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Strangers and Pilgrims on Earth

Essays in Honour of Abraham van de Beek

By

E. Van der Borcht and P. van Geest



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THE TEACHING CONCERNING THE LORD'S SUPPER IN THE 1559
HUNGARIAN REFORMED CONFESSION OF MAROSVÁSÁRHELY
(TRANSYLVANIA)

Botond Kund Gudor and István Pásztori-Kupán

The evolution of religious identity constitutes a matter of great debate between Protestant churches and secular historians. Antithetical opinions exist in both European and Transylvanian Protestantism. While Reformed church historiographers note the appearance of a written confession of faith of a given religious denomination unambiguously as a defining moment of religious identity, secular historians often consider the *confessio fidei* only as a typical manifestation of the religious élite, i.e. as an intellectual product rather than a personal choice of identity. In this latter view the emphasis lies on the historicity of the religion and not on its spirituality or beliefs. According to the church-historical definition, the Reformation is a belief-continuum, a process of disseminating the gospel in which God is the main acting subject.¹ It is not accidental that the evaluation of the Reformation by secular historians is more focused on prominent personalities, whereas the Reformation of the masses is often considered as hardly being a process of careful deliberation, with doubtful depth of sincere probing. The question is unavoidable: how and when did the Calvinist Reformation manifest itself in Transylvania? Was the Helvetic trend a mere self-definition of the Protestant élite or did it represent a wider social identity?

The publication of polemical tracts and confessions of faith in the first decades of the Reformation are visible achievements of a strengthening identity. Besides the wording of the doctrines, mostly but not regularly, in such publications the external order of the church is considered as being a part of the religion. Numerous tracts and confessions of faith were intended to help the followers of the Swiss Reformation in gaining the same secular recognition as the Lutherans. Nonetheless, even within

¹ See Dezső Buzogány, "A Marosvásárhelyi Hitvallás teológia- és egyháztörténeti helye [*The Theological and Church-Historiographical Place of the Confession of Marosvásárhely*]," in *Marosvásárhelyi Hitvallás [Confession of Marosvásárhely] 1559* (Kolozsvár: EREK, 2010), 5–12.

reformatory groups, the differences between teachings required clarification in order to avoid confusion. The *Confession of Marosvásárhely* (Târgu Mureş / Neumarkt) of 1559 does not contain an exposé concerning ecclesiastical order, yet it tries to promote reconciliation with the Lutheran party without abandoning its method of peaceful persuasion. Many of such Reformed publications have begun to surface again by making these documents available to international readership.²

In the relevant literature, 1564 is widely considered as the official date of the formation of the Transylvanian Reformed Church. This is due to the January 1564 Diet of Segesvár (Sighişoara / Schäßburg) which initiated the religious debate, and to the following Protestant Synod of Nagyenyed (Aiud / Straßburg am Mieresch) held in April 1564, where the formal separation of Transylvanian Lutheranism and Calvinism occurred.³ The Transylvanian ethnic and religious polarisation also became evident: the Saxons (Siebenbürger Sachsen) remained Lutherans, while “the church of the Hungarians” followed the Calvinist trend, being labelled as

² German Protestants have pursued the publication of Lutheran and Helvetic confessions since 1928 in five projected volumes, edited by Heiner Faulenbach and Eberhard Busch. See Lukas Vischer, ed., *Reformiertes Zeugnis heute. Eine Sammlung neuerer Bekenntnistexte aus der reformierten Tradition* (Neukirchen – Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988); Eberhard Busch et al., *Reformierte Bekenntnisschriften 1/1 1523–1534* (Neukirchen – Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2002); Georg Plasger and Mathias Freudenberg, eds., *Reformierte Bekenntnisschriften. Eine Auswahl von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005). For the edition of Hungarian confessions see Mihály Bucsay and Zoltán Csepregi, “Thesen des Pfarrkonvents in Nagyvárad (Oradea / Großwardein), 1544” and “Das Bekenntnis der Synode zu Erdőd von 1545” in *Reformierte Bekenntnisschriften I/2. 1535–1549*, ed. by Heiner Faulenbach and Eberhard Busch (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2006), 429–438 (Nr. 32) and 439–448 (Nr. 33). See also Bucsay and Csepregi, “Das Abendmahlsbekenntnis zu Marosvásárhely (Neumarkt), 1559,” in *Reformierte Bekenntnisschriften II/1. 1559–1563*, ed. by Heiner Faulenbach and Eberhard Busch (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2009), 97–115 (Nr. 52). Bucsay and Csepregi published the rest of the Hungarian religious documents: “Confessio catholica von Eger und Debrecen, 1562,” “Confessio brevis der Synode zu Debrecen, 1567,” “Confessio Cassoviensis, 1568” and “Confessio Varadina, 1569,” in *Reformierte Bekenntnisschriften II/2. 1562–1569*, ed. by Andreas Mühling and Peter Opitz (Neukirchen – Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2009), 1–165 (Nr. 58), 347–401 (Nr. 62), 403–408 (Nr. 63) and 409–414 (Nr. 64).

³ János Karácsonyi, “Erdély és a kapcsolt részek vallási állapotai 1526-tól 1571-ig [The Religious Situation of Transylvania and Its Attached Parts],” in *Az erdélyi katolicizmus múltja és jelene [The Past and Present of Transylvanian Catholicism]*, (Dicsőszentmárton: Erzsébet Könyvnyomda Részvénytársaság, 1925), 40. Cf. Jenő Zoványi, *A magyarországi protestantizmus története 1895-ig [The History of Hungarian Protestantism until 1895]* (Máriabesnyő-Gödöllő: Attraktor, 2004), 49–62; Sándor Szilágyi, *Erdélyi Országgyűlési Emlékek [Records of Transylvanian Diets]* 21 vols (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1897–1898), II, 187, 227, 231 (hereafter: EOE).

“sacramentarian” or even “neo-Nestorian”. This decision, however, had been preceded by councils, confessions, meetings and rowdy political events.⁴ The fever of religious change is marked also by the fact that even the resolutions of the Lutheran Transylvanian Diet in 1558 still ardently protested against the “sacramentarian” trend.⁵ This was a further sign that—after Lutheranism—the Helvetic line of Reformation was also loudly rapping on the gates of politics.⁶

The secular rigorousness which had been guarding the Catholic–Lutheran balance became loosened after Queen Isabella’s death on 15 September 1559. The education of the young reigning prince Johann Sigismund (János Zsigmond) became the responsibility of chancellor Mihály Csáky (1505–1572) and of Giorgio Blandrata (1515–1588), the prince’s personal physician, who was a Socinian thinker. With the decline of firm political control the Transylvanian Reformation gained new momentum. Although in seventeenth-century Transylvania religious matters were mostly a question of power, at the beginning of the Reformation it was the hesitant attitude of politics and this existence of a power vacuum which unequivocally favoured the expansion and development of Protestantism. Transylvanian society, despite all appearances living amidst religious debates, communicated not only at the level of the theological élite, but also at the level of the town as a religion-choosing community that was also actively engaged in these disputes.

The most important and most sensitive topic of Protestant dialogue was the interpretation of the Holy Communion. Although it is outside the main focus of our present study, one has to observe that the main theological difference between Luther’s and Calvin’s view of the Lord’s Supper was deeply rooted in their respective Christological models: the former followed the Alexandrian, the latter the Antiochene tradition. Their answers

⁴ István Bitskey, *Hitviták tüzeiben [In the Crossfire of Confessional Disputes]* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1978). This work meticulously presents the atmosphere of the time, yet does not mention Marosvásárhely Confession (1559). Two subsequent Anti-Trinitarian confessions are worth mentioning, which are also linked to Marosvásárhely and Dávid Ferenc. See Jenő Zoványi, *Magyar protestáns Egyháztörténeti Lexikon [Hungarian Protestant Church-Historical Lexicon]* (Budapest: A Magyarországi Református Egyház Zsinati Irodájának sajtóosztálya, 1977). Cf. János Kénosi Tózsér and István Uzoni Fosztó, “Úrvacsoraviták 1557–1564 [Debates over the Lord’s Supper 1557–1564],” in *Az Erdélyi Unitárius Egyház története [The History of the Transylvanian Unitarian Church]* (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Unitárius Egyház, 2005), I, 133–145.

⁵ See the decisions of the Diet between 27 March–3 April, 1558 in EOE, II, 93.

⁶ Karácsonyi, “Erdély”, 39.

to the question whether the finite could indeed contain the infinite differed accordingly. Thus, the mode of the Lord's presence in the bread and wine was predetermined by their assumed Christological system, whether explicitly or not. Any discussion of the so-called "communion-debates" is therefore required to acknowledge this fundamental starting point, i.e. that the dispute over the Lord's Supper was ultimately a Christological issue. In this sense Transylvania was no exception. It is not at all accidental that the Helvetic trend became labelled as "neo-Nestorian".

While the Lutheran party clung to the principle of *ubiquitas* (omnipresence), the Helvetic interpretation, especially that of Heinrich Bullinger, became gradually publicized through Debrecen. It is precisely the year 1559 which proves to be the landmark in the wider acceptance of the new, Helvetic doctrine concerning the Lord's Supper. As a result, the positions of Transylvanian conservative Lutheranism were prejudiced in the most unexpected places, namely on the level of the Transylvanian theological élite, which accepted the Helvetic Reformation through German mediation. The conversions of Gáspár Heltai (Caspar Helth, 1510–1574) and Ferenc Dávid (David Hertel, 1520–1579) signalled the new changes of the Transylvanian Reformation regarding Holy Communion. The participation of the previously Lutheran Ferenc Dávid, first in the Nagyvárad (Oradea / Grosswardein) meeting (18 August 1559), and then as a supporter of the Helvetic trend at the Saxon council of Medgyes (Medias / Mediasch), corroborated the spiritual conversion which the bishop himself had also undergone.⁷

This, however, was not an isolated phenomenon of personal conviction change of a few. The mood swing of the people of Kolozsvár and Marosvásárhely cannot be ignored. According to historians, the debates on Holy Communion led to the mass seclusion of townspeople by means of issuing 'Holy Tickets'.⁸ There was an immediate need for clarification in order to harmonize doctrine with practices as well as for preaching and liturgical reasons. This is precisely why the later Nagyenyed Council can be considered as an effect or consequence, through which a formal constitutional framework for the emerging Reformed Church was sought. It is therefore the confession of faith of the earlier (1 November 1559) Council held in the

⁷ Kénosi—Uzoni, "Úrvacsoraviták", 133–145, 140.

⁸ Kénosi Tőzsér János—Uzoni Fosztó István, "Úrvacsoraviták", 141.

castle of Marosvásárhely,⁹ which unequivocally signals the acceptance and the spread of the Helvetic religious identity in Transylvania, influenced at the time by Bullinger. This was prefigured by Melanchthon's "media sententia" represented by Mátyás Dévai Bíró (†1545) and István Szegedi Kis (1505–1572), exemplifying an intermediary approach in which the signs of the Holy Communion—the body and blood of Christ—are present in the promise and not physically. Melanchthon's Transylvanian and Hungarian disciples clarified their views in Marosvásárhely, leaning towards the Helvetic approach, as a consequence of the wider European debate over the issue.¹⁰ One needs to bear in mind that the ideas presented in the *Consensus Tigurinus* of 1549 between Calvin and Bullinger had undoubtedly reached the Transylvanian theologians. Furthermore, Melanchthon's irenic position may well have prevented the Hungarian Reformers to move towards Zwingli's more radical doctrine.¹¹

The confession of faith this article discusses here can be considered as the joint *confessio fidei* of Transylvanian and Hungarian religious intellectuals, including Ferenc Dávid, Péter Méliusz Juhász (1532–1572) and other signatories who played key roles within the Hungarian Reformation. Furthermore, it is also the expression of a newer religious identity of Transylvanian Hungarians (and Germans becoming Hungarians). Méliusz, a preacher from Debrecen also contributed by continuing the work of his predecessor, the Transylvanian Márton Kálmáncsehi Sánta. Kolozsvár and Marosvásárhely offered the opportunity, whilst Méliusz's theological training proved suitable for the purpose. The accuracy of the German translation, which was published in 1563 in Heidelberg (in the same year as the *Heidelberg Catechism*) can be attributed to Ferenc Dávid.¹² In order

⁹ See Vilmos Fraknói, "A marosvásárhelyi hitvallás [*The Confession of Faith of Marosvásárhely*]," in *Magyar könyvszemle november–december* (Budapest: Magyar Tudományos Akadémia, 1878), 277–282; Kiss Áron, *A XVI. században tartott magyar református zsinatok végzései* [*Decrees of Hungarian Reformed Synods Held in the 16th Century*] (Budapest: Magyarországi Protestáns Egylet, 1881), 44–53. Cf. Gábor Incze, "Az Urnac vaczoraiairól [*On the Lord's Supper*]," in *A reformáció és ellenreformáció korának evangéliumi keresztyén egyházi írói* [*The Evangelical Christian Church Writers of the Age of Reformation and Counter-Reformation*] (Budapest: Incze Gábor, 1938). Most recently Buzogány, "Marosvásárhelyi hitvallás", 45–56.

¹⁰ Buzogány, "Marosvásárhelyi hitvallás", 20.

¹¹ Buzogány, "Marosvásárhelyi hitvallás", 39.

¹² *Beschluss und Form der Lehre vom Testament und Abendmal unsers Seligmachers Jesu Christi*, (Heidelberg: Johannes Mayer, 1563). Cf. Kathona Géza, "Méliusz Péter és életműve [*Péter Méliusz and his Life-work*]," in *A II. Helvét Hitvallás Magyarországon és Méliusz*

to fulfil his aim, Méliusz contacted Ferenc Dávid with the help of Gergely Molnár, the rector from Kolozsvár.¹³

The frequency of Transylvanian confessions of faith during this period betrays the intention to settle the identity-crisis of the new community, shaken by the conflict between Lutheran and Helvetic Reformation. The debate in Marosvásárhely was the moment when the Hungarian Reformed Church, following the Helvetic line, separated itself doctrinally from the Lutheran Church of Transylvanian Germans (Saxons). Both the place of venue and the phrasing of the confession are significant. There are indications that, while in 1552 the still mostly Catholic magistrates of the town might have banished the Evangelical preacher,¹⁴ they were instead actively taking part in the debates caused by the Reformation.¹⁵ It would become one of the strongholds of Helvetic Protestantism, as a result of the work started in 1557 by the preacher Máté Göcsi (†1585).¹⁶ The continued success of Anti-Trinitarians made the Reformers in Transylvania and Hungary determined to create a common theological platform. Marosvásárhely (originally Székelyvásárhely) thus became the starting point of the Reformation of the Székely people.¹⁷ The Helvetic Reformation of larger Transylvanian towns occurred between 1552–1559, creating an important theological basis for the continuation of Protestant mission towards inner Transylvania, i.e. Székely Land.

életműve [The Second Helvetic Confession in Hungary and Méliusz's Life-work] (Budapest: MREZS, 1967), 143–144, 201.

¹³ From the Saxon historian Schaesaeus. See Jakab Elek, *Dávid Ferenc emlékezete* [The Memory of Dávid Ferenc] (Budapest: Magyar Királyi Egyetemi Könyvnyomda, 1879), 41.

¹⁴ Cf. József Pokoly, *Az erdélyi református egyház története* [The History of the Transylvanian Reformed Church] (Budapest: EREK, 1904), I, 77. Cf. Zoványi, *A magyarországi protestantizmus története*, 28.

¹⁵ See “Borsos Sebestyén Krónikája: Világnak lett dolgairól írott krónika [Written Chronicle about the Events of the World],” in Mikó Imre, *Erdélyi történeti adatok* [Historical Data of Transylvania] (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület, 1855), I, 173: “[on 11 August 1556] they were in a great toss about choosing a religion, because almost half of the town, its majority had accepted the new heresy, that of Blandrata”.

¹⁶ József Koncz, “Göcsi Máté, the Very First Minister of the Reformed Church in Marosvásárhely (1552–1585), the Third Bishop in Transylvania (1579–1585),” in *Marosvásárhely és vártemploma* [Marosvásárhely and Its Fortress Church], ed. by Endre Medvigy (Budapest: Ráday Gyűjtemény, 1990), 80. Cf. Mihály Balázs, “Toroczky Máté Vásárhelyen [Toroczky Máté in Vásárhely],” *Keresztény Magvető* 2002/2–3. (Kolozsvár: Erdélyi Unitárius Egyház, 2002) see in http://kermagv.unitarius.com/regi/magvetok/2002/2002_23/2002_23_balazsm3.htm (accessed: 2 September 2010).

¹⁷ Géza Nagy, “Méliusz”, *Kálvinista jellemképek* [Calvinistic Characters] (Kolozsvár: EREK, 1930), 22.

The fact that the *Confession of Marosvásárhely* had been drawn up in Hungarian (and not in Latin, as one could have easily expected at the time) signifies not only a theological, but also a cultural-linguistic or even ethnic separation from the German-speaking Lutherans of Transylvania. Concerning its theological content it is hardly a coincidence that its German translation was sent to Heidelberg, where it was published in 1563.¹⁸ In 1559 Zacharias Ursinus (1534–1584), the Reformed theologian and Catechism-writer in Heidelberg followed the Helvetic Reformation. In 1561, Frederick III (1559–1576) also decided in favour of the Reformed party at the conclusion of a local theological dispute, which had commenced at the beginning of his reign. The publication of the *Marosvásárhely Confession* and of the *Heidelberg Catechism* within the same year in Heidelberg has a double significance: it shows both the urgent need for instructional argumentation and evinces the clear spiritual connection between geographically distant, yet theologically close bodies of Reformation.

The 1559 council of Marosvásárhely represents a remarkably important moment within the history of the Transylvanian Reformed Church. It is understandable that 1 November 1559 is considered the date of birth of Transylvanian Helvetic Protestantism, although the formal establishment of the Transylvanian Reformed Church took place only in 1564. The *Marosvásárhely Confession* became a basic document,¹⁹ creating a spiritual unity between Transylvania and Tiszántúl (Debrecen and its environs). Putting it into the wider perspective of the famous Reformation documents, it is certainly connected not only with Calvin's *Institutes* of 1536, but also with the *Heidelberg Catechism* of 1563, which was rapidly accepted and used ever since by all Hungarian Reformed communities.

The intention of the council of Nagyvárad (Oradea / Grosswardein) held in August 1559 was to unify the Upper-Hungarian and Transylvanian Helvetic Protestantism. This "small council" ought to be regarded as an important precedent leading up to the council and *Confession of Marosvásárhely*.²⁰ The text was printed in 1559 in Kolozsvár in Heltai Gáspár's

¹⁸ Zoványi, *A magyarországi protestantizmus története*, 60.

¹⁹ See Gábor Sipos, *Az erdélyi református egyház múltjából* [From the Past of the Transylvanian Reformed Church]. http://misszio.reformatus.hu/cm/cd/02_erdely_tortenete/az_erdelyi_reformatus_egyhaz_multjabol_erdelyi_reformatus_egyhazkerulet_tortenete.doc (accessed: 2 September 2010).

²⁰ "A kolozsvári egyház lelkészeinek és az erdélyi egyházakban helyesen tanító több lelkészeknek az Urvasoráról szóló helyes értelmök védelme [Defence of the Right Interpretation of the Lord's Supper of the Ministers from Kolozsvár and of More Correctly Teaching Ministers within the Transylvanian Churches]," in Kiss, *A XVI. században tartott*

printing house, who labelled it as written by “the Christian teachers from all over Hungary and Transylvania”, i.e. as being the work of preachers gathered from two separate countries.²¹ The *Marosvásárhely Confession* represents the religious reconciliation of two Hungarian political entities, which for the moment settled the tensions between the Swiss and German trends satisfactorily, and attempted to offer an integrated, Transylvanian interpretation of the Lord’s Supper with a clear Helvetic emphasis.

In 1559 the council of Marosvásárhely had three achievements: first, that the two former theological opponents in questions regarding the Holy Trinity, i.e. Dávid and Méliusz were temporarily reconciled. Secondly, that the Lutheranism of Dávid and of Heltai was replaced by a Helvetic interpretation of the Lord’s Supper. Thirdly, the Transylvanian Helvetic Protestantism brought about a theological harmony in support of the new confessional identity.

The community of Hungarian ministers was united in defending the Helvetic doctrine, enabling itself to embrace the Reformation of Heidelberg and its Catechism a few years later. As recently observed, the teachings of the *Heidelberg Catechism* and of the *Marosvásárhely Confession* concerning the Lord’s Supper are consonant as of “having been cut off the same root”.²²

In light of the above, the question of religious identity in Transylvania requires a broader interpretation. The fact that towns and regions were seeking for an identity should not be ignored. The formulation of the confession together with the clarification of differences between the opinions of the élite undoubtedly reached its aim. Nonetheless, the confession of faith bears the expression of the masses’ religious identity by the élite and on the one hand provides a starting point for the Protestant mission, whilst on the other hand promotes an active theological solidarity with Protestant Europe.

The *Marosvásárhely Confession* of 1559 is a unique achievement within the history of Reformation for various reasons. First, it was written and published in Hungarian and not in Latin, which betrays a clear reformatory intention, i.e. to make the Bible as well as the credal statements available to the public in their native tongues, thus integrating them into the

magyar református zsinatok végzései, 47. Cf. Pokoly, *Az Erdélyi Református Egyház története*, I, 126.

²¹ Tibor Klaniczai, “Hungária és Pannónia a Reneszánsz korban [Hungary and Pannonia in the Age of Renaissance],” *Irodalomtörténeti Közlemények* 91–92 (1987–1988), 6.

²² Buzogány, “Marosvásárhelyi hitvallás”, 40.

theological discussion. Furthermore, it attempted to avoid any separation between the various trends of Reformation already present in Transylvania. Although its function was to reconcile the mainly Helvetic oriented factions with each other, it also attempted (albeit unsuccessfully) to mediate between the Swiss and Lutheran teachings about the Lord's Supper.

The main authors of this important historical-theological documents were Ferenc Dávid and Gáspár Heltai from Transylvania as well as Péter Méliusz Juhász and a few of his fellow-ministers from the region of Tiszántúl in Royal Hungary. The contribution of Méliusz must have been significant, since quite a few formulae within the *Confession* are very similar to some of the statements in his sermons uttered at Debrecen or in his published works. The *Marosvásárhely Confession* as a common achievement of various Hungarian ministers strengthened and furthered the tradition of theological collaboration amongst spiritual leaders who were living in remote areas of the one-time Hungarian Kingdom, even after its collapse which had taken place earlier, during the same century.

The theological input of this *Confession* is that it follows the more irenic and flexible line of Melancthon's teaching concerning the Lord's Supper. It is a clear sign that by the middle of the sixteenth century the Transylvanian Hungarian Reformers came to accept the Helvetic and Melancthonian interpretation. The following Hungarian–English bilingual edition is accompanied by annotating footnotes in order to explain the most important aspects of textual tradition and theological message. The Hungarian text follows the 1559 edition of Gáspár Heltai, with some minor orthographical adjustments.

Az Úrnak vacsorájáról való közönséges keresztyéni vallás

Melyet a keresztyén Tanítók mind egész Magyarországból, s mind Erdélyből a Vásárhelyi szent Zsinatban tettek, és kiadták a Krisztus Jézus Szentegyházának építésére. M.D.LIX. Esztendőben, Mindszent Napján.

*A common Christian confession concerning the Lord's Supper*²³

Composed in the Holy Synod of Marosvásárhely and published for the edification of the Holy Church of Christ by the Christian teachers from all over Hungary and Transylvania in the year 1559, on All Saints' Day.

²³ The present annotated translation of István Pásztori-Kupán should be considered as being the definitive one in comparison to the text in James T. Dennison, Jr., ed., *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation: Volume 2, 1552–1566* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2010), 134–139, which was published with a few errors and lacunae due to the inaccessibility of some relevant sources at the time.

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| <p><i>A Krisztus Jézusnak testével és vérével való igaz Részesülésről, az Úrnak vacsorájában</i> Micsoda az Úrnak vacsorája?</p> | <p><i>Concerning the true partaking in the flesh and blood of Christ Jesus in the Lord's Supper</i> What is the Lord's Supper?</p> |
| <p>Az Úrnak vacsorája (amint szent Pál szól) a Krisztus Jézus Testével és Vérével való igaz részesülés, mely részesülés léssen a kenyérnek és a bornak vevőjétől, hitnek általa, mely hit az ígéletben a Krisztus Jézust hozzá kapcsolja, és teljes reménységgel és bizodalommal ragaszkodván ez ígérethez: „az én Testem tiérettetek halálra adatik, az én Vérem tiérettetek kiontatik”, részesül a Krisztus Jézussal és minden javával, melyeket szent halálával és vére kiontásával szerzett, tudniillik az örök boldogsággal.</p> | <p>The Lord's Supper (as Saint Paul says) is the true partaking in the flesh and blood of Christ, from the side of the recipient of the bread and wine through faith, a faith which connects Christ Jesus to him/her in the promise, whilst [the recipient] clings to this promise with full hope and confidence: “My body is given over to death for your sake, my blood is shed for your sake”²⁴—[which means, that the believer] partakes in Christ Jesus and in all his benefits, that is, in the eternal happiness, which he [Christ] procured by his sacred death and the shedding of his blood.²⁵</p> |
| <p>Miképpen léssen ez a részesülés? Léssen igaz hitnek általa. Mert miképpen az ígéletet hittel vesszük, azonképpen az ígéletnek álatyát [lényegét]²⁶ és</p> | <p>How does this partaking take place? It happens through true faith. For in the manner in which we receive the promise by faith, in the same fashion</p> |

²⁴ Cf. Lk. 22:19–20.

²⁵ Cf. with Question 75 of the Heidelberg Catechism: “How are you admonished and assured in the Lord's Supper, that you are a partaker of that one sacrifice of Christ, accomplished on the cross, and of all his benefits? *Answer:* Thus: that Christ has commanded me and all believers, to eat of this broken bread, and to drink of this cup, in remembrance of him, adding these promises: first, that his body was offered and broken on the cross for me, and his blood shed for me, as certainly as I see with my eyes, the bread of the Lord broken for me, and the cup communicated to me; and further, that he feeds and nourishes my soul to everlasting life, with his crucified body and shed blood, as assuredly as I receive from the hands of the minister, and taste with my mouth the bread and cup of the Lord, as certain signs of the body and blood of Christ.” <http://www.ccel.org/creeds/heidelberg-cat.html> (accessed: 2 September 2010).

²⁶ The Hungarian term “állat” in this case does not mean “animal”, but rather “állapot”, i.e. “state” or, as in most of the similar cases in the relevant sixteenth century theological literature, “essence” or “substance”.

Table (*cont.*)

gyümölcsét, mely a Krisztus Jézusnak érettünk megtöretett Teste és bűnünk bocsánatáért kiontatott Vére, hittel kell vennünk. És ez mi módon legyen, rövid beszéddel így magyarázzuk meg.

Az Isten akarván beteljesíteni minden ő ígéretit, melyeket eleitől fogva az emberi nemzetnek tett vala, adá érettünk az ő Fiát. És az emberi testet érettünk felvén, halált szenvedé a mi üdvösségünkért. Mind megtestesülése mind halála miérettünk lón, és ennek minden haszna miénk lón, úgyannyira, hogy az ő Testének felvétele lón oka, hogy a mi testünk mindenestől fogva el ne vesszne. Halála és feltámadása lón oka, hogy örökké éljünk. Testesülése azért, halála és feltámadása nekünk örök életünk.

De hogy ennek a jótételnek emlékezeti a mi elménkben és lelkünkben ki ne esnéjék, szerzé a végvacsorát a Krisztus, melybe külső jegyek által emlékeztet az ő jótéteményiről, és egyszersmind, hitnek általa, e jókat közli az ő híveivel, nemkülönben mint közölte a végvacsorán az Apostolokkal.

we also have to receive by faith²⁷ the essence and fruit of promise, which is the Body of Christ Jesus broken for our sake and his Blood shed for the forgiveness of our sin. How this happens, we shall explain in a short discourse, as follows.²⁸

God, willing to fulfil all his promises he had made to the human race from the beginning, gave his Son for our sake. And taking on the human flesh for us, he suffered death for our salvation. Both his incarnation and death happened for our sake and all its benefits became ours to the extent that the assumption of his Body became the reason for our own body not to perish altogether. His death and resurrection became the reason for us to live eternally. Therefore, his incarnation, death, and resurrection are our eternal life.

Nevertheless, in order that the remembrance of this benefaction not to fall out from our minds and souls, Christ instituted the last supper, in which he reminds [us] of his benefactions through external signs, and, simultaneously, he communicates these goods to his believers through faith, in the same manner as he communicated them to the Apostles during the Last Supper.

²⁷ See e.g. the following passage from Chapter 21 of the *Second Helvetic Confession*: "By this sacred rite the Lord [...] feeds us with his flesh, and gives us his blood to drink, which, being received spiritually by true faith, nourish us to eternal life". <http://www.ccel.org/creeds/helvetic.htm> (accessed: 2 September 2010).

²⁸ This and other similar signs suggest that the *Confession* may well have emerged from sermons concerning the Lord's Supper.

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| <p>Annak okáért mikor azt mondja a Krisztus Jézus a végvacsorán a kenyérről, „ez az én testem”, nem egyebet ért rajta, hanem azt, amit szent János evangéliomában mond: „én vagyok az életnek kenyere”. Mert ott nem egyebet ért a Krisztus Jézus, hanem hogy az ő Teste minékünk kenyere és étünk, mellyel él és tápláltatik a mi lelkünk, és a lélek által a test. Mert a test él a lélektől. Semmi nem egyéb annak okáért a Krisztus Jézusnak Testét ennünk, és Véréát innunk, hanem a szívnek teljes reménységével és bizodalával hinnünk, hogy az ő Teste miérettünk adattatott halálra, Vére miérettünk ontatott ki, bűnünknek bocsánatára, és hogy csak az ő Testének és Vérének áldozatja miatt tartatunk meg az örök életre. Ekképpen hitnek általa részesülünk a Krisztus Jézus Testével és Vérével.</p> | <p>Consequently, when during the last supper Christ Jesus says about the bread that “this is my body”, he does not mean anything else by it, but what Saint John says in his Gospel: “I am the bread of life.”²⁹ For there Christ Jesus does not mean anything else than that his Body is our bread and food, by which our soul lives and is nourished. And the body [is nourished] through the soul, for the body lives from the soul. Therefore, to eat the Body and drink the Blood of Christ Jesus is nothing else than to believe with the full hope and confidence of the heart that his Body was given over to death and his Blood was shed for our sake and for the forgiveness of our sin, and that we are saved for eternal life only because of the sacrifice of his Body and Blood. In this manner we partake in the Body and Blood of Christ by faith.³⁰</p> |
| <p>A Christus Testének étele miért mondatik lelki ételnek?</p> <p>Továbbá, erről a részesülésről mondjuk, hogy lelki és nem testi módon léssen, mert a hit, amely ezt veszi, a léleké, nem a testé. Ennek utána, a javak is, melyeket e vacsorába</p> | <p>Why the eating of Christ’s Body is said to be spiritual food?</p> <p>Further, we say that this partaking is spiritual and not corporal, since the faith, which receives it, belongs to the soul and not to the body. Consequently, the goods we receive in this supper</p> |

²⁹ At this point one might claim that the reference to Jn. 6:48 betrays the influence of Zwingli’s explanation at the Marburg Colloquy in 1529 as opposed to Luther’s literal interpretation of “hoc est corpus meum”. Nevertheless, the subsequent sentences clarify that the authors have moved far beyond a mere symbolic or rational understanding of the sacrament.

³⁰ Cf. with Question 76 of the *Heidelberg Catechism*: “What is it then to eat the crucified body, and drink the shed blood of Christ? *Answer*: It is not only to embrace with believing heart all the sufferings and death of Christ and thereby to obtain the pardon of sin, and life eternal; but also, besides that, to become more and more united to his sacred body, by the Holy Ghost, who dwells both in Christ and in us; so that we, though Christ is in heaven and we on earth, are notwithstanding ‘flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone’ and that we live, and are governed forever by one spirit, as members of the same body are by one soul.”

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| <p>veszünk, mennyei és lelki javak, nem testiek. Továbbá, ennek a Krisztus Jézussal való részesülésünknek csatornája a Szent Lélek, ki által minden javait is reánk ötli, és velünk közli a Krisztus Jézus, mint szent János mondja, „ebből ismerjük meg, hogy ő mibennünk lakozik, és mi őbenne, hogy az ő Lelkéből adott minekünk”.</p> | <p>are also heavenly and spiritual goods, not bodily ones. In addition, the channel of this partaking of ours with Christ Jesus is the Holy Spirit, by whom Christ Jesus bestows upon us as well as communicates with us all his benefactions, as Saint John says, “By this we know that he dwells in us, and we [dwell] in him, because he has given us of his Spirit”.³¹</p> |
| <p>Hányféle étel legyen az Úrnak vacsorájában?</p> | <p>How many kinds of eating are in the Lord's Supper?</p> |
| <p>Itt azt is meg kell értenünk, hogy az Úrnak vacsorájában kétféle eledel vagyon: lelki és testi. A lelki avagy mennyei, Krisztus Jézusnak szent Teste és szent Vére. A testi a kenyér és a bor. És miképpen kétféle az eledel, azonképpen az étel is kétféle: testi és lelki. A test veszi a testi eledelt, a</p> | <p>Here we also have to understand that in the Lord's Supper there are two kinds of food, namely spiritual and corporal.³² The spiritual or heavenly one is the holy Body and holy Blood of Christ Jesus. The corporal one is the bread and the wine. Thus, as the nourishment is twofold, in the same manner the eating is also dual:</p> |

³¹ Cf. 1 Jn. 4:13. As pointed out above, the authors follow Calvin's and Bullinger's argumentation, speaking of the soul's nourishing by Christ's body and blood through faith, and adding that the channel of this partaking is the Holy Spirit. Cf. with Article 23 of the *Consensus Tigurinus*: “Christ, by our eating of his flesh and drinking of his blood, which are here figured, feeds our souls through faith by the agency of the Holy Spirit”. See Henry Beveridge's translation in: <http://www.creeds.net/Tigurinus/tigur-bvd.htm> (accessed: 2 September 2010). Cf. also with Question 79 of the *Heidelberg Catechism*: “Why then does Christ call the bread ‘his body’, and the cup ‘his blood’, or ‘the new covenant in his blood’; and Paul the ‘communion of body and blood of Christ’? *Answer*: Christ speaks thus, not without great reason, namely, not only thereby to teach us, that as bread and wine support this temporal life, so his crucified body and shed blood are the true meat and drink, whereby our souls are fed to eternal life; but more especially by these visible signs and pledges to assure us, that we are as really partakers of his true body and blood *by the operation of the Holy Spirit* as we receive by the mouths of our bodies these holy signs in remembrance of him; and that all his sufferings and obedience are as certainly ours, as if we had in our own persons suffered and made satisfaction for our sins to God.” <http://www.ccel.org/creeds/heidelberg-cat.html> (accessed: 2 September 2010). See also Ch. 21 of the *Second Helvetic Confession*: “by the work of Christ through the Holy Spirit they [the faithful] also inwardly receive the flesh and blood of the Lord, and are thereby nourished unto life eternal”. <http://www.ccel.org/creeds/helvetic.htm> (accessed: 2 September 2010).

³² For a detailed discussion of the “kinds of eating” see Ch. 21 of the *Second Helvetic Confession*.

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| <p>kenyeret és a bort, mely étel mondatik szentség szerint való ételnek is. A lélek veszi az ígéletben a Krisztus Jézusnak szent Testét, szent Véré, hit által.</p> | <p>corporal and spiritual. The body receives the corporal nourishment, i.e. the bread and the wine—a manner of eating, which is also called eating according to the sacrament [i.e. “sacramental eating”]. The soul receives in the promise the holy Body and the holy Blood of Christ Jesus.</p> |
| <p>Miképpen legyen jelen Krisztus a vacsorában?</p> | <p>In what manner is Christ present in the Supper?</p> |
| <p>Továbbá, azt is eszünkbe vegyük, miképpen legyen a mi Urunk Krisztus Jézus a vacsorában jelen. A szentegyháztól soha a Krisztus Jézus el nem távozik, Isteni természete és hatalmassága szerint, miképpen ő maga mondja: „én veletek vagyok mind világ végezetig”. Én, én visellek titeket még vénségekben is. Efféle ígéleti szerint a szentegyházban mindenha jelen vagyok a mi Urunk Krisztus Jézus. De e jelen voltának fölötte a vacsorában az ő teste, vére is jelen vagyok a hitnek, az ígéletben. Mert a hitnek oly ereje vagyok, hogy a távol való állapotokat [valóságokat] is jelenvalóképpen veszi az Igében. Mert a hitnek mind a távol való, s mind a közel való hely egy.</p> | <p>Further, we should also bear in mind in what manner is our Lord Christ Jesus present in the Supper. Christ Jesus never departs from the holy church according to his divine nature and power, as he himself says: “I am with you always, to the end of the world”.³³ I, I take care of you even in your old age. According to such promises of his, our Lord Christ Jesus is always present in the holy church. Nevertheless, beyond this presence, his body and blood are also present in the supper, for the faith, within the promise. [This happens] because faith has such a great power, that it receives even the remote realities as being present in the Word. Since for the faith both the remote and the nearby places are one.³⁴</p> |

³³ Mt. 28:20. Cf. with Question 47 of the *Heidelberg Catechism*: “Is not Christ then with us even to the end of the world, as he has promised? *Answer*: Christ is very man and very God; with respect to his human nature, he is no more on earth; but with respect to his Godhead, majesty, grace and spirit, he is at no time absent from us.” <http://www.ccel.org/creeds/heidelberg-cat.html> (accessed: 2 September 2010).

³⁴ Although the doctrine of impanation or a local inclusion of Christ’s body and blood in the elements of the Lord’s Supper in the sense of an extra-sacramental conjunction was rejected by Lutherans as well, they still maintained the ubiquity of Christ’s body. The *Marosvásárhely Confession*, however, beside refusing the *inclusio localis*, adheres to the Antiochene Christological model represented by the Swiss Reformers in regard to the fact that both natures of Christ retain their specific properties. Therefore, the attribute of omnipresence of Christ’s divine nature is not transferred to his human nature, i.e. to his

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Ekképpen írja szent Pál a Galáciabelieknek, hogy szemük előtt feszített meg a Krisztus Jézus. Maga³⁵ nem Galáciában, hanem Jeruzsálemben, régen annak előtte, feszített meg a Krisztus Jézus. Ábrahámról is azt mondja a Krisztus Jézus, hogy Ábrahám látta az ő napját azaz idejét, melyben a Krisztus Jézus a testben e világban élt. Maga a Krisztus Jézus születésének előtte sok száz esztendővel holt vala meg Ábrahám. Ezenképpen e mai nap a hívőknek is jelen vagy a mi Urunk Krisztus Jézusnak szent Teste, és szent Vére, az ígéletben, hit által, miképpen a Galáciabelieknek a Krisztus Jézusnak feszítése jelen volt, és Ábrahám pátriárkának a Krisztus Jézusnak napja. De ezt értsd hitben és lélekben lenni, nem testiképpen. Mert test szerint a Krisztus Jézusnak ül Atyjának jobbán, honnan az ő ígéletiben minden javait közli mivelünk, életet, táplál és oltalmaz.

És ezenképpen mondjuk jelen lenni a Krisztus Jézust az ő híveinek jótéteményiről is, melyek az ő Testéből, az ő ígéleti szerint, mireánk származnak.

It is in this sense what Saint Paul writes to the Galatians, that Christ Jesus was crucified before their eyes,³⁶ although Christ Jesus had not been crucified in Galatia, but in Jerusalem, a long time before.

The Lord Christ Jesus says about Abraham also, that Abraham had seen his day, i.e. his time, in which Christ Jesus lived in this world in the flesh, yet Abraham had died many hundred years before the birth of Christ Jesus. Similarly, the holy Body and holy Blood of our Lord Christ Jesus is also present for the believers today³⁷ within the promise, through faith, in the same manner as the crucifixion of Christ Jesus was present for the Galatians, and as the day of Christ Jesus [was present] for the patriarch Abraham. Nonetheless, understand this as happening through faith, spiritually, and not in a corporal sense. For according to the body, Christ Jesus is sitting on the right hand of the Father, whence he shares all his benefits with us, according to his promise, vivifying, nourishing as well as protecting [us]. And it is in this manner that we say also about the benefactions [availed to] his believers that Christ Jesus is present [through them], since these [benefactions] derive upon us from his Body, according to his promises.

body. The Lutheran understanding of the Lord's corporal omnipresence is discarded within this same chapter: "for according to the body, Christ Jesus is sitting on the right hand of the Father". This is also consonant with the answer to Question 80 of the *Heidelberg Catechism*. For a more detailed discussion of this matter see István Pásztori-Kupán, "The Doctrine of *Communicatio Idiomatum* in the Theological Thinking of Heinrich Bullinger," in *Emlékkönyv Tökés István kilencvenedik születésnapjára / Festschrift für István Tökés zum 90. Geburtstag* (Kolozsvár: PTI-EREK-KRE, 2006), 299–323.

³⁵ In this context, the Hungarian word "maga" does not mean "himself", but "although". Cf. with the text of 2 Cor. 6:8–10 of the 1590 edition of Gáspár Károli's Bible translation.

³⁶ Gal. 3:1.

³⁷ This is another sign showing that the *Confession* emerged from sermons explaining the Lord's Supper.

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| <p>Mondja magát a szentegyház fejének. Mert miképpen a tagoknak a főtől vagy on indulatjok [kezdetük] és életük: azonképpen mi a Krisztus Jézus testének érdeme miatt élünk. Mondja magát szőlőtőnek. Mert miképpen a szőlővessző a szőlőtőtől él, és onnan vészen zsirt és erőt, azonképpen mi is a Krisztus Jézus Testének érdeméből vett étellel élünk.</p> | <p>[Christ] calls himself the head of the holy church,³⁸ because as the members have their beginning and life from the head, in the same fashion, we live by the merit of the Body of Christ Jesus. He calls himself the vine,³⁹ because as the branch has its life from the vine, thence receiving its nourishment and energy, in the same fashion we live by a life taken from the merit of the Body of Christ Jesus.</p> |
| <p>Mondja továbbá a szentegyház vőlegényének magát. Mert miképpen a vőlegény táplálja és oltalmazza az ő hitese társát, azonképpen a Krisztus Jézus őrizi és táplálja az ő szent egyházát. De ezeknek e jótéteményeknek mind feje a Krisztus Jézusnak megtestesülése, miért hogy a mi testünket vette fel és testünket közlöttük ővele, úgyannyira, hogy (amint szent Pál szól) húsunk az Ő húsából legyen, csontunk az ő csontjaiból. Annak okáért lehetetlen, hogy minket elhagyjon, és ne oltalmazzon hatalmával, miképpen ember az ő tagjaitól, csontjaitól és testétől el nem távoznak. Annak okáért e sok jótéteményekért és javakért is, melyek mireánk a Krisztus Jézusnak Testéből áradnak, mondjuk, hogy a Krisztus Jézus e Vacsorában jelen vagy on, és közli mivelünk minden javait, az ő ígéretiben.</p> | <p>Further, he calls himself the bridegroom of the holy church,⁴⁰ because as the bridegroom nourishes and protects his faithful companion, in the same manner Christ Jesus guards and nourishes his holy church. Nonetheless, the fountainhead of all these benefactions is the incarnation of Christ Jesus, inasmuch as he assumed our body and we imparted our body to him, to the extent that (as Saint Paul says) our flesh is of his flesh, and our bones are of his bones.⁴¹ For this reason it is impossible for him to leave us and not to protect us with his power, just as one man cannot depart from his members, bones and body. Consequently, due to these many benefactions as well as benefits, which are pouring upon us from the Body of Christ Jesus, we say that Christ Jesus is present within this Supper and shares all his benefits with us in his promise.</p> |

³⁸ Cf. Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18.

³⁹ Jn. 15:5.

⁴⁰ Cf. Mt. 9:15; Mt. 25:1–13; Mk. 2:19–20; Lk. 5:34–35; Jn. 3:29.

⁴¹ Eph. 5:30.

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| De mondjuk, hogy e jelen létel nem testi jelen létel, hanem lelki. Mert csak a hit fogja és érti ezt meg, nem a test. | Nevertheless, we say that this presence is not corporal, but spiritual presence, since only the faith can grasp and understand this, not the body. ⁴² |
| Hogy a hitetlenek nem veszik Krisztusnak szent Testét, szent Véré | That the unbelievers do not receive the holy Body and holy Blood of Christ |
| Oly jelenlétét azért a Krisztus Jézus Testének és Vérének nem valljuk, mely hitnek kívülről legyen. Mert a hitnek kívülről senkivel magát a Krisztus Jézus nem közli. Annak okáért tagadjuk, hogy a hitetlenek Krisztus Jézus Testét vegyék. | Therefore, we do not confess such a presence of the Body and Blood of Christ Jesus, which is outside of faith, because Christ Jesus does not impart himself to anyone beyond faith. Consequently, we deny that the unbelievers may receive the Body of Christ Jesus. |
| Mert valakiben a Krisztus Jézusnak lelke nincs, az Krisztus Jézusnak Testét nem veheti. A hitetlenekben nincsen a Krisztus Jézusnak lelke, mert azt mondja szent Pál, hogy Krisztusnak Beliallal semmi közö nincs; azért a hitetlenek nem vehetik az ő Testét. | If someone does not possess the spirit of Christ Jesus within himself/herself, he/she cannot receive the Body of Christ Jesus. The unbelievers do not possess the spirit of Christ Jesus within themselves, since Saint Paul says that Christ has nothing in common with Belial; ⁴³ thus, the unbelievers cannot receive his Body. |
| Továbbá a Krisztus Jézus is azt mondja, hogy aki az ő Testét eszi és Véréit issza, el nem vesz. A hitetlenek elvesznek: azért az Ő Testét nem eszik, Véréit nem isszák. | Further, Christ Jesus also says that the one who eats his Body and drinks his Blood will not perish. The unbelievers perish: thus, they neither eat his Body, nor drink his Blood. |

⁴² See e.g. Chapter 36 of the *French Confession of La Rochelle*, published in the same year 1559: "We confess that the Lord's Supper, which is the second sacrament, is a witness of the union which we have with Christ, inasmuch as he not only died and rose again for us once, but also feeds and nourishes us truly with his flesh and blood [*nous repaît et nourrit vraiment de sa chair et de son sang*], so that we may be one in him, and that our life may be in common. Although he be in heaven until he come to judge all the earth, still we believe that by the secret and incomprehensible power of his Spirit he feeds and strengthens us with the substance of his body and of his blood [*par la vertu secrète et incompréhensible de son Esprit il nous nourrit et vivifie de la substance de son corps et de son sang*]. We hold that this is done spiritually [*spirituellement*] not because we put imagination and fancy in the place of fact and truth, but because the greatness of this mystery exceeds the measure of our senses and the laws of nature [*ce mystère surmonte en sa hauteur la mesure de notre sens et tout ordre de nature*]. In short, because it is heavenly [*céleste*], it can only be apprehended by faith [*ne peut être appréhendé que par foi*]." <http://www.creeds.net/reformed/frconf.htm> (accessed: 2 September 2010).

⁴³ Cf. 2 Cor. 6:15.

Table (*cont.*)

Annak utána szent Pál is szólván a Vacsorabeli méltatlan ételről és italról, nem ezt mondja: „aki a Krisztus Jézusnak Testét méltatlanul eszi”, hanem: „aki a kenyérből méltatlanul eszik, és a pohárból méltatlanul iszik, vétkezik a Krisztusnak Teste és Vére ellen”. Mi legyen ez, [ugyan]azon szent Pál megmagyarázza: Kárhozatot véssen, úgymond, magának. Tudjuk pedig azt, hogy a Krisztus Jézusnak Teste nem kárhozat, hanem élet.

Azért a hitetlenek a Krisztus Jézus Testét nem veszik állattya [lényege] szerint, és lélek szerint, hanem csak a Krisztus Jézus Testének és Vérének jeleit, a bort és a kenyeret.

Végezetre, haszontalan dolgot a Krisztus Jézus sehol nem parancsolt, mely minekünk veszedelmünkre volna. A Krisztus Jézus Testének vétele hit nélkül haszontalan, ezért azt nem parancsolja. Ha nem parancsolja, nem is akarja; tehát erővel tőle el nem vehetjük, akár mint [ti. bármennyire is] adjuk szóval a hitetleneknek.

Az Úr vacsoráját mi végre kell gyakorlanunk?

Utolszor, azt is mondjuk és valljuk, hogy az Úr Testének és Vérének vételére a szent Vacsorában int és kényszerít minket. Először, a mi Urunk Krisztus Jézusnak parancsolatja, aki azt mondja: „Vegyétek, egyétek. Igyatok ebből mindnyájan”. És „tegyétek ezt az én emlékezetemre” stb.

Saint Paul also, when speaking about the unworthy manner of eating and drinking at the Supper, does not say that “whoever eats the Body of Christ Jesus unworthily”, but that “whoever eats the bread or drinks from the cup unworthily will be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.”⁴⁴ The same Saint Paul explains the meaning of this, saying that [the one who eats or drinks unworthily] takes damnation to himself/herself. Yet we know that the Body of Christ Jesus is not damnation, but life.

Therefore, the unbelievers do not receive the Body of Christ Jesus according to its substance and spiritually, but merely the signs of the Body and Blood of Christ Jesus, the wine and the bread.

Finally, Christ Jesus never commanded anything useless, which could be harmful for us. The reception of the Body of Christ Jesus without faith is useless—so he does not command it. If he does not order it, then he does not want it either. Thus, we cannot take it [i.e. his Body] from him by force, regardless of how much we might give it verbally to the unbelievers.

For what purpose do we have to perform the Lord’s Supper?

Finally, we also say and confess that within the Holy Supper the Lord exhorts and compels us to receive his Body and Blood.

First, it is a commandment of our Christ Jesus, who says, “Take, eat; drink from it, all of you”. And “do this in remembrance of me” etc.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Cf. 1 Cor. 11:27.

⁴⁵ Cf. Mt. 26:27; Mk. 14:22; 1 Cor. 11:24–25.

Table (*cont.*)

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| <p>Annak utána a hasznok, melyeket az Úrnak Vacsorájában veszünk: Először annak okáért, a Krisztus Jézus vacsorájának hozzánk való vétele erősíti a mi hitünket, a Krisztus Jézusnak ígéretiben.</p> | <p>Then the benefits we receive within the Lord's Supper: First, our reception of the Supper of Christ Jesus strengthens our faith in the promises of Christ Jesus.</p> |
| <p>Mert miképpen a külső jegyek meg nem csalják szájunknak és szemünknek érzékenységét: azonképpen a Krisztus Jézusnak ígéretiben igazán adattatik a hívóknak a Krisztus Jézusnak szent Teste és szent Vére, a hit által, kiből mireánk a megújulás és elevenedés száll, mint szent Ágoston szól: „Aki, úgymond, akar élni, vagyon honnét éljen: járuljon ide, higgyen, egyesüljön Krisztussal, hogy megéledjen”.</p> | <p>For as the external elements do not deceive the senses of our mouth and eyes, in the same fashion, within the promises of Christ Jesus, the holy Body and holy Blood of Christ Jesus is truly given to the believers through faith. From these [i.e. from his Body and Blood] renewal and redemption descend upon us, as saint Augustine says, “whoever wants to live, has whence to live: let him/her come near, believe, and unite with Christ in order to be revived.”⁴⁶</p> |
| <p>Annak utána, int e szent Vacsora hálaadásra is, hogy a mi Urunk Krisztus Jézusnak velünk való jótéteményiről és javairól, melyeket halálával és feltámadásával szerzett, hálát adjunk. Melyről szól a Krisztus Jézus, mondván: „Ezt tegyétek az én emlékezetemre”. Szent Pál is: „Valamennyiszer észtek e kenyérből, az Úrnak halálát hirdessétek”. Harmadszor, int az atyafiúi szeretetre is. Mert miképpen a kenyér, mellyel a test él, sok búzaszemből vagy, és a bor sok szőlőszemből: azonképpen nekünk, kik egy főnek tagjai vagyunk, egyesekké kell lennünk, melyről szól szent Pál, mondván: „Egy a kenyér, sokan egy test vagyunk”.</p> | <p>Further, this Holy Supper urges us also to thanksgiving, thus to give thanks to our Lord Christ Jesus concerning his benefactions and benefits he provided for us, acquiring these by his death and resurrection. About which Christ Jesus speaks, saying, “Do this in remembrance of me.”⁴⁷ Also Saint Paul, “As often as you eat of the bread, proclaim the Lord's death.”⁴⁸ Thirdly, it also urges us to brotherly love. For as the bread by which the body lives is made of many seeds of wheat, and the wine of many seeds of grape, in the same manner, we, who are members of one head, have to become one. Saint Paul speaks about this, saying, “There is one bread, and we who are many are one body.”⁴⁹</p> |

⁴⁶ Cf. Augustine, *Tractatus in Johannis evangelium* [*Tractate on the Gospel of John*] 26, 13: “He who would live, has where to live, has whence to live. Let him come near, let him believe; let him be embodied, that he may be made to live.” See Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 35, 1613: “Qui vult vivere, habet ubi vivat, habet unde vivat. Accedat, credat; incorporetur, ut vivificetur.”

⁴⁷ Lk. 22:19.

⁴⁸ 1 Cor. 11:26.

⁴⁹ 1 Cor. 10:17.

Table (*cont.*)

Negyedszer: különbséget teszen miköztünk és a hitetlen pogányok között, kik a szentegyháznak nem tagjai. Egyszersmind vigasztal is a szentegyháznak megmaradásáról mind világ végezetig, szent Pálnak mondása szerint, ki azt mondja: „Valamennyiszer a kenyérből esztek, és e pohárból isztok, az Úrnak halálát hirdessétek, míglen eljő”.

Ezt a hív és istenfélő keresztyének látván és megértvén, e szent és üdvösséges tanítást meg ne utálják, hanem lelkük vigasztalására erről gyakorta elmélkedjenek. És buzgó szívből, lélekből kérjék velünk egyetemben a Krisztus Jézus nevében a szent Lelket, ki minket minden igazságra megtanítson, és tegyen minket a Jézus Krisztusban egyesekké, hogy őneki miköztünk valami kedves dolgai lehessenek. Ámen.

Kolozsvárott Nyomtattot, Heltai Gáspár műhelyében, 1559.

In the fourth instance, it distinguishes us from the unbelieving Pagans, who are not members of the Holy Church.⁵⁰ Simultaneously, it also comforts us concerning the continued existence of the Holy Church until the end of the world, according to the words of Saint Paul, who says, “As often as you eat of the bread and drink of the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes”.⁵¹

By seeing and understanding this, the faithful and God-fearing Christians should not despise this sacred and salvific doctrine, but rather ought to meditate upon it frequently for the consolation of their souls. From within a devoted heart and soul they should pray together with us, in the name of Christ Jesus, for the Holy Spirit, who will guide us into all truth⁵² and make us one in Jesus Christ so that he may have some pleasing achievements among us. Amen.

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⁵⁰ The message of this sentence can be understood better in a historical context. The victory of the Turks (i.e. “the unbelieving Pagans” as the Hungarians regarded them in the sixteenth century) at Mohács (1526) and their conquest of Buda, the Hungarian capital (1541) marked the end of the mediaeval Hungarian Kingdom and imposed a serious threat upon the relative independence of the Transylvanian Principality. The subsequent consolation in the text concerning *the continued existence* of the Holy Church bears an important historical and theological message: regardless of the present fate of the nation, the believers, who are distinguished from the pagans by their very access to the Lord’s Supper, must cling to the promise of the returning Christ. The *Marosvásárhely Confession* gives here a theologically adequate answer to a highly complicated and dangerous historical situation.

⁵¹ 1 Cor. 11:26.

⁵² Cf. Jn. 16:13.