analogously integrated, divine-human actions. This indicates that all the Word's acts and sufferings *in carne* possess a divine efficacy and are, therefore, salutary for mankind.¹²³ As we shall see shortly, this will lead Thomas (following Dionysius) to consider their 'theandric' character, insofar as the Word's divine operation employs the human, and his human operation shares in the power of the divine.¹²⁴ Again, such an understanding will undergo a more explicit exposition in the *Summa Theologiae*.

Finally, before proceeding to Thomas' fullest exposition, it is worth pointing out how he stresses in the *contra Gentiles* the imperfect resemblance of the body-soul analogy to the reality. Whilst preserving the distinction of divine and human operations, the miracle of the hypostatic union, Thomas insists, allows for a much deeper compenetration of natures than even that of body and soul. As he teaches, the union of flesh and divinity in the person of the Word is "far more sublime and penetrative" (*multo sublimius et intimius*) than any union involving the created soul of man.¹²⁵ It is to the later Christology of the *Summa Theologiae* we must proceed now for a more comprehensive consideration of the consequences of this most intimate of unions.

inseruit." St Cyril of Alexandria, *In Luc.* 4 (PG 72, 552b), cited by Thomas in his *Catena Aurea in quator Evangelia Expositio in Lucam* (Rome: Marietti, 1953) c. 4, lectio 9.

¹²² That is, animated by a rational soul, with faculties of intellect and will.

¹²³ "Humana etiam operatio Christi quandam efficaciam divinam ex unione divinitatis consequatur, sicut actio secundarii agentis consequitur efficaciam quandam ex principali agente: et ex hoc contigit quod quaelibet eius actio vel passio fuit salubris." SCG 4, 36.

¹²⁴ "Propter quod dionysius humanam christi operationem vocat theandricam, idest dei-virilem; et etiam quia est dei et hominis". SCG 4, 36. As we will see, Thomas will consider this at more length in the *Summa Theologiae* (III 19, 1).

¹²⁵ "... intelligendum est enim verbum dei multo sublimius et intimius humanae naturae potuisse uniri quam anima qualicumque proprio instrumento" SCG IV, 41.

1.2.4. “He wrought Divine things humanly, as when He healed a leper by His touch”:¹²⁶ a divine efficacy in the flesh

The implications of Thomas’ mature position on the metaphysics of instrumental causality for our understanding of the salvific efficacy of the assumed flesh are made manifest in the *tertia pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*. The intimate presence of the principal cause in the operation of the instrumental cause is, by virtue of the hypostatic union, shown to be realised to an unsurpassable degree in the Incarnation. Simultaneously, and in harmony with the nature of this union, what is distinctively proper to the action of the instrument is perfectly maintained: the bodily humanity operates in distinction to the divinity, and according to its own laws. St Thomas not only shows this to be in accordance with the faith of the Church,¹²⁷ but seeks to grant this distinctiveness and particularity of the sacred humanity’s operation a theological exposition.

When considering all the actions and sufferings of the enfleshed Word, Thomas insists upon this distinction of operation: “the human nature has its own proper form whereby it acts, and so has the Divine”.¹²⁸ Yet, this is a distinction-in-unity, for in all the actions of the one incarnate Son,

the moved [i.e. the humanity] shares in the operation of the mover, and the mover [i.e. the Divinity] makes use of the operation of the moved, and, consequently, each acts in communion with the other.¹²⁹

Like a sculptor raising a sharp chisel to the marble, “the Divine Nature makes use of [*utitur*] the operation of the human nature, as of the operation of its instrument”.¹³⁰ Importantly, in belonging to the person of the Word, the assumed flesh is able to perform its own proper actions for which it possesses an *intrinsic suitability*. In doing so, the instrument ‘modifies’ the action of the principal cause: “it carries out its instrumental action in working its own proper action”;¹³¹ indeed, participating in the power of the main agent “does not stop [the

¹²⁶ ST III 19, 1 ad. 1. “... divina operabatur humanitus, sicut cum sanavit leprosum tangendo”.

¹²⁷ That there are two operations in Christ, one of the human nature, the other of the divine nature, is of faith, as pronounced at the Third Council of Constantinople (as Thomas states in ST III 19, 1). On the distinction of operations, Thomas also quotes from the Tome of Leo to Flavian (*Ep. 28 ad Flavian*).

¹²⁸ ST III 19, 1. “... humana natura habet propriam operationem distinctam ab operatione divina, et e converso.”

¹²⁹ *Ibid.* “... motum participet operationem moventis, et movens utatur operatione moti, et sic utrumque agit cum communione alterius.”

¹³⁰ *Ibid.* “... divina natura utitur operatione naturae humanae sicut operatione sui instrumenti”.

¹³¹ ST III 62, 1 ad. 2.

instrument] from having its own operation”.¹³² Thus, such bodily actions as the making of paste from spittle, the touching of the deaf-mute’s tongue, the shout to Lazarus, ensure that the Word may effect authentically *human contact* with the human objects of his mercy and love; and by virtue of the divinity, these human actions bring about effects which infinitely exceed their own native power:

to heal a leper is a proper work of the divine operation, but to touch him is the proper work of the human operation. Now both these operations concur in one work, inasmuch as one nature acts in union with the other [*agit cum communione alterius*].¹³³

The healing of the leper through bodily contact is both a properly human action yet, simultaneously in this case, an act of divine revelation, a ‘theandric’ action. It expresses, in the words of Thomas, a single *divinam-virilem vel divinam-humanam* operation, not by any confusion of the operations or powers of both natures, but “inasmuch as His Divine operation employs the human, and His human operation shares in the power of the Divine.”¹³⁴ Given this unity, and the singularity of its effect (i.e. salvation), Thomas is able to make the startling claim that, considered *qua instrument*, the operation of the assumed flesh “is not distinct from the operation of the Godhead [*non est alia ab operatione divinitatis*]”.¹³⁵ Whilst carefully preserving the distinction of operations according to the distinction of natures, it is still one and the same saving action by which the sacred flesh and divinity save us.

1.2.5. “It pertains to the greatest glory of God to have raised a weak and earthly body to such sublimity”:¹³⁶ the heights of the “corpus carneum et terrenum”.

By affirming such harmonious interaction of principal and instrumental agents, the human at the service of the divine and participating in its power, a specific theology of the sacred body of Christ begins to emerge in the *tertia pars*, in continuity with the fundamental principles and intuitions we witnessed in the writings of St Cyril. The extent of this continuity, and the

¹³² ST III 19, 1 ad 2.

¹³³ Ibid. ad 5. “Ad quantum dicendum quod aliud est proprium operatum operationis divinae, et operationis humanae in christo, sicut operatum proprium divinae operationis est sanatio leprosi, operatum autem proprium humanae naturae est eius contactus.”

¹³⁴ ST III 19, 1 ad. 1. “... divina operatio eius utitur humana eius operatione, et humana operatio participat virtutem divinae operationis.”

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ ST III 5, 2 ad. 3. : “ ... ad maximam Dei gloriam pertinet quod corpus infirmum et terrenum ad tantam sublimitatem provehit”.

nature of its development in the theology of St Thomas, will become clearer in our specifically Eucharistic considerations. Yet even before we come to consider the sacramental mode of the Word's physical body we can see how Thomas' mature understanding of the Incarnation conveys the simple and eminently Cyrilline doctrine that the condescending movement of the Word made flesh involves the adaptation of divine activity to our bodily nature: not by acts proper to the divinity, but by acts strictly proper to the flesh, the infinite Word comes into redemptive contact with sinners. Furthermore, through Thomas' adoption of the doctrine of the Word's flesh as the conjoined instrument of the divinity, a specifically sacramental understanding of the physical body of Christ emerges. This is evident in two ways: first of all, when we bring together certain disparate elements of Thomas's Christology we have considered, from the consideration of the true bodiliness (q. 5, a. 2) to the exposition of the unity and distinction of divine and human operations (q. 19, a. 1), we can see how the physical body of Christ is understood to possess, not only in its participated power but also in its very tangibility, fragility and passibility, the privileged role of manifesting the love of God for man,¹³⁷ granting human expression to the infinite love of its divine subject. Through his very own "carnal and earthly body", the divine Word has, as Thomas beautifully expresses it, "wrought divine things humanly".¹³⁸ But, according to him, this privilege does not remain at the level of signification alone. Through his appropriation of St Cyril's understanding of the efficacy of Christ's corporeal contact with man,¹³⁹ as presented in the healing narratives of the Gospels,¹⁴⁰ Thomas also reveals how the physical body of Christ not only gives visible

¹³⁷ In his consideration of the fittingness of the Incarnation (for the purposes our redemption (ST III 1, 2)), Thomas approvingly quotes the following from St Augustine: "Nothing was so necessary for raising our hope as to show us how deeply God loved us. And what could afford us a stronger proof of this than that the Son of God should become a partner with us of human nature?" (*De Trinitate* xiii); and "What greater cause is there of the Lord's coming than to show God's love for us?" (*De Catechizandis Rudibus* iv).

¹³⁸ ST III 19, 1 ad. 1. "...divina operabatur humanitus". On this mystery of the divine instrumentality and efficacy of frail flesh, Thomas quotes Dionysius approvingly (ST III 19, 1 ad. 1): "what is of man He works beyond man; and this is shown by the Virgin conceiving supernaturally and by the unstable waters bearing up the weight of bodily feet. ... He performed Divine works not as God does, and human works not as man does, but, God having been made man, by a new operation of God and man" ("super hominem operabatur ea quae sunt hominis, quod monstrat virgo supernaturaliter concipiens, et aqua terrenorum pedum sustinens gravitatem. ... sed, deo homine facto, nova quadam dei et hominis operatione.")

¹³⁹ Cf. ST III 19, 1 ad. 5.

¹⁴⁰ Bernard Blankenhorn OP has observed how St Thomas's later understanding of the efficient, instrumental causality of the assumed flesh of the Word coincides with a much more frequent deployment of the Scriptures in his argumentation. According to him, because of Thomas's exposure to the Greek Fathers, and his developed understanding of instrumental causality of the sacred flesh in the *Summa Theologiae*, "Thomas could return to Sacred Scripture and begin to make sense of its realistic language, to see what he could not see before" ("The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments", p. 288). On the other hand, "it is very striking that in the *Sentences* all of Thomas's arguments for his doctrine of sacramental

and audible expression of salvation, but procures it. In both signifying and effecting what it signifies, the sacred body can be said to possess a truly sacramental function in Thomas' soteriology.¹⁴¹ As one Thomistic commentator has put it, rather than designating, in general terms, "the humanity of Christ as the sacrament of God's saving action", we can be "a little more specific":

[for] it is in fact his body which constitutes the foundational sacrament ... Christ's body in its human activity finds its true significance beyond the sacred humanity in the divine mystery of redemption.¹⁴²

This sacramentality of the Word's body is, as we have said, dependent upon both its role as signifier, and its own task in effectively procuring salvation. Indeed, the upholding of the integrity and distinctiveness of the activity of the Word's bodily operations, where the flesh performs "its own proper action",¹⁴³ relates importantly to the level of causality Cyril and Thomas wish to attribute to it: in hypostatic union with the Word, the integral sacred humanity, body and soul, is not extrinsic to the causality of man's redemption, but is rather a true, effecting principle of the restoration of sinful flesh.¹⁴⁴ Together with the power of the

causality remain unrelated to Scripture. ... Scripture's minimal function in Aquinas' early teachings on sacramental (and Christological) efficacy will become all the more striking [if] we contrast it to an evermore biblical approach in his subsequent career" (Ibid., p. 268).

¹⁴¹ Cf. ST III 60, 6: "[to the Word Incarnate] the sacraments have a certain conformity [*quodammodo conformatur*], in that the word is joined to the sensible sign, just as in the mystery of the Incarnation the Word of God is united to sensible flesh."

¹⁴² Colman O'Neil OP, *Meeting Christ in the Sacraments*, rev. ed. (New York: Alba House, 1991), p. 80. "We can be a little more specific than we have been about designating the humanity of Christ as the sacrament of God's saving action. It is in fact his body which constitutes the foundational sacrament of Christianity. A sign must be visible or audible; and it is only Christ's body and his bodily actions which can be seen or heard. Christ's body in its human activity finds its true significance beyond the sacred humanity in the divine mystery of redemption itself. "That which was from the beginning", writes St John, 'which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have touched, of the word of life, ... that which we have seen and heard, we declare unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us, and our fellowship may be with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ' (1 Jn. 1: 1-3). St John tells us that the apostles 'saw his glory' (Jn. 1:14), the glory manifesting the presence of God (cf. Ex 24:16), upon whom no man can look and yet live (cf. Ex. 33:20), made flesh in Christ. It is this presence of the God of the Alliance in tangible form that makes the body of Christ the sacrament on which the Church is founded" (Ibid.).

¹⁴³ ST III 19, 1.

¹⁴⁴ One commentator has expressed St Thomas's understanding of the efficient causality of an instrument in this way: "The saw does not merely dispose the bench for the unmediated work of the carpenter; nor does it induce the carpenter to fashion the wood; nor does it induce the wood to fashion itself according to the carpenter's plan; nor does it tell the wood what to do. The effect is entirely due to a transient condition of 'motion' in the instrument (such as the accurately directed back-and-forth movement of a saw). The causal influence, insofar as the agent uses the medium instrumentally, *passes entirely through the instrument*. The instrument *comes between* the primary agent and the effect, yet it *embodies* the causal influence entirely".

principal cause immanent to it, it is this feature of the *particularity* of the flesh's operation in the Word's saving actions which allow Thomas to grant it the status of efficient cause. It is not by ceasing to act as flesh, but rather by its own acts (*per formam suam*), that the flesh (*per contactum suam*) effects salvation not merely *meritorie* but *efficienter*.¹⁴⁵

Finally, it must be noted how this doctrine of the assumed flesh's living instrumentality here in the *tertia pars* is, it must be remembered, based upon a strikingly naturalistic understanding of the Son's corporality. For the purposes of our thesis, it is necessary to combine this theology of the divine privileges of the human body of Christ with the earlier graphic realism of Thomas' Christology and theology of the Passion: the "carnal and earthly body" composed of "flesh and bones and blood" is the personal instrument of the transcendent divinity, the frail medium through which God effects salvation. But according to the laws of instrumentality, it is precisely by virtue of this true and passible body that it is able to function as the instrument of divine power in relation to sinful mankind. In other words, in having, with the remainder of the race, "whatever goes with the nature of a human body",¹⁴⁶ and possessing all the "tangible qualities such as the nature of a human body requires",¹⁴⁷ it is intrinsically suited to be both the Christian's natural point of contact with the divinity, and the instrument through which the Word touches sinners and thereby

Philip Lyndon Reynolds, 'Efficient Causality and Instrumentality in Thomas Aquinas's Theology of the Sacraments', in *Essays in Medieval Philosophy and Theology in Memory of Walter H. Principe*, CSB: Fortresses and Launching Pads, ed. James R. Ginther and Carl N. Still (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005) p. 77.

¹⁴⁵ ST III 48, 6: "... dicendum quod duplex est efficiens, principale, et instrumentale. Efficiens quidem principale humanae salutis Deus Est. Quia vero humanitas Christi est divinitatis instrumentum, ut supra dictum est, ex consequenti omnes actiones et passiones Christi instrumentaliter operantur, in virtute divinitatis, ad salutem humanam. Et secundum hoc, passio Christi efficienter causat salutem humanam." (ST III 48, 6). St Thomas also explains this in his Commentary 1 Thessalonians 4: 16: "Sciendum est autem quod apostolus I Cor. XV, 12 ex resurrectione Christi astruit nostram, quia illa est causa nostrae, unde arguit per locum a causa. Et resurrectio Christi non est causa solum, sed etiam exemplar: quia Verbum caro factum suscitavit corpora, Verbum vero simpliciter animas. Etenim eo quod Christus accepit carnem, et in ea resurrexit, est exemplar nostrae resurrectionis. Nec solum hoc est, sed et causa efficiens: quia quae humanitate Christi gesta sunt, non solum sunt gesta secundum virtutem humanitatis, sed virtute divinitatis sibi unitae. Unde sicut tactus suus curabat leprosum in quantum instrumentum divinitatis, sic resurrectio Christi causa est nostrae resurrectionis non in quantum corporis, sed in quantum resurrectio corporis uniti Verbo vitae." (*Super Ad 1 Thess. c. 4, lectio 2*).

¹⁴⁶ ST III 54, 3. "quidquid ad naturam corporis humani pertinet, totum fuit in corpore christi resurgentis. Manifestum est autem quod ad naturam corporis humani pertinent carnes et ossa et sanguis, et alia huiusmodi. Et ideo omnia ista in corpore christi resurgentis fuerunt. Et etiam integraliter, absque omni diminutione". Thomas adds, "to say that Christ's [risen] body had neither flesh, nor bones, nor the other natural parts of a human body, belongs to the error of Eutyches, Bishop of Constantinople, who maintained that *our body in that glory of the resurrection will be impalpable, and more subtle than wind and air: and that our Lord, after the hearts of the disciples who handled him were confirmed, brought back to subtlety whatever could be handled in Him.*" (Ibid.).

¹⁴⁷ ST III 54, 2. "habens in se tangibiles qualitates, secundum quod requirit natura corporis humani, et ideo naturaliter erat palpabile".

communicates his restorative power. Indeed, as we have perceived through Thomas' exposition of this doctrine of the Greek Fathers, the sacred humanity's ability to be the instrument of the Word rests not only on its hypostatic union with omnipotent divinity but also upon its inherent aptitude, as tangible flesh, to come into comprehensive contact with the fallen flesh of the Christian.¹⁴⁸ By the light shed from his discovery of the Christology of St Cyril and the Greek patristic tradition, Thomas is able to perceive the assumed corporality of the Son with a new sense of wonder: "it pertains to the greatest glory of God to have raised a weak and earthly body to such sublimity."¹⁴⁹ The continued contact exerted by this very body upon sinners is the subject of our next consideration.

¹⁴⁸ "... the Word of God first bestows immortal life upon that body which is naturally united with Himself, and through it works the resurrection in all other bodies" (ST III 56, 1). Christ's bodily resurrection is the efficient cause of our bodily resurrection. See also *Super Ad 1 Thess..c. 4*, lectio 2.

¹⁴⁹ ST III 5, 2 ad 3. "... hoc ipsum ad maximam dei gloriam pertinet quod corpus infirmum et terrenum ad tantam sublimitatem provehit."

2. Corporeity and the Eucharist: the physical body of Christ *per modum sacramentale*

2.1: Introduction: the Sacramental prolongation of the Word made Flesh

In our consideration of the Christology and Eucharistic theology of St Cyril of Alexandria, we noted his tendency to see the sacramental activity of the Church after Christ's Ascension as the prolongation of the healing and sanctifying activity of Christ in his earthly ministry.¹⁵⁰ Accordingly, Cyril's various analyses of the historical, salvific activity of the Incarnate Word frequently conclude with an exhortation to recognise a corresponding activity in the sacramental order, where it is believed that, through his ascended and glorified humanity, the enfleshed Word still heals and sanctifies. This is especially evident in his exegesis of those Gospel narratives which recount healing through physical contact with the body of Jesus: Cyril anticipates receiving analogous, supernatural benefits through his own contact with the same body, in its sacramental mode.¹⁵¹ As Christ raised from the dead the young man of Nain by means of touch (Lk. 7:11), Cyril prays: "May our Lord Jesus Christ also touch us".¹⁵²

But as we witnessed, Cyril goes further than this. Not only does he recognise a causal relation between the power which "goes forth" (Lk. 8:46) from the sacred body in the Gospels and that which sanctifies through the sacraments,¹⁵³ but he also perceives an intensification and perfection of contact available in the sacramental order. Faithfully consuming the sacrament of the Lord's body and blood must, he argues, by virtue of both the entirety of Christ's presence under edible species, and the comprehensive nature and depth of the available contact, "profit a man more richly"¹⁵⁴ than anything possible to Jesus' historical contemporaries. We shall now see how these theological intuitions of Cyril are, in certain important respects, repeated and developed in the sacramental theology of St Thomas.

By transferring his attention immediately from the salvific activity of Christ to the salvific activity of the sacraments, we recognise a similar approach taken by St Thomas in the *tertia pars* to that of Cyril in his exegesis.¹⁵⁵ "After considering those things that concern the

¹⁵⁰ See, for example, Cyril's *Third Letter to Nestorius*, 7. (*St Cyril of Alexandria: Selected Letters*, ed. and trans. L. Wickham (Oxford, OUP, 1983) p. 23).

¹⁵¹ For example, *In Luc* 7:11, Sermon 36 (PG 72, 577C).

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *In Joh.* 3:5. Pusey, i, 219.

¹⁵⁴ *In Joh.* 4,3. Pusey, i, 530.

¹⁵⁵ In his own commentary on the Gospel of John, St Thomas also uses the earthly ministry of Christ to illuminate truths of the sacramental order. "Christus tactu suo sanabat infirmos. Sic ergo quod dixit supra, ego sum panis vivus, pertinet ad virtutem Verbi; hic vero quod subdit pertinet ad communionem sui

mystery of the incarnate Word”, writes Thomas, “we must consider the sacraments of the Church which derive their efficacy from the Word incarnate Himself”.¹⁵⁶ The principles which give theological coherence to Thomas’ order of investigation, from the *acta et passa in carne*, to the *sacramenta Ecclesiae*, are the same as those found in Cyril: the sacraments derive their efficacy not immediately from the Godhead, but from the prior efficacy of the hypostatically united flesh. From the beginning of his treatise on the sacraments it is evident that the now familiar principle of bodily mediation is continued: the divine power which was modified and adapted through the mediating instrumentality of the sacred body is now, after the Ascension, communicated to sinners through certain bodily signs and actions¹⁵⁷ ordained by Christ¹⁵⁸ to continue the task of bringing about specific, sanctifying effects.¹⁵⁹ The power of the Godhead is now not only mediated through the Word’s personally united flesh, but, precisely by virtue of the power forever invested in that living instrument, it is to be mediated through certain extraneous agents which are momentarily raised to participate in that power.¹⁶⁰ Just as Cyril recognised when considering how the earthly ministry of the incarnate Word might be prolonged beyond his bodily Ascension, the glorious humanity wills to work through other created agencies of mediation. Thus, from the Ascension onwards “there are”, writes Thomas, “two kinds of instrument”¹⁶¹ in the order of salvation; both the bodily humanity of the risen Christ and his sacramental signs.

Thomas establishes this line of causality early on in his consideration of the sacraments. He roots their salvific efficacy in the very Christological mystery he has just used to explain the salvific efficacy of all the Word’s *acta et passa in carne*: the humanity of Christ as the conjoined instrument of the divinity. In continuity with the activity of this pre-eminent instrument, Thomas argues that, “in causing grace, a sacrament works in the manner

corporis, scilicet ad Eucharistiae sacramentum” (*In Jo.* ch. 6, lect. 6, 959). See also ST III 84, 10 obj. 3 and ad. 3, where Thomas draws a parallel between Christ’s healing ministry on earth and the sacrament of penance.

¹⁵⁶ ST III 60, Prol. “Post considerationem eorum quae pertinent ad mysteria Verbi incarnati, considerandum est de ecclesiae sacramentis, quae ab ipso Verbo incarnato efficaciam habent.”

¹⁵⁷ ST III 60, 4.

¹⁵⁸ ST III 64, 2 and 3: “... ex institutione sacramenta virtutem obtinent, inde est quod ... ad excellentiam potestatis Christi pertinet quod ipse, qui dedit virtutem sacramentis, potuit instituere sacramenta.”

¹⁵⁹ “[each sacrament] produce[s] a particular spiritual effect” (ST III 62, 4 ad. 1). See also ST III 60, 7; 63, 3; and 65, 1.

¹⁶⁰ The instrumental power of these separated instruments is, in distinction from the assumed humanity, *fluens et incompleta*, “transient and incomplete” (ST III 62, 3).

¹⁶¹ ST III 62, 5.

of an instrument [*per modum instrumenti*]”, which derives its own instrumentality from the prior instrumentality of flesh hypostatically united to the Godhead.¹⁶² As he explains,

Now there are two kinds of instrument: one a separate instrument, such as a stick; the other, united, as a hand. Moreover, the separate instrument is moved by means of the united instrument, as a stick by the hand. Now the principal efficient cause of grace is God Himself, in comparison with whom Christ’s humanity is as a united instrument [*instrumentum coniunctum*], whereas the sacrament is as a separate instrument [*instrumentum separatum*]. Consequently, the saving power must be derived by the sacraments from Christ’s Godhead through His humanity [*derivetur a divinitate Christi per eius humanitatem*].¹⁶³

The sacraments mediate the divine power, but only by virtue of the perfect mediation of the assumed humanity of the Word.¹⁶⁴ This provides the answer to an earlier objection which, in questioning the very possibility of bodily mediation of universal salvation, unites the sacramental thought of Thomas to Cyril: as the objector simply states, though “Christ cleansed the leper by touching him ... Christ’s Passion could not touch all mankind”.¹⁶⁵ Such an objection assumes that the saving power of the incarnate Son (specifically, here, the salutary power of the Passion) is confined, like the touch of his sacred body upon the leper, to the historical, earthly conditions of human corporality, and cannot possess a universal efficacy. But according to St Thomas, such a position underestimates the greatness of the hypostatic union, and the resultant power of the sacred humanity to invest a causal dignity in other secondary, created agents: “For a united instrument, the more powerful it is, is all the more able to lend its power to the separated instrument; as the hand can to a stick”.¹⁶⁶ Such is

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid. “Est autem duplex instrumentum, unum quidem separatum, ut baculus; aliud autem coniunctum, ut manus. Per instrumentum autem coniunctum movetur instrumentum separatum, sicut baculus per manum. Principalis autem causa efficiens gratiae est ipse Deus, ad quem comparatur humanitas Christi sicut instrumentum coniunctum, sacramentum autem sicut instrumentum separatum. Et ideo oportet quod virtus salutifera derivetur a divinitate Christi per eius humanitatem in ipsa sacramenta.”

¹⁶⁴ Hence, the earthly ministers of the sacraments “are the ministers of the true Mediator by administering, *in His stead*, the saving sacraments to men.” (ST III 26, 1 ad. 1) [“Sacerdotes vero novae legis possunt dici mediatores Dei et hominum in quantum sunt ministri veri mediatoris, vice ipsius salutaria sacramenta hominibus exhibentes”].

¹⁶⁵ ST III 48, 6 obj. 2. The whole objection reads: “nullum agens corporale efficienter agit nisi per contactum, unde etiam et Christus tangendo mundavit leprosum, ut ostenderet carnem suam salutiferam virtutem habere, sicut Chrysostomus dicit. Sed passio Christi non potuit contingere omnes homines. Ergo non potuit efficienter operari omnium hominum salutem.”

¹⁶⁶ ST III 64, 4. “Potest enim instrumentum coniunctum, quanto fuerit fortius, tanto magis virtutem suam instrumento separato tribuere, sicut manus baculo.”

the power of the *instrumentum coniunctum* that, *ex benedictione Christi*,¹⁶⁷ certain *instrumenta separata* can continue to convey the Word's divine power and human merits to sinners.¹⁶⁸ Thus, St Thomas' exposition of sacramental causality clarifies and vindicates the intuition of St Cyril, for the logic of the Incarnation does not cease after the Ascension but can be said to be extended and brought to a new perfection: from the Godhead, through the hypostatically united flesh, through to the separated instruments of human ministers and signs, salvation passes through descending lines of mediation in order to apply the fruits of Christ's *acta et passa* beyond their historical confines.¹⁶⁹

This account of the causal relation between the sacred humanity and the sacraments indicates the continuity between the time-bound episodes of Jesus' ministry and the subsequent communication of grace through sacramental rites. Making this connection is, as we have repeated, central to the sacramental doctrine we encountered in Cyril's exegesis. His hope that the touch which raised from the dead the young man of Nain may be available to him becomes more theologically intelligible in light of Thomas' account of sacramental causality. This emerges with particular clarity in his analysis of the precise nature of their instrumentality. Sacraments, he argues, are not disposing instrumental causes,¹⁷⁰ but efficient instrumental causes, causing grace "by exercising [their] proper action"¹⁷¹ under the divine power of the principal agent. Hence, analogous to the divine-human operation of the historical body of Christ upon sinners, the

¹⁶⁷ ST III 62, 4 ad 3.

¹⁶⁸ Thomas teaches that "Christ's Passion, although corporeal, ... secures its efficacy by spiritual contact [*spiritualem contactum*]" (ST III 48, 6 ad. 2). In other words, the Passion of Christ is able to transcend its historical and spatial limitations, and be universally efficacious, by virtue of the hypostatic union of the crucified flesh to the divinity. This gives it an "infinite power" [*infinitam virtutem*] (ad. 1), which allow its effects to be communicated universally beyond the bodily particularities of the historical episode. This is what is meant by *spiritualem contactum*. It is not to deny either the bodiliness of the Passion, the bodily mediation by which sinners receive its effects, nor the glorious consequences the Passion has upon the bodies of sinners. Yet if we are to be united to the Passion two millennia after its occurrence, it cannot, of course, be by way of historical and actual bodily contact with it (in the manner of our Lord himself) but by way of its *spiritualem virtutem*, communicated to sinners "by faith and the sacraments of faith" (ad. 2).

¹⁶⁹ "... passio Christi quodammodo applicatur hominibus per sacramenta" (ST III 61, 1 ad. 3). As Thomas puts it in the *De Veritate* IV, 29, 7 ad. 8: "... meritum Christi sufficienter operatur ut quaedam causa universalis salutis humanae; sed oportet hanc causam applicari singulis per sacramenta, et per fidem formatam, quae per dilectionem operatur."

¹⁷⁰ In the *Summa Theologiae*, unlike in the *Sentences* or the *De Veritate*, St Thomas never even mentions the possibility of sacraments being instrumental disposing causes. See Blankenhorn, 'The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments', p. 287ff.

¹⁷¹ ST III 62, 1 ad. 2.

the corporeal sacraments by their operation, which they exercise on the body that they touch, accomplish through the Divine institution an instrumental operation on the soul.¹⁷²

By virtue of this level of instrumentality, in contrast to a merely dispositive instrumentality,¹⁷³ the sacraments allow sinners, throughout time, to receive the saving power contained in Christ's historical actions, and undergo the healing and sanctifying influence which, from heaven, continues to "go forth" (Lk. 8: 46) from his sacred body.¹⁷⁴

Thomas develops this connection between Jesus' earthly ministry and the sacramental actions even further in his consideration of the sacraments' Christological and anthropological structure —another important preoccupation of Cyril's.¹⁷⁵ As if to illuminate the sacramental prolongation of the enfleshed Word's healing and sanctifying operations on earth, Thomas insists that the lines of communication in the sacraments follow the same anthropological and Christological structure as those described in the episodes of individual healing and sanctification in the Gospels. As St Thomas insists, there is a certain conformity between the sacraments and the incarnate author of grace himself, as there is also between the sacraments and their human recipients. Considered "in regard to the cause of sanctification", writes Thomas, the sacraments

¹⁷² Ibid. Reminiscent of St Cyril, Thomas adds the argument from anthropology: "... since from soul and body one thing is made". "[S]acramenta corporalia per propriam operationem quam exercent circa corpus, quod tangunt, efficiunt operationem instrumentalem ex virtute divina circa animam. ... nam ex anima et corpore unum fit."

¹⁷³ As Blankenhorn observes, if the sacraments were only disposing causes of grace, they "would prepare us for Christ's action and apply his merit, but the salvific efficacy of Christ's humanity would remain essentially separate from the sacraments. In other words, the sacraments would not grant a real share in Christ's saving mysteries. Christ's humanity would act in us in a way that would remain almost indistinguishable from the primary causality exercised by the Trinity, thus becoming invisible, uncertain, and wholly unpredictable. The logic of the Incarnation, to effect and manifest grace in us through the finite and the sensible, would essentially come to an end with the Ascension" ("The Instrumental Causality of the Sacraments", p. 290).

¹⁷⁴ In light of this level of causality, distinct from the moral order, it is often said by Thomists that sacraments act after the manner of 'physical' causes since, under the power of the principal, divine cause, the sacrament really, objectively and immediately produces its effects. As Thomas writes, "if we hold that a sacrament is an instrumental cause of grace we must needs allow that there is in the sacraments a certain instrumental power of bringing about the sacramental effects" (ST III 62, 4). For more on the attribution of a "physical" causality to the sacraments, see M.-Benoît Lavaud OP, 'Saint Thomas et la Causalité Physique Instrumentale de la Sainte Humanité et des Sacraments', in *Revue Thomiste* 32 (1927) p. 305 ff.

¹⁷⁵ For example: *In 1 Cor. 6:15*, Pusey, iii. 263-4; *In Joh. 3:5*. Pusey, i, 219; *In Joh. 15:1* Pusey, ii. 543-4;

have a certain conformity, in that the word is joined to the sensible sign, just as in the mystery of the Incarnation the Word of God is united to sensible flesh.¹⁷⁶

The essential point which underlies this observation, namely, the prolongation of the logic of the Incarnation through time and space, is expressed more explicitly in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*: as Thomas teaches there, since the sacraments are the *instrumenta separata* of their incarnate principal cause, “it is necessary that the instrument be proportioned to [that] first cause”.¹⁷⁷ It therefore has a definite theological fittingness, Thomas observes, “that the remedies whereby the power of the universal cause reaches mankind should bear some likeness to that cause”.¹⁷⁸ Hence, just as it was throughout the earthly ministry of the incarnate Son, here in the sacraments “the divine power works invisibly under visible signs”.¹⁷⁹

If we return to the *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas shows how this conformity is evident not only from the aspect of Christ, but also from the aspect of the sinner, the recipient of Christ’s power. It is man, “composed of soul and body”, writes Thomas, to whom “the sacramental remedy is adjusted [*proportionatur*]”.¹⁸⁰ Again, the argument is illuminated by the scriptural testimony: as it was for those who sought the healing contact of Jesus in faith (cf. Mk. 5: 28-35) the sanctifying power of the incarnate Word in the sacraments implicates the whole composite nature of the sinner, body and soul: for “it touches the body [*corpus tangit*] through the sensible element, and the soul through faith in the words.”¹⁸¹

The theological continuity Thomas stresses between the incarnate mission of the Son and the subsequent sacramental order is now clear. His fundamental line of argument

¹⁷⁶ ST III 60, 6: “... possunt considerari ex parte causae sanctificantis, quae est Verbum incarnatum, cui sacramentum quodammodo conformatur in hoc quod rei sensibili verbum adhibetur, sicut in mysterio incarnationis carni sensibili est Verbum Dei unitum.”

¹⁷⁷ SCG IV, 56. “... instrumenta oportet esse primae causae proportionata. Prima autem et universalis causa humanae salutis est Verbum incarnatum, ut ex praemissis apparet. Congruum igitur fuit ut remedia quibus universalis causae virtus pertingit ad homines, illius causae similitudinem haberent”.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. “... ut scilicet in eis virtus divina invisibiliter operaretur sub visibilibus signis”.

¹⁸⁰ ST III 60, 6: “Secundo possunt considerari sacramenta ex parte hominis qui sanctificatur, qui componitur ex anima et corpore, cui proportionatur sacramentalis medicina”.

¹⁸¹ Ibid. “... per rem visibilem corpus tangit, et per verbum ab anima creditur.” In light of this, it is interesting to observe Thomas’s distinction between the effects of baptism *in re* and baptism *in voto*. Whilst baptism *in re* incorporates into Christ absolutely, without qualification (ST III 62, 2; 68, 2; 69, 5), baptism *in voto* incorporates into Christ only *secundum quid*. It involves a regeneration *corde* but not *corpore* (ST III 68, 2 ad. 1); it incorporates into Christ *mentaliter*, but not *sacramentaliter* (ST III 68, 2), or *corporaliter* (ST III 69, 5 ad. 1). Hence, it is incorporation essentially incomplete, and ordered towards baptism *in re* as its completion.

indicates that the sacraments, in possessing an efficient —not merely dispositive— instrumentality, and in their conformity of structure to both the incarnate Word and to the nature of the recipient, continue the condescending trajectory of the Incarnation, a condescension made explicit through the deployment of the principle of instrumental causality. Through their momentary participation in the divine power, the sacraments objectively confer grace through their own action, and in their sensible and spiritual structure, they replicate the body-to-body mode of contact consistent with the economy of the Incarnation.¹⁸² Present in this sacramental theology of St Thomas, therefore, is the fundamentally Christological intuition of the Greek Fathers: just as the metaphysics of instrumental causality was, earlier in the *tertia pars*, employed to elucidate the mystery of the ‘adaptation’ of the Word’s divine power to the conditions of human corporeality, so in the sacraments it is taught that the spiritual, divine remedy is both transmitted through a tangible medium and thereby “proportioned” or “adjusted” [*proportionatur*] to the nature of the recipient. The sacraments follow on organically from the Christological reflections of both St Cyril and St Thomas¹⁸³ because, insofar as they are the “separated instruments” of the Word, participating in his own efficient instrumentality, modelled on him and adapted to the recipient, they continue his condescending movement of becoming flesh, communicating his divine power through instruments connatural with the human objects of his mercy and love.

¹⁸² Though not all of Christ’s acts of healing and sanctification recounted in the Gospels involve physical contact, all them nevertheless follow the fundamental laws of human communication (e.g. verbal request, command), and therefore involve corporeality at some level. But as Cyril teaches, those episodes which describe healing and sanctification through the touch of Christ’s body are more representative of the Incarnation. See, for example, *In Luc 7:11*. Sermon 36 (Smith, i. 135; PG 72, 577C).

¹⁸³ It is also noteworthy that certain aspects of Thomas’s arguments for the fittingness of the Incarnation (q. 1, 1) are repeated in his exposition of the fittingness of the structure of the sacraments (q. 60, 4 and 6). In both the Incarnation and the sacraments, God condescends to the conditions of human corporeality. For the Incarnation: “illud videtur esse convenientissimum ut per visibilia monstrentur invisibilia Dei, ad hoc enim totus mundus est factus, ut patet per illud apostoli, Rom. 1:20: ‘invisibilia Dei per ea quae facta sunt, intellecta, conspiciuntur.’” (ST III 1, 1). For the sacraments: “... divina sapientia unicuique rei providet secundum suum modum, et propter hoc dicitur, Sap. VIII, ‘quod suaviter disponit omnia’. Unde et Matth. XXV dicitur quod ‘dividit unicuique secundum propriam virtutem’. Est autem homini connaturale ut per sensibilia perveniat in cognitionem intelligibilium. Signum autem est per quod aliquis devenit in cognitionem alterius. Unde, cum res sacrae quae per sacramenta significantur, sint quaedam spiritualia et intelligibilia bona quibus homo sanctificatur, consequens est ut per aliquas res sensibiles significatio sacramenti impleatur” (ST III 60, 4).

2.2. *The physical body of Christ “per modum sacramentale”: the perfection of the sacramental order*

During our earlier considerations of the developments in St Thomas’s understanding of the nature and dignity of instruments, we briefly alluded to an argument concerning the Eucharist in the *De Veritate*, to which we must now return. When considering the causal relation between the sacred humanity of the Word and the sacraments in general, Thomas makes an important distinction in regard to the sacrament of the Lord’s body which, in the particular relation it bears to the Incarnation, is understood to represent the consummation of the sacramental order.

Thomas begins his argument by repeating the fundamental principle that the humanity of Christ is the instrumental cause of our salvation.¹⁸⁴ But since this sacred humanity is at once spiritual and bodily, *spiritus et corpus est*,¹⁸⁵ and that it is the integral humanity, body and soul, which constitutes this united instrument, it follows that salvation is communicated to us in a correspondingly corporeo-spiritual manner: the causal power of the humanity of Christ is, Thomas insists, “applied to us spiritually through faith and bodily through the sacraments, because Christ’s humanity is both spirit and body”.¹⁸⁶ This aligning of the natures of the incarnate Son with the sacraments is, in its echoes of St Cyril,¹⁸⁷ nothing less than the very doctrine we have just been considering in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* and the *Summa Theologiae*. However, what is particular to the *De Veritate* is how Thomas also points out the Eucharistic consequences of this Christologically and anthropologically-informed sacramentology: as he observes, given that it is peculiar to the sacraments to communicate the saving power of Christ to man *corporaliter*, placing the latter, as we have already articulated, in bodily contact with the power which goes forth from his sacred body, it follows that “the most perfect sacrament is that in which the body of Christ is really contained [*corpus Christi realiter continetur*]”.¹⁸⁸ By virtue of this direct presence of the body of the Word, as opposed to a participation in the power which proceeds from it from

¹⁸⁴ *De Veritate* 27, 4: “humanitas Christi est instrumentalis causa iustificationis”.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.* “... quae quidem causa nobis applicatur spiritualiter per fidem, et corporaliter per sacramenta: quia humanitas Christi et spiritus et corpus est”.

¹⁸⁷ As we saw in chapter 2: *In Joh.* 15:1 Pusey, ii. 543-4; *In Luc.* 22:17-22. Reuss, 208-9; Smith, 568; *In I Cor.* 6:15, Pusey, iii. 263-4; *In Rom.* 8:3. Pusey, iii, 213.

¹⁸⁸ *De Veritate* 27, 4. “Unde illud est perfectissimum sacramentum in quo corpus Christi realiter continetur”.

heaven, such a sacrament is by necessity “the consummation of all the others [*est omnium aliorum consummativum*]”.¹⁸⁹

We can make the general observation, therefore, that though the divine power exerted through the humanity of Christ is applied (*applicatur*) to us through faith and the sacraments, it is specifically *sacramental* contact, argues Thomas, which prolongs the mission of Christ in its *incarnate* particularity.¹⁹⁰ Yet a specific perfection belongs to the Eucharist: for whilst all the sacraments are said by Thomas to continue, as *instrumenta separata*, the principle of bodily mediation of the *instrumentum coniunctum*, the sacrament of the Lord’s body necessarily achieves this in a distinctive mode, and in a sovereign manner. This argument of Thomas in the *De Veritate* is expounded upon more comprehensively in the *Summa Theologiae*.

If we go, then, to the *Summa Theologiae*, we see that the perfection of the Eucharist is articulated differently, though according to the same principles. Its pre-eminence, by virtue of the conversion of the substances of bread and wine into the substances of Christ’s body and blood, lies in the fact that “it contains Christ Himself substantially, whereas the other sacraments contain a certain instrumental power which is a participation of Christ’s power”.¹⁹¹ In other words, the Eucharist is not, therefore, an *instrumentum separatum* but an *instrumentum coniunctum*, the very body hypostatically united to the Word. It does not convey Christ as an action conveys his power; rather, under its sacramental species, it conveys him directly, as the hypostatically united body conveys the divine person.¹⁹² Consequently, in distinction from all the other sacraments, in being the personal body of the Word, the Eucharist “has of itself [*ex seipso*] the power of bestowing grace”.¹⁹³ It does not participate in the power of the united instrument, but rather *is* that very united instrument in its sacramental mode.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Colman O’Neil OP has expressed the particularity of sacramental contact in this way: “The personal intervention of Christ, active through the visible elements of the liturgical action, brings a direct, bodily contact with the mysteries as they are preserved in the glorified Christ. This is a new and wholly gratuitous addition to the mental contact achieved by faith and it brings with it a richness of grace unattainable to faith alone; yet it is fully in harmony with the contact of faith. It intensifies, makes corporeal, the union of faith.” *Meeting Christ in the Sacraments*, p. 74.

¹⁹¹ ST III 65, 3: “... ex eo quod in eo continetur ipse Christus substantialiter, in aliis autem sacramentis continetur quaedam virtus instrumentalis participata a Christo”.

¹⁹² See ST III 76, 1 for the argument of Eucharistic concomitance.

¹⁹³ ST III 79, 1 ad. 1: “hoc sacramentum ex seipso virtutem habet gratiam conferendi”.

2.2.1. From Action to Presence: Participated Power to the Substantial Body of Christ

This immediacy of bodily presence is illuminated by what Thomas has to say about the role of the matter in the Eucharist, in relation to the matter of the other sacraments. If the latter convey, momentarily, the divine power which goes forth from his ascended body, the matter of the former does not participate in his power, but itself becomes that very body from which power proceeds.¹⁹⁴ The principle of sacramental mediation is thereby intensified, since the instrumental conveying of power through sensible matter (which characterises the other sacraments) is here replaced by a substantial containing under the sacrament's material species:

A sacrament is so termed because it contains something sacred. Now a thing can be considered sacred from two causes; either absolutely, or in relation to something else. The difference between the Eucharist and other sacraments having sensible matter is that whereas the Eucharist contains something which is sacred absolutely, namely, Christ's own body; the baptismal water contains something which is sacred in relation to something else, namely, the sanctifying power: and the same holds good of chrism and such like. Consequently, the sacrament of the Eucharist is completed in the very consecration of the matter, whereas the other sacraments are completed in the application of the matter for the sanctifying of the individual. And from this follows another difference. For, in the sacrament of the Eucharist, what is both reality and sacrament is in the matter itself.¹⁹⁵

This teaching of Thomas subtly indicates how the Eucharist both transcends the lines of communication essential to the others, and perfects the entire sacramental order.¹⁹⁶ As

¹⁹⁴ ST III 79, 1. "... effectus huius sacramenti debet considerari, primo quidem et principaliter, ex eo quod in hoc sacramento continetur, quod est Christus. Qui sicut, in mundum visibiliter veniens, contulit mundo vitam gratiae, secundum illud Ioan. I, *gratia et veritas per Iesum Christum facta est*; ita, in hominem sacramentaliter veniens, vitam gratiae operatur, secundum illud Ioan. VI, *qui manducat me, vivit propter me.*"

¹⁹⁵ ST III 73, 1 ad. 3. "Sacramentum dicitur ex eo quod continet aliquid sacrum. Potest autem aliquid esse sacrum dupliciter, scilicet absolute, et in ordine ad aliud. Haec est autem differentia inter Eucharistiam et alia sacramenta habentia materiam sensibilem, quod Eucharistia continet aliquid sacrum absolute, scilicet ipsum Christum, aqua vero baptismi continet aliquid sacrum in ordine ad aliud, scilicet virtutem ad sanctificandum, et eadem ratio est de chrismate et similibus. Et ideo sacramentum eucharistiae perficitur in ipsa consecratione materiae, alia vero sacramenta perficiuntur in applicatione materiae ad hominem sanctificandum. Et ex hoc etiam consequitur alia differentia. Nam in sacramento Eucharistiae id quod est res et sacramentum, est in ipsa materia".

¹⁹⁶ As Thomas writes in his Commentary on the Gospel of St Matthew, "... this Sacrament [the Eucharist] is the end and perfection [*finis et perfectio*] of all the sacraments; and this is the reason, because 'being' which is by its essence, is the end and perfection of those things which exist by participation [*quia esse quod est per essentiam, est finis et perfectio eorum quae per participationem*]: for other sacraments contain Christ by participation [*Christum continet per participationem*]; in this very one, however, it is Christ

Thomas implies here, the sensible sign of baptism is a momentary action, containing not the body of Christ but the regenerating *act* of Christ.¹⁹⁷ The permanent effect upon the soul of the baptised (i.e. the baptismal character) has been brought about by the passing action of water and words, momentarily raised to the dignity of *instrumentum separatum Christi*.¹⁹⁸ It is this quality, as we have considered, that could be said to lend the other sacraments a certain analogous relation to the historical and earthly ministrations of Christ,¹⁹⁹ where transient applications of divine power were conveyed through sensible signs and expressions. In consequence of transubstantiation, the distinction Thomas is able to make for the Eucharist shows how it both transcends this structure, and yet perfects the notion of the sacramental prolongation of the incarnate mission of the Word. For according to his understanding of the matter of the Eucharist, in this sacrament the ascended body of Christ is not acting upon the Christian through an extraneous and momentarily raised agent of his power, but is itself substantially present under edible species. Therefore, in the execution and completion of this sacrament, there is no passing action upon the sinner in a manner analogous to that found in the Gospel narratives; rather, by the power of the words of Institution (uttered “as if Christ were speaking in person”²⁰⁰) his action is upon the bread and wine.²⁰¹ Consequently, as we

himself according to substance: therefore, as Dionysius says, there is no sacrament which is not made complete in the Eucharist” (*In Matt.*, ch. 26, 3).

¹⁹⁷ Cf. ST III 62, 1 ad. 2; ST III 66, 5 ad 1.

¹⁹⁸ As Thomas writes elsewhere, in sacraments such as baptism, “the consecration of the matter consists only in a blessing, from which the matter consecrated derives instrumentally a spiritual power [*ex qua materia consecrata accipit instrumentaliter quandam spiritualem virtutem*], which through the priest who is an animated instrument, can pass on to inanimate instruments [*quae per ministrum, qui est instrumentum animatum, potest ad instrumenta inanimata procedere*]” (ST III 78, 1).

¹⁹⁹ Cf. ST III 84, 10 ad. 3.

²⁰⁰ ST III 78, 1: “Sed forma huius sacramenti profertur ex persona ipsius Christi loquentis”.

²⁰¹ Thomas associates the healing touch of Christ upon the leper with the transforming power of his words of Eucharistic consecration (see ST III 78, 4 ad. 2). Indeed, the passing act which conveys Christ’s power in this sacrament is the words of consecration, and it is these words which bear, momentarily, his divine power. Analogous to baptism, this is a passing act of Christ which brings about a permanent effect, not upon the soul of the recipient, but on the matter of the sacrament: in this case, the effect is the enduring presence of the physical body and blood of Christ under the sacramental species of bread and wine. This is the historical action of Christ which, through his ordained ministers, is repeated through time (cf. ST III 78, 1: since “the form of this sacrament is pronounced as if Christ were speaking in person ... the minister does nothing in perfecting this sacrament, except to pronounce the words of Christ”; ST III 78, 4: “For since these words are uttered in the person of Christ, it is from His command that they receive their instrumental power from Him, just as His other deeds and sayings derive their salutary power instrumentally”; ST 78, 4 ad. 2: “No creature can work miracles as the chief agent, yet it can do so instrumentally, just as the touch of Christ’s hand healed the leper. And in this fashion Christ’s words change the bread into His body.”). Hence, as Vonier observes, each consecration is an application, through the ministry of his priest, of what happened at the Last Supper: “after Christ, the Son of God, had done the great deed of the first consecration at the Last Supper, the miracle was complete, and nothing new has happened since. The circumstance that thousands of priests consecrate today in all parts of the world is no

saw Thomas imply in the *De Veritate*, the sacrament of the Lord's body is the direct sacrament of the Incarnation, rather than a specific application of the power that proceeds from it. The consecrated species is not temporarily raised to be a separated instrument of Christ's power but is his permanent sensible sign and bearer, containing the very body from which the sacramental power of all the other sacraments proceed.²⁰² Hence, "this sacrament is accomplished by the consecration of the matter, while the rest are perfected in the *use* of the consecrated matter [*in usu materiae consecratae*]"²⁰³.

2.2.2. Understanding the Wonder of St Cyril

It is precisely this unique sacramental structure of the Eucharist that provokes the wonder of St Cyril when he traces the general correspondence between Christ's historical acts of healing and sanctification and the subsequent sacramental order. The ascended body, through which the divine power is always mediated in the sacraments, is here not placed in contact with sinners through separated instruments, but simply present. The effects which proceed from it are, Thomas argues, the consequence of the sacred body's substantial presence.²⁰⁴

new marvel." Dom Anscar Vonier OSB, *A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist* (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne Ltd., 1931) p. 181. As we shall consider in more detail shortly, the action of Christ on the soul by means of the sacramental eating of his body is, as Cyril perceived, without any corresponding precedent in his earthly ministry.

²⁰² Cf. ST III 65, 3; ST III 79, 1. "[S]impliciter loquendo, sacramentum eucharistiae est potissimum inter alia sacramenta. ... Primo quidem, ex eo quod in eo continetur ipse Christus substantialiter, in aliis autem sacramentis continetur quaedam virtus instrumentalis participata a Christo Semper autem quod est per essentiam, potius est eo quod est per participationem. Secundo hoc apparet ex ordine sacramentorum ad invicem, nam omnia alia sacramenta ordinari videntur ad hoc sacramentum sicut ad finem. ... Tertio hoc apparet ex ritu sacramentorum. Nam fere omnia sacramenta in eucharistia consummantur" (ST III 65, 3); "... effectus huius sacramenti debet considerari, primo quidem et principaliter, ex eo quod in hoc sacramento continetur, quod est Christus. Qui sicut, in mundum visibiliter veniens, contulit mundo vitam gratiae, secundum illud Ioan. I, '*gratia et veritas per iesum Christum facta est*'; ita, in hominem sacramentaliter veniens, vitam gratiae operatur, secundum illud Ioan. VI, '*qui manducat me, vivit propter me*'. Unde et Cyrillus dicit, '*vivificativum Dei Verbum, uniens seipsum propriae carni, fecit ipsam vivificativam. Decebat ergo eum nostris quodammodo uniri corporibus per sacram eius carnem et pretiosum sanguinem, quae accipimus in benedictione vivificativa in pane et vino.*' Secundo consideratur ex eo quod per hoc sacramentum repraesentatur, quod est passio Christi Et ideo effectum quem passio Christi fecit in mundo, hoc sacramentum facit in homine. Unde super illud Ioan. XIX, '*continuo exivit sanguis et aqua*', dicit Chrysostomus, '*quia hinc suscipiunt principium sacra mysteria, cum accesseris ad tremendum calicem, vel ab ipsa bibiturus christi costa, ita accedas.*' Unde et ipse dominus dicit, Matth. XXVI, '*hic est sanguis meus, qui pro vobis effundetur in remissionem peccatorum.*' (ST III 79, 1).

²⁰³ ST III 78, 1 (emphasis mine). "... quod hoc sacramentum perficitur in consecratione materiae, alia vero sacramenta perficiuntur in usu materiae consecratae".

²⁰⁴ ST III 79, 1. "... effectus huius sacramenti debet considerari, primo quidem et principaliter, ex eo quod in hoc sacramento continetur, quod est Christus".

These distinctions help us understand the very connections which are present, though unformulated, at the heart of Cyril's Christologically sacramental thought: namely, the lines of continuity between the activity of Christ and the sacraments. According to Thomas, if the sacraments convey the saving power of Christ's operation, the Eucharist is the sacrament which, at the most fundamental level, prolongs his bodily presence: for, in this instance, the very sacrament itself "contains Christ Himself substantially".²⁰⁵ If the other sacraments bear an analogous relation to the actions of Christ's earthly ministry, the Eucharist, strictly speaking, continues his incarnate presence on earth, sacramentally.

In light of this, it is worth recalling that St Cyril's theological astonishment is not primarily directed towards the bodily *presence* of Christ in the Eucharist (for this has its precedent in his pre-ascended presence on earth), but rather to what this presence is ordered towards: namely, sacramental eating. It is precisely in its function as food that the sacrament of the Lord's body seems to transcend the lines of communication inaugurated at the Incarnation: as Cyril beheld, if Christ's earthly ministry of healing, forgiveness and sanctification finds its prolongation in the momentary infusions of divine power through separated instruments, the sacramental eating of the very body from which this power proceeds establishes a wholly new level of contact: "if mere contact with the sacred flesh gives life to a dead body, how should we not profit more richly by the life-giving body when we taste it?".²⁰⁶ We are going to return to this theme, particularly the subject of bodily contact through touch and taste, in due course.

2.2.3. " ... in the sacrament of the Eucharist, what is both reality and sacrament is in the matter itself".²⁰⁷

To complete this consideration of how the sacramental presence of the Lord's true body effects, in a perfect and sovereign manner, the very purpose of the entire sacramental order, we must return to certain conclusions established earlier in the *tertia pars*. Drawing upon the Christology which Thomas' sacramental theology presupposes, to say that the true body of Christ (*res*) is present under a sacramental sign (*sacramentum tantum*), is to admit of two signs in this one sacrament. This is because the true body of Christ is, as we have already observed, itself the divine sacrament *par excellence*. The presence of this very body is

²⁰⁵ ST III 65, 3.

²⁰⁶ *In Joh.* 4,3. Pusey, i. 530.

²⁰⁷ ST III 73, 1 ad. 3. " ... in sacramento Eucharistiae id quod est res et sacramentum, est in ipsa materia".

therefore a sign of further realities: it is both reality and sign, *res et sacramentum*.²⁰⁸ Such is the uniquely direct structure of this sacrament, where, as we have said, by virtue of substantial conversion, the matter itself becomes the sacred reality we desire, the entire sacramental order is here fulfilled: it means that the crucified and risen Sacrament of the Godhead (the historical and physical body of Christ) is not at work through independent material realities which efficaciously signify his saving work, but the material realities themselves become this Sacrament: become, in other words, the body of the Word, the great Sacrament of the mystery of redemption.²⁰⁹ If the other sacraments convey, as his *instrumenta separata*, his saving action, this sacrament contains the Sacrament which, as the Word's hypostically united instrument,²¹⁰ works through those independent agents. Here, then, the sacramental order returns to its first principle and its greatest realisation for, as Thomas teaches in the *De Veritate*, the sacramental principle of bodily mediation undergoes no personal disconnection or mitigation in this particular instance: as he teaches, if the sacraments all communicate the saving power of Christ *corporaliter*, “the most perfect sacrament is that in which the body of Christ is really contained [*corpus Christi realiter continetur*]”.²¹¹

²⁰⁸ See ST III 73, 6. In this sacrament, the real, historical body of Christ is itself both the reality (*res*) contained under the sensible sign of bread and wine, and —consistent with its natural function as a body— itself a *sacramentum*, the efficacious sign of his union with the Christian (*res et sacramentum*).

²⁰⁹ “The body of Christ was the sacrament of redemption while Christ was on earth; it retains its sacramentality now that Christ is glorified. On earth the divine mystery of redemption was carried out by Christ in his humanity; and, just as any man’s external actions execute and make known his intentions, so Christ’s body, in its actions and in what it suffered, signified and made known the hidden movements of Christ’s soul by which he freely obeyed the command of his Father offering his life for our redemption. The physical body of Christ, as we see it with the eye of faith, passing through the earthly mysteries, is consequently the sacrament of the whole mystery of redemption in both its divine origin and its human realisation. Now that Christ is glorified in heaven and has become the source of the Spirit, his body remains for the eye of faith the sacrament of salvation. Endowed with the power of the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, the body is the direct cause of our sanctification. As sign and cause, the body of Christ is the basic sacrament of salvation.” Colman O’Neill OP, *Meeting Christ in the Sacraments*, p. 80-1.

²¹⁰ Thomas occasionally speaks of the “body” of Christ as the conjoined instrument of the Godhead. For example, in ST III 50, 6 ad. 3, he says that the “*corpus illud fuit instrumentum divinitatis*”.

²¹¹ *De Veritate* 27, 4. “*Unde illud est perfectissimum sacramentum in quo corpus Christi realiter continetur*”.

3. Corporeity and the doctrine of Transubstantiation: “It would be impossible to conceive a closer form of bodily presence”.²¹²

3.1. Initial Considerations

Before we consider certain features of Thomas’ Eucharistic theology which relate specifically to our theme, it is necessary to make certain initial observations about the metaphysical principles underlying his account of the Eucharistic presence. This will give added clarity to the arguments we will be proposing later, and guard against misunderstandings.

As we shall soon be considering in more detail, Thomas argues that the body of Christ is in this sacrament not merely *secundum figuram* but *secundum veritatem*; this is because, at the words of Consecration, “the whole substance of the bread is converted into the whole substance of Christ’s body”.²¹³ As a result of this conversion, Thomas is happy to speak not simply of Christ’s “presence”, but specifically of Christ’s “bodily presence” (*sui praesentiam corporalem*)²¹⁴ in this sacrament. This choice of words is of special importance to our thesis, and we shall consider the implications of it more fully in due course. At this point it is simply necessary to establish the fundamental principles upon which any kind of corporality can be predicated of the Eucharistic presence.

According to the principles laid down by Thomas, we are to speak of Christ’s “bodily presence” in the Eucharist not insofar as the mode of the sacred body’s presence is bodily, but simply insofar as the actual body of Christ, born of Mary and now in glory, is substantially and not merely figuratively present. Indeed, it is substantially present not according to its natural mode, in and through its natural species,²¹⁵ but *per modum substantiae*, under the sacramental species of bread and wine.²¹⁶ Thus, under these sacramental conditions, the body of Christ is said to be present in a non-local,²¹⁷ non-spatial,²¹⁸ non-circumscribable,²¹⁹ mode. The substance of the body is not present in the way

²¹² William Barden OP, Blackfriars edition of the *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 58: ‘The Eucharistic Presence’ (Blackfriars, 1965), p. 211.

²¹³ ST III 74, 4: “... tota substantia panis convertitur in totam substantiam corporis Christi”.

²¹⁴ ST III 75, 1

²¹⁵ ST III 76, 8

²¹⁶ ST III 76, 1

²¹⁷ ST III 75, 1 ad. 2; ST III 76, 5 and also 6.

²¹⁸ ST III 76, 5

²¹⁹ ST III 76, 5 ad. 1

in which the substance of the bread was present, as underlying the dimensions and sensible properties of the bread;²²⁰ nor is it present in such a way that those same edible properties become Christ's physical properties,²²¹ nor that "Christ's body is in physico-chemical and spatial contact with the environment".²²² Such a "bodily presence" is, therefore, not bodily realised: "it cannot be seen by the bodily eye",²²³ nor "does it come under any one of the senses",²²⁴ but "is perceptible ... only by the intellect".²²⁵ In other words, according to these metaphysical principles of Thomas, we need to say that Christ is "bodily present" in an unbodily way in the Eucharist; the "bodily presence" is realised in a spiritual mode, the mode of substance.²²⁶

These principles have great implications for our study, and will allow us to develop the thesis we are seeking to expound. At the outset, two significant points need to be asserted before we proceed with our particular theme. First of all, the fact that the accidents of bread do not inhere in the substance of Christ's body does not imply any weakening or diminution of presence. For after the consecration, the substance of the body of Christ is as close to the appearances of bread as the substance of the bread was to its own appearances.²²⁷ The accidents of the bread do not inhere in the substance of the sacred body,²²⁸ but they nevertheless contain it,²²⁹ just as really and as closely as they had contained the substance of bread. Since the sacramental species is as close to the body of Christ as accident is close to

²²⁰ ST III 77, 1

²²¹ ST III 75, 5; ST III 77, 7 ad. 3

²²² Timothy McDermott OP, *Summa Theologie: A Concise Translation* (Allen, Texas: Christian Classics, 1989), p. 546.

²²³ ST III 76, 7

²²⁴ ST III 76, 7

²²⁵ ST III 76, 7.

²²⁶ Thomas provides a way of understanding this spiritual mode of this "bodily presence" in response to those who misinterpret St Augustine's teaching ("You are not to eat the body which you see", and "in its spiritual sense it will quicken you"): "he means not to exclude the truth of Christ's body, but that it was not to be eaten in this species in which it was seen by them ... [and] he intends not that the body of Christ is in this sacrament merely according to mystical signification, but spiritually, that is, invisibly, and by the power of the spirit." (ST III 75, 1 ad. 1).

²²⁷ ST III 76, 1 ad. 3. " ... tota substantia corporis Christi et sanguinis continetur in hoc sacramento post consecrationem, sicut ante consecrationem continebatur ibi substantia panis et vini".

²²⁸ ST III 77, 1

²²⁹ ST III 78, 5. Thomas frequently speaks of Christ's body as "that which is contained [*continetur*] under the species of bread [*sub speciebus panis continetur*]". This does not imply that the body is circumscriptively contained by the accidents of bread, as though enclosed in a container, but rather it means that the substance of Christ's body is present wherever the accidents of bread remain.

substance “it would be impossible”, observes one commentator, “to conceive a closer form of bodily presence”.²³⁰

Secondly, by clearly following the principles laid down by Thomas, we can perceive more clearly how the notion of bodiliness relates to Christ’s presence and, specifically, how this bodiliness *per modum substantiae* relates to the communicant’s own corporality. As the Church teaches,²³¹ and as Thomas shows, to say that the body of Christ is touched and eaten is strictly true—even though only sacramentally possible—since what is eaten is no longer bread, but the true body of Christ. Therefore, Thomas can assert, sometimes without adding any further qualification, *per Eucharistiam manducamus Christum*.²³² The shocking impact of John 6: 53-5, the “intolerable language” (Jn. 6: 60) of the Lord, is thereby entirely maintained by Thomas;²³³ what he adds is to show that the reality is made possible, and indeed, humanly fitting,²³⁴ by the sacramental mode of this presence and contact. Though it is contact with the sacred body *in specie sacramentali*, and not *in sua specie*, this in no way changes the decisive feature of the sacrament:²³⁵ it is Christ himself, *Christum ipsum*, who is

²³⁰ William Barden OP, Blackfriars edition of the *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 58: ‘The Eucharistic Presence’ (Blackfriars, 1965), p. 211.

²³¹ DS 700 (The Berengarian Confession of 1079).

²³² ST III 73, 5 ad. 1.

²³³ “[U]nless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; ... [f]or my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.” As is frequently observed, the Greek verb *trogein*, τρώγω, translated here as “eat”, has a peculiarly strong and vivid sense of corporality, which should also be understood as “chew” or “gnaw”. The Anglo-Catholic theologian E.L. Mascall makes the following observation on the sixth chapter of St John’s Gospel: “Here [Christ] is quite clearly not telling his disciples that they must enter into a spiritual relation with him by faith, that they, as spiritual creatures, must commune with him who is uncreated Spirit. What he is saying is that they, as living men of flesh and blood, must feed upon him who is a living man of flesh and blood. How they were to do this they would discover at the Last Supper, but the fact is plain. This is not soul communing with soul, it is men feeding upon a man. If this phrase sounds shocking, it is relevant to observe that our Lord’s own words shocked his hearers; but he was not prepared to mitigate their force, even when many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him. In spite of this, theologians have shown a recurrent tendency, in their discussions on the Eucharist, to fall into a false spirituality, sometimes merely as regards their language but also sometimes as regards their thought. They have frequently separated man into soul and body, then assumed that it is only the soul that matters, and finally concluded that the Eucharist is solely concerned with the sanctification and salvation of the soul”. Mascall then lists several examples. See E.L. Mascall, *Corpus Christi: Essays on the Church and the Eucharist* (London: Longmans, 1953) pp. 115-6.

²³⁴ ST III 75, 5. “[A]ll the accidents of the bread and wine remain after the consecration. And this is reasonably done by Divine providence. First of all, because it is not customary, but horrible, for men to eat human flesh, and to drink blood. And therefore Christ’s flesh and blood are set before us to be partaken of under the species of those things which are the more commonly used by men, namely, bread and wine. Secondly, lest this sacrament might be derided by unbelievers, if we were to eat our Lord under His own species. Thirdly, that while we receive our Lord’s body and blood invisibly, this may redound to the merit of faith.”

²³⁵ ST III 79, 2 ad. 3. “... quod *Christus* sub aliena specie sumitur, pertinet ad rationem sacramenti”.

touched and eaten.²³⁶ It is in this way that the striking realism often found in the Eucharistic doctrine of the Fathers,²³⁷ and the ancient liturgies,²³⁸ is to be understood and upheld. It is also, Thomas teaches, how the vivid somaticism of the Berengarian Confession is to be interpreted.²³⁹

With these principles established, we may now proceed to specific arguments in Thomas' Eucharistic theology which relate in important ways to the notion of corporality. The first concerns the notion of 'touch' which, as we saw, plays a decisive role in St Cyril's Christologically informed Eucharistic theology. As we shall consider now, it is also a theme which plays an important part in the Eucharistic doctrine of St Thomas.

²³⁶ Cf. ST III 75, 1.

²³⁷ For example, this extract from St John Chrysostom: "[In the Eucharist] Christ has given those who desire him not only to see him, but even to touch him, and eat him, and fix their teeth in his flesh, and to embrace him, and satisfy all their love" (Homily 46, 3; cited in Rev. Alvin Kimel Jr, 'Eating Christ: Recovering the Language of Real Identification', *Pro Ecclesia* XIII (Winter, 2004), p. 83).

²³⁸ For example, this extract from the West Syrian Liturgy: "Thee I am holding who holdest no bounds, thee I am grasping who orderest the depths, thee, O God, do I place in my mouth" (cited in *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, ed. F.E. Brightman (Oxford, 1896), p. 102). And, "I carry you, living God, ... and I embrace you in my palms, Lord of the worlds whom no world has contained. You have circumscribed yourself in a fiery coal within a fleshly palm—you Lord, who with you palm measured out the dust of the earth. You are holy, God incarnate in my hands in a fiery coal which is a body, ... my hands embrace you confidently. Make me worthy, Lord, to eat you ... and to taste the food of your body" (cited in Aelred Cody, 'An Instruction of Philoxenus of Mabbug on Gestures and Prayer when one receives Communion in the Hand, with a History of the manner of receiving the Eucharistic Bread in the West Syrian Church', in *Rule of Prayer, Rule of Faith*, ed. Nathan Mitchell and John F. Baldovin (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996), p. 63). In the Divine Liturgy of St Basil, the celebrant speaks these words at the fraction: "Broken and divided is the Lamb of God, which is broken and not disunited, which is ever eaten and not consumed" (cited in Michael Pomazansky, *Orthodox Dogmatic Theology*, trans. Seraphim Rose (Platina, California: St Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1983) p. 282).

²³⁹ The Berengarian Confession of 1059 holds: "... after the Consecration, not only the Sacrament but the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ ... are in truth sensibly and not only sacramentally touched by the hands of the priests and are broken and chewed by the teeth of the faithful." (DS 690). In other words, the actual body of Christ is sensibly touched and eaten *sacramentally*. (See ST III 77, 7 ad. 3). Guitmand of Aversa (+1090), one of the very first to apply the distinction of substance and accidents to the Eucharist, writes, "In the Eucharist, the body of Christ is truly touched by our hands and truly eaten, but in such cases he himself is in no way wounded or hurt. ... Like the eating, the *fractio*, the breaking of the Host at Mass, does not hurt the Lord, nor does it divide him, even though the Host is divided" (Guitmand, *De Corporis et sanguinis Christi veritate*; PL 149, 1432-33; quoted in O'Connor, *The Hidden Manna*, p. 108-9). Zachary of Besancon, a contemporary of Peter Lombard, writes: "The body of Christ is incorruptible, but on the other hand, the body of Christ is crushed by teeth and gulped down" (quoted in Gary Macy, *Treasures from the Storeroom* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1999), pp. 26-7. Along these lines, certain theologians have even spoken of a quasi *communicatio idiomatum* in their Eucharistic theology. See Rev. Alvin Kimel Jr, 'Eating Christ: Recovering the Language of Real Identification', *Pro Ecclesia* XIII (Winter, 2004), pp. 82-100; Robert I. Wilberforce, *The Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist* (London: Mozley, 1853) pp. 242-3; Francis J. Hall, *Dogmatic Theology* (vol. ix): 'The Sacraments' (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1921), pp. 136-7.

3.2. *Sacramental Contact by way of Touch*

As our earlier reflections demonstrated, St Thomas' teachings on the perfections of the Eucharist in relation to the other sacraments force the reader to recall the fundamental Christological principles, particularly the hypostatic union, which underlie his Eucharistic doctrine. This is a feature of Thomas' Eucharistic theology that unites him, once again, with St Cyril, for just as the latter does in his Eucharistic theology, Thomas' implicitly draws upon the mystery of the hypostatic union in expressing not only the reality, but the efficacy, of the sacrament of the Lord's body: "The effect of this sacrament ought to be considered, first of all and principally, from what is contained in this sacrament".²⁴⁰ Thus, as we have seen him argue, the power of the Eucharist resides not primarily in operation and participated power, but in that it contains the hypostatically united —and therefore "life-giving"²⁴¹— flesh of the Word. If the other sacraments are "sacred in relation to something else, namely, the sanctifying power",²⁴² the Eucharist "contains something which is sacred absolutely, namely, Christ's own body".²⁴³

This theology of Thomas is, as we have been seeking to emphasise, thoroughly Cyrilline in its intuitions. In continuity with Cyril's sacramentology, it is founded upon the hypostatic union of flesh and divinity and the consequences which proceed from it, in and through its sacramental modality, after the Ascension. Particularly pertinent, therefore, is how Thomas applies to the Eucharist another theme important to Cyril: the incarnate Word's tendency to perform acts of healing and sanctification through physical touch. Cyril, as we saw, frequently alluded to this phenomenon to articulate, among other things,²⁴⁴ both the

²⁴⁰ ST III 79, 1. "... effectus huius sacramenti debet considerari, primo quidem et principaliter, ex eo quod in hoc sacramento continetur".

²⁴¹ *In Jo.* 6, lect. 4, n. 914. "Et quia caro Christi ipsi Verbo Dei unita est, habet etiam quod sit *vivificativa*, unde et corpus, sacramentaliter sumptum, *vivificativum* est".

²⁴² ST III 73, 1 ad. 3. "... sacrum in ordine ad aliud, scilicet virtutem ad sanctificandum".

²⁴³ *Ibid.* "...Eucharistia continet aliquid sacrum absolute, scilicet ipsum Christum". One commentator provides the following reflection: "According to Thomistic teaching, the humanity of Christ has a direct physical influence on us as the conjoined instrument of the divinity. Through that humanity, all grace comes to us. According to Garrigou-Lagrange, Christ's humanity acts on us virtually. "It does not touch us", he wrote, "because it is in heaven" (*The Mother of the Saviour*, p. 213). His statement, however, is not completely accurate, because it does not allow sufficiently for the unique contact achieved with the Lord in the Eucharist. Although not a contiguous contact in the usual sense of the word, it is more than the virtual contact that Jesus has with us in the other sacraments; it is, indeed, quasi-contiguous because of his Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Eucharist". James O'Connor, *The Hidden Manna: A Theology of the Eucharist*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), pp. 359-60.

²⁴⁴ Cyril also sees this tendency for bodily contact as God's way of forming a union with man "according to a common nature" (i.e. according to the flesh, *kata sarka*). See *In Joh.* 15:1. Pusey, ii. 543-4. Such a union,

mystery of the hypostatic union and the bodily composition of man. Yet whilst he regards contact by means of touch to grant eloquent expression to the truth of the Incarnation,²⁴⁵ we have also seen how he regards “mere touch” to be surpassed by the “tasting” that is peculiar to Eucharistic communion.²⁴⁶ Thomas develops this distinction²⁴⁷ though, as we shall now see, rather than regarding *gustus* as signifying a wholly new mode of contact, he perceives it in continuity with *tactus*, and as an intensification of the latter’s basic characteristics.

Before observing how St Thomas relates ‘touch’ to the contact achieved in the Eucharist, it is worth noting the place it holds in his general anthropology. Its chief attributes show it to accord in important ways both with the nature of man and the very composition of the sacraments. “Touch”, according to Thomas, is not only “the first of the senses”,²⁴⁸ but also the most human of them, for it is simultaneously the “most material” (*maxime materialis*)²⁴⁹ of the five and the one which, for its perfection, depends most of all upon the intellect, the body’s rational form.²⁵⁰ Of all the senses, “touch and taste are the most material of all”,²⁵¹ yet by virtue of his intellectual soul, “man has the best sense of touch among animals”,²⁵² and in him it is necessarily “more perfect ... than in any other animal”.²⁵³ Indeed, of all the animals, man is especially well-equipped to benefit from this sense: his intellectual soul causes his body to be “most suitable as an organ of touch

though, is not so much the effect of the touch of Christ, but the consequence of eating the Eucharist. As we have seen, Cyril regards the Eucharist to involve a level of contact much deeper than touch (*In Joh.* 4,3. Pusey, i. 530).

²⁴⁵ For example, *In Luc.* 4:38, Sermon 12 (Smith, i. 71; PG 72, 552B, 549D); and 7:11. Sermon 36 (Smith, i. 135; PG 72, 577C).

²⁴⁶ *In Joh.* 4,3. Pusey, i. 530.

²⁴⁷ It is chiefly in his Commentary on the *Sentences* that this theme is developed, which was written long before Thomas encountered the writings of St Cyril. However, on certain occasions in the *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas explicitly associates the act of touching the physical body of Christ with reception of the Eucharist. For example, ST III 80, 4 ad. 1: “Christus in propria specie apparet non exhibebat se tangendum hominibus in signum spiritualis unionis ad ipsum, sicut exhibetur sumendus in hoc sacramento. Et ideo peccatores eum in propria specie tangentes non incurrerant crimen falsitatis circa divina, sicut peccatores sumentes hoc sacramentum. Et praeterea Christus adhuc gerebat similitudinem carnis peccati, et ideo convenienter se peccatoribus tangendum exhibebat. Sed, remota similitudine carnis peccati per gloriam resurrectionis se tangi prohibuit a muliere, quae defectum fidei circa ipsum patiebatur, secundum illud Ioan. XX, *noli me tangere, nondum enim ascendi ad Patrem meum*, scilicet in corde tuo, ut Augustinus exponit. Et ideo peccatores, qui defectum fidei patiuntur formatae circa ipsum, repelluntur a contactu huius sacramenti.”

²⁴⁸ ST Suppl. 82, 4, obj. 1 (quoting Aristotle, *De Anima* ii, 2).

²⁴⁹ *Sent. Libri Ethicorum* X, lectio 9, n. 7. “... operatio tactus est maxime materialis”.

²⁵⁰ ST I 76, 5: “... inter ipsos homines, qui sunt melioris tactus, sunt melioris intellectus”.

²⁵¹ ST I 78, 3. “Tactus autem et gustus sunt maxime materiales”. This is said because they “have a greater measure of material alteration connected with [them]” (ST III 82, 4 ad. 1). Furthermore, “animal is defined from the primary sense, namely touch” (ST Suppl. 79, 2 obj. 3).

²⁵² ST I 76, 5. “... homo inter omnia animalia melioris est tactus”.

²⁵³ ST I 91, 3 ad. 1. “... tactus ... est perfectior in homine quam in aliquo alio animali”.

[*convenientissimum organum tactus*]”,²⁵⁴ and even the very sense upon which all the others depend.²⁵⁵

To a greater degree than the other sacraments, *tactus* is specifically identified with the Eucharist, argues Thomas, and this is both a consequence of its unique structure (following the miracle of transubstantiation) and a manifestation of its pre-eminence.²⁵⁶ It is, of course, the edible species that allow Thomas to make this identification between the sense of touch and the blessed sacrament, which mean that the body of Christ is not eaten (and therefore not touched) *in sua specie, sed in specie sacramentali*.²⁵⁷ Yet there is, Thomas argues, a great fittingness that the direct, non-participated, presence of the “principal agent” in the sacrament of his body should be instituted under the figure of food, *in figura cibi*.²⁵⁸ Such fittingness is on account of the ‘touch’ that is effected through taste, where the immediacy of contact brought about through tasting corresponds to the immediacy of the Christ’s presence in this sacrament. As Thomas argues, “taste is a kind of touch”,²⁵⁹ and it is only by the objective directness of contact-through-touch that one can speak of a true “joining” (*coniunctio*) between two things: “among the senses it is only the sense of touch that is really joined to its sensible object”.²⁶⁰

Now this particular attribute of touch is realised to an eminent degree through the consumption of food: it is precisely through taste, argues Thomas, that the highest perfections of touch are found. As he observes, when compared with taste, a certain superficiality characterises the contact effected by other tangible things, for these “act only by bringing about some impressions on that which they touch”.²⁶¹ Food, however, surpasses these

²⁵⁴ ST II 85, 6. We observed earlier how the body of Christ has, in Thomas’s opinion, the most acute sense of touch (see ST III 46, 6: “... in eo maxime viguit sensus tactus”).

²⁵⁵ ST I 70, 3. “... omnes sensus fundantur super tactum”. See also ST I 91, 3.

²⁵⁶ *In Sent.* IV, d. 8, a. 3, q. 3. The contents of this article will follow in our exposition of Thomas’s argument.

²⁵⁷ Cf. ST III 77, 7 ad. 3. As Thomas sings in his *Adoro Te Devote*, “Visus, tactus, gustus, / in Te fallitur”. Like all the senses except hearing, touch is deceived in the Eucharist. “Sed auditu solo / tuto creditur.” Yet, by virtue of transubstantiation, what is touched is not bread but the body of Christ, hidden by the appearances that properly belong to other matter than Christ’s body.

²⁵⁸ *In Sent.* IV, d. 8, a. 3, q. 3. “Et quia invenimus diversas actiones sacramentales diversis sacramentis distributas, quae in virtute Verbi incarnati agunt, oportet ad perfectam actionem hujus generis esse aliquam sacramentalem actionem quae ipsimet principali agenti attribuitur, quod est Verbum incarnatum; et ideo oportuit esse sacramentum eucharistiae, quod ipsum Verbum incarnatum contineret, ceteris sacramentis tamen in virtute ipsius agentibus; et ideo convenienter in figura cibi hoc sacramentum institutum est”.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.* “... gustus autem tactus quidam est”.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.* “... inter alios sensus solus tactus est cui suum sensibile realiter coniungitur”.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.* “... alia vero tangibilia agunt efficiendo aliquas impressiones in eo quod tangitur, sicut patet de calido et frigido, et huiusmodi”.

limitations, for “only food acts by its being joined to the one fed, since the nourishing and the nourished are made one”.²⁶²

Accordingly, both the direct manner of Christ’s presence in this sacrament, and the very *purpose* of this direct presence (union with Christ), are aptly expressed through the likeness of food. It is the heightened level of touch effected through taste that lends the edible species, under which Christ is contained, a peculiar fittingness: “Since every sacrament ought to be proposed in the likeness [*figura*] of some sensible thing”, argues Thomas,

it is fitting that this sacrament, in which the Word incarnate himself is contained in order to be joined to us, be given to us in the likeness of food. He is joined to us, not by changing into us but by changing us into him, as St Augustine says (in *Confessions*, 7, 10).²⁶³

The directness of Christ’s Eucharistic presence is fittingly represented by the edible accidents, where the most direct and intimate form of touch is effected through sacramental eating. Here, then, Thomas’ teaching is again in harmony with that of Cyril who, as we have frequently observed, perceives with wonder the extent of the union that may be achieved with Christ in his sacramental mode. But Cyril, unlike Thomas, seems not to perceive the continuity that exists between touch and taste and, therefore, the continuity between the normal sanctifying action of the Incarnate Word (contact by way of touch) and what he achieves through the Eucharist. Whilst, as Cyril perceives, the presence of Christ’s body under edible species allows for a depth of contact which surpasses anything possible to Christ in his native species, Thomas shows this sacramental eating to be a mystery beautifully consistent with the basic principles of the Incarnation.²⁶⁴ Since, among all tangible mediums, “only food acts by its being joined to the one fed”, it is “fitting that this sacrament, in which the Word incarnate himself is contained in order to be joined to us, be given to us in the

²⁶² Ibid. “... solus cibus est qui agit per coniunctionem sui ad cibatum, quia nutriens et nutritum fit unum”.

²⁶³ Ibid. “Et ideo cum omne sacramentum in figura alicujus rei sensibilis proponi debeat, convenienter sacramentum in quo ipsum verbum incarnatum nobis conjungendum continetur, proponitur nobis in figura cibi, non quidem convertendi in nos per suam conjunctionem ad nos, sed potius sua conjunctione nos in ipsum convertens, secundum quod Augustinus ex persona Verbi incarnati dicit: *non tu me mutabis in te, sicut cibum carnis tuae; sed tu mutaberis in me.*” We are going to return to this question of assimilation through “spiritual eating” later.

²⁶⁴ As Journet has expressed it, “as once in his Incarnation, [Christ] comes in the Eucharist to touch the world bodily.” Charles Cardinal Journet, ‘The Mystery of the Blessed Eucharist’, in *L’Osservatore Romano* (Weekly Edition in English), 30th March 1969, p. 9. And as Colman O’Neill OP observes, “The economy of incarnation is here brought a stage further than in Palestine” (*Meeting Christ in the Sacraments*, p. 37).

likeness of food”.²⁶⁵ This is both in continuity with the sacramental order in general, and in harmony with Christ’s tendency to heal and sanctify through physical touch: for “taste is a kind of touch”,²⁶⁶ indeed, a touch of the most pervasive kind.

3.3 The Fittingness of Christ’s ‘Bodily Presence’ in the Eucharist

The attention given to tactile contact with the body of Christ is, in the Eucharistic theology of Cyril and Thomas, the natural outcome of their doctrine of the hypostatic union. From this principle they are able to grant particular theological focus to the deifying effects of physical contact with the sacred body, and draw attention to its continuation in the Eucharist. “So that we do not think that he is [the living bread] insofar as he is the Word or in his soul alone”, writes Thomas, “he shows that even his flesh is life-giving ... and thus Christ healed the sick by his touch”.²⁶⁷ Such life-giving contact, argues Thomas, now “pertains to the sharing in his body, that is, to the sacrament of the Eucharist”.²⁶⁸ For Cyril, as we have already seen, a certain tactile engagement with the sacred flesh is frequently the object of his desire: “may our Lord Jesus Christ touch us”, he prays, for the “flesh of the Almighty Word is the body of Life”.²⁶⁹

The combined force of Cyril’s preoccupation with bodily contact with this “body of Life”, and Thomas’ exposition of the Eucharist’s power to effect tactile contact with the same “life-giving” body that once “healed the sick by [its] touch” lends, as we have just seen, a certain theological fittingness to both the doctrine of transubstantiation and the presence of Christ under edible species.²⁷⁰ As one commentator remarks, “the importance of contact with Christ’s flesh may be said to be the very reason for the mystery of the Real Presence in the

²⁶⁵ *In Sent.* IV, d. 8, a. 3, q. 3.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.* “... gustus autem tactus quidam est”.

²⁶⁷ *In Jo.* 6, lect. 6, n. 959. The whole passage reads: “Dixerat enim, quod erat panis vivus, et ne intelligatur quod hoc ei esset in quantum est Verbum, vel secundum animam tantum; ideo ostendit quod etiam caro sua vivificativa est: est enim organum divinitatis suae; unde, cum instrumentum agat virtute agentis, sicut divinitas Christi vivificativa est, ita ut Damascenus dicit et caro virtute verbi adiuncti vivificat: unde Christus tactu suo sanabat infirmos. Sic ergo quod dixit supra, ego sum panis vivus, pertinet ad virtutem verbi; hic vero quod subdit pertinet ad communionem sui corporis, scilicet ad Eucharistiae sacramentum.” And earlier on: “because the flesh of Christ is united to the Word of God it also is life-giving. Thus, too, his body, sacramentally received, is life-giving” (*Ibid.* n. 914).

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁹ *In Luc* 7:11. Sermon 36 (Smith, i. 135; PG 72, 577C).

²⁷⁰ As we shall shortly see, Thomas indeed perceives a fittingness in the substantial presence of Christ’s body in the Eucharist insofar as it continues to manifest the very same love that prompted the Incarnation (ST III 75, 1: “... hoc competit caritati Christi, ex qua pro salute nostra corpus verum nostrae naturae assumpsit”).

Eucharist”.²⁷¹ Indeed, as we have just considered from Thomas’ teaching in his commentary on the *Sentences*, part of the supreme suitability of transubstantiation lies in the immediacy of contact it ensures: since the presence of the body of Christ comes about not through the mediation of independent material realities, but immediately, through the conversion of the very substance of bread into the very substance of Christ’s body, contact with the sacred body is direct. Regarding the sacrament’s edible species, an aspect of their fittingness lies in their ability to ensure sensible contact of a special depth and pervasiveness (by means of *gustus* and *tactus*). As we have just seen Thomas explain, so that this sacramental contact may effect union of the deepest kind, and not merely by way of a superficial impression, the body is contained under the likeness of food. As Thomas teaches in the *Scriptum*, through these accidents, “the food may be joined to the one fed”.²⁷²

It is to other arguments *ex convenientia* that Thomas resorts when demonstrating, in the *Summa Theologiae*, that the body of Christ is in this sacrament not merely figuratively but *secundum veritatem*.²⁷³ As will become apparent, these arguments will illuminate and grant further significance to the notion of tactile contact we have just been exploring.

It is worth, first of all, considering the objections Thomas poses to the doctrine that the body of Christ is in this sacrament not merely figuratively but in very truth. These are significant counter-propositions, for they are united by an exaggerated spiritualism: underlying them all is the conviction that sufficient contact is already achieved between Christ and the Christian by virtue of a spiritual union that comes about through theological faith. Thomas’ decision to address this way of thinking recalls, once again, the Eucharistic theology of St Cyril. As we saw in his Commentary on the Gospel of John, Cyril responds to the argument of an unnamed Arian opponent who asserts the wholly spiritual nature of both the presence of Christ and the union he forges with Christians; a union consisting solely of the spirit and affections, the Arian insists.²⁷⁴ A similar doctrine is to be found in the

²⁷¹ James T. O’Connor, *The Hidden Manna: A Theology of the Eucharist*, p. 279.

²⁷² *In Sent.* IV, d. 8, a. 3, q. 3. “... solus cibus est qui agit per coniunctionem sui ad cibatum”.

²⁷³ ST III 75, 1. This is often translated as “really and truly”. As the Blackfriars edition of the *Summa Theologiae* explains, “‘really’ in contrast to a figurative way only, and ‘truly’ in relation to the types and figures of the Old Testament of which the Eucharist is the fulfilment. Its relationship to them is that of substance to shadow, of truth to type or figure.” (vol. 58, ‘The Eucharistic Presence’ (3a. 73-78), William Barden OP, p. 53).

²⁷⁴ See *In Joh.* 15:1 (Pusey, ii. 543-4). As we observed in our previous chapter, according to the Arian, the Christian’s union with Christ—a union of branches to the vine—is not fleshly (*sarkikos*), but only spiritual (*pneumatikos*), a union grounded solely in faith and mind. This is one of Cyril’s pretexts for developing his doctrine of union with Christ *kata sarka*. As he writes, “Christ has been shown to us to be the Vine in this sense, and we the branches, inasmuch as we partake in a fellowship with Him that is not merely spiritual

objections formulated by Thomas: as they claim, not only does a doctrine of Christ's bodily presence in this sacrament seem to contradict his historical, bodily ascension into heaven but, given the apparently sufficient union we already have through grace, such a presence seems soteriologically superfluous.²⁷⁵

Before examining how Thomas responds to these, and what he establishes in the *corpus* of the article, it is worth drawing attention to some of the recurring terminology that characterises his argument. In an effort to make clear the decisive distinction not only between the Old and New Laws, but also between this and the other sacraments, Thomas speaks not merely of Christ's "presence", or the "truth" and "reality" of this presence, but repeatedly of his "bodily presence", *sui praesentiam corporalem*.²⁷⁶ This is a point of emphasis not evident in any other of his Eucharistic writings, but which emerges on six occasions in this single article.²⁷⁷

Now according to Thomas, such bodily presence ensures, first of all, a certain historical and theological fulfillment. It is entirely in keeping with the New Law that what

but also corporeal ... And this we say, not as attempting to deny the possibility of union with Christ by faith and sincere love, but rather in order to point out that, both spiritually and corporally (*kai pneumatikos kai somatikos*), Christ is the Vine and we are the branches." (Ibid).

²⁷⁵ Along these lines, Thomas constructs four objections to Christ's bodily presence in the Eucharist. They are founded upon the two-fold difficulty of bodily location and, more significantly for us, a sense of the superfluousness of Christ's bodily presence in light of the union that comes through faith and charity. First of all, in a tactic we saw frequently in Cyril, he uses the Lord's words of John 6: 54 ("it is the spirit that gives life, whilst the flesh alone profits nothing") to suggest that any bodily presence must be meant symbolically and figuratively. Secondly, given that the body of Christ is in heaven, we are to interpret the promise of his presence until the end of time (Matt 28:20) not in any bodily fashion but as a spiritual presence, referring to the abiding presence of "the truth of the Lord", rather than of his true body. For, as Augustine teaches, "the body, in which He rose again, must be in one place; but His truth is spread abroad everywhere". Thirdly, drawing upon this same necessity, that no human body "can be in several places at one time", and that Christ's human body is both a true body and a body in heaven (*corpus Christi est verum corpus, et est in caelo*) it follows that statements regarding the presence of Christ's "body" in this sacrament must be taken symbolically. Fourthly, such a presence would not be good for us, since an attachment to Christ's body could prevent the Christian from receiving the Holy Spirit; a danger Christ seems to have warned against (Jn. 16:7). As one commentator has observed, throughout these objections is the recurring implication that "contact with Jesus' physical body and blood [is] unnecessary and unfitting, now that Jesus has led the way to heaven". Matthew Levering, *Sacrifice and Community: Jewish Offering and Christian Eucharist* (Blackwell, 2005) p. 135.

²⁷⁶ This language has also been taken up by the Magisterium: "beneath these appearances Christ is present whole and entire, bodily present too, in His physical reality, although not in the manner in which bodies are present in place". Pope Paul VI, *Mysterium Fidei*, 46 (Encyclical letter).

²⁷⁷ ST III 75, 1: "... *sui praesentiam corporalem nobis repromittit in praemium*"; "... *nec sua praesentia corporali in hac peregrinatione destituit*". And in the objections: "Sed secundum Gregorium, ... *regulus reprehenditur quia quaerebat corporalem Christi praesentiam*"; "Apostoli etiam impediabantur recipere Spiritum Sanctum propter hoc quod affecti erant ad eius *praesentiam corporalem*"; "Non ergo Christus secundum *praesentiam corporalem* est in sacramento altaris."; "ratio illa procedit de *praesentia corporis Christi prout est praesens per modum corporis*" (ad. 4).

was once represented merely by way of sign or figure should, in the New, be present in actual, bodily truth. The sacrament, as the “sacrifice of the New Law”, should “contain him not merely as by a sign or figure, but in actual reality as well”.²⁷⁸ Importantly for us, in this progression from figure to reality there is, as has been observed,²⁷⁹ also a move from mere faith and spiritual participation to the perfection of full presence and love. It is precisely the perfection of love that Thomas uses as his second reason for the fittingness of Christ’s bodily presence. It is to this that we must now give particular attention.

3.4 Christ’s Bodily Presence: “A Special Feature of Friendship”

One can perceive a great fittingness to the miracle of transubstantiation, Thomas perceives, if one considers the natural aspirations of friends. That the Word-made-flesh is present not merely by his power and operation but in his very body, fulfills the desire of those who strive to enjoy the full presence of the beloved and thereby “live together [as] friends”.²⁸⁰ According to Thomas, it is precisely in fulfillment of this desire that Christ “does not deprive us of His bodily presence”, “but unites us with Himself in this sacrament through the truth of His body”.²⁸¹ Such “familiar union” (*familiari coniunctione*), he teaches, is the “sign of supreme love” (*maximae caritatis signum*).²⁸²

We need to examine the implications of this teaching and observe the importance it holds for our thesis. First of all, we should note that the connection Thomas makes here between friendship and the Eucharist complements what he has already stated about divine-human friendship earlier in the *Summa*, and in his commentary on Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*. Let us briefly consider certain principles he establishes there. First of all, according to the order of nature, friendship between man and God is impossible; any friendship between the two can only be, Thomas insists, in consequence of God’s special condescension and

²⁷⁸ ST III 75, 1. “Et ideo oportuit ut aliquid plus haberet sacrificium novae legis a Christo institutum, ut scilicet contineret ipsum passum, non solum in significatione vel figura, sed etiam in rei veritate.”

²⁷⁹ “Bodily contact with Jesus is necessary because ‘the perfection of the New Law’ (ST III 75, 1) requires a sharing of his sacrifice that goes beyond offering him up in faith—as was possible in Israel’s sacrifices—and achieves actual bodily sharing in his sacrifice, true offering up of Jesus in and with him. ... [T]he ‘perfection’ of the New Law consists precisely in bodily offering Christ’s sacrifice in and with Christ. ... Were not Christ bodily present, believers could not offer up Christ’s sacrificial body, and the New Law would not attain ‘perfection’, but would instead remain at the figural level, a level already attained through Israel’s sacrificial worship” (Levering, *Sacrifice and Community*, p. 136-7).

²⁸⁰ ST III 75, 1. “... maxime proprium amicitiae est, convivere amicis, ut philosophus dicit (IX Ethic.)”.

²⁸¹ Ibid. “Interim tamen nec sua praesentia corporali in hac peregrinatione destituit, sed per veritatem corporis ... sui nos sibi coniungit in hoc sacramento.”

²⁸² Ibid.

communication.²⁸³ As Thomas points out, “likeness is the [*per se*] cause of friendship”,²⁸⁴ and man and God are infinitely unlike one another. If there is to be any “likeness” [*similitudo*] it must be in respect to either lovability [*secundum objectum amabilem*]²⁸⁵ or in respect to having something in common [*secundum communicationem aliquam*],²⁸⁶ and, beyond some special intervention from God, neither likenesses could ever be said to exist between God and man. Regarding the former kind of likeness, God’s virtue infinitely exceeds that of man, so there is no likeness according to lovability; regarding the latter, man and God share no way of life, no common pursuit, no natural fellowship, so there is no likeness according to commonality. “When one party is removed to a great distance, as God is”, argues Aristotle, “the possibility of friendship ceases”.²⁸⁷

All this is true in the order of nature, but false on account of what God has freely willed to effect for man in the supernatural order.²⁸⁸ As Thomas shows, out of the greatness of his love, God establishes a certain common life, a *communicatio*, which provides the foundation for all subsequent friendship between them. In all cases, argues Thomas, such commonality is the indispensable context, the foundation (*fundamentum*) for friendship; “every friendship is rooted in (*consistit in*) something which the friends have in common”,²⁸⁹

²⁸³ As Thomas states in an objection in the *De Caritate* (from the *Quaestiones Disputatae*), “according to the Philosopher (*Ethics* viii) friendship consists in a certain equality. But there is the greatest inequality between God and us, as between beings who are infinitely separated. Therefore, there can be no friendship of God for us, or of us for God” (art. 2, obj. 15). In reply, Thomas identifies the infusion of the divine life of charity as the moment man can be said to enjoy a certain likeness to God: “[C]harity is not a virtue of man considered as man, but of man as considered as becoming, through participation in grace, like to God and the Son of God” (Ibid. ad. 15).

²⁸⁴ “... similitudo ... est per se causa amicitiae” (*In VIII Eth.*, lect. 4, n. 1588).

²⁸⁵ In other words, persons can become friends if there is a certain likeness between them in virtue, or in capacity for usefulness, or of giving pleasure (see Thomas’s *In VIII Eth.*, lect. 3).

²⁸⁶ In other words, persons can become friends if there is between them a likeness with respect to a common way of life, a common upbringing, or a common pursuit, etc. (see *In VIII Eth.*, lects. 9-12; see also ST II,II 23, 5). One can gain an understanding of the word “*communicatio*” by seeing how Thomas uses it in the course of ST II,II qq. 23-26. There he combines it with such words as *coniunctio*, *convivere amico*, and *conversatio*. As one commentator has observed, “*coniunctio* goes with *communicatio*, *conversatio* with *convivere amico*, and the latter two are acts or activities which the former two make possible”. Joseph Bobik, ‘Aquinas on Friendship with God’, in *New Scholasticism* 60 (1986), pp. 257-71.

²⁸⁷ *Nicomachean Ethics*, Bk. VIII, ch. 7, 1159a 4-5. Although Aristotle certainly sees that it is possible for friendship to arise between two greatly unequal parties if the superior moves to share something with the inferior. This is alluded to by Jerome Wilms OP, who unfortunately gives no reference to any specific text in Aristotle. See his *Divine Friendship according to St. Thomas*, trans. Sr. M. Fulgence OP (London, 1958), p. 19.

²⁸⁸ See ST II,II 23, 1. Also see from Thomas’s *Quaestiones Disputatae*, *De Caritate* art. 2, ad. 15 (to which we have just referred).

²⁸⁹ “... omnis amicitia in communicatione consistit” (*In VIII Eth.*, lect. 9, n. 1657).

and so, “if there were no communication”, he insists, “there could be no friendship”,²⁹⁰ for the “mutual benevolence [of friends] is founded [*fundatur*] on some communication”.²⁹¹ In the case of God and man, such *communicatio*, such common life is, teaches Thomas, God’s gift of his beatitude to him:

since ... there is some kind of communication between man and God, according as he communicates his beatitude to us, some kind of friendship ought to be founded on that communication.²⁹²

Through sharing with man his very beatitude, the infinitely superior God establishes something in *common* with infinitely inferior man. This is not the virtue of friendship itself, but, as Thomas makes clear in the above quotation, a *fundamentum*, an underlying foundation or context, which—in uniting the two—establishes the conditions in which they may perform acts of friendship. What may flower from this *communicatio* is a *convivere amico*, a life of mutual delight, of companionship, manifesting itself in acts of love, and perfecting itself in *conversatio*, a conversing with one another in mutual exchange.²⁹³

3.4.1. “...it was fitting for God to become man, since man is naturally a friend to man”.²⁹⁴

Having established these principles, we are close now to being able to return to our theme, and to the connection Thomas perceives between the bodily presence of Christ in the Eucharist and the perfections of friendship. But before doing so we need to observe how Thomas, even before relating friendship to the Eucharist, initially connects it in a certain way to the motivations that lie behind the Incarnation itself. The precise conditions necessary for friendship, which Thomas has already identified with the communication of God’s beatitude, also appear to be brought about by God becoming *man*. The solidarity this effects, Thomas implies, establishes the proper context in which God and man can engage in the mutual, loving exchange proper to friendship. Accordingly, in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Thomas identifies God’s desire that man be raised into friendship with him as one of the motivating

²⁹⁰ “... si nulla esset communicatio non posset esse amicitia” (*In VIII Eth.*, lect. 9, n. 1661).

²⁹¹ “... mutua benevolentia fundatur super aliqua communicatione” (ST II,II 23, 1).

²⁹² ST II,II 23, 1. “... cum ... sit aliqua communicatio hominis ac Deum secundum quod nobis suam beatitudinem communicat, super hac communicatione oportet aliquam amicitiam fundari”.

²⁹³ See *In VIII Eth.*, lect. 5 for Thomas’s explanation of *convivere amico* as the “act” of friendship. For *conversatio*, see lect. 6. See also ST II,II 23, 1 obj. 1 and ad. 1.

²⁹⁴ SCG IV, 54, n. 3927. “... expediens fuit homini quod Deus fieret homo, quia etiam naturaliter homo homini amicus est”.

factors of the Incarnation,²⁹⁵ and he perceives in this divine condescension the bringing forth of a new and indispensable *similitudo* between them:

Since friendship consists in a certain equality, it is not possible for beings who are very unequal to be united in friendship. And so that friendship between man and God might be more intimate [*quod familiarior amicitia esset inter hominem et Deum*], it was necessary for God to become man, since man is naturally a friend to man.²⁹⁶

God becoming man is, then, a *fundamentum* upon which the two may be united in friendship, for “man is naturally a friend to man”. If, as we have already shown, “likeness” is an indispensable condition for friendship, we have in the Incarnation a new likeness, *secundum communicationem aliquam*. Since Christ and mankind now enjoy the solidarity of a common life, are united in human fellowship, this can serve to bring them together so that a *convivere amico*, with its accompanying *conversatio*, may take place in mutual friendship.²⁹⁷ Such loving condescension does not itself constitute friendship, but establishes the context in which friendship may occur, and in which the greatest manifestation of friendship may be performed: this brings us directly to the Eucharist, for “greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” (Jn. 15: 13). As Thomas argues, it is not the Incarnation itself, but rather by means of this act of sacrificial love, and the sacramental fruits that come from it, that Christ “*makes [man] his friends [amicos efficeret]*”.²⁹⁸ Hence, as we shall soon

²⁹⁵ The connection could also be said to be implicit in the *Summa Theologiae* (ST III 1, 1) for Thomas sees the Incarnation as a fitting expression of perfect goodness: “Unde quidquid pertinet ad rationem boni, conveniens est Deo. Pertinet autem ad rationem boni ut se aliis communicet, ut patet per Dionysium (IV cap. De div. Nom.). Unde ad rationem summi boni pertinet quod summo modo se creaturae communicet. Quod quidem maxime fit per hoc quod naturam creatam sic sibi coniungit ut una persona fiat ex tribus, Verbo, anima et carne, sicut dicit Augustinus (XIII de Trin.). Unde manifestum est quod conveniens fuit Deum incarnari.”

²⁹⁶ SCG IV, 54, n. 3927: “Cum amicitia in quadam aequalitate consistat, ea quae multum inaequalia sunt, in amicitia copulari non posse videntur. Ad hoc igitur quod familiarior amicitia esset inter hominem et Deum, expediens fuit homini quod Deus fieret homo, quia etiam naturaliter homo homini amicus est”.

²⁹⁷ This recalls the Christology of St Cyril, where (as we considered in our previous chapter) a fleshly solidarity, a racial kinship or brotherhood, is established between the Incarnate Word and mankind by virtue of the Incarnation alone (see *In Joh.* 10:2. Pusey, ii. 618). This provides the foundation for the intimacy that comes through the actual communication of his true body and blood in the Eucharist.

²⁹⁸ In his commentary on this passage, Thomas teaches that the friendship between Christ and man is the *fruit* of Christ’s death. As he writes, “Christ did not lay down his life for his enemies so that they would remain his enemies, but to *make them* his friends [*Christus non posuit animam suam pro nobis inimicis, ut scilicet inimici remaneremus, sed ut amicos efficeret*]. Or, one could say, that he lay down his life for his friends, not in the sense that they were friends who loved him, but rather were those whom *he* loved [vel licet non essent amici quasi amantes, erant tamen amici ut amati]” (*In Jo.* 15, lect 2. n. 2009). He clarifies this in a later passage: “by loving us, God makes us love him: ‘I love those who love me’ (Prv 8:17). It is not they who first loved God, but God makes them lovers by loving them [*Deus enim nos amando, facit*

be considering in greater detail, Thomas specifically identifies the Eucharist with the inauguration of this friendship.²⁹⁹

Before proceeding further, it is worth noting that the same connections seem to be articulated in the *tertia pars* of the *Summa Theologiae*, where Thomas' argument for the fittingness of Christ's bodily presence in the sacrament is in continuity with his earlier Christological reflections. The love which motivates the true, not merely figurative, sacramental presence of the Word's body is the same love which motivated his true, not merely figurative, enfleshment: such is the implication when Thomas states, "this [i.e. the Eucharist] belongs to Christ's love, out of which for our salvation he assumed a true body of our nature".³⁰⁰ Here, strongly reminiscent of St Cyril, Thomas considers the Eucharist in its continuity with the one, condescending movement of the Word made flesh. A "true body of our nature" is both assumed by the Word and, in its sacramental mode, bodily present to us in human companionship.

So, if Thomas in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* explicitly identifies the desire for friendship as one of the motivating factors of the Incarnation,³⁰¹ here in the *Summa Theologiae* he sees the sacramental presence of the sacred body as a cause and manifestation of friendship, the setting in which a true *convivere amico* can take place.³⁰² We need now to consider the particular perfections brought by this bodily presence of Christ.

suos dilectores; (Prov. VIII, 17): ego diligentes me diligo: non quasi prius fuerint diligentes, sed quia ipse eos diligentes facit diligendo." (*In Jo.* 15, lect. 3, n. 2011).

²⁹⁹ In his Commentary on John, Thomas gives the following citations from the Old Testament a Eucharistic interpretation: "But it is you, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend. We used to hold sweet converse together" (Ps 55:13). (*In Jon.* 13, lect. 4, 1808); and, "Eat, O friends, and drink; drink deeply, O lovers!" (Song 5:1). (*In Jo.* 21: lect. 2, 2608).

³⁰⁰ ST III 75, 1: "... hoc competit caritati Christi, ex qua pro salute nostra corpus verum nostrae naturae assumpsit."

³⁰¹ The connection could also be said to be implicit in the *Summa Theologiae* (ST III 1, 1) for Thomas sees the Incarnation as a fitting expression of perfect goodness: "Unde quidquid pertinet ad rationem boni, conveniens est Deo. Pertinet autem ad rationem boni ut se aliis communicet, ut patet per Dionysium (IV cap. De div. Nom.). Unde ad rationem summi boni pertinet quod summo modo se creaturae communicet. Quod quidem maxime fit per hoc quod naturam creatam sic sibi coniungit ut una persona fiat ex tribus, Verbo, anima et carne, sicut dicit Augustinus (XIII de Trin.). Unde manifestum est quod conveniens fuit Deum incarnari."

³⁰² ST III 75, 1: "quia maxime proprium amicitiae est, *convivere amicis*, ut philosophus dicit, IX Ethic., sui praesentiam corporalem nobis repromittit in praemium".

3.4.2. “It is peculiar to love that it unites lover and beloved, as far as this is possible”.³⁰³

We have already noted how Thomas presents the theme of friendship not merely in relation to Christ’s presence, but in specific connection to Christ’s *bodily* presence in this sacrament. “In our pilgrimage he does not deprive us of His bodily presence”, insists Thomas; rather, “since it is the special feature of friendship to live together with friends ... he promises us his bodily presence [*sui praesentiam corporalem*]”.³⁰⁴ It is important to notice that the connection Thomas perceives between friendship and the corporeal presence of Christ in the Eucharist occurs within a general association he recognises between this sacrament and the perfections of love. Christ’s true bodily presence in the sacrament of his body “belongs to Christ’s love” (*hoc competit caritati Christi*),³⁰⁵ the very love which has already been demonstrated (*demonstrari*) by his becoming man. And so, just as the love which motivated the Incarnation has union with man as its objective,³⁰⁶ so Christ’s enduring bodily presence in the sacrament is, Thomas points out, specifically ordered towards establishing union with every recipient: “He does not deprive us of His bodily presence; but unites us with Himself [*nos sibi coniungit*] in this sacrament through the truth of His body”.³⁰⁷ Here, then, in the sacramental mode of Christ’s human body, “a man is made perfect in union with Christ [*in unione ad Christum*]”, and thus it is “known as the sacrament of Charity, the ‘bond of perfection’ [*vinculum perfectionis*]”.³⁰⁸ In light of these remarks we can say that Thomas beautifully anticipates the Eucharist in his reflection on the fittingness of the Incarnation: for “it is peculiar to love”, he observes, “that it unites lover and beloved, as far as this is possible”.³⁰⁹

³⁰³ SCG IV, 54. “est ... proprium amoris unire amantem cum amato, in quantum possibile est”.

³⁰⁴ ST III 75, 1. “... quia maxime proprium amicitiae est, convivere amicis, ... sui praesentiam corporalem nobis re promittit in praemium”.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ SCG IV, 54, 5. “Amor autem Dei ad homines nullo modo efficacius homini potuit demonstrari quam per hoc quod homini uniri voluit in persona”. This is made in reference to the hypostatic union, which is ordered towards the Word establishing interpersonal union with other members of the human race. It is the means (*per hoc quod*) by which God shows man his love for man. As Thomas makes quite clear, God did not want to be united to man *propter se*, as if it would increase his perfection, but rather in order to redeem man.

³⁰⁷ ST III 75, 1. “Interim tamen nec sua praesentia corporali in hac peregrinatione destituit, sed per veritatem corporis et sanguinis sui nos sibi coniungit in hoc sacramento.”

³⁰⁸ ST III 73, 3 ad. 3

³⁰⁹ SCG IV, 54, 5. “... est ... proprium amoris unire amantem cum amato, in quantum possibile est.” As we have just observed, this is made in reference to the hypostatic union. But as Garrigou-Lagrange observes (and as is evident in light of our considerations of Eucharistic theology of St Cyril), “the fruitfulness of Eucharistic communion is, as it were, the extension of this other communion by which the very mystery of the Incarnation is brought about”. R. Garrigou-Lagrange OP, ‘The Fecundity of Goodness’, in *The Thomist* 2 (1940), p. 227.

These Christological and sacramental observations on the unitive aspirations of love are consistent with certain arguments Thomas has already formulated earlier in the *Summa*. In his reflections on the effects of love in the *prima secundae*, Thomas establishes certain philosophical principles which can illuminate our theme, particularly the importance of Christ's bodily presence in the Eucharist in relation to the perfections of love and friendship. Let us allow for a brief digression to consider these arguments, before relating them explicitly to our enquiry.

3.4.3. “... this is real union, which the lover seeks with the object of his love”.³¹⁰

When Thomas comes to consider the unitive aspirations of love in the *prima secundae*, he perceives important distinctions in the teaching of the Fathers. “Love”, writes Dionysius, “is a unitive force”,³¹¹ or as Augustine puts it, “a vital principle uniting, or seeking to unite, two together, the lover and the beloved”.³¹² The union of lover and beloved is therefore twofold: a “uniting” or a “seeking to unite”, or as Thomas writes, a *unio realis* and a *unio secundum affectum*.³¹³ By the “union of affection”, we should understand that bond or presence of the beloved in the will of the lover, a union based on “the beloved abiding in the apprehension of the lover”³¹⁴ inclining him to something further, “to desire and seek the *presence* of the beloved [*desiderandum et quaerendum praesentiam amati*].”³¹⁵ This desiring and seeking the presence of the beloved is, then, a kind of union itself, but one that exists for the sake of its perfection, for the sake of what Thomas calls “real union”.³¹⁶ The underlying, affective union, is the principle of movement *towards* the beloved, and has as its goal the “real union”

³¹⁰ ST I,II 28, 1 ad. 2. “... haec est unio realis, quam amans quaerit de re amata”.

³¹¹ *De Divinis Nominibus* IV (cited in ST I, II 28, 1).

³¹² *De Trinitate* 8,10 (cited in ST I, II 28, 1). “... amor est quasi vita quaedam duo aliqua copulans, vel copulare appetens, amantem scilicet et quod amatur.”

³¹³ ST I,II 28,1 & 2

³¹⁴ ST I,II 28, 2. “... quantum ad vim apprehensivam amatum dicitur esse in amante, in quantum amatum immoratur in apprehensione amantis”.

³¹⁵ ST I,II 28, 1.

³¹⁶ As one commentator has explained, according to St Thomas, “Love’s goal is not for the lover to become like the beloved by a process of affective assimilation, but to be *united* with the beloved —to attain in reality ... the good that is already present in one’s affection. The beloved’s affective presence is not the real presence, and love tends towards the good in itself, not towards its formal or intentional presence in the appetite. If love did tend towards the *impression* made by the beloved upon the lover . . . one would already have all that one desires in the very desiring And this is completely contrary to experience.” Peter Kwasniewski, *The Ecstasy of Love in Thomas Aquinas* (Unpublished doctoral thesis, Catholic University of America, 2002) p.132.

of full presence, the final *resting in* the beloved.³¹⁷ This is the very union “the lover seeks [*quaerit*] with the object of his love”,³¹⁸ allowing the two “to live together, speak together, and be united together”.³¹⁹

It is of particular importance for us that this “real union” for which love strives, necessarily involves the hunger for a certain totality and comprehensiveness of presence and union. According to Thomas, the “real union” which is sought by the underlying union of affection is thorough and profound for, as he states, in the lovers’ mutual, apprehensive abiding (which seeks ‘real union’ as its perfection) there is an implicit demand for a certain totality of knowledge and possession. As Thomas observes,

the lover is not satisfied with a superficial apprehension of the beloved, but strives to gain an intimate knowledge of everything pertaining to the beloved, so as to penetrate into his very soul.³²⁰

Similar aspirations are present in the lover’s affections,³²¹ for following this apprehension, the consequent movement of the appetite is correspondingly eager and its demands are correspondingly great: the lover “is not satisfied with any external [*extrinseca*] or superficial possession or enjoyment of the beloved; but seeks to possess the beloved perfectly [*perfecte habere*], by penetrating into his heart, as it were”.³²²

³¹⁷ A further distinction between these two unions can be made. The “union of affection” *seeks* “real union”, a union which is not love itself but rather the work of love or the *result* of love. Love then, in its essence, *is* the affective union, “without which there is no love” (ST I, II 28, 1), whilst real union is its final perfection. The real union which is sought as its final effect, which Thomas characterises as the desire “to live together, speak together, and be united together” (ST I, II 28, 2 ad. 2), does not abolish it, but necessarily serves to “manifest and further [this] underlying union of affection” (Kwasniewski, *The Ecstasy of Love* p. 131).

³¹⁸ ST I,II 28, 1 ad. 2. “Quaedam vero unio est effectus amoris. Et haec est unio realis, quam amans quaerit de re amata.”

³¹⁹ ST I, II 28, 2 ad. 2. “... ut scilicet simul conversentur, et simul colloquantur, et in aliis huiusmodi coniungantur.”

³²⁰ ST I,II 28,2. “Amans vero dicitur esse in amato secundum apprehensionem in quantum amans non est contentus superficiali apprehensione amati, sed nititur singula quae ad amatum pertinent intrinsecus disquirere, et sic ad interiora eius ingreditur.” Thomas sees this movement of love as a most fitting description of the activity of the Holy Spirit. After describing this striving for knowledge, Thomas writes: “Sicut de spiritu sancto, qui est amor dei, dicitur, I ad Cor. II, quod scrutatur etiam profunda Dei.”

³²¹ In other words, when love is characterised by a desire for the other not for his or her own sake, but also for the delight he or she will bring. This is the difference between *amor concupiscentiae* and *amor amicitiae*. The former can naturally be present in even the noblest kinds of friendship. For Thomas, *amor concupiscentiae* has nothing negative or unseemly about it unless its object is bad. Man is a concupiscent being. We love another person with *amor amicitiae* but we love their presence to us with *amor concupiscentiae*, because that presence is a good for us.

³²² ST I,II 28, 2. “Amor namque concupiscentiae non requiescit in quacumque extrinseca aut superficiali adptione vel fruitione amati, sed quaerit amatum perfecte habere, quasi ad intima illius perveniens.”

Importantly for us, these aspirations involve the notion of personal totality: the resting in real union, as opposed to the mere strivings of the union of affection, implies a bond that corresponds entirely to the full truth of man's incarnate nature. For real union to be achieved, in Thomas's precise meaning of the term, the lover and beloved must be united in such a way that no part of their nature is omitted from the bond. This same observation, which has such far-reaching implications for our study, has been made by one commentator on Thomas' metaphysical analysis of love:

When 'real union' is effected it is effected through some form of *contact*. . . . There are three kinds of contact possible between lover and beloved, depending on the three possible types of objects lovable. These contacts may be purely spiritual, purely physical, or both physical and spiritual. A purely spiritual love is possible only between a subject and an object which are purely spiritual; or at least only in the proportion that they are spiritual. A purely physical love is relegated to the sphere of the sense appetite and, as such, is possible only among animal natures. So far as human love is concerned, however, the real union will be some form of combination of spiritual and physical contact; because the rational nature is both animal and spiritual.³²³

The importance this holds for the Eucharist should be immediately apparent. That the fulfilment of "real union" must be, for bodily-spiritual beings, brought about by "some form of combination of spiritual and physical contact" lends a new force to those statements of Thomas which argue for the fittingness of the Incarnate Son's entire, bodily presence in the Eucharist. In those, Thomas perceives an aspect of the Eucharist's perfection to lie in this very notion of totality; a totality of presence,³²⁴ and a certain comprehensiveness of union³²⁵ with the recipient.³²⁶ As we have observed, Thomas perceives in Christ's bodily presence certain important perfections: in being present in his very body, and not merely by means of

³²³ Michael Faraon O.P., *The Metaphysical and Psychological Principles of Love* (Iowa: William C. Brown, 1952) p.70.

³²⁴ Cf. ST III 76, 1.

³²⁵ Regarding this, it is worth simply noting here that Thomas quotes (with approval) the following statement of St Cyril: "it was becoming that [Christ] should be united somehow with bodies [*eum nostris quodammodo uniri corporibus*] through His sacred flesh" (ST III 79, 1).

³²⁶ It is in light of this demand for totality of union that Thomas calls to mind the understandable exaggeration of Aristophanes, who "stated that lovers would wish to be united both into one" (ST I-II 28, 1 ad 2). This exaggeration, as Pius XII saw (see *Mystici Corporis* 86) is a particular temptation when considering the union of Christ and His Church. Rather than aiming at substantial unity, however, the desire for real union demands that the other *remains* the other, so as not to abolish the interpersonal relation it seeks to perfect: after all, a total fusion "would result in either one or both being destroyed" (ST I,II 28, 1 ad 2). Accordingly, the desired union is necessarily "in keeping with the demands of love" (Ibid.), an inclination to possess the distinct beloved perfectly.

spiritual power, Christ both displays and effects his friendship with men (“It should be noted that all friendship is based on union”)³²⁷ and fulfills the demands of love between incarnate beings (“it is peculiar to love that it unites lover and beloved, as far as this is possible”).³²⁸ In the sacrament of the Eucharist, then, we have a mode of presence which properly realises the aspirations of incarnate, embodied love. Though enjoyed in the obscurity of faith,³²⁹ what is effected by it is a *unio realis*, a state of fellowship when the “beloved is present [*praesentialiter*] with the lover”,³³⁰ allowing them to “live together, speak together, and be united together”.³³¹

3.4.4. “*Totus Christus sit in hoc Sacramento*”

Love’s aspiration for the whole presence of the beloved (*unio secundum affectum* seeking fulfilment in *unio realis*) is not only shown to be realised in Christ’s bodily presence in the sacrament (a bodily presence which, as we have just seen, Thomas explicitly associates with the perfections of love and friendship) but with his more extensive discussion on the fullness of Christ’s presence *per modum substantiae*.³³² Given the importance we are attaching to the notion of totality-of-presence in light of the goals of love, it is significant that Thomas chooses to articulate the true extent of this doctrine with a marked, corporeal realism —an emphasis which theologically complements the importance he has already attached to Christ’s bodily presence in the preceding question. Here he insists that Christ’s presence is not only bodily, but whole and entire, to the extent that the recipient of this sacrament does not just receive those parts of him which seem conducive to eating,³³³ but also, *per modum substantiae*, every minutest aspect of his incarnate, bodily humanity: “the bones and nerves [*ossa et nervi*] and the like” [*alia huiusmodi*].³³⁴

Thomas, as before, stresses this point through reiteration. Just as we saw him grant a certain emphasis to the bodiliness of Christ’s sacramental presence by his use of repetitions, so here an even more developed and vivid naturalism is captured by his thrice repeated

³²⁷ *In Jo.* 8, lect. 5, n. 1236. “... omnis amicitia in coniunctione fundatur”.

³²⁸ SCG IV 54, 5.

³²⁹ ST III 75, 5 ad. 2. “... faith is not contrary to the senses, but concerns things to which sense does not reach”. See also 78, 3 ad. 6.

³³⁰ ST I,II 28, 1.

³³¹ ST I,II 28, 2 ad. 2.

³³² Cf. ST III 76, 1.

³³³ Cf. ST III 76, 1 ad. 2.

³³⁴ ST III 76, 1 ad. 2.

allusion to “bones”, and “nerves” and “all the rest”.³³⁵ Such an accent is entirely in keeping with the corporeal realism that characterises certain aspects of his earlier Christological reflections, as we observed at the beginning of this chapter. The vividly naturalistic vocabulary we recognised there, with the repeated assertion that the body assumed by the Word was not simply a true body (*corpus verum*), but a “carnal and earthly body” (*corpus carneum et terrenum*), materially (*materialiter*) composed of “flesh and bones and blood” (*caro et ossa et sanguis*), re-emerges here, with perfect continuity, in his discussion of this same (now risen and glorified) body in its sacramental mode. The earlier, initial realism of his account of Christ’s human nature leads us, therefore, not only to his physically graphic analysis of the torments of the Passion, and the true bodiliness of his risen and glorified state, but also to the uncompromisingly vivid, even forensically detailed, account of the totality of Christ’s bodily presence in this sacrament of his love. The body contained in the Eucharist, Thomas teaches, is as corporeally real as the divinely fashioned though “carnal and earthly body” he assumed from Mary, as the uniquely sensitive body subject to the violence of the Passion, and the integral, glorified body of the resurrection, present now with “all the [bodily] particles which belong to the truth and integrity of human nature”.³³⁶

Now such entirety and comprehensiveness is, as should be clear to us by now, intrinsic to the nature of love and its demands. It is at once both a most fitting expression of love (*maximae caritatis signum*), and the means by which its natural aspirations for the fulfilment of “real union” can be effected. In these arguments of Thomas what is demonstrated by him is that the divine Word, including all the elements of his bodily humanity, is sacramentally present in order to enter into comprehensive union with the whole man. It is for this reason he is able to state, with approval, the doctrine of St Cyril: since the true body of the Word is Life-giving, “it is fitting [*decebat*] that He should be united somehow with our bodies [*quodammodo uniri corporibus*] through His sacred flesh.”³³⁷

³³⁵ ST III 76, 1 obj. 2; *Ibid.* ad. 2; 76, 2 obj. 2.

³³⁶ ST III 54, 3 ad. 3: “... omnibus particulis ad veritatem et integritatem humanae naturae pertinentibus”. This is the body made present under the sacramental species: “the entire Christ is contained in this sacrament, and He remains entire under the form in which He ascended to heaven” (ST III 76, 8, obj. 2; see also 76, 2; and 81, 3).

³³⁷ ST III 79, 1. “... vivificativum Dei Verbum, uniens seipsum propriae carni, fecit ipsam vivificativam. Decebat ergo eum nostris quodammodo uniri corporibus per sacram eius carnem”.

3.4.5. 'Real Union' and contact by way of Touch and Taste through the Sacramental Species

Together with this doctrine of Christ's whole and entire bodily presence, certain previous considerations of ours are now cast in a new light by our reflections on the natural aspirations of embodied love. Particularly illuminated is the doctrine we recently considered in Thomas' commentary on the *Sentences*, where he discusses the peculiar fittingness of the Eucharist's edible species which ensure sacramental contact with the body of Christ through touch (*tactus*) and taste (*gustus*). As we saw Thomas observe, among incarnate things only in the objective directness of contact-through-touch can one speak of a true "joining" (*coniunctio*): "among the senses it is only the sense of touch that is really joined to its sensible object".³³⁸ According to him, this fittingly expresses what occurs in this sacrament, where "the Word Incarnate is contained in order to be joined to us".³³⁹

This argument for the fittingness of the edible species gathers force when it is read in light of his teaching on "real union" as love's aspiration. Such union has to be effected through some form of contact and, as we have just established, the nature of this contact "depends upon the nature of the object with which the love in question seeks to make its rapport".³⁴⁰ As we have already considered, for beings composed of body and spirit, the contact which establishes "real union" can never be purely spiritual or physical, but always a combination of the two, where lover and beloved are present and united according to the whole truth of their natures. Hence, Thomas' interest in the the roles of *gustus* and *tactus* in Eucharistic communion can now be read in this light. We can see now that the fittingness of the edible species lies not only in the fact that they helpfully express the directness of Christ's presence by virtue of transubstantiation, nor merely that the action of eating signifies the highest kind of union, but also that such tactile contact brought about through eating the body of Christ in its sacramental mode ensures that there is contact at once bodily and spiritual. As Thomas puts it so forthrightly, *per Eucharistiam manducamus Christum*,³⁴¹ an eating achieved through the edibility of his sacred body's sacramental species. Such incarnate contact fulfils here a vital condition for the fulfilment of 'real union'.

³³⁸ *In Sent.* IV, d. 8, a. 3, q. 3. "... inter alios sensus solus tactus est cui suum sensibile realiter coniunctur".

³³⁹ *In Sent.* IV, d. 8, a. 3, q. 3.

³⁴⁰ Faraon OP, *The Metaphysical and Psychological Principals of Love*, p. 70.

³⁴¹ ST III 73, 5 ad. 1.

Finally, we can now also re-visit another of Thomas' teachings in this particular article of his *Scriptum*, namely, the particular excellence of 'taste' to signify the depth of contact Christ effects with the communicant in his sacramental mode. Though 'touch' ensures a certain "joining" it is, as we saw, specifically the touch of *taste* that impresses Thomas here, for it signifies the deepest kind of union: whilst, he argues, most tangible things "act only by bringing about some impressions on that which they touch",³⁴² food, on the other hand, transcends these limitations, for it "acts by its being joined to the one fed, since the nourishing and the nourished are made one".³⁴³ The edible nature of the sacramental species allow for a depth of contact which surpasses the superficiality of external contact, indeed, surpassing anything possible to Christ in his native species. This brings us back to the aspirations of love, and its implicit demands for comprehensiveness of presence and union. Through eating the body of Christ by means of its edible species, a very far-reaching level of union is signified and effected, which fulfils those profound demands of love we considered earlier: for "it is peculiar to love", observes Thomas, "that it unites lover and beloved, as far as this is possible";³⁴⁴ accordingly, "he does not deprive us of his bodily presence; but unites us with himself [*nos sibi coniungit*] through the truth of his body."³⁴⁵

4. To Feed Spiritually upon the Body of Christ

The particular contact we have been considering is specifically sacramental contact; the importance of touch and taste lie in their capacity to signify, and instrumentally bring into effect, a union which initially concerns the soul of man, and from the soul, the body.³⁴⁶ It is precisely for this reason that Thomas regards the sensible aspects of this sacramental contact to hold such theological importance, for in their corporality they serve not only to prolong the logic of the Incarnation,³⁴⁷ but to manifest outwardly what is effected supernaturally and, until the general resurrection, invisibly to the eye. If touch and taste interest Thomas in his Commentary on the *Sentences*, he continues this line of thought in the *Summa Theologiae* by

³⁴² *In Sent.* IV, d. 8, a. 3, q. 3. "... alia vero tangibilia agunt efficiendo aliquas impressiones in eo quod tangitur, sicut patet de calido et frigido, et huiusmodi".

³⁴³ *Ibid.* "... solus cibus est qui agit per coniunctionem sui ad cibatum, quia nutriens et nutritum fit unum".

³⁴⁴ SCG IV, 54.

³⁴⁵ ST III 75, 1.

³⁴⁶ ST III 79, 1 ad. 3. "... corpus non sit immediatum subiectum gratiae, ex anima tamen redundat effectus gratiae ad corpus, dum in praesenti membra nostra exhibemus arma iustitiae Deo (ut habetur Rom. VI); et in futuro corpus nostrum sortietur incorruptionem et gloriam animae."

³⁴⁷ See, for example, *De Veritate* 27, 4 (as we observed earlier in the chapter).

observing the natural consequences of bodily eating, from which he is able to perceive one of the principal supernatural effects of Eucharistic eating.³⁴⁸

The decisive feature of bodily eating that Thomas seeks to apply, in an analogous sense, to the supernatural eating of the Eucharist, is the notion of a “change” (*conversio* or *mutatio*) through the interaction of food with the one nourished. If, on the biological level, a certain incorporation can be observed, where the food “is changed [*convertitur*] into the substance of the person nourished”,³⁴⁹ the very reverse takes place through the sacramental eating of the body of Christ. Here we have an exchange of the typical active and passive principles peculiar to eating. In this unique instance, the assimilation is not of food into the body of the consumer, but of the consumer into the supernatural food of Christ himself. This living, non-material, incorruptible, supernatural food, infinitely more powerful than the recipient, “changes [*convertit*] man into itself”, insists Thomas.³⁵⁰ We have already established the principles which account for this at the very beginning of our Eucharistic considerations: the living substance of Christ’s risen body, received by means of the edible instrumentality of bread, is not in itself eaten and consumed, but sacramentally eaten, sacramentally absorbed. It thereby undergoes no destruction, loss, absorption, nor material integration, but itself exerts its own incorporating and assimilating powers *upon* the recipient. “The change is entirely on our side, not on his”.³⁵¹

It is for these reasons that Thomas frequently calls the Eucharist itself a *spirituale alimentum*,³⁵² and Holy Communion a *manducatio spiritualis*.³⁵³ We must be clear about what Thomas means by these terms. First of all, they distinguish the Eucharist from the dead matter of “bodily food” (*alimentum corporale*), the nourishment which is absorbed and destroyed through its biological assimilation into the body of the consumer. In making this distinction, Thomas is able to uphold the inherent paradox of Eucharistic communion: the true *body* of Christ, present *per modum substantiae* with “bones, nerves, and all the rest”, is

³⁴⁸ An analysis of this is also found in his Commentary on the *Sentences* (See *Sent.* IV, 12, 2.1.1).

³⁴⁹ ST III 73, 3 ad. 2

³⁵⁰ ST III 73, 3 ad. 2. “Ad secundum dicendum quod haec est differentia inter alimentum corporale et spirituale, quod alimentum corporale convertitur in substantiam eius qui nutritur, et ideo non potest homini valere ad vitae conservationem alimentum corporale nisi realiter sumatur. Sed alimentum spirituale convertit hominem in seipsum, secundum illud quod Augustinus dicit, in libro confess., quod quasi audivit vocem Christi dicentis, nec tu me mutabis in te, sicut cibum carnis tuae, sed tu mutaberis in me.”

³⁵¹ “It is we who, as we see, touch, and taste the consecrated host, enter into new and direct contact with him whom it contains. The change is entirely on our side not on his”. Marie-Joseph Nicholas OP, *The Eucharist*, trans. Reginald F. Trevett (London: Burns and Oates, 1960), p. 53.

³⁵² ST III 73, 1

³⁵³ ST III 74, 1

true food for the soul. By virtue of the sacred body's divine instrumentality (which we considered in detail earlier) and its presence under the edible species of bread, the body of Christ is able to reach down and act upon the very spiritual root of man's being, "transforming and inebriating it with God", Thomas sings.³⁵⁴

In this sacrament, then, the body of Christ not only continues to participate in the power of the divinity, but is communicated in a spiritual mode, which ensures the unique depth of its action upon the Christian. Here we can see how the sacred body, whilst remaining truly bodily, transcends the inherent limitations of material bodiliness and acts, miraculously, at the level of the spirit: "[effecting] for the spiritual life all that material food does for the bodily life".³⁵⁵ Such is the strictness of this analogy that Thomas transfers all that he knows of natural feasting to this supernatural nourishment: the bread that is Christ's body inwardly "sustains, gives increase, restores, and gives delight".³⁵⁶

All this immediately gives us an insight into how Thomas is applying *spiritualiter* in this Eucharistic context. As we have seen, in certain specific ways, it is used in opposition to *corporaliter*, in order to distinguish it from the properties and effects of merely natural nourishment. In other instances, it is used not precisely in opposition to *corporaliter*, but rather to uphold the truth of Christ's bodily presence in the sacrament, by identifying the spiritual mode of the sacred body's presence: *spiritualiter, idest invisibiliter*.³⁵⁷ And as we have just considered, it also indicates its initial sphere of action, the soul of man, from which contact the Christian's body subsequently participates.³⁵⁸

4.1. In this sacrament Christ is present "not only in His divinity, but in the reality of His Flesh":³⁵⁹ a comprehensiveness of contact and effect

As we are beginning to detect, Thomas does not offer a dualistically spiritualised theology of the Eucharist and its fruits. We have already observed how the bodily dimension is most pronounced in his understanding of the Eucharistic presence, but it also features strongly in

³⁵⁴ *In Jo.* 6, lect. 7. See also ST III 79, 1 ad. 2, where Thomas uses the same language, and makes an allusion to the Song of Songs: "Et inde est quod ex virtute huius sacramenti anima spiritualiter reficitur, per hoc quod anima delectatur, et quodammodo inebriatur dulcedine bonitatis divinae, secundum illud Cant. V, comedite, amici, et bibite; et inebriamini, carissimi."

³⁵⁵ ST III 79, 1. "... omnem effectum quem cibus et potus materialis facit quantum ad vitam corporalem"

³⁵⁶ ST III 79, 1. "... quod scilicet sustentat, auget, reparat et delectat, hoc totum facit hoc sacramentum quantum ad vitam spiritualem."

³⁵⁷ ST III 75, 1 ad. 1 (and ad. 4).

³⁵⁸ ST III 79, 1 ad. 3

³⁵⁹ *In Jo.* 6, lect. 7.

his expounding of the sacrament's effects. For example, in continuity with St Cyril,³⁶⁰ at certain moments in his Eucharistic doctrine the body of Christ is identified specifically with the sanctification and glory of the Christian's body, and the sanctification of the Christian's soul is identified with the concomitant divinity. Like so many other aspects of Thomas and Cyril's Eucharistic theology, this association is founded upon the hypostatic union, specifically the principle that "it is the Word who raises up souls, and it is the Word-made-flesh who gives life to bodies".³⁶¹ This distinction, closely related to the one we observed in the Eucharistic doctrine of Cyril,³⁶² is then immediately applied to the Eucharist: "Now in this sacrament", Thomas observes, "the Word is present not only in his divinity, but also in the reality of his flesh".³⁶³ Therefore this sacrament is to be understood as food for the whole man, argues Thomas, for it causes "the resurrection not just of souls, but of bodies as well".³⁶⁴ Such anthropological comprehensiveness alone makes it "clear how profitable it is to eat this sacrament."³⁶⁵

We see a similar, though perhaps less precise, distinction at work on certain occasions in the *Summa*, where Thomas favourably cites the poetic association the Fathers make between the body of Christ and the salvation of the recipient's body, and the blood of Christ and the recipient's soul: "The body is offered for the salvation of the body, and the blood for the salvation of the soul", Thomas writes.³⁶⁶ Within its limits, and correctly interpreted, Thomas perceives a certain wisdom in this connection between the sacred body and our sinful bodies, and the precious blood and our souls. The human body of Christ clearly corresponds to the communicant's own body, and so it is not unfitting to appropriate

³⁶⁰ *In Joh.* 17:22-23 (Pusey, iii. 2-3); *In Luc.* 22:17-22 (Reuss, 209-10; Smith, 571).

³⁶¹ *In Jo.* cap. vi, lect. 7. "Verbum resuscitat animas, sed Verbum caro factum vivificat corpora."

³⁶² As we observed in our previous chapter, Cyril highlights the fact that there is a "union of common natures" between Christ and the Christian in Eucharistic communion. By virtue of the communication of Christ's sacred flesh to the sinful flesh of the communicant, there is brought about for the Christian what Cyril calls a "physical [i.e. natural] participation" (*methexis physikiy*) with the enfleshed Word. See *In Joh.* 15:1 (Pusey, ii. 535).

³⁶³ *In Jo.* 6, lect. 7. "In hoc autem sacramento non solum est Verbum, secundum suam Divinitatem, sed etiam secundum veritatem carnis".

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.* " ... non est solum causa resurrectionis animarum, sed etiam corporum".

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.* "Patet ergo utilitas huius manducationis."

³⁶⁶ Thomas favourably alludes to this teaching of St Ambrose on at least two occasions: " ... ut Ambrosius dicit, super epistolam ad Corinthios, hoc sacramentum valet ad tuitionem corporis et animae, et ideo caro Christi sub specie panis pro salute corporis, sanguis vero sub specie vini pro salute animae offertur" (ST III 74, 1). See also 79, 1 ad. 3. The same doctrine is proposed by St Anselm: "We place bread and wine upon the altar to represent each [i.e. the Body and Blood], that we may believe that by bread made Body, and worthily received by us, our body will be conformed to the Body of Christ in immortality and impassibility; and similarly that by wine turned into Blood, and received by us, our souls become conformed to the soul of Christ" (*Ep.* 107), quoted in Mascall, *Corpus Christi*, p. 120 (fn. 1).

to Christ's glorious and risen body the salvation of the communicant's fallen body; likewise, a natural association persists between the precious blood and the communicant's soul, for the blood invisibly pervades the sinner's body in a manner analogous to spirit, and therefore lends itself to this particular appropriation.³⁶⁷ But such distinctions are based upon symbolic associations, and so Thomas is quick to reunite them in their operation, and thereby highlight the comprehensiveness of the Eucharist's effects: both sacred body and blood "each works for the salvation of both", he reminds us.³⁶⁸

But in continuity with these associations, it is particularly noteworthy how often Thomas includes in his arguments certain statements from the Fathers which offer a highly developed sense of the somatic dimension of Eucharistic communion. For example, after having established the distinction between *cibus materialis* and the Eucharist, Thomas quotes a statement from St John Chrysostom on Eucharistic union which, in its naturalism and heightened sense of tactility, immediately relieves Thomas' own argument from any false sense of abstraction or unhuman spiritualism: "Let us feel Him, and eat Him, and embrace Him",³⁶⁹ Thomas quotes St Chrysostom as saying. Significant too is Thomas' favourable allusion to St Cyril in his first presentation of the Eucharistic effects, which we witnessed earlier. Alongside Thomas' clarifications on the spiritual nature of this nourishment, indeed by virtue of this (as shall become clearer) Thomas does not hesitate to assert that Christ unites himself to our very bodies through the bestowal of his own body in this sacrament: "it is fitting that He should be united somehow with our bodies [*quodammodo uniri corporibus*] through His sacred flesh."³⁷⁰ The principles and distinctions Thomas provides show in what sense this is true, as we shall shortly consider.

These are all statements of the Fathers which Thomas incorporates into his own arguments after having established the metaphysical presuppositions which grant them coherence and intelligibility. Just as we witnessed in the Eucharistic doctrine of St Cyril, what is ultimately conveyed by Thomas throughout his argumentation, and by force of implication, is a sense of the comprehensiveness of the Eucharist's effects: through union with the flesh of the Word, the whole man, in his corporal reality, is brought into vital,

³⁶⁷ Furthermore, in the Old Testament "blood" is frequently "life-blood", and therefore a convenient outward sign of the spiritual soul as life-principle (Gen. 9: 4-5; Deut. 12:23; Lev. 17:11).

³⁶⁸ ST III 79, 1 ad. 3.

³⁶⁹ ST III 79, 1. "Et Chrysostomus dicit, supra Ioan., praestat se nobis desiderantibus et palpare et comedere et amplecti."

³⁷⁰ ST III 79, 1. "... vivificativum Dei Verbum, uniens seipsum propriae carni, fecit ipsam vivificativam. Decebat ergo eum nostris quodammodo uniri corporibus per sacram eius carnem".

sanctifying contact with the whole Christ in his corporal reality. This is anticipated by what Thomas had observed earlier when considering Christ's office of Headship, for "the entire humanity of Christ, body and soul" he teaches, "acts upon men, on their bodies as well as their souls".³⁷¹ His Eucharistic doctrine shows how this is true, where any strict equating of the material with the natural, and the spiritual with the supernatural, is ultimately resisted.³⁷² The supernatural life is not consigned and limited to the spiritual but, just as we saw St Cyril insist, comes into vital contact with sinful flesh by means of the sacred flesh of the Word. As Thomas teaches, through the sacramental mode of the body of Christ, the divine life is brought to the whole man: "[T]his bread is so very profitable, since it gives eternal life [not only] to the soul, but also because it gives eternal life to the body."³⁷³

4.2. Further understanding the notion of "bodily union" with Christ

These clarifications enable us to state, with greater assurance, the precise way in which the body of Christ can be said to be 'united' with the body of the Christian. From what we have

³⁷¹ ST III 8, 2. "... tota Christi humanitas, secundum scilicet animam et corpus, influit in homines et quantum ad animam et quantum ad corpus".

³⁷² Eric Mascall has some illuminating thoughts on this matter, particularly in relation to the Eucharist. Here he reflects on the terminology found in certain Anglican texts, which make, in his opinion, a false association between the body and the natural, and the soul and the supernatural. In reflecting on the Book of Common Prayer, he writes, "'What', asks the Catechism, discussing the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, 'are the benefits whereof we are partakers thereby?' And the answer is: 'The strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the Body and Blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the Bread and Wine.' The thought is perfectly clear, however extraordinary the consequences may be. I am made up of two parts, a body and a soul. Each of them needs to be fed. My body is a material thing and needs for its food material things, such as bread and wine. That is one half of the picture, and it makes perfectly good sense. But here is the other half. My soul is a spiritual thing and needs for its food spiritual things, such as— what? The Body and Blood of Christ? But the Body and Blood of Christ are not just spiritual things. Clearly the parallel has broken down. The human soul of Christ is a spiritual thing, and so (if, *salva reverentia*, the word 'thing' may be used in this connection) is his divine Person; but the Catechism does not tell us that in the Lord's Supper we receive Christ's human soul or his divine Person. It tells us that we receive his body and blood; and this, in Biblical usage, means manhood in its entirety. Obviously something has gone badly wrong with the thought It arises out of the assumption that what the Eucharist imparts is merely spiritual sustenance for our souls, and this is an assumption that the words 'body' and 'blood' simply will not bear. However unintentionally, in this unhappily worded question and answer the Catechism has managed to suggest both an inadequate view of man and an inadequate view of the Eucharist. It has divided man into two parts, a body which needs merely natural nourishment and a soul which needs supernatural nourishment, thus removing the body from all direct contact with the supernatural realm. In consequence, since the Eucharistic food is clearly supernatural, the Catechism has had to restrict the operation of the Eucharist to the soul and, in doing so, to treat the Body and Blood of Christ as purely spiritual objects. The material is treated as purely natural, and the supernatural as purely spiritual; this is an assumption which is highly congenial to the modern world and which has had remarkable and devastating results in other spheres than those of Eucharistic theology". E.L. Mascall, *Corpus Christi*, pp. 116-117.

³⁷³ *In Jo.* 6, lect. 7. "Est ergo magna utilitas huius cibi, quia dat vitam aeternam animae; sed etiam magna est, quia dat vitam aeternam etiam corpori."

observed, we may eliminate two possibilities. First of all, we have seen it clearly asserted by Thomas that this is not a union by way of bodily assimilation and absorption, where—in the manner of natural food—one thing is destroyed in order to become the other. Such a union would, in fact, cease to be a union of love, since the annihilation of the other results in their being one, and no longer two in interpersonal distinction.³⁷⁴ But, secondly, neither do we have in this instance a coming together by means of bodily juxtaposition, where a close but external proximity might be justifiably regarded as a union, as in the case of conjugal union. Though Eucharistic union is formed by means of the body, and through tangible mediation, it is nevertheless, as we have observed, a reality formed initially at the innermost level of the soul, and therefore radically exceeds any union of external, bodily concurrence.

But it is precisely in this ‘spiritual’ feature of Holy Communion that ensures its profound, bodily dimension. The fallen and perishable body of the Christian can be said to be united to the risen and glorious body of Christ insofar as the Christian’s soul, his very principle of life, is first united to Christ and sanctified by this contact. We have only to recall some of the anthropological principles we considered in Part 1 of our thesis to see how this is the case. As we observed there, with a living body, the principle of life is united to the body as form to matter, act to potency.³⁷⁵ The human body is only “one”, teaches Thomas, because of that principle of life which unites all its parts.³⁷⁶ Now “by coming sacramentally into man [*in hominem sacramentaliter veniens*]”,³⁷⁷ the true body of Christ is able to form a new bond with the communicant’s body precisely through being food for the body’s own form, the soul.³⁷⁸ Here, instead of the bodily absorption and destruction of Christ, we have instead a change in the soul of the recipient, which means, therefore, we have a change in the principle of life and unity of the body. This cannot fail to be profoundly ennobling and elevating for the body,³⁷⁹ for several reasons. The deification of the very life-principle of the

³⁷⁴ Such an understanding is of the Christian’s union with Christ by absorption is, as we observed in Part 1 of our thesis, both contrary to the union of the Mystical Body (see *Mystici Corporis* 86) and contrary to the nature and demands of love itself. This, as we saw earlier in this chapter, is the very exaggeration of Aristophanes (see ST I,II 28, 1 ad. 2).

³⁷⁵ ST I 75, 1, and 76, 1.

³⁷⁶ ST I 76, 1.

³⁷⁷ ST III 79, 1.

³⁷⁸ For an account of the implications of Thomas’s hylomorphic anthropology on his understanding of the glorious resurrection of the Christian’s body see: Caroline Walker Bynum, *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200-1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 256-271.

³⁷⁹ As one mystical theologian of the Thomist tradition puts it, “Participation in this admirable sacrament imparts to the human body a divine splendour that will remain eternally” (Juan Arintero OP, *The Mystical*

Christian's body means that the latter too must participate in this supernatural life, and ultimately be transformed by it (cf. Phil. 3:21).³⁸⁰ But upon these principles we can go further still: insofar as the divine life of Christ becomes, through the Eucharist, the supernatural life-principle of the Christian ("It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me", Gal. 2:20),³⁸¹ the Christian's body comes to be, by a certain logical necessity, literally 'possessed' by Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 6:15).³⁸²

So, rather than implying any opposition to corporality, the spiritual aspect of this Eucharistic nourishment and union expresses its depth of contact, a depth which allows for the transformation of the whole psychosomatic reality of man. There is, indeed, no better way for Christ to come into possession of the sinner's body, and to take hold of it and sanctify it, than by forming a union with the Christian not through bodily juxtaposition or destructive absorption, but at the very root of his being and life-principle of his body. In this way, "Christ is head of our bodies, not only our souls".³⁸³ One should say, therefore, that the Christian's body is united to the body of Christ in a formal, rather than in a simply material, and therefore weaker, way. It is a union that comes about not through bodily juxtaposition, or as part-next-to-part, but precisely by the internal, formal principle uniting them, the supernatural

Evolution in the Development and Vitality of the Church, trans. Jordan Aumann OP (Rockford, Illinois: Tan Books, 1978), p. 340).

³⁸⁰ We saw this previously at the end of our chapter on St Cyril, but it is worth noting that it is a doctrine which also emerges frequently in the writing of mystical theologians. "By this [Eucharistic] union the Saviour wished to deify the flesh of man, in a certain sense, in the person of all those Christians who would worthily receive His sacred flesh. He wished also to communicate His grace to souls and to resurrected bodies a power which would make them share in the brilliance of His own glorious body. But understand well that those who frequently and worthily received this divine food will enjoy in their resurrected flesh a greater accidental glory than those who were not worthy to receive this sacrament so frequently, even though they will be equal in merit in all other respects. ... No one could ever have imagined such a work; namely, that God should have become a creature, and a creature would become God in this ineffable manner and by this double communication". St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, *De Sacramento Altissimo* I, chap. 21 (quoted in Juan Arintero OP, *The Mystical Evolution*, Ibid., p. 340). Arintero himself writes, "Since it purifies, recifies, and heals our flesh, the Eucharist is a preservative from corruption and the seed or living pledge of resurrection. Participation in this admirable sacrament imparts to the human body a divine splendour that will remain eternally and will bestow a singular glory on the just who receive it with the greater frequency". (Ibid. p. 340).

³⁸¹ In the *Scriptum*, Thomas uses this phrase of St Paul's in his exposition of the Eucharist's effects: "the proper effect of this sacrament is the conversion of man into Jesus Christ, in such a way that he can truly say: *I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me.*" (*In IV Sent.*, dist. 12, q. 2, a. 1. ad. 1).

³⁸² This notion of 'possession' was observed by Jacques-Benigne Bossuet, who taught that, because of the Eucharist, "our body is no longer our own, but Jesus Christ's. ... [Y]our own body is no longer yours. Jesus desires to possess it. In this way you will become united, body to body, and you will be two in one flesh." (*Médit. Sur l'Evang., La Cène*, 24; cited by Juan Arintero OP in *The Mystical Evolution*, Ibid. p. 334).

³⁸³ ST III 8, 2.

life of sanctifying grace.³⁸⁴ This lends the union a unique intensity and perfection that would be impossible to effect in the natural order, necessarily exceeding the union of spouses in “one flesh” (Gen. 2: 24),³⁸⁵ its human counterpart and model (cf. Eph. 5:31). “We could not possibly enter into such a relationship with any other than the God-man”.³⁸⁶

Conclusion

Our closing Eucharistic reflections call to mind our Christological starting point in this chapter, and demonstrate an important unity in Thomas’ thought. His desire to unite, in his exposition of the Incarnation, the earthly and the heavenly, the vividly natural and the exaltedly supernatural, is sustained in his exposition of the Eucharist. Here, as we have just witnessed, the natural and the material are not excluded from the supernatural order, but are shown to be, in the sacred body of Christ, the vehicle of its sanctifying power, whilst the body of the communicant is shown to come entirely under its sphere of influence. In these concluding reflections, it is worth reminding ourselves how Thomas’ theology of the Incarnation and, specifically, of the hypostatic union, underlies what we have witnessed in his Eucharistic doctrine.

We observed at the beginning of this chapter how the sacred humanity of Christ is presented by Thomas in both its unique sublimity and its palpable earthliness: this human body is, uniquely among all bodies, exalted far beyond the entire spiritual order.³⁸⁷ Such miraculous concurrence of opposites in the Incarnation inspires Thomas to wonder that “it pertains to the greatest glory of God to have raised a weak and earthly body to such sublimity”.³⁸⁸ Indeed, this “way that leads to God” is, despite its cosmic significance and purpose, no metaphysical abstraction but a tangible and bodily mediating principle of divine grace, materially (*materialiter*) composed of earthly elements; a “carnal and earthly body” (*corpus carneum et terrenum*), made up of “flesh and bones and blood” (*caro et ossa et*

³⁸⁴ Cf. ST III 8, 1-6.

³⁸⁵ “The union of Christ and his Church is much deeper than the union of marriage, and the identification in a single body more absolute.” F.X. Durrwell, *The Resurrection: A Biblical Study*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (London: Sheed and Ward, 1965) p. 178. As St Ambrose writes, “The body of Christ is the bridal chamber of the Church [*Cubiculum Ecclesiae corpus est Christi*]”, *In Ps. 118, Sermo I*, 16 (PL 15, 1271).

³⁸⁶ M.J. Scheeben, *The Mysteries of Christianity*, tr. by Cyril Vollert S.J. (St. Louis, 1954) p. 366.

³⁸⁷ ST III 57, 5

³⁸⁸ ST III 5, 2 ad. 3

sanguis).³⁸⁹ As we recognised, there is a peculiar emphasis in Thomas' exposition here: not only does he reject the notion that the assumed flesh be heavenly (*caeleste*) or illusory (*phantasticum*)³⁹⁰ but, precisely by virtue of its supernatural dignity through the hypostatic union, Thomas even perceives an intensification of its natural attributes: in Jesus Christ we encounter not simply a true human nature but, along with the perfections of soul, a unique and exemplary manifestation of human bodiliness,³⁹¹ where his perfect constitution and sensibility grants him a heightened sensitivity to the conditions of bodily life.³⁹² This realism and preoccupation with natural palpability in Thomas' Christology is evident, firstly, in his consideration of the perishable body offered on the Cross, yet we also observed how the risen and gloriously impassible body of Jesus, victorious over death, retains its essential materiality and palpability. Thomas' observations of the assumed flesh in its supernatural glory specify certain features which connect it with his earlier Christology: "the openings of the wounds break the continuity of the tissue,"³⁹³ he observes, and in preserving all the "tangible qualities such as the nature of a human body requires,"³⁹⁴ it can still "naturally be handled",³⁹⁵ as it was by his disciples.

These features of Thomas' consideration of the Saviour in himself inform his considerations of Christ's saving actions. This true and humble flesh, possessing all the common elements "which belong to the truth and integrity of human nature" (*ad veritatem et integritatem humanae naturae*)³⁹⁶ has been raised to a sublime causal dignity, where it may extend its influence far beyond the historical confines and bodily particularities of first century Palestine.³⁹⁷ As the flesh of the divine person of the Word, it is forever the *instrumentum coniunctum Divinitatis*, through which the infinite God condescends to effect "divine things humanly".³⁹⁸ Thus, the harmony of infinitely distinct orders, the earthly and heavenly, the human and divine, persists throughout this soteriology. Indeed, it is not by acts

³⁸⁹ ST III 5, 2

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

³⁹¹ ST III 46, 6

³⁹² Ibid. "... secundum corpus erat optime complexionatus, cum corpus eius fuerit formatum miraculose operatione Spiritus Sancti. ... sicut et alia quae per miracula facta sunt, sunt aliis potiora, ut Chrysostomus dicit de vino in quod Christus aquam convertit in nuptiis. Et ideo in eo maxime viguit sensus tactus, ex cuius perceptione sequitur dolor."

³⁹³ ST III 54, 4 ad. 2

³⁹⁴ ST III 54, 2

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ ST III 54, 3 ad. 3

³⁹⁷ ST III 48, 6 ad. 2

³⁹⁸ ST III 19, 1 ad. 1

proper to the divinity, but by acts strictly proper to the flesh, that the divine Word comes into redemptive contact with sinners,³⁹⁹ ensuring that infinite Spirit may effect authentically human contact, and therefore bodily contact, with the human objects of his mercy and love. Thomas' sacramental theology is informed by these very principles, for here the spiritual, divine remedy is both transmitted through a tangible medium and thereby lovingly "proportioned" or "adjusted" [*proportionatur*] to the bodily nature of the recipient.⁴⁰⁰ In this way, argues Thomas, the true flesh of the Word, participating in the power of the Godhead, continues to exert its influence upon the sinful flesh of man in and through this sacramental order. Christ brings this to pass not simply by way of a moral causality from afar, but by the very sacramental contact of his sacred humanity upon our sinful humanity, an efficient, effecting cause which is analogous to the physical.⁴⁰¹ Such contact is achieved by means of both the six *instrumenta separata*,⁴⁰² and, most perfectly, the *instrumentum coniunctum*, his true, physical body in its sacramental mode.

As is most fitting for the perfect sacrament of the Incarnation,⁴⁰³ Thomas' exposition of the Eucharist is, as we observed, characterised by the same integration of sublimity and naturalism that we witnessed in his Christology. Christ's physical body is here present in a spiritual mode, though it is precisely by virtue of this spiritual mode that Thomas is able to maintain not only the supernatural, but also the natural and bodily dimensions of its presence and sphere of effect. The physical body which, by virtue of its divine subject and supernatural consecration, "surpasses all spiritual substances in dignity",⁴⁰⁴ is nevertheless present in both its glorious and natural truth, with "bones, nerves and all the rest".⁴⁰⁵ This comprehensiveness of presence ensures a whole series of welcome consequences. First of all, it is this "bodily presence" of a divine person that gives the Eucharist its distinctive character and, according to Thomas, reveals its great fittingness. By being present in his very body, and not merely by way of power or operation, the friendship between God and man is effected and manifested,⁴⁰⁶ where Christ and Christians may engage in a life of mutual, loving

³⁹⁹ ST III 19, 1

⁴⁰⁰ ST III 60, 6

⁴⁰¹ E.g. ST III 62, 4. See also M.-Benoît Lavaud OP, 'Saint Thomas et la Causalité Physique Instrumentale de la Sainte Humanité et des Sacraments', in *Revue Thomiste* 32 (1927) p. 305 ff.

⁴⁰² ST III 64, 4

⁴⁰³ *De Veritate* 27, 4

⁴⁰⁴ ST III 57, 5

⁴⁰⁵ ST III 76, 1 ad. 2

⁴⁰⁶ *In Jo.* 15, lect. 3, n. 2011

exchange, until the joy of heavenly beatitude.⁴⁰⁷ Furthermore, as we showed through an application of Thomas' own principles, such bodily presence, along with its unique comprehensiveness, brings to a certain perfection the natural aspirations of love between bodily subjects, this side of heavenly beatitude.

Secondly, we observed the special perfections of the edible sacramental species, especially in relation to the question of sacramental contact. As the earthly Christ, in accordance with the consequences of the hypostatic union, typically communicated his divine power through physical touch, so Thomas perceives a special theological significance in the sacramental contact, and the operation of the communicant's senses, in Eucharistic communion. Here, through the sacramental species, the agency of 'touch' is understood to find its highest perfection in 'taste', which fittingly signifies the deepest and most pervasive level of contact and union.⁴⁰⁸ It is, *per accidens*, truly the body of Christ that is touched and consumed, through the instrumentality of the edible, sacramental species. The contact between the Incarnate Word and the Christian is here characterised by a new depth and comprehensiveness which surpasses anything possible to Christ in his native species, to such an extent that, paradoxically, the very body of Christ is able to work directly upon the soul of the Christian and by virtue of this, the Christian's body.⁴⁰⁹

This, as we have just been considering, is the key to understanding the bodily dimension of the Christian's union with the body of Christ. Rather than offering a disembodied, 'spiritualised' Eucharistic theology, Thomas' exposition of the Blessed Sacrament as *spirituale alimentum* serves to indicate the unique depth of the sacred body's action. In accordance with the vivid somaticism of John 6, Thomas is able to perceive in the Eucharist an entirely comprehensive sphere of effective contact, which fittingly corresponds with his teachings on the comprehensiveness of the incarnate Christ's sacramental presence. Because this risen and sacred body is able first to sanctify the very formal principle of the sinner's body, the body of the Christian is truly possessed by Christ (cf. 1 Cor 6: 15), and united to his own risen body through Eucharistic communion. In other words, the fallen body of the Christian is united to the sacred and risen body of Christ via the latter's initial contact with the soul. Hence, rather than by a destructive, biological assimilation of body into body, or external, material juxtaposition of body-next-to-body, the Christian's body comes to be

⁴⁰⁷ ST III 75, 1

⁴⁰⁸ *In Sent.* IV, d. 8, a. 3, q. 3

⁴⁰⁹ ST III 79, 1 ad. 3

supernaturally animated by the very divine life of the Head (cf. Gal. 2:20). It is owing to this formal, rather than the weaker material union, that “he will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body” (Phil. 3:21).

From our considerations of these aspects of Thomas’ Christological and Eucharistic thought, we gain a new appreciation of the thesis of both St Cyril of Alexandria in the early fifth century, and of the exegetes of the mid-twentieth century we considered in the first part of our study. We are able now, in particular, to turn to Cyril’s thesis of the bodiliness of Christ’s union with the Christian with a new critical awareness. Though we have frequently stressed the continuity of thought between Cyril and Thomas, their mode of expression is profoundly dissimilar. This is significant to our study, since Cyril, as is common to the Fathers, invariably expresses his doctrine of somatic union with Christ through vibrant metaphors and homiletic lyricism. Thomas’ distinctions have allowed us to perceive Cyril’s imagery in both its poetic fittingness and metaphysical inadequacy. For example, the comparison Cyril makes between this union and the forging of two pieces of wax, warmed and pressed together (whilst maintaining their distinction),⁴¹⁰ is seen now to have a clear purpose, within its obvious limits: it evokes the uniquely pervasive character of the body of Christ under its edible species, the bodiliness of the recipient, and the bodily mode of reception. It also conveys the fundamental truth that the communicant’s body will ultimately, at the resurrection, be changed through having received sacramentally the body of Christ into his own body. However, with the help of St Thomas, we can see now the essential inadequacy and poverty of this image, for in its sheer materiality it cannot avoid suggesting either union through destructive absorption, or union by bodily juxtaposition, both of which have been shown to be false. For all its evocation of solidity and vigour of bond, this metaphor ultimately expresses a weaker and more superficial union than the supernatural reality Cyril wants it to signify. We may regard as less inadequate, though, Cyril’s metaphor of the incursion of leaven in the bread dough (the leaven signifying the body of Christ, the dough signifying the body of the communicant).⁴¹¹ This both maintains the bodily realities, but more accurately conveys the sense of a true body invisibly and inwardly (*spiritualiter, idest invisibiliter*)⁴¹² vivifying the material dough, by which one operative and enlivening

⁴¹⁰ Both *In Joh.* 6: 56. Pusey, i 535; and *In Joh.* 15: 1. Pusey, ii. 545.

⁴¹¹ *In Joh.* 6: 56. Pusey, i 535

⁴¹² Cf. ST III 75, 1 ad. 1, and ad. 4

body can be said to come into comprehensive possession of another; from its very core outwards, the yeast comes to pervade the dough, and thereby forms the deepest union with it.

With the help of St Thomas, then, we have come to a clearer understanding of St Cyril's thesis, and have thereby been able to give further dogmatic credibility to the argument proposed by our exegetes in part one of our study. By way of a concluding synthesis, we now turn our attention to the arguments of the 19th century German theologian, Matthias Joseph Scheeben, in his *Die Mysterien des Christentums*. Here, the principle insights of Cyril and Thomas which relate to our enquiry are raised to a special prominence.

Chapter 3

Matthias Scheeben's *Die Mysterien des Christentums*: A Christological and Eucharistic Somaticism

1. Introduction: from Cyril to Thomas to Scheeben.

In our previous chapter we presented particular aspects of St Thomas' Christological and Sacramental thought in its continuity with the teachings of St Cyril of Alexandria. We concluded with a clearer perception of the way in which Cyril's doctrine of the Christian's union with Christ *kata sarka* is to be understood. All these considerations ultimately serve the purpose of illuminating for us, from a dogmatic perspective, the exegetical thesis proposed by the biblical scholars we encountered in part one of our study. If our chapter on St Cyril showed that the arguments of those mid-twentieth century exegetes has an important dogmatic precedent in the theological tradition, our study of St Thomas both supported this conviction, and provided us with the necessary precisions to show how the thesis is metaphysically and dogmatically coherent. We now turn to our final dogmatic source, where the thesis we are seeking to expound is granted a special prominence.

The Christological and sacramental thought of the 19th century Rhineland theologian, Matthias Joseph Scheeben (1835-1888), represents a natural point of synthesis of the thought of our two Doctors, St Cyril of Alexandria and St Thomas Aquinas. Historians of theology struggle to categorise Scheeben, or to place him within a theological school. He both was, and was not, a typical product of the Roman Theology of the 1850s. As a student of such neo-scholastic theologians as Joseph Kleutgen,¹ Clemens Schraader, and Johann Baptist Franzelin, Scheeben was amply exposed to the Thomistic revival of mid-nineteenth century Rome,² and in many ways celebrated it.³ Yet this was a formation not entirely neo-scholastic

¹ Kleutgen (1811-1883) never taught Scheeben formally, though certainly influenced him by his work and his correspondence. "Kleutgen was not a teacher of Scheeben —he was never professor at the Gregorianum— but [Kleutgen's] *Theologie der Vorzeit* was a guide for the young Scheeben, and later the theologian used it as a resource" (H. Schauf, "Vorwort", to Scheeben, *Handbuch der katholischen Dogmatik* 6 (Freiburg, 1957), p. xv. For the correspondence between them, see E. Paul, *Denkweg und Denkform der Theologie von Matthias Joseph Scheeben* (Munich, 1970) pp. 8 ff.

² For more on Scheeben's Roman formation, see A. Kerkvoorde, 'La formation théologique de M.J. Scheeben à Rome (1852-1859)' *ETHL* 22 (1946) p. 174 ff; H. J. Brosch, 'Das Werden des jungen M.J. Scheeben', *Stimmen der Zeit* 123 (1932), p. 395 ff. On this 'Roman School' in general, see W. Kasper, *Die Lehre von der Tradition in der Römischen Schule* (Freiburg, 1962).

in spirit, for he was also drawn to the patristic leanings of Carlo Passaglia, and to the theological method of Giovanni Perrone, whose particular aspiration was, like Scheeben's would later be, "to arrange biblical, scholastic, and patristic approaches into a synthesis".⁴ Indeed, though Scheeben was principally a disciple of Thomas, and championed the revival of his doctrine, it is said that he thought "like no other neo-scholastic".⁵ His advocacy of St Thomas was complemented by a wide reading of the Greek Fathers and, as is commonly noted, by a special intellectual devotion to St Cyril of Alexandria.⁶ Kleutgen himself was troubled by Scheeben's unconventional brand of Thomism, insisting "it will confuse more heads than it will illumine"⁷ and, with his fellow neo-scholastic Franzelin, he ultimately advised the Roman curia against recommending his *Handbuch der katholischen Dogmatik*.⁸

Commentators typically identify two distinctive features of Scheeben's Thomism that, relative to his time, were unconventional, yet which serve to make it a fitting complement to our own study. The first concerns Scheeben's adherence to the actual writings of Thomas rather than to any subsequent commentarial tradition, and the second concerns the influence of the Fathers, in reference both to doctrine and to Scheeben's mode of expression. Regarding the former characteristic, it has been observed that Scheeben's desire was always to "reach back to theological sources, to pass beyond scholasticism to Thomas Aquinas" himself.⁹ Accordingly, he "did not come to Aquinas through Suarez, Molina, De Lugo, or Bañez" but sought to engage with Thomas directly, acquiring "a broad knowledge of Aquinas' [actual] writings".¹⁰ Allied to his esteem for St Cyril, what emerged from this was not only a Thomism forged through close adherence to Thomas himself, but a Thomism

³ As Scheeben wrote, "Kleutgen was the first who twelve years ago undertook to rehabilitate scientifically the 'Theology and Philosophy of the Past' which had been neglected for a century. He did it with a vast and profound erudition, with clarity and peace. ... No one will brand the author with the slogan "neoscholastic" as a member of a dark and closed direction, for Kleutgen showed that he stands on the height of our age and knows its ideas and performances well —he does not want a repristination but a regeneration" (*Literarischer Handweiser* 28 [1864]: p. 323). Trans. provided by T.F. O'Meara OP, *Church and Culture: German Catholic Theology, 1860-1914* (Notre Dame, IN, 1991), p. 222.

⁴ See T.F. O'Meara OP, *Church and Culture: German Catholic Theology*, p. 53.

⁵ K. Eschweiler, *Die zwei Wege der neueren Theologie. G. Hermes — M.J. Scheeben* (Augsburg, 1926) p. 183.

⁶ This has been noted, for example, by Aidan Nichols' 'Homage to Scheeben', in *Scribe of the Kingdom: Essays on Theology and Culture*, vol. 1 (London: Sheed and Ward, 1994), p. 205; see also O'Meara OP (*Ibid.*), p. 54.

⁷ J. Kleutgen, *Briefe aus Rom* (Münster, 1865), pp. 130 ff. (Sept. 4th 1892).

⁸ See H. Schauf, A. Eröss, *M.J. Scheeben, Briefe nach Rom* (Freiburg, 1939), p. 132. See also Paul, *Denkweg* (*Ibid.*), pp. 32 ff.

⁹ O'Meara OP, *Church and Culture: German Catholic Theology*, p. 54.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 55.

contrived “in the spirit of the Greek Fathers”,¹¹ causing Scheeben to be considered both “a scholastic *and* a patristic theologian”.¹² Such powers of integration and assimilation, particularly in reference to Cyril and Thomas, make Scheeben the natural complement to our preceding chapters.

Our focus will be upon Scheeben’s final completed work, *Die Mysterien des Christentums*,¹³ the “masterpiece” of his career,¹⁴ where the decisive doctrines we have been focussing upon are raised to a special prominence. Here, Scheeben’s powers of integration and assimilation are reflected in his distinctive manner of expression, where a scholastic aspiration for technical precision is combined with a Patristic lyricism and rhetorical power. Given the route our study has taken, this particular quality of Scheeben’s has special importance for us. If the vital distinctions we have discerned in Thomas’ theology both complement and clarify the more homiletic language and imagery of St Cyril, Scheeben combines these two virtues in his *Mysterien*. We arrive at a point where the very theme we have been exploring, the union of Christ and the Christian from the vantage point of its bodiliness, is presented in a manner which harmonises our previous investigations, and brings them to a fitting conclusion. The truth of this will become clearer as we proceed.

Before we begin to engage with Scheeben’s teaching, it is worth making certain other observations. First of all, in Scheeben’s *Mysterien*, his treatment of Cyril and Thomas, and the association he perceives between them, is conducted within a broader theological project which immediately lends itself to making a connection between such historically diverse theologians. In accord with the promptings of the Magisterium in Scheeben’s life-time,¹⁵ his aim in the *Mysterien* is not only to reveal the mysteries of Christianity in their supernatural luminosity and mysterious character, but to unite them, and reveal their mutual reciprocity and internal coherence. This aspiration of Scheeben’s is mirrored by his use of sources: not only are the mysteries themselves shown in their harmonious unity, but the theological sources of East and West, Patristic and Scholastic, are brought together and integrated in

¹¹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord, A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. 1: *Seeing the Form*, trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998), p. 116.

¹² O’Meara OP, *Church and Culture: German Catholic Theology*, p. 54.

¹³ *Die Mysterien des Christentums: Wesen, Bedeutung und Zusammenhang derselben nach der in ihrem übernatürlichen Charakter gegebenen Perspektive dargestellt* (Freiburg: Herder, 1865 [1941]). English trans. (ET): *The Mysteries of Christianity*, trans. Cyril Vollert SJ (New York: Herder & Herder, 1946).

¹⁴ Aidan Nichols, ‘Homage to Scheeben’ (Ibid.) p. 207.

¹⁵ Vatican I emphasises understanding the mysteries of Christianity via the ‘analogy of faith’, that is, through their reciprocal illumination. See Vatican Council I (DS 3016) on the ability and vocation of natural reason to discern the interconnectedness of the mysteries of the Christian Faith.

Scheeben's theological expositions. As we have already intimated, this is most clearly manifested in his appropriation of the thought of St Thomas and St Cyril which, particularly in his Christology and Eucharistic theology, dominate Scheeben's references and argumentation.¹⁶

Scheeben's aspiration to reveal the ontological unity of intellectually distinct Christian mysteries, and to give particular expression of their sublimity and supernatural mysteriousness was, by his own admission,¹⁷ provoked by the theological rationalism and pantheism that had infected much 19th century theology.¹⁸ Such thinking involved not only an attack on the supernatural order but, paradoxically and consequentially, also an attack on the natural,¹⁹ including therefore the bodily dimension of the Christian mystery,²⁰ and the related sacramental order²¹ where the integration of these orders is so decisive. Significantly, Scheeben saw St Cyril to be a spiritual comrade in this anti-rationalist cause, regarding the Patriarch's thought—which was forged in opposition to Nestorian dualism—as a vital weapon in his own day; this Father of the Church was, Scheeben insists, the “champion [Vorkämpfer] raised up by God to do battle with Eastern rationalism”.²² Thus, in Scheeben's

¹⁶ Of all the Fathers and Doctors to which Scheeben alludes, St Thomas and St Cyril are by far the most frequently cited in the *Mysterien*. Whole sections of chapters, and appendices, are specifically devoted to the exposition, or presentation, of Thomas's texts (see for example, pp. 160-164), and he is explicitly cited on 55 occasions. In the four chapters alone that concern Christology, the Eucharist, the Sacraments, and the Church, St Cyril is explicitly alluded to on at least 32 occasions. In his Christological expositions, Scheeben admits that he could, if space allowed, refer to “countless passages [unzählige Stellen]” from Cyril (*Die Mysterien*, p. 315; ET p. 380). At the end of Scheeben's work on the Eucharist, he devotes a special section to Cyril's commentary on the farewell discourses in the Gospel of John (see the sub-section: ‘Die Eucharistie und die mit ihr in Verbindung stehenden Mysterien nach dem hl. Cyrill von Alexandrien’, pp. 437-442; ET pp. 530-535).

¹⁷ *Die Mysterien*, p.19-20 (ET p. 20).

¹⁸ For more on the intellectual background to Scheeben's writing, see E. Paul, *Denkweg und Denkform* (Ibid.) pp. 29-33; L. Scheffzyck, ‘Der Weg der deutschen katholischen Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert’ in *Theologische Quartalschrift* 145 (1965), pp. 273-306; A. Nichols OP, ‘Homage to Scheeben’ (Ibid), pp. 205-6; B. Casper, ‘Gesichtspunkte für eine historische Darstellung der deutschen katholischen Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert’, in A. Rauscher (ed.), *Entwicklungslinien des deutschen Katholizismus* (Munich-Paderborn, 1973), pp. 85-96; G. Schwaiger, ‘Die Aufklärung in katholischer Sicht’, in *Concilium* 3 (1967), pp. 559-566; and M. Weitlauff, ‘Kirche und Theologie in der ersten Hälfte des 19 Jahrhunderts’, in *Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift* 39 (1988), pp. 155-180

¹⁹ See *Dei Filius* 1 (DS 3002) and *Dei Filius* 2 (DS 3004, 3026).

²⁰ As we considered in the first part of our study, the scientific rationalism of Descartes resulted in the relegation of the human body to the sphere of sheer externality and brute matter, and this anthropological dualism dominated the following centuries. Michael Waldstein shows this to be so in his exposition of the anthropological legacy of scientific rationalism in his Introduction to John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body* (Boston: Pauline Books, 2006), pp. 36-55; 94-99. That this way of thinking strongly influenced succeeding centuries is shown by Waldstein, who traces the continuity from Francis Bacon, to Descartes, to Kant (Ibid., pp. 36-55).

²¹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 466 ff. (ET p. 567 ff.).

²² Ibid. p. 437 (ET p. 530).

Mysterien, we see an emphasis placed not only on the supernatural character of the Christian mysteries, but also on the dignity invested in the natural order, to which the supernatural mysteries are related analogously. Accordingly, Scheeben articulates a highly developed and pronounced theology of the somatic dimension of the Christian mystery, and proposes an understanding of the bodiliness of Christ's union with the Christian that complements and develops the theologies of St Cyril and St Thomas we have been considering. Let us now proceed to consider this.

2. Anthropological and Christological Presuppositions

In our previous chapters we observed the anthropological foundation upon which both Cyril and Thomas build their expositions of the sacraments. Both account for the tangibility of the sacramental order on the basis of the united truths of man's bodiliness and the assumed bodiliness of the Son. Scheeben follows this line of thought and, as we shall see, significantly expounds it. First of all, in harmony with Cyril and Thomas, Scheeben resists identifying the material and visible nature of the Christian sacraments with the fallen condition of man. Whilst the sacraments are themselves medicinal, and are in this sense a consequence of sin, their composition reflects not man's sin²³ but man's nature: the bodily and the spiritual are so integrated in man, insists Scheeben, that by a certain anthropological necessity "corporal nature [*leibliche Natur*] must have part [*Anteil haben mußte*] in the supernatural elevation of the spiritual nature".²⁴ But more compelling reasons can be perceived in man's state of innocence, for "already in Adam", writes Scheeben, "we observe a distinctive and remarkable interlacing [*wunderbar Verflechtung*] of supernatural grace with the nature of

²³ "Diese Gebundenheit des Mysteriums an das Sichtbare, des Übernatürlichen an das Natürliche und namentlich an das Materielle könnte auf den ersten Blick al seine Erniedrigung desselben erscheinen, welche nur mit Rücksicht sei es auf die natürliche Unvollkommenheit des Menschen, an welchen das Übernatürliche herantreten soll, sei es auf die durch die Sünde eingetretene Verkümmernng desselben sich motivieren lasse. Dieses Verhältnis möchte man als ein in etwa unnatürliches, auf rein medizinellen Gründen beruhendes auffassen, als wenn einerseits der Mensch, als in die Sinnlichkeit versunkenes Wesen, eben durch seine Schwachheit einer solchen sinnlichen Vermittlung in eine neue, aber heilsame Abhängigkeit von der sinnlichen Natur hingewiesen, für seinen Stolz gedemütigt werden sollte. Daran reiht sich der Gedanke, der sakramentale Charakter des Christentums sei ausschließlich auf die gefallene Natur berechnet, während eine derartige Einrichtung im Urstand nicht hätte Platz greifen können; er bekunde die wunderbare Heilkraft des Christentums, gehöre aber keineswegs an sich, seinem Wesen nach, absolute, zu einer höheren, wunderbareren Ökonomie des Universums und des Übernatürlichen insbesondere. ... Trotzdem glauben wir, daß diesem ganzen Verfahren etwas Tieferes zu Grunde liegt." *Die Mysterien*, p. 463 (ET p. 563).

²⁴ *Die Mysterien*, p. 462 (ET p. 562). " ... leibliche Natur Anteil haben mußte an der übernatürlichen Erhebung der geistigen".

man, even with his material side [*materiellen Seite*]”.²⁵ A certain original sacramentality can already be discerned in the fact that the transmission of grace was, before sin, bound up with the transmission of nature; the natural, generative act of human beings was always intended by God to be the vehicle not only of natural life but of supernatural life. This original and harmonious integration of distinct orders is of great importance for Scheeben, for the dignity invested in the natural order in general, and in bodiliness in particular, immediately illuminates the fittingness of the materiality of the Christian sacraments. As Scheeben writes, God intended

daß er seine übernatürliche Fruchtbarkeit mit der natürlichen des Geschlechts verflechten, beide zu einem harmonischen Ganzen verbinden und dadurch jener eine natürliche Unterlage, dieser eine übernatürliche Weihe geben wollte.²⁶

Thus, in God’s original intention, such was the internal harmony of the created order that the transmission of the highest was dependent upon the innate instrumentality of the lowest: as a natural expression of the body’s first dignity and sacramentality, “man’s corporal nature [*Leiblichkeit der Menschen*] was meant to become the vehicle [*das Vehikel*] for the grace in which the whole human family was to share”.²⁷

Already at this early stage of our consideration of Scheeben, we can perceive how a clear theology of the body emerges from his intention to reintegrate and present distinct mysteries in their harmony. In his treatment of this original dignity invested in human bodiliness, Scheeben is able to shed light upon essential principles of Christian revelation: both the Incarnation, and the sacramental character by which man’s restoration is typically accomplished, is shown to have a certain harmony with God’s original intention for the human body. As Scheeben reflects, this is

eine wahrhaft großartige Einrichtung, aus der wir erkennen, wie wunderbare die göttliche Weisheit das Höchste mit dem Niedrigsten zu verbinden trachtete, damit beide in geheimnisvoller Einheit und Wechselbeziehung die vollste Harmonie des Universums repräsentierten, damit das Hohe in der Durchdringung des Niedrigen seine

²⁵ *Die Mysterien*, p. 463 (ET p. 563-4). “Schon beim ersten Menschen beobachteten wir eine eigentümliche, wunderbare Verflechtung der übernatürlichen Gnade mit der Natur des Menschen, und zwar mit der materiellen Seite derselben”.

²⁶ *Die Mysterien*, p. 464. “[God wished] to link His supernatural fruitfulness with man’s natural fruitfulness, to join both together in one harmonious whole, and thereby give to the former a natural substratum and to the latter a supernatural consecration.” (ET p. 564).

²⁷ *Die Mysterien*, p. 464 (ET p. 564). “... so sollte auch die Leiblichkeit der Menschen das Vehikel für die Gnadengemeinschaft im Geschlecht werden”

ganze Kraft offenbarte, das Niedrige hinwiederum, an der Kraft des Hohen partizipierend, aus seiner natürlichen Niedrigkeit erhoben würde. Das war der sakramentale Charakter des Urstandes des ersten Menschen, das die erhabene Bedeutung desselben.²⁸

And so, Scheeben's anthropological reflections on the materiality of the sacramental order inevitably give way to specifically Christological ones, which bring the capacities of bodily, human nature to a new and perfect realisation. Like Cyril and Thomas before him, he insists that the sacramental order is founded not only upon the truths of man, but upon the truths of the God-man, where the highest dignity conceivable is accorded to a human body. "Here", he observes, "the supernatural in the most exalted sense [*erhabensten Sinn*] is really and most closely united [*vereinigte sich hier in der innigsten und realsten Weise*] to the visible humanity, the flesh."²⁹ As our study of Cyril and Thomas has already indicated, this has numerous implications for the sacramental order. First of all, by virtue of the hypostatic union, the physical body of Christ is, by necessity, the archetypal sacrament, the exemplary manifestation of Christian sacramentality, expressing the "sublime union of God [*erhabenste Verbindung Gottes*] and His power of supernatural grace with visible, material nature [*sichtbaren, materiellen Natur*]"³⁰ Scheeben articulates the consequences of this union in manifestly Cyrillian terms: "His flesh houses the fullness of the Godhead, and thus becomes a *caro vivificans*, a life-giving flesh, from which supernatural life flows to us".³¹

Secondly, this bodily mediation of divine life is not only the principal sacrament, but the ontological foundation of the entire sacramental order. The sublime dignity invested in the human body of Christ by its hypostatic union with the divinity underlies all Christian sacramentality: for the fact that "the Son of God has come into contact with mankind in visible flesh [*im sichtbaren Fleische der Menschheit nahegetreten*] and has committed His

²⁸ *Die Mysterien*, p. 464 (ET p. 564). "This is a truly imposing arrangement, from which we learn how wonderfully the divine wisdom intended to join the highest to the lowest, so that both would represent the fullest harmony of the universe in mysterious unity and mutual dependence, so that what was high would display its mighty energy in what was low, and the low in turn would be raised from its native lowliness to share in the power of the high. Such was the sacramental character of the first man's original state, and such its sublime meaning".

²⁹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 461 (ET p. 560). "Das Übernatürliche im erhabensten Sinn vereinigte sich hier in der innigsten und realsten Weise mit der sichtbaren Menschheit, mit dem Fleische".

³⁰ *Die Mysterien*, p. 465 (ET p. 565). "Die erhabenste Verbindung Gottes und seiner übernatürlichen Gnadenkraft mit der sichtbaren, materiellen Natur".

³¹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 465 (ET p. 565). "... daß sein Fleisch wahrhaft und wesentlich die Fülle der Gottheit in sich enthält und damit zu einer 'caro vivificans' wird, aus der für uns das übernatürliche Leben sprudelt."

wonderful power [*wunderbare Kraft*] to this flesh”,³² inevitably lends a visible, bodily, sacramental character to all his saving work, both before and after the Ascension.³³ As we shall consider in greater detail later, Scheeben explicitly joins Cyril and Thomas in attributing a “physical causality” to the risen and glorified humanity of Christ in its continuing influence upon sinners. As the bearer and channel of divine grace, power continues to “go forth” (Lk. 8:46) from the Son’s hypostatically united body and, as Cyril says, like a “glowing coal” (*glühende Kohle*),³⁴ communicates its fire “to all objects [*allen Objekten*] coming into contact [*Verbindung*] with it”.³⁵ This innate sacramentality of the Incarnate Son’s work and mode of contact does not cease after the Ascension; the assumed flesh is now operative through the sacraments, through which Christ exercises a causal influence that is not simply moral but is “analogous to the physical” (*physischen analoge*),³⁶ and thereby comes, according to Scheeben, into “real contact” (*reale Kontakt*)³⁷ with each Christian.

Throughout Scheeben’s general reflection on the intrinsic sacramentality of Christianity, which he defines as “the real union [*reale Verbindung*] of the supernatural with corporal nature [*natürliche Leiblichen*]”,³⁸ he expresses the consequences the Incarnation has on the material order in far-reaching terms. God’s assumption of a human body into personal unity expresses and foreshadows, in Scheeben’s view, the radical comprehensiveness of

³² *Die Mysterien*, p. 465 (ET 565-6). “Ist einmal der Sohn Gottes im sichtbaren Fleische der Menschheit nahegetreten, und hat er in diesem Fleische seine wunderbare Kraft niedergetreten”.

³³ As Scheeben argues, “... dann muß auch seine fortwährende Gegenwart hienieden, seine substantielle Vereinigung mit der ganzen Menschheit sowohl wie seine ganze übernatürlich Wirksamkeit in derselben sich in sakramentaler Weise vollziehen; sonst würde der Aufbau seiner Grundlage nicht entsprechen, würde der heranwachsende Baum von der in seiner Wurzel liegenden Idee und Tendenz abweichen” (*Die Mysterien*, p. 465; ET p. 566: “His continuing presence here below and His substantial union with the whole of mankind, as well as His entire supernatural activity in our race, must be carried out in a sacramental manner. Otherwise the edifice would not correspond to its foundation, and the growing tree would deviate from the design and tendency contained in the root.”).

³⁴ *Die Mysterien*, p. 379 (ET p. 459). See Scheeben’s admiration for this image of Cyril’s in footnote 6 of p. 379.

³⁵ *Die Mysterien*, p. 379 (ET p. 459).

³⁶ *Die Mysterien*, p. 376 (ET p. 456). Scheeben develops this doctrine as part of his resistance to the tendency of some theologians to limit Christ’s efficacy to one of the moral order. As he writes, “Sollte aber moralische Wirksamkeit das ganze Mysterium seiner Bedeutung für das Geschlecht erschöpfen? Viele Theologen denken nicht weiter; sie lassen es dabei bewanden, weil sie fürchten, des Geheimnisvollen zu viel zu bringen. Wir glauben mit dem heiligen Thomas weiter gehen zu müssen. Gerade dieselben Grundlagen, auf welche sich die ganz einzige moralische Wirksamkeit Christi stützt, verlangen, auch eine physische oder vielmehr eine der physischen analoge hyperphysischen Wirksamkeit desselben Gründen, aus welchen der Gottmensch *für uns* bei Gott wirkt, kann und muß er auch dynamisch *auf* uns wirken als Träger und Kanal der Gnadenkraft Gottes” (Ibid.)

³⁷ *Die Mysterien*, p. 381 (ET p. 462).

³⁸ *Die Mysterien*, p. 466 (ET p. 566). “... die reale Verbindung des Übernatürlichen mit dem natürlich Leiblichen”.

God's redemptive activity, which seeks to reach down into the very heart of the material order and sanctify it from within. As he reflects,

So ließ sich die vergöttlichende übernatürliche Kraft des Gottmenschen, welche den Geist des Menschen und den Leib desselben erheben und verklären sollte, bis in die Tiefe der leiblichen, materiellen Natur herab, um gerade von dort aus den Geist, wie von beiden Seiten, von oben und von unten, ihn umspannend, zu durchdringen und zu verklären.³⁹

This calls to mind the conclusions we made in our previous chapter, regarding the Eucharistic theology of St Thomas. There we came to understand how the sacred body works, uniquely, at the level of the spiritual, formal principle of the communicant's body, and here Scheeben accounts for this effect in more general terms. God's personal assumption of a human, bodily nature, brings about, Scheeben teaches, an apparent reversal of the typical order of things since man's Fall, for here the assumed *body* of the Word is the means to the sanctification of the spirit. As he writes,

Gerade die materielle Natur, die sonst den Geist selbst von seiner natürlich Höhe herabzuziehen geeignet ist, wurde durch die Inkarnation so hoch erhoben, daß sie fortan in der Kraft Gottes mit zur übernatürlichen Erhebung des Geistes mitwirken sollte. So groß war der Segen, den die Inkarnation des Gottmenschen über sie verbreitete, daß Fleisch das Vehikel des Heiligen Geistes mitwirken sollte.⁴⁰

Aside from these effects, Scheeben also calls to mind the objectives which motivate this hypostatic union of infinitely separated orders of being. It is of particular significance for our study that he understands God's motivation for this assumption of a bodily nature not primarily to effect some kind of assistance in our knowledge of God,⁴¹ but chiefly in terms of union with the objects of his mercy: a visible, tangible nature is assumed by God, insists Scheeben, in order that he may "enter into the closest possible union [*Verbindung*] with the

³⁹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 465 (ET p. 566). "The deifying, supernatural power of the God-man, which was to elevate and transfigure both man's spirit and his body, descended into the depths of corporal, material nature, in order to permeate and glorify the spirit by embracing it from both sides, from above and below."

⁴⁰ *Die Mysterien*, p. 465 (ET p. 566). "Material nature, which ordinarily tends to draw the spirit itself down from its native eminence, was raised so high by the Incarnation that henceforward, endowed with divine energy, it was to cooperate in effecting the supernatural elevation of the spirit. So great was the blessing which the incarnation of the God-man shed over matter, that the flesh could become, and was made to become, the vehicle of the Holy Spirit."

⁴¹ "Daß im Gottmenschen eine göttliche Person selbsteigen in eine sichtbare Natur hinein und in derselben und durch dieselbe an die Menschen möglich würde, unter der sichtbaren Hülle seinen Gott leichter zu fassen und zu lieben ..." . *Die Mysterien*, p. 464 (ET p. 564).

whole human race”.⁴² For such union to be effected with man, he argues, it must come about by bodily means, and establish a bond with man that is at once bodily and spiritual.⁴³ Thus, he may come to “elevate [*erheben*] and transfigure [*verklären*] both man’s spirit and his body”.⁴⁴

We should conclude our considerations of these presuppositions with one of the recurring themes of Scheeben’s theology in the *Mysterien*. As he claims, the Incarnation not only inaugurates the sacramental order by virtue of Christ’s *caro vivificans*, but also by virtue of the fact that God Himself has become a member (*Glied*) of the human race. This itself, Scheeben teaches, establishes a new union between man and God, a non-salutary, “bodily unity” (*leibliche Einheit*),⁴⁵ which all subsequent supernatural, sacramental contact presupposes and builds upon.⁴⁶ This is the very theology of St Cyril we observed earlier, where the Word’s personal assumption of a human nature is seen to establish a new, racial solidarity or kinship between the Incarnate Son and the remainder of the human race, upon which the graces of baptism and the Eucharist are founded. Just as it is upon this natural union that Cyril develops his sacramental theology, so Scheeben aspires to articulate his theology of Eucharistic communion upon the initial “physical continuity [*physischen Kontinuität*]”⁴⁷ we have with Christ by virtue of the Incarnation. As he explains,

Wie der Sohn Gottes durch seine Menschwerdung seine leibliche Einheit mit dem Geschlechte zur Grundlage seiner übernatürlichen Einheit mit demselben machte, so

⁴² *Die Mysterien*, p. 464 (ET p. 565). “... in der innigsten und universalsten Weise mit dem ganzen Menschengeschlecht in Verbindung treten sollte”. This reminds us of the related observation Thomas makes in his own initial Christological reflections, where a supreme fittingness is perceived in the hypostatic union due to the extent of the unity it accomplishes (in principle) with the object of God’s mercy and love: the personal union between the Son and his human nature is supremely fitting, observes Thomas, for “it is peculiar to love that it unites lover and beloved, as far as this is possible” (SCG IV, 54, 5). As Thomas eventually shows, and as Scheeben comes to assert, this personal union is ordered towards interpersonal union with the remainder of men, for “if the Logos was to become one flesh with the other members, He had Himself to become flesh with this one member” (i.e. with the human nature he assumes) (ET p. 373).

⁴³ *Die Mysterien*, p. 310-11 (ET p. 374).

⁴⁴ *Die Mysterien*, p. 465 (ET p. 566).

⁴⁵ *Die Mysterien*, p. 465 (ET p. 566).

⁴⁶ As Scheeben writes, “Wie nun die von Sohn Gottes angenommene leibliche Natur als solche eben die wesentliche Bedingung seiner Einheit mit dem Geschlechts, ... so war es ganz natürlich, daß die geheimnisvollen Gnadenkraft des Sohnes Gottes eben nur durch das Vehikel seiner leiblichen Menschheit in das Geschlecht eintrat” (*Die Mysterien*, p. 464). (ET p. 565: “As the corporal nature assumed by the Son of God is the necessary condition of His unity with the race ... it was most fitting that the mysterious power of grace possessed by the Son of God should come to the race through the vehicle of his sacred humanity”).

⁴⁷ *Die Mysterien*, p. 381 (ET p. 462).

mußte er auch diese letztere Einheit dadurch krönen, daß er die erstere zum Abschluß brachte.⁴⁸

But how is this initial “bodily unity” (*leibliche Einheit*) to be brought to its perfection? Christ perfects it, argues Scheeben, by “substituting Himself for our bodily foods [*leiblichen Nahrung substituierte*], which He changed into His flesh and blood”.⁴⁹ We will come to this theology of Eucharistic communion in due course. First we must consider this “bodily union” that precedes and underlies it.

2.1. A non-salutary leibliche Einheit

Just as we have seen Scheeben identify a natural, bodily substratum (*natürliche Unterlage*) to the whole sacramental order, so the heights of man’s supernatural union with Christ, by means of baptism and the Eucharist, is built upon a prior, bodily foundation. “Some sort of bodily union [*gewisse Einheit des Leibes*] with Christ”, Scheeben insists, “must even precede baptism”.⁵⁰

This preceding union is the first consequence of the Incarnation, where the very Creator of the human race makes his own and assumes into his person “a member of the race [*Glied des Geschlechtes*] that is ontologically united [*realem Zusammenhange*] with all the other members”.⁵¹ As Scheeben reflects, this, by itself, brings about a new relation between mankind and the Word, for “if one of its parts [*ein Teil*] enters into union with the person of the Word” the race as a whole “is taken up into Him [*welche als Ganzes in der Person des Wortes aufgenommen wird*]”.⁵² This “one part” of the human race, by virtue of the divine person assuming it, is the favoured (*bevorzugte*), and privileged part (*privilegierte Teil*), yet a part which does not lose its essential continuity with its fellow members (*Kontinuität mit dem*

⁴⁸ *Die Mysterien*, p. 465 (ET p. 566). “As the Son of the God by His Incarnation made His bodily unity with the race the basis of His supernatural unity with it, so likewise He had to crown this latter unity by bringing the first unity to its highest perfection”.

⁴⁹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 465 (ET p. 566). “... das tat er, indem er sich der leiblichen Nahrung substituierte, dieselbe in sein Fleisch und Blut verwandelnd”.

⁵⁰ *Die Mysterien*, p. 311 (ET p. 375). “... so muß auch der Taufe schon eine gewisse Einheit des Leibes mit Christus vorausgehen”.

⁵¹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 304 (ET p. 366). Scheeben is obviously not espousing a doctrine of Adoptionism here (for a pre-existing ‘member’ of the race is not assumed by the Son). He is simply using the term “Glied” (“member”) loosely, for a member of the human race comes to *be* by virtue of the hypostatic union of a human nature with the divine person of the Son.

⁵² *Die Mysterien*, p. 305 (ET p. 368).

Geschlecht heraus).⁵³ Thus, a true “racial unity” [*geschlechtliche Einheit*] is brought about between the Creator of men and all men, a superiority-in-union that makes Christ to be, Scheeben insists, “the new head [*das neue Haupt*] of the whole race [*ganzen Geschlechtes*], its natural head included [*das natürlich Haupt in demselben mit eingeschlossen*]”.⁵⁴

Now all this explicitly recalls the doctrine we saw in St Cyril,⁵⁵ where the Incarnation is understood to inaugurate a new and irrevocable racial kinship, a ‘concorporality’ in the flesh between man and the God-man. This natural, non-salutary concorporality provides, as we saw, the foundation to the supernatural, divinely efficacious concorporality in Christ’s sacred flesh in the Eucharist. As we shall consider now, Scheeben develops this doctrine of Cyril’s by making even more explicit the *anticipatory* character of this preliminary, natural solidarity. Holy Communion with Christ’s body in the sacrament of the Eucharist fulfils and crowns what our initial “bodily union” (*Einheit des Leibes*) and “physical continuity” [*physischen Kontinuität*] with him anticipates.

Before articulating this explicitly, Scheeben implies the preparatory nature of the human race’s “bodily union” with Christ by describing it in terms normally reserved for man’s salutary, supernatural, ecclesiological union with him. Not only baptised Christians, but rather the “whole human race [*ganze menschliche Geschlecht*]”, he insists, “becomes the body of the Son [*der Leib Sohnes Gottes*], when one of its members is embodied [*einverleibt*]

⁵³ *Die Mysterien*, p. 306 (ET p. 368).

⁵⁴ *Die Mysterien*, p. 304 (ET p. 366). Scheeben explains this headship, in distinction from the headship of Adam: “Wodurch aber und wie wird Christus, der Gottmensch, Haupt des Geschlechtes, wenn er nicht wie Adam das Prinzip desselben ist? Wir könnten schlechtweg sagen: weil er das weitaus edelste, vornehmste und würdigste Glied des Geschlechtes ist. Doch damit allein würde der Gottmensch mehr als die Krone und edelste, schönste Blüte des Geschlechtes denn als das Haupt desselben erscheinen. *Das Haupt* im eigentlichen Sinne *ist* nicht nur der Gipfel, das hervorragendste Glied am Körper, es ist zugleich das, was bei der Pflanze die Wurzel, was für die Reben der Weinstock ist, *das, worin der ganze Körper zusammengehalten, dem er angeschlossen ist, das, was den ganzen Körper sich aneignet, besitzt und durchherrscht, das endlich, worin der ganze Körper gleichsam aufgeht*. Diese Stellung hatte Adam dadurch, daß das ganze Geschlecht aus ihm hervorging und, von ihm ausgehend, mit ihm verbunden blieb; der Gottmensch hat sie dadurch, daß er das ganze Geschlecht, obgleich es nicht von ihm selbst ausgegangen, durch seinen Eintritt in dasselbe *in sich aufnahm, mit sich verband und sich aneignete*. Adam war Haupt des Geschlechtes, weil und insofern er die Ursache der natürlichen Einheit desselben war; der Sohn Gottes eignet sich durch die unendliche Anziehungskraft seiner göttlichen Person dieses so geeinte Geschlecht in seinem ganzen Umfrange an, indem er ein Glied des Geschlechtes, das mit den übrigen in realem Zusammenhange steht, sich aneignet und in seine Person aufnimmt; und dadurch wird er das neue Haupt des ganzen Geschlechtes, das natürlich Haupt in demselben mit eingeschlossen.” (*Die Mysterien*, p. 304).

⁵⁵ Scheeben makes numerous allusions to Cyril in this context, because: “weil sie zeigt, wie mächtig der heilige Cyrillus von den Ideen, die wir hier verfolgen, durchdrungen war” (*Die Mysterien*, p. 325, fn. 9). See *Ibid.* p. 305 (fn. 5); p. 312 (fn. 20); p. 316 (fn. 19); p. 315 (fn. 18); p. 325 (fn. 9).

in the Son of God”.⁵⁶ By assuming flesh from the flesh of the race and by making it his own, “the Logos has become one flesh [*einem Fleische*] with all the other persons of the race”.⁵⁷ From the very moment of the Incarnation, calling the human race *der Leib, das Fleische des Wortes* is meant, according to Scheeben, “not in a purely moral [*moralischen*] sense”,⁵⁸ for “the whole race *truly* belongs [*gehört ... wahrhaft*] to the person of Christ as His body [*als deren Leib*],”⁵⁹ comprising a “union of the race with Christ [that] is real [*reale*] and objective [*objektive*]”.⁶⁰ This consistent application of typically ecclesiological vocabulary to describe the natural state of affairs between Christ and mankind is only occasionally tempered with the necessary distinctions. As Scheeben cautions, “when I refer to the whole race [*ganze Geschlechter*] as the body of Christ, I am actually, to some extent, using figurative [*figürlich*] language”. Yet still, he insists, the figure rests “on a profound [*tiefen*], objective [*objektiven*] reality”.⁶¹

Scheeben is fully aware of the objections that could be posed against this use of ecclesiological vocabulary to describe a natural state of union,⁶² though he counters them by emphasising the decisive difference between a “living [*lebendige*] union” with the body of Christ, and “some material [*materielle*], lifeless union [*tote Einheit*]” with him.⁶³ The latter is a fitting description of this racial and physical continuity between man and Christ we have been considering, when it is not “vitalised” (*belebt*) by grace. Yet even so, Scheeben repeatedly affirms that such a bodily union is the indispensable condition for this grace, the bodily substratum (*Grundlage*) upon which all the supernatural perfections to which man is destined can be communicated. As he states, faith and baptism do not establish the “simple

⁵⁶ *Die Mysterien*, p. 305 (ET p. 367). “Das ganze menschliche Geschlecht wird der Leib des Sohnes Gottes, wenn ein Glied desselben dem Sohne Gottes einverleibt wird”.

⁵⁷ *Die Mysterien*, p. 310 (ET p. 373). “Indem nämlich der Logos Fleisch vom Fleische des Geschlechtes angenommen und sich zu eigen gemacht, sei er mit den übrigen Personem des Geschlechtes eins geworden in einem Fleische”.

⁵⁸ *Die Mysterien*, p. 306 (ET p. 368).

⁵⁹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 306 (ET p. 368).

⁶⁰ *Die Mysterien*, p. 307 (ET p. 369).

⁶¹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 307 (ET p. 369-70).

⁶² “Man könnte uns nämlich einwerfen: nicht das Menschengeschlecht als solches, sondern die durch den Glauben oder die Taufe mit Christus in besondere Verbindung getretenen Glieder desselben, die Mitglieder der Kirche, bildeten den Leib, dessen Haupt Christus ist. Wer möchte leugnen, daß die Menschen im engeren Sinne erst durch den Glauben und die Taufe Glieder des Gottsmenschen warden?” (*Die Mysterien*, p. 311; ET p. 374-5).

⁶³ *Die Mysterien*, p. 311 (ET p. 375).

union [*einfache Einheit*] of the body with Christ [*des Leibes mit Christus*]” but, rather, they presuppose its existence.⁶⁴ He goes on to develop this point further:

Wenn im Glauben die Einheit eine lebendige wird, dann mußte die materielle, die tote Einheit schon vorhanden sein als die zu belebende. Der Geist des Hauptes kann nicht in uns einströmen, wenn wir nicht schon in etwa zu seinem Leibe gehören, und wir unsererseits können jenes Haupt nicht ergreifen und festhalten, wenn es nicht schon wirklich unser Haupt ist, und wir in etwa schon mit ihm verbunden sind.⁶⁵

Thus, “some sort of bodily union with Christ must precede [*vorausgehen*] even baptism”, he insists.⁶⁶

Scheeben takes up the theme of the nuptial mystery to elucidate the relation between the initial, lifeless, bodily union with Christ, and the bodily union vitalised with supernatural life. He teaches that the former union with each man, which results from the Incarnation alone, is analogous to that “which existed between Adam and Eve [*welche zwischen Adam and Eva insofern bestand*] inasmuch as Eve was derived from Adam’s side”.⁶⁷ However, if we consider their subsequent, nuptial union, “effected by their marriage as formally contracted [*förmlich eingegangene*] or consummated [*vollzogene Ehe*]”,⁶⁸ then the analogy immediately lends itself to the living, supernaturally vitalised union between Christ and the Christian, for such a consummated bond, he insists, “is not established between Christ and us except by baptism and the Eucharist [*erst hergestellt durch die Taufe und die Eucharistie*]”.⁶⁹ This comparison allows Scheeben to explain, once again, the anticipatory, inclinational character of the first bodily union between man and Christ through the latter’s Incarnation. “Just as the derivation of the woman from the man’s side” he points out, “served to prefigure and prepare the way [*Grundlegung und Präformation*] for their marital union [*ehelichen Einheit*]” (and, as we have observed, “had its basis in their destiny [*Bestimmung*] for each other”), so likewise “the assumption of human nature from the midst of the race is the

⁶⁴ *Die Mysterien*, p. 311 (ET p. 375).

⁶⁵ *Die Mysterien*, p. 311 (ET p. 375). “If faith makes this union a living union, some material, lifeless union must already be present as that which is to be vitalised. The Spirit of the head cannot flow into us unless we already pertain to His body in some respect; and on our part we cannot lay hold of Christ our head and clasp Him firmly unless He is already our head in a true sense, and unless we are already joined to Him in some way.”

⁶⁶ *Die Mysterien*, p. 311. “... so muß auch der Taufe schon eine gewisse Einheit des Leibes mit Christus vorausgehen”.

⁶⁷ *Die Mysterien*, p. 311 (ET p. 374).

⁶⁸ *Die Mysterien*, p. 311 (ET p. 374).

⁶⁹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 311 (ET p. 374).

foundation [*Grundlage*] of the formal nuptials [*förmlichen Vermählung*] of God's Son with the human race by baptism and the Eucharist".⁷⁰ Thus, the bodily union which results from the Incarnation alone is, for Scheeben, a "virtual marriage" (*virtuelle Vermählung*), a bond which anticipates and inclines man towards the "formal nuptials" (*förmlichen Vermählung*) effected by the grace that comes from sacramental contact.⁷¹ Through the sacraments this elementary bodily union with Christ is perfected (*ausgebildet*), sealed (*ausgeprägt*), organised (*organisiert*), completed (*vollzogen*) and consummated (*abgeschlossen*).⁷² "Concerning the meaning of these nuptials [*Vermählung*] and bodily union [*Einheit des Leibes*]", Scheeben writes, "we shall have to speak at greater length".⁷³ This he will do in his explicitly Eucharistic considerations.

3. Communion with the Body of Christ: A Salutory *leibliche Einheit*

Scheeben's preoccupation with the underlying somatic bond that unites Christ to all men by virtue of the Incarnation is continued in his consideration of the sacraments, where the purpose and nature of this union becomes increasingly intelligible. Scheeben teaches, first of all, that the sacraments are themselves dependent upon this basis; no sacramental contact would be at all possible, he argues, without this preliminary, natural proximity Christ has already effected with each man by becoming a fellow member of the human race.⁷⁴ Secondly, as matter relates to form, potency to act, this initial union is neither abrogated nor substituted but, through baptism and the Eucharist in particular, supernaturally vitalised and, therefore, perfected.⁷⁵ The continuity Scheeben perceives between the two kinds of union is, not surprisingly, most evident in his Eucharistic doctrine, where the notion of a *leibliche Einheit* emerges with increasing regularity and is used, he insists, not in an entirely different way but, rather, in a more literal (*realerem*) and fuller (*vollerem*) sense than before.⁷⁶ Holy

⁷⁰ *Die Mysterien*, p. 311 (ET p. 374). "Wie aber zur Grundlegung und Präformation der ehelichen Einheit das Weib aus der Seite des Mannes genommen, und sie durch die Bestimmung beider füreinander begründet wurde: so ist auch die Annahme der menschlichen Natur aus dem Schosse des Geschlechtes beim Sohne Gottes die Grundlage seiner förmlichen Vermählung mit desselben durch die Taufe und die Eucharistie".

⁷¹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 311 (ET p. 374).

⁷² *Die Mysterien*, p. 311 (ET p. 375).

⁷³ *Die Mysterien*, p. 310 (ET p. 374).

⁷⁴ *Die Mysterien*, p. 311 (ET p. 375); p. 382-3 (ET p. 462-4).

⁷⁵ See *Die Mysterien*, p. 465 (ET p. 566).

⁷⁶ *Die Mysterien*, p. 398 (ET p. 484).

Communion is at once the “perfected expression” (*vollendete Ausdruck*) and “seal” (*Besiegelung*) of the original “bodily unity” (*Einheit des Leibes*) each man has with Christ, yet also, through its supernatural vitalisation, the cause of its “deepening and intensification” (*Vertiefung und Verinnerlichung*).⁷⁷ We are going to examine this argument of Scheeben’s in greater detail later, after making some more general observations.

3.1 The natural contact preceding sacramental contact

If Scheeben develops this somaticism most extensively in relation to the Eucharist, it is worth noting first how general themes in his teaching on the other sacraments stand in relation to this. First of all, when speaking of the “sensible, indirect contact [*sinnliche, mittelbare Kontakt*] with Christ in the sacraments”,⁷⁸ he insists that “such contact only has meaning [or ‘makes sense’, *nur dann einen Sinn*] if Christ is virtually present [*virtuell gegenwärtig*] in the whole human race even apart from the sacraments”.⁷⁹ This virtual presence is the “real, physical continuity and contact” (*realen, physischen Kontinuität und Berührung*)⁸⁰ we have been discussing, and it is upon this foundation that Scheeben expounds the salvific work of the sacraments: the Incarnation makes sacramental contact possible because “it brings us into so close a contact [*nahe Berührung*] with Christ’s humanity that it can act upon us as the organ of the divinity [*das Organ der Gottheit*]”.⁸¹ In other words, the natural bodily union between Christ and mankind establishes the conditions whereby Christ may effect a further, supernatural union with fellow members of the race. As Scheeben states, “by His Incarnation [the Son of God] made His bodily unity with the race [*leibliche Einheit mit Geschlechtern*] the basis [*Grundlage*] of His supernatural unity [*übernatürlichen Einheit*] with it”.⁸² Indeed, the sacred humanity’s natural proximity to all men is what allows that same humanity to exert its deeper, salvific contact upon those individuals who consent to its saving action. Like Cyril and Thomas before him, Scheeben regards the Christian sacraments by which this salvific

⁷⁷ *Die Mysterien*, p. 398 (ET p. 485). This is also a deepening and intensification of the union effected by baptism: as Scheeben writes, “... wir müssen vielmehr in der Eucharistie eine Vertiefung und Verinnerlichung der allgemeinen Einheit erblicken, welche durch die Inkarnation bzw. durch den Glauben und die Taufe zwischen dem Gottmenschen und den Menschen bewirkt worden ist”.

⁷⁸ *Die Mysterien*, p. 383 (ET p. 464).

⁷⁹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 383 (ET p. 464).

⁸⁰ *Die Mysterien*, p. 382 (ET p. 462).

⁸¹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 382 (ET p. 463).

⁸² *Die Mysterien*, p. 465 (ET p. 566). “Wie der Sohn Gottes durch seine Menschwerdung seine leibliche Einheit mit dem Geschlecht zur Grundlage seiner übernatürlichen Einheit mit demselben machte, so mußte er auch diese letztere Einheit dadurch krönen, daß er die erstere zum Abschluß brachte”.

contact takes place as “other organs” (*andere Organe*) connected (*Verbindung*) with the principal, hypostatically united “organ of the divine power”.⁸³ Accordingly, in a certain sense Christ has need of this preliminary, bodily union with us more than he has need of the sacraments, “otherwise grace could not be given *outside* the sacraments [*außer den Sakramenten*], without the actual reception [*wirklichen Empfang*] of them”.⁸⁴ The natural bond between the divine Word and man explains not only how the *instrumentum coniunctum Divinitatis* may exert its saving influence upon us through its *instrumenta separata*, but also how the same humanity may come to heal and sanctify sinners outside of the sacramental order.

Scheeben’s Cyrillian and Thomistic understanding of the sacraments as ‘separated instruments’ of the ‘conjoined Instrument’, account for his understanding of their efficient, causal power. As we have already seen Thomas assert in his mature doctrine, these external, sensible actions are not “merely pledges [*Pfänder*] assuring us of such efficacy” but, by virtue of the humanity of Christ to which they are connected, are themselves efficient, instrumental causes of grace, “true vehicles [*wirkliche Vehikel*] of the power flowing [*ausgeströmten Kraft*] into the members from Christ”.⁸⁵ And so, just as we saw how the sacramental theology of Cyril and Thomas illuminates the resemblance and continuity between the earthly ministry of the God-man and the composition and action of the sacraments, so Scheeben makes the same analogy and insists on the same level of realism: on the foundation of what Scheeben calls the “physical continuity” between Christ and us inaugurated at the Incarnation, the sacraments work in a similar way (*ähnliche Weise*) to Christ’s “words and touches” (*Worte und Berührungen*), by which he permitted His miraculous power to go forth from Him.⁸⁶

⁸³ Scheeben speaks of the relationship in this way: “So tritt gerade in der Menschheit Christi und durch sie, als ihr Organ, die göttliche Kraft an uns heran; und wie sie hier durch ein in der innigsten Verbindung mit ihr stehendes Organ an uns herantritt, so kann und wird sie auch von da aus durch andere Organe, die mit jenem in Verbindung stehen, sich über das ganze Geschlecht ausbreiten und an jeden einzelnen herantreten.” (*Die Mysterien*, p. 469-70 (ET p. 570)).

⁸⁴ *Die Mysterien*, p. 383 (ET p. 464).

⁸⁵ *Die Mysterien*, p. 470 (ET p. 571). “Äußern Handlungen dieser Organe, an welche die Wirksamkeit geknüpft ist, sind deshalb nicht bloß Pfänder, die uns derselben versichern, sondern zugleich wirkliche Vehikel der von Christus, dem gottmenschlichen Haupte, in seine Glieder ausgeströmten Kraft ...”.

⁸⁶ *Die Mysterien*, p. 470 (ET p. 571). “... und wirken daher auf ähnliche Weise, wie Christus durch seine äußern Handlungen, seine Worte und Berührungen seine Wunderkraft von sich ausgehen ließ”. Scheeben further describes sacramental causality: “Diese Art der Vermittlung der Gnade durch die Sakramente nennt man gewöhnlich die physische Wirksamkeit der letztern, nicht als wenn das äußere Zeichen seiner eigenen Natur nach zur Wirkung des Sakramentes beitrüge, sondern vielmehr deshalb, weil es das wahre Vehikel einer übernatürlichen Kraft ist, die ihm beiwohnt oder innewohnt. Physisch nennt man sie bloß im

Continuing to follow the very intuitions of Cyril and Thomas we considered earlier, Scheeben uses this continuity between the earthly actions of Christ and the sacramental actions to illuminate an aspect of the Eucharist's perfection. As transient agents of divine power, six sacraments are "merely actions" (*bloß Handlungen*) when considered in relation to the Eucharist, where the power of God "resides personally [*persönlich*] and substantially, in the life-giving flesh [*lebendigmachenden Fleische*] of the Word".⁸⁷ It is this level of presence, and the corresponding immediacy of contact which results, that allows Scheeben to develop his doctrine of a supernatural *Leibliche Einheit* in very distinctive ways in his Eucharistic doctrine. We must now turn to this.

3.2 The physical body of Christ in a spiritual mode

Scheeben's exposition of the sacrament of the Eucharist almost begins where we, in our previous chapter, concluded. Just as we considered the meaning and theological implications of St Thomas' doctrine of Christ's "bodily presence" in a spiritual mode, and the formal, spiritual level of the sacred body's initial sphere of operation in the communicant, so Scheeben sets forth his own account with a reflection on these rich theological paradoxes. Once again, his application and development of the teachings of Cyril and Thomas, and the conclusions he formulates, make his thoughts on these matters of special importance to our study.

Our first observation concerns how Scheeben develops the theme we recently considered in St Thomas, namely, the true body of Christ present and active in an unbodily, invisible mode. Scheeben thinks that the term "spiritual presence" (*geistige Gegenwart*) is potentially misleading when applied to the Eucharist, for it might easily suggest "the exact contrary" (*gerade Gegensatz*) of the truth.⁸⁸ As we have already considered in our previous chapter, since "*spiritual presence*" is, somewhat paradoxically, meant not to deny but rather

Gegensatz zur moralischen Wirksamkeit des Verdienstes; an sich wäre sie eher als hyperphysisch zu bezeichnen." (*Die Mysterien*, p. 470; ET p. 571: "This manner of conferring grace through the sacraments is usually referred to as the physical causality of the sacraments. This does not mean that the outward sign contributes to the sacramental effect by its own nature. Rather it means that the outward sign is the true vehicle of a supernatural power that accompanies it or resides in it. Such causality is termed physical only in opposition to the moral causality exercised by merit. As it is in itself, it might better be termed hyperphysical").

⁸⁷ *Die Mysterien*, p. 470 (ET p. 571).

⁸⁸ *Die Mysterien*, p. 391 (ET p. 475). "... schlecht verstanden, die Realität des Mysteriums verflüchtigen und aufheben und wird sogar als der gerade Gegensatz zur realen Gegenwart Christi gebraucht".

to safeguard and explain the true bodiliness of what is contained under the sacramental signs, Scheeben regards the term to be hazardous, even “ambiguous” (*zweideutig*). Therefore, the “meaning [*den Sinn*] of the expression must be carefully determined [*sorgfältig bestimmen*]”, he insists, “so as to preclude all error”.⁸⁹

Scheeben is troubled by a mistaken understanding of “spiritual” that is in strict opposition to “bodily”, which would in his view “dilute or destroy [*verflüchtigen und aufheben*] the reality of the mystery”.⁹⁰ We have already seen in our previous chapter how St Thomas’ consistent use of the term “bodily presence” is illuminated by his arguments on the spiritual manner of this presence *per modum substantiae*. Indeed, ‘bodily presence’ is used by him to express the unique perfections of the sacrament precisely on the assumption that the spiritual *mode* of this bodily presence is understood. The spiritual mode, as we have seen, is what makes the bodily presence possible and metaphysically intelligible. Scheeben develops this argument by emphasising the way in which the spiritual mode of presence affirms, rather than dilutes, the true bodiliness of Christ’s presence. By the qualification “spiritual” (*geistige*), “do we mean to do away [*ausgeschlossen*]” Scheeben asks, “with its material nature [*materielles Wesen*] or its substantial presence, as in the theories proposed by Protestantism and rationalism?”. “Not in the remotest degree” (*Nicht im entferntesten*), he insists.⁹¹ Indeed, according to Scheeben, “spiritual presence” is wrongly interpreted if it is understood “as opposed [*Gegensatz*] to physical contact [*physischen Kontakte*]”, and if it “indicates no more than a presence for the spirit [*Gegenwart für den Geist*], or for the eyes of the spirit [*für die Augen des Geistes*] contemplating it”.⁹² However, when it is correctly understood, a real, bodily presence is actually “emphasised” (*statuiert*) by this term; for it is by means of its spiritual mode of presence that the physical body of Christ can, like a spirit, “be present in a place or an object in a more real [*realer*], intimate [*inniger*], and perfect [*vollkommener*] manner” than all other human bodies can.⁹³ Yet even so: in Scheeben’s view,

⁸⁹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 390-1 (ET p. 475). “Jedoch muß man namentlich bei dem Ausdruck ‘geistige Gegenwart’ den Sinn sorgfältig bestimmen, um nicht irre zu gehen.”

⁹⁰ *Die Mysterien*, p. 390-1 (ET p. 475). “... schlecht verstanden, die Realität des Mysteriums verflüchtigen und aufheben und wird sogar als der gerade Gegensatz zur realen Gegenwart Christi gebraucht.”

⁹¹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 424 (ET p. 513). “Was heißt das: der Leib Christi soll für uns eine geistige Nahrung sein? Wird dadurch sein materielles Wesen oder seine substantielle Gegenwart ausgeschlossen, wie der Protestantismus und Rationalismus meint? Nicht im entferntesten.”

⁹² *Die Mysterien*, p. 391 (ET p. 475).

⁹³ *Die Mysterien*, p. 391 (ET p. 475). “Dadurch wird die reale Gegenwart nicht ausgeschlossen, sondern vielmehr die realste Gegenwart statuiert, da die Geister realer, inniger und vollkommener an einem Orte oder in einem Gegenstände gegenwärtig sein können als die Körper”.

such is the strictness of this bodily presence (in its spiritual mode) that he ultimately sees the term “spiritual presence” to be inadequate and ambiguous “even when used in its legitimate sense [*guten Sinne*]”. Therefore he elects to “clarify [*erklären*] and complete [*Ergänzung*] it” by using the terms “‘divine presence’ [*göttliche Gegenwart*], or ‘divine, Godlike mode of existence [*göttliche, d. h. gottähnliche Existenzweise*]’”.⁹⁴ As shall become clearer as we proceed, this argument of Scheeben’s does not imply, in the manner of Luther, a divine ubiquity of the body of Christ.⁹⁵

This leads us into the second feature of Scheeben’s understanding of the *geistige Gegenwart* of the sacred body, under the humble appearances of bread and wine: rather than signifying an abasement, Christ’s sacramental mode of existence represents an astonishing privilege of the bodily order, Scheeben insists. Just as we were able to deduce from the Eucharistic doctrines of Cyril and Thomas, in Scheeben there is a similar, yet explicit attempt to uphold and articulate a theory of bodily exaltation in the Eucharist. Without ceasing to be a material body, the flesh of the Word exists in the sacrament “under the manner of higher substances [*in der Weise höherer Substanzen*], namely the spiritual [*geistigen*] and the divine [*göttlichen*]”,⁹⁶ and therefore is present and active in a manner “that transcends the nature of all bodies”.⁹⁷ It is precisely upon this insight that Scheeben will develop his theology of a *leibliche Einheit* through the Eucharist, which we shall investigate shortly. But before we do so, it is worth taking into account how Scheeben perceives this exaltation in the manner of the Eucharistic presence, before considering how he relates it to his doctrine of Eucharistic union.

3.2.1. Transubstantiation: a manifestation of the sacred body’s glory and majesty

Scheeben observes how it might seem that “Christ’s sacramental mode of presence” is nothing but a “supernaturally effected degradation [*Erniedrigung*]”.⁹⁸ After all, here we have

⁹⁴ *Die Mysterien*, p. 391 (ET p. 475). “Da aber der Ausdruck ‘geistige Gegenwart’ immerhin zweideutig bleibt und überdies, auch in seinem guten Sinne genommen, den Charakter der Gegenwart nicht allseitig und vollständig ausdrückt: so muß man zu seiner näheren Erklärung und Ergänzung den andern: ‘göttliche Gegenwart’ oder ‘göttliche, d. h. gottähnliche Existenzweise’, hinzufügen, wie dies oben geschehen ist”.

⁹⁵ See *Die Mysterien*, p. 391 (ET p. 476).

⁹⁶ *Die Mysterien*, p. 389 (ET p. 473).

⁹⁷ *Die Mysterien*, p. 389 (ET p. 473). “... der Leib Christi existiere hier in einer über seine Natur und über die aller Körper erhabenen Weise”

⁹⁸ *Die Mysterien*, p. 388 (ET p. 472). “... die sakramentale Existenzweise Christi sei eben nur eine übernatürliche Erniedrigung desselben”.

a concealment (*Verborgenheit*) of Christ's glory and majesty, rather than a visible manifestation of it. This, as Scheeben points out, has led many theologians to associate Christ's presence under the humble appearances of bread and wine with the humiliation of his Passion.⁹⁹ Scheeben finds this dissatisfying, for it amounts to emphasising the most superficial aspect of the sacrament, and constructs a doctrine around "a view which touches only the surface [*Außenseite*] of the mystery and does not reach down to its inner nature [*innere Wesen*]"¹⁰⁰ Therefore, Scheeben seeks to explain the various ways by which the divine majesty, rather than being concealed is, paradoxically, actually manifested under the appearances of bread and wine. It will soon be evident how this relates in important ways to our study.

The sustaining in existence of the accidents of a substance that has ceased to be present is nothing other than an operation of divine omnipotence. As Scheeben asks, if not their original substances, in what do these accidents of bread and wine now inhere? To claim that they inhere in the body of Christ as their material substratum would be to claim an absurdity. Scheeben argues that, if this were true, it would not only amount to a profound degradation, but we would have to say that Christ's body "would be more material [*mehr materiell*] in the Eucharist than it is in itself".¹⁰¹ This would be entirely contrary to what we have already observed in Thomas' account of the uniquely spiritual mode of this physical body's sacramental existence. What Scheeben insists upon is that, in taking the place of the substance of the bread, rather than subjecting itself to further abasement, the body of Christ acts all powerfully. It replaces the substance of the bread as the "source, the principle, from which the accidents flow [*fließen*] and have their stability [*Bestand*]",¹⁰² and not as that which is "informed [*informiert*], completed [*ergänzt*], and perfected [*ausgestattet*] by these accidents".¹⁰³ In other words, the sacred body of the eternal Son succeeds the substance of the bread insofar as that substance of bread was *powerful*, not weak and subject; the succession of the bread to the substance of the body of Christ is according "to [the bread's] active

⁹⁹ See *Die Mysterien*, p. 388, fn. 7 (ET p. 472, fn. 4).

¹⁰⁰ *Die Mysterien*, p. 388 (ET p. 472).

¹⁰¹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 389 (ET p. 473). "... in der Eucharistie mehr materiell, als er es an sich ist".

¹⁰² *Die Mysterien*, p. 389 (ET p. 474). "... "die Quelle, das Prinzip, woraus die Akzidenzen fließen, woraus sie ihren Bestand haben".

¹⁰³ *Die Mysterien*, p. 389 (ET p. 474).

[*aktiven*], not to its passive function [*passiven Eigenschaft*], relative to the accidents”.¹⁰⁴ Without a substance in which to inhere, the power of God keeps them in being, sustains them, preserves them from annihilation. But as we have already hinted, for Scheeben this miraculous preservation is not only an instance of divine omnipotence, but a specifically Christological mystery, a manifestation of Jesus’ *body* as an *instrumentum coniunctum divinitatis*. If the body of Christ replaces the substance of bread in the Eucharist, “it can keep the accidents in being only by acting as the instrument of the Godhead”.¹⁰⁵

Now according to Scheeben, this particular function of the body of Christ is revelatory. By it, we are able to see something of what he terms the “divine mode of existence” (*göttliche ... gottähnliche Existenzweise*) that Christ’s body enjoys in its Eucharistic mode. In sustaining the accidents of the bread in being, we see that Christ’s body “shares [*teilnehmend*] in the omnipresence of God [*Allgegenwart Gottes*]”,¹⁰⁶ shares in that very presence which transcends mere surface contact, and “penetrates [*penetrierenden*] to the deepest essence [*innerste Wesen*] of things [and] interiorly sustains [*innerlich tragenden*]” them.¹⁰⁷

To attribute these qualities to the Eucharistic body of Christ has far-reaching implications for our thesis, as we shall now examine. What Scheeben is arguing here is that this body, whilst remaining a physical body, surpasses the limitations of natural bodiliness and assumes a spiritual, even divine, capability and power. The body of the Word no longer suffers the necessary limitations of its natural existence and is, in Scheeben’s view, even endowed by God with a higher mode of existence (*in einer höhern Weise existieren*) than it possessed in its state of divine transfiguration and glorification after the Resurrection.¹⁰⁸ This is evident most obviously in the fact that the body does not now merely come into external contact with other bodies, but also —as we shall see— inwardly animates (*belebt*) and transfigures (*verherrlicht*) them. It is a body that, unique among all bodies, operates

¹⁰⁴ *Die Mysterien*, p. 389 (ET p. 474). “Er vertritt die Brotsubstanz eben nicht in gemeiner, sondern in ganz eminenter Weise, d.h. er vertritt sie in ihrer Vollkommenheit, aber nicht in ihrer Unvollkommenheit, in ihrer aktiven, aber nicht in ihrer passiven Eigenschaft den Akzidenzen gegenüber”.

¹⁰⁵ *Die Mysterien*, p. 390 (ET p. 474). “... so kann er nur als Instrument der Gottheit die Akzidenzen forterhalten”.

¹⁰⁶ *Die Mysterien*, p. 390 (ET p. 474).

¹⁰⁷ *Die Mysterien*, p. 390 (ET p. 474). “...daß er hier als Organ einer spezifisch göttlichen Wirksamkeit auftritt, erscheint er auch als teilnehmend an der das innerste Wesen der Dinge penetrierenden, dasselbe innerlich tragenden und darum zur Supplierung seiner ganzen Wirksamkeit befähigten Allgegenwart Gottes”

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* p. 484.

according to the manner of spirit; a body that, contrary to the bodies of nature, can exert an influence upon other beings that is “essentially *intrinsic*” (*wesentlich innigern*).¹⁰⁹ Let us now turn to consider how Scheeben develops this idea, and the important implications it has for our thesis.

3.3. Through the Eucharist “our body is again joined to the body of the Logos”¹¹⁰

Scheeben’s understanding of these inimitable privileges of the body of Christ in its sacramental mode requires careful handling. In ascribing a “divine mode of existence [*eine göttliche Existenzweise*] to the body of Christ”,¹¹¹ he does not mean to appropriate to it the mode of existence proper to the divine nature and person. Unlike Luther who postulated for Christ’s humanity a general presence, “a certain ubiquity [*Ubiquität der Menschheit*] that arose from the hypostatic union [*hypostatischen Union entspringende*]”,¹¹² Scheeben is arguing from secure metaphysical and Chalcedonian principles.¹¹³ He does not appropriate to Christ’s body, on the basis of the hypostatic union, the mode of existence proper to the divine nature and person, but rather teaches that it “shares [or ‘participates’, *partizipiere*] in certain of the properties [*gewissen Eigenschaften*] characteristic of the mode of existence enjoyed by the divine person and nature”.¹¹⁴ This is not the same as attributing to the body of Christ all the privileges of the Godhead. Rather, “in limited measure” (*in beschränktem Maße*) this sacred body receives, by virtue of the power of the person inhabiting it, “the unique privilege” (*einziges Privilegium*) not only of spirit’s indivisibility but also something of God’s “pervasive power” (*penetrierenden Kraft*).¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 398 (ET p. 485).

¹¹⁰ *Die Mysterien*, p. 397 (ET p. 483). “In der Eucharistie ... wird unser Leib mit dem Leibe des Logos wieder zusammengefügt”.

¹¹¹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 391 (ET p. 476).

¹¹² *Die Mysterien*, p. 391 (ET p. 476). “... daß sie eine aus der hypostatischen Union entspringende Ubiquität der Menschheit Christi statuieren”

¹¹³ Luther’s doctrine of Christ’s bodily ubiquity amounts not only to confused metaphysics but a denial of fundamental Chalcedonian definitions. Luther rejects the idea of God dwelling in a place, and concludes from this that since Christ is God, he is also everywhere, and wherever Christ is as God, he is there also as man. Hence, too, his body must be present everywhere. This is clearly untenable for many reasons, one of which is the false application of the communication of idioms: for it means holding the mistaken idea that everything which pertains to the person of Christ by reason of his divinity is attributable to Him also according to His bodily humanity, and *vice versa*.

¹¹⁴ *Die Mysterien*, p. 391 (ET p. 476). “... daß er an gewissen Eigenschaften der Existenzweise der göttlichen Person und Natur partizipiere”

¹¹⁵ *Die Mysterien*, p. 392 (ET p. 476). “... der Sohn Gottes den von ihm angenommenen Leib zur Teilnahme an der Einfachheit, Universalität und penetrierenden Kraft seiner göttlichen Existenz”

Why, Scheeben wonders, this unparalleled elevation and privilege? He states the reason clearly:

Er tut dies um so mehr, weil er eben durch diesen seinen Leib als Haupt des Menschengeschlechtes mit allen Gliedern desselben in die innigste Berührung und die realste Vereinigung treten, und ihn als das Organ seiner allumfassenden, in die Tiefe der Wesen eindringenden, die Naturen vergöttlichenden Wirksamkeit gebrauchen will.¹¹⁶

This intention to establish, “by means of his body” (*durch diesen seinen Leib*), the “closest contact” (*innigste Berührung*) with each man, brings the preliminary, natural *Einheit des Leibes* to its perfection. Here in the Eucharist, writes Scheeben, “our body is again joined [*wieder zusammengefügt*] to the body of the Logos”, and we thus become “flesh of His flesh yet again”.¹¹⁷ But in this instance we “become flesh of His flesh in so perfect a way that the first union [*erstere Einheit*] ... is by comparison no more than the foundation [*Grundlegung*] and type [*Präformation*] of the second”.¹¹⁸ Indeed, by the sacramental communication of the very body of the Son, a “more real [*realere*] and more interior [*innigere*] union”, a “substantial union” (*substantielle Vereinigung*) is “added” (*hinzutrate*) to that “union of individual men with the God-man which results from racial union [*Geschlechtseinheit*]”.¹¹⁹ By the very gift of his body, “we are bound to Him more securely [*weit fester*], and become His body much more perfectly [*vollkommener sein Leib*]” than before.¹²⁰ Therefore, on account of the Eucharist, the communicant can say that Christ “has not only taken flesh from our flesh, but has returned to us the flesh that He assumed.”¹²¹ By this sacramental ‘returning’ of the flesh he assumed, Christ is no longer merely “virtually [*virtuell*] and indirectly [*mittelbar*] joined to each member” but also internally united to them, “like the soul which

¹¹⁶ *Die Mysterien*, p. 392 (ET p. 477). “He [raises the body in this way] particularly for the weighty reason that as head of the human race He wills, by means of His body, to establish the closest contact, and enter into the most solid union, with all the members of the race. He wishes to use His body as the instrument of His all-embracing activity, reaching down into the hearts of beings and deifying their natures”.

¹¹⁷ *Die Mysterien*, p. 397 (ET p. 483).

¹¹⁸ *Die Mysterien*, p. 397 (ET p. 483-4). “In der Eucharistie aber wird unser Leib mit dem Leibe des Logos wieder zusammengefügt, und so werden wir abermal Fleisch von seinem Fleische, und zwar in der Weise, daß die erstere Einheit, wie bei unsern Stammeltern, nur die Grundlegung und Präformation des letzteren ist”.

¹¹⁹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 396 (ET p. 482).

¹²⁰ *Die Mysterien*, p. 405 (ET p. 493).

¹²¹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 405 (ET p. 493). The whole passage reads: “Durch die Eucharistie aber werden wir noch weit fester mit ihm verbunden, werden noch vollkommener sein Leib, da er nicht bloß von unserem Fleische das seine angenommen, sondern auch das angenommene uns wieder eingesenkt hat”.

informs the physical body”.¹²² Thus the “bodily union based on the Incarnation alone” is “ratified [*vollzogen*], completed [*vollendet*], and sealed [*besiegelt*]” by it. The Eucharist is nothing less than its “consummation” (*Vollendung*).¹²³ We must now explore how Scheeben accounts for this.

3.4. Christ “changing into His body the food that nourishes our body”¹²⁴

Scheeben sets forth his doctrine of Eucharistic union, and the particular somatic emphasis he chooses to develop, on the foundation of the highest theological authority. “That Christ unites Himself to us in the Eucharist in such a way as to become one body with us” is, he insists, no theological aberration but “the clear [*klare*], decisive [*entschiedene*] teaching of Holy Scripture and the Fathers”.¹²⁵ The particular way in which this doctrine is developed by such theologians as St Cyril is, Scheeben teaches, based not only upon the hypostatic union, but also upon a special attentiveness towards the nature of food; the consummate *leibliche Einheit* established between Christ and the Christian, and its own character of bodiliness, owes itself to the fact that the sacred body is to be *eaten* (cf. Jn. 6:55). As Scheeben writes,

Ist es doch die wesentliche Bestimmung jeder Speise, daß sie sich mit dem Genießenden zu einem substantiellen Ganzen verschmelze. Und so reden auch die heiligen Väter in den stärksten Ausdrücken von einer Vermischung und Verschmelzung des Leibes Christi mit dem unsrigen. Sie betonen dabei ausdrücklich, daß unsere Einheit mit Christus nicht eine bloß moralische, sondern eine reale, physische, substantielle sei.¹²⁶

Accordingly, just as we observed it to be the case in St Thomas’ Eucharistic doctrine, Scheeben’s understanding of Eucharistic communion is based not only on the privileges granted to the sacred body by virtue of its hypostatic union with the divinity but also upon the edible accidents by which the body is sacramentally conveyed. If the unitive capacities of the

¹²² *Die Mysterien*, p. 396 (ET p. 482). “... daß also das gottmenschliche Haupt in dem natürlichen Körper, sondern, wie beim letzteren die ihn informierende Seele, mit seiner eigenen Substanz in die einzelnen Glieder einging, sie durchdränge und so sie mit seiner göttlichen Herrlichkeit und Kraft erfüllte”.

¹²³ *Die Mysterien*, p. 397 (ET p. 483).

¹²⁴ “... daß er die Nahrung unseres Leibes in seinem Leib wandelt” (*Die Mysterien*, p. 413; ET p. 501).

¹²⁵ *Die Mysterien*, p. 397 (ET p. 483). “Daß Christus in der Eucharistie sich mit uns verbinde, um ein Leib mit uns zu werden, ist die klare, entschiedene Lehre der Heiligen Schrift und der heiligen Väter.”

¹²⁶ *Die Mysterien*, p. 397 (ET p. 483). “The essential function of any food is to combine with the one partaking of it the formation of a single substantial whole. Hence the Fathers employ the strongest terms in speaking of an assimilation and fusion of Christ’s body with ours. Specifically, they insist that our union with Christ is more than simply a moral union; it is a real, physical, substantial union.”

Eucharist are remotely dependent on the hypostatic union, we can say that they are immediately dependent upon transubstantiation and the edible nature of bread.

Scheeben insists that the physical purpose of the sacramental species can only be properly discerned once they are understood no longer to inhere in bread. Christ can be said to become “one body” with the communicant (*ein Leib mit uns*)¹²⁷ only if the substance of bread has, in fact, been entirely replaced by the substance of the body of Christ. If the Eucharist is to establish a perfected *leibliche Einheit*, as Scheeben insists it does, there can be at the consecration no mere ‘impanation’, no sense in which the body is merely present in the bread, *Deus panis factus*, and does not replace its substance. If a mere inherence or co-existence of the sacred body with the bread were the case, we could not in any “proper sense” (*nicht eigentlich*) be said to “become one body with the living body of Christ”.¹²⁸ Or to put it another way, if the body of Christ did not replace the substance of the bread, “Christ would not be incorporated in us by our reception of the Eucharist, nor would we be incorporated in Christ”.¹²⁹ Instead, through natural biological absorption, the process would be the very reverse: it would still be the substance of bread that was incorporated into us, still the bread that, as the weaker and perishable entity, entered our body to be absorbed and broken down. In such a case, the accompanying body of Christ would be, ridiculously, dominated and absorbed by the communicant and, in failing to be the communicant’s *geistige Nahrung*, would be impotent to exert its unitive, incorporating powers upon him.

As we have already considered in St Thomas, we are able to speak in such somatically unitive, indeed ‘Cyrillian’ terms, when the substance of bread, a substance “which is naturally capable of passing over into our body”¹³⁰ has been converted into the body of Christ. In this way, Christ is able to effect a salvific *leibliche Einheit* with the communicant through taking advantage of the physical capabilities of bread, utilising the capacities of its accidents. Through the miracle of transubstantiation, where the substance of

¹²⁷ Scheeben consistently uses this term without any apology. As he writes, “Daß Christus in der Eucharistie sich mit uns verbinde, um ein Leib mit uns zu werden, ist die klare, entschiedene Lehre der Heiligen Schrift und der heiligen Väter” (*Die Mysterien*, p. 397; ET p. 483).

¹²⁸ *Die Mysterien*, p. 412 (ET p. 500). “... obgleich wir auch dann nicht eigentlich mit dem lebendigen Leibe Christi ein Leib werden würden”

¹²⁹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 412 (ET p. 500). “Wenn der Leib Christi nur im Brote gegenwärtig wäre, nicht an die Stelle der Brotschubstanz träte, so würde durch den Empfang der Eucharistie weder Christus uns, noch wir Christus inkorporiert”.

¹³⁰ *Die Mysterien*, p. 413 (ET p. 500). “Letzteres werden wir nur dann, wenn die Substanz des Brotes, die ihrer Natur nach dazu angetan ist, in unsern Leib überzugehen, in den Leib Christi übergegangen ist, wenn Christus, in ihre Stelle eingetreten, sich so innig mit uns vereinigt, als wenn er das Brot selbst wäre”.

bread is replaced by the substance of Christ's body —yet where the accidents of bread remain— Christ is able to unite Himself to us “as though He were the bread itself” (*als wenn er das Brot selbst wäre*),¹³¹ and thereby come “into no less intimate contact with us than natural food does”.¹³²

As we saw Thomas imply in our previous chapter, combined with the specific privileges of the hypostatically united body, it is precisely these edible accidents that grant Eucharistic contact its radically invasive and incorporating quality. As Scheeben sees it, by coming into the communicant under edible species, and thereby overcoming all that typically hinders the bodily order, Christ's intention is “to effect a union that would be not simply the presence [*nicht bloß eine Gegenwart*] of His body in ours, or a contact [*Berührung*] between the two bodies, but would be an organic connection [*organische Verknüpfung*] between them”;¹³³ this is precisely what the material accidents of bread help to ensure.

By these teachings, Scheeben is here brilliantly illuminating the very conclusions we ourselves deduced from St Thomas' Eucharistic doctrine. By taking a substance which “naturally can and does become one body with us”,¹³⁴ and changing it into His body by conversion, Christ is able to effect a true incorporation where Christians are, not merely in a poetic or metaphorical sense but, properly speaking,¹³⁵ united to the body of Christ. As we saw in Thomas, the alternative possibilities of natural, bodily absorption or external, bodily juxtaposition, are both repudiated by this doctrine: “by changing into His body the food that nourishes our body [*Nahrung unseres Leibes*]”¹³⁶ Christ shows that he “wills not merely to bring the substance of His body into contact with us [*uns nahetreten*], but to implant Himself

¹³¹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 412 (ET p. 500)

¹³² *Die Mysterien*, p. 425 (ET p. 514). “... nicht weniger wahrhaft und substantiell unsere Nahrung als die natürliche Speise”.

¹³³ *Die Mysterien*, p. 412-13 (ET p. 500). “Noch mehr hat er das getan, um auf diese Weise erst eine Vereinigung zu bewerkstelligen, die nicht bloß eine Gegenwart seines Leibes in dem unsrigen oder eine Berührung beider Leiber, sondern organische Verknüpfung derselben wäre”.

¹³⁴ *Die Mysterien*, p. 413 (ET p. 500). “... was naturgemäß ein Leib mit uns werden kann und soll, zu seinem Leiber durch Umwandlung”.

¹³⁵ This can be seen in Scheeben's understanding of the analogical relationship between the *Einheit des Leibes* of marital union and this Eucharistic union. The former is the latter's *natürliche Analogie*. As he writes, “Die vollkommenste, natürliche Analogie für diese Einheit des Leibes bildet daher diejenige, welche in der Ehe besteht” (*Die Mysterien*, p. 397; ET p. 483). Scheeben also understands this analogy to illuminate the difference and the similarity between the bodily union as based directly on the Incarnation alone, and its consummation in the Eucharist: “Diese Analogie zeigt uns überdies, wie wir früher schon gesehen, den Unterschied und den Zusammenhang zwischen der Einheit des Leibes, wie sie unmittelbar durch die Inkarnation allein begründet wird, und der Vollendung derselben durch die Eucharistie” (p. 397; ET p. 483).

¹³⁶ *Die Mysterien*, p. 413 (ET p. 501).

in us [*sondern sich in us*], or rather us in Him [*uns in sich hineinpflanzen*].”¹³⁷ We must now examine this idea further.

3.5. Eucharistic Union: an “*unaussprechliche Einheit des Leibes*”.¹³⁸

In our previous considerations of Thomas’ Eucharistic doctrine, we understood how the theological intelligibility of a somatic union with Christ rests upon the sacred body’s capacity to be, paradoxically, not man’s *alimentum corporale* but his *alimentum spirituale*. If St Cyril’s doctrine of the Christian’s union with Christ *kata sarka* is seen in its metaphysical and theological coherence through the distinctions provided by St Thomas, Scheeben’s Eucharistic doctrine synthesises these features; here the “bold terms” (*starken Aüsdrukken*) of Cyril’s Eucharistic somaticism,¹³⁹ is manifestly continued, though articulated according to the technical distinctions of Aquinas.

Accordingly, Scheeben’s theology of a Eucharistically effected *Leibliche Einheit* is built upon his understanding of its nature as a *geistige Nahrung*. The divine privileges of the sacred and glorified body, and its presence *per modum substantiae*, mean that its relation to the communicant is not determined by the usual limitations of materiality but is able to be like “that of the soul, which permeates and animates [*durchdringt und belebt*] the body into which it enters”.¹⁴⁰ Indeed, precisely as we deduced from St Thomas’ principles in our previous chapter, Scheeben argues that the sacramental communication of the glorified body is such that, in a reversal of the typical order of things, its relation to the communicant “is that of the soul itself to the body which it animates”.¹⁴¹

This analogy of the sacred body relating to the communicant as the natural soul relates to the human body¹⁴² becomes increasingly intelligible once we understand how the Eucharistic body, by virtue of its unique power, relates to the body of the communicant.

¹³⁷ *Die Mysterien*, p. 413 (ET p. 501).

¹³⁸ *Die Mysterien*, p. 400 (ET p. 487).

¹³⁹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 401 (ET p. 488).

¹⁴⁰ *Die Mysterien*, p. 424 (ET p. 513).

¹⁴¹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 426 (ET p. 515). “Dort verhält er sich zur Gottheit wie der Leib zur Seele, hier wie die Seele selbst nach Art der Gottheit zu einem von ihr zu belebenden Leibe”.

¹⁴² Scheeben illustrates this point further through the remarkable statement of Guitmund, the 11th century Norman Benedictine theologian: “Per animam quipped fit, ut corpus utcumque temporaliter vivat, per carnem vero Salvatoris agitur, ut Ecclesia non quomodocumque, sed beate in aeternum vivat.” (“For, as our soul is the life of the body, so by an even greater title through God’s grace the flesh of the Saviour is the life of the Church. It is through the soul that the body has temporal life; and it is through the Saviour’s flesh that the Church has eternal life in all blessedness”). *De Corporis et sanguinis Christi veritate*, lib. 1, med. (PL, 149, 1435). Quoted by Scheeben, p. 426 (fn. 4); (ET p. 515, fn. 4).

Since here, just as at the Incarnation, “the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily” (Col. 2:9) it is a body infinitely more powerful than the mortal body of the communicant. Therefore, it cannot be subject to the latter’s body, but rather the sacred body acts upon him, and it does so “not by being assimilated by the body [of the Christian] but by dominating [*beherrschend*] it”.¹⁴³ These are the conditions for its transformative power, for it does not sacramentally enter the sinner “as a perishable [*vergängliche*], corruptible [*auflösbare*] substance” but rather “as an immutable [*unwandelbare*], imperishable [*unvergängliche*], insoluble [*unteilbare*] substance”,¹⁴⁴ as the *lebendigen Leibe* of the risen and glorified Christ. Here we can see the reasons why Scheeben, as we have already noted, perceives in this sacramental mode even greater privileges for the body “than it possessed in its state of divine transfiguration even after the Resurrection”.¹⁴⁵ For now the body is not only “for its own sake” (*für sich selbst*) “animated and transfigured [*belebt und verherrlicht*] by the divinity” but by participating in something of the pervasive power (*penetrierenden Kraft*) of the Godhead, and sacramentally conveyed via the instrumentality of edible species, it is empowered now to “animate and transfigure others”.¹⁴⁶

3.5.1. A spiritually founded somaticism

In light of all this, Scheeben’s Eucharistic doctrine is characterised by what we might call a spiritually founded somaticism, where the bodily dimension of Eucharistic communion is taken to its furthest point of emphasis, precisely by virtue of the spiritual mode by which this union is effected. This is in continuity with the characteristics of both Cyril’s and Thomas’ Christologically informed Eucharistic doctrines which, as we particularly highlighted in Thomas, combine so effectively the vividly natural and the exaltedly supernatural, without confusion or separation. In the same way, Scheeben perceives these contrasting Christological features to be manifested in the sacramental mode of the sacred body, where the “union of the invisible with the visible, of the divine with the human” is here not suspended or interrupted “but distinctly brought out [*fortgesetzt und vollendet*] in its

¹⁴³ *Die Mysterien*, p. 424 (ET p. 513).

¹⁴⁴ *Die Mysterien*, p. 425 (ET p. 514).

¹⁴⁵ *Die Mysterien*, p. 425 (ET p. 514-15).

¹⁴⁶ *Die Mysterien*, p. 425 (ET p. 515). “... andere belebend und verherrlichend”.

sacramental existence”.¹⁴⁷ Thus, he observes how the flesh in its sacramental mode is at once wholly bodily and yet wholly spiritualised or “supernaturalised”. Though still material in itself (*an sich materielle*), the body of Christ “exists after the fashion of a spiritual substance [*geistigen Substanz*]” in the sacrament;¹⁴⁸ it is “flesh of the same substance as our flesh”,¹⁴⁹ it “possesses the true nature of flesh” (*Fleisch seiner Natur nach*),¹⁵⁰ and yet in its risen state, and here under the sacramental species, has transcended the natural limitations of the flesh, “has been liberated [*befreiten*] from its weakness [*Schwachheit*]” and “been glorified and spiritualised by victory [*Überwindung*] over death”.¹⁵¹ This has occurred to such a glorious extent that it now even “seems to be [*erscheinen läßt*] spirit rather than flesh”,¹⁵² even though it is most certainly true flesh (cf. Jn. 6: 53-55). In accordance with these characteristics, the body of Christ, whilst still “possessing the true nature of flesh”, “nourishes us in a spiritual way [*geistige Weise*]”,¹⁵³ it “come[s] to our spirit in a spiritual way”, it “descends into [*senkt sich in hinein*] the depths of the soul” and therefore “directly affects our spirit, not merely our body”.¹⁵⁴ And yet, as we have observed before through Thomas’ arguments, this spiritual mode is precisely in the interests of the body, both from the perspective of Christ and from the perspective of the Christian. The supernatural and spiritual manner of presence and mode of communication ensures the entirety of the gift and, for the recipient, the comprehensiveness of the effect. As Scheeben insists, if it were still just natural flesh, if it “retain[ed] the limitations of flesh” (*Schranken des Fleisches*), it “could not unite itself to us wholly and entirely [*ganz und unteilbar*], nor could it fuse [*verschmelzen*] us with itself”.¹⁵⁵ It is not only because of its transfigured and spiritual mode, but by virtue of its more powerful sacramental mode, that this flesh can be truly “unite[d] to the flesh of the faithful”.¹⁵⁶ Thus,

¹⁴⁷ *Die Mysterien*, p. 431 (ET p. 522). “Wie in der geistigen sich die erhebende und verklärende Kraft der Inkarnation fortsetzt und vollendet, so prägt sich in dieser die Verbindung des unsichtbar Göttlichen mit dem sichtbar Menschlichen aus, die wir bei der Inkarnation beobachten”

¹⁴⁸ *Die Mysterien*, p. 387 (ET p. 471).

¹⁴⁹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 428 (ET p. 518). “Es ist zwar Fleisch von derselben Substanz wie unser Fleisch”.

¹⁵⁰ *Die Mysterien*, p. 428 (ET p. 518).

¹⁵¹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 429 (ET p. 519).

¹⁵² *Die Mysterien*, p. 428 (ET p. 518).

¹⁵³ *Die Mysterien*, p. 424 (ET p. 514).

¹⁵⁴ *Die Mysterien*, p. 425 (ET p. 514). “Nährt uns aber nun der Leib Christi auf geistige Weise, indem er direct unsern Geist, nicht bloß unsern Leib ... Wenn er aber unsere Seele mit unseren Leib, wenn er unser ganzes Wesen nähren soll, muß er auf gleicher Stufe mit unserer Seele stehen und geistigerweise dem Geiste nahe kommen.”

¹⁵⁵ *Die Mysterien*, p. 429 (ET p. 519-20). “Es würde sich ferner nicht ganz und unteilbar mit uns vereinigen, nicht uns mit sich verschmelzen können.”

¹⁵⁶ *Die Mysterien*, p. 428 (ET p. 518). “Dieser selbe Geist aber führt auch das Fleisch Christi, als das Organ seiner geistigen Kraft, auf den Altar, um es mit dem Fleische des Gläubigen zu vereinigen”

Scheeben's highly developed sense of Christ's supernaturally effected bodily union with the Christian through the Eucharist is not in spite of this spiritual mode, but precisely by means of it.

3.6. *Scheeben's somatic emphasis*

So Scheeben's presentation of Eucharistic union is, as we have just shown, characterised by a sense of bodily-spiritual integration. The spiritual mode is considered by him not as a factor which negates or opposes the bodily dimension, but which successfully brings it to pass. Yet one could also say that, in the manner of Cyril, a certain somatic emphasis characterises Scheeben's presentation. According to both its natural realisation and its supernatural perfection, man's union with Christ is not simply an *Einheit* or even a *geistliche Einheit*, but always for Scheeben a *leibliche Einheit*. As we have seen, in the order of nature it is bodily in a non-efficacious way, a "material [*materielle*], lifeless union [*tote Einheit*]",¹⁵⁷ whilst in the order of grace it is no less bodily, but efficaciously so, a "living union" (*lebendige Einheit*) supernaturally vitalised (*belebt*) by sanctifying grace. Just as we saw Cyril insist against his Arian opponent,¹⁵⁸ so Scheeben asserts that this is no mere union of minds or affections but truly a "union of bodies" (*Einheit des Leibes*) a union "of a living body with another living body".¹⁵⁹ Of course, the underlying Christological and anthropological presuppositions all necessitate that this somatic emphasis is understood in an integrated, holistic sense, as well as a supernatural sense. For, according to the composite nature of man, and the bodily means by which the Incarnate Son communicates his saving power to him, the whole God-man is said to come into saving contact with the whole sinner.¹⁶⁰

But along with this integration, and by virtue of spiritual modality, Scheeben does insist upon a precise, bodily emphasis in certain respects. Such a practice rests, he insists, upon a venerable theological tradition: as we have already seen him remark, that Christ unites Himself to us in the Eucharist in such a way as to become, specifically, "one body with us" is no peculiar theological conceit but simply "the clear, decisive teaching of Holy Scripture and the Fathers".¹⁶¹ And so, as we have been observing, Scheeben seeks to elucidate this doctrine from many angles. "In receiving the Eucharist", he teaches, "we unite ourselves, in closest

¹⁵⁷ *Die Mysterien*, p. 311 (ET p. 375).

¹⁵⁸ See *In Joh.* 15:1. Pusey, ii. 543-4.

¹⁵⁹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 397 (ET p. 483). "... eines lebendigen Leibes mit einem lebendigen".

¹⁶⁰ ST III 8, 2.

¹⁶¹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 397 (ET p. 483).

and most substantial fashion, primarily [*zunächst*] with the God-man's body, which enters into our inmost being [*Innerste unseres Wesens*].¹⁶² Scheeben is at liberty to make this assertion because he has already established, by virtue of the hypostatic union, "the priceless value [*Kostbarkeit des Wertes*] of the sacred body",¹⁶³ its causal role as "the vehicle or organ of the live-giving and transforming power of the divinity",¹⁶⁴ and its uniquely communicative powers in its glorified and sacramental mode. But the emphasis he gives also rests on the naturally revelatory capacity of this body, which is again a natural consequence of the hypostatic union. In forming with us, by means of the Eucharist, an "ineffable union of body [*unaussprechliche Einheit des Körpers*], which knows no limits and transcends all our notions" we can deduce further truths, for such a union "must inevitably give rise to an equally exalted fellowship in goods and life between man and the Son of God".¹⁶⁵ In fact, Scheeben admits that "without such fellowship, the [bodily] union is unthinkable [*nicht denkbar*"]".¹⁶⁶ And later, in the same way, Scheeben reaffirms this revelatory aspect of the union:

Wenn aber der Logos, um uns zu beleben, mit seinem Leibe auf eine so wunderbare Weise sich mit uns vereinigt: müssen wir schließen, daß er in seiner Gottheit mit der Seele sich auf ähnliche Weise vereinige, wie er sich in seinem Fleisch und Blut mit dem Leibe vereinigt.¹⁶⁷

Thus, from these vantage points, a certain emphasis on the bodiliness of the union is legitimate and even fitting, since it serves here to manifest its spiritual depths.

But these are not the only reason Scheeben places a certain emphasis upon the somatic dimension. Another reason he does so is that he regards this aspect of our union to reflect most adequately the full consequences of the Son's embodiment. "If the body of Christ existed for us and became united to us in [a] spiritual way alone [*bloß in geistiger Weise*]", Scheeben reflects, "its relations to us would be wholly internal [*ganz innerlich*] and

¹⁶² *Die Mysterien*, p. 434 (ET p. 526).

¹⁶³ *Die Mysterien*, p. 429 (ET p. 520).

¹⁶⁴ *Die Mysterien*, p. 432 (ET p. 523). "... daß der Leib des Gottmenschen in uns gelegt wird als das Vehikel, das Organ der belebenden und verklärenden Kraft der Gottheit".

¹⁶⁵ *Die Mysterien*, p. 400 (ET p. 487). "Diese unaussprechliche Einheit des Körpers, die keine Grenzen kennt und all Begriffe übersteigt, muß notwendig eine ebenso erhabene Güter- und Lebensgemeinschaft des Menschen mit dem Sohne Gottes erzeugen".

¹⁶⁶ *Die Mysterien*, p. 400 (ET p. 487). "... außer der sie nicht denkbar ist".

¹⁶⁷ *Die Mysterien*, p. 432 (ET p. 524). "But if, in order to give us life, the Logos unites His body to us in so astounding a fashion we must conclude that He unites His divinity to our souls in a way that resembles the union of His flesh and blood with our bodies".

spiritual [*ganz geistig*].¹⁶⁸ This spiritual relation might suffice for salvation in the strict sense, but it would be in discontinuity with the nature of man, and represent a profound disruption to the order established at the Incarnation. According to such “wholly internal and spiritual” relations, the union between ourselves and Christ “would not be effected by an external [*äußeres*] physical bond [*natürliches Band*], and “would not have the character of a bodily oneness [*leiblichen Einheit*].¹⁶⁹ That the union be distinguished by this “bodily oneness” is no peripheral, inconsequential matter for Scheeben, but “an integral factor” (*integrierendes Moment*) in the “organism inaugurated by the Incarnation”.¹⁷⁰ For the Son of God “clothed Himself with natural, visible flesh”, he argues, for two reasons: “to confer on us the union He envisaged” and then to be able “to manifest it outwardly”.¹⁷¹ As is now most evident to us, the Eucharist, which “is meant to be the continuation [*die Fortsetzung*] of the Incarnation”, most adequately ensures and accomplishes both this originally envisaged union and its outward manifestation.

3.7. “Reale Einheit”: Scheeben’s application of St Thomas’ “Unio Realis”

Thus, according to Scheeben, the bodily emphasis we see in his account of Eucharistic union represents for him certain unitive perfections; the *leibliche Einheit* brought about through Eucharistic communion not only most adequately corresponds with the Incarnation, and perfects (*vervollkommnet*) the union which results from the Incarnation alone, but also expresses, in the Christian’s earthly state, the supernatural highpoint of his union with Christ. It is in light of this that we wish to highlight Scheeben’s repeated use of the term *reale Einheit* to provide a more distinctive nuance to the character of this union. The union forged by Christ with the Christian by means of the Eucharist is said to be not only a *leibliche Einheit* but also, Scheeben teaches, a *reale Einheit*, a “real union”. In relation to the arguments we proposed in the previous chapter on St Thomas’ understanding of this term, Scheeben’s deployment of it in a Eucharistic context has special significance for our study.

¹⁶⁸ *Die Mysterien*, p. 431 (ET p. 521-2).

¹⁶⁹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 431 (ET p. 522).

¹⁷⁰ *Die Mysterien*, p. 431 (ET p. 522).

¹⁷¹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 431 (ET p. 522). “Wie bei dieser der Sohn Gottes sich mit einem natürlichen, sichtbaren Fleische bekleidete, um die mit uns beabsichtigte Einheit zugleich zu vermitteln und äußerlich darzustellen ...”.

If one observes Scheeben's preferred terms in his Eucharistic theology, *reale Einheit*, or variants of it,¹⁷² regularly feature as either qualifying terms of *leibliche Einheit* or else in close proximity to it.¹⁷³ It is employed by him to denote a distinctive characteristic of Eucharistic union, as distinct from a mere moral union or, as we have just seen, from a relation that is "wholly internal or spiritual".¹⁷⁴ As he writes, "by this partaking [of the Eucharist] we are made one ... with Him by the most intimate and real union [*realste Einheit*] that may be conceived";¹⁷⁵ the Eucharist effects "the real union [*reale Vereinigung*] of His body with us";¹⁷⁶ Christ wants to "associate individual men [to His sacrifice] by a real union [*reale Verbindung*] with Him";¹⁷⁷ "in this sacrament we are closely united to the heavenly Father through the very real union [*realste Einheit*] we have with the Son";¹⁷⁸ "the significance of the Eucharist comes to this, that the real union [*reale Einheit*] of the Son of God with all men is ratified, completed, and sealed in it".¹⁷⁹ And so on.

Now as we have seen in our previous chapter, in scholastic theology the notion of a "real union" (*unio realis*) has a specific character and represents the fulfilment of particular desires. It emerges, as we saw, in Thomas' consideration of the unitive effects of love, where it is meant to express the happy realisation of full presence and contact: "real union" is, Thomas teaches, that very union "the lover seeks [*quaerit*] with the object of his love",¹⁸⁰ and is not a presence merely in the mind of the lover, or in his affections. Indeed, this kind of presence precedes real union, for it consists not in the enjoyment of full presence, but rather in the beloved abiding in the preceding affections and apprehension of the lover (*unio secundum affectum*),¹⁸¹ inclining him "to desire and seek the presence of the beloved".¹⁸² This inclination is for the sake of "real union", where what is enjoyed is the full presence of

¹⁷² Such as "reale Vereinigung" or "reale Verbindung".

¹⁷³ See, for example, *Die Mysterien* p. 392 (ET p. 482); p. 397 (ET p. 483); p. 382 (ET p. 462); p. 406 (ET p. 495); p. 407 (496); p. 412 (ET p. 500); p. 414 (ET p. 503); p. 429 (ET p. 519); p. 436 (ET p. 528).

¹⁷⁴ *Die Mysterien*, p. 431 (ET p. 521-2).

¹⁷⁵ *Die Mysterien*, p. 406 (ET p. 495). See also the use of the term on the following page (p. 407).

¹⁷⁶ *Die Mysterien*, p. 412 (ET p. 500).

¹⁷⁷ *Die Mysterien*, p. 429 (ET p. 519).

¹⁷⁸ *Die Mysterien*, p. 436 (ET p. 528).

¹⁷⁹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 396 (ET p. 482). See also the use of the term in the preceding paragraph.

¹⁸⁰ ST I,II 28, 1 ad. 2. "Quaedam vero unio est effectus amoris. Et haec est unio realis, quam amans quaerit de re amata."

¹⁸¹ ST I,II 28,2

¹⁸² ST I,II 28,1.

the beloved to the lover, allowing the two “to live together, speak together, and be united together”.¹⁸³

We should also recall here that, as we considered previously, the bond of “real union” must correspond to the nature of the object with which the love in question seeks to make its rapport. Thus, whilst a purely spiritual love is only possible between a subject and an object which are purely spiritual, between incarnate beings “real union” will be “some form of combination of spiritual and physical contact”.¹⁸⁴

Accordingly, Scheeben’s application of the term fulfils a specific purpose: as a term representing fullness of presence and union, he reserves it for the *leibliche Einheit* of Eucharistic union. It is, significantly, not applied by him in connection to man’s first supernatural consecration at baptism which, though efficacious for salvation, is yet anticipatory in character, and awaits consummation.¹⁸⁵ Indeed, Scheeben’s account of Eucharistic union is perfectly in accord with the nature of *unio realis* as explained by Thomas: the *reale Einheit* of Eucharistic union is, suitably, characterised by a sense of restful completion in Scheeben’s exposition, yet he also alludes to the striving quality which aspires towards, and precedes, the joy of real union. Both these aspects are intrinsic to its character. And so, as Scheeben frequently reminds the reader, the Eucharist is first and foremost “the miracle of unspeakable, inconceivable love of God for us human beings”;¹⁸⁶ as is necessary in the pursuit of real union, such love is not content to effect a mere “contact [*Berührung*] between the two bodies”, or even “the presence [*Gegenwart*] of His body in ours”;¹⁸⁷ rather, it “wills ... to establish the closest contact [*innigste Berührung*]”, to “enter into the most solid union [*realste Vereinigung*]” with man.¹⁸⁸ Indeed, such is the fervour of his love that Christ

¹⁸³ ST I,II 28, 2 ad. 2. “... ut scilicet simul conversentur, et simul colloquantur, et in aliis huiusmodi coniungantur.”

¹⁸⁴ Michael Faraon OP, *The Metaphysical and Psychological Principals of Love* (Iowa: William C. Brown, 1953) p. 70.

¹⁸⁵ In relation to baptism, Scheeben regards the Eucharist as the culminating point within progressing levels of intimacy. The Eucharist’s “deepening and intensification” of the natural *leibliche Einheit* is also a “deepening and intensification” of the supernatural “union inaugurated ... by baptism” (485). He describes the progressive ordering by means of the nuptial mystery: Christ “the bridegroom seals His union with man in baptism, as with a wedding ring. But both faith and baptism are mere preliminaries for the coming together of man and the God-man in one flesh by a real Communion of flesh and blood in the Eucharist” (543).

¹⁸⁶ *Die Mysterien*, p. 394 (ET p. 479). “Jeder Christ betrachtet die Eucharistie als das Wunder einer unaussprechlichen, unbegreiflichen Leibe Gottes zu uns Menschen”.

¹⁸⁷ *Die Mysterien*, p. 413 (ET p. 500). “Noch mehr hat er das getan, um auf diese Weise erst eine Vereinigung zu bewerkstelligen, die nicht bloß eine Gegenwart seines Leibes in dem unsrigen oder eine Berührung beider Leiber ...”.

¹⁸⁸ *Die Mysterien*, p. 392 (ET p. 477).

“desires to unite Himself to us in the closest possible manner [*innigste Weise vereinigen*]”.¹⁸⁹ Yet complementing these ardent aspirations for the repose of real union is, in Scheeben’s account, also a highly developed sense of the joy of its attainment. Since the Eucharist brings about our earthly *reale Einheit* with Christ, Scheeben thinks that the sacramental reception of the body of Christ ought to provoke—even apart from its subsequent fruits—a certain restful tranquillity in itself: the sacred body of the God-man is “to be the object [*der Gegenstand*] of our loving and rapturous possession [*lieben und wonnevollen Besitzes*]”.¹⁹⁰ This he considers a “living embrace” (*lebendiger Umarmung*)¹⁹¹ where Christ is “clasp[ed]” and “possess[ed]” (*erfassen und besitzen*) in a joyful union that is itself “delightful” (*lieblich*) and “blissful” (*wonnevoll*).¹⁹² All this, he insists, should deter the communicant from an excessively functional understanding of the union. Though, of course, the fruits of this union confer the greater riches upon the sinner, nevertheless we “should desire not merely to derive vital energy from the God-man”, but also to “possess and enjoy” him (*besitzen und genießen*). This is nothing less than the joy of *reale Einheit* which, as Thomas teaches, “the lover seeks [*quaerit*] with the object of his love”.¹⁹³

Therefore, our own theological application of this philosophical concept in our consideration of St Thomas’ Eucharistic doctrine has been vindicated by Scheeben’s own deployment of the term in a strictly Eucharistic context. By using it in the services of Eucharistic theology, Scheeben expresses that, this side of full beatitude and according to the state of *viator*, man’s union with Christ through the sacrament of the Lord’s body enjoys a certain completeness and perfection, a certain satisfaction of love’s demands. Yet it is precisely according to its bodily character, in its depth and comprehensiveness as a *leibliche Einheit*, that Eucharistic union is to be understood as a *reale Einheit*. For, as Scheeben insists following Cyril,¹⁹⁴ here we enjoy no merely moral or affective bond, but a union that is real (*reale*), physical, (*physische*), substantial (*substantielle*): “the real union [*reale Vereinigung*] of His body with us”.¹⁹⁵

¹⁸⁹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 394 (ET p. 479).

¹⁹⁰ *Die Mysterien*, p. 434 (ET p. 526).

¹⁹¹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 432 (ET p. 523).

¹⁹² *Die Mysterien*, p. 434 (ET p. 526).

¹⁹³ ST I,II 28, 1 ad. 2. “Quaedam vero unio est effectus amoris. Et haec est unio realis, quam amans quaerit de re amata.”

¹⁹⁴ See *In Joh.* 15:1. Pusey, ii. 543-4.

¹⁹⁵ *Die Mysterien*, p. 412 (ET p. 500).

4.1. The Eucharist: changing “our lowly body to be like His glorious body” (Phil. 3:21)

It is consistently apparent in Scheeben’s Eucharistic theology that the body which is received into the mortal and corruptible body of the communicant is one that has already passed triumphantly through death. It is not only the naturally and supernaturally vivifying body of the God-man, but also one no longer subject to mortality, an immortal body in a risen and glorious state, victorious over the powers of sin and destruction. Indeed, it is not the body on the cross, but precisely this risen body, under its sacramental species, that enters the fallen and mortal body of the Christian.¹⁹⁶ Thus, Scheeben’s doctrine of an “ineffable union of bodies” leads logically to his theology of the resurrection, for by means of Eucharistic communion the forces of supernatural life and glorious immortality descend into the fallen, weak and mortal state of the communicant.¹⁹⁷ Though this effects “the union of one living body with another living body”,¹⁹⁸ it is—in relation to the powers exerted—an entirely uneven union, for the powers which “go forth” (Lk. 8: 46) from the living body of the God-man are infinitely more powerful than the assimilating powers of the communicant. The glorious body is not incorporated into the sinner but rather exerts its assimilating, incorporating powers upon him, “so that our bodies themselves are, as it were, changed [*verwandelt*] into the body of Christ”.¹⁹⁹

It follows, then, that the risen body of Christ sacramentally entering the fallen body of the Christian is the cause and pledge of the latter’s bodily glory, just as we observed in our studies of Cyril and Thomas. Since, as Scheeben states, “we must become one with this body so as to share in the energy [*lebende und wirkende Kraft*] residing and functioning in it”,²⁰⁰ such a sharing will ensure, by a certain logical necessity,²⁰¹ the Christian’s own bodily glory,

¹⁹⁶ See *Die Mysterien*, p. 428-9 (ET p. 518-20).

¹⁹⁷ This is not to say that such union with Christ must be unconditionally sacramental, but that simply “to be able to claim bodily immortality, we must be supernaturally united to the God-man as members of His Mystical Body, either perfectly through the Eucharist, or imperfectly by faith and baptism” (*Die Mysterien*, p. 559; ET p. 669).

¹⁹⁸ *Die Mysterien*, p. 397 (ET p. 483). “... eines lebendigen Leibes mit einem lebendigen”

¹⁹⁹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 413 (ET p. 501). “... im Brote als einem Lebenselement unseres Leibes wird gleichsam unser Leib selbst in den Leib Christi verwandelt”.

²⁰⁰ *Die Mysterien*, p. 424 (ET p. 513). “... weil aber der Geist Christi nur in seinem Leibe weht, deshalb müssen wir eben mit diesem Leibe eins werden, um in demselben die in ihm lebende und wirkende Kraft zu empfangen.”

²⁰¹ According to St Thomas, if the Christian places no obstacle, the resurrection of the body will follow infallibly from the Christian’s union with Christ (see ST suppl. 76, 1 ad. 1). Similarly, Cyril insists that “it is impossible that [Christ] should not endow those with Life those in whom he comes to dwell” (*In Joh.* 6:54. Pusey, i. 533).

making “our body conformable [*gleichförmig*] to the body of His glory”.²⁰² That such a transformation is, at this present time, “mainly interior [*innerliche*] and hidden [*verborgene*]”, is testimony to the depth of activity of Christ’s glorious body in the communicant. As we have repeatedly observed, the sacred body is not food of the natural order, but supernatural food that “descends into [*senkt sich in hinein*] the depths of the soul”,²⁰³ sanctifying man from his root upwards, bringing about an external, bodily glory at the end of time.

This bodily-spiritual comprehensiveness of the Eucharist’s effect is, in Scheeben’s view, a special feature of the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John. Here, Christ not only “refers explicitly to that life which He wishes to confer upon our entire nature [*ganzen Natur*], soul and body”, but also “goes so far as to place a special emphasis [*besondern Nachdruck*] on the life of the body”.²⁰⁴ As we saw in both Cyril and Thomas,²⁰⁵ the Eucharist has a natural association with the glorious resurrection of the sinner’s body because of the natural, physical correspondence between the sacred body of Christ and the fallen body of the communicant. Accordingly, in line with the doctrine of John 6, Scheeben explicitly bases his elucidation of the glorious resurrection of the body upon Cyril’s Eucharistically-formed understanding.²⁰⁶ What is worth noting in Scheeben’s own account, however, is how he develops the doctrine in light of his Christological and Eucharistic principles. So, before we conclude, it is worth making the following brief observations.

First of all, Scheeben’s understanding of bodily immortality is based not on the *leibliche Einheit* that results from the Eucharist, but on the underlying, natural *leibliche Einheit* which results from the Word becoming flesh. By our natural solidarity with Christ alone, the entire race of man is guaranteed a certain corporal endurance. This, as we saw earlier, is precisely the doctrine of St Cyril,²⁰⁷ where all men, saints and unrepentant sinners

²⁰² *Die Mysterien*, p. 416 (ET p. 504). “... unsern Leib dem Leibe seiner Herrlichkeit gleichförmig macht”.

²⁰³ *Die Mysterien*, p. 425 (ET p. 514). “Nährt uns aber nun der Leib Christi auf geistige Weise, indem er direct unsern Geist, nicht bloß unsern Leib Wenn er aber unsere Seele mit unseren Leib, wenn er unser ganzes Wesen nähren soll, muß er auf gleicher Stufe mit unserer Seele stehen und geistigerweise dem Geiste nahe kommen.”

²⁰⁴ *Die Mysterien*, p. 555 (ET p. 664-5). “Er redet nämlich bei Johannes Kapitel 6 nicht ausschließlich abstrakt vom dem Leben unserer Seele, sondern konkret von demjenigen, welches er unserer ganzen Natur, der Seele und dem Leibe, mitteilen will; ja er legt sogar auf das Leben des Leibes einen besondern Nachdruck, indem er uns dessen Wiederherstellung nach dem zeitlichen Tode verheißt”.

²⁰⁵ For Cyril, see *In Joh.* 6:35 (Pusey, i. 475); *In Joh.* 6:52 (Pusey, i. 520); *In Joh.* 6:54 (Pusey, i. 533). For St Thomas, see ST III 74, 1; ST III 79, 1 ad. 3; and *In Joh.* cap. vi, lect. 7.

²⁰⁶ See *Die Mysterien*, p. 559 (ET p. 669).

²⁰⁷ See *In Joh.* 10: 2 (Pusey, ii. 618); *In Joh.* 6: 1 (Pusey, ii. 233).

alike, are destined to rise bodily by virtue of their first physical kinship with the Incarnate Logos. Scheeben, too, sees the “signature of eternity” (*Signatur der Ewigkeit*) “stamped upon the flesh” of man²⁰⁸ not as a fruit of his loving response to God’s initiative, nor of any supernatural participation, but simply as a consequence of God’s embodiment, by which that initial lifeless, material *leibliche Einheit* is forged, and awaits supernatural vitalisation. Yet mere fleshly duration does not, according to Cyril and Scheeben, represent victory over death.²⁰⁹ Though all men are destined to rise bodily, not all are destined to rise in bodily glory. Whilst the bodily union that results from the Incarnation alone infallibly ensures our bodily resurrection, it is the perfected, supernaturalised *leibliche Einheit* that ensures this resurrection will be glorious.

Accordingly, Scheeben presents the glorification of the body as a direct fruit of the sacramental communication of the risen body of the God-man. By this, the sinner’s flesh comes to participate, in limited measure, in certain of the glorious perfections with which the Eucharistic body is endowed. Just as Scheeben, as we have seen, stresses how the sacred body under its sacramental veil does not cease to be material but rather surpasses all that is inherently limiting in materiality, so he perceives in the eventual, glorious body of the Christian certain related qualities. These are attributes which demonstrate how the Christian’s body comes to be conformed to the very body he receives sacramentally. Hence, first of all, Scheeben asserts that just as the body received sacramentally is “flesh of the same substance as our flesh”,²¹⁰ and “possesses the true nature of flesh” (*Fleisch seiner Natur nach*),²¹¹ so the Christ-conformed, glorious body of the Christian loses none of its palpability, its capacity to touch and be touched, and to exert physical contact upon other bodies. If the state of glory

²⁰⁸ *Die Mysterien*, p. 560 (ET p. 671). “... ist im Fleische der Stempel, der ihm die Signatur der Ewigkeit aufdrückt”.

²⁰⁹ Scheeben calls the resurrection of the damned a “negative Verklärung”, and sees their bodily resurrection to represent a terrible *intensification* of death (see *Die Mysterien*, p. 572-80; ET p. 684-94). For Cyril, see his *Homiliae Diversae* 14 (PG 77, 1088-89). As we saw him state there, “death, properly so called, is not the death which separates the soul from the body, but the death which separates the soul from God. God is Life, and He who is separated from Life is dead.” As we briefly considered earlier in Cyril, the bodily duration granted to those who die in unrepented hostility to God is itself deathly: weighed down eternally in their “dishonourable form” (*In 1 ad Cor.* 7 (Pusey, *In Joh.* iii. 316-317) their unredeemed, unglorified, bodies only manifest their fallen spiritual condition and exacerbate their sufferings. It is a condition worse than annihilation for, though it is a form of life, it signifies subjection to the powers of death; death dominating, “tyrannizing savagely over us” (*In 1 ad Cor.* 7; Pusey, *In Joh.* iii. 315).

²¹⁰ *Die Mysterien*, p. 428 (ET p. 518). “Es ist zwar Fleisch von derselben Substanz wie unser Fleisch”.

²¹¹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 428 (ET p. 518).

were to deprive the body of these abilities, it “would simply cease to be a body”²¹² Scheeben insists. Rather, what he wants to ensure is that, in its subjection to spirit, the risen body acts “without losing its own character [*sein Wesen*]”,²¹³ without losing its inherent bodiliness (cf. Lk. 24: 39). As it is with the risen body of Christ in the sacrament, the ‘spiritualisation’ of the Christian’s body does not consist in its ceasing to be bodily, but rather in its ‘supernaturalisation’ where the “spirit inhabiting it perfectly pervades [*durchdringt*] and dominates [*durchherrscht*] it with supernatural power”.²¹⁴ This results not in an abolition but in a perfection, “in a certain refining [*Verfeinerung*] of the body”,²¹⁵ where the limits (*Schranken*) of materiality are finally “broken through” (*durchbrochen*),²¹⁶ and released from all that prevents it from both manifestating the spirit and acting on its behalf. Thus, as Scheeben identified with the Eucharistic body of Christ, the Christ-conformed body of the Christian enjoys a new “penetrability”,²¹⁷ a new capacity for communion, a victorious “surmounting” (*Wegräumung*) of obstacles. As has been familiar throughout Scheeben’s Eucharistic doctrine, such a *Vergöttlichung* of the body both preserves and elevates, for it “confers on bodily life an incomparably greater power and energy [*ungleich größere Kraft und Energie*] than it had from nature”.²¹⁸

Conclusion

These considerations bring to a conclusion our dogmatic exposition of the union of Christ and the Christian from the vantage point of its bodiliness. Before we make a general conclusion of this study, let us briefly recall how Scheeben has aided our understanding in relation to the previous insights of Cyril and Thomas. First of all, his treatment of this theme, as we anticipated in our introduction, serves to combine the most distinctive features we observed in the two doctors. In continuity with Cyril, the doctrine does not feature as a

²¹² *Die Mysterien*, p. 563 (ET p. 674) “... weil dadurch der Leib ein wesentliches Vermögen verlöre und nicht mehr ein vergeistigter Körper, sondern gar kein Körper mehr wäre”.

²¹³ *Die Mysterien*, p. 564 (ET p. 674). “... ohne sein Wesen zu verlieren”.

²¹⁴ *Die Mysterien*, p. 565 (ET p. 677). “Denn im Menschen wird die Materialität des Leibes gerade dadurch überwunden, daß der in ihm wohnende Geist mit übernatürlicher Kraft ihn vollkommen durchdringt und durchherrscht”.

²¹⁵ *Die Mysterien*, p. 566 (ET p. 678).

²¹⁶ *Die Mysterien*, p. 566 (ET p. 677).

²¹⁷ *Die Mysterien*, p. 566 (ET p. 677). “Die Wegräumung des Hindernisses und die Kollation der Fähigkeit, sich durchdringen zu lassen, ist in unserem Falle die Wirkung der in göttlicher Kraft den Körper durchdringenden Seele selbst”.

²¹⁸ *Die Mysterien*, p. 568 (ET p. 680).

peripheral matter in his overall theological scheme but as a certain theological preoccupation. Just as Cyril declares his Eucharistic somatism with unashamed assurance and even, perhaps, an intentional lack of subtlety,²¹⁹ so Scheeben articulates the doctrine of a *leibliche Einheit* with Christ not only with great consistency throughout his Christological and sacramental discourse, but also with what one may call a Cyrillian realism and boldness. Here, Scheeben's distinctive adaptation of a Patristic mode of expression that is subjected to Thomistic principles reveals its special relevance to our study. If the doctrine we have been seeking to explore is explicit in Cyril, it remains covert and hidden in Thomas. Yet, conversely, if the principles which must underlie this doctrine are not rigorously expounded by Cyril, they are thoroughly provided for by Thomas. In Scheeben, both these virtues come together, where a Cyrillian somaticism is justified upon Thomistic grounds.

Following Cyril, the bodily dimension of the mystery truly serves as a theological *leitmotif* throughout Scheeben's expositions, uniting his Christology to his general theology of the sacraments and, most definitively of all, to his Eucharistic doctrine. In its initial realisation the notion of "bodily union" serves, he teaches, as the *Grundlage* of all subsequent supernatural contact between Christ and man, and then, as the seal and consummation of this first union, the *leibliche Einheit* of Eucharistic communion represents the greatest pre-heavenly union between Christ and the Christian. But though based on Cyril's principles, indebted to both his Christology and his theology of the vivifying flesh in its sacramental mode, Scheeben's exposition of the union surpasses Cyril's for clarity and metaphysical precision. As we have seen, this is because it is illuminated by the metaphysical framework provided by St Thomas, which allows Scheeben to expound and develop Cyril's intuitions with such great assurance and constancy. Cyril's doctrine of every man's racial solidarity with Christ through the Incarnation is illuminated and developed by Scheeben, both by his perception of it in manifestly somatic terms (it is not simply a racial kinship here, but precisely a *leibliche Einheit*) and his decision to relate it explicitly to the consummate, Eucharistic nuptials, to which it looks forward. As Cyril intimates, but as Scheeben explicitly states, the first "bodily union" is ordered towards another, greater, salutary "bodily union". If the first is a material, lifeless bond, effecting a "physical continuity" between Christ and man, the second is not its abrogation but its seal and supernatural vivification. Following Cyril, Scheeben shows how the natural *leibliche Einheit* which results from the Incarnation both

²¹⁹ See, for example, *In Joh.* 6: 56 (Pusey, i 535); *In Joh.* 15: 1 (Pusey, ii. 545).

underlies all subsequent sacramental contact and looks forward to the Eucharistic *leibliche Einheit* as to its supernatural perfection.²²⁰

We have come to see, however, that it would be inadequate to see the insights of Thomas as merely the means by which Scheeben expounds upon and develops Cyril. Thomas himself, as we saw, does not simply re-present but vigorously develops the doctrine of St Cyril, not only by means of his presentation of the causal power of the assumed flesh, and the contact exerted by this flesh in the sacramental order, but also through his Eucharistic doctrine where, with all the necessary metaphysical precisions, the doctrine of Christ's "bodily presence" is stated to an extent that Cyril himself would not wish to surpass. Scheeben is indebted both to the bold naturalism and the exalted supernaturalism that characterises the Eucharistic doctrine of Thomas. The risen body of Christ is present, in all its physical reality, in a spiritual mode; or as Scheeben prefers to say, the true body enjoys in this sacrament a "divine, Godlike mode of existence",²²¹ by which it can surpass the typical limitations of bodiliness and be united to sinners in a uniquely intimate, entirely comprehensive, manner. This, in Scheeben's mind, is achieved in two principle ways: both by the sacred body's created participation in the *penetrierenden Kraft* of God,²²² and by taking a substance which "naturally can and does become one body with us",²²³ and changing it into his body by conversion. As Thomas had made perfectly clear, and which Scheeben expounds, by such conditions Christ is able to effect a union which reverses the natural union of food to its consumer: it brings about a supernatural and strictly interpersonal *leibliche Einheit* where the consumer is incorporated into, and conformed to, the living food he consumes. As is now evident, what carries Scheeben's doctrine of the Eucharistic *leibliche Einheit* is, most decisively of all, Thomas' metaphysical understanding of the spiritual mode by which this realism is sustained. This, as we saw him insist, is not a mode in opposition to bodiliness, but a mode which successfully brings such bodily realism to pass, and makes it possible. It is a spiritually, or supernaturally founded somaticism that he proposes, where the apparent Cyrillian extremes of somatic language and imagery re-emerge and are justified not

²²⁰ Such a fundamental theme in Cyril and Scheeben both anticipates and illuminates the meaning of the teaching of Gaudium et Spes 22: "... by his Incarnation, he, the Son of God has in a certain way [quodammodo] united Himself with each man" ("Ipse enim, Filius Dei, incarnatione sua cum omni homine quodammodo se univit").

²²¹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 391 (ET p. 475).

²²² *Die Mysterien*, p. 392 (ET p. 476).

²²³ *Die Mysterien*, p. 413 (ET p. 500).

only by the full consequences of the Incarnation,²²⁴ but also by the spiritual, supernatural mode by which the risen body of Christ is present and unifying.

It surely does not require any lengthy explanation to show how Scheeben's doctrine has decisively clarified the question with which we began this study. The exegetes who propose an understanding of Christ's union with the Christian according to a "physical realism which our modern ways of thinking is inclined to soften down",²²⁵ find in Matthias Scheeben a dogmatician who has expounded this very realism consistently and unequivocally. It is a thesis which, as we have observed, both bears his own distinctive stamp, yet which he builds on the principles he inherits from his two foremost guides: St Cyril of Alexandria and St Thomas Aquinas. Let us now proceed to our general conclusion.

²²⁴ Cf. *Die Mysterien*, p. 431 (ET p. 521-22).

²²⁵ P. Benoit, 'Corps, Tête et Plérôme' p. 111.

Concluding Reflections

Our dogmatic studies of part 2 have demonstrated the credibility and theological coherence of the thesis proposed by our exegetes in part 1. In their special complementarity, the doctrines of Cyril of Alexandria, Thomas Aquinas, and Matthias Scheeben, indicate not only that the exegetical arguments of those biblical scholars has an important precedent in the wider theological tradition, but also that their thesis can be understood to be, despite its stark unconventionality, metaphysically and dogmatically lucid. It is not to be regarded, therefore, as the passing novelty of an exegetical trend, but a conviction which is upheld, implicitly and explicitly, in the teachings of three principal theologians of the patristic, medieval and modern eras. Through them we have arrived at a greater understanding of how it can possibly be held that “every Christian is united really and corporally to the risen body of Christ”.¹

Fundamental to such a doctrine proposed by our exegetes and elucidated by our theologians involves maintaining, without confusion or separation, the most heavenly and the most earthly of realities. By means of that aspect of Christ which is lowest and nearest to the earth, his highest and most sublime properties are communicated to man. This explains why, in expounding dogmatically a thesis that is constructed in response to St Paul, we have made such frequent recourse to St John, at once the most earthly and heavenly of the evangelists. According to his testimony, what is spiritually beyond man’s reach (Jn. 8: 58) is yet physically palpable (Jn. 4: 6; 20: 27). The Life which was in the bosom of the Father is made manifest to us in one whom we have not only “seen” or “heard” but whom we have “touched with our hands” (1 Jn. 1: 1). Accordingly, what unites our three theologians is the intuition that the bodily humanity of Christ is not a mere conduit of divine grace but the focus of what we could call a ‘mediated immediacy’ between God and man.² Thus, Cyril, Thomas and Scheeben all articulate a theology of the sacred body of Christ which takes us further than the notion of basic mediation. If, for Cyril, the unique character of the Eucharist is that it unites Christ with the Christian according to a common nature, that is, according to the flesh, κατὰ σάρκα, for Thomas too the idea of the “familiar union” (*familiari coniunctione*) brought about by such natural continuity between the bodily presence of Christ in the Eucharist and

¹ Barnabas Mary Ahern C.P., ‘The Christian’s Union with the Body of Christ in Cor, Gal, and Rom’, in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, vol. 23, no. 2, April 1961, p. 206.

² This is a phrase used by Cooper, *Life in the Flesh*, p. 119.

ourselves, allows him to develop the doctrine of Eucharistic friendship, and the fulfilment of that “special feature of friendship to live together as friends”.³

The natural realism that characterises this account by Thomas on the entire presence of Christ under sacramental species with “bones, nerves, and all the rest” maintains the “intolerable language” of the Lord himself (Jn. 6: 60), and the philosophical principles which he uses to account for this presence *per modum substantiae* illuminate its intelligibility and metaphysical coherence. As we have considered, it is the spiritual mode by which this body is present, and by which it is conveyed into the bodies of Christians, which ensures both the totality of presence and the comprehensiveness of its effect upon the communicant. Indeed, since in this sacrament “the Word is present not only in his divinity, but also in the reality of his flesh”,⁴ it procures for the communicant a special union with the bodily humanity and, accordingly, allows for a uniquely broad sphere of operation. The living body of Christ here works, paradoxically, at the level of the soul, exerting its assimilating powers upon the sinner, coming into possession of the whole man, body and soul, by means of the body’s very formal principle. This is how we are to interpret Thomas’ observation, following Cyril, that “it is fitting that He should be united somehow with our bodies through His sacred flesh.”⁵ Through his own sacred body he is “united to our bodies” not by external contact or bodily juxtaposition, but by being the Christian’s *spirituale alimentum*, allowing Christ to divinise the objects of his merciful love at the very animating principle of their natural being.

“Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?” (1 Cor. 6: 15)

In light of these principles of Cyril and Thomas, it is worth recalling that the related teaching of 1 Cor. 6: 15, “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?”, is the chief point of reference of our exegetes, moving them towards their peculiarly vivid sense of the Christian’s union with the bodily humanity of Christ, analogous in its physicality “even to that between a man and a harlot”.⁶ This comparison, so strongly implied by Paul, “shows that [he] is prepared to accept in the fullest measure”, writes one such exegete, “the implications

³ ST III 75, 1.

⁴ *In Joh.* cap. vi, lect. 7. “In hoc autem sacramento non solum est Verbum, secundum suam Divinitatem, sed etiam secundum veritatem carnis”.

⁵ ST III 79, 1. “... vivificativum Dei Verbum, uniens seipsum propriae carni, fecit ipsam vivificativam. Decebat ergo eum nostris quodammodo uniri corporibus per sacram eius carnem”.

⁶ Ahern, ‘The Christian’s Union with the Body of Christ’, p. 202. See also, for example, Lucien Cerfaux, *La Théologie de l’Église suivant saint Paul* (Paris: Cerf, 1948), p. 236.

of the union of believers with Christ as a physical bodily union”.⁷ Yet such an argument remains vague and insufficiently defined without our reflections of part 2. Indeed, our dogmatic considerations have shown that this correspondingly physical bond, the “bond between [the Christian’s] *sōma* and the *sōma* of the glorified Christ, which is as real as the union between a man and a harlot”,⁸ does not imply a correspondingly carnal one. If the latter involves a union of the flesh inclined towards corruption and death, the former concerns that same weak, death-inclined flesh of the sinner in faithful union with the divinely empowered Life-giving flesh which is the living organ of the Godhead; the immortal, glorious flesh that has triumphed over the forces of sin and death.⁹

Such an understanding is especially evident in the writings of our third theologian, Matthias Scheeben, where we saw our theme raised to a particular prominence. Here, the fundamental intuitions of St Cyril are reaffirmed and developed, chiefly by means of a creative, ‘Cyrillian’ assimilation of the principles of St Thomas. Distinctive to Scheeben’s theology of a *leibliche Einheit* with the *lebendigen Leibe* of the glorious Christ is the way in which he develops the notion of its spiritual and supernatural mode of realisation, where the bodily dimension of Eucharistic communion is taken to its furthest point of emphasis on the basis of a developed sense of its sublime modality. Following Cyril and Thomas, Scheeben constructs his doctrine of “bodily union” with Christ upon a three-fold Eucharistic presupposition: not only is the sacred body itself gloriously “spiritualised” (1 Cor 15: 44) in its triumph over sin and death, but the very sacramental modality by which it is communicated to sinners also transcends the inherent limitations of materiality, bringing about, as Thomas also showed, the typically Christian paradox that the risen body works directly not upon the recipient’s body but upon its very formal principle, his soul.¹⁰ The body of Christ, without ceasing to be a true human body, here assumes a heightened level of

⁷ Albert Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle*, tr. William Montgomery (London: A&C Black, 1931) p. 127.

⁸ Ahern, ‘The Christian’s Union with the Body of Christ’, p. 202.

⁹ In contrast to the mere fleshliness of the union with a harlot, the union with Christ is to be called “one spirit” (1 Cor 6: 17) not in opposition to its character of “one body” (1 Cor 10: 17) but in opposition to the death-orientated, iniquitous union of mere flesh with mere flesh. See M. Miguens, ‘Christ’s ‘members’ and Sex’, pp. 32-33.

¹⁰ Cf. The Communion prayers of the Mass (1962): “Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat *animam* meam in vitam aeternam”. In the Communion Rite of the *novus ordo* the prayer does not specify the soul: “Corpus Christi custodiat *me* in vitam aeternam”. Several other Communion prayers of the 1962 missal convey the comprehensiveness of the Eucharistic effect: E.g.: “Perceptio Corporis tui, Domine Jesu Christe, quod ego indignus sumere praesumo, non mihi proveniat in iudicium et condemnationem: sed pro tua pietate prosit mihi ad tutamentum *mentis et corporis*”.

communicability, acting like “the soul, which permeates and animates the body into which it enters”,¹¹ participating in the very *penetrierenden Kraft* of God.¹² Inevitably, the doctrine of transubstantiation is decisive in this realistic conception of bodily union with Christ, not only because of the substantial level of presence it ensures, but also because it preserves intact the tangible, edible accidents which the sacred body utilises for its own unitive purposes; it demonstrates that Christ has converted into his own risen body a substance which “naturally can and does become one body with us”.¹³

It is therefore not without a certain truth that opponents to this thesis acknowledge, albeit disdainfully, that only the “obscurity” and “magic” of “old fashioned transubstantiation”¹⁴ could possibly grant any intelligibility to such a somatically realistic reading of the Christian’s union with Christ. Our dogmatic enquiries have shown they are correct in their assumptions, as our three theologians have amply demonstrated in their distinct though intellectually related doctrines. Yet such opponents would be surprised to discover that the very transubstantiation which they regard to be such Christian “literalism”, such a “chemical brand of sacramentalism”,¹⁵ is precisely the doctrine which explains not only that the risen Christ remains bodily present to the Church beyond the Ascension, but also the doctrine which ensures that any subsequent thesis of ‘bodily union’ is saved from crass materialism or metaphysical absurdity.

Prospects for further research: avenues and dangers

A question which emerges clearly from our study of the bodily dimension of Christ’s union with the members of the Church is the implication it holds for the doctrine of the nuptial mystery and the revelation of Christ as *Sponsus Ecclesiae*. Such a theme has received extensive reflection in the Church’s mystical tradition, from the Patristic commentaries on the Song of Songs to the writings of the Carmelite doctors; yet in these cases the espousals are presented almost solely from the vantage point of their spiritual character, as the mystical marriage of the sanctified soul with its heavenly bridegroom.¹⁶ One might even conclude that,

¹¹ *Die Mysterien*, p. 424 (ET p. 513).

¹² *Die Mysterien*, p. 392 (ET p. 476).

¹³ *Die Mysterien*, p. 413 (ET p. 500).

¹⁴ R. H. Gundry, *Sōma in Biblical Theology, with Emphasis on Pauline Anthropology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) p. 236-7.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 237.

¹⁶ See Claude Chavasse, *The Bride of Christ: An Enquiry into the Nuptial Element in Early Christianity* (London: Faber and Faber, 1939).

in the work of certain commentators, the somatic aspect of the mystery has been consciously avoided.¹⁷ Though we have not sought to develop the theme in our own study, our enquiry strongly implies that the nuptial mystery of Christ and the Church has a clear bodily dimension which theologically complements, and gives expression, to these spiritual espousals of the Christian mystical life. This certainly invites further consideration. We have already glimpsed how St Augustine explicitly associates the spousal office of Christ with the theme of somaticism,¹⁸ and recent magisterial teaching has sought to make similar connections.¹⁹ Perhaps in light of spiritual over-compensations in the past, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has even endeavoured to highlight the special fittingness of the bodily imagery of the Song of Songs where, in “the audacious conjunction of language”, the startling combination “of what is most human with language about what is most divine”, the Church does not confront an embarrassing scandal but “recognises her relationship to Christ”.²⁰

Such associations are fertile grounds for further research. Indeed, exegetes have alluded to the influences of the marital theme on St Paul’s consistent use of corporeal imagery to describe the union of Christ and the Church,²¹ and more recently Joseph Ratzinger has sought to take the theme of Eucharistic somaticism and nuptiality further still. One particular argument of his shows a possible direction in which our own study could be developed. As we have pointed out, Ratzinger identifies the Eucharist at the root of Paul’s conception of the Church as the ‘body of Christ’, but also sees in the background to this doctrine what he calls “the idea of nuptiality”.²² As he argues, “The formula ‘the Church is the body of Christ’ states that ... the Lord gives us his body and makes us one body”; this, he argues, must be understood in light of Gen. 2: 24 and the “idea that man and woman become

¹⁷ This is certainly discernable in the commentarial tradition on the Song of Songs which, because of its strongly metaphorical imagery, is often characterised by an explicit move away from the bodily dimension of the mystery so as to avoid any falsely naturalistic interpretations of the text. See, for example, St Gregory of Nyssa who even asks the reader to “forget all thoughts relating to marriage” when reading the Canticle. See his *In Canticum Canticatorum*, Homily I, PG 44, 763 ff.

¹⁸ “Omnis enim ecclesia sponsus Christi est cuius principium et primitiae caro Christi est; ibi iuncta est sponsa sponso in carne” (*In Joan. Epist.* tract II, 2; PL 35, 1990).

¹⁹ John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* 26; and *On the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World*, especially 9-11 (Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, May 31st 2004).

²⁰ *On the Collaboration of Men and Women*, 9.

²¹ See A.M. Dubarle, ‘L’origine dans l’A.T. de la notion paulinienne de l’Eglise corps du Christ,’ *Studiorum Paulinorum Congressus Internationalis Catholicus*, (Analecta Biblica, 17-18), I (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1963), pp. 231-240. He expresses the view that it is the marital text of Gen. 2: 24 that is the basis of Paul’s conception of the Church as the Body of Christ. See also M. Miguens, ‘Christ’s “members” and Sex’ in *The Thomist* 39 (1975), p. 29.

²² *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today*, p. 37.

one flesh in a bond at once spiritual and physical”.²³ Thus, the Eucharistic mystery, “precisely in being transformed by the idea of nuptiality”, is at the “heart of the concept of the Church as described by the term ‘Body of Christ’.”²⁴ By means of the Eucharist, this “sacrament, which is an act of love”, two subjects (Christ and the Church, Christ and each Christian) are, writes Ratzinger, “fused in such a way as to overcome their separation and to be made one”. He then adds the important clarification: “the Church is the Body of Christ in the way in which the woman is one body, or rather one flesh, with the man ... in such a way that in their indissoluble spiritual-bodily union, they nonetheless remain unconfused and unmingled”.²⁵

Ratzinger does not develop these thoughts at length, though they clearly relate to our own investigations in important ways, and indicate a way in which our study could be developed. Yet it should be pointed out that any integration of this Eucharistic somaticism with the “idea the nuptiality” would require careful handling. As has been discussed elsewhere,²⁶ certain contemporary ‘theologies of the body’ have, on the basis of an inadequate appreciation of the principle of analogy, identified the love of Christ for man in the Eucharist with the spousal and sexual love of man and woman too strictly. The analogical relation between the “one flesh” of Christ and the Church and the “one flesh” of husband and wife must take into account not only the *similitudo* but the *maior dissimilitudo* between the two instances. Failure to appreciate how this similarity coincides with an ever-greater dissimilarity places one in danger of assuming that the theology of the body is synonymous with a theology of sexuality.²⁷ It seems that an important corrective here would be, as has been pointed out,²⁸ John Paul II’s own theology of the body. Particularly pertinent there is his reminder that the human body is, most fundamentally of all, made for God, before it is made for another human being in spousal love. The human body in its “original solitude” is, he teaches, “substantially prior” to the body in its “original unity” and also, therefore, in its

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid. pp. 38-39.

²⁵ Ibid. p. 39.

²⁶ See the criticisms given by David L. Schindler on the work of Christopher West, the American commentator on John Paul II’s Catechetical Audiences on the body. A comprehensive presentation of the arguments can be found in *Faith Magazine*, May-June 2010. Internet link: <http://www.faith.org.uk/Publications/Magazines/May10/May10TheologyOfTheBodyAVigorousDiscussion.html>

²⁷ See, for example, Gregory K. Popcak, *Holy Sex* (Crossroad: New York, 2008).

²⁸ See David L. Schindler, ‘Response to Profs. Smith and Waldstein regarding Christopher West’: http://www.headlinebistro.com/hb/en/news/schindler_response.html

sexual difference.²⁹ The body, first and foremost, bears a filial relation to God, and only in consequence of this does it bear a capacity for union with another human being. Even within the relation between spouses, this filial relation to God retains its priority, as our own study of the Christian's bodily union with God-made-man has amply demonstrated. Such an analogically conceived understanding of embodied love is, of course, fundamental to any theology of the body.

²⁹ See General Audience, 7th November 1979 in *Man and Woman He Created Them: a Theology of the Body*, ed. and trans. Michael Waldstein (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2006) p. 157.

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