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Bodies Behaving Badly: The Eucharist and the New Philosophy[1]

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Abstract
Cardinal Bellarmine's defense of Roman Catholic eucharistic doctrine in his *Disputationes de controversiis huius temporis* focuses not on transubstantiation but on such questions as whether one body can simultaneously occupy two places or two bodies a single place. The Protestants to whom he is replying (Calvin and Peter Martyr) seem similarly invested in such matters. These are topics central to early modern philosophy, but Bellarmine and his respondents predate Descartes by decades, so why, in the sixteenth century, are theologians debating the physics (rather than metaphysics) of the Eucharist?

Keywords
Eucharist, Bellarmine, Calvin, sacraments, physics, Reformation

> *No theologian was more eminent than the Jesuit Cardinal Robert Bellarmine, whose* Disputationes de controversiis Christianae fidei *of 1586 was considered by learned Catholics to be impregnable*.
>
> Patrick Collinson, Alexandra Walsham, & Arnold Hunt[2]

The *magnum opus* of "Rome's most impressive champion," the three volumes of Cardinal Bellarmine's *Controversiae* (1586-93) fill approximately three-thousand double-column folio pages, not counting indices. Anthony Milton terms it "the most important single defence of

[1] Spelling and accidentals (including punctuation) have been modernized *ad libitum* throughout all quotations, English and Latin.

[2] "Religious publishing in England, 1557-1640," in *The Cambridge ~~h~~History of the ~~b~~Book in Britain, ~~v~~Volume IV: 1557-1695*, ed. John Barnard and D. F. McKenzie, with the assistance of Maureen Bell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 48.

Roman Catholic doctrine throughout the early Stuart period,"[3] widely-read and extensively-mined by Catholic controversialists as well as by Protestants of all stripes. On the Continent, Reformed theologians publishing volumes *contra Bellarminum* include Franciscus Junius, Aegidius Hunnius, Lambert Daneau, Johannes Piscator, and Conrad Vorstius. The list of English Protestants the title of whose books explicitly target the Cardinal includes half the big names of Elizabethan and Jacobean Calvinism: William Whitaker, John Rainolds, William Ames, Francis Bunny, Matthew Sutcliffe, Robert Abbot, George Downham, Thomas Brightman, Andrew Willett, Joseph Hall.[4] Izaak Walton reports that John Donne's library contained "'all the Cardinal's works marked with many weighty observations under his own hand.'"[5] In 1609 England's Venetian ambassador, Henry Wotton, told the Doge that Bellarmine's writings were "better known in England than in Italy."[6] And Milton likely compiled his (lost) *Index theologicus* in advance of a planned attack on this "Goliath of the Papists."[7]

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[3] Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant eChurches in English Protestant tThought, 1600–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 15.

[4] See Carlos Sommervogel, S.J., *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus,* new edition, 11 vols. (Brussels & Paris, 1890-1932), 1:1165-80.

[5] M. Hobbs, "'To a most dear friend'—Donne's Bellarmine," *Review of English Studies,* n.s., 32.128 (1981): 435-38 (at 435).

[6] Debora Shuger, *Censorship and eCultural sSensibility: tThe rRegulation of lLanguage in Tudor-Stuart England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 237-38; see also Milton, *Catholic and Reformed*, 15, 83.

[7] Gordon Campbell, "Milton's '***Index theologicus***' and Bellarmine's '***Disputationes de controversiis Christianae fidei adversus huius temporis haereticos***,'" *Milton Quarterly* 2.11.1

As all this suggests, the *Controversiae* are not only very long but very good. The Latin is crystal-clear. Bellarmine's eucharistic theology (the focus of this paper) draws heavily on Duns Scotus (d. 1308), but going from Scotus' prose to Bellarmine's is like switching from Hegel to C. S. Lewis. Plus, unlike most post-Reformation apologetics, the *Controversiae* eschew *ad hominem* rancor, gross distortion of opponents' positions, and denunciatory hyperbole. In defending Catholic eucharistic doctrine against Protestant objections, Bellarmine does not target straw-men from the Sacramentarian fringe but major Reformed theologians; and while he makes no attempt to present their teachings sympathetically, his account is fair and accurate.

It is also surprising. Given that the *Controversiae* offer—or at least are generally held to offer—the premier exposition of Tridentine orthodoxy, I assumed that Bellarmine's treatment of the Eucharist would center on Aristotelian substance/accidents metaphysics (i.e., Transubstantiation), the Roman Church's commitment to which was, I had always been told, the crux of Reformation-era eucharistic debates.[8] And indeed Bellarmine includes a discussion of this at the end of the third book of the controversy on the Eucharist, the book titled *De veritate Corporis Domini in Eucharistia* ("On the reality of the Body of the Lord in the Eucharist").[9] Yet

(1977): 12-16 (at 12-13).

[8] Jaroslav Pelikan, *The ~~r~~Reformation of Church and ~~d~~Dogma (1300-1700)*, vol. 4 of *The Christian ~~t~~Tradition: ~~a~~A ~~h~~History of the ~~d~~Development of D~~d~~octrine* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), 52-59, 297-99; Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: A ~~h~~History* (New York: Viking, 2003), 24-25.

[9] *Disputationum Roberti Bellarmini Politiani, Societatis Iesu, de controversiae Christianae fidei, adversus huius temporis haereticos*, 3 vols (Ingolstadt: David Sartorius, 1586-93); book 3 of the controversy *De sacramento Eucharistiae* fills columns 666 to 779 of the second volume, which

most of this key chapter deals not with substance-shifting accidents but with the nature of bodies: with whether bodies are, by definition, and hence necessarily, spatial in the ordinary sense (*res extensae*); with their principles of unity and individuation (i.e., can same body be in two places simultaneously, and, if so, in what sense is it the *same* body?); with whether body, *qua* extended, is also necessarily impermeable, so that two bodies cannot simultaneously be in the same place. Nor is Bellarmine's fascination with these questions peculiar to him, since his principal antagonists—Calvin and Peter Martyr Vermigli—from whom he quotes at length, address the same topics. And, in contrast to the metaphysics of substance and accidents, these questions regarding bodies, space, and extension are, rather obviously, ones that play a major role in seventeenth-century natural philosophy and the new science.

As several superb recent essays make clear, the questions mooted and positions taken by Bellarmine and his Protestant interlocutors exemplify the "confessional physics" of the post-Reformation, which, in Amos Funkenstein's words, witnessed "a fusion between theology and physics to an extent unknown earlier and later."[10] Yet most of these studies focus on the seventeenth century, tracking the role that theology, and especially eucharistic theology, played

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came out in 1591. Subsequent references to the *Controversiae* will be given parenthetically in the text. The other major topic Bellarmine addresses in this controversy, the focus of books 5-6, concerns the Mass as a sacrifice.

[10] Amos Funkenstein, *Theology and the ~~s~~Scientific ~~i~~Imagination from the Middle Ages to the ~~s~~Seventeenth ~~c~~Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 72. Here and throughout, "Protestant" refers only to Reformed Protestants; Lutherans espoused a fundamentally different eucharistic theology. See Richard Strier, "Martin Luther and the Real Presence in ~~n~~Nature," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 37.2 (2007): 271-303.

in the reception of early modern philosophy and science, whether motivating bans on Cartesianism in Catholic France or legitimating atomism in Calvinist areas.[11] It's often not clear whether more is going on in these accounts than each territory favoring the science[12] that best squared with its confession; they give the impression that scientific and philosophical views developed independent of confessional contexts, the theologians responding thereafter, denouncing or embracing, according to whether a given view undermined or supported a favored doctrine.[13] Bellarmine, however, wrote his *Controversiae* in the 1580s, when Galileo was still a student, Descartes not yet born; and the eucharistic writings of Bellarmine's debate-partners *pre-*

[11] Steven Nadler observes that the fact that Descartes' theory of matter seemed to favor Calvinist eucharistic teaching lay behind all three major seventeenth-century episodes of anti-Cartesianism ("Arnauld, Descartes, and Transubstantiation: Reconciling Cartesian ~~m~~Metaphysics and Real Presence," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 49.2 [1988]: 229-46 (at 238-40). Cees Leijenhorst notes that Scaliger and Ramus, both writing ca. 1560, make a case for atomism largely because it supported Reformed teaching on the Eucharist ("Place, ~~s~~Space, and ~~m~~Matter in Calvinist ~~p~~Physics," *The Monist* 84.4 [2001]: 520-41 (at 525-28, 539n29). See also Cees Leijenhorst & Christoph Lüthy, ~~"~~"The ~~e~~Erosion of Aristotelianism: Confessional ~~p~~Physics in ~~e~~Early ~~m~~Modern Germany and the Dutch Republic,~~"~~" in *The Dynamics of Aristotelian Natural Philosophy from Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Cees Leijenhorst, Christoph Lüthy, and Johannes Thijssen (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 375-411 (at 395). ~~in *The dynamics of Aristotelian natural philosophy from Antiquity to the seventeenth century*, ed. Cees Leijenhorst, Christoph Lüthy, and Johannes Thijssen (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 395~~.

[12] To avoid endless pedantic repetition, I will use "science," "natural philosophy," and "new philosophy" as loose and interchangeable equivalents.

date the *Controversiae* by some decades. These cannot be responding to the new philosophy.[14] What is at stake for both Catholics and Protestants in this sixteenth-century *querelle* is how bodies, spatiality, extension, and the like matter *theologically*. But since within a half-century bodiliness, spatiality, and extension become hallmark foci of the new philosophy, their prefiguration in sixteenth-century eucharistic theology means that the question of how sixteenth-century eucharistic speculation might relate to seventeenth-century philosophical and scientific developments lurketh in the background.

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[13] See, for example, Giovanni Gellera, "Calvinist Mmetaphysics and the Eucharist in the Eearly sSeventeenth Ceentury," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 21.6 (2013): 1091-1110 (at 1092).

[14] Copernicus' *De revolutionibus*, to be sure, comes out in 1543, but although Wikipedia calls its publication "a major event . . . triggering the Copernican Revolution," the same entry goes on to note that prior to the seventeenth century the book won few adherents and generated little controversy. Its first appearance on the *Index of fForbidden bBooks* was in 1616. That Bellarmine and his Protestant counterparts *appear* to be engaging issues central to the new philosophy must stem, at least in part, from the continuities binding late medieval speculation (which, mainly *via* Scotus, does inform sixteenth-century eucharistic theology) to early modern developments. On these continuities, see Funkenstein, *Theology and the sScientific iImagination*; Edward Grant, *A hHistory of nNatural pPhilosophy from the aAncient wWorld to the nNineteenth cCentury* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) and his *Much aAdo aAbout nNothing: tTheories of sSpace and vVacuum from the Middle Ages to the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

For the ensuing discussion to make any sense at all one needs to realize that neither Bellarmine nor his Protestant counterparts think of bodies as being located in space—that is, in an empty three-dimensional grid.[15] They never speak of a body as occupying space, but rather, following Aristotle, as occupying or being contained in a place (*occupare locum, loco contineri*).[16] That is to say, they take as given Aristotle's definition of place as the innermost surface of the thing that contains the object in question (the martini surrounding the olive, as it were). Modern translations often obscure this; the Beveridge translation of Calvin's *Institutes*, for example, speaks of how the Holy Spirit "unites things separated by space"; the Latin, however, has the Spirit unite "things separated with respect to their places [*quae locis disiuncta sint*]" (4.17.10).[17]

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[15] Aristotle does mention the possibility of three-dimensional incorporeal extension capable of receiving bodies, i.e., space, but he thinks the notion is incoherent, since extension (quantity) is an accident of substance, and an extended substance is, by definition, a body, so space would have to be a body; but space, also by definition, is precisely that which is *not* a body but the locus of bodies. See Marilyn McCord Adams, *Some ~~l~~Later ~~m~~Medieval ~~t~~Theories of the Eucharist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 20-21; Grant, *Much ~~a~~Ado*, 5-8.

[16] Aristotle, *Physics* 212a2-30. See Leijenhorst, "Place," 523-24; Adams, *Some ~~l~~Later ~~m~~Medieval ~~t~~Theories*, 20-21; Edward Casey, *The ~~f~~Fate of ~~p~~Place: ~~a~~A ~~p~~Philosophical ~~h~~History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California ~~p~~Press, 1998), 50-56.

[17] John Calvin, *The ~~i~~Institutes of the Christian ~~r~~Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989); *Institutio Christianae religionis* (Geneva: Iacobus Stoer, 1618). Subsequent references to the *Institutes* will be given parenthetically in the text.

Bellarmine's *De veritate Corporis Domini in Eucharistia* presents the Protestants' objections to Roman Catholic teaching on Christ's real presence in the Eucharist as basically twofold: that it requires belief in impossibilities and that it is also abhorrent, its literalism entailing that the glorified body of Christ, which sitteth on the right hand of the Father, is chewed, swallowed, defecated on earth. This bipartite analysis, in turn, offers a lucid structure, *simplex munditiis*, for the ensuing discussion. The remainder of this essay will therefore take up first one, then the other, of the Protestant objections, along with Bellarmine's responses.

According to both Bellarmine and his interlocutors, the central problem for e~~E~~ucharistic theology is bilocation: how can one body be in two places simultaneously, that is, in heaven and all those little wafers. However, the discussion gets braided together with its reciprocal: how two bodies can be simultaneously in one place, or what Bellarmine terms *penetratio corporum* (685d). This latter question is relevant because all parties accept that if the one is possible, then so too the other,[18] and there are explicit biblical examples of seeming penetration: Christ exiting a~~A~~ tomb whose opening is barricaded by a large rock—a rock, we are explicitly told, that an angel only *subsequently* removed (Matt. 28:1-6); and then, shortly thereafter, Christ's sudden appearance in a room whose doors, as we are again explicitly told, were closed (John 20:19).

The Reformed theologians hold that bilocation and penetration are *logically* impossible, since bodies are by definition *res extensae*, and to be extended means to be extended in some place—and hence, Calvin adds, by definition, visible and tangible. As Vermigli puts it, "a body is something *solid* (*corpus solidum quiddam est*)" (260); and it is against both nature and reason

[18] As Vermigli notes in his *Defensio doctrinae veteris & Apostolicae de sacrosancto Eucharistiae sacramento . . . **adversus Stephani Gardineri . . . librum*** ([Zurich: Froschauer] 1559), 37. Further references to this volume will be given parenthetically in the text.

for a solid body, "a body with mass and magnitude[,] to be *somewhere* and yet not occupy place (*corpus quantum esse alicubi, & non occupare locum*)."[19] If the body of Christ is in the sacrament *realiter*, it will be a *corpus quantum* that does not occupy place, which, Vermigli insists, makes no sense (41; see also 34); and, he notes, if one tries to get around this objection by allowing that the eucharistic Real Presence does occupy place, then, since Christ ascended bodily into heaven, His body must simultaneously occupy more than one place—in which case, how is it still one body (29)? Calvin makes the same point: to make "the same flesh occupy different places, so as not to be confined to any particular place," as Catholics seek to do, is to ask the power of God "to make something flesh and not-flesh at the same time (*ut [Deus] carnem faciat simul esse & non esse carnem*)." For, Calvin continues, "is not flesh . . . something contained in a place, something that can be touched and seen (*nonne [est caro] . . . quae certa quae loco continetur, quae tangitur quae videtur?*)"; indeed, "it is the very nature of flesh that it be in a single and distinct place (*ea vero est carnis conditio, ut uno certoque loco . . . constet*)" (4.17.24).

Both Calvin and Vermigli, moreover, argue that the Roman position is not only self-contradictory but, in almost a literary-rhetorical sense, improbable. In Vermigli's words, that Christ went *through* the tomb's stone walls is simply not "verisimilar" (37). Calvin points out that since at the Last Supper the Apostles *ate* the bread that Christ called "my body," apparently without hesitation, they *must* have understood Christ's words the same way Protestants do: i.e., as metaphoric (the signified put for the sign)—a rather brilliant bit of literary reasoning

[19] A *corpus quantum* is, translated literally, a quantified body, a concept that more or less corresponds to a body with magnitude and/or mass. See Edward Grant, "Motion in the Void and the Pprinciple of Iinertia in the Middle Ages, *Isis* 55.3 (1964): 265-92 (at 270n16).

(4.17.23). The criterion of verisimilitude likewise underwrites Vermigli's characterization of Catholic sacramental theology as outrageous fables (*mendacia, fictiones, prodigia*) (35), as also Calvin's complaint, with respect to "this is my body," that Rome prefers to make up a bunch of enigmatic murk (*aenigmatum tenebras sibi fingant*) when it's obvious that Jesus is speaking metaphorically (4.17.23). Calvin goes on to deny, more than once, that he's making common sense the criterion of supernatural truth ([*non*] *respuimus quod secundum communem sensum difficile est creditu* [4.17.25])—but there's something jarring about such protests, since they crop up in the midst of arguments that do, in truth—and the same holds for Vermigli—rely on appeals to everyday experience, i.e., common sense.[20]

And it's precisely this tendency that Bellarmine homes in on, accusing Reformed theologians of using their imagination. For, he argues, although the imagination is indeed not able to conceive of one body in diverse places, yet *reason*, if sound, can judge whether or not the imagination errs--as it errs in not being able to conceive of God or the soul being in diverse places, nor of two bodies being in one place (680d).[21] The imagination/reason contrast is,

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[20] See, for example, Vermigli's dismissal of the Catholic argument that, because the mysteries of faith lie beyond ordinary experience, they also elude the bounds of ordinary language: to the Catholic position that *adverbia vero illa* **corporaliter & naturaliter** *. . . adhibita fuisse non ad modum praesentiae indicandum, sed ad praesentiae veritatem exprimendam*, Vermigli retorts that *etiam pueros intelligere, in his adverbiis istos homines prorsus insanire. Nemo enim grammaticus umquam dubitavit, ea signficare modum. Quid enim aliud est* **clementer**, *quam clementi modo; aut* **severiter**, *quam severo modo?* (260).

[21] *Itaque imaginatio quidem non potest concipere unum corpus in diversis locis, sed ratio tamen iudicare potest, si sana sit, falli imaginationem, sicut fallitur dum Deum, vel animam, non potest*

tellingly, almost the opposite of our own; the imagination, rather than being the faculty that allows one to think outside the box, can only remix the familiar stuff of sense experience.

To understand Bellarmine's defense of bilocation—which, although this is never mentioned, draws throughout on Scotus[22]—one has to keep in mind that, like Scotus, Bellarmine presupposes Aristotle's definition of place as the innermost boundary of the thing that contains the object in question. While it is the role (*officium*) of magnitude to fill a place, expelling other bodies, a thing's role, Bellarmine avers, is not part of its essence. It follows that "to be in a place (*esse in loco*)" does not belong to a body's essence; it's accidental, extrinsic. Hence "it is possible that a body be somewhere and yet not occupy place (*posse corpus alicubi esse, & locum non occupare*)" (686b).[23] Just so the outermost sphere (this being Bellarmine's favorite example) is a true body, yet does not occupy a place (671a, 686d), there being nothing that contains it. (The universe isn't "in space"; there's nothing outside it; so that if, as in the movie *The* ***Truman Show***, one cut a hole in the outermost sphere and climbed through it, one would be, literally, no place.[24])

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cogitare in diversis locis, vel duo corpora in uno loco. Bellarmine is here channeling Scotus; see Adams, *Some ~~l~~Later ~~m~~Medieval ~~t~~Theories*, 127.

[22] Michael Edwards notes that Scotus remained a name to conjure with in the post-Reformation, even among Jesuits, despite their official Thomism ("Aristotelianism, Descartes, and Hobbes," *The Historical Journal* 50.2 [2007]: 449-64 (at 454, 459)).

[23] On the centrality of this claim to Tridentine eucharistic theology, see Gellera, "Calvinist Metaphysics,"1092.

Bellarmine makes a similar argument regarding individuation, which he considers a major crux, for if, as Roman Catholics hold, a body can be in two places, how is it conceivably not two bodies? His response is that being in two places doesn't destroy a body's "intrinsic undividedness (*indivisio intrinsica*),"~~,~~ but only its extrinsic *indivisio* with respect to place (677b), for the *essential* unity of a thing does not depend on the unity of its place but on its own internal principles; and a thing's being one is prior to its being in one place (680d).[25] Christ's body in heaven and on the altar are thus not discontinuous, as the Calvinists claim; only the *loci* are, but the same identical body occupies both places (681a), just as God is one yet occupies multiple, indeed all, places. And to the Protestant objection that God does not exist in multiple places but fills the whole universe as one place, Bellarmine replies, here drawing on cutting-edge late-medieval theorizing, that God could create another universe, not intersecting this one at any

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[24] The place, or rather no-place, beyond the outermost sphere, and what it might, at least hypothetically, contain, was a topic of absorbing interest to late-medieval natural philosophers, whose reflections on this extra-cosmic void were an important precursor of Newtonian absolute space (Grant, *A ~~h~~History*, 204-5, 228, as well as his *Much ~~a~~Ado*; Funkenstein 59). Bellarmine, however, does not pursue the scientific **implications of his hypothetical**, these having no obvious bearing on eucharistic questions.~~-~~

[25] *Sic etiam, cum unum corpus est in diversis locis, non tollitur indivisio intrinseca, sed solum extrinseca respectu loci . . . unitatem essentialem rei non pendere ab unitate loci, cum prius sit rem esse unam, quam esse in uno loco, sed pendere ab internis suis principiis*. In this section Bellarmine is arguing against Thomas Aquinas as well as Reformed theologians.

point, and He would be God in that universe, just as He is present in separate places at a distance from each other in this one (675a).[26]

Bellarmine, however, agrees with Reformed theologians (but not with some medieval ones) that corporeality entails extension and shape, although only with respect to a thing's internal structure—that is, *extensam esse in se, & partem habere extra partem*—not vis-à-vis other things (685b). That is to say, the body present in the eucharistic host is physically identical to the risen Christ and has all the accidents, including magnitude and figure, of that glorified body--excepting, of course, relation to its celestial place. Thus, if God took all the air out of the room in which we are sitting (the example is Bellarmine's), so that there was nothing at all surrounding our bodies, we would retain our dimensions and *facies*, but each of us would no longer be in a space (*spatium*), nor (since light was thought to need a medium) would we be visible to each other (699d).[27]

Bellarmine also appeals to Scripture, where he finds one apparent case of bilocation and a couple more in which bodies interpenetrate, plus various other contraventions of what we call laws of physics.

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[26] Fourteenth-century natural philosophers (preeminently Nicholas Oresme (d. 1382)) had speculated, *contra* Aristotle, that two universes might possibly exist, one outside the other, and, if they did exist, since they would be spherical, there would be a vacuum, an "empty incorporeal space," between them. See Grant, *A ~~h~~History*, 204-5.

[27] Bellarmine's thought-experiment concerning bodies beyond the outermost sphere goes back to Scotus, who likewise ~~also~~ uses it to explicate the physics of the Eucharist. See Adams, *Some ~~l~~Later ~~m~~Medieval ~~t~~Theories*, 116-17.

As for bilocation--given that all parties agree that after Resurrection, Christ is seated at right hand of the Father in the highest heaven--how is it, Bellarmine wonders, that He appeared to St. Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9)? Calvin, he notes, suggests several~~a couple of~~ possibilities: perhaps what Paul saw was a vision, not Christ himself; or perhaps Paul's eyes and ears were infused with a supernatural power enabling him to behold Christ enthroned in glory above the spheres. To which Bellarmine responds that, since Paul states that he, *like the A~~a~~postles*, beheld the risen Christ, what he saw on the road to Damascus cannot have been merely a vision. Calvin's alternative hypothesis--that Paul might have seen all the way up into heaven--Bellarmine dryly notes, seems a bit inconsistent with Protestant ridicule of Catholics' belief that the saints in heaven can see all the way down to our needs on earth. Plus, he adds, had Christ spoken from that height, his words would have been no less audible to Paul's companions than to Paul himself, just as a thunderclap sounds as loud to someone on one side of a room as on the other; but since the companions heard only an indistinct noise, Christ must have been very close to Paul, closer to him than the others were, and yet also seated in the highest heaven: that is to say, in two places at once (671b-672d).

And then there's the camel of Luke 18:25, whose getting through the needle's eye, Bellarmine observes, presents difficulties similar to those concerning Christ's body in a wafer, since a camel cannot go through a needle's eye except by not occupying place. For were the camel to be elongated until thread-like, it wouldn't be a camel anymore, nor, he notes, does it help matters to hold that "camel" was a type of nautical rope, given that it's as humanly impossible to thread a needle with nautical rope as with camels. Protestant glosses, Bellarmine adds, that try to get around the problem by claiming that the "needle's eye" refers to a narrow gateway, which a camel could only get through by squeezing, miss Christ's point: that, given the

laws of nature, it's *impossible*—not merely difficult—for camels to thread a needle's eye, yet possible *apud Deum*—although *how* God might do this is known to Him alone (687b-688b).

Even if the camel were just a trope, there is, Bellarmine points out, biblical evidence for actual *penetratio*, where two bodies simultaneously occupy the same place. When the Gospels depict Christ entering a room whose doors are said to be closed, the implication is pretty obviously *not* (as Vermigli at one point suggests) that He climbed in through the window,[28] but that He entered through the doors even though they were closed (688cd); and ditto for the sealed tomb, and (a topic on which Bellarmine dwells at disturbing length) for Mary's virginal "closures" remaining intact after childbirth (690a-692b). All these passages imply that His body occupied the same place as another body—albeit that, like bilocation, this is impossible for *viribus creatis* and incomprehensible to mortal understanding (688c)—but Reformed theologians (this is still Bellarmine) seem to think that if they can't *grasp* how something could have happened, then it can't *have* happened (689c).[29]

The Reformed theologians, in turn, insist that they do allow for the reality of miracles, albeit only clearly-attested biblical ones and with the explicit caveat that even these cannot involve impossibilities (ruling out, in their view, both bilocation and *penetratio*). While all parties agreed that logical contradictions (like creating a round triangle) were impossible, even

[28] See Philip McNair, "Peter Martyr the preacher," in *Peter Martyr Vermigli: ~~h~~Humanism, RP~~r~~republicanism, ~~r~~Reformation*, ed. Emidio Campi, Frank James III, and Peter Opitz (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2002), 306-7.

[29] Bellarmine is quoting *De Trinitate* by Hilary of Potiers (d. 367), who is voicing the "heretics of his own age," who say *factum non fuisse, quia intelligentiam facti non apprehendimus, & cessante sensu nostro, cesset effectus.*

for God, the fact that Reformed theologians treat bilocation and penetration as similarly impossible means that, for them, the impossible *simpliciter* includes *natural* impossibilities, scenarios that violate the ordinary laws of physics. For late-medieval natural philosophy, however, and for Bellarmine, such scenarios fall within the scope of God's *potentia absoluta*, and are therefore (hypothetically) possible.[30] Calvin and Vermigli, conversely, tend to limit possible miracles to extraordinary instances of ordinary physical processes: as, for example, water becoming steam or ice.[31] Calvin thus hypothesizes that the risen Christ could exit the sealed tomb because a portion of the wall momentarily vaporized—a possibility Vermigli also considers *longe versimilius* than *penetratio* (37)--just as earlier He could walk on the Sea of Galilee because its waters crystallized. As for the tomb, maybe the stone was just briefly removed (29). Vermigli, as already mentioned, suggests that when the Bible says Christ entered a room whose doors were closed, we are to assume that He found some other entrance, perhaps the windows (43)[32]—adding that, although he accepts the biblical miracles, yet when faced with

[30] Grant, *A ~~h~~History*, 243-46.

[31] Vermigli at points seems to treat that which is naturally impossible (inconsistent with the laws of physics) as impossible *simpliciter*: e.g., his denial that it is possible for something *adesse corpus alicubi & locum non occupare, cum id. . . corpori organico summopere adversetur* (34; see also 37), at one point explicitly distinguishing *leges naturae* that even God cannot violate from those that can be overridden (43). So too Calvin emphatically denies that he wants to subject the eucharistic mystery to the laws of nature, and yet the passage that immediately follows--the passage declaring that flesh by its very nature can occupy only a single place at any one time (*vide supra*)--seems to do just that (4.17.24).

claims of an alleged supra-natural happening, like bread turning into a body, we are permitted to raise the obvious questions about how this might have transpired (43).

Bellarmine (obviously) rejects this Protestant distinction between the physically possible miracles of Scripture and impossible popish fables involving bilocation and the like, maintaining instead that biblical miracles like Peter walking on water (Matt 14), Christ becoming invisible (Luke 4), the Hebrew children unhurt in the fiery furnace (Daniel 3) are *analogous* to eucharistic real presence. In the above, divine power brings it about that a heavy thing has no weight, a visible object cannot be seen, a hot one doesn't give off heat; in each case, a cause has been disjoined from its ordinary effect, their separation possible because causes are prior to their effects and hence do not (not logically) depend on them; and, Bellarmine continues, the same reason holds with respect to magnitude—the cause—and occupying a place—the ordinary effect (695d-697a).

It's not clear how much weight these arguments are supposed to bear, since Bellarmine repeatedly notes that such physics-defying miracles--or, better, *mysteries*—happen beyond the limits of what we *can* think; yet they are also, for him—and here is where the philosophical handy-dandy becomes theologically luminous—at the very heart of Christianity. Whereas sixteenth-century Protestants generally depict Roman eucharistic theology as a bizarre bit of decadent Aristotelianism birthed by the greed and ignorance of the medieval Church, for

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[32] The possibility that Christ entered through an opened window (*forte Christus per fenestras . . . ingressus est*) comes from Vermigli's *Loci communes*, which goes on to add that it's also possible that he miraculously penetrated the doors but *not* in such a way to allow "*~~T~~transubstantiatores*" to infer that Christ's body can exist in multiple places (*Loci communes D. Petri Martyris Vermilii* [London: Thomas Vautrollier, 1583], 1047).

Bellarmine its weirdness is one shared by *all* the central mysteries of faith: a God who is one and yet wholly present in all his creatures, which certainly exceeds human understanding (*certe superat captum hominum*); as likewise the rational soul, which is wholly present in each part of the body (*tota est in qualibet parte corporis*) (674cd, 698ab); or the fact that a human soul can be confined within a person's body, a bounding of spirit by matter that presents no less difficulty than one body permeating another (694cd).[33] The difficulties attendant upon the mystery of the Trinity are notorious (675b), but the Ascension also raises the question of how the risen Christ could get through the solid convex of an outer sphere that has "no door, no window, not even a crevice . . . for, as Job 37 says 'the heavens are most solid, as if of molten brass'" (692d-693a). And what of the mystery of eternity, which is a single instant of duration yet coexistent with all time past and future (676bc)?[34] Bellarmine's examples imply, are meant to imply, that Christianity depends on *not* making intelligibility—our being able to get a clear and distinct idea of something—a criterion of truth.

Bellarmine's "mysteries" are not, most of them, miracles in the ordinary sense: not rare instances of divine *potentia absoluta* overriding the laws of nature. The Trinity, Ascension, and body-soul interface are not, that is, *exceptions*, but the fundamental realities of the Christian universe, and they do not follow the rules governing ordinary time and space. At its sites of self-revelation, the divine discloses a supernatural order whose relation to temporal order is something like that of quantum to Newtonian physics: that is, when things get small enough or

[33] *animus noster spiritus est per se existens, & a corpore independens, & tamen tam mirabili artificio est inclusus a Deo in corpore mortis huius, quasi in carcere, ut non possit inde egredi, nisi prius corporis constitutio dissolvatur.*

[34] *ut unum instans durationis simul sit in diversis temporibus, sive coexistat diversis temporibus.*

sacred enough, they behave in ways that depart radically from macro-experience, in ways we find hard to get our heads around. But more of this anon.

The salient characteristic of Bellarmine's supernatural order would seem to be the materialization of the spiritual and corresponding spiritualization of material--a blurring of the line between them, as when he describes how the dimensions of Christ's body in the host exist without reference to place in *almost* the same way that the soul is within the body~~,~~ yet can't be said to be smaller—or bigger—than the body; like the soul, Christ's body doesn't have "size" with respect to what encloses it (701a).[35]

And it is precisely this blurring to which Reformed theologians object; as Calvin complains, the schoolmen spiritualize the flesh of Christ into a phantom (4.17.7, 29) while materializing God into bread (4.17.13), and Vermigli protests that Catholics jumble together heaven and earth (*coelum terrae miscetis*) (40). Conversely, Bellarmine accuses Protestants of holding that an indivisible spirit can *never* exist divisibly & extended in the manner of a body, nor a divisible body exist indivisibly in the manner of a spirit (699b).[36] This hardening of the line between matter and spirit seems characteristic of the Reformed tradition;[37] whatever its relation to seventeenth-century mechanism, it massively affects sacramental theology in two ways. It

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[35] In the ~~H~~host the dimensions of the Body of Christ *existunt sine ordine ad locum, eo modo fere, quo anima est in corpore, quae nec minor, nec major corpore dici potest*.

[36] *non potest ullo modo spiritus indivisibilis existere per modum corporis divisibiliter, & extense; ergo nec potest corpus divisibile existere ullo modo per modum spiritus indivisibiliter.*

[37] Kilian McDonnell, OSB, makes a similar point in his observation that Calvin's thinking on the Eucharist "was dominated by empirical rather than metaphysical categories" (*John Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967], 238).

underpins the well-known Reformed bifurcation of the material sign from the spiritual signified: "bread and wine," Calvin writes, being "signs representing to us the invisible nourishment we receive from the flesh and blood of Christ"[38]--the "familiar similitude" enabling even blockheads (*crassimae quaeque mentes*) to grasp "that souls are fed by Christ just as the corporeal life is sustained by bread and wine" (ibid). The partitioning of matter from spirit further affects sacramental theology by requiring that bodies, even glorified ones, behave like bodies, not spirits, which means that the risen Christ must occupy place, and therefore He cannot be in the host, cannot be "here; for He sits there, [in heaven], at the right hand of the Father" (4.17.26).[39] Hence one of Calvin's two canons of eucharistic interpretation mandates that "no property," for example, bilocality, "be assigned to [Christ's] body inconsistent with His human nature" (4.17.19); for "flesh needs be flesh; and spirit, spirit. And the nature of flesh is to be in one specific place, with its own size and shape (*carnem . . . carnem esse oportet: spiritum,*

[38] ***Primo, signa sunt panis & vinum, quae invisibile alimentum, quod percipimus ex carne & sanguine Christi, nobis repraesentant*** (4.17.1).

[39] Cranmer adds a codicil to the 1552 Prayer Book's Communion rite similarly explaining that "the natural body and blood of our savior Christ . . . are in heaven and not here. For it is against the truth of Christ's true natural body to be in moe places than in one, at one time." (Quoted in William N. West, "What's the ~~m~~Matter with Shakespeare?: Physics, ~~i~~Identity, ~~p~~Playing," *South Central Review* 26 ~~(~~(2009~~)~~): 103-26 (at 106.))

spiritum . . . . Ea vero est carnis conditio ut uno certoque loco, ut sua dimensione, ut sua forma constet)" (4.17.24).[40] Human bodies cannot (*pace* Milton) "turn all to spirit."[41]

Nor, Calvin avers, can the "heavenly glory of Christ" mingle with "the corruptible elements of this world" (4.17.19), this being fundamentally abhorrent (*indignum*). "*Indignum*" is Bellarmine's word for Protestants' second main charge against Catholic eucharistic teaching (717c); Protestants themselves tend to use stronger language. As Calvin puts it, in holding that Christ "is transmitted by the bodily mouth into the belly," Catholic doctrine is manifestly gross (*crassum*), disgraceful (*dedecor*), the product of a "*bruta imaginatio*" (4.17.15-17). Vermigli similarly finds it an "abomination that He should be broken, ground with the teeth"; that, although Catholics "call their sacrifice 'bloodless' . . . they cannot help but swallow a bloody drink."[42] Both Protestants, moreover, accept the implications of their recoil from the mingling of matter and spirit: namely, that Jesus—the Christ who was born of a Virgin, nailed to the cross—is no longer here, no longer present, but sits up there, at the right hand of the Father ("*non est hic: ibi enim sedet ad dexteram Patris*"), confined to heaven until the Last Judgment; until then, we are at a very great distance from Him ("*nos Christo . . . locorum alioqui distantia procul dissitos*") (4.17.12, 26-28); as Vermigli likewise insists, "there is between us and Christ's body a great distance of place."[43] Hence, Calvin explains, "the only way in which Christ now dwells in

[40] Leihenhorst notes that for both Calvin and Zwingli body *qua* body has to be "circumscribed by a place" ("Place," 523, 538).

[41] *Paradise Lost* 5.497.

[42] *The Peter Martyr Reader*, ed. John Patrick Donnelly, S.J., Frank James III, Joseph McLelland (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 1999), 154, 157.

[43] Ibid., 163.

us is by his Spirit" (4.17.12), for the Spirit alone "unites things separated by space [*locis*]" (4.17.10; see also 4.17.28, 31); and this union is "spiritual, secret, and divine."[44] The tendency in modern scholarship has been to say that, according to Reformed eucharistic theology, *only* spiritual presence remains, but the "only" is wrong; it implies the loss of a fuller, deeper contact, but for Reformed theologians nothing has been lost except vile nonsense: bodies cannot be in two places simultaneously, and even if they could, to imagine the body of Christ, lurking under a bread-shield, rubbed against teeth and swallowed by a mouth (4.17.31,12)[45]—this is Calvin again—offends against "his celestial glory" (4.17.19).

Bellarmine homes in on the mocking contempt—the recoil of common sense toward a bread-god that ends up in the belly—with its foreshadowing of Shaftesbury's axiom that whatever is vulnerable to ridicule is *eo ipso* ridiculous. Although Protestants may *now* confine their mockery to transubstantiation, Bellarmine darkly observes, pagans and heretics have always found not only *this* mystery but virtually the whole of Christianity laughably offensive (717d).[46] What offends non-Christians, what offends common sense, is a God who allows himself to be enclosed not just in a wafer but in the uterus of some obscure Jewish woman, to be wrapped not just in bread but swaddling clouts; a God who let himself get strung up on a cross; a God who cares about sparrows, counts hairs, enters into the low and little things of earth (717d-719b). What offends non-Christians (including, for Bellarmine, Protestants) is, as it were, Christianity.

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[44] Ibid.

[45] See also 4.17.7 denouncing papists who "*pro sua crassitie absurdum edendi & bibendi modum fabricant*."

[46] *Neque enim solum hoc mysterium, sed omnia fere alia Iudaei, pagani, haeretici tanquam indigna & stulta irriserunt*.

Or, to put it another way, the problem, in Bellarmine's eyes, is Protestantism's imagination-based metaphysic, with its attendant hermeneutic that projects the world of sense-experience onto the supernatural. And as the Sadducees considered the soul's immortality absurd because they imagined heaven with marriages and midwives, so Reformed Protestants imagine the glorified humanity of the Logos ~~as sitting on a throne~~ permanently enthroned 'up there,'[47] and likewise imagine that, for Catholics, Christ is "in" the Host like a chocolate chip in a cookie (not Bellarmine's simile), and so gets chewed and digested. What they do not understand, Bellarmine urges, is that God is everywhere present, yet neither defiled by dirt nor consumed by fire (*nec sordescit in sordibus, nec crematur in flammis*); and the glorified body in the h~~H~~ost is no more digested or defecated than in the Crucifixion the Godhead underwent death (718b-719b).

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The Reformed side in this debate does sound modern, or at least modernish; its insistence on matter as solid *res extensa* that, by definition, occupies a place, thereby preventing other things from occupying the same place, feels like a harbinger of the new science--as does the Reformed insistence on the hard line between body and spirit. Indeed, both *feel* more or less current: more or less affirming the same understanding of matter informing current studies of 'material culture': history of the book and the body, of fashion, food, and furniture—of corpus quantums, as it were, objects with mass and magnitude that occupy specific places, sharply divided from the

[47] Luther similarly objected to the Sacramentarians' "'childishly' spatial and anthropomorphic conceptions of God" as sitting upon a throne with His Son permanently stationed at His right hand (Strier, "Martin Luther," 289).

hazy realms of ideas, souls, truth, and transcendence. And Vermigli's *I dunno, the doors were closed so maybe He climbed through a window* (had it not been in Latin) could be a ~~Twitter~~ social media post.

But if Reformed eucharistic physics (as it were) should be seen as a harbinger of modernity, how does the moral of the story differ from the Galileo-infused standard narrative that I learned in school, where the Roman Church clings to an implausible Aristotelian metaphysics of substances with detachable accidents—or an equally implausible Scotist physics of bodies untethered to place--while Protestants, freed from the Luddite chains of tradition and Inquisition, marched with the scientists into the newly discovered territories of empiricism, common sense, and the "cold philosophy" that, as Keats warned, would "conquer all mysteries by rule and line"?[48] And although one might regret the disenchantment of nature and religion, nonetheless truth is truth.

But do the e~~E~~ucharistic disputes summarized ~~above~~ here really endorse this standard narrative? The fact that all the texts considered above are sixteenth-century, and the Protestant ones pre-1560, means, as noted earlier, that the Galileo paradigm doesn't fit ~~here~~, since a lone Copernicus doth not a scientific revolution make. There were not yet new truths for Protestants to embrace nor for Roman cardinals, blinded by dogmatism, to reject. The refocusing of natural

[48] This and subsequent fragments of Keats come from "Lamia." ll. 229-35. The standard narrative of persecutory religion versus scientific truth, although one still encounters it in recent scholarship, has faced major challenges since my schooldays; see, for example, John Headley's *Tommaso Campanella and the T~~t~~ransformation of the ~~w~~World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

philosophy—and eucharistic theology—on bodies, extension, and extra-cosmic voids goes back to the late thirteenth-century, and it's Bellarmine, not the Reformed theologians, who primarily draws on this material. The seeming modernity of the Protestants—their insistence that bodies necessarily occupy place, their common-sense skepticism regarding alleged miracles, their sharp demarcation of matter and spirit—emerges too early to have been molded by "cold philosophy" and its truths. Nonetheless, Reformed theologians had, it would seem, already begun (again in Keats' words) to "empty the haunted air," raising the post-modern question of whether truth *is* always truth--and not sometimes, at least in part, ideology.

The post-modern answer to this query is too predictable to be of interest, even if the possibility that our own instincts as to truth and reality have been shaped by sixteenth-century eucharistic controversies does take one by surprise.

If we return to initial question—namely, whether these sixteenth-century controversies endorse the standard narrative in which the new religion, new philosophy, and new science together defend the fort of truth--I (not being a post-modernist) would have thought the answer was yes. Atoms are real; the earth does move; and a body can't be in two places at once. The parts about atoms and the earth moving are presumably correct; I didn't check. But I did ask Google about the status of bilocation in contemporary physics, and will conclude by simply quoting the responses, leaving readers on their own to imagine Cardinal Bellarmine, harp slung over his shoulder, giving a high-five to Niels Bohr.

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In quantum mechanics, we often say that a particle can be two places at once. It is more precise to say that there are situations when a particle may not have a location at all. Which is deeply weird.

Brian Greene, Professor of Physics & Mathematics, Columbia University[49]

At low temperatures, this tunneling water exhibits quantum motion through the separating potential walls, which is forbidden in the classical world. This means that the oxygen and hydrogen atoms of the water molecule are 'delocalized' and therefore simultaneously present in all six symmetrically equivalent positions in the channel at the same time. It's one of those phenomena that only occur in quantum mechanics and has no parallel in our everyday experience.

Alexander Kolesnikov, Oak Ridge National Laboratory[50]

Giant molecules can be in two places at once.

Rafi Letzter, *Scientific American*[51]

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[49] https://twitter.com/bgreene/status/1144433162707243008

[50] See Ron Walli, "New state of water molecule discovered," https://phys.org/news/2016-04-state-molecule.html [the article quotes a paper in *Physical Review Letters*, for which Kolesnikov was lead author].

[51] Rafi Letzter, "Giant molecules exist in two places at once in unprecedented quantum experiment," *Scientific American*, October 8, 2019 https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/giant-molecules-exist-in-two-places-at-once-in-unprecedented-quantum-experiment/.