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EUCCHARISTIC SACRIFICE:
AN EXPRESSION OF GOOD FOR OTHERS

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Practical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by
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February 1968

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Advisor

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INTRODUCTION

The Nature of Current Interest in Eucharistic Sacrifice

In the past few decades the Eucharist has been the source and object of much study, Seen properly as the normative center of Christian worship expression, the dynamic and doctrine of the Eucharist has been studied from public and private, practical and philosophical points of view. Everywhere renewed interest and life has been the experience of the Church. Weekly celebrations are coming to replace the "once-a-month" or quarterly parish eucharistic celebrations. All this renewed life and interest did not come about in any vacuum. Rather, it is better viewed as one of the healthiest expressions of a general liturgical renaissance which has embraced the Church. Today's renascent liturgical expressions are the younger siblings of such phenomena as Cardinal Newman, the Oxford Movement, Mercersburg theology, the St. James Society, etc. Assertions of liturgical renewal in the form of the encyclical Mediator Dei of Pius XII in 1947 and the more recent "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy" of Vatican II, have given added impetus and inspiration to the efforts of liturgical revival among Protestants.

The increase in Biblical studies has served to assemble the material for an enlightened understanding of the euchar-

ist. Modern critical exegesis has yielded a new emphasis upon the central importance of cultic activity in religious communities of both the Old and New Testaments. It is obvious that increased knowledge of this nature would open the eucharist to a fuller understanding as well as raise numerous questions about the eucharist among all branches of Christendom. Such has indeed been the situation.¹ Not the least among the questions raised concerning the essence of the eucharist have been those collateral to eucharistic sacrifice. What is the Old Testament comprehension of sacrifice? What, if anything, do the Law, the Prophets and the Writings add to our present sacrificial understanding of the eucharist? Did the writers of the New Testament perceive the Last Supper and its subsequent rehearsals in a sacrificial sense? How did the New Testament authors conceive of their eucharist or agape feasts as a sacrifice? These and scores of other questions have been raised. Some answers have been forthcoming as a result of the increase in Biblical studies.

Fortunately, we cannot halt with simply the "combined witness of the Scriptures and Liturgy" to inform our view of the current interest in eucharistic sacrifice.² At present, happily, one can hardly speak of the liturgical renaissance or Biblical studies without also confronting the ecumenical dialogue so prevalent and influential within the Church. The most notable result of this ecumenical exchange has been a trend toward union and the sunset of divisiveness

within the Church Catholic. The sine qua non of church union is the establishment of a mutual understanding between separated communions. Current ecumenical discussions as well as discussions within communions have been instrumental in bringing about a marked increase of mutual understanding and an end to the hostilities which marred former relationships. Less spectacular, yet perhaps more important, is the fact that today's equivalents of former "Free Conferences" have forced church bodies to re-examine, re-evaluate, and finally give clear and precise expression to their understanding of Christian doctrine and practice. The centrality of the Eucharist for the Christian faith has caused it to occupy a central place in the churches' dialogue. In any discussion of the eucharist between Protestants and Catholics an examination of the nature of eucharistic sacrifice has occupied a topmost position on agendas. Even if the matter of eucharistic sacrifice could be avoided in discussion, it indicts one in the worship found, with few exceptions, at every ecumenical convocation. In these ecumenical contexts, the eucharist presents itself as both accuser and witness: a witness to the unity expressed in the eucharist and an accuser against the schisms which separate brothers in Christ. "When we are unable to share together in the Lord's Supper the pain and scandal of our divisions is most severely felt because we seek the one Lord and know that we should be able to

partake as brethren in the Family of God at one Table."³

The nature of current interest in Eucharistic sacrifice finds expression on three basic fronts: the liturgical renaissance, Biblical studies and the ecumenical dialogue. In her liturgical renaissance, the Church grapples with form and idiom in both text and action, seeking to render eloquent expression to the depth of meaning inherent in her historic liturgy as she worships through eucharistic activity. Our second area of interest, Biblical studies, functions here, to a large degree, as a servant of the Church. Interest in the eucharist is generated by Biblical studies as it provides solid underpinnings of knowledge and information which advises both the Church's liturgical renaissance and ecumenical dialogue. The interest here derives its direction and force from the increased understanding of the Biblical material. In the arena of ecumenical conversations, the great interest in the eucharist is of a positive nature; one which builds upon openness and understanding. The expression of interest in eucharistic sacrifice in the ecumenical dialogue is at its best when it is least defensive, while being honestly open to the future with a sound awareness of the past.

As sensitivity to the sacrificial nature of the eucharist reveals itself in the liturgical renaissance it is intensely practical and decidedly historical. In the area of Biblical studies, it becomes objective and exegetical. It is perhaps

in the field of ecumenical dialogue that the interest in eucharistic sacrifice is most varied. Here it is practical and systematic as well as quite historical.

It is apparent then that the problem of the scope and nature of eucharistic sacrifice is not simply a narrow segment of theology, but involves, in some manner, the entire field of theological discipline.

Problems Connected With Eucharistic Sacrifice

James McCue has stated that "...Roman Catholics are generally agreed that the Mass is a sacrifice," however, he continues, "the consensus breaks down when it comes to detailed explanation of what is meant by 'sacrifice.'"⁴ Among Protestant communions, there is not nearly the agreement regarding the sacrificial understanding of the eucharist. Nevertheless, the breakdown of agreement among Protestants comes at precisely the same point Mr. McCue indicated among his Roman Catholic brethren, i.e., over detailed explanation of what one means or understands by the term "sacrifice" when connected with the eucharist.

Agreement is generally easily come to on an understanding of the eucharist. Even if there is still some problem concerning the understanding of the eucharist across denominational lines, there is little within separate communions. The question of sacrifice, and, especially eucharistic sacrifice,

is entirely another matter. Debate and disagreement still color present discussions.

Finding themselves increasingly involved in the arena of ecumenical discussions, Lutherans are oftentimes hard pressed to enunciate an understanding of eucharistic sacrifice.⁵ It will not suffice to say that there is no sacrifice nor a sacrificial understanding of the eucharist.' Brillioth issued a call for Lutherans to heed. "The evangelical churches must treat seriously the consideration that the eucharist is a sacrifice of praise; and they cannot be justified in denying the validity of the idea of the memorial act."⁶ If we are to heed this, and take seriously the idea that the eucharist is a sacrifice of praise, and that the concept of a memorial act is valid, then answers will have to be forthcoming and definitions will have to be precise. It yet remains to be seen whether the difficulty lies with the concept itself, or the lack of definition.

Another problem connected with eucharistic sacrifice is that discussions have taken place from positions arrived at during a period of strife in the history of the Church.

Periods of strife and controversy always have an unfortunate consequence - the defendant must at all costs save the point attacked, and so the threatened point is stressed while others are passed over. 7

The consequences are equally unfortunate from the side of the offensive.

The point from which the battle has been launched has

become strengthened to the point that "eucharistic sacrifice" has become an inflammatory term in some circles. The unfortunate outcome of previous periods of strife poses problems for today's discussions. Closely connected with this problem is the fact that any previous definition of a sacrificial understanding of the eucharist grew from a decidedly negative situation. The Roman Catholic position was defined, as Jungmann states, from a defensive stance. Protestant positions more often than not, took the form of simply "no-saying". Yet, it must be noted that the above mentioned negative situation was a direct result of the legitimate objection of the Reformers. Their objection, as we shall later demonstrate, grew from a rejection of expressions of Roman medieval sacramental theology and its understanding of the sacrifice of the mass. Against this medieval understanding of sacrifice the reformers disagreed for sound theological reasons. It has been the later developments which produced the problematic situation with which we are now faced.

Reasons for Treatment

As we have noticed above, the past several years have revealed a great amount of interest in the topic of the eucharist and its sacrificial interpretation. Despite the great amount and wide scope of the present interest, there has not been any significant definition of the topic which holds promise of effecting any agreement on the subject. The lack of agreement

continues despite the ever increasing involvement in ecumenical dialogue. Biblical studies continue to provide the Church with an ever growing amount of knowledge and understanding; much of it relevant to a discussion of eucharistic sacrifice. But agreement still seems to elude the Church. The wonder is how the liturgical renaissance flourishes and ecumenical dialogue grows at the present pace without agreement on a subject divisive to two factions of western Christendom. As the liturgical renaissance continues to grow, it becomes increasingly necessary to enunciate specific definitions of how one understands a liturgy which has been resurrected so successfully.

Among some Roman theologians there has been an effort put forth to redefine the medieval understanding of eucharistic sacrifice. Protestantism has not yet contributed significant attempts to define her understanding of eucharistic sacrifice.⁸ There is ample room for much discussion and definition of the concept on the part of the Protestant communions. Indeed, both the revival of liturgical worship and the present ecumenical discussions would seem to demand that a clear definition of eucharistic sacrifice be given by Protestants for the benefit of the entire Church Catholic.

N O T E S

¹Gustaf Aulén, Eucharist and Sacrifice, translated from Swedish by Eric H. Wahlstrom (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), p. xii.

²Evelyn Underhill, Worship (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), p. 57.

³Third World Conference on Faith and Order Held at Lund, 1952 (London: Student Christian Movement, 1953), p. 53.

⁴James F. McCue, "Luther and Roman Catholicism on the Mass as Sacrifice," Journal of Ecumenical Studies, II, 2, (Spring 1965), 223.

⁵Notable exceptions to this have been Gustaf Aulén, Eucharist and Sacrifice, and Arthur Carl Piepkorn's three articles: "Christ Today: His Presence in the Sacraments," Lutheran World, X, 3 (July 1963), 267-287; "The Lutheran Doctrine of the Sacraments: Ecumenically Considered," 25th North American Liturgical Week, The Challenge of the Council: Person, Parish, World, 1964, pp. 134-154; "Sacrament, Sacrifice and Stewardship," Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Proceedings of the Michigan District, 1960, pp. 11-20.

⁶Yngve Brilioth, Eucharistic Faith and Practice, translated by A. G. Herbert (London: S.P.C.K., 1961), p. 48.

⁷Joseph Andrew Jungmann, S.J., The Sacrifice of the Church, translated from the German by Clifford Howell, S.J. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1955), pp. 2-3.

⁸The most significant of the recent Roman Catholic theologians attempting to give expression to a sacrificial understanding of the eucharist was Dom Odo Casel. He saw the sacrifice of the present Mass as a "re-presentation" of the sacrifice of Calvary. Significant Lutheran efforts have already been noted. Max Turian represents the Reformed tradition.

CHAPTER I

TOWARD A BROADER VIEW

A Definition of Sacrifice

From the previous discussion, it becomes apparent that the concept of eucharistic sacrifice is problematic for the Church. However, not the real problem, for the basic problem appears to be the failure or inability of the Church to come to any sort of agreement on how one is to understand sacrifice. If a clear understanding of sacrifice is achieved, then it yet remains to discover whether or not that understanding may be applied to the eucharist, on which there already is substantial agreement. Only when the question of sacrifice has been settled will it be possible to come to any considered agreement on the larger question of eucharistic sacrifice.

The Hebrew concept of sacrifice is very instructive. It is modeled on the surrounding sacrificial concepts of the near eastern world. Generally speaking, definitions of sacrifice which have come from churchly sources have been based almost entirely upon the Hebrew concept of sacrifice as expressed in the Old Testament. A. R. S. Kennedy makes a noteworthy distinction in talking about sacrifice. He distinguishes "sacrifice" from "offering". "Every sacrifice was an offering, but not all offerings were sacrifices."¹ To sacrifice meant literally to slaughter. Only those offerings which were

immolated were sacrificial offerings. The concept "sacrifice" has inherent within it the destruction of that which is offered. Whether the offering is destroyed, therefore becoming a sacrifice, or is simply presented to God, they are both motivated by the same understanding - - namely, that the offering be effective before the heavenly throne. An offering was made on the basis of do ut des ("I give that you may give"), either to initiate the blessing of God or in response to a blessing already received, with an eye to perpetuation.²

There are then two ingredients to any sacrifice: an offering to God with the intent of favorably influencing Him; that same offering must be destroyed in some manner, either literally or figuratively. The belief that the offering will be effective in influencing God is the important concept.

At this point I should like to introduce another definition of sacrifice. Originally expressed by Paul Weiss in a context totally separate from that of eucharistic sacrifice, still it deserves to be taken seriously. For the purposes of this paper, it will be the definition of sacrifice which we shall employ. Sacrifice is defined as "an act which regards the needs of others more than is usual, and which generously expresses and tries to produce a good for others."³

This definition of sacrifice seems to have much to recommend itself for the present discussion of eucharistic sacrifice. This definition performs the valuable function of placing the entire topic of sacrifice on a much broader base.

The previously negative basis for discussion is thereby removed. It is to be observed that the definition does not necessarily remove the element of destruction.

Perhaps an example will best reveal the broadening effect this definition has upon a discussion of sacrifice. Part of the problem concerning the subject of eucharistic sacrifice is the question of whether the Last Supper was originally intended to be sacrificial.⁴ Those who say that it was not, claim that sacrificial elements were only read back into the eucharistic meal in the light of the sacrifice of Calvary. Thus, the sacrifice must be only on Calvary, and not in the meal. Others have resisted placing the sacrifice in either the Last Supper or the blood-letting of Calvary. These men have seen the sacrifice as being the entire life of our Lord; the voluntary *κενόσις*, Incarnation, life among men and death on the Cross. The last would fit well with our definition of sacrifice. The life of the God-Man, Jesus Christ far surpassed the regard given to the needs of men (both physical and spiritual) by anyone yet - God or man. The life of Christ generously expresses through both his words and actions a regard for the needs of men. Not only does His life express, but the consistent witness of the Christian Church has been, that our Lord by His Holy life and death did effect the ultimate good for men: the salvation of all men.

Finally, such a definition of sacrifice would recommend itself for our consideration on the basis that as a modern

explication, it may well be useful in formulating definitions to speak of eucharistic sacrifice in contemporary discussion.

The fact that sacrificial language in connection with the eucharist has consistently been understood in terms of the ancient near eastern conception of an offering which is efficacious before the heavenly council, has long been a problem in formulating a definition of sacrifice suitable to the Church-both Protestant and Roman. To speak of sacrifice was not a real problem for the Hebrew mind. Not only was the same understanding of sacrifice held all about Palestine, but the ancient Hebrew was not confronted by the life and death of Christ. Ever since the $\epsilon\phi\acute{\omicron}\tau\alpha\varsigma$ character of the sacrificial life and death of Jesus Christ became a peculiar trait of the Christian $\kappa\eta\rho\upsilon\gamma\mu\alpha$, it has been difficult to speak of sacrifice in terms of the Old Testament paradigms. Weiss correctly reminds us that for any dictionary, "to sacrifice" is to make something sacred, holy, to dedicate it, to consecrate it.⁵ Yet, we have outdistanced such thought in our common, secular language. "To sacrifice" has become secularized. We commonly speak of sacrificing our time, or an ideal. If someone "sacrifices" a block of his time, that time is not increased in its sacral qualities. The Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth is not made the more holy by the "sacrifice" or destruction of anything, even a human being. A portion or even the whole of something "sacrificed" to repay God out of a sense of obligation only equates the

the sacrifice with the very secular concept of "justice". The ludicrous nature of the above is precisely that which has proved problematic when pursued by theologians who have been convinced that their argumentation, either for or against eucharistic sacrifice, must be based upon the old Hebrew conceptualization.

Just as much of our common, secular language usage has outstripped our concept of sacrifice, so our language has "secularized" our understanding of the eucharist. No longer is the eucharist thought to be just so much "hocus pocus". A highly mystical understanding of the eucharist will no longer satisfy one who has eaten a communal meal in union with God and men. Those who gather as a worshipping community with eyes wide open about an altar symbolizing the presence of a Risen Christ in the midst of his people are not swayed by mysticism. Experiencing the Risen Christ with all his sacramental power in such a manner precludes speaking of even eucharistic sacrifice in terms of bringing about the destruction of some created thing to effect some sort of beneficial response on behalf of the God to whom the "sacrifice" was made. Instead, I would submit, we ought to speak of eucharistic sacrifice in terms of the suggested definition. No longer may we attempt to effect a consensus on what is being "sacrificed" (destroyed) in the eucharist, where this occurs in the eucharistic liturgy, and finally how this "sacrifice" may be understood to come about. Instead

one must view the eucharistic action as a whole action which is being performed. It is this entire activity which then becomes the sacrifice. We must seek to achieve a consensus on a way, or a consensus on several ways of understanding the entire eucharistic activity as a sacrifice; of understanding the entire eucharistic action as an act which regards the needs of others more than is usual, and as an act which in and of itself is an act which expresses and tries to achieve a good for other people.

Our aim in this paper will be to demonstrate that such a conception of sacrifice, when it is applied to eucharistic sacrifice, is not at variance with the normative elements of the Christian Church. The choice of those sources considered normative for our discussion will be somewhat selective. We shall limit ourselves to a discussion of texts from Scriptures, writings of the Fathers of the Church, pertinent works of Luther and other reformers of the Lutheran Church, and the Book of Concord, 1580. This is indeed very limited, as it makes no provision for what has happened since the era of the Reformation. The confines of this study do not permit a treatment of those sources which have appeared since the 16th century.

We would hope to demonstrate that the entire topic of eucharistic sacrifice might be placed upon a much broader base than has been the case prior to this. It is hoped that this study will reveal the possibility of doing this with

some profit as well as increase our present understanding of the historic background of eucharistic sacrifice.

N O T E S

¹A. R. S. Kennedy, "Sacrifice and Offering," Dictionary of the Bible, article revised by James Barr, edited by James Hastings and revised by Frederick C. Grant and H. H. Rowley (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), p. 868.

²see T. H. Gaster's article "Sacrifices and Offerings," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, edited by George Butirick (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), IV, pp. 147-159.

³Paul Weiss, "Sacrifice and Self-Sacrifice," Review of Metaphysics, II, (June 1948), p. 78.

⁴For a full discussion of this problem, see Joachim Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus, translated from the third German edition by Norman Perrin (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), pp. 15-88.

⁵Weiss, p. 81.

CHAPTER II

THE OLD TESTAMENT UNDERSTANDING OF SACRIFICE

Early Canaanite Influence

In the attempt to discover the way in which the Old Testament understands and expresses its understanding of sacrifice, one finds that there are few specific interpretations of a theological significance attached to sacrifice, especially in the early days of Israel's amphy-tionic union.¹ Despite the fairly obvious conscientious effort of early writings to link the sacrificial cult with the Sinaitic Mosaic code, there is almost no attempt to interpret or freight any sacrifice with a specific meaning. This pervading silence yields the impression that the early Israel had no specific understanding of sacrifice. The confrontation of Yahweh in His mighty, historic acts still exerted a strong influence on the faith of the early Palestinian Israelite community.

From the study of the history of religions, there has come an awareness of a phenomena which may well serve to provide us with a partial understanding of this lack of explanation on the part of Israel regarding her sacrifices.

Ages which offered their sacrifices in naïve faith had little or nothing to say about the meaning of these sacrifices. It is only when certain tensions appear between the world of the rites and the men who perform them that

theories about sacrifice arise, as well as the need for their rational clarification. 2

Whether one might be permitted in so blithely terming the early forms of Yahwism "naïve" is a questionable issue. None-the-less, the theory is certainly attractive in the face of silence. The theory becomes all the more attractive when one considers the Canaanite influence. The intermixing of the Israelite and Canaanite cultures could well be the source of the "certain tensions" mentioned, but unidentified by von Rad.

The collection of Old Testament sacrifices and their attendant rites did not in themselves spring from normative Yahwism. "It was only in Canaan that Israel entered into an old and widespread sacral practice, into which she poured her own ideas."³ This view of Israelite dependence upon contemporary Canaanite cultic practice is given strong support by Clements:

The substance of Israel's cult was certainly not of a single unified origin, any more than the Israelites were themselves derived from a single family stock. Every increase in our knowledge of the Canaanite cult has served to show how deeply the Israelites were indebted to the Canaanites for the forms of their worship. The types of sacrifice, the festival calendar and often the very sanctuaries themselves were taken over from the Canaanites . . . Much of the older pattern of the cult was continued, but was transformed because it was now in the honour of Yahweh. So heavy is this borrowing from Canaan that it is now beyond the powers of the historian to make any probable reconstruction of what Israel's cult was like when the people first settled in the land. 4

The Canaanite religion and sacrificial cultus undoubtedly had no small influence upon the Israelite system of sacrifice. Perhaps her naïveté had begun to wear thin when subjected to the friction which the contact with the Canaanites brought about. Previously Israel had seen Yahweh's turning to her revealed in His "Mighty Arm" and in the gracious guidance of individual lives. But the salvific activity of Yahweh was not to be exhausted. Israel now came to believe "that in the sacrificial cult too, he (Yahweh) had ordained an instrument which opened up to her a continuous relationship with Him."⁵ The interpretation, or perhaps more properly, the re-interpretation had begun. Still, it is not possible to discern any consistent understanding of sacrifice. The externals of the sacrifices were preserved through cultic observance down to quite a late date in a remarkably conservative manner; but "the ideas themselves are flexible and inevitably change in the course of the centuries."⁶ It has been noted, perhaps quite correctly in this connection, that "to the devout Jew ... the distinctions and classifications of the Mosaic sacrificial code were probably more technical than real."⁷ This is at least an adequate description of the loose state of change in which Israel's sacrificial cultus was prior to and during the almost "trial and error" process of selecting and adopting motives which finally led to an interpretation of sacrifice. This process is described by

von Rad:

What generally happened was that whenever sacrifice was offered, several motives were involved, and these imperceptibly passed over into one another with the probable result that one of them became prominent and determinative. 8

The reader looks in vain (in the Priestly code) for firm holds to enable him to rise into the spiritual realm by way of the sacrificial concepts lying behind the sacrificial practice. In itself the offering of the sacrifice, or course, left great freedom to the attitude of the worshipper, allowing room for the meanest do ut des disposition as well as the most spiritualisation of the outward act. 9

The attitude which permitted such a free wheeling atmosphere of interpretation to arise surrounding Israel's sacrificial cultus undoubtedly gave rise to much confusion and thus silence concerning an interpretative understanding of any given sacrifice. A bit of modern conjecture about the extents that such confusion could attain is supplied us by Paddy Chayefsky in his play, Gideon:

(Gideon was sent out to secure a bullock for sacrifice, and returns instead with a kid. His father Joash, hurriedly decides to sacrifice the kid any way).

JOASH: Now, does anyone remember the ritual we followed last year?

HELEK: It didn't help much last year, so I shouldn't worry too much about repeating it exactly.

ABIMELECH: You dip your hand in the blood of the sacrifice and sprinkle it on the horns of the altar and . . .

JOASH: Yes, yes, I remember all that. It's the portion I'm asking about. How much of the animal do we actually offer? Does the right shoulder and upper right joint sound familiar to anyone?

HELEK: No, no, the proper portion for the

sacrifice to My Lord Ba-al is the two cheeks, the stomach, the shoulders and all the fat thereof.

JOASH: Oh, I know that's not right.

ABIMELECH: (Reaching impatiently for the knife in JOASH'S hand) Oh, Let me do it.

JOASH: No, I'm Chief of the clan.

ABIMELECH: Well, finish up with it then.

JOASH: It's a mangy little animal. Why don't we just offer up the whole kid and have done with it?

ABIMELECH: Good.¹⁰

If confusion and a lack of clarity in understanding her sacrifices characterizes Israel's cultus, such is not the case in other aspects of the rising Jewish nation. The same interaction with the Canaanite peoples of Palestine which led to a diversity of sacrifices, also led to the establishment of the Monarchy. The Israelite people became less and less agriculturally oriented, while, at the same time, they adopted more and more of the sophisticated, urbanized culture of the Canaanites. There is still not a really Hebraic interpretation of the adopted sacrifices. Nevertheless, we must agree that during the rise of the Israelite state in the pre-exilic period, it was the confused cult of Israel that was "an instrument for maintaining a continuity of faith and conduct in Israel."¹¹ The earlier Mosaic traditions were maintained in the midst of confusion, alongside of, and intermingled with the more elaborate cultic practices which had been borrowed from the Canaanites.

The Monarchy's Influence On
Sacrifice

The formation and establishment of the Monarchy, especially as it was experienced under the Davidic reign, had a profound effect upon the entirety of the life of the Israelite state. Despite its conservative nature, Israel's cultic activity was not immune to the influence of the Monarchy. The effect of the Monarchy upon the sacrificial activity associated with the cultic centers was two-fold. What had once consisted of many local cultic centers serving a diverse population, now suddenly under David was unified in a single political and religious center located at Jerusalem. The theological result was the rise of the whole school of Zion theology. The choice of Israel in Abraham by Yahweh was at last being realized in a historical, concrete manner. If one should doubt this he need only look to the King and the Temple. No further proof was required. Israel was the chosen nation, the nation with whom Yahweh had entered into covenant. Surely Yahweh would never depart from this Kingdom or this Holy Temple. The cultic and sacrificial activity came to be understood as a means of perpetuating the glorious existence of the Davidic Kingdom.

A second effect was that with the establishment of the temple at Jerusalem, the priesthood came to take on greater importance in society. But with the establishment of the

priesthood as a social institution came a danger. It is then that "the simple act of sacrifice becomes transformed into a solemn and mysterious rite which gathers round it a whole complex of ideas and practices."¹² Often they are of a very abstruse character. Finally, a theory of sacrifice becomes developed. It is this theory of sacrifice which is important. Often the theory of sacrifice becomes as important as, or more important than theology itself, the theory of the nature of the gods.

The stage has thus been set for the prophetic outcry denouncing the practice of sacrifice as it was performed by the priests of their day. Really, it is not until the prophets of the pre-exilic kingdom that Israel comes clean with an understanding of sacrifice. The unfortunate element here is that the interpretation of sacrifice came about only when conditions of the cult were in a deplorable state. The prophetic definition of sacrifice, sadly, has a negative, denying tone to it.¹³

The Prophetic Interpretation Of Sacrifice

There can be little doubt that the prophets of the eighth century denounced sacrifices. The question that must be asked, is why? What led the prophets to speak so harshly against a religious practice that had been such an established part of Israel's worship for these many generations? The

question has been raised whether the general tenor of the Israelite religious community, and especially the prophets, become too sophisticated for sacrificing:

The old heathenish ideas that God physically enjoyed the smell of the burning flesh and that he and his worshippers shared the common sacrificial meal though obsolete or evanescent were still remembered and must have struck the more thoughtful as unworthy. Moreover, the inherent futility of killing a beast, hewing its carcass in pieces, tossing basinsfuls of its blood in this place and that and finally burning its remains in whole or in part, could hardly have failed to come home sooner or later to spiritual minds. 14

Such a view, does not really take the message of the prophets themselves seriously, however sophisticated we may like to think of the Israelites of Davidic Jerusalem.

A more accurate view of the prophets' attack upon sacrifice would see the attack in the context of the covenant. Israel's cult had not upheld the law in the eyes of the prophets. But this failure was only a part of its wider failure to represent the interests of the covenant as a whole. Sometimes seen as an attack upon sacrifice, the prophetic message was rather one intended to revive an awareness of what the covenant was all about. Clements' observes that:

The very fact that the prophetic criticism stress righteousness and justice over against the offering of sacrifices, points to the relative, rather than absolute, nature of their opposition to the worship of the sanctuaries. They did not oppose cult as such, in favor of a non-cultic religion, but they opposed the cult which they found, because it no longer stressed the ethical nature of true Yahwehism . . . A religion without moral obedience, no matter how

elaborate its ceremonies and festivals, did not fulfill the (covenant) demands of the holy God of Israel.

When the sacrificial worship of Israel had obscured and replaced this knowledge of Yahweh's covenant, it had ceased to honour Yahweh, and had failed to fulfill its essential task of making known his will. 15

The point at issue was bigger than just sacrifice, but rather what Dawson termed the "theory of the nature of the gods", specifically, Yahweh. The concept of a god who had entered into covenant with Israel had been subverted by the Canaanite concept of a god who could be influenced to yield blessings through the power of correctly performed rituals.

The prophetic denunciations of the sacrifices of their day define, albeit via negativa, the true nature and understanding of sacrifice in terms of the covenant, and not in terms of an ex opere operata performance of rituals.¹⁶ For the prophets sacrifice meant to rehearse, to re-present the covenant with a didactic understanding of that rehearsal. In this connection, A. E. J. Rawlinson makes a noteworthy observation regarding the sacrificial personnel: "The Hebrew kohen is indeed more than simply a sacrificial functionary; It also belongs to his office to be an exponent of the 'law' or 'teaching' (Torah) of God."¹⁷

The prophets reveal themselves as not being opposed to all sacrifice. They issued a prophetic call for a "reform" of sacrifice. Sacrifices were to perform a very instructive function of the cult, bearing fruit as they became transformed into a vehicle for instilling a more ethical and responsible

attitude toward Yahweh. Sacrifice was to be understood as a means, rather than an end; a means of both revealing and instructing Israel in the true Word of Yahweh, and not as an end in itself which possessed the inherent power to effect a change in the attitude of Yahweh. The true Word of Yahweh was to be found in the covenant, and not in the formulary of ritual. It was the Word of the covenant which had brought Israel into being as the People of God, and the intent of the cultic activity was the re-presenting, the "teaching", if you will, of that covenant throughout the generations. It is understandable that the major thrust of the prophetic message was that the covenant had been broken and that Yahweh was about to punish his unfaithful nation. There is an intimate connection between the prophet's oracle of doom to Israel and the criticism of sacrifice. Not only had the covenant been broken, but it was not even being "taught" the Israelites through a proper, ethical understanding of the nature of Yahweh. This was to have been the essential function of sacrifice.

A clear understanding of this intimate connection between the covenant and sacrifice relates directly to our definition of sacrifice as an act which regards the needs of others more than is usual, and which generously expresses and tries to produce a good for others. The degree to which a sacrifice "taught" or re-enacted the covenant, is the degree to which it may truly be called a sacrifice. The covenant itself is really the "sacrificial" act par excellence. As we have seen

from the Canaanite's concept of sacrifice, the needs of others was purely their responsibility, to be looked after by means of sacrifice: i.e. successfully influencing a god through correct ritual. That god to whom sacrifice was offered was, at best, neutral towards the needs of others, and at worst, actively hostile and in need of pacification via ritual. The radical view of God expressed in the covenant was that of a God who took the initiative in becoming identified with the needs of others by entering into covenant with men. Such a view was highly irregular, and unusual among the concepts of gods present in the near east. By the very nature of the covenant, ("You shall be my people, and I will be your God"), Yahweh pledged himself not simply to expressing a good for others, but to effecting that good. That such was His will is ably demonstrated in the deliverance from Egypt and the establishment of the nation in Palestine. The effecting of this good by Yahweh is to extend beyond Israel. It is no afterthought on the part of Yahweh that he confronts Abraham with the responsibility of being a "blessing to the nations". In entering into covenant with His chosen people, Yahweh, from the very outset, purposed to effect blessing among the nations through the means of his covenanted nation, Israel. This was to have been Israel's sacrifice.

N O T E S

¹Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology II, (henceforth referred to as O.T.T. II) translated from the German by D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 392.

²Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology I (henceforth referred to as O.T.T. I) translated from the German by D. M. G. Stalker (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 253.

³Ibid., p. 252.

⁴R. E. Clements, Prophecy and Covenant: Studies in Theology #43 (London: SCM, 1965), pp. 88-89.

⁵von Rad, O.T.T. I, p. 260.

⁶Ibid., p. 252.

⁷Evelyn Underhill, Worship (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), pp. 51-52.

⁸von Rad, O.T.T. I, p. 252.

⁹Ibid., p. 260.

¹⁰Paddy Chayefsky, Gideon (New York: Random House, 1962), pp. 8-9.

¹¹Clements, p. 93.

¹²Christopher Dawson, Religion and Culture (New York: Meridian, 1958), p. 90.

¹³The parallels to the 16th century reformers is obvious. Thus it is that many see in the pre-exilic prophets the spirit of reformers more than the spirit of a prophet.

¹⁴C. J. Cadoux, "The Religious Value of Sacrifice," The Expository Times, LVIII, 2 (November 1946), 43.

¹⁵Clements, pp. 93-97.

¹⁶H. H. Rowley, "The Prophets and Sacrifice," The Expository Times, LVIII, 11 (August 1947), 305-307.

¹⁷A. E. J. Rawlinson, "Priesthood and Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity," The Expository Times, LX, 5 (February 1949), 116.

CHAPTER III

THE NEW TESTAMENT UNDERSTANDING OF SACRIFICE

In the preceding chapter we described the Old Testament understanding of sacrifice; the adapted foreign perspectives which adhered to the Israelite cult, and how the prophets interpreted sacrifice in terms of the covenant. A grasp of this perspective yields an insight to the nature of the difficulty of describing a New Testament concept of sacrifice. There is no single New Testament understanding of sacrifice.

Judaism passed on to Christianity a host of sacrificial ideas: sacrificial meals and other religious meals; the sin offering of the Day of Atonement;...the Paschal sacrifice, itself so closely connected with the death of Jesus and the origin of the eucharist...and finally the prophetic criticism of the legal righteousness of the sacrificial system and the prophetic call for the sacrifice of a troubled spirit...¹

When we speak of the New Testament understanding of sacrifice, aside from being aware of the complicating nature of the influence of the Old Testament, we must ask whether a given interpretation of sacrifice is an interpretation held by Jesus or by the New Testament writers (i.e., the Church). This distinction is not simply a Scholastic one. The latter is, virtually without exception, an interpretation of the former as it was understood by either the individual or the total Christian community.

In seeking to understand the meaning of sacrifice for Jesus, we look to the words and activity centered about the

Last Supper, rather than the Gospel narratives as a whole. This is motivated by the reason indicated above; the Gospels bear the marks of theological interpretation of individuals and/or whole communities. "The proclamation of the Incarnate One is qualified in each of our Gospels by a particular theological interest."²

The Last Supper is best understood as a passover meal. In the summation of his discussion on the question of whether or not the Last Supper was a Paschal meal, Jeremias states:

The relationship between the old covenant and the new... are brightly illuminated, if Jesus' last meal was a passover meal, it becomes fully understandable when they are set within the context of the passover ritual. It should be emphasized that the Last Supper would still be surrounded by the atmosphere of the passover even if it should have occurred on the evening before the feast.³

The passover sacrifice was conceived of as inaugurating a covenant. This we have noted in our previous findings. "In developed Hebrew usage it (the passover) had come to be interpreted as essentially a solemn annual rite of thanksgiving commemorative of God's deliverance of His people from Egypt."⁴ E. O. James also supports such a view of the passover in connection with Jesus' interpretation:

...in offering himself like the Paschal lamb at the last of the solemn banquets with his disciples, Christ in effect said, 'I am the victim, whose blood is shed for you, i.e., for the faithful, that the new covenant may be sealed with God and whose body is slain for you.' Thus he interpreted his own death as the event which would establish the New Covenant, as his words over the cup made explicit.⁵

In this ἀναμνησις, as the former covenant had been

sealed with blood, so the eucharistic wine could be none other than the Blood of Christ in which he sealed the New Covenant.⁶

In the chapter in which he deals with the meaning of the words of Christ at the first eucharist, Jeremias concludes:

Jesus describes his death as this eschatological passover sacrifice: his vicarious death brings into operation the final deliverance, the new covenant of God. The content of this gracious institution...is perfect communion with God in his reign, based on the remission of sins.⁷

The pascal sacrifice which had once sealed the covenant blessings of the Israelite nation is reinterpreted by our Lord as the beginning of the New Covenant. The understanding of sacrifice demonstrated by Jesus at the first eucharist is in terms of the covenant.

To discern only this view of sacrifice in the New Testament is to have a very narrow understanding of New Testament concepts. Focusing too sharply upon the scene in the Upper Room produces a concept of sacrifice which is limited to Calvary. "The New Testament connects the idea of sacrifice with the whole earthly life of Jesus."⁸ For Paul the incarnation is the beginning of the sacrificial act (Phil. 2:6-7). We have indicated such an interpretation of sacrifice above (p. 3). Underhill argues very convincingly that Christ himself conceived of his whole life as a sacrifice.⁹ Anders Nygren provides a motif for this view which bears further investigation:

The impression cannot be avoided that Jesus lived

entirely in the Ebed-Jahve sphere. He found ~~there~~ the confirmation for the mission on which he knew ~~that~~ he had been sent. There existed the basic features of his new messianic concept...¹⁰

The sacrificial death of Jesus must be seen in connection with Jesus' sacrificial life.

Sacrifice is interpreted in several other ways in the New Testament using other motifs and imagery. Some of these differing interpretations draw upon Old Testament imagery. Contemporary metaphors are employed by others.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is the best example of the New Testament use of Old Testament types. Hebrews draws from the ritual of the Day of Atonement in two ways. First, Jesus is compared to the faultless victim, who through his vicarious death assures forgiveness and full communion with God. Second, Jesus is pictured as the High Priest who perpetually intercedes for his people (7:25, 9:24).¹¹ Jeremias views the interpretation in the following manner:

Good Friday is the Day of Atonement of the New Covenant, of which all the Days of Atonement, repeated year after year, were but types and patterns. The benefits of this new and final Day of Atonement are twofold. First, Christ's vicarious sinless death answers man's cry for forgiveness - - once and for all. Secondly, actualizing this reconciliation, Christ, himself tempted and afflicted while on earth, intercedes in heaven for his tempted and afflicted Church. ¹¹

Paul also employs Old Testament cultic themes in interpreting the nature of the sacrifice of the life and death of Jesus. He sees Christ as the Passover Lamb (I Corinthians 5:7), the sacrifice offered on the Day of Atonement (Romans 3:25)

and in Romans 8:3 as a "sin offering."

Contemporary metaphors are also pressed into service by the Apostle. Passages having reference to the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 53) who bore the punishment because of our transgressions, is borrowed from the sphere of criminal law.

"He was delivered", says Paul in Romans 4:25, "for our offenses".

When a man was crucified there was affixed over his head a tablet - the so-called titulus - which he had carried around his neck on the way to the place of execution. The crimes for which he had been sentenced were inscribed on this titulus. Above Jesus' head also hangs a titulus. *But don't you see, says Paul, 'there is a hand which removes this titulus and replaces it with another one with lines of writing crowded on it. You will have to draw near if you want to decipher this new titulus - it is your sins and mine that are inscribed on it. 12

The institution of slavery is likewise used to provide a meaningful interpretation of sacrifice. When Paul speaks of "buying" (I Corinthians 6:20), or "redeeming" (Galatians 3:13) "with a price" (I Corinthians 6:20), he is giving interpretation to Christ's sacrificial actions in terms of the dramatic act of entering into slavery in order to redeem a slave. (cf. I Clem 55:2).

Finally, Paul makes reference to sacrifice in terms of ethical substitution. (Romans 5:18, Galatians 4:4f.) The sinless one is understood here as taking the place of sinners; the sacrifice is seen as taking the place of sinners; sacrifice is seen as the actualization of God's love and blessing.

Some of the major concepts of sacrifice in the New Testament have been presented. Though a diversity of ex-

pression is apparent, there is one unifying element present. The diversity of expression, rather than pointing to a diverse understanding of sacrifice in the New Testament, is better viewed as different attempts to respond to the unique sacrifice of Jesus. A unified understanding of the New Testament concept of sacrifice is determined by the unique sacrifice of Christ.

Our Lord interpreted his sacrifice in the terms of the covenant. That this is not a unique understanding of sacrifice is seen from the Old Testament. The unique nature of Christ's sacrifice lies in its "once, for all nature". (ἑφ'απαξ) It is not a prescribed ritual action that must be repetitiously performed by sinful men. Rather it is a free, personal action of self giving on the part of the sinless and eternal son.¹³ In this activity of self-giving, the ultimate good for sinful men, union between God and man, becomes a possibility. In this sacrifice, the ultimate good is not simply expressed, it is made a reality for all men always. The sacrifice of Christ effects perfect communion between God and man. This is indeed the sacrifice which regards the needs of other men and which generously expresses or tries to produce a good for others.

It may be thought that the Epistle to the Hebrews represents a regression in that it returns to the use of Old Testament symbols. This is far from being the case. A more accurate perception of the message of Hebrews penetrates

the Old Testament types and symbols to the core event of the sacrifice of Christ. The author of this epistle stands in close proximity to the sacrifice of Christ. Through this "Christ event" he enters into perfect communion with God and becomes freed from the cultic concept of sacrifice. It is then that he:

finds the meaning of sacrifice in the fulfillment of the will of God, 10:5ff., and when he demands of Christians the sacrificial ministry of unceasing worship of God and of the performance of acts of brotherly love, 13:15f. In the sphere of the new διαθήκη whose establishment by Christ brings the old διαθήκη to an end, 8:6f., there is to be no more sacrifice in the literal manner. To bring oneself, one's will, one's action wholly to God, is the new meaning which the concept of sacrifice acquires in Hebrews, ...¹⁴!

The unique experience of the sacrificial life of Christ, the experience of the New Testament people, transforms all of life into a sacrifice.

Much the same as Hebrews, Paul uses the "old" concepts to interpret the concept of the "new" sacrifice of Christ which establishes the new covenant. The "old" is understood figuratively for Paul, who comes down hard upon the sacrificial death of Christ. Those who have experienced the mercy of God, who have been "bought back" by the sacrificial death of Christ are to bring in response sacrifices of thanksgiving.

That is to say, they themselves, in all the vitality of a being which is determined by God, are to give themselves to God, to live for him as he would have it. This is their λογική λατρεία, Romans 12:1. All that faith does (cf. Galatians 5:6), whether it

be ministry or the spread of the Gospel (Phil 4:18), becomes θυσία and λειτουργία. Life is a sacrifice -- the direct opposite of the offering of the life of another in cultic sacrifice.¹⁵

For Paul, as for the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews and Christ, life has become our sacrifice; all life is an act which considers the needs of others more than is usual, and which expresses or tries to produce a good for other men.

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¹Yngve Brilioth, Eucharistic Faith and Practice translated by A. G. Herbert (London: S.P.C.K., 1961), p. 42.

²Ernst Käsemann, "The New Testament Canon and the Unity of the Church," Essays on New Testament Themes: Studies in Biblical Theology #41 (London: S.C.M. Press, 1964), p. 96.

³Joachim Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus translated from the German by Norman Perrin (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1966), p. 88.

⁴A.E.J. Rawlinson, "Priesthood and Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity," Expository Times, LX, 5 (February 1949), 117.

⁵E.O. James, Sacrifice and Sacrament (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1962), p. 205.

⁶Ibid., p. 206.

⁷Jeremias, Eucharistic Words, p. 226.

⁸Gustaf Aulén, Eucharist and Sacrifice translated from Swedish by Eric H. Wahlstrom (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), p. 148.

⁹Evelyn Underhill, Worship (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), pp. 54-55.

¹⁰Anders Nygren, Christ and His Church translated from the Swedish by Alan Carlsten (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956), p. 60.

¹¹Joachim Jeremias, The Central Message of the New Testament (London: S.C.M. Press, 1965), p. 32-33.

¹²Ibid., p. 37.

¹³Behm, Johannes, "θυσία," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965), III, p. 185.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 186.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 185.

CHAPTER IV

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In the two preceeding chapters we have demonstrated that the proposed definition of sacrifice is in agreement with scriptural conceptions in both the Old and New Testaments. As this juncture, however, there are two questions that we must consider. Does the Church speak of the eucharist as a sacrifice in her tradition? If this is so, then we must ask if the definition of sacrifice that we have proposed is in accord with the manner in which the Church speaks of the eucharist as sacrifice through her tradition? Our aim shall be to demonstrate that the Church does speak of the eucharist as sacrifice throughout her tradition and that the proposed definition is in agreement with that sacrificial manner of speaking. If this can be demonstrated, then our definition possesses the validity for consideration in present discussions dealing with the question of eucharistic sacrifice.

The remainder of our discussion shall deal with two further eras: the Church Fathers, and the Reformation. Historians will see a large hole here bearing the title: "Middle Ages". Nevertheless, such an omission is defensible. Both Protestant and Roman Catholic scholarship seem to be agreed that there are basically only three stages in which the formation of the dogma of eucharistic sacrifice takes place. These are: the era of the Church Fathers, the Middle

Ages, and the Reformation era.

Regarding the Lord's Supper, we cannot speak of a gradually developing dogma...The history of the conceptions of the Lord's Supper in the ancient Church does not present a doctrinally logical development, in which the fathers, one taking up the work of another, had aimed to create a dogma. The Middle Ages did produce a dogma such as the Roman Catholic Church has today.¹

On the basis of these words (the words of Jesus at the Last Supper), Tradition, up to the twelfth century; professed the Mass to be a true sacrifice.²

The manner in which Doronzo defines "tradition up to the twelfth century" is chronological: "up to the time when theologians began to formulate the direct and explicit questions as to how the eucharist is a true and proper sacrifice."³ It was against the formulations of the Middle Ages which the Reformers reacted.

These developments of the Middle Ages on the doctrine of eucharistic sacrifice will be briefly considered in a discussion of the events of the Reformation.

The Witness of the Fathers

That the Fathers held to a sacrificial understanding of the eucharist is just about universally accepted. A sacrificial understanding appeared very early in the worship life as well as the sacred writings of the early Church. It is in the Didache that $\theta\upsilon\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha$ is first used of the eucharist (14.1). There we observe with Brilioth that ($\theta\upsilon\sigma\acute{\iota}\alpha$) is not

used

in the prayers, but in the exhortation to confession of sins before the breaking of bread, 'that your sacrifice (θυσία) may be pure'; and no one who has a quarrel with another may partake, 'lest your sacrifice (θυσία) be defiled.'⁴

Clement of Rome, writing in 95 A.D. also uses sacrificial imagery in referring to the eucharist (I Clem., I. 40, 41)

In a desire to show that the eucharist is a true sacrifice, some of the Fathers emphasised a commemorative and representative idea of the eucharistic sacrifice to the point of asserting formally the sameness or oneness of the eucharistic sacrifice with the sacrifice of the Cross.

We find this unity of the two sacrifices expressed in

St. Cyprian:

The sacrifice which we offer is the passion of the Lord. [Ep. 63.17: Passio est enim Domini sacrificium quod offerimus; M.L. 4.398f.]

St. Ambrose:

Christ is offered (in the Mass); but he is offered as a man, as if receiving (i.e., suffering) the passion. [De officiis ministerium, 1.238: Quasi recipiens passionem; M.L. 57.690].

and St. John Chrysostom:

We offer indeed, but we recall to memory His death ...Therefore, the sacrifice is one (with the sacrifice of the Cross)...We do not offer another sacrifice, but always the same; or rather we make a commemoration of the sacrifice. [In Hebr., hom. 17.2 f.: Offerimus quidem; sed ejus mortem revocamus in memoriam...Quamobrem unum est sacrificium...Non aliud sacrificium...sed idem semper facimus; potius autem commemorationem facimus sacrificii; M.G. 63. 131].⁵

When we come to Irenaeus, we note a slightly differing emphasis.

"The bread and wine are clearly stated to be sacrificial

offerings", and the sacrifice is viewed literally.⁶

We offer to him that which is his own, thereby declaring the unity of the material and the spiritual. For as bread which comes of the earth, when it receives the invocation of God (pericipiens invocationem Dei), is no longer common bread, but eucharist, consisting of two parts, an earthly and an heavenly, so our bodies, which receive the eucharist are no longer corruptible, but have the hope of immortality. [adv. Haeresss, IV. 18. 15].⁷ Through the prayer of the Church (επικλησις) the Holy Spirit unites the Δογος with the elements of bread and wine, and makes them something they were not before, namely, body and blood of Christ.⁸

When the cup and bread receive the word of God (ἐπιδέχειται τὸν λόγον θεοῦ) they become the body and blood of Christ, from which the substance of our flesh is increased and supported.⁹

We shall let these quotes from the Fathers suffice to show that as representatives of the tradition of the Church, they do speak of the eucharist as a sacrifice.

We turn to St. Augustine for an example of the specific way in which the Fathers spoke about the eucharistic sacrifice. St. Augustine is chosen for good cause. "Augustine is of special interest in regarding the conceptions of the Lord's Supper in the West."¹⁰

Among the later Fathers, Ambrose and Augustine contributed most to the deepening of the idea of sacrifice.¹¹

Augustine, ...usually synthesizes the sense of the preceding tradition in pregnant formulas which become the basis for further theological development...¹²

Having said this much about Augustine's importance, we note some basic observations:

Christ is the one sacrifice, which the sacrifice of the liturgy can only bring to mind and set forth . . . For Augustine especially the priestly act has value only in connection with the communion of the people; and this is the surest safeguard against the degradation of the act to a pagan level. He teaches that the eucharist is a memorial. 13

It is the Church that is symbolized in the Last Supper. Therefore, the real Christians only receive the benefit. The benefit consists in this that it symbolizes our union with Christ, the spirit of love proceeding from him and operative in the Church. This is Augustine's symbolical conception of the eucharist. It is to remind us of Christ's suffering and to stimulate us for the union of love as members of his body. 14

Augustine says it best himself:

Thus a true sacrifice is every work which is done that we may be united with God in Holy fellowship and which has reference to that supreme good and end in which alone we can be truly blessed. And therefore, even the mercy we show to men, if it is not shown for Christ's sake is not a sacrifice. For, though made or offered by man, sacrifice is a divine thing, as those who called it sacrifice (Literally, a sacred action.) meant to indicate. Thus, man himself, consecrated in the name of God and vowed to God is a sacrifice in so far as he dies to the world that he may live to God. [De Civitate Dei, X, 6, 1-4.]

This is perhaps the finest expression in the Fathers of the concept of sacrifice using the terms and language of the scriptures. Augustine's understanding of sacrifice, as it is expressed here, uses corporate imagery and has a deep understanding of sacrifice as an act performed which "unites with God". Here he utilizes covenant language, while in the same paragraph he becomes extremely Pauline, evoking echoes of those who have been "bought back" in turn making eucharist

and offering their bodies, and total vitality to the Glory of God and the good of their fellow man. St. Augustine, like the New Testament, has caught the vision created by the sacrificial death and life of Jesus which has brought about the union of men with God and the possibility of truly free sacrifices being made, sacrifices which are acts that consider the needs of others and which express or try to produce a good for other men.

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¹Juergen L. Neve, A History of Christian Thought (Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, 1943), I, 158-159.

²Emmanuel Doronzo, "On the Essence of the Sacrifice of the Mass," The Catholic Theological Society of America: Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Convention. Notre Dame, n.p., 1952. p. 54.

³Ibid., p. 54.

⁴Yngve Brilioth, Eucharistic Faith and Practice translated by A. G. Herbert (London: S.P.C.K., 1961), p. 44.

⁵quoted by Doronzo, p. 55.

⁶Brilioth, p. 45.

⁷quoted by Brilioth, p. 45.

⁸quoted by Neve, p. 160 to which he notes: "This was not meant to be transubstantiation, but it is the union of the Λογος with the elements that makes these the body and blood of the Lord."

⁹Johannes Quastena, Patrology (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1950), I, 304-305.

¹⁰Neve, p. 163.

¹¹Brilioth, p. 47.

¹²Doronzo, p. 57.

¹³Brilioth, p. 47.

¹⁴Neve, p. 163.

CHAPTER V

THE REFORMATION ERA

Medieval Roman Sacramental Theology

A rising tide of sacerdotalism is the prevailing situation within the Church during the Middle Ages. Parallel to this rise of sacerdotalism, we note a corresponding rise in sacramentalism. It is about the two loci of sacerdotalism and sacramentalism that the battles of the Reformation are waged. An interestingly devastating turn of events is found in the strategy of the reformers. Rather than contending against the firmly positioned clergy, the Reformers, instead, sought to discredit the sacramentalism, thereby bringing down the sacerdotal establishment along with it. In some ways Luther may be seen to be an exception to this observation. The attack launched by the Augustinian monk at Wittenberg was bi-frontal. His 95 Theses exhibit both a sacerdotal attack and an attack on the medieval sacramental theology.

The unedifying popular sacramental piety of the times was well established among the masses. Lists of the fruits derived from a "devout hearing of Holy Mass" grew increasingly in length as well as astounding virtuous claims. An editor of a German version remarked: "the formulas for the fruits of the Mass take on a more gross appearance the nearer they stand

to the end of the Middle Ages."¹ Though Jungmann attributes these developments to simply "a lack of proportion, or too much of a good thing," he does admit that all was not quite right.

Although contemporary theology did not approve such exaggerations, still they were able to flourish unimpeded in the homiletic and devotional literature of the day. That meant the people were encouraged to zealous attendance at Holy Mass, but also they were lulled into false security, as though the salvation of their souls could be assured by merely hearing Mass.²

One such "contemporary" theologian referred to by Jungmann might have been Gabriel Biel. However much Biel may seem to differ from some of the more popular preachers of his day, he ultimately fails to reveal little more than a mechanical conception of the sacrifice of the Mass. His is the work of an academic theologian. He abundantly attempts to distinguish between the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary and the sacrifice in the Mass. Still, he fails to show their unity; nor does he have much of a concern for the eucharistic action of the Church aside from her priests.³

Roland Bainton provides us with an apt assessment of the tenor of the age and a delightful anecdote:

In an age when so much of religion consisted in a venal bargaining with God, it is refreshing to read of a woman who carried a chafing dish of live coals and a flask of water in order with the first to burn up Paradise and with the second to extinguish Hell that men might be good solely for the love of God.⁴

This woman may have been slightly prophetic in that she

embodies the highest ideals of the reformers. The age upon which the Reformation broke was, in the Church, one in which an established priesthood held the masses at bay with an elaborate, almost magical system of sacraments. It might not be extreme to consider the masses enslaved to the Church; enslaved socially, economically, and by their own superstitions and fears of hell. The priesthood, with its sacraments both claimed and was believed by the people to possess the exclusive ability to achieve men's release from such bondage.

Martin Luther

(The priests have strayed into godless ways; out of the sacrament and testament of God, which ought to be a good gift received, they have made for themselves a good deed performed, which they then give to others and offer up to God.⁵)

So it was that Martin Luther rejected the Roman priest's sacrifice of the Mass. It is in his denunciations of the Mass as it was offered by the priests, that Luther becomes most scathing:

By far the most wicked abuse of all, in consequence of which there is no opinion more generally held and more generally believed in the church today than this, that the mass is a good work and a sacrifice. And this abuse has brought an endless host of other abuses in its train, so that the faith of this sacrament has become utterly extinct and the holy sacrament has been turned into a mere merchandise, a market, and a profit-making business. Hence, participations, brotherhoods, intercessions, merits, anniversaries, memorial days and the like wares are bought and sold, traded and bartered, in the church. On these the priests and monks depend for their entire livelihood.⁶

For Luther the sacrifice of the mass could not, in any sense be a separate, distinct sacrifice which we offer with any merit, either implicit in the sacrifice which we offer, or inherent in ourselves. If the mass is a separate sacrifice, two basic facts about the Christian life are denied: it is God who gives to us; we have nothing to give (which might benefit God), and thus only receive.⁷ The more moderate view that the sacrifice of the mass is somehow complimentary to the sacrifice of Christ upon Calvary is also unacceptable to Luther.

Objection to contemporary Roman understanding of the sacrifice of the mass by Luther is well founded. He objected not so much to the sacrificial understanding of the mass as he did to the concept of God which lay behind the Roman view. An exceedingly angry god had to be posited if the mass could ever have become a sacrifice offered by men. If God was not angry, it was quite superfluous to offer sacrifice on the part of men. Not only was it assumed by the contemporary theology that God is an angry god, but it was also taken for granted that one is able to pacify or appease this displeased god. For Luther, the Roman view "obscures the fact that God is already gracious to us, and that if he were not, there would be nothing that we could do about it."⁸

Luther's basic objection to the mass is that it was a "work", and not a "sacrament" or a "testament".

So too, I fear that many have made the mass into

a good work, whereby they have thought to do a great service to Almighty God. Now if we have properly understood what has been said above, namely that the mass is nothing else than a testament and a sacrament in which God makes a pledge to us and gives us grace and mercy, I think it is not fitting that we should make a good work or merit out of it. For a testament is not a beneficium acceptum, sed datum: it does not take benefit from us, but brings benefit to us . . . Likewise in the mass we give nothing to Christ, but only receive from him; unless they are willing to call this a good work, that a person sit still, and permits himself to be benefited, given food and drink, clothed and healed, helped and redeemed.⁹

The view of the sacrifice of the mass held by Luther is a positive one which lies grounded in and springs from a faith in a God who is gracious toward men. Through the sacrifice of Christ, we receive the gift, the blessing, the testament of life and salvation. Luther refrained from expressing the "fruits" of the mass negatively as simply the forgiveness of sins and thereby granting a reprieve from the torments of hell. Instead he stated them positively as the incorporation into the family of God, life and salvation. Life and salvation are to be found where ever the forgiveness of sins is present: i.e., the mass.

The fact that Luther objected strongly to the mass and its attendant abuses, is not to be understood that Luther does not himself perceive the mass to be a sacrifice. In fact, the very opposite more accurately approaches the truth. That Luther does not use the term "sacrifice" as frequently as one might expect him to may partially be explained by

history.

In his earlier writings about the Lord's Supper, prior to 1520, he employed the term quite frequently. But during the great controversy about the sacrament he seems deliberately to avoid speaking about sacrifice in connection with the eucharist. After 1530, however, the expression returns and occurs frequently thereafter in Luther's writings. We get the idea that the corruption of the idea of sacrifice in the doctrine of the mass caused Luther to avoid the use of the term for a while, but that sacrifice is such an integral part of the biblical record that the use of the word became unavoidable.¹⁰

It is inaccurate to state that Luther either did not, or else deemed it unnecessary to enunciate his understanding of the sacrifice of the mass because of the controversy over the doctrine of the mass. Luther may not define his concept of the sacrifice of the mass in the manner and diction of a modern systematics. Nevertheless, he adequately reveals his understanding in several places!

Luther seems to demonstrate three ways in which he understands the term "sacrifice" as it is applied to the mass: 'as a sacrifice of "prayer; praise and thanksgiving";' in the sense of a continual sacrifice in heaven, and as an expression of the sacrifice of self for the good of others as one makes eucharist in communion with others.

The very act of making eucharist is in itself, a sacrifice of praise. In celebrating the eucharist, thanksgiving and praise are brought to Christ, and the honor properly belonging to him is rendered. To the question "What sacrifices, then, are we to offer?", Luther replies:

Ourselves and all that we have, with constant prayer, as we say, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10). With this we are to yield ourselves to the will of God, that he may make of us what he will, according to his own pleasure. In addition, we are to offer him praise and thanksgiving with our whole heart, for his unspeakable, sweet grace and mercy, which he has promised and given us in this sacrament. And though such a sacrifice occurs apart from the mass, and should so occur - for it does not necessarily and essentially belong to the mass, as has been said - yet it is more precious, more appropriate, more mighty, and also more acceptable when it takes place with the multitude and in the assembly, where men encourage, move, and inflame one another to press close to God and thereby attain without any doubt what they desire.11

It is apparent that Luther sees such a sacrifice of prayer, praise and thanksgiving taking place in the corporate action of the mass. Yet, it is just such a sacrifice of "prayer, praise and thanksgiving and of ourselves", that we are not to present before God ourselves, but rather we are to lay it upon Christ and let him present it for us in heaven. From Romans 8:34 ("It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who sits on the right hand of God, who makes intercession for us."), Luther tells us:

We learn that we do not offer Christ as a sacrifice, but that Christ offers us. And in this way it is permissible, yes profitable, to call the mass a sacrifice; not on its own account, but because we offer ourselves as a sacrifice along with Christ. That is, we lay ourselves on Christ by a firm faith in His testament and do not otherwise appear before God with our prayer, praise and sacrifice except through Christ and his mediation. Nor do we doubt that Christ is our priest or minister in heaven before God. Such faith, truly, brings it to pass that Christ takes up our cause, presents us and our prayer and praise, and also offers himself for us in heaven. If the mass were so understood and

for this reason were called a sacrifice, it would be well. Not that we offer the sacrament, but that by our praise, prayer, and sacrifice we move him and give him occasion to offer himself for us in heaven and ourselves with him. . . Few, however, understand the mass in this way.¹²

Throughout the above, we have seen hints that Luther sees the sacrifice of the mass as really self-sacrifice and an opportunity to express a concern for others. "The sacrament has no blessing and significance," says Luther, "unless love grows daily and so changes a person that he is made one with all others."¹³ In referring to the times to which St. Paul addressed himself in I Corinthians (11:23), Luther comments:

Those were the days when so many became martyrs and saints. There were fewer masses, but much strength and blessing resulted from the masses; Christians cared for one another, supported one another, sympathized with one another, bore one another's burdens and affliction. This has all disappeared, and now there remain only the many masses and the many who receive this sacrament without the least understanding or practicing what it signifies.¹⁴

Today, the custom of gathering food and money at the mass has fallen into disuse and not more than a trace of it remains in the offering of a pfennig at the high festivals, and especially at Easter, when cakes, meat, eggs, and so forth are still brought into the church to be blessed. In place of such offerings and collections, endowed churches, monastic houses, and charitable institutions have now been erected. These were supposed to be maintained for just one purpose, that the needy in every city be given all they require, so that there would be no beggars or poverty-stricken persons among the Christians, but that each and all would have from the mass enough for body and soul.¹⁵

From what we have presented above, it is evident that Luther quite definitely looks upon the mass as a sacrificial act. We note that it is not simply the act of the priest,

but rather the corporate action of the whole church as a unity offering its prayers, praises, thanksgiving and themselves to their Lord. / In addition, he sees Christ acting in union with his church, presenting their prayers, praises and sacrifices to the Father by his sacrifice, incorporating them into the family of God as he does so. / The mass is the time and place to act for the children of God. Luther also looks to the mass as the sacrifice which will provide the dynamic and solutions for the problem of the "needs of others" of the sixteenth century. A concept of sacrifice which concerns itself with the needs of others and tries to produce a good for others is held by Luther. Indeed, "few understand the mass in this way."

Other Lutheran Theologians

Much of what we have seen in Luther, his opposition to the abuses of the mass and his view of eucharistic sacrifice, we find echoed and re-echoed by those who followed after as they addressed themselves to discussions of sacrifice and its relation to the eucharist.

In his Examination of the Decrees of the Council of Trent, Martin Chemnitz provides us with a list of seven senses in which the mass may be called a sacrifice.

- (1) In the Mass the death of Christ is proclaimed in the reading and explication of the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures and a consideration of the causes and benefits of the Passions of Christ is set forth out of the Word of God (Romans 15:16;

- Philippians 2:17; I Peter 2:5);
- (2) In the celebration of the Holy Eucharist the praises of God are spoken and sung (Hebrews 13:15; Psalm 50:14);
 - (3) The liturgical action includes public prayers and common acts of thanksgiving;
 - (4) The celebration is the occasion of offering alms for the relief of the poor and hence the whole action can be called a sacrifice;
 - (5) In the Mass we consecrate our whole selves to God so that we may cleave to God in a holy association; we engage in exercises of faith; and our love for God and the neighbor is kindled;
 - (6) The consecration of the blessing of the elements; as part of the sacred ministry of the Gospel, can be called a sacrifice (Romans 15:16);
 - (7) The distribution and reception of Holy Communion can be called a sacrifice because it takes place as a memorial of the unique sacrifice of Christ and because the same Victim who was once offered for our sins on the Cross is there distributed and received.¹⁶

Numbers 3-7 are especially interesting to us in our study.

After he has given us this list, Chemnitz notes again the utilitarian purpose of the sacrifice of the mass. The passion of Christ is the sacrifice for Chemnitz. He sees our sacrifice as a commemoration of the great sacrifice.

Christ has, indeed, in His Supper not only instituted a memorial and application of His passion. . . but he has expressed and prescribed that the memorial of his passion in the Lord's Supper is to be celebrated with thanksgiving, dispensing and eating and drinking of His body and blood, also with the announcement of His death. Thus he has also defined and prescribed the mode of application, namely, that Christ Himself, in His Supper through the ministry, by the word and dispensing of His body and His blood, under the bread and wine, wills to apply the virtue of His passion to the believers, and that believers through the use of Christ in true faith, may apply to themselves the merits and benefits of His passion.¹⁷

Chytraeus, writing of sacrifice, acknowledges the Fathers' use of the term "sacrifice" in connection with the eucharist.

Though he does not, himself, refer to the eucharist as a sacrifice, one cannot help but feel that he has thrown his lot with the Fathers on this matter:

It is true that the Fathers call the Lord's Supper a sacrifice, but they themselves explain that they mean, not that Christ's body and blood are offered to God by a priest so as to apply the remission of sins to the living and the dead, but that the rite reminds us of the sacrifice of Christ, offered once for all on the altar of the cross . . . It is not the action of the priest alone, but the entire activity of the priest and people (viz., commemoration of the death of Christ and all his benefits; faith; thanksgiving; alms) which the Fathers call a sacrifice and an obligation.¹⁸

Writing a century later, John Gerhard located his objection to the Roman mass in exactly the same locus as did Luther; whether there be in the mass something sacrificial offered to God. He rejects the immolative sacrifice in the mass, but is willing to grant (as do so many of the Fathers) that sacrifice can also mean "to represent" (repraesentare) to God the passion of His Son - the passion which was a sacrifice in the past - through our prayers. In this sense he says that sacrifice is granted by Lutherans in two ways, first:

that in the eucharist we "proclaim the Lord's death" (I Corinthians 11:26) and pray that God, on account of that holy and spotless (immaculatum) sacrifice completed on the cross and on account of the holy victim (hostia) which is certainly present in the eucharist, would be merciful to us, and second, that he would in kindness receive and grant a place to the rational and spiritual oblation of our prayer.¹⁹

Interestingly, Gerhard concludes from the canon of the Roman mass that it presents no true sacrifice. At most

it is a memorial and representation (Memoria et repraesentatio) of an already completed sacrifice. From the canonical prayer Supplices ("Command that these things may by the hand of your holy angel be borne aloft to your altar on high in the sight of your divine majesty"), Gerhard observes:

It is clear that the sacrifice takes place in heaven, not earth, in as much as there is offered to God the Father the death and passion of his beloved Son by way of commemoration (per commemorationem).²⁰

In a discussion with Sir Robert Bellarmine on the subject of eucharistic sacrifice, Gerhard contended:

As in the Christian sacrifice there is no other victim except the real and substantial body of Christ, so there is no other true priest except Christ himself. Hence this sacrifice once offered on the Cross takes place continually (jugiter) in an unseen fashion in heaven by way of commemoration when Christ offers to the Father on our behalf his sufferings of the past, especially when we are applying ourselves to the sacred mysteries, and this is the "unbloody sacrifice" which is carried out in heaven.²¹

Like Luther, he rejects the view of the eucharistic sacrifice in which something is offered to God. He similarly finds a continual sacrifice in heaven being offered and intercession for us in heaven by the Son. In his own way, Gerhard seems to place a greater weight upon the "sacrifice of prayers" than Luther, who lumps them together with praise and thanksgiving. For Gerhard, they seem to be able to effect somewhat of a telescoping of time between the sacrifice of the eucharist and the sacrifice of Christ.

Confessional Material

The witness of the reformers on the subject of eucharistic sacrifice is voluminous in comparison to that found in the Book of Concord (1580). /The evidence there is terse, definite and direct. This, unfortunately, permits less of a variety of expression. The specific problem in the area of eucharistic sacrifice to which the confessions, and especially the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Article XXIV, address themselves is the uncompromising rejection of a view of the mass as an ex opere operato propitiatory sacrifice. Though such an understanding of the mass is rejected, the Apology is quick to distinguish between propitiatory sacrifice and eucharistic sacrifice. / The former is defined as "a work of satisfaction for guilt and punishment that reconciles God or placates his wrath or merits the forgiveness of sins for others." Eucharistic sacrifice is designated as a sacrifice in which "those who have been reconciled give thanks or show their gratitude for the forgiveness of sins and other blessings received."²² / The usage of the Latin text is significant for its expression of "eucharistic sacrifice"; sacrificium um εύχαριστικόν. Melancton evidently holds no opposition to a sacrificial conception of the eucharist:

[We are perfectly willing for the mass to be understood as a daily sacrifice, provided this means the whole Mass, the ceremony and also the proclamation of the Gospel, faith prayer and thanksgiving. Taken together, these are the

daily sacrifice of the New Testament; the ceremony was instituted because of them and ought not be separated from them.²³ /

/ Luther and others active during the era of the Reformation do not dissociate the idea of sacrifice from the eucharist. No compromise is admitted concerning the medieval Roman conception of the mass as a propitiatory offering of human action.²⁴ Differences between Rome and the reformers lie in the "manner and extent to which believers share in the sacrifice of Christ."²⁵ A wide spectrum of expression is held by the reformers on the subject of eucharistic sacrifice. The idea common to the reformers is that the eucharistic sacrifice is the whole liturgical activity of the Church, both priest and people.) It is the beneficiaries of the sacrifice of Christ responding and striving to benefit the lives of others.

N O T E S

¹Joseph A. Jungmann, The Mass of the Roman Rite (Missarum Sollemnia), translated from the German by Francis A. Brunner and revised by Charles K. Riepe (New York: Benziger Brothers, Inc., 1961), p. 97.

²Ibid., p. 97.

³Heiko Augustinus Oberman, The Harvest of Medieval Theology (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), p. 279-280. For a full treatment of Biel's sacramental theology see p. 249-280.

⁴Roland Bainton, The Medieval Church (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1962), p. 62.

⁵Martin Luther, "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church", XXXVI in Luther's Works, translated from the German by A. T. W. Steinhäuser, revised by Frederick C. Ahrens and edited by Abdel Ross Wentz and Helmut P. Lehman (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1959), p. 49.

⁶Ibid., p. 35-36

⁷James F. McCue, "Luther & Roman Catholicism on the Mass as Sacrifice," Journal of Ecumenical Studies, II, 2 (Spring 1965), 217.

⁸Ibid., p. 222.

⁹Martin Luther, "A Treatise on the New Testament, that is, the Holy Mass," XXXV in Luther's Works translated by Jeremiah J. Schindel from the German, edited by E. Theodore Bachmann and Helmut T. Lehman (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960), p. 93.

¹⁰Gustaf Aulén, Eucharist and Sacrifice translated from the Swedish by Eric H. Wahlstrom (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958), p. 84-85.

¹¹Martin Luther, "Treatise on the New Testament", Luther's Works, American Edition, XXXV, p. 38.

¹²Ibid., p. 99.

¹³Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 57.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 96.

¹⁶ Martin Chemnitz, Examination of the Decrees of the Council of Trent translated from the Latin by Frederick Hassold (Springfield: The Committee on Research, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, 1964), pp. 1104-1105.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 1121.

¹⁸ David Chytraeus, On Sacrifice translated from the Latin by John Warwick Montgomery (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), p. 131.

¹⁹ Arthur Carl Piepkorn, "Christ Today: His Presence in the Sacraments" Lutheran World, X, 3 (July 1963), p. 284. See also John Gerhard, Confessio catholica, II pars II, article sv, caput 1, exthesis 6 (Frankfort am Main: Christianus Gensichius [Johannes Andraae], 1679), p. 1200ff.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 284.

²¹ Ibid., p. 234.

²² The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, "The Apology of the Augsburg Confession," XXIV, 19, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert with Jaroslav Pelikan, Robert H. Fischer and Arthur C. Piepkorn (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), p. 252.

²³ Ibid., p. 256.

²⁴ See in this connection Luther's sharp attack on the Mass in the "smalcald Articles", The Book of Concord, Tappert, et al., pp. 293-296.

²⁵ Luther D. Reed, The Lutheran Liturgy (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1947), p. 236.

CONCLUSION

Throughout the history of the Church, the idea which has adhered most tenaciously to the concept of the eucharist has been that of eucharistic sacrifice. Other conceptions of the eucharist have existed, and continue to exercise influence. It has been the sacrificial interpretation of the eucharist, however, which has been the one possessing the greatest catholicity. In enunciating a sacrificial understanding of the eucharist, the Church has chosen to employ a wide variety of expression.

Behind any sacrifice there lies the presupposition of a god and a theory of the nature of the god to whom sacrifice is offered. Those understandings of eucharistic sacrifice which have denied the notion of an angry god to be pacified through sacrifice have best expressed the Church's concept of her eucharistic sacrifice.

In the endeavor to articulate the varying understanding of eucharistic sacrifice within the Church, a definition of sacrifice, applicable to eucharistic interpretation has been proposed. The proposed definition is most applicable and best interpreted by those conceptualizations of the eucharist which reflect the greatest corporate understanding of the nature of the eucharist. Those who view the eucharistic sacrifice as a corporate activity of the entire Christian community are most closely identified with the proposed

definition. Eucharistic sacrifice is not located in isolated sections of the liturgy.

The wide scope to the definition of sacrifice which has been offered enables it to embrace expressions of eucharistic sacrifice which have been found to be dominant in the variety of the Church's eucharistic understanding. On this basis, the proposed definition of sacrifice would recommend itself as a broad base for ecumenical discussion based on the concept of a eucharistic sacrifice as an expression of good for others.

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