

WHAT SORT OF NACHFOLGER OF ZWINGLI WAS BULLINGER?

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The secondary literature on Zurich theology often takes as its starting point the dependence of Heinrich Bullinger on the thought of Huldrych Zwingli. This is because Bullinger is regarded as Zwingli's successor or Nachfolger, who closely followed and echoed Zwingli's teaching. Furthermore, "Zwinglianism" is often imprecisely equated with Zurich theology.

This article examines those sections of Bullinger's commentary on 1 Corinthians (1534) that discuss the Lord's Supper. Bullinger does cite Zwingli's *Concerning the Protests of Eck* (1530) and *An Exposition of the Faith* (1531) but none of the other works of Zwingli on the Lord's Supper. Of particular note is Bullinger's use of Ratramnus's treatise on the Lord's Supper (early 840s), which had influenced Berengar of Tours (c. 999–1088). Although Zwingli did refer to the importance of 1 Cor 10:1–5 for understanding the Lord's Supper it was Bullinger who, using Ratramnus's treatise, made a more comprehensive study of this pericope to underscore feeding on Christ spiritually by the elect in the Lord's Supper.

Both Bullinger and Zwingli were trained in humanism, rhetoric, and the use of the biblical languages. Since both placed the utmost priority on correctly interpreting Scripture through judicial use of the tools they were trained and skilled in, it is not surprising that, unfettered by the tradition of the medieval church, they came, independently, to similar views of the Lord's Supper. There were, of course, nuanced differences between their respective understandings of the Lord's Supper. With the passing of time Bullinger felt free to express his views in the context of defending Zurich theology as opposed to defending Zwinglian theology.

It used to be taken as virtually axiomatic by some scholars that, as Huldrych Zwingli's (1484–1531) Nachfolger, Heinrich Bullinger (1504–1575) closely followed and echoed Zwingli's teaching. An extreme extrapolation of this account would be to argue that Bullinger had little independent thought to

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add to that of Zwingli's. However, recent scholarship on Bullinger has actually highlighted the independence and genius of his thought.¹

A case can be made that it was actually Bullinger who influenced Zwingli on key aspects of understanding the Lord's Supper and of the covenant as a theme linking the message of the Bible as a whole.² For example, Bullinger wrote about the post-lapsarian covenant with Adam before Zwingli.³ Moreover, after the demise of Zwingli on the battlefield at Kappel am Albis in 1531, it was clear that Bullinger did his utmost to affirm the many positive contributions Zwingli had made in order for the reformation to continue and develop in Zurich and beyond. Thus, in deference to his *Diarium* entry (September 12, 1524), which recounted that Zwingli forbade (*prohibebat*) Bullinger from writing on the Lord's Supper for the time being as he planned to do so himself at the proper time,⁴ Bullinger did not formally write a major work on the Lord's Supper until the *True Confession* (*Wahrhaftes Bekenntnis*, 1545). Furthermore, the writing of that work was prompted by the vitriol against Zwingli and the Zurich ministers in Luther's *Brief Confession Concerning the Holy Sacrament* (1544). Whenever Bullinger wrote on the Lord's Supper in his early years as Antistes, or chief minister, in Zurich, he consciously employed as much as possible the terminology and phrasing of Zwingli. This was so noticeably the case that Amy Nelson Burnett observed that Bullinger's "esteem and desire to uphold Zwingli's reputation made him sound more Zwinglian than he actually was."⁵ Burnett further concluded that the major factor in this approach was Bullinger's "loyalty to Zwingli's reputation (if not precisely to his theology)."⁶

The present article examines how Bullinger interacted with Zwingli's thought in his discussions concerning the Lord's Supper in his commentary on 1 Corinthians (June 1534). This commentary was written in the early period of Bullinger's leadership of the church in Zurich, and therefore provides a

¹ Bruce Gordon and Emidio Campi, eds., *Architect of Reformation: An Introduction to Heinrich Bullinger, 1504–1575* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004); Peter Opitz, *Heinrich Bullinger als Theologe: Eine Studie zu den "Dekaden"* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2004); Emidio Campi and Peter Opitz, eds., *Heinrich Bullinger: Life, Thought, Influence* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2009).

² Joe Mock, "To What Extent Did Bullinger Influence Zwingli with Respect to His Understanding of the Covenant and the Eucharist?," *Colloquium* 49, no. 1 (2017): 89–108; Joe Mock, "Bullinger and the Lord's Supper," in *From Zwingli to Amyraut: Exploring the Growth of European Reformed Traditions*, ed. Jon Balsarak and Jim West (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 59–64. For Zwingli's influence on Bullinger, see, for example, Carrie Euler, *Couiers of the Gospel: England and Zurich, 1531–1558* (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2006), 185; Andrew A. Woolsey, *Unity and Continuity in Covenantal Thought: A Study in the Reformed Tradition to the Westminster Assembly* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2012), 228–30.

³ Joe Mock, "Bullinger and the Covenant with Adam," *RTR* 70 (2011): 185–205.

⁴ Heinrich Bullinger, *Heinrich Bullingers Diarium (Annales vitae) der Jahre 1504–1574*, ed. Emil Egli (Basel: Basler Buch- und Antiquariatshandlung vormals Adolf Geering, 1904), 9, lines 14–18.

⁵ Amy Nelson Burnett, "Heinrich Bullinger and the Problem of Eucharistic Concord," in *Life, Thought, Influence*, 239.

⁶ Burnett, "Eucharistic Concord," 239.

window through which to examine Bullinger's dependence on the thought of Zwingli. In a small way, this article represents a modest supplement to what was presented by Luca Baschera at a conference in Zurich in February 2019 on "*Helveticae nostrae apostolus: Aspekte der Zwingli-Rezeption Bullinger im Corpus seiner Kommentare zu den neutestamentlichen Briefen.*"⁷ It should not be surprising to find clear traces of Zwingli's thought in Bullinger's commentaries on the Pauline epistles. Both men were grounded in humanism and the judicial use of rhetoric. These humanist tools were used by both men to unpack the meaning and application of the Pauline epistles. Furthermore, both were well versed in the writings of the church fathers.

I. Bullinger's Commentary on 1 Corinthians⁸

Bullinger produced his *Lectures on Romans* (1525) and his *Lectures on Hebrews* (1526/1527) during his time as a teacher at the Kloster in Kappel am Albis. Soon after he commenced his ministry as Antistes in Zurich, Bullinger wrote commentaries on the following epistles: 1, 2, and 3 John (1532), Hebrews (1532); Romans (1533), 1 Corinthians (1534), 2 Corinthians (1535), Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians (1535), and 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon (1536). These were followed by a compendium on the Pauline and catholic epistles (*In omnes apostolicas epistolas commentarii*, 1537).

There was clearly a plan in Bullinger's mind. John's epistles focus on the personal relationship the elect have with the heavenly Father because of his love. Romans was viewed by Bullinger, as well as by other reformers, as probably the most important book in the biblical canon. Hebrews was pivotal in revealing the salvation historical message of the Bible as a whole unit with one author as well as in demonstrating the nature of the continuity and discontinuity between the old covenant and the new covenant. Not surprisingly, the next epistles for which commentaries were written were the Corinthian epistles. Discussing the challenges of the Corinthian church gave Bullinger the opportunity to address dynamics within the local church as well as that of leadership. This was important for the growing and developing church in Zurich in the aftermath of the Second Battle of Kappel. It needs to be noted also that Bullinger's commentary on Acts was produced in 1533.

Published in June 1534, Bullinger's commentary on 1 Corinthians was dedicated to the Frankfurt church and to Dionysius Melander who was the

⁷ Luca Baschera, "*Helveticae nostrae apostolus: Aspekte der Zwingli-Rezeption Bullinger im Corpus seiner Kommentare zu den neutestamentlichen Briefen.*" in *Die Zürcher Reformation in Europa: Beiträge der Tagung des Instituts für Schweizerische Reformationsgeschichte 2019*, ed. Arianne Albisser and Peter Opitz (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2020).

⁸ The text will be taken from Heinrich Bullinger, *Kommentare zu den neutestamentlichen Briefen: Röm, 1Kor, 2Kor*, ed. Luca Baschera, Heinrich Bullinger Theologische Schriften 6 (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 2012). Hereafter HBTS.

Antistes there. His earlier commentary on Acts had already been sent to Frankfurt where it had been well received. Melander had been open to the Zurich teaching and practice of the Lord's Supper and had succeeded in compelling the pro-Wittenberg Johann Cellarius to leave Frankfurt. Luther promptly responded by sending an open letter (*Sendschreiben*) in January 1533.⁹ On behalf of the Frankfurt church, Martin Bucer (1491–1551) drafted an apology to Luther which was promptly dispatched to Wittenberg in March of the same year.¹⁰ The whole gamut of Luther's emotions was reflected in the very strong language used in his open letter which, in many ways, anticipated the vitriol he was to use in his *Brief Confession Concerning the Holy Sacrament*. For example, in referring to preachers who ascribed to the Zurich understanding of the Lord's Supper, Luther compared them to Arius, Sabellius, and Mohammed and even referred to them as disciples of the crafty dragon because of their wickedness and malice! Moreover, Luther declared: "Therefore, whoever has such preachers or is deceived by them, let this be a warning for them as before the devil incarnate himself."¹¹ Indeed, the Zurichers were also referred to in terms of "a circus juggler who plays tricks under a hat and says, Mmmm Mmmm."¹² Luther's advice or directive to the church in Frankfurt was emphatic:

Whoever has public knowledge that his pastor teaches Zwinglianly, he should avoid him and rather go without the Sacrament all his life long rather than receive it from him—yes, even be ready to die on this account and suffer everything before that. If his pastor is one of the double-tongued sort who mouths it out that in the Sacrament the body and blood of Christ are present and true, and yet who prompts an uneasiness that he is selling something in a sack and means something other than what the words say ...¹³

Luther's intemperate language used in his open letter was alluded to in the preface addressed to Melander in Bullinger's commentary on 1 Corinthians. In this preface, Bullinger likened the Wittenbergers and the Zurichers to the various factions that were in Corinth (that is, the Cephas, the Paul, and the Christ parties).¹⁴ This was evidently an earnest plea for unity amongst fellow Christian brethren. Because Zwingli was mentioned by name in a derogatory and pejorative manner in Luther's open letter, it will be instructive to examine how Bullinger referred to Zwingli in the sections in the commentary that touch on the Lord's Supper.

⁹ Martin Luther, "Ein Brief an die zu Frankfurt am Main, 1533," in *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, 117 vols. (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1883–1993), 30/3:558–71. Hereafter WA.

¹⁰ Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: The Preservation of the Church, 1532–1546* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), 39–40.

¹¹ Jon D. Vieker, "An Open Letter to Those in Frankfurt on Main, 1533, by Martin Luther," *Concordia Journal* 16 (1990): 341.

¹² Vieker, "Open Letter," 338.

¹³ Vieker, "Open Letter," 337–38.

¹⁴ "adeo ut iam nobis Lutherianorum et Zwinglianorum nomina non minus celebria vulgataque sint, quam Corinthiis errant Cephistarum atque Paulianorum factiosa vocabula" (HBTS 6:229).

Sang-Yoon Kim has made a detailed study of Bullinger's commentary on 1 Corinthians, especially with respect to the church fathers and other writers that Bullinger cites.¹⁵ He identified that the citations in this commentary represent a significantly higher ratio in comparison to those found in commentaries by contemporary commentators such as Calvin and Melancthon.¹⁶ In this connection, Bruce Gordon noted that, during the 1540s, Bullinger compiled a catena or collection of quotations of the church fathers which were arranged in categories in his notebooks.¹⁷ These were specifically used by Bullinger to attest to Zurich orthodoxy. Bullinger's 1 Corinthians commentary may well contain such a collection in embryo. Indeed, Bullinger often gave the quotations without comment when they expressed what he himself wanted to express. In doing so he sought to demonstrate, through the respective church father's quotation, that he was faithful to the biblical witness.

II. *Bullinger's Writing on the Lord's Supper vis-à-vis His Commentary on 1 Corinthians*

During his formative period at Kappel am Albis, Bullinger wrote four works on the Lord's Supper, *De sacrificio missae* (1524), *Wider das Götzenbrot* (1525), *De institutione eucharistiae* (1525), and *De pane eucharistiae declamationes* (1526). These works need to be seen in the context of the *Diarium* entry referred to above when Zwingli "forbad" Bullinger to write on the Lord's Supper for the time being, meaning not to write a treatise on the Lord's Supper. The first reformed Lord's Supper was held in Zurich, soon after this *Diarium* entry, on Maundy Thursday, April 13, 1525,¹⁸ which was several months before Zwingli produced his *Subsidiary Essay on the Eucharist* (*Subsidium sive coronis de eucharistia*, August 1525).

Bullinger's commentary on 1 Corinthians was the first occasion that he wrote in a concerted manner on the Lord's Supper. His 1528 edition of *On the Origin of Error* (*De origine erroris*) did discuss the Lord's Supper, but was more from the perspective of the historical origins of the misunderstanding and abuse of the Lord's Supper by the medieval church, especially with regard to the sacrifice of the Mass and the teaching of transubstantiation. It was not, in point of fact, an exposition of what the Lord's Supper is. In his later book titled *Antwort auf*

¹⁵ Sang-Yoon Kim, "Humanistic Commentary on Scripture in the Reformation: Heinrich Bullinger's Commentary on 1 Corinthians (1534)" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2015).

¹⁶ Kim, "Humanistic Commentary," 111.

¹⁷ Bruce Gordon, "Heinrich Bullinger and the Legacy of Huldrych Zwingli" (paper presented at the Reformation Studies Colloquium, University of Birmingham, April 2004).

¹⁸ Huldreich Zwingli, *Aktion oder Brauch des Nachtmahls* (1525). An English translation of this can be found in Huldrych Zwingli, *The Implementation of the Lord's Supper*, translation and introduction by Jim West, Occasional Publications of the Pitts Theology Library (Atlanta: Pitts Theology Library, 2016).

Johan Fabers Trostbüchlein, 1532, he also referred to similar issues that were raised in *On the Origin of Error*. Bullinger subsequently added three extra pericopes to the section on 1 Cor 11:23–26 in the 1537 edition of the compendium of the apostolic epistles (*In omnes apostolicas epistolas commentarij*).¹⁹ This made the section the longest of the whole commentary, and therefore clearly points to the importance of his exposition of the Lord's Supper in this commentary.

Some months after Bullinger produced his commentary on 1 Corinthians he was instrumental in drafting a letter together with the pastors of Zurich addressed to Bucer (December 1534) that became known as the *Zurich Confession*.²⁰ In seeking to address Bucer's repeated and persistent attempts to forge a unity between Wittenberg and Zurich with respect to the Lord's Supper, it strongly opposed the use of obscure and ambiguous terminology when speaking of the Lord's Supper. Rather, it underscored that simple and clear exposition should be used.²¹ The *Zurich Confession* further declared that "the true body of Christ ... is truly present, given and distributed to believers."²²

This declaration in the *Zurich Confession* about the presence of the true body of Christ spiritually in the Lord's Supper is reflected in the *Confessio Helvetica Prior* (1536), drafted by Bullinger and others only two years after his commentary on 1 Corinthians.²³ The *Zurich Confession* demonstrates a nuanced difference between Bullinger and Zwingli. In *An Exposition of the Faith (Christianae fidei brevis et clara expositio ad regem Christianum*, 1531) Zwingli did speak of the presence of Christ in the Eucharist in the *Appendix de eucharistia et missa*: "I believe that Christ is truly present in the Supper, nay, I do not believe it is the Lord's Supper unless Christ is here."²⁴ However, there was no further elaboration of this by Zwingli. This work of Zwingli's was written in the summer of 1531 and, to the annoyance of Luther, was published by Bullinger in 1536 after the dust

¹⁹ The first: "Primus enim ... cuius sunt memoracula" (HBTS 6:369); the second: "Hic quoque diligenter ... fideliter sacramenta tractant" (HBTS 6:370–72); and the third: "Merito autem observamus ... se beneficio effunduntur" (HBTS 6:382).

²⁰ Heinrich Bullinger, *Zurich Confession*, Heinrich Bullinger Briefwechsel 4 (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1989), 420–30. Hereafter HBBW. For a helpful overview on Bullinger and the Lord's Supper in the 1530s, see W. Peter Stephens, *The Theology of Heinrich Bullinger* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019), 351–55.

²¹ "Iam, ne qua verbis insit obscuritas aut amphibologia, nos nostrarque simpliciter et bona fide ad hunc modum exponimus" (HBBW 4:422).

²² "Verum corpus Christi ... vere adesse, dari, distribuique fidelibus" (HBBW 4:422).

²³ This is especially to be seen in Leo Jud's official German translation of the creed; see Phillip Schaff, *The Evangelical Protestant Creeds*, vol. 3 of *The Creeds of Christendom* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 225. The German version fleshes out the Latin version to affirm that Christ is truly present in the Lord's Supper and that believers feed on his body and blood spiritually.

²⁴ "Sed tu, o benignissime rex, brevibus accipe sententiam nostram de Christi corpore, quomodo sit in coena. Christum credimus vere esse in coena; immo non credimus esse domini coenam, nisi Christus adsit" (Huldrych Zwingli, *Appendix de eucharistia et missa*, Huldreich Zwinglis Sämtliche Werke 6, Part 5 [Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1991], 90; hereafter ZW). This appendix is not to be found in Bromiley's translation of the work in G. W. Bromiley, *Zwingli and Bullinger* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1953).

had settled somewhat in the aftermath of the defeat at Kappel which Luther and others had interpreted as God's judgment on Zwingli and Zurich. It also needs to be considered that the leaders of Zurich were not opposed to closer ties with Wittenberg; their main difference with Wittenberg vis-à-vis the Lord's Supper was not the exegesis of key Scripture passages, nor was it the difference in Christology, but rather what they considered to be the soteriological view that Luther had of the Lord's Supper.²⁵

III. *Excursus: Ratramnus of Corbie (800–868)*

One major difference between Bullinger and Zwingli with respect to the Lord's Supper was Bullinger's use of Ratramnus's treatise on the Supper (*De corpore et sanguine domini*) in his commentary on 1 Corinthians.²⁶ Ratramnus had written this treatise at the request of Charles the Bald (823–877), possibly in the early 840s. His work differed fundamentally from that of Paschasius Radbertus (785–865), whose view was to become that of the medieval church. After centuries of obscurity, Ratramnus's work was published in 1531 in Cologne by Johannes Prael with the title *Bertrami presbyteri De corpore et sanguine domini*.²⁷ The reformers in Zurich quickly realized the significance of this work as it gave the background to the forced recantations of Berengar of Tours (c. 999–1088) at the time of Pope Nicholas II, which became codified in the official view of Rome concerning transubstantiation at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215.

Zwingli had been aware of Berengar; he cited his recantation of 1059 in his *On the Lord's Supper (Eine klare Unterrichtung vom Nachtmahl Christi, 1526)*. Indeed, Zwingli had briefly mentioned Berengar in his earlier *Commentary on True and False Religion (De vera et falsa religione commentarius, 1525)*.²⁸ Zwingli cited Berengar's recantation from Gratian's *Decretum* as follows:

I, Berengarius, an unworthy servant of the church of St. Maurice of Angers, confessing the true, catholic and apostolic faith, anathematize all heresy, including that of which I myself have been long suspected, which maintains that the bread and wine we place upon the altar is after consecration only a sacrament, that is a sign and that it is not the very body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that it is handled and broken by the priests and pressed by the teeth of the faithful only symbolically and not essentially and literally. But now I agree with the holy Roman church and the apostolic see, and both with my lips and my heart I confess that in respect of the sacrament of the Lord's Table I hold the same faith as that which my noble lord

²⁵ W. Peter Stephens, "The Soteriological Motive in the Eucharistic Controversy," in *Calvin: Erbe und Auftrag: Festschrift für Wilhelm Neusser zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Wilhelm van't Spijker (Kampen: Kok, 1991), 203–13.

²⁶ HBTS 6:344–45, 378–79. The first citation is chs. 21–23 while the second citation is chs. 9–11 of *De corpore et sanguine domini*.

²⁷ The name *Bertramus* is presumably a conflation/corruption of *Beatus Ratramnus*.

²⁸ Samuel Macauley Jackson, *Commentary on True and False Religion* (Durham, NC: Labyrinth Press, 1981), 210.

Pope Nicholas and holy synod prescribed and confirmed on evangelical and apostolic authority, namely, that after consecration the bread and wine on the altar are not merely a sacrament but the very body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that manifestly not merely the sacrament but the very body and blood of Christ are handled and broken by the priests and pressed or crushed by the teeth of the faithful.²⁹

Luther also was clearly aware of Berengar's recantation. But he took the opposite view to Zwingli in his *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper* (1528):

Therefore, the fanatics [meaning Zwingli, Oecolampadius, and others] are wrong, as well as the gloss in Canon Law, if they criticize Pope Nicholas for having forced Berengar to confess that the true body of Christ is crushed and ground with the teeth. Would to God all popes had acted in so Christian a fashion in all other matters as this pope did with Berengar in forcing this confession. For this is undoubtedly the meaning, that he who eats and chews this bread eats and chews that which is the genuine, true body of Christ and not mere, ordinary bread, as Wycliffe teaches. For this bread is truly the body of Christ, just as the Dove is the Holy Spirit and the flame is the angel.³⁰

When Ratramnus's treatise became available, Bullinger and the other leaders at Zurich examined it with interest as they were able to look closely at the actual work that had stimulated Berengar's thought. In particular, they saw that Ratramnus's work formed a bridge back to the church fathers through the lenses of Ambrose (340–397), Jerome (347–420), Augustine (354–430), Fulgentius (late 5th to early 6th century), and Isidore (560–636). Because the Zurich ministers seized on Ratramnus's work to support their view of the Lord's Supper, some Roman Catholic scholars at the time even claimed that the work was a forgery! In 1532 Leo Jud prepared a German translation of *De corpore et sanguine domini* and addressed it to the Margrave of Brandenburg.³¹ Significantly, the introduction to this work was penned by Bullinger. In the introduction, Bullinger defended the work of Oecolampadius and responded to the invective Luther had hurled at the Zurichers. The major part of the introduction took issue with Luther's view of the Lord's Supper and implied that it could be corrected by a careful reading of the treatise of Ratramnus. The closing section of the introduction points out that Ratramnus correctly noted that the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper are not identical with the body and blood of Christ in his sacrifice on the cross; rather, through faith and remembrance, the body and blood of Christ are present in the Lord's Supper sacramentally.

²⁹ Bromiley, *Zwingli and Bullinger*, 193–94.

³⁰ Martin Luther, *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper*, in *Word and Sacrament III*, ed. Robert H. Fischer, Luther's Works 37 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1961), 300–301.

³¹ Christian Moser, "Ratramnus von Corbie als 'testis veritatis' in der Zürcher Reformation: Zu Heinrich Bullinger und Leo Juds Ausgabe des 'Liber de corpore et sanguine Domini' (1532)," in *Strenarum lanx: Beiträge zur Philologie und Geschichte des Mittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Martin H. Graf and Christian Moser (Zug: Achijs, 2003), 235–309.

Despite the fact that not a few scholars view Ratramnus as a precursor to Calvin's understanding of the Lord's Supper,³² there appears to be no evidence that Calvin interacted with the thought of Ratramnus. In fact, Anthony Lane noted that there is no reference at all to Ratramnus in the writing of Calvin nor was a copy of Ratramnus's treatise kept in the Genevan library even though *De corpora et sanguine domini* was published in Geneva in 1541.³³ On the other hand, Peter Martyr Vermigli referred to Ratramnus in his *Tractatio de sacramento eucharistiae* (1549). This was akin to Bullinger's use of Ratramnus in his commentary on 1 Corinthians. This is evident by his use of Ratramnus's understanding of Israel's baptism in the wilderness and the eating of manna as discussed by Paul in 1 Cor 10.³⁴ In 1550 Vermigli further cited Ratramnus after a discussion of ch. 26 of Augustine's *Tractates on the Gospel of John* (*In Iohannis evangelium tractatus*) in a manner similar to that of Bullinger in his commentary on 1 Corinthians.³⁵

It is also clear that, in an effort to have influence on the reformation in England, Bullinger wrote to Joachim Vadian (1484–1551) on August 22, 1536, urging him to send a copy of his *Aphorisms* (*Aphorismorum*)³⁶ to Cranmer.³⁷ This was Vadian's extended account of the Zurich understanding of the Eucharist, which included a very positive reference to the treatise of Ratramnus in Book 6.³⁸ Bullinger was keen for Cranmer to be introduced to the work of Ratramnus because the recent Wittenberg Concord of May 29, 1536, to which Martin Bucer was a signatory, affirmed the *manducatio indignorum*. His hope was that Cranmer's reading of Ratramnus's treatise would open his discerning eyes to realize that the Zurich understanding of the Lord's Supper was indeed that of the church fathers.

IV. Bullinger's Commentary on 1 Corinthians 10:1–5

In this section of the commentary is to be seen a significant difference between Bullinger and Zwingli in the manner in which they write about the Lord's Supper. This is because of Bullinger's use of Ratramnus to point out that the

³² For example, Herman Speelman, *Melanchthon and Calvin on Confession and Communion: Early Modern Protestant Penitential and Eucharistic Piety* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016), 69; Killian McDonnell, *John Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 51.

³³ Anthony N. S. Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 45.

³⁴ Peter Martyr Vermigli, *Tractatio de sacramento eucharistiae, habita in universitate Oxoniensi* (London: R. Wolfe, 1549), 8r–8v.

³⁵ Peter Martyr Vermigli, *A discourse or traictise of Peter Martyr Vermilla Flore[n]tine, the publyque reader of divinitee in the Vniuersitee of Oxford wherein he openly declared his whole and determinate iudgement concerninge the sacrament of the Lordes supper in the sayde Vniuersitee* (London, 1550), 12–13.

³⁶ Joachim Vadianus, *Aphorismorum libri sex de consideratione eucharistiae* (Zurich: Froschauer, 1536).

³⁷ HBBW 6:400–401.

³⁸ Vadianus, *Aphorismorum*, 215–16.

patriarchs in the old covenant fed on Christ in the same way the elect feed on him in the age of the new covenant. For the OT saints it was a case of proleptic feeding on Christ before his actual incarnation. Therefore, the feeding must have been spiritual.

The citation from Ratramnus was used by Bullinger to underline that at the heart of both the sacraments of the old covenant and the new covenant there is the inner working of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the believer. Ratramnus reiterated the comparison between the physical or natural and the spiritual in the following manner:

Wherefore both the sea and the cloud conveyed the cleansing of sanctification, not in respect of that, which they inwardly contained, the sanctification of the Holy Ghost. For in them there was both a visible form, apparent to the bodily senses, not in image, but in truth; and also a spiritual power, which shone forth within, discernable not by the eye of the flesh, but of the soul.³⁹

Ratramnus further juxtaposed “corporeal existence” (*corporeales extiterant*) with “spiritual meat and spiritual drink” (*spiritualem escam et spiritualem potum*) and explained that “in these corporeal substances the spiritual power of the Word was contained” (*quoniam inerat corporeis illis substantiis Spirituales Verbi potestas*). Such distinction between body and spirit as well as the prime role of the Holy Spirit in the sacraments was also a major focus of Zwingli.

Although Zwingli did write about the continuity between the old covenant and the new covenant, this theme was far more pronounced in Bullinger.⁴⁰ In particular, Bullinger took this passage from the apostle Paul as affirming that “our fathers ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink” (*escam spiritualem manducasse eundem potum spiritualem bibisse*) as parallel to believers who partake of the Lord’s Supper. Since the patriarchs fed on Christ before his actual incarnation, then it must mean that they fed on him spiritually. If the elect who feed on Christ in the Lord’s Supper partake of the same spiritual food and drink as the saints in the old covenant, then the feeding on Christ in the sacrament must be in a spiritual manner. Ratramnus had expressed it in a manner that Bullinger could cite verbatim:

³⁹ “Mare et nubes non secundum hoc, quod corpus extiterant, sanctificationis munditiam praeuere, verum secundum quod invisibiliter sancti spiritus sanctificationem continebant. Erat nanque in eis et visibilis forma, quae corporeis sensibus appareret non in imagine, sed in veritate: et interius spiritualis potentia refulgebat, quae non carnis oculis, sed mentis luminibus appareret” (HBTS 6:344). The text cited by Bullinger is the same as that in the critical edition of Ratramnus’s work: Ratramnus, *De corpore et sanguine domini*, ed. J. N. Bakhuizen van den Brink (Amsterdam, Elsevier, 1974). See also Ratramnus Corbeiensis, *The Book of Ratramn: The Priest and Monk of Corbey, Commonly Called Bertram, On the Body and Blood of the Lord*, ed. W. R. Whittingham (Baltimore: Joseph Robinson, 1838), 34.

⁴⁰ See Bullinger’s *De testamento* (1534) and *The Old Faith* (1539). Bullinger points out that the ceremonies of the old covenant were fulfilled in Christ so that the new covenant is characterized by being *innovata, plenius, dilucidius, and absoluta*.

You ask perhaps in what way the same? Certainly the same, which today the congregation of believers eat and drink in the church. In fact we may not consider them to be different since it is one and the same Christ who gave his own flesh for food and his own blood for drink to the people who, in the desert, were baptized in the cloud and in the sea, and now feeds the congregation of believers in the church with the bread of his body and gives them to drink of the stream of his blood.⁴¹

With respect to the debate concerning *manducatio impii* (eating of the sacrament by the unrighteous) and *manducatio indigni* (eating of the sacrament by the unworthy), this extended quotation from Ratramnus accords with what Bullinger stressed elsewhere with his preferred terminology. Bullinger had repeatedly pointed out the concept of true Israel within Israel or spiritual Israel within Israel. These were those who were circumcised in the heart and upon whose hearts was inscribed God's *torah*.⁴² Only true Israel in the old covenant fed on Christ proleptically, that is, of his death yet to take place on the cross. Furthermore, only the elect or true believers (*credentes*) in the new covenant feed on Christ spiritually in the Lord's Supper, in view of Christ's death once for all on the cross having already taken place.

V. Bullinger's Commentary on 1 Corinthians 11:23–26

Kim considered this important section of the commentary a "literary quilt of various quotations from Cyprian, Augustine, Tertullian, Chrysostom, Ambrosiaster, Oecolampadius, Zwingli, Ratramnus, and Erasmus."⁴³ Significantly, this section of the commentary has quotations from Oecolampadius's *Dialogue (Quid de eucharistia veteres Graeci tum Latini senserint dialogus, 1530)*, Zwingli's *Concerning the Protests of Eck* (*De convitiis Eckii, 1530*)⁴⁴ as well as his *An Exposition of the Faith*.⁴⁵

Oecolampadius and Zwingli are deliberately mentioned by name in a very positive manner by Bullinger⁴⁶ immediately after an affirmation that the Lord's

⁴¹ "Quaeris fortasse quam eandem? Nimirum ipsam, quam hodie populus credentium in ecclesia manducat et bibit. Non enim licet diversa intelligi, quoniam unus idemque Christus est, qui et populum in deserto, in nube et in mari baptisatum sua carne pavit, suo sanguine tunc potavit, et in ecclesia nunc credentium populum sui corporis pane, sui sanguinis unda pascit ac potat" (HBTS 6:344–45; author's translation).

⁴² Joe Mock, "Heinrich Bullinger and Pneumato-cardionography in the Old Testament," *WTJ* 81 (2019): 19–33.

⁴³ Kim, "Commentary on 1 Corinthians," 113.

⁴⁴ ZW 6/3, 259 (line 5)–261 (line 3).

⁴⁵ ZW 6/5, 156 (lines 6–9, lines 16–18), 157 (line 8)–158 (line 10), and 158 (line 12)–160 (line 22).

⁴⁶ "Id, quod et foelicis memoriae viri, eruditione et pietate clari, ecclesiae Christi lumina, frates et praeceptores nostri fidelissimi H[ULDRYCHUS] ZUINGLIUS Tigurinae ecclesiae et IO[ANNES] OECOLAMPADIUS Basilien[sis] ecclesiae episcopi agnovere" (HBTS 6:375). It is to be noted that Bullinger humbly refers to both Zwingli and Oecolampadius as *praeceptores*.

Supper is not merely a bare sign.⁴⁷ Oecolampadius's earlier work on the Lord's Supper⁴⁸ was not referred to by Bullinger in the commentary. Although this work did interact considerably with the church fathers,⁴⁹ his *Dialogue* had a more comprehensive survey of what the church fathers wrote concerning the Eucharist.⁵⁰ The quotation from *Concerning the Protests of Eck* together with the concerted quotations from Zwingli's *An Exposition of the Faith* are the only references to Zwingli in those sections of the commentary that touch on the Lord's Supper. It is somewhat striking that, apart from these quotations, Zwingli's name is not mentioned at all in this important section of the commentary that discusses the Lord's Supper. If Bullinger were a Nachfolger of Zwingli in a more literal sense of the word, then we would expect more references to Zwingli in the commentary about such a fundamental topic for Zurich theology as the Lord's Supper.

Bullinger used the quotation from *Concerning the Protests of Eck* to stress that the bread and the wine in the Lord's Supper are not bare signs. The elements of the Lord's Supper do not just signify very high things (*sublimes*) to believers "but even in a sense present them to our eyes and senses."⁵¹ Moreover, with respect to the understanding of *anamnesis*⁵² in the Lord's Supper, "is not the divine bounty set forth and brought to mind with the giving of thanks?"⁵³ Significantly, "is not the whole Christ presented as it were in visible form to the senses?"⁵⁴ For Bullinger, there is no doubt whatsoever about Christ being present in the sacrament.

The quotations from *An Exposition of the Faith* were used by Bullinger to further underline the role of all the human senses in receiving Christ spiritually in the Lord's Supper. But the context is faith in the heart of the believer as opposed to an *ex opere operato* understanding of the sacrament. Thus, the sacraments, especially the Lord's Supper, augment faith. Indeed, "our faith is

⁴⁷ "Itaque nos in coena mystica non nudum duntaxat signum agnoscimus" (HBTS 6:375).

⁴⁸ *De genuina verborum domini Hoc est corpus meum expositio* (Basel, 1525).

⁴⁹ See Eric W. Northway, "The Reception of the Fathers and Eucharistic Theology in Johannes Oecolampadius (1482–1531) with Special Reference to the *Adversus Haereses* of Irenaeus of Lyons" (PhD diss., University of Durham, 2008), 181–88, for a comprehensive list of the church fathers cited by Oecolampadius in *De genuina verborum domini*.

⁵⁰ See Northway, "Oecolampadius," 189–98, for a much more comprehensive list of the church fathers cited by Oecolampadius in *Dialogue*. Northway has a discussion on pp. 198–235 of Oecolampadius's use in these two works of Augustine, Cyril, Chrysostom, Tertullian, Ambrosiaster, Origen, Jerome, Fulgentius Ruspensis, and Irenaeus.

⁵¹ "verumetiam suo quodam modo oculis ac sensibus subiicitur" (HBTS 6:376; see also Ulrich Zwingli, *On Providence and Other Essays*, ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson [Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1999], 110).

⁵² In this section of the commentary Bullinger uses "memoria" four times, "memoracula" eleven times, and "memnosynun" once.

⁵³ "an non divina liberalitas exponitur et cum gratiarumactione in memoriam revocatur?" (HBTS 6:376; Zwingli, *On Providence and Other Essays*, 110).

⁵⁴ "an non iam totus Christus velut sensibiliter sensibus etiam offertur?" (HBTS 6:376; Zwingli, *On Providence and Other Essays*, 110).

continually tested and tempted” (*enim fidem nostram semper exerceri et tentari*). Because our senses can be so easily led astray by the devil they need to be “pledged to faith” (*fidei mancipantur*). The senses should be like handmaidens (*ancillae*) that “do nothing but what is commanded and done by their master faith” (*nihil aliud agant, quam quod agit iubetque hera fides*). Indeed, the senses need to be “placed under the obedience of faith” (*in obsequium fidei trahuntur*). The point that Bullinger seeks to make through the very words of Zwingli is that the proper role of the senses can help the believer have a heightened participation in the sacrament as a thanksgiving and perpetual memory and pledge of God’s love for his elect.⁵⁵ The quotation ends with what might be considered one of the “signature” statements of Zwingli concerning the Lord’s Supper: “Thus the sacraments assist the contemplation of faith and conjoin with it the strivings of the heart.”⁵⁶ Bullinger further cited Zwingli to the effect that the Lord’s Supper should be highly valued because it is a sign of something “great, precious and sublime.”⁵⁷ This is yet another declaration that the elements of the Lord’s Supper are not merely “bare signs.”

Bullinger used his commentary on 1 Cor 11:23–26 to explain biblically what the Lord’s Supper is. He chose to do so with many references to the church fathers in order to demonstrate that the Zurich church did not introduce anything “new,” but it was rather Rome that had introduced “new” teaching and thereby had moved away from the clear teaching of Scripture. Moreover, he referred to those church fathers that he adjudged to have correctly interpreted Scripture. This *modus operandi* was to be clearly enunciated in the preface to his compendium on the Pauline and catholic epistles:

I have also borrowed much from the ancient and modern writers. And I have not hidden this.... The reason we cite statements of the church fathers is not to rely on their authority as we do on that of Scripture. But since our opponents accuse us of twisting the Scriptures capriciously to suit their own recently born heresies, we have produced the testimonies of the church fathers, especially on the controversial topics, to let our opponents see that what we say is not recent and not heretical but original and orthodox.⁵⁸

In some sense, citing both Oecolampadius and Zwingli was to put them on a par with the church fathers (in the particular matter for which they were cited) as being adjudged by Bullinger correct in their interpretation of Scripture. In this phase of Bullinger’s writing on such a disputed topic as the Lord’s Supper, Bullinger was content to let the church fathers, Oecolampadius, or Zwingli

⁵⁵ “ut perpetuum amoris erga nos sui mnemosynum ac pignus relinqueret” (HBTS 6:377).

⁵⁶ “Adiuvant ergo fidei contemplationem sacramenta, concordant cum mentis studiis” (Bromiley, *Zwingli and Bullinger*, 264).

⁵⁷ “magna, preciosa, amplifica” (HBTS 6:378).

⁵⁸ Heinrich Bullinger, *In omnes apostolicas epistolas divi videlicet Pauli XIII et VII canonicas commentarii Henrychi Bullingeri* (Zurich: Froschauer, 1537), aaa4v–5r; translation from Kim, “Humanistic Commentary,” 117.

speak verbatim for him rather than distill their writings and express them in his own words.

For Bullinger, referring to Zwingli was an opportunity to affirm his orthodoxy to Scripture and his continuity with what Zwingli had taught. It was also a chance to highlight the central role of the Holy Spirit, the word of God, faith in the heart of the believers in the Lord's Supper, the celebratory nature of the Lord's Supper for the body of Christ as well as the participation of the senses in the Lord's Supper.⁵⁹ When he cited Zwingli, Bullinger did not employ a "run on" style of quotation or use concerted continuous quotations, but rather he quoted sections of Zwingli's writings as they suited his purpose. In this section of the commentary, Bullinger also stressed aspects of the Lord's Supper that are less prominent in Zwingli, such as the covenantal nature of the sacrament and the celebrating of the Lord's Supper in light of Christ's return. Bullinger cited Ambrosiaster's commentary on 1 Corinthians in seeing a parallel between *hoc est corpus meum* and *hoc est testamentum, quod disposuit deus ad vos* by referring to Exod 24:8.⁶⁰ He further pointed out, in referring to Erasmus, that Christ instituted the Lord's Supper to be not only a meal of remembrance of his death but also of the eternal covenant (*aeterni foederi*).⁶¹ Acts 1:11 was thus mentioned by Bullinger to emphasize Christ's return. In this connection, he quoted from Erasmus's *Paraphrasis in epistolam Pauli ad Corinthios priorem* to underscore that the Lord's Supper functions as a "perpetual remembrance that holds you in attention" until Christ returns.⁶²

It is to be noted that Bullinger did not mention Zwingli's *Subsidium sive coronis de eucharistia* (1525), *Amica exegesis* (1527), nor other relevant works of Zwingli. But he did cite both *De convitiis Eckii* (1530) and *Christianae fidei* (1531), which were written not long before Zwingli's death. This was not, however, because of supposed developments in Zwingli's understanding of the

⁵⁹ Bruce Gordon provides a helpful summary of how Zwingli understood the Lord's Supper, which is expressed in the two quotations used by Bullinger in his commentary on 1 Corinthians. Gordon writes, "The term [i.e., *memoria*], derived from Platonism, does not mean mere recollection but a transformative, unifying experience in which temporal distance is overcome as the believer is grafted into the body of Christ through the work of the Spirit. Far from prosaic ritual, Zwingli advocated an almost mystical experience through his absolute distinction of Flesh and Spirit. The efficacy of the Eucharist cannot in any manner be dependent on human senses. Yet, the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper, as well as the water of baptism, are outward signs of faith that engage the senses and direct them to Christ. The bread and wine are symbols through which the Spirit works, thus they are beneficial only to those who receive them in faith. In themselves they do not convey grace or impart faith" (Bruce Gordon, "Huldrych Zwingli," *ExpTim* 126 [2014]: 167).

⁶⁰ HBTS 6:374. Although this aspect of the Lord's Supper is significantly more pronounced in Bullinger, Zwingli did, on occasion, speak of the covenant in relationship to the Lord's Supper. See Bruce Gordon, "It Is the Lord's Passover": History, Theology and Memory in the Liturgy of the Lord's Supper in Reformation Zurich," in *Liturgy's Imagined Past(s): Methodologies and Materials in the Writing of Liturgical History Today*, ed. Teresa Berger and Bryan D. Spinks (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2016), 172–200.

⁶¹ HBTS 6:383.

⁶² "iugis memoria vos in officio contineat" (HBTS 6:383).

Lord's Supper, especially with respect to the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper, according to Gottfried Locher's suggestion of such development in Zwingli's thought (*Spätzinglianismus*).⁶³ Much of what Zwingli wrote about the Lord's Supper is actually reflected in Bullinger's discussion of both 1 Cor 10:1–5 and 1 Cor 11:23–26. However, Bullinger chose to express these points through his own interpretation of the biblical text and through the words of certain church fathers as well as Ratramnus. Bullinger did quote from these two works of Zwingli as they were worded in a way that suited Bullinger's purpose. It is clear that, as Zwingli's Nachfolger, Bullinger did not blindly follow Zwingli.

VI. Conclusion

Bullinger was invited by Zwingli to accompany him to the Colloquy at Marburg (1529) but he declined, giving the reasons that he had just gotten married and had recently commenced a pastoral ministry at Bremgarten. Although there is no documentation to the fact, it can be reasonably presumed that there were communications or discussions between Zwingli and Bullinger in preparation for the colloquy. At any rate, Bullinger would have been fully conversant with Zwingli's understanding of the Lord's Supper.

Both Bullinger and Zwingli had similar backgrounds in preparation for their respective ministries. They were both trained in humanism, rhetoric, and the use of the biblical languages. Since both placed the utmost priority on correctly interpreting Scripture through judicial use of the tools they were trained and skilled in, it is not surprising that, unfettered by the tradition of the medieval church, they came, independently, to similar views of the Lord's Supper. There were, of course, nuanced differences between their respective understandings of the Lord's Supper. With the passing of time Bullinger felt free to express his insights in the context of defending Zurich theology as opposed to defending Zwinglian theology.⁶⁴

Bullinger was the Nachfolger of Zwingli who carried on the baton of the true interpretation and practice of Scripture. With respect to the Lord's Supper, Bullinger enunciated more clearly and in greater detail what Zwingli had written. He did not slavishly follow Zwingli at every point. The differences between them were expressed by Bullinger over time so that there was both continuity and discontinuity as determined by Bullinger himself. In this connection, Amy Nelson Burnett noted that "Zwingli was succeeded by the young Heinrich

⁶³ Gottfried W. Locher, *Die Zwinglische Reformation im Rahmen der europäischen Kirchengeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 584–85. See also Paul Sanders, "Heinrich Bullinger et le 'zinglianisme tardif' aux lendemains du 'Consensus Tigurinus,'" *Zwingliana* 1 (1992): 307–23. Although "late Zwinglianism" appears an attractive approach to Zwingli's thought, it fails to give due attention to the import of Zwingli's earlier works.

⁶⁴ For a study of the continuity and discontinuity between Bullinger and Zwingli with respect to the Lord's Supper, see W. Peter Stephens, "The Sacraments in the Confessions of 1536, 1549, and 1566: Bullinger's Understanding in the Light of Zwingli's," *Zwingliana* 33 (2006): 51–76.

Bullinger, whose theology of the sacraments was shaped but not determined by his predecessor.”⁶⁵ It may well have been the case, however, that both Zwingli and Bullinger came to a markedly similar understanding of the Lord’s Supper through their own study of the church fathers and the application of humanist tools to the exegesis of key biblical passages. More than ten years after Zwingli’s demise Bullinger began to express his understanding of the Lord’s Supper in terms that addressed the contemporary challenges such as the Council of Trent (commenced 1545). His understanding of the Lord’s Supper in the *Consensus Tigurinus* (1549) and in *The Decades* (1549–1551) indicates that he and Zwingli drew from the same sources but that there were distinct differences.

⁶⁵ Amy Nelson Burnett, *Debating the Sacraments: Print and Authority in the Early Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 314.