

## Calvin

### **On union with Christ as ground of our salvation:**

“We must now examine this question. How do we receive those benefits which the Father bestowed on his only-begotten Son — not for Christ's own private use, but that he might enrich poor and needy men? First, we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value for us.” *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 3:1:1

### **Against those who say that the “eating and drinking” of Lord’s Supper = “belief”:**

“We admit indeed, meanwhile, that this is no other eating than that of faith, as no other can be imagined. But here is the difference between my words and theirs: for them to eat is only to believe; I say that we eat Christ's flesh in believing, because it is made ours by faith, and that this eating is the result and effect of faith. Or if you want it said more clearly, for them eating is faith; for me it seems rather to follow from faith. This is a small difference indeed in words, but no slight one in the matter itself. For even though the apostle teaches that "Christ dwells in our hearts through faith" [Eph. 3:17], no one will interpret this indwelling to be faith, but all feel that he is there expressing a remarkable effect of faith, for through this believers gain Christ abiding in them. In this way the Lord intended, by calling himself the "bread of life" [John 6:51], to teach not only that salvation for us rests on faith in his death and resurrection, but also that, by true partaking of him, his life passes into us and is made ours — just as bread when taken as food imparts vigor to the body.” *Inst.* 4:17:5

### **More on the necessity of participating in Christ’s physical flesh and blood:**

“I am,’ he says, "the bread of life come down from heaven. And the bread which I shall give is my flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." [John 6:48, 51; 6:51- 52] By these words he teaches not only that he is life since he is the eternal Word of God, who came down from heaven to us, but also that by coming down he poured that power upon the flesh which he took in order that from it participation in life might flow unto us. From this also these things follow: that his flesh is truly food, and his blood truly drink [John 6:55; cf. ch. 6:56], and by these foods believers are nourished unto eternal life.” *Inst.* 4:17:8

### **On the manner of participation in Christ’s physical body:**

“But greatly mistaken are those who conceive no presence of flesh in the Supper unless it lies in the bread. For thus they leave nothing to the secret working of the Spirit, which unites Christ himself to us. To them Christ does not seem present unless he comes down to us. As though, if he should lift us to himself, we should not just as much enjoy his presence! The question is therefore only of the manner, for they place Christ in the bread, while we do not think it lawful for us to drag him from heaven. Let our readers decide which one is more correct. Only away with that calumny that Christ is removed from his Supper unless he lies hidden under the covering of bread! For since this mystery is heavenly, there is no need to draw Christ to earth that he may be joined to us.” *Inst.* 4:17:31

### **Freebie: A good reminder...**

“In all your studies you must be careful that you are not looking merely for entertainment, but working toward the purpose of being useful to the church of Christ. Those who desire of scholarship nothing more than an honored occupation with which to drive away the boredom of idleness impress me as being like those who spend their whole life merely looking at beautiful pictures.” —Calvin in a letter to an unknown pastor at Orleans, 1540