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**SACRIFICE IN THE EUCHARIST IN THE TEXTS OF THE FATHERS
FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT TO THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON**

by

Derick William Brookes McCulloch B.D.,B.A.

Master of Arts

1990

Abstract

This thesis examines the evidence for the notion of Eucharistic Sacrifice which is found in the original texts of all the principal Fathers and ecclesiastical authors of the Early Church. The period covered is from the time of the writing of the New Testament to the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D. Each of the principal Fathers is examined in historical order, as far as this is possible, except when there is another link between them such as their city of origin. Apart from a few exceptions, the texts are presented in their Greek or Latin original in the footnotes, but an English translation is supplied for every case in the main text of the thesis. The aim of the thesis is not to provide an exhaustive analysis of the above data, but to present them in an orderly way and to make initial exploratory comments on the texts themselves and of the work of various scholars. The final conclusion resulting from this exercise is that, although there is indisputable evidence that the notion of Eucharistic sacrifice was widely upheld by Patristic authors, its actual content varied from author to author and presents a richness which it is not easy to classify.

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**FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT TO THE COUNCIL
OF CHALCEDON**

by

Derick William Brookes McCulloch B.D.,B.A.

**A Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts**

Theology

**The University of Durham
1990**



15 NOV 1991

ST. AUGUSTINE



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ABBREVIATIONS

- [PG] Patrologiae cursus completus, sive bibliotheca
universalis.....omnium SS. patrum, doctorum
scriptorumque, ecclesiasticorum. Series Graeca
Paris 1857 - 1864
- [PL] Patrologiae cursus completus, sive bibliotheca
universalis.....omnium SS. patrum, doctorum
scriptorumque, ecclesiasticorum. Series Latina
Paris 1844
- [SC] Sources Chrétiennes H.deLubac, J.Daniélou
Paris 1944
- [Quasten] Patrology 3 volumes
Utrecht 1950-1986
- [A.N.C.L.] Ante Nicene Christian Library
Leipzig 1903
- [G.C.S.] Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller
London 1867

INTRODUCTION

In this thesis I have set out to look at the texts that have come down to us from the principal Fathers and authors of the Early Church in the period from the writing of the New Testament to the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D. The first chapter deals with the books of the New Testament, the final with Church liturgies. The order followed for the other authors is more or less chronological except where two or more Fathers are clearly linked by a common tradition as was the case, for example, in Carthage, Cappadocia, and Alexandria.

The chapters contain a considerable amount of original textual material which is given in an English translation usually taken from the most common translation, with certain alterations as this has seemed appropriate. The original text in which it was written, whenever possible, is given in the footnotes.

I am indebted in particular to Father George Dragas for his help and advice, and to Fathers Theophilus and Theophanes of the Monastery of St.Sabas near Jerusalem for helping me to translate some of the more difficult passages.

The title of the Thesis reads " Sacrifice in the Eucharist..." It should be noted that in later centuries this question was a cause of ecclesiastical dispute, but in the centuries we are talking about, it was non- controversial. As we shall see, most of the Fathers of the Early Church use the Greek and Latin words for sacrifice, and other related words to describe the Eucharist, but these words are also used with reference to other things. I intend to show that while the pagan sacrifices and the animal sacrifices of the Jews are rejected by Christians as effective sacrifices, there is a link between the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the Cross and the Eucharist. We shall see that the Eucharist comes to be seen as a sacrifice and not just a memorial of a sacrifice as a result of that link.

According to Saint Thomas Aquinas, who here develops the thought of Saint Augustine¹ "...anything placed before God with the purpose of raising the human spirit to him may be termed a sacrifice....",² the visible offering being the outward sign of the inward offering of the heart. The purpose of sacrifice, he continues, is

¹ City of God X.5 PL 41, 282

² Et ideo omne illud quod Deo exhibetur ad hoc quod spiritus hominis feratur in Deum, potest dici sacrificium. - *Summa Theologica* 3a 22,2

to obtain the remission of sin, preservation in the state of grace, and perfect union with God. In the Old Testament it was members of the tribe of Levi who offered sacrifice on behalf of the whole People of Israel, and at the head of this priestly caste was the High Priest who also offered special sacrifices. Now the Christian Tradition sees Jesus as the incarnate Son of God, and as the New and Eternal High Priest, who offered himself on the Cross as the supreme sacrifice. The principal way Christians receive the fruits of this sacrifice is through the Eucharist, which was ordained by the Lord himself "on the night that he was betrayed", and is therefore identified with his supreme sacrifice of himself. So when Christians offer this sacrifice and eat the Body of Christ they not only reap the benefits of the sacrifice, but are invited to participate in that sacrifice as well.

This is evident in the writings of the Fathers of the early Church, and as they all base their teaching on the New Testament it is there that the examination must begin.

Chapter I

THE NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE

Although the New Testament " says surprisingly little about sacrifice,³ Jesus saw his life in these terms, for he is reported as saying " The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."⁴ This is the sacrifice of the Cross. It is less clear what the relationship of this sacrifice is to the Eucharist. Within the text of the New Testament there are a number of references to the Eucharist. The most obvious of these are found in the Synoptic Gospels and in the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians. There are also less obvious references to both bread and wine in the Parables and the Miracles, and in the Teaching of Jesus himself. First it is necessary to look at the Eucharistic passages.

1.1 THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

Shortly before the death of Jesus, we are told that he shared a meal with the twelve disciples. According to Matthew, Mark, and Luke this was a kind of Passover Meal; for it was said to take place at the time of the Passover, and it took place in Jerusalem at night with over ten persons present:⁵ although there is no mention of the Passover Lamb being eaten, or the use of the bitter herbs.⁶ The Passover was the most important sacrifice for the Jews, having been instituted in Egypt prior to the flight of the People of Israel into the wilderness of Sinai, and it marks the central point of the Jewish Calendar. Clearly Jesus is shown as linking this event with his own forthcoming death, and he is also integrating the Last Supper with it as well. This is indisputable for New Testament theology.

Matthew says that the institution of the Eucharist took place during this sort of Passover Meal. If this had been an ordinary Passover a lamb would have been

³ Daly *Origins of the Christian Doctrine of Sacrifice* page 53

⁴ Mk.10.45; Mtt.20.28; c.f. Is.53.10-12

⁵ Jeremias *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* p.41ff

⁶ Mtt.26.18; Mk.14.16; Lk.22.8

sacrificed, and they would eat the meat as a part of the ritual. In Matthew there is nothing to suggest that this did happen, though we are told that Jesus instituted the Eucharist as they were eating.⁷ The connection between his forthcoming death which is understood in sacrificial terms, and the Eucharist, while not obvious at the time, after the event would be self-evident. The words *Λάβετε φάγετε: τούτο ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα μου* clearly are identified with the eating of the sacrificial meat. In the same way, the words *τούτο γὰρ ἐστὶν τὸ αἷμα μου* recall the shedding of blood which was an essential part of the Jewish sacrifice: the blood being seen as the life of the animal.⁸ The killing of the Passover Lamb for sacrifice was linked directly to the Covenant of God with his chosen people - Israel. So Jesus speaks of the wine of the Eucharist as the blood of the Covenant shed for many for the remission of sins.⁹ The use of the word *ἐκχυννόμενον* clearly has sacrificial overtones. Later in this chapter Jesus speaks of His forthcoming sacrifice as a *ποτήριον*, clearly linking the Eucharistic cup to the events that were about to take place.¹⁰

Mark uses substantially the same words as Matthew and it is possible to draw similar implications from them.¹¹

The sacrificial overtones in Luke are less obvious than in Matthew and Mark. However the first part of Lk.22.14 *Καὶ ὅτε ἐγένετο ἡ ὥρα* may be interpreted both with reference to the proper hour for the sacrifice and to the appropriate time for the Passion. This can be seen in Lk.22.14 where the eating of the Passover and the forthcoming suffering are conjoined. However the emphasis is more on the forthcoming kingdom than on sacrifice. The rest of the account, though omitted by some manuscripts, does clearly suggest a connection between the forthcoming death of Jesus and the Eucharist, a suggestion emphasised by Jesus by the use of *ποτήριον* in Lk.22.42.

Within the Synoptic Gospels there are other references to bread and to wine both in the parables and the miracles. The sacrificial overtones are much less clear

⁷ Mtt.26.26 *Ἐσθιόντων δε αὐτῶν*

⁸ Gen.9.4, Lev.17.14

⁹ Mtt.26.28 *τῆς διαθήκης τὸ περι πολλῶν ἐκχυννόμενον εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν.*

¹⁰ Mtt.26.39 Mtt.26.42

¹¹ Mk.14.18ff

here than in the Passion Narratives. Perhaps the words ἀναβλέψας εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν in the story of the feeding of the Five Thousand,¹² may recall sacrifice in the sense of offering; though clearly it is the sharing that is the dominant theme.

In conclusion one can say that it is the position of the Institution of the Eucharist as an introduction to the Passion of the Lord that is the central theme of the Synoptic Gospels and as the Passion is essentially sacrificial, so the Eucharist is sacrificial by implication.

1.2 PAUL

The earliest account of the institution of the Eucharist is to be found in the letters of Paul, in particular within chapters 10 and 11 of his First Epistle to the Corinthians. He begins with allusions to both Baptism and the Eucharist:

” And [our fathers] were all baptised in the cloud and in the sea; and they all ate the same spiritual food; and they all drank the same spiritual drink...”¹³

In 1 Cor.10.16 Paul speaks first of all about the communion of the blood of Christ in the Eucharist. Cerfaux says that ” it is not surprising to find Paul considering the Eucharist as a sacrificial meal, and comparing it with the sacrificial meals of the Jews, or the sacrifices of the Pagans...”¹⁴ The use of αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ has sacrificial overtones, for in the Old Testament, it was the blood which was removed first from an animal sacrifice¹⁵ before the meat was consumed. In the very next verse he establishes a relationship between the eating of sacrifices by the Jews and the eating of the body of Christ. This suggests that both are in some sense sacrificial acts. Paul continues by speaking about the gentile sacrifices. The eating of the sacrificial meat is a sacrificial act and so was forbidden from the earliest time to all Christians.¹⁶ Paul continues in the next chapter,¹⁷ by describing the Institution Tradition he had received: first, that the institution of the Eucharist took place on the same night that Jesus was betrayed, and secondly that the cup is

¹² Mtt.14.19

¹³ 1 Cor.10.2,3,4

¹⁴ Cerfaux Christ in the Theology of St. Paul page 130

¹⁵ Lev.8.15

¹⁶ Acts.21.25

¹⁷ 1 Cor.11.23

the New Covenant in Christ's blood. This means that for Paul the Eucharist must be considered as a kind of sacrifice. Indeed Paul makes a comparison between the Eucharist and the sacrifices of Israel in 1 Cor.10.18.

1.3 JOHN

John has no account of the institution of the Eucharist, but the events of Jn.6 are undeniably linked to the Eucharist. First, they take place at the time of the Passover, the most important sacrifice of the Jews.¹⁸ Secondly, Jesus speaks of himself as the Bread from Heaven, corresponding to his speaking of bread as his body during the Last Supper in the Synoptic Gospels.¹⁹ Thirdly, this bread is given for the life of the world.²⁰ Then in Jn 15.1 Jesus calls himself the true vine. Although the institution of the Eucharist is not mentioned within the Passion Narrative the death of Jesus happens at the time of the slaughter of the Passover Lambs.²¹ Westcott suggests that the separation of the flesh and the blood in the sacrifice presupposes a 'violent death',²² so there is a presumption of sacrifice in the sayings of Jesus in the sixth chapter of the fourth Gospel, which are related to the Eucharist.

1.4 Conclusions

In conclusion, it can be said that the positioning of the eucharistic institution within the account of the sacrificial death of Jesus implies that it can be regarded as a sacrifice. As Christ's death is a sacrifice and the Eucharist is linked to the death of Christ so the Eucharist becomes sacrifice as well. In the course of time Christians came to understand more clearly the nature of this sacrifice. First of all, it is necessary to look to those other authors of the First and Second Century outside the canon of the New Testament: the Apostolic Fathers.

¹⁸ Jn.6.4

¹⁹ Jn.6.35

²⁰ Jn. 6.51 ἡ σὰρξ μου ἐστὶν ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ζωῆς

²¹ Jn.19.42 διὰ τὴν παρασκευὴν

²² Westcott Gospel according to St. John page 240

Chapter II

THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS

In the years following the writing of the New Testament books, and some would say contemporary to them, other Christian writings shed further light on the awareness of eucharistic sacrifice. These writings are known as the works of the Apostolic Fathers, and they include: the Didache, the 1st Letter of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians, the seven letters of Ignatius of Antioch, (the short recension), the Letter of Polycarp of Smyrna to the Philippians, the Epistle of Barnabas, the Shepherd of Hermas, the Letter to Diognetus, and the Reliques of the Elders. It is only the first three of these that provide relevant material for this study.

2.1 DIDACHE

Young²³ identifies the Didache as holding the same position as the New Testament and so it is best to begin there. Also most scholars attribute to it a very early date between 60 and 100 A.D.²⁴ The word *παῖς* (meaning servant) is used four times in Chapters 9 and 10 of the Didache.²⁵ The use of this word in a Eucharistic Prayer may indicate a sacrificial link between Jesus the servant who offered himself as a sacrifice for human sin and the celebration of the Eucharist; but it would be wrong to stretch this too far. The same can be said for the use of *ἐρχέσθω* in Chapter 10 as this was used as a cultic term in New Testament times for drawing near to the altar of God.²⁶ Much more explicit is the description of the Sunday Eucharist in Chapter 14.1:

²³ Sacrificial ideas p.249

²⁴ Bettenson Early Christian Fathers Vol.1 page 6

²⁵ Did.9.2,3; 10.2,3

²⁶ Daly Christian Sacrifice p.311 (Studies in Christian Antiquity Vol.18)

Gather yourselves together on the Lord's Day to break bread and give thanks, first confessing your sins so that your sacrifice may be pure.²⁷

The use of the phrase ἡ θυσία ἡμῶν must surely imply that this is an offering of the whole community, for it is preceded by confession and the sacrifice of the New Testament and this requires the resulting moral purity in the same way that the Old Testament sacrifice required ritual purity.²⁸ Thus whatever else may be said about the other references in the Didache mentioned above, in Chapter 14 "sacrifice is explicitly central."²⁹ However, while the idea of the eucharist as sacrifice appears to be assumed, this chapter does not tell us what is involved in it, nor does it indicate precisely what is meant by the term sacrifice. Taken together with the other relevant passages it would seem to imply that a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, that is, prayer over the bread and the cup with a sense of the Lord's saving presence. The quotation from Mal.1.11,14, which reappears frequently in the Fathers in this context here becomes a command instead of a statement of fact: "For this [(i.e) the Eucharist] is the sacrifice spoken of by the Lord:.... In every place and time offer me a pure sacrifice...". The obvious implication here is that from very early on Christians saw the prophecy of Malachi concerning the pure sacrifice as having been fulfilled in the sacrifice of the Eucharist.

2.2 CLEMENT OF ROME

In Clement of Rome's letter to the Corinthians Daly identifies three main themes about sacrifice.³⁰ These are 1. "the necessity that sacrifice be according to the will of God"; 2. "the spiritualization of sacrifice" and 3. "the institutionalization of sacrifice". In the first category an emphasis is put on the obedience of Abraham³¹ in being willing to sacrifice his son Isaac, and the importance of obeying the Church order in Liturgy described in Chapters 40 - 42 as a similar act of obedience to God. According to Daly the New Testament is inclined to spiritualize sacrifice to divest it from its bloody aspect and Clement does the same.

²⁷ Κατὰ κυριακὴν δὲ Κυρίου συναχθέντες κλάσατε ἄρτον καὶ εὐχαριστήσατε, προσεξομολογησάμενοι τὰ παραπτώματα ὑμῶν, ὡς καθαρὰ ἡ θυσία ὑμῶν ἢ.

²⁸ ibid p.312 *Daly Christian Sacrifice*

²⁹ ibid p.502

³⁰ ibid. p.502

³¹ 1 Clem.10.7

This seems to be the case in such quotations as those from Ps.49.23 *θυσία καὶ αἰνέσεως*: and Ps.49.14 *θυσον τῷ θεῷ θυσίαν αἰνέσεως*. However it is Daly's third category that has the greatest importance for this study, the institutionalization of sacrifice. In 40.1-5, 41.1-3, and 44.3ff, Clement uses sacrificial terms to describe the Eucharistic Liturgy of the Church. The loss to the earliest Christians of the Temple in Jerusalem following its destruction in 70 A.D. led to a greater awareness of the Christian Assembly being the living Temple of God: so one can see in Ch.40:

"....it behoves us to do all things in [their proper] order, which the Lord has commanded us to perform at the stated times. He has enjoined offerings [to be presented] and service to be performed..... at the appointed times."³²

In Chapter 41.1 he speaks of the public liturgy of the Church: "not in every place are the daily sacrifices offered, but in Jerusalem only." This is most probably a reference to the Eucharist. Here Clement is speaking not only about the order of the Old Testament priesthood, but also about the ministers of the New Covenant, for in the next chapter he says:

"Christ was sent forth by God, and the apostles by Christ....both these appointments then, were made in an orderly way."³³

He continues by saying that the bishops and deacons are a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy by altering Is.60.17 to read:

"I will appoint their bishops in righteousness, and their deacons in faith".³⁴

Later,³⁵ Clement clearly implies that the bishop has a special function in the Church's public liturgy and that this function is in a special way..... sacrificial."³⁶
In later writers the *τα δωρα* of this passage are interpreted as the bread and wine

³² Πάντα τάξει ποιεῖν ὀφείλομεν, ὅσα ὁ Δεσπότης ἐπιτελεῖν ἐκέλευσεν κατὰ καιροὺς τεταγμένους. Τὰς τὲ προσφορὰς καὶ λειτουργίας ἐπιτελεῖσθαι... PG Vol.1.288

³³ Ἐξεπέμφθη ὁ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι ἀπὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ: ἐγένοντο οὖν ἀμφοτέρω εὐτάκτως... PG Vol.1.292

³⁴ Καταστήσω τοὺς ἐπισκόπους αὐτῶν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ τοὺς διακόνους αὐτῶν ἐν πίστει. PG Vol.1.293

³⁵ 1 Clem.44.3.4

³⁶ Daly Christian Sacrifice p.503

of the Eucharist. This is probably what Clement intended, but it is impossible to be sure at this stage. Whatever else may be said about the position of the Eucharist in the Roman Church at this time, there can be no doubt that it is central. If then the Eucharist is at the centre of the Church's worship, and that worship is seen as sacrificial; the Eucharist must be sacrificial by implication.

2.3 IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

In the letters of Ignatius Professor Young has identified three sacrificial themes: the Temple, the sacrifice of Christ, and the sacrifice of the Christian. In her view Ignatius never uses the word *θυσία* explicitly of the eucharist³⁷. Although this is correct, it must be said that the Eucharist is strongly implied in what Ignatius says about the sacrifice of the Church. For example, Ignatius says:³⁸ " If anyone is not within the altar [i.e. the Church] he is deprived of the bread of God." Here bread does mean the bread of the eucharist, and perhaps by implication much else besides besides, as the Lord intended when he said "I am the bread of life". The altar on which the Eucharist is offered becomes the foundation of the unity of the Church for in another letter he writes:³⁹

" For there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup to [show forth] the unity of this blood; one altar as there is one bishop along with the presbytery and the deacons....."⁴⁰

Not only is there a strong allusion here to the Eucharist as sacrifice, particularly in the reference to the one altar, but also the Eucharistic sacrifice is tied to the local bishop escorted by the other clergy. According to Young, the first theme of the Temple is closely related to the living stones of 1 Pt.2.4-10. The Temple was seen in Old Testament times to be the place where God was present in a special way, and consequently where the sacrifices were offered. In Ignatius' writings it is usually the sacrifice of martyrdom that is specifically intended whenever this verse of Peter's is mentioned. Nevertheless, the eucharist as the primary liturgical action

³⁷ Young Sacrificial Ideas p.250

³⁸ Eph.5.2

³⁹ Philad. 4

⁴⁰ *μία γὰρ σὰρξ τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἓν ποτήριον εἰς ἑνώσιν τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ ἐν θυσιαστήριον, ὡς εἰς ἐπίσκοπος ἀμα τῷ πρεσβυτερίῳ καὶ διακόνοις.* PG Vol.5.700

of the Church is related to the sacrifice of the martyr. This is indicated in the way in which Ignatius explains his approaching martyrdom. This martyrdom is not only depicted in sacrificial terms, but in a language that is highly suggestive of the eucharistic liturgy, as can be seen in the text that follows:⁴¹

” Grant me no more than to be a sacrifice for God while there is an altar at hand. Then you can form yourselves into a choir and sing praises to the Father in Jesus Christ,...”⁴²

The same attitudes are found in Ignatius that we found in Clement, and his application of Eucharistic imagery to his coming martyrdom in this passage, which was the sacrifice of his life, presupposes that the Eucharist is a sacrifice.⁴³ In other words the Eucharist holds a central place within the sacrificial life of the Church and therefore is sacrificial in character.

2.4 Conclusions

These works then form the basis for the evidence of an early awareness of the eucharistic sacrifice. In them there is more evidence of the liturgical life of the Church at the heart of its existence than is readily apparent in the New Testament. In the New Testament the sacrifice of Christ is central; here the relationship between that sacrifice and the increasing numbers of Christians who were to become martyrs is being thought out. Within the Church the eucharist is now seen as the liturgical celebration both of what Christ did, and also of what is happening and is going to happen to the individual Christian, and this celebration is highly sacrificial. In each of the three Apostolic Fathers, there is a similar attitude taken to the Eucharist. It is a central part of the Church's life, a life which was perceived in sacrificial terms; and so the Eucharist has a sacrificial character.

⁴¹ Rms.2.2 SC Vol.10 page 128

⁴² Πλειόν δὲ μὲ παρέχεσθε τοῦ σπονδισθῆναι θεῶ, ὡς ἔτι θυσιαστήριον ἑτοιμον ἔστιν, ἵνα ἐν ἀγάπῃ χορὸς γενόμενοι ἄσητε τῷ πατρὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,.... PG Vol.5.805

⁴³ Louis Bouyer, History of Christian Spirituality Vol.1 pages 201-204

Chapter III

JUSTIN MARTYR

Justin Martyr, who may be regarded as the chief among the Apologists, has some very interesting references to the Eucharist and in particular to eucharistic sacrifice. The two works in which he discusses eucharistic sacrifice are his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* and his *First Apology*. It is clear⁴⁴ that the *Apology* was written first, for Justin refers to it in *Dialogue* Chapter 120; therefore the evidence provided by it should be examined first.

3.1 The First Apology

This *Apology* falls into two main parts, the first dealing with the attitude of the civil authorities and the worship of the pagan gods⁴⁵; the second part⁴⁶ is a justification of Christianity, and a description of its worship and teaching.⁴⁷

It is in the *First Apology* that Justin refers to eucharistic sacrifice. In Chapter 66, during the description of the "Eucharist for the Newly Baptized", these are his words:⁴⁸

"For not as ordinary bread and ordinary drink do we receive these, but in like manner as by the Word of God Christ Jesus our Saviour was made flesh and blood for our salvation, so also the food, which is blessed by the prayer of the Word which proceeded from him and from which our flesh and blood by transmutation are nourished, is, we are taught, the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh."⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Quasten *Patrology* Vol.1 p.202

⁴⁵ Chapter 4 to Chapter 12

⁴⁶ Chapter 13 to Chapter 67

⁴⁷ Quasten *Patrology* Vol.1 p.199/200

⁴⁸ *Apol.*1.66 p.176

⁴⁹ Οὐ γὰρ ὡς κοινὸν ἄρτον οὐδὲ κοινὸν πόμα ταῦτα λαμβάνομεν: ἀλλ' ὁν τρόπον διὰ λόγον θεοῦ, σαρκοποιηθεὶς Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ Σωτὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ σὰρκα καὶ αἷμα ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας ἡμῶν ἔσχεν, οὕτως καὶ τὴν

From this whole text and especially the significant phrase δι'εὐχῆς λόγου τοῦ παρ'αὐτοῦ we can see that the only sacrificial action in the Eucharist is the pronouncing of prayer over the bread and the wine.⁵⁰ This is stressed against the accusations that there had been human sacrifices amongst the Christians, and it is designed to emphasise the innocence of what is happening in the Christian assemblies. Earlier in the same Apology⁵¹, Justin had said that the offering of the Eucharist was made verbally (διὰ λόγου) and is in line with this same concern:

" The only honour that is worthy of him is not to consume by fire what he has brought into being for our sustenance, but to use it for ourselves and those in need, and with gratitude to him to offer thanks verbally by praises and hymns for our creation and for the well being of all things."⁵²

This means that it is by praises and hymns or prayer that Christians make their sacrifices to God, as distinct from the bloody sacrifices of others.

3.2 Dialogue with Trypho

Justin is clearer on this point in the *Dialogue with Trypho*.⁵³ It is in the context of his presentation of Christians as the New Israel (Ch. 109 - 142) that the Eucharist emerges as the distinctive sacrifice of this new people. This is linked with the offering of flour in thanksgiving (Lev.14.11) made by those who had been cleansed from leprosy and also with the pure sacrifice of Malachi 1.1. Here are Justin's words:⁵⁴

δι'εὐχῆς λόγου τοῦ παρ'αὐτοῦ εὐχαριστηθεῖσαν τροφήν, ἐξ ἧς αἷμα καὶ σάρκες κατα μεταβολὴν τρέφονται ἡμῶν, ἐκείνου τοῦ σαρκοποιηθέντος Ἰησοῦ καὶ σάρκα καὶ αἷμα ἐδιδάχθημεν εἶναι. PG Vol.6.428

⁵⁰ De La Taille p.62 Vol.2 Thesis XVIII

⁵¹ Apol.1.13 p.40

⁵²μόνην ἀξίαν αὐτοῦ τιμὴν ταύτην παραλαμβάντες, τὸ τὰ ὑπ'ἐκείνου εἰς διατροφήν γεγόμενα οὐ πυρὶ δαπανᾶν ἀλλ'ἑαυτοῖς καὶ τοῖς δεομένοις προσφέρειν, ἐκείνω δὲ εὐχαρίστους ὄντας διὰ λόγου πομπὰς καὶ ὕμνους πέμπειν ὑπὲρ τε τοῦ γεγονέναι καὶ τῶν εἰς εὐρωστίαν πόρων πάντων. PG Vol.6.345

⁵³ The 142 chapters of the Dialogue are our oldest existing apology against the Jews. Chapters 9 - 47 explain the Christian understanding of the Old Testament; Chapters 48 - 108 are about the divinity of Christ; and Chapters 109 to 142 on the Christians as the New Israel. - Quasten Patrology Vol.1 p.202/203

⁵⁴ De La Taille p.61 Vol.2 Thesis XVIII

" The offering of flour also, prescribed for those who were cleansed from leprosy, was a figure of the bread of the Eucharist, which the Lord Jesus Christ commanded to be made by us in memory of his Passion, which he sustained for those whose souls are purged from all malice, and that at the same time we might give thanks to God, because he created the world, and everything that is in it, for the sake of man, liberated us from the wickedness in which we were, and completely overthrew the principalities and powers through him who suffered the Passion according to his will. Hence God spoke, as I have already said, of the sacrifices which you offered at that time, through Malachias,⁵⁵ one of the twelve, in these words ' I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord; and I will not accept sacrifices at your hands: for from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same my name has been glorified among the gentiles, and in every place incense has been offered to my name, and a pure offering: for my name is great among the gentiles says the Lord, but you profane it.' He then speaks of those gentiles, namely us, who in every place offer sacrifices to him, that is the bread of the Eucharist and also the cup of the Eucharist, affirming both that we glorify his name and you [the Jews] profane it."⁵⁶

The above text demonstrates that Justin considers the Eucharist to be a sacrifice in as much as he identifies it with the flour offering of the leper, and on the

⁵⁵ Mal.1.10

⁵⁶ Καὶ ἡ τῆς σιμιθάλευς δὲ προσφορά, ὧ ἄνδρες, ἔλεγεν ἡ ὑπὲρ καθαριζομένων ἀπὸ τῆς λέπρας προσφέρεσθαι παραδοθεῖσα, τύπος ἦν τοῦ ἄρτου τῆς εὐχαριστίας, ὃν εἰς ἀνάμνησιν τοῦ πάθους οὗ ἔπαθεν ὑπὲρ τῶν καθαιρομένων τὰς ψυχὰς ἀπὸ πάσης πονηρίας ἀνθρώπων, Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ὁ Κύριος ἡμῶν παρέδωκε ποιεῖν, ἵνα ἅμα τε εὐχαριστῶμεν τῷ θεῷ ὑπὲρ τε τοῦ τὸν κόσμον ἐκτικέναι σὺν πᾶσι τοῖς ἐν αὐτῷ διὰ τὸν ἄνθρωπον, καὶ ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς κακίας ἐν ἡ γεγόναμεν ἠλευθερωκέναι ἡμᾶς, καὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ τὰς ἐξουσίας καταλελυκέναι τελείαν κατάλυσιν διὰ τοῦ παθητοῦ γινομένου κατὰ τὴν βουλήν αὐτοῦ. Ὅθεν περὶ μὲν τῶν ὑφ' ἡμῶν τότε προσφερομένων θυσίαν λέγει ὁ θεός, ὡς προέφη, διὰ Μαλαχίου, ἑνὸς τῶν δώδεκα. Οὐκ ἔστι θέλημά μου ἐν ὑμῖν, λέγει κύριος, καὶ τὰς θυσίας ὑμῶν οὐ προσδέξομαι ἐκ τῶν χειρῶν ὑμῶν: διότι ἀπὸ ἀνατολῆς ἡλίου ἕως δυσμῶν τὸ ὄνομά μου δεδοξασται ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσι, καὶ ἐν παντί τόπῳ θυμίαμα προσφέρεται τῷ ὄνοματί μου καὶ θυσία καθαρά, ὅτι μέγα τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσι, λέγει κύριος, ἡμεῖς δὲ βεβηλοῦτε αὐτό. Περὶ δὲ τῶν ἐν παντί τόπῳ ὑφ' ἡμῶν τῶν ἔθνῶν προσφερομένων αὐτῷ θυσίαν, τοῦτέστι τοῦ ἄρτου τῆς εὐχαριστίας καὶ τοῦ ποτηρίου ὁμοίως τῆς εὐχαριστίας, προλέγει τότε, εἰπὼν καὶ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ δοξάζειν ἡμᾶς, ὑμᾶς δὲ βεβηλοῦν.....!

other hand with the sacrifice prophecied by Malachi.⁵⁷ This is stated once more in the Dialogue, for he says:

" Long beforehand God declares that all those who are pleasing to him who, through his Name, make the sacrifices which Jesus commanded to be made, those which make the Eucharist of bread and wine, and which are made by Christians in every place."⁵⁸

Particularly striking here is Justin's use of the term sacrifice (*θυσίας*) for the eucharistic bread and wine and his claim that they were commanded by Jesus. This passage taken together with the previous one makes it indisputably clear that in the first half of the first century the celebration of the Eucharist was considered to be the Christian sacrifice, par excellence, which had been instituted by Christ as a replacement for the sacrifices of the Old Testament.⁵⁹

There is finally another passage in Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* which elaborates the meaning of the Eucharistic Sacrifice; linking the notion of the offering to the prayer embedded in the celebration of the Eucharist:⁶⁰

" Now that prayers and eucharists, when offered by worthy men, are the only perfect and well-pleasing sacrifices to God, I admit... For such alone Christians have undertaken to offer, and in the remembrance effected by their solid and liquid food, whereby the suffering of the Son of God which He endured is brought to mind, whose name the high-priests of your nation have caused to be profaned and blasphemed over all the earth..... for there is no race of men anywhere..... in which through the name of the crucified Jesus prayers and eucharists are not made to the Father and Maker of all things. "⁶¹

⁵⁷ de La Taille page 61 Vol.2 Thesis XVIII

⁵⁸ Πάντας οὖν, οἱ διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τούτου θυσίας, ἃς παρέδοκεν Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς γίνεσθαι, τουτέστιν ἐπὶ τῇ εὐχαριστίᾳ τοῦ ἄρτου καὶ τοῦ ποτηρίου, τὰς ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ τῆς γῆς γιγνομένας ὑπὸ τῶν Χριστιανῶν, προλαβὼν ὁ θεός, μαρτυρεῖ εὐαρέστους ὑπάρχειν αὐτῷ.

⁵⁹ c.f. de la Taille

⁶⁰ De La Taille p.62 Vol.2 Thesis XVIII

⁶¹ Ὅτι μὲν οὖν καὶ εὐχαὶ εὐχαριστίαι, ὑπὸ τῶν ἀξίων γιγνόμεναι, τέλειαι μόναι καὶ εὐαρέσται εἰσὶ τῷ θεῷ θυσίαι, καὶ αὐτὸς φημι... Ταῦτα γὰρ μόναι καὶ Χριστιανοὶ παρέλαβον ποιεῖν, καὶ ἐπ' ἀναμνήσει δὲ τῆς τροφῆς

De La Taille says of this: " To us the plain meaning of the passage is that sacrifices really acceptable to God are not made by the sword or by the fire, but by the prayers and thanksgivings of the lips. "⁶² In other words the prayer is said to be the instrument of the sacrifice, the bread and the wine are the actual offering.

3.3 Conclusions

It seems fair to say in conclusion that Justin clearly sees the Eucharist as replacing the old sacrifices of the Jews. In several places we have seen that he uses the word *θυσια* explicitly for the Eucharist. Although he does not speak of it as an "unbloody" sacrifice, it is clear that he implies it since it is a sacrifice effected by prayer alone, and that the offering being made is of the bread and the wine: this being the new sacrifice foretold by the Prophet Malachi. In contrast to the offerings of the Jews, which were restricted to the Temple in Jerusalem and to themselves, the new sacrifice is made throughout the world, and amongst the Gentiles. In this Justin anticipates the teaching of later Fathers, although he does not seem to say very much about the precise role of Christ himself in this offering beyond saying that it is Christ's Body and Blood that are being offered. He does make three points of crucial significance: (a) Christ instituted it; (b) it is directly linked to his own Body and Blood which were offered as a sacrifice on the cross; and (c) it is made in or through his name. All these points reappear in Irenaeus who most probably had read Justin; and are further elaborated.

αὐτῶν ξηρᾶς τε καὶ ὑγρᾶς, ἐν ἧ καὶ τοῦ πάθους ὁ πέπονθε δι' αὐτοὺς ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ μεμνηται. Οὐ τὸ ὄνομα βεβηλωθῆαι κατὰ πᾶσαν τὴν γῆν καὶ βλασφημῆσθαι οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ διδάσκαλοι ἐργάσαντο... Οὐδὲ ἐν γὰρ ὅλως ἐστὶ τὸ γένος ἀνθρώπων, ... ἐν οἷς μὴ διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ σταυρωθέντος Ἰησοῦ εὐχαὶ καὶ εὐχαριστιαὶ τῷ Πατρὶ καὶ Ποιητῇ τῶν ὅλων γίνονται.

⁶² De La Taille p.62

Chapter IV

IRENÆUS, BISHOP OF LYONS

The purpose of this chapter is to look at the understanding of the Eucharist in the two extant works of Irenaeus, the second century Bishop of Lyons. "He was by far the most important of the theologians of the Second Century"⁶³. Born in Asia Minor, yet ministering as a bishop in Gaul, he is a witness to the unity of the faith of the Church in East and West in this period. His contact with Polycarp gives him a link with those who had heard John and other apostles.⁶⁴ There are two works of importance: *Against the Heresies* and *the Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*; the first being available only in Latin (in its entirety) and the second having survived only in Armenian. As might be expected, the sacrificial language is much more explicit than has been found previously; and although the bishop's purpose ranged much wider than just questions of the Eucharist: what he says is most illuminating. The clearest references are in *Adversus Haereses* Book IV.

4.1 ADVERSUS HAERESSES

The purpose of Irenaeus in *Adversus Haereses* was to refute the heretics who were at that time threatening the Catholic Church, and in particular the various forms of Gnosticism. The opening chapters of this work are devoted to the refutation of this heresy and they contain detailed descriptions of the beliefs of the various Gnostics. The main strand of their doctrines stresses the rejection of good in material things, and rejection of the God of the Jews revealed in the Old Testament as being one and the same with the God of the New Testament. They believed that they alone were granted a $\gamma\nu\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma$ (knowledge) which freed them from the constraints of the material world. This had two separate effects: the one a withdrawal from the evil-material world; the other a lapse into immoral practices on the grounds that nothing material could affect the soul. Communication with the one perfect and ineffable Being (called Proarche, Propator, or Bythus)

⁶³ Quasten Patrology Vol.1 page 287

⁶⁴ Eusebius Hist.Eccl. 5.20 5-7

was achieved through a sequence of descending aeons. Creation of the material world was the work of the Demiurge, using the three passions of fear, grief, and perplexity.⁶⁵

Against this background, Irenaeus refuted these ideas by expounding the orthodox teaching of the Church, and it is in this context that we see how his understanding of the Eucharist fits into the scheme of things. Of course, matter to him is not evil since it was created by God who created all things out of goodness. In the case of man, however, he follows Saint Paul's vision that the human body was subjected to corruption and death through sin, but Christ provided the way for it to be restored in immortality. This is concretely realized in the Eucharist which brings incorruptibility to the Christian. As Montgomery-Hitchcock says "Irenaeus regarded the Eucharist as a means of acquiring immortality for the body, because of its heavenly part".⁶⁶

4.1.1 Book III

The third book of *Adversus Haereses* uses the divine institution of the Eucharist as a means of refuting the Gnostic view of matter in favour of the Christian view which says that God uses material things as a means to their acquiring immortality. One way this is done is through the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist. So Irenaeus says:⁶⁷

"...writing to the Corinthians he [Paul] says 'for we proclaim Christ crucified.' And he infers: 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ?' Who is this but he who communicates us through food."⁶⁸

Irenaeus uses this quotation from 1 Corinthians in this Book III to prove his main point of argument which is that matter created by God is not intrinsically evil, and this remains the principal object of the rest of the work.

⁶⁵ Adv.Haer.1.5.4

⁶⁶ Church Quarterly Review Vol. 129 page 207 *Doctrine of Holy Communion in Irenaeus*.

⁶⁷ Adv.Haer.III.19

⁶⁸ ...ad nos Corinthos scribens ait 'nos autem annuntiamus Christum Iesum crucifixum.' Et infert: 'Calix benedictionis quem benedicimus, nonne communicatio sanguinis est Christi?' 'Quis est autem qui communicavit nobis de escis.'

4.1.2 Book IV

In the Fourth Book, Irenaeus establishes further the principle that Christ cannot be divided, and that the Son suffered in Christ. The Eucharist is again used here as a part of his argument, but this time so is the concept of sacrifice. Chapter 17 argues that God did not provide the levitical sacrifices because he had need of them, for he needs nothing from men; and that this was the real message of the prophets. In the second section of this Chapter, Irenaeus says that it was not anger which caused God to reject the levitical sacrifices, but rather to point to the " true sacrifice " :⁶⁹

" For it was not because he was angry, like a man, as many venture to say, that he rejected their sacrifices; but out of compassion to their blindness, and with the view of suggesting to them the true sacrifice, by offering which they shall appease God, and that they may receive life from him... " ⁷⁰

The first indications of what this true sacrifice might be are given in section 4, for Irenaeus says:⁷¹

" Out of all these things it is manifest, that God requires from them neither sacrifices nor burnt-offerings; but faith, and obedience, and justice, for their salvation. " ⁷²

However the Eucharist is also seen as a sacrifice for in section 5 he says this:⁷³

" Again, giving directions to his disciples to offer God the first-fruits of his own created things - not as if he stood in need of them, but that they might be themselves neither unfruitful nor ungrateful - he took that created thing, bread, and gave thanks, and said, " This is my body ", and in the same way the cup, which is part of that creation to which we belong, which he

⁶⁹ Adv.Haer.IV.17.2 Harvey Vol.2 page 195

⁷⁰ Non enim sicut homo motus, ut multi audent dicere, divertit eorum sacrificia: sed miserans eorum caecitati, et verum sacrificium insinuans, quod offerentes propitiabuntur Deum, ut ab eo vitam percipiant.

⁷¹ Adv.Haer.IV.17.4 Harvey Vol.2 page 197

⁷² Ex quibus omnibus manifestum est, quia non sacrificia et holocaustomata quaerebat ab eis Deus; sed fidem, et obedientiam, et iustitiam, propter illorum salutem.

⁷³ Adv.Haer.IV.17.5 Harvey Vol.2 page 197ff

confessed to be his blood, and taught the new oblation of the new covenant which the Church receiving from the Apostles, offers to God throughout all the world, to him who gives us as the means of sustenance the first-fruits of his own gifts in the New Testament, concerning which Malachi, among the twelve prophets, thus spoke beforehand: 'I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord Almighty, and I will not accept sacrifice at your hands. For from the rising of the sun, unto the going down [of the same], my name is glorified among the Gentiles, says the Lord Almighty;' - indicating in the plainest manner, by these words, that the former people [the Jews] shall indeed cease to make offerings to God, but that in every place sacrifice shall be offered to him, and that a pure one; and his name is glorified among the Gentiles."⁷⁴

Montgomery-Hitchcock says that: "The Eucharist was.... regarded by Irenaeus as a sacrifice of the fruits of the earth;..."⁷⁵ Here it is seen to be more than that, for the significant words here are *oblatio* and *offert* and *purum sacrificium* which are sacrificial terms. Furthermore it is the Church which makes the offering throughout the world in fulfilment of the prophecy of Malachi; offering the bread which Christ said was his Body, and the cup which he confessed to be his blood. This sacrifice is the new oblation of the New Testament; and it is possible because the Father confesses the name of Jesus Christ.⁷⁶

"...which is throughout all the world glorified in the Church, to be his own, both because it is that of his Son, and because he who thus describes it gave him for the salvation of men. Since, therefore, the Name of Son belongs to the Father, and since in the omnipotent God the Church makes offerings

⁷⁴ Sed et suis discipulis dans concilium, primitias Deo offerre ex suis creaturis, non quasi indigenti, sed ut ipsi nec infructuosi nec ingrati sint, eum qui ex creatura est panis, accepit, et gratias egit, dicens: Hoc est meum corpus. Et calicem similiter, qui est ex ea creatura, quae secundum nos, suum sanguinem confessus est, et Novi Testamenti novam docuit oblationem: quam Ecclesia ab Apostolis accipiens, in universo mundo offert Deo ei qui alimenta nobis praestat primitias suorum munerum in Novo Testamento, de quo in duodecim prophetis Malachias sic praesignificavit: Non est mihi voluntas in vobis, dicit Dominus omnipotens, et sacrificium non accipiam de manibus vestris. Quoniam ab ortu solis usque ad occasum nomen meum clarificatur inter gentes, et in omni loco incensum offertur nomini meo, et sacrificium purum: quoniam magnum est nomen meum in gentibus, dicit Dominus omnipotens; manifestissime significans per haec, quoniam prior quidem populus cessabit offerre Deo; omni autem loco sacrificium offertur ei, et hoc purum; nomen autem eius glorificatur in gentibus.

⁷⁵ Church Quarterly Review Vol.129 page 215

⁷⁶ Adv.Haer.IV.17.6 Harvey Vol.2 page 200

through Jesus Christ, he says well on both these grounds, 'And in every place incense is offered to my Name and a pure sacrifice' Now John, in the Apocalypse, declares the incense is the prayers of the saints."⁷⁷

If the prayers of the saints are the incense, then the pure sacrifice must be the Eucharist, for that is the offering which the Lord commanded his followers to make. This is confirmed in the next chapter:⁷⁸

" Therefore the oblation of the Church, which the Lord taught to be offered throughout the world, is reckoned a pure sacrifice before God, and is accepted by him; not because he needs a sacrifice from us, but because he who offers, is himself glorified in that which he offers, if his gift is accepted.
"⁷⁹

The Eucharist can be said to be a sacrifice because oblations have not generally been put aside:⁸⁰

" And the class of oblations in general has not been set aside; for there were both oblations there [among the Jews], and there are oblations here [among the Christians]. Sacrifices there were among the people; sacrifices there are, also, in the Church: but the species alone has been changed in such a way that it is now offered not by slaves, but by freemen..."⁸¹

It is the Eucharist which is the oblation among the Christians, and it is said to be a sacrifice. Irenaeus, concludes the next section with these words:⁸²

" Sacrifices, therefore, do not sanctify a man, for God stands in no need of sacrifice; but it is the conscience of the offerer that sanctifies the sacrifice

⁷⁷ Quoniam ergo nomen Filii proprium Patris est, et in Deo omnipotente per Iesum Christum offert Ecclesia, bene ait secundum utraque: Et in omni loco incensum offertur nomini meo, et sacrificium purum. Incensa autem Iohannes in Apocalypsi, orationes esse ait sanctorum.

⁷⁸ Adv.Haer.IV.18.1 Harvey Vol.2 page 201

⁷⁹ Igitur Ecclesiae oblatio, quam Dominus docuit offeri in universo mundo, purum sacrificium reputatum est apud Deum, et acceptum est ei: not quod indigeat a nobis sacrificium, sed quoniam is qui offert, glorificatur ipse in eo quod offert. si acceptet munus eius.

⁸⁰ Adv.Haer.IV.18.2 Harvey Vol.2 page 201

⁸¹ Et non genus oblationum reprobatur est; oblationes enim et illic, oblationes autem et hic: sacrificia in populo, sacrificia et in Ecclesia: sed species immutata est tantum, quippe cum iam non a servis, sed a liberis offeratur...

⁸² Adv.Haer.IV.18.3 Harvey Vol.2 page 203

when it is pure, and thus moves God to accept [the offering] as from a friend."⁸³

The sacrifice which Irenaeus is speaking about is the Eucharist, for in the beginning of the next section he writes:⁸⁴

" Inasmuch, then, as the Church offers with single-mindedness, her gift is justly reckoned a pure sacrifice with God."⁸⁵

If then, the intention of the offerer has to be right, it is also true that it belongs to the Church alone to make this offering.⁸⁶

" And the Church alone offers this oblation a pure thing to the Creator offering to him with thanks an action out of his created things."⁸⁷

Irenaeus concludes his chapter by stating that the Jews are not able to offer this sacrifice; and, more to the point, neither can the heretics; and the Eucharist is clearly intended here for he says of the heretics: "how can they be consistent with themselves, [when they say] that bread over which thanks have been given is the body of the Lord, and the cup his blood,..."⁸⁸

The next two sections of this chapter conclude his arguments on the Eucharist.⁸⁹

" For we offer to him what is his own.....announcing consistently the communion and the union of the flesh and of the Spirit for....the bread receiving the invocation of God, is now not common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two things, earthly and heavenly, and so our bodies

⁸³ Igitur non sacrificia sanctificant hominem; non enim indiget sacrificio Deus: sed conscientia eius qui offert sanctificat sacrificium, pura existens, et praestat acceptare Deum quasi ab amico.

⁸⁴ Adv.Haer.IV.18.4 Harvey Vol.2 page 203

⁸⁵ Quoniam igitur cum simplicitate Ecclesia offert, iuste munus eius purum sacrificium apud Deum deputatum est.

⁸⁶ Adv.Haer.IV.18.4

⁸⁷ Et hanc oblationem Ecclesia sola puram offert fabricatori offerens ei cum gratiarum actione ex creatura eius.

⁸⁸ Quomodo autem constabit eis, eum panem in quo gratiae actae sint, corpus esse Domini sui, et calicem sanguinis eius... Adv.Haer.IV.18.4

⁸⁹ Adv.Haer.IV.18.5,6

receiving the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having hope of the resurrection.⁹⁰

Then Irenaeus repeats the theme that God does not need this offering, but that the thanksgiving sanctifies the offerer. This is clearly sacrificial.

Irenaeus finishes this chapter by saying that although God has no need of our possessions, Christians do need for their own sake to offer something to God. It was for this reason that the Word gave to his people the commandment to make this offering, so that they might learn to serve God.⁹¹

" so that same word gave to the people a precept to make the oblation, although it was not needed for them, in order that they might learn to serve God... Therefore it is to the altar in heaven, for there our prayers and our oblations are directed, as John said in the Apocalypse: And the Temple of God was opened; and the Tabernacle: for behold, he said, the tabernacle of God, in which he dwells with men. "⁹²

This offering, he says, is to be made at the altar frequently and without intermission.⁹³ The altar to which it is directed is in Heaven and so is the Temple, as Christians were told in the Revelation of St. John.

In the next chapter,⁹⁴ Irenaeus shows how these gifts, oblations, and sacrifices, were shown in a figure on Mount Sinai, from the One God, whose Name is now to be glorified in the Church among all nations.⁹⁵ He finishes this discourse by criticising those men who think that they understand the mysteries of God. The

⁹⁰ offerimus enim ei quae sunt eius..... congruenter communicationem et unitam praedicantes carnis et Spiritus.... enim.... panis, percipiens invocationem Dei, iam non communis panis est, sed Eucharistia, ex duabus rebus constans, terrena et coelesti: sic et corpora nostra percipientia Eucharistiam, iam non sunt corruptibilis, spem resurrectionis habentia.

⁹¹ Adv.Haer.IV.18.6

⁹² ita id ipsum Verbum dedit populo praeceptum faciendarum oblationem, quamvis non indigeret eis, ut disceret Deo servire;.... Est ergo altare in coelis, illuc enim preces nostrae et oblationes nostrae diriguntur; et templum, quaemadmodum Johannes in Apocalypsi ait: Et apertum est templum Dei; et tabernaculum: Ecce enim, inquit, tabernaculum Dei, in quo habitabit cum hominibus.

⁹³ sic et ideo nos quoque offerre vult munus ad altare frequenter et sine intermissione.

⁹⁴ Adv.Haer.IV.19

⁹⁵ ...ab Uno et Eodem Deo, cuius et nunc in Ecclesia glorificatur nomen in omnibus gentibus.

book concludes by showing the way in which God was active in ancient times; and that the Exodus was a type of the ' exodus ' of the Church.

The importance of these passages for our purpose is not so much the main thrust of his argument, which is about the material aspect of the Eucharist, but rather that the idea of a sacrificial understanding of the Eucharist may be found in these texts, for Irenaeus sees the Eucharist as the new oblation instituted by Christ, the pure sacrifice foretold by Malachi, and an effective means of grace.

4.2 THE PROOF OF THE APOSTOLIC PREACHING

The second extant work of Irenaeus that has to be considered is the *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* which had been lost for centuries, but was discovered in the Church of Our Lady of Erevan in Armenia in 1904. In this work the Eucharist is not mentioned specifically; and the only mention of sacrifice is in Ch.96⁹⁶ where he quotes Hosea 6.6 " I desire mercy and not sacrifice " which Irenaeus used in *Adversus Haereses*, though in this case there is no mention of the Eucharist.⁹⁷

4.3 Conclusions

What conclusions then can be drawn from the writings of Irenaeus? The Eucharist can be said to be a sacrifice because it is clearly described as the new oblation or the new sacrifice foretold in the Prophets. It is the empty sacrifices of the Jews that are of no effect. The frequent use of sacrificial terms is very clear; and the Eucharist is linked through its institution to the eternal offering of the Son to the Father. The nature of this Sacrifice in the Eucharist is that God's people by invoking the Holy Spirit are joined with Christ as he offers his own. he offers, and he is the Victim. The Church at that moment is as it were in Heaven. The bread and the wine are truly the Body and Blood of Christ: for they are of his creation; a creation that can and will be made incorruptible. Those who eat and drink the Lord in their bodies will by this act be made incorruptible too. Of course, this was what St. Paul said when he talked about what was lost in Adam is regained in Christ, for it was his promise that Christians "shall be changed."

⁹⁶ Proof of the Apostolic Preaching Ancient Christian Writers Vol.16 page 106

⁹⁷ Adv.Haer.IV.18.4

Chapter V

TERTULLIAN

In this chapter the writings of Tertullian are examined. No particular distinction is made between those writings which preceded his becoming a Montanist and those which followed it. First, it is important to see if any coherent pattern be found. Some scholars have maintained that Tertullian's understanding of the Eucharist was purely symbolic, and it may be that he did indeed understand the Eucharist in a sacrificial way.

First of all in the *De Praescriptionibus*:⁹⁸

" Come now, run over the apostolic churches, in which the very thrones of the apostles are still pre-eminent in their places, in which their own authentic writings are read uttering the voice and representing the voice of each of them severally,..... she [the Church of Rome] unites in one volume with the writings of the evangelists and the apostles, from which she drinks in her faith: this she seals with the water (of baptism) arrays with the Holy Spirit, feeds with the eucharist, cheers with martyrdom, and against such a discipline thus (maintained) she admits no gainsayer..... "⁹⁹

Here the apostolic origin of the Eucharist is upheld along with the other sacraments of baptism and confirmation. He does not specifically say in which way the Eucharist feeds the Roman Christians, but it is possible to see that for Tertullian it is a sacrament or mystery which builds up the people of God. This is repeated in *De Corona Militis*:¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Ch.36

⁹⁹ Age iam, percurrere Ecclesias apostolicas, apud quas ipsae adhuc cathedrae Apostolorum suis locis praesident; apud quas ipsae authenticae litterae eorum recitantur, sonantes vocem et repraesentantes faciem uniuscuiusque..... Legem et Prophetas cum evangelicis et apostolicis litteris miscet, et inde potam fidem; eam aqua signat, Sancto Spiritu vestit, eucharistia pascit, ad martyrium exhortatur, et ita adversus hanc institutionem neminem recipit.

¹⁰⁰ Ch.3

" We take also, in meetings before daybreak, and from the hands of none but the presidents, the sacrament of the Eucharist, which the Lord both commanded to be eaten at meal-times, and enjoined to be taken by all (alike)..."¹⁰¹

Again the Eucharist is described as a sacrament, but as in the previous quotation, it is the feeding that is stressed. In several other places the Eucharist is mentioned as one of the central activities of the Christian's life.¹⁰² In *Ad Uxorem* he uses the word *convivium* [=a feast], but there is specific suggestion of sacrifice. However a reference to the sacrifices of the pagans is found in *De Spectaculis*:¹⁰³

" ... nor do we dislike the temples less than the monuments: we have nothing to do with either altar, we adore neither image, we do not offer sacrifices to the gods, and we do not make funeral oblations to the departed; nay, we do not partake of what is offered either in the one case or in the other, for we cannot partake of God's feast and the feast of devils. "¹⁰⁴

Here God's feast [*coena Dei*] which is the Eucharist is contrasted with the false feasts of the pagan gods. If this contrast is carried to its logical conclusion, then each false activity of the pagan religion has its true parallel in the life of the Church: temples, monuments, altars, images, sacrifices, oblations, and feasts. The Temple is then superseded by the People of God, the monuments perhaps by the lives of the saints, the altar by Christ, the sacrifices by the sacrifice of the Eucharist, pagan funerals by prayers for the departed and not to the departed, and the feasts also by the Eucharist. What Tertullian is doing is similar to the earlier Fathers, but he is speaking about the superseding of the pagan religion rather than that of the Jews.

Turning now to *Adversus Marcionem*, the Eucharist is mentioned four times. First of all in Book 1.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Eucharistiae sacramentum, et in tempore victus, et omnibus mandatum a Domino etiam antelucanis coetibus, nec de aliorum manu quam praesidentium sumimus:....

¹⁰² De Fuga in Persecutione.14; Ad Uxorem.2.4.9

¹⁰³ Ch.13

¹⁰⁴ Nec minus templa, quam monumenta despuimus: neutram aram novimus, neutram effigiem adoramus: non sacrificamus, non parentamus, sed neque de sacrificio et parentato edimus, quia non possumus coenam Dei edere, et coenam daemoniorum.

¹⁰⁵ Adv.Marcionem 1.14

" He certainly has not even yet rejected the creator's water, for in it he washes his own: nor the oil with which he anoints them, nor the compound of milk and honey on which he weans them, nor the Creator's Bread by which he makes manifest his own body. Even in his own rites and ceremonies he cannot do without things borrowed from the Creator."¹⁰⁶

The key word here is *repraesentat*. Montgomery-Hitchcock¹⁰⁷ while attempting to disprove Pusey's contention that the word implied a real presence in the Eucharist says that it should be taken in a subjunctive sense. This seems to be unjustified in the light of what Tertullian says elsewhere; and the view of the Eucharist generally current in Tertullian's day.¹⁰⁸

Another key word used by Tertullian is *figura*, so one can read further on these words:¹⁰⁹

" ...You have a hint of this tree also in Jeremiah, who prophecies to the Jews that they will say, Come let us cast a tree into his bread..... meaning his Body. For so God has revealed it, even in his Gospel which you accept, when he says that Bread is his Body: so that even from this you can understand that he who gave bread the figure of his Body is the same as he whose body the prophet had of old figuratively described as bread, as Our Lord himself was afterwards to expound this mystery. "¹¹⁰

In this quotation, *figura* is almost certainly the Latin equivalent of *τυπος*, used by the Greek Fathers. It is important to remember that Greek is the key language used by theology in the early centuries, and that some of Tertullian's earlier works were produced in Greek. It does not seem unreasonable that the African and

¹⁰⁶ Sed ille usque nunc nec aquam reprobavit creatoris qua suos abluit, nec usque nunc nec unguis, nec mellis et lactus societatem qua suos infantat, nec panem quo ipsum corpus suum repraesentat, etiam in sacramentis propriis egens mendicitatibus creatoris.

¹⁰⁷ Church Quarterly Review April-June 1942 p.27

¹⁰⁸ c.f. Irenaeus

¹⁰⁹ Adv.Marc.3.19

¹¹⁰ Hoc lignum et Hieremias tibi insinuat. dicturis praedicans Iudaeis. Venite, iniciamus lignum in panem eius, utique in corpus. Sic enim Deus in evangelio quoque vestro revelavit, panem corpus suum appellans, ut et hinc iam eum intellegas corporis sui figuram pani dedisse, cuius retro corpus in panem prophetas figuravit, ipso Domino hoc sacramentum potea interpretaturo.

the Roman churches were consistent in the use of such words: for example using *sacramentum* for *μυστηριον*. *Figura* is also used in Book.4:¹¹¹

" So then having affirmed that with desire he desired to eat the Passover, his own Passover (it would not have been right for God to desire anything not his own) the bread with he took, and divided among his disciples he made into his body, saying, This is my body, that is the figure of my body. Now there could have been no figure, unless it had been a veritable body; for an empty thing, which a phantasm is, would have been incapable of figure..... So Christ who throws light upon the ancient things, has made it quite clear what on that earlier occasion he meant by bread, when he calls bread his own body. So also at the reference to the cup, when establishing the covenant sealed with his own blood, he affirmed the reality of his body; for there can be no blood except from a body which is flesh... "¹¹²

How Tertullian uses the word *figura* is governed by the phrase *corpus suum illum fecit*. If Tertullian had intended to use purely symbolic language, he would not have made such a definite statement as this. Again Montgomery-Hitchcock is not justified in saying " ...the very fact that the reverse action (*retro*) is mentioned by Tertullian shows the entirely figurative and symbolical character of the passage..."¹¹³ Why should this be so? The acceptance of the real presence in the Eucharist does not rule out the existence of symbolism; nor indeed of sacrifice.

In *De Resurrectione Carnis* he uses these words:¹¹⁴

" ...the flesh feeds upon the Body and Blood of Christ, that the soul likewise may fatten upon God?"¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Adv.Marc.4.40 .

¹¹² Professus itaque se concupiscentia concupisse edere pascha ut suum (indignum enim ut quid alienum concupiscerat Deus), acceptum panem et distributum discipulis corpus suum illum fecit, Hoc est corpus meum dicendo id est figura corporis mei. Figura autem non fuisset nisi veritatis esset corpus: ceterum vacua res. quod est phantasma, figuram capere non posset..... Itaque illuminator antiquitatum quid tunc voluerit significasse panem satis declaravit corpus suum vocans panem, Sic et in calicis mentione testamentum constituens sanguine suo obsignatum, substantium corporis confirmavit. Nullius enim corporis sanguis potest esse nisi carnis...."

¹¹³ Church Quarterly Review April-June 1942

¹¹⁴ De Res. Carnis. 8

¹¹⁵ ... caro corpore et sanguine Christi vescitur, ut et anima Deo saginetur.

These words show that Tertullian is recalling the idea of feeding on the sacrifice, to demonstrate what is happening spiritually in the Eucharist. It is not just symbolic but real. This is seen even more clearly by the expressions that he uses in *De Oratione*:¹¹⁶

" Most think that they must not be present at the sacrificial prayers on the ground that their fast would be broken by the reception of the Lord's Body. Does the eucharist, then abolish a service dedicated to God, or does it not rather bind it more to God? Will not your station be more solemn, if you also stand at God's altar? If you have received and preserved the Lord's Body, both privileges are secure, your participation in the sacrifice and your performance of your duty... "¹¹⁷

The really interesting idea in this passage is the concept of sacrificial prayers. What does Tertullian mean by *orationes sacrificorum*? It appears to have been the custom in certain places in these early centuries for Christians to reserve a portion of the Sacrament for communion later, perhaps on a daily basis. This explains the phrase "received and preserved". Surely the point of this passage is that communion should not be divorced from the gathering of the Church to offer the Holy Sacrifice. The sacrificial prayers would then be the Eucharistic Prayer. If this is so, then it is clear that Tertullian saw the Eucharist as a sacrifice, and that participation in the sacrifice was effected by being present and standing at the altar: this being a vital part of the Christian calling.

Rather less specific is what Tertullian says about the fifth clause of the Lord's Prayer: " Give us this day our daily bread."¹¹⁸

" ...' Give us this day our daily bread ' spiritually. For Christ is our Bread; because Christ is Life, and bread is life. ' I am ', he says, ' the Bread of Life ', and a little above, ' The Bread is the Word of the Living God, who came down from the heavens.' Then (we find), too, that his body is reckoned

¹¹⁶ De Orat.19

¹¹⁷ Similiter et stationem diebus non putant plerique sacrificiorum orationibus interveniendum, quod statio solvenda sit, accepto corpore Domini. Ergo devotum Deo obsequium Eucharistia resolvit? An magis Deo obligat? Nonne solemnior erit statio tua, si et ad aram Dei steteris? Accepto corpore Domini, et reservato, utrumque salvum est, et participatio sacrificii, et executio officii."

¹¹⁸ De Oratione.6

(to be) in bread: ' This is my Body.' And so in petitioning for ' daily bread ', we ask for perpetuity in Christ, and indivisibility from his Body. But, because the word is admissible in a carnal sense too, it cannot be used without the religious remembrance of spiritual discipline; for (the Lord) commands that 'bread' he prayed for, which is the only (food) necessary for believers. "119

What does Tertullian mean by the phrase *corpus eius in pane censetur*? The problem is that the word *censetur* can be given several different meanings in Latin. It comes from the same root as *census*; and so can be correctly rendered into English as " counted ". Montgomery-Hitchcock¹²⁰ is convinced that it is not to be taken literally, and that if Tertullian had intended it to be understood this way then he would have used *esse*. Tertullian uses *esse* when he quotes Our Lord in the phrase " This is my Body ".¹²¹ Tertullian is using *censere* to describe the change that has come about in ordinary bread in the Eucharist, and that we should regard the Bread of the Eucharist in a special way. Quasten¹²² thinks that this phrase in the Lord's Prayer is intended to be inclusive of the Lord's Body, and this would seem to be the correct interpretation.

5.1 Conclusions

What conclusions then can we draw from the allusions and references to the Eucharist, and in what way did Tertullian understand its sacrificial character? It is beyond question that he saw the Eucharist as a sacrifice in some sense, for we have seen that he uses the phrase *orationes sacrificiorum* for the eucharistic activity of the Church around the altar. These sacrificial prayers are seen to be connected with the reception and the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament; and they appear to precede its reception. It would seem that a sacrificial understanding

¹¹⁹ *Quoniam PANEM NOSTRUM QUOTIDIANUM DA NOBIS HODIE, spiritualiter potius intelligamus. Christus enim panis noster est, quia vita Christus, et vita panis. Ego sum, inquit, panis vitae (Joan.VI.35). Et paulo supra: Panis est sermo Dei vivi, qui descendit de coelis. Tum quod est corpus eius in pane censetur. Hoc est corpus meum (Luc.XXII.19). Itaque petendo panem quotidianum, perpetuitatem postulamus in Christo, et individuitatem a corpore eius. Sed et quia carnaliter admittitur ista vox, non sine religione potest fieri et spiritalis disciplinae. Panem enim peti mandat, quod solum fidelibus necessarium est;.....*

¹²⁰ Church Quarterly Review April-June 1942 p.23

¹²¹ Hoc est corpus meum

¹²² Quasten Patrology I p.337

of the Eucharist must be implied here, and that it is the Eucharistic Prayer that is intended by the "sacrificial prayers".

It is important to see Tertullian's understanding of the Eucharist in the context of his own century. Some scholars are trying to read into his words proofs that will confirm their post-Reformation ideas about the Eucharist, and as a result they fail to understand what he is trying to say. One of the ways that they do this is to take certain Latin words and deduce their meaning from their secular usage. It is more important to see how these early Christians understood these terms. Tertullian stresses the material in the Eucharist not as a denial of the spiritual but as a reply to those who saw Christ as a kind of ghost. So when he uses *repraesentare*, he does not intend its modern meaning of "represent"; but rather in the sense "re-present": that is that the offering should be understood as making Christ's own Body present by the means of bread. We can see this very clearly in our opening quotation on the sacraments, for God uses water, oil, milk, honey, bread and wine to make manifest his holy Mysteries. It is what God does with these things that is important.

Finally it is important to understand Tertullian's understanding of duty. Perhaps as a lawyer he tends to express things in a very legal way. In a quotation above he said "in your participation in the sacrifice and your performance of your duty". The duty is of course participation in the Holy Mystery of the Eucharist; and one can see by the words themselves that the carrying out of this duty in prayer is clearly sacrificial.

Chapter VI

CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

Cyprian was Bishop of Carthage in the Province of Africa. His exact date of birth is not known, but it was probably around 200 A.D.¹²³; and he was converted around 245 A.D. Very soon after his conversion he was ordained to the Priesthood,¹²⁴ was elected Bishop of Carthage in either 248 A.D. or 249 A.D., despite the opposition of five of the Carthaginian presbyters. He looked to Tertullian for his example, calling him the "master".¹²⁵ This chapter will show how he reflects the typically African attitudes of Tertullian, and how he develops the idea of sacrifice in the Eucharist that we have seen so far.

6.1 SACRIFICE IN THE EUCHARIST

Professor Saxer says that " the word *sacrificium* in the vocabulary of St. Cyprian designates rarely, the pagan sacrifices. It is used habitually for the Christian sacrifice."¹²⁶ It will be clear below that when Cyprian uses the word *sacrificium*, it is the Eucharist which is intended. This is so not least because the word appears several times in Cyprian's Letter to Caecilius entitled On the Sacrament of the Cup of the Lord (Epistle 63). As this is the most important work for our purposes we shall look in detail at this first of all. Of this Epistle Professor Saxer says:¹²⁷ " St. Cyprian has composed the most ancient tract on the eucharist. It is the Letter to Caecilius of the Autumn of 253. "¹²⁸ It is certainly true that this is the first complete work that we have come across specifically devoted to the Eucharist.

¹²³ Saxer *Vie Liturgique et Quotidienne à Carthage Vers le Milieu du IIIe Siecle* p.103

¹²⁴ Saxer p.135

¹²⁵ Saxer p.139

¹²⁶ " Le mot *sacrificium*, dans le vocabulaire de S. Cyprian, peut designer, mais rarement, les sacrifices paiens. Il est employée habituellement pour le sacrifice Chrétien. "

¹²⁷ Saxer p.189

¹²⁸ " S. Cyprian a composé le plus ancien traité sur l'eucharistie. C'est la lettre à Cecilius de l'automne 253."

Looking at the letter in detail one sees that his concern is over the use by some Christians of water alone in the chalice at the Eucharist. The first reference to sacrifice is in Section 1:¹²⁹

” ... yet since some, either by ignorance or simplicity in sanctifying the cup of the Lord, and in ministering to the people, do not do that which Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, the founder and teacher of this sacrifice, did and taught,....”¹³⁰.

Here the consecration of the cup, and the ministrations to the people are specifically called a sacrifice by Cyprian. Not only that, but it is implied that Our Lord himself had taught us that it should be understood in this way. This must be so for the whole point of Cyprian’s letter is that there are those who are teaching something contrary to the Lord’s own institution. Cyprian would never have used the expression ” sacrifice ”, unless he believed that this was a part of his Lord’s teaching.

The next quotation is from Section 4:¹³¹

” Also in the priest Melchizedek we see prefigured the sacrament of the sacrifice of the Lord,....”¹³²

Cyprian now recalls the Letter to the Hebrews when he sees the Eucharist prefigured by Melchizedek when he brought forth bread and wine. It must be the Eucharist that is intended here, for the phrase that is used is the ’ sacrament ’ of the sacrifice. Later on in Section 4 we writes:

”...` which order is assuredly this coming from that sacrifice and thence descending;....”¹³³

Here the order referred to is the order of Melchizedek quoted from Psalm 110.4; *sacrificio illo* means the offering of the Son to the Father; as Cyprian puts

¹²⁹ Ante Nicene Christian Library Vol.2 p.209 ff

¹³⁰ ...tamen quoniam quidam, vel ignoratur vel simpliciter, in calice Dominico sanctificando et plebi ministrando non hoc faciunt quod Jesus Christus Dominus et Deus noster, sacrificii huius auctor et doctor, fecit et docuit,....”

¹³¹ A.N.C.L. Vol.2 p.209ff

¹³² Item in sacerdote Melchisedech sacrificii Domini sacramentum praefiguratum videmus.

¹³³ Qui ordo utique hic est de sacrificio illo veniens et inde descendens,....”

it: "*declarat in Psalmis Spiritus Sanctus ex persona Patris ad Filium.*" Further on in Section 4 one reads:

" For who is more a priest of the Most High God than Our Lord Jesus Christ, who offered a sacrifice to God the Father, and offered that very thing which Melchizedek had offered, that is, bread and wine, to wit, his body and blood? "134

So Christ is the priest who offers, This quotation suggests that the Last Supper was a real sacrifice connected as it was with the events of the Passion: for what was really being offered was his own Body and Blood. Then we see:¹³⁵

" In Genesis, therefore, that the benediction, in respect of Abraham by Melchizedek the priest, might be duly celebrated, the figure of Christ's sacrifice precedes, namely, as ordained in bread and wine; which thing the Lord completing and fulfilling, offered bread and the cup mixed with wine, and so he who is the fulness of truth fulfilled the truth of the image prefigured."¹³⁶

This confirms what has just been seen: that the sacrament which had been ordained at the Last Supper was fulfilled in the Passion and that the actions of Melchizedek which had been a figure of this sacrifice had now been fulfilled as well.

The next important reference is in Section 9:¹³⁷

" Whence it appears that the blood of Christ is not offered if there be no wine in the cup, nor the Lord's sacrifice celebrated with a legitimate consecration unless our oblation and sacrifice respond to his passion. "138

Cyprian points out the close connection between what Christians do in offering

¹³⁴ Nam quis magis sacerdos Dei summi quam Dominus noster Jesus Christus, qui sacrificium Deo obtulit, et obtulit hoc idem quod Melchisedech obtulerat, id est panem et vinum, suum scilicet corpus et sanguinem?

¹³⁵ A.N.C.L. Vol.2. p.209ff

¹³⁶ Ut ergo in Genesi per Melchisedech sacerdotem benedictio circa Abraham posset rite celebrari, praecedit ante imago sacrificii Christi. in pane et vino scilicet constituta; quam rem perficiens et adimplens Dominus panem et calicem mixtum vino obtulit, et qui est plenitudo veritatis veritatem praefiguratae imaginis adimplevit.

¹³⁷ A.N.C.L. Vol.2 p.209ff

¹³⁸ Unde apparet sanguinem Christi offerri, si desit vinum calici, nec sacrificium Dominicum legitima sanctificatione celebrari, nisi oblatio et sacrificium nostrum responderit passioni.

the Eucharist, and what happened in the past. This is what should be done now. If Christians did not use wine in the chalice then the Eucharist would be invalid: as he says, the 'sacrifice' would not be celebrated legitimately.

Further on in Section 9 he says:

" But how shall we drink the new wine of the fruit of the vine with Christ in the kingdom of his Father, if in the sacrifice of God the Father and of Christ we do not offer wine, nor mix the cup of the Lord by the Lord's own tradition?"¹³⁹

The Gospel according to John is recalled here with the promise that the disciples of Christ should drink the fruit of the vine with him in the Kingdom. We saw how Irenaeus said that the altar which was being addressed in the Eucharist was in Heaven, and that is probably what is intended here; for Cyprian has already said in this letter that the sacrifice of God the Father and of Christ was the Sacrifice of the Son to the Father. Also in Section 14 he says:¹⁴⁰

" For if in the sacrifice which Christ offered none is to be followed but Christ, assuredly it behoves us to obey and do that which Christ did, and what he commanded to be done..."¹⁴¹

Here there is a clear relationship between the Sacrifice that Christ offered on the cross, and the celebration of the Eucharist, which is the act of obedience. This is most clearly seen further on in Section 14:

" For Jesus Christ our Lord and God, is himself the chief priest of God the Father, and has offered himself a sacrifice to the Father, and has commanded this to be done in commemoration of himself, certainly that priest truly discharges the office of Christ and who imitates that which Christ did; and then offers a true and full sacrifice in the Church to God the Father, when

¹³⁹ Quomodo autem de creatura vitis novum vinum cum Christo in regno Patris bibemus, si in sacrificio Dei Patris et Christi vinum non offerimus. nec calicem Domini Dominica traditione miscemus?

¹⁴⁰ A.N.C.L. Vol.2 page 209ff

¹⁴¹ Nam, si in sacrificio quod Christo obtulit, non nisi Christus sequendus est, utique id est obaudire et facere oportet quod Christus fecit et quod faciendum esse mandavit...

he proceeds to offer it according to what he sees Christ himself to have offered. "142

Now comes the crux of the matter, for there can be no doubt now that the Christian priest (in Cyprian's view), when he imitates what Christ did, offers a " true and full sacrifice in the Church." This is the first time that we have seen the Christian priest spoken of explicitly as *sacerdos vice Christi*. The sacrificial language continues in Section 15:

"unless indeed any one should fear in the morning sacrifices, lest by the taste of wine he should be redolent in the blood of Christ. "143

There are a number of interesting points here. The Eucharist was offered in the morning: we are not told how frequently, but the reference to the Resurrection below suggests Sunday mornings. Also there was no contention or problem at that time in speaking of the Eucharist as a sacrifice, for as it has been seen, Cyprian habitually does this; and that there was an obvious reluctance by some Christians to use wine in the Sacrament. Was this because it was in the morning, or was it perhaps a reluctance to drink alcohol at all? Probably the latter. In Section 16 one reads these words:¹⁴⁴

" It behoved Christ to offer about the evening of the day, that the very hour of sacrifice might show the setting and evening of the world; as it is written in Exodus, ' And all the people of the synagogue of the children of Israel shall kill it in the evening.' And again in the Psalms, ' Let the lifting up of my hands be an evening sacrifice.' But we celebrate the Resurrection of the Lord in the morning. "145

¹⁴² Nam, si Jesus Christus Dominus et Deus noster ipse est summus sacerdos Dei Patris, et sacrificium Patri se ipsum primus obtulit et hoc fieri in sui commemorationem praecipit, utique ille sacerdos vice Christi vere fungitur qui id quod Christus fecit imitatur, et sacrificium verum et plenum tunc offert in Ecclesia Deo Patri, si sic incipiat offerre secundum quod ipsum Christum videat obtulisse.

¹⁴³ ...nisi si in sacrificiis matutinis hoc quis veretur ne per saporem vini redoleat sanguinem Christi.

¹⁴⁴ A.N.C.L. Vol.2 page 209ff

¹⁴⁵ Christum offerre oportebat circa vesperum diei. ut hora ipsa sacrificii ostenderet occasum et vesperam mundi, sicut in Exodo scriptum est: ' Et occident illum omne vulgus synagagae filiorum Israel as Vesperam.' Et iterum in Psalmis: Allevatio manuum mearum sacrificium vespertinum.' Nos autem resurrectionem Domini mane celebramus.

It is not clear whether Cyprian intends the death of Christ to be understood, for the ninth hour is still some three hours away from sunset: or whether it was the Last Supper that is intended. Perhaps both are assumed. Certainly Cyprian is connecting the sacrifices in the Temple in Jerusalem, with Christ's sacrifice, and with the Eucharist. He stresses both the continuity and the differences involved: the Eucharist is celebrated in the morning as this was the time of Resurrection, the sacrifices were usually in the evening. In the next Section Cyprian returns to the question of our relationship with the One who offers:¹⁴⁶

" And we make mention of his passion in all sacrifices (for the Lord's passion is the sacrifice which we offer), we ought to do nothing else than he did.

"¹⁴⁷

Again Cyprian is very specific. It is the Lord's sacrifice that is being offered, that is, his Passion. Up to this time, no Father has described the Eucharistic sacrifice in such explicit terms. It is interesting that while Irenaeus always spoke of Christ making the offering, Cyprian frequently uses the expression *offerimus*.¹⁴⁸ For in the Eucharist the offering becomes the Christian's own as well. Finally in Section 19 one can read:¹⁴⁹

" Therefore it befits our religion, and our fear, and the place itself, and the office of our priesthood, dearest brother, in mixing and offering the cup of the Lord, to keep the truth of the Lord's tradition, and, on the warning of the Lord, to correct that which seems to have been erroneous;..."¹⁵⁰

In this last quotation from Epistle 63 Cyprian tells his brother priest and bishop that he should remember the importance of tradition; and take note of the Lord's warning to be on guard against error.

¹⁴⁶ A.N.C.L. Vol.2 page 209ff

¹⁴⁷ Ex quia passionis eius mentionem in sacrificiis omnibus facimus (passio est enim Domini sacrificium quod offerimus), nihil aliud quam quod ille fecit facere debemus.

¹⁴⁸ Offerimus is used as a liturgical formula in all the ancient Eucharistic Prayers

¹⁴⁹ A.N.C.L. Vol.2 page 209ff

¹⁵⁰ Religione igitur nostrae congruit et timori et ipsi loco atque officio sacerdotii nostri, frater charissime, in Domino calice miscendo et offerendo custodire traditionis Dominicae veritatem, et quod prius apud quosdam videtur erratum, Domino monente, corrigere;...

There are a number of other references to the sacrifice of the Eucharist in the writings of Cyprian; and these shall be examined in turn. First from the *De Oratione Dominica*.¹⁵¹

" But when we stand for prayer,... we ought to apply ourselves earnestly to prayers with our whole heart,... that is why the priest, before the (eucharistic) prayer (sings) the Preface, he prepares the minds of the brethren saying: ' Lift up your hearts ', so that while the people respond: ' We lift them up unto the Lord ', he may be reminded that he must think of nothing else except the Lord. "¹⁵²

In this quotation there is no specific reference to sacrifice, but it is clear through the use of *sacerdos* that the idea of sacrifice is present in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. The word *sacrificium* is used further on in this treatise:¹⁵³

" Thus God does not receive the sacrifice of a dissenter, but he orders him to return to the altar and first be reconciled to his brother, so that God may be appeased by the prayers of a peace-maker. Our peace and brotherly concord is the greater sacrifice, and a people united in the Unity of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."¹⁵⁴

It is much less clear that the Eucharist is intended here; but when taken with the other quotations, and bearing in mind the mention of the altar, it is probable that this is what is meant. Professor Saxer included it in his section on the Kiss of Peace.

In Epistle 1 Cyprian writes:¹⁵⁵

" a sacrifice for those who have fallen asleep "¹⁵⁶

¹⁵¹ Orat.Dom.31 Saxer p.38

¹⁵² Quando autem stamus ad orationem.... incumbere ad preces toto corde debemus... Ideo et sacerdos, ante orationem praefatione praemissa. parat fratrum mentes dicendo: Sursum corda, ut, dum resonet plebs: Habemus ad Dominum. admoneatur nihil aliud se quam Dominum cogitare debere.

¹⁵³ Orat.Dom.23 Saxer p.240

¹⁵⁴ Sic nec sacrificium Deus recipit dissendis. et ab altari reverentem prius fratri reconciliari iubet, ut pacificis precibus et Deus possit esse pacatus. Sacrificium Deo maius est pax nostra et fraterna concordia et de Unitate Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti plebs adunata.

¹⁵⁵ Ch.2 Saxer p.199 ; Quasten Patrology Vol.1 p.382

¹⁵⁶ Non offerretur pro eo nec sacrificium pro dormitione eius celebraretur.

Quasten says that this shows that the Eucharistic sacrifice has an objective value as it is celebrated for the repose of souls. It is also celebrated for the martyrs as can be seen in Epistle 39:¹⁵⁷

" We always offer sacrifices for them, as you remember, as often as we celebrate the passions and days of the martyrs in the annual commemoration. "¹⁵⁸

Finally in Epistle 57 he writes:¹⁵⁹

"... so that we, as priests, who daily celebrate the sacrifices of God, may prepare offerings and victims for God. "¹⁶⁰

Here is implied not only mention of what appears to be a daily Eucharist; but also that these Eucharists are offered by the priests as a daily sacrifice to God.

There are many other occasions when Cyprian uses the word *sacrificium*, and to list them all here would be to go beyond the scope of this chapter. In almost every case it seems that he intends the Eucharist when he uses it.

6.2 Conclusions

What conclusions then be drawn from these many references? Saxer says this : " ... the word *sacrificium* is far from having one meaning. St. Cyprian in effect uses this word in various senses. Firstly, it is the assembly of the eucharistic rite: *sacrificium* is then synonymous with *solemnia*, this use is without doubt the case in the greater part of the Cyprianic texts. In a second sense, it is equivalent to *oblatio* and seems to be the precise moment of the offertory.... A third sense, finally, is offered in the expressions where *sacrificium* is coupled with *prex*. "¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ Ch.3 Quasten p.382

¹⁵⁸ *Sacrificio pro eis semper ut meministis, offerimus, quoties martyrum passiones et dies, anniversaria commemoratione, celebramus..*

¹⁵⁹ Ch.3 Saxer p.199

¹⁶⁰ *Ut sacerdotes, qui sacrificia Dei quotidie celebramus, hostias Deo et victimas praeparemus...*

¹⁶¹ "... le mot *sacrificium* est loin d'avoir une signification univoque. S. Cyprien emploie en effet ce mot en divers sens. Et un premier, c'est l'ensemble du rite eucharistique: *sacrificium* est alors synonyme de *solemnia*, ce qui est sans doute le cas dans le plupart des textes cyprianiques. En un deuxième sens, il equivaut a *oblatio* et vise soit le moment précis de l'offrande soit même la matière de celle-ci... Un troisième sens, enfin, s'offre a nous dans les expressions où *sacrificium* est couple avec *prex*..."

It would seem then that one must be careful not to argue that every time the word *sacrificium* is used, it is the Eucharist that Cyprian intended. On the other hand, because it is used so many times with reference to the Eucharist, it would be reasonable to conclude that for Cyprian the Eucharist is a sacrifice, in so far as it is in and through the Lord that the Church participates in and offers the sacrifice of Christ. The Passion of the Lord is the sacrifice that Christians offer.

Within the context of his theology, Cyprian's greatest concern seems to be for the unity of the Church. The sacrament binds Christ together with his people - the faithful, and the offering of the true sacrifice within the Church, in the way that the Lord commanded, is the way in which that unity will be achieved. A Eucharist celebrated outside the Church would be invalid. For Cyprian the Church is the new community of the Lord maintaining the tradition given to the apostles. This community is successor to the promises made to Israel, and Christ is its High Priest. However, to Cyprian, it is clearly given to Christ's faithful people through the priests of the New Covenant to offer the Christian Sacrifice (the Eucharist) to God. This means that one can justifiably call the Eucharist a sacrifice; in the sense that Cyprian intended it to be understood: a sacrifice offered in prayer by and within the Church.

Chapter VII

CLEMENT THE ALEXANDRIAN

Clement was born probably in Athens in the middle of the Second Century, the son of pagan parents.¹⁶² He seems to have been a philosopher; but little is known of his conversion. After he became a Christian, he travelled for some time throughout the Mediterranean. In the end he stayed in Alexandria, particularly to hear the lectures of one man - Pantaenus, who was head of the school of catechumens. Clement followed him in this position about the end of the century. A few years after this he had to leave Egypt on account of the Severian Persecution and lived in Cappadocia with his pupil Alexander (later to become Bishop of Jerusalem); and there he died some fifteen years later.

Of his works, two are of interest to us: Παιδαγωγός meaning the Tutor, and Στρωματεῖς meaning the Miscellanies. His main aim seems to have been to give the Church a foundation of a 'scientific' system of thought by bringing together pagan philosophy and Christian biblical faith. Christians through γνῶσις would attain the heavenly life finding their unity with each other through their unity with Christ. As we shall see, the Eucharist is heavenly food. Clement is less explicit than Tertullian and Cyprian in speaking about the Eucharist as sacrifice; but this does not mean that he failed to understand it in this way at all.¹⁶³

7.1 PAIDAGOGOS

In the first of these works, Clement recalls the words of Our Lord in the Gospel according to St. John.¹⁶⁴ In this passage, the Eucharist is a food providing spiritual nourishment. The blood is said to be pointing to the Word - Jesus Christ. We see this clearly in the Paidagogos:¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Quasten Patrology Volume 2 page 5

¹⁶³ *ibid.* page 7

¹⁶⁴ Jn.5.53

¹⁶⁵ Paid.1.6. Quasten p.7 A.N.C.L. page 142

" 'Eat my flesh', he says, 'and drink my blood'. Such is the suitable food which the Lord ministers, and he offers his flesh and pours forth his blood, and nothing is wanting for the children's growth. O amazing mystery! We are enjoined to cast off the old and carnal corruption, as also the old nutriment, receiving in exchange another regimen, that of Christ, receiving him if possible, to hide him within; and that, enshrining the Saviour in our souls, we may correct the affections of our flesh. But you are not inclined to understand it thus, but perchance more generally. Hear it also in the following way. The flesh figuratively represents to us the Holy Spirit; for the flesh was created by him. The blood points out to us the Word, for as rich blood the Word has been infused into life; and the union of both is the Lord, the food of babies - the Lord who is Spirit and Word."¹⁶⁶

In this section of *Paidagogos*, Clement describes Christians as spiritual babies needing the milk of Holy Mother Church, that is the Word. The Eucharist is the way in which Christians are fed. As is the case in Tertullian one needs to know what he means by 'represents figuratively'¹⁶⁷. Montgomery-Hitchcock has said that " Clement's teaching supported sacramental symbolism against the growing sacrificial tendency in Africa ".¹⁶⁸ It is certainly true that Clement is less clear than his contemporary Cyprian. *αλληγορει* has probably two distinct meanings: Firstly to indicate or show something of whatever it is that is represented, in this case the Holy Spirit; but also to 'present' to us the deeper mysteries of God, that God is Spirit and Word as creation is flesh and blood. There is then no need

¹⁶⁶ Φάγεσθέ μου, φησί, τὴν σάρκα, καὶ πίεσθέ μου τὸ αἷμα. Ταύτας ἡμῖν οἰκείας τροφάς ὁ Κύριος χορηγεῖ, καὶ σάρκα ὀρέγει, καὶ αἷμα ἐκχεῖ: καὶ οὐδὲν εἰς αὐξήσιν τοῖς παιδίοις ἔνδει. Ὡ τοῦ παραδόξου μυστηρίου! Ἀποδύσασθαι ἡμῖν τὴν παλαιὰν καὶ σαρκικὴν ἐγκέλευται φθορὰν, ὡσπερ καὶ τὴν παλαιὰν τροφήν: καινῆς δὲ ἄλλης τῆς Χριστοῦ διαίτης μεταλαμβάνοντες, ἐκείνον, εἰ δυνατόν, ἀναλαμβάνοντας, ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἀποτίθεσθαι, καὶ τὸν Σωτῆρα ἐνστερνισασθαι ἵνα καταρτίσωμεν τῆς σαρκὸς ἡμῶν τὰ πάθη. Ἄλλ' οὐ ταύτη νοεῖν ἐθέλεις, κοινότερον δὲ ἴσως. Ἄκουε καὶ ταύτη: σάρκα ἡμῖν τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἀλληγορεῖ: καὶ γὰρ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ δεδημιουργηται ἡ σαρξ. Αἷμα ἡμῖν τὸν Λόγον αἰνιττεται: καὶ γὰρ ὡς αἷμα πλουσίου, ὁ Λόγος ἐπικέχυται τῷ βίῳ: ἡ κρᾶσις δὲ ἀμφοῖν ὁ Κύριος, ἡ τροφή τῶν νηπιῶν: ὁ Κύριος, πνεῦμα καὶ Λόγος.
PG Vol.8.301

¹⁶⁷ ἀλληγορεῖ

¹⁶⁸ Church Quarterly Review Vol.129 p.58

to insist that the use of this word must mean that there is no sacrifice: for the Sacrament is both a figure and a symbol at the same time.

Elsewhere in the same section he says this:¹⁶⁹

" ... Besides, also, the completion of his own passion he called catachrestically 'a cup' when he alone had to drink and drain it. Thus to Christ the fulfilling of his Father's will was food; and to us infants, who drink the milk of the word of the heavens, Christ himself is food.... Further the Word declares himself to be the bread of heaven... '...And the bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world'. Here is to be noted the mystery of the bread, inasmuch as he speaks of it as flesh...."¹⁷⁰

Here one sees the relationship between the cup and the 'Passion'. Christians feed in two different ways: by drinking the cup; and also by doing the will of the Father as Christ himself did. The 'bread' is called a mystery,¹⁷¹ which Christ spoke of as his flesh. In the next section one can read this:¹⁷²

" The blood of the Lord is twofold. For there is the blood of his flesh, by which we are redeemed from corruption; and the spiritual, that by which we are anointed. And to drink the blood of Jesus, is to be partaker of the Lord's immortality; the Spirit being the energetic principle of the Word, as the blood is of the flesh. Accordingly, as wine is blended with water, so is the Spirit with man. And the one, the mixture of wine and water, nourishes to faith; while the other, the Spirit, conducts to immortality. And the mixture of both, of the drink and of the Word, is called Eucharist, renowned and glorious grace; and they who by faith partake of it are sanctified both in

¹⁶⁹ Paid.1.6 A.N.C.L. p.144

¹⁷⁰ Ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν συμπλήρωσιν τοῦ ἰδίου πάθους ποτήριον κέκληκε καταχρηστικῶς, ὅτε, ἐκπιεῖν καὶ ἐκτελέσαι μόνον ἔχρησεν αὐτό. Οὕτω Χριστῷ μὲν ἡ τροφή τῆς πατρικῆς βουλῆς ἢ τελείωσις ἦν, ἡμῖν δὲ αὐτὸς ὁ Χριστὸς ἡ τροφή τοῖς νηπίοις, τοῖς ἀμελγοῦσι τὸν Λόγον τῶν οὐρανῶν. Ἐτι δὲ καὶ ἄρτον αὐτὸν οὐρανῶν ὁμολογεῖ ὁ Λόγος... Καὶ ὁ ἄρτος ὃν ἐγὼ δώσω, ἡ σὰρξ μου ἐστίν, ἣν ἐγὼ δώσω ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ζωῆς. Ἐνταῦθα τὸ μυστικὸν τοῦ ἄρτου παρασημειωτέον, ὅτι σάρκα αὐτοῦ λέγει... PG Vol.8.304

¹⁷¹ μυστικόν

¹⁷² Paid.2.2 Quasten p.30 A.N.C.L. p.200

body and soul.”¹⁷³

Here is to be seen the very essence of the matter; for here Clement expounds what he means by mystery: as the wine is blended with the water, so the Spirit is 'blended' with man. The wine and the water nourish faith, and the Spirit grants the very immortality that Irenaeus spoke of. There can be no doubt that Clement intends the Eucharist here for he says " and the mixture of both is called Eucharist. Later in this chapter he writes this:¹⁷⁴

" ...And he blessed the wine, saying, 'Take, drink: this is my blood' - the blood of the vine. He allegorically calls the Word 'shed for many, for the remission of sins' - the holy stream of gladness.”¹⁷⁵

Clement now returns to the action of Christ at the Last Supper. Again he uses the word *αλληγορει* suggesting both symbol and type; and the use of *εκχενομενον* is clearly sacrificial.¹⁷⁶ So is the use of *θυσια* later on in the book with reference to the altar.¹⁷⁷

" If, then, we say that the Lord the great High Priest offers to God the incense of sweet fragrance, let us not imagine that this is a sacrifice and sweet fragrance of incense; but let us understand it to mean, that the Lord lays the acceptable offering of love, the spiritual fragrance, on the altar.”¹⁷⁸

¹⁷³ Διττόν δὲ τὸ αἷμα τοῦ Κυρίου: τὸ μὲν γὰρ, ἐστὶν αὐτοῦ σαρκικόν, ὡς τῆς φθορᾶς λελύτρωμα: τὸ δὲ πνευματικόν, τουτέστιν ὡς κεχρισμένον. Καὶ τουτ' ἐστὶ πιεῖν τὸ αἷμα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, τῆς κυριακῆς μεταλαβεῖν ἀφθαρσίας: ἰσχύς δὲ τοῦ Λόγου τὸ Πνεῦμα, ὡς αἷμα σαρκός. Ἀναλόγως τοίνυν κινῶνται, ὃ μὲν οἶνος τῷ ὕδατι, τῷ δὲ ἀνθρώπῳ τὸ Πνεῦμα: καὶ τὸ μὲν εἰς πίστιν εὐωχεῖ, τὸ κράμα, τὸ δὲ εἰς ἀφθαρσίαν ὁδηγεῖ, τὸ Πνεῦμα: ἢ δὲ ἀμφοῖν αὐθις κράσις, πόταν τε καὶ Λόγου εὐχαριστία κέκληται, χάρις ἐπαινουμένη καὶ καλή: ἧς οἱ κατὰ πίστιν μεταλαμβάνοντες ἀγιάζονται καὶ σῶμα καὶ ψυχὴν:.... PG Vol.8.409

¹⁷⁴ Paid.2.2 A.N.C.L. page 208

¹⁷⁵ Καὶ εὐλόγησέν γε τὸν οἶνον, εἰπὼν, Λάβετε, πίετε, τοῦτό μου ἐστὶν τὸ αἷμα, αἷμα τῆς ἀμπέλου: τὸν Λόγον, τὸν περὶ πολλῶν ἐκχενόμενον εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, εὐφροσύνης ἁγίου ἀλληγορεῖ νάμα... PG Vol.8.428

¹⁷⁶ Clement is quoting Mtt.26.27,28

¹⁷⁷ Paid.2.8 A.N.C.L. page 233

¹⁷⁸ Εἰ γοῦν τῆς εὐωδίας τὸ θυμίαμα τὸν μέγαν ἀρχιερέα, τὸν Κύριον ἀναφέρειν λέγοιεν τῷ Θεῷ, μὴ θυσίαν ταύτην καὶ εὐωδίαν θυμιάματος νοούντων: ἀλλὰ γὰρ τὸ τῆς ἀγάπης δεκτὸν ἀναφέρειν τὸν Κύριον, τὴν πνευματικὴν εὐωδίαν, εἰς τὸ θυσιαστήριον παραδέχεσθω. PG Vol.8.473

This does not mean that the offering of incense is not a sacrifice, but that the true offering is that which Christ has made out of love, and upon which all Christian sacrifice depends.

7.2 STROMATEIS

In the first chapter of the *Στρωματεῖς* one finds the following passage:¹⁷⁹

" ... The Scripture manifestly applying the terms bread and water to nothing else but those heresies which employ bread and water in the oblation, not according to the canon of the Church. For there are those who celebrate the Eucharist with mere water. "¹⁸⁰

As Cyprian did, so Clement condemns those who do not use wine in the Eucharist. They are said to be breaking the rule or canon of the Church. Here the offering is called the 'oblation' or *προσφορά*. Quasten¹⁸¹ tells us that this shows that Clement was familiar with the physical objects in the oblation, and that the Church had a canon at this time. Later on in the book¹⁸² one sees a reference to Melchisedek of Genesis and Hebrews:

" Melchisedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who gave bread and wine, furnishing consecrated food for a type of the Eucharist. "¹⁸³

According to the Letter to the Hebrews, Christ is called a high priest after the order of Melchisedek; and so the action of the king of Salem in bringing bread and wine before Abraham is seen as a type¹⁸⁴ of the Eucharist. So Clement, according to Quasten¹⁸⁵ did see the Eucharist as a kind of sacrifice. On the other hand,

¹⁷⁹ Strom.1.19 Quasten p.29 A.N.C.L. p.416

¹⁸⁰ ἄρτον καὶ ὕδωρ οὐκ ἐπ' ἄλλων τινῶν, ἀλλ' ἡ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄρτω καὶ ὕδατι κατὰ τὴν προσφοράν μὴ κατὰ τὸν κανόνα τῆς ἐκκλησίας, χρωμένων ἀρέσεων, ἐμφανῶς ταπτούσης τῆς Γραφῆς. Εἰσὶ γὰρ οἱ καὶ ὕδωρ φίλον εὐχαριστοῦσιν. PG Vol.8.813

¹⁸¹ Patrology p.30

¹⁸² Strom.4.25 Quasten Patrology p.30

¹⁸³ Μελχισεδέκ, βασιλεὺς Σαλήμ, ὁ ἱερεὺς τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου, ὁ τὸν οἶνον καὶ τὸν ἄρτον τὴν ἡγιασμένην διδοὺς τροφήν εἰς τύπον εὐχαριστίας. PG Vol.8.1369

¹⁸⁴ τύπον

¹⁸⁵ Patrology page 29

Clement is careful to say (like Irenaeus) that God has no need of the sacrifices of Christians. But how do they participate in the sacrificial act? Further on¹⁸⁶ Clement says that:

” We rightly do not sacrifice to God, who, needing nothing, supplies all men with all things; but we glorify him who gave himself in sacrifice for us, we also sacrificing ourselves... For in our salvation alone God delights.”¹⁸⁷

Clement is very careful to say that Christians offer nothing on their own but are called to glorify Christ who gave himself for them. The interesting phrase is ” we also sacrificing ourselves ”. This shows how Christians become involved in the sacrifice by offering themselves: it is the bloody sacrifices that are no longer necessary.

Then Clement goes on to point out that the fumes of the smoke from the burning of the sacrifices do not even reach as far as the clouds. Not even the worldly glory and honour of Christians will impress God. He continues:¹⁸⁸

” We do not therefore, and with reason too, offer sacrifice to him who is not overcome by pleasures, inasmuch as the fumes of the smoke stop far beneath and do not even reach the thickest clouds; but those they reach are far from them. The Deity neither is then in want of anything, nor loves pleasure or gain of money, being full and supplying all things to everything that has received being and has wants. And neither by sacrifices nor offerings, nor on the other hand by glory and honour is the Deity won over; nor is he influenced by any such things; but he appears only to excellent and good men who will never betray justice for threatened fear nor by the promise of considerable gifts. ”¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ Strom.7.3. Quasten Patrology p.28

¹⁸⁷ οὐ θύομεν εἰκότως ἀνευδεεῖ τῷ Θεῷ, τῷ τὰ πάντα τοῖς πᾶσι παρεσχημένῳ τὸν δ' ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἱερευθέντα δοξάζομεν, σφὰς αὐτοῦς, ἱερεύοντες, εἰς τε τὸ ἀνευδεές ἐκ τοῦ ἀνευδεοῦς καὶ εἰς τὸ ἀπαθές ἐκ τοῦ ἀπαθοῦς. Μόνη γὰρ τῇ ἡμετέρα σωτηρία ὁ Θεὸς ἡδέται. PG Vol.9.417

¹⁸⁸ Strom.7.6 Quasten Patrology page 29

¹⁸⁹ Εἰκότως ἄρα τῷ μὴ νικωμένῳ ἡδοναῖς θυσίαν οὐ προσάγομεν, κάτω ποῦ καὶ οὐδὲ μεχρὶ νεφῶν τῶν παχυτάτων, μακρὰν δὲ καὶ τούτων, τῆς διὰ τοῦ καπνοῦ ἀναθυμιάσεως φθανούσης, εἰς οὐς καὶ φθάνει. Οὐτ' οὖν ἐνδεές, οὐδὲ μὴν φιλήδονον, φιλοκερδές τε ἢ φιλοχρήματον τὸ θείον, πλήρες οὖν, καὶ πάντα παρεχόν παντὶ τῷ γενητῷ καὶ ἐνδεεῖ.

So it seems that the view of God held by Clement was much greater than the pagans could imagine. Certainly for Clement the bloody sacrifices achieve nothing. However, that is very different from saying that Clement did not see the Eucharist as a sacrifice in any way, for a little further on one reads that:¹⁹⁰

” The sacrifice of the Church is the word breathing as incense from holy souls, the sacrifice and the whole mind being at the time unveiled to God.¹⁹¹

Of this passage Quasten says:¹⁹² ” From this passage it might appear that Clement knows of no eucharistic sacrifice by the Church but only an inner, moral immolation of the soul. However, such an interpretation would not do justice to him.” It might be possible to put an interpretation on this passage that Clement saw sacrifice only as a moral change within the soul; but as we have seen above, he speaks about the oblation within the Eucharist. It is more probable that the passage above was motivated by a desire to attack the actions of the pagans and their false sacrifices. Also the use of *αμα* implies that the eucharistic sacrifice is in some way attuned with a sacrifice of the soul.

7.3 Conclusions

In conclusion, then, how can one assess the way in which Clement sees the Eucharist as a sacrifice? First, it would be necessary to say that he is not as explicit as Tertullian or Cyprian; and that he wishes to refute all the bloody sacrifices of the Jews, and also (in his case) of the pagans as well. He follows the same pattern as the New Testament. Montgomery-Hitchcock is surely not right in contrasting symbolism with realism. According to Clement God has not need of a sacrifice, but as Christ has offered himself to Christians: they can receive him sacramentally as he promised that those who partake of the Eucharist in faith will be sanctified in body and soul as they receive it. It is a mixture of drink (the

οὔτε θυσίαις, οὐδὲ μὴν ἀναθήμασιν, οὐδ' αὖ δόξῃ καὶ τιμῇ καλεῖται τὸ θεῖον, καὶ παράγεται τοιούτοις τισίν, ἀλλὰ μόνοις τοῖς καλοῖς καγαθοῖς ἀνδράσι φαίνεται, οἳ τὸ δίκαιον οὐκ ἂν ποτὲ προδῶεν ἢ φόβου ἔνεκεν ἀπειλούμενου, ἢ δῶρων ὑποσχέσει μείζονων. PG Vol.9.417

¹⁹⁰ Strom.7.6 Quasten Patrology p.29

¹⁹¹ Καὶ γὰρ ἔστιν ἡ θυσία τῆς Ἐκκλησίας λόγος ἀπὸ τῶν ἁγίων ψυχῶν ἀναθυμῳμένος, ἐκκαλυπτομένης ἀμα τῆς θυσίας καὶ τῆς διανοίας ἀπάσης τῷ Θεῷ.

¹⁹² Patrology p.29

earthly part) and the Word (the heavenly part). According to Clement, they are then bound to carry out the Lord's command and make the offering in the proper way. Biggs¹⁹³ concentrates on the twofold nature of the Blood of Christ. He calls the Sacrifice of the Lord "the charter of his High Priesthood" and "the condition of his sacramental agency". He continues "... But what is this special boon that he conveys in that supreme moment, when his sacrifice co-operates with ours, when 'in faith' we partake of the nourishment he bestows?" It would be wrong then to separate the Christian sacrifice of the soul as it turns to God, from the eucharistic sacrifice: for it is clearly stated that there needs to be a sacrifice of the individual as he or she offers a life to God. The essential nature of this faith will be even more apparent in Origen.

¹⁹³ The Christian Platonists of Alexandria p.106

Chapter VIII

ORIGEN

Origen was born probably in the year 185 A.D. Although he was condemned for some of his views later on, in many ways he was "an outstanding teacher and scholar of the early Church."¹⁹⁴ Much of his work consisted of Biblical Commentaries. During his life Origen produced an enormous number of works. Estimates range from two to three thousand.¹⁹⁵ These fall into five categories: The *Hexapla* - a six-fold parallel of Scripture, the *Scholias*, Homilies, Commentaries, and some treatises. References to the Eucharist are found in most of the existing works but those which follow are the most important for an understanding of the Eucharistic Sacrifice for Origen. First of all there are two themes which do not specifically speak about sacrifice.

8.1 The Eucharist in Origen's Works

8.1.1 Unworthy Reception of the Eucharist

In one of his homilies on Leviticus, Origen says this:¹⁹⁶

"When you receive the mystical bread eat it in a clean place; that is do not receive the Lord's Body in a soul defiled by sins. For whosoever eats this bread and drinks this cup unworthily shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord."¹⁹⁷

This suggests that one must be properly prepared for the reception of Holy Communion, but also that the use of the word *anima* indicates that it is in the soul that a real change must take place. This must be so for elsewhere¹⁹⁸ Origen

¹⁹⁴ Quasten Patrology Volume 2 page 37

¹⁹⁵ Quasten Patrology Vol.2 page 43

¹⁹⁶ Lev.Hom. 13.5 Church Quarterly Review 131 page 224 - PG. Vol.12 col. 551

¹⁹⁷ ..., cum accipis panem mysticum, in loco mundo manduces eum, hoc est ne in anima contaminata et peccatis polluta dominici corporis sacramenta percipias quicumque enim manducaverit inquit panem et biberit calicem Domini indigne, reus erit corporis et sanguinis Domini.

¹⁹⁸ In Mtt.Comm.11.14 Enchiridion Patristicum page 183 *Revue de Journal* 1946 Bardona.

says:

” The food which is consecrated according to the material part passes into the body, and is cast out into a drain. ”¹⁹⁹

8.1.2 Sanctification

It is possible to see, however, that the Eucharist not only brings condemnation to the sinner, but also sanctification to the true believer. Origen recalls the words of Jesus in the Gospel according to Saint John in his work *On Prayer*.²⁰⁰

”and since every food is called bread according to Scripture, as it is evident that it is written about Moses, that he ate no bread for forty days nor water, and there is a diversity of food words, not all which can eat in the solidity and strength of the divine lessons; because of this he wanted to bring a robust food for a more perfect people; ’ the bread which I will give is my flesh, I will give for the life of the world’ and a little further on - ’unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up....he who eats this bread will live for ever”²⁰¹

The Eucharist, then, is a much greater food than the manna, for it brings to the believer eternal life: in other words it sanctifies. One must ask therefore, what is it that brings about this sanctification in Origen’s opinion. Is it the eating of the Body of Christ only, or is there an offering taking place, in other words, a sacrifice?

¹⁹⁹ ...καὶ τὸ ἁγιαζόμενον βρῶμα διὰ λόγου θεοῦ καὶ ἐντεύξεως κατ’ αὐτὸ μὲν τὸ ὑλικὸν χωρεῖ, καὶ εἰς ἀφεδρῶνα ἐκβάλλεται.

²⁰⁰ John 6.59 *On Prayer*.27 PG Vol. 11 col. 508

²⁰¹ Ἐπεὶ δὲ πᾶσα τροφή ἄρτος λέγεται, κατὰ τὴν Γραφήν, ὡς δῆλον ἐκ τοῦ περὶ Μωυσέως ἀναγεγραφθαι: Ἄρτον οὐκ ἔφαγε τεσσαρακοντα ἡμέρας καὶ ὕδωρ οὐκ ἔπιε, ποικίλος δὲ ἐστὶ καὶ διαφορὸς ὁ τροφίμος λόγος, οὗ πάντων δυναμένων τῇ στερροτητι καὶ εὐτονια τρέφεσθαι τῶν θείων μαθημάτων: διὰ τοῦτο βουλομεγος παραστήσαι ἀθλητικὴν τελειότεροις ἀρμόζουσαν τροφήν φησιν: ὁ ἄρτος δε, οὐ ἐγὼ δώσω, ἢ σὰρξ μου ἐστίν, ἢ ἐγὼ δώσω ὑπερ τῆς τοῦ κοσμου ζωῆς, καὶ μετ’ ὀλίγα: εἰάν μὴ φαγήτε τὴν σάρκα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου καὶ πῖντε αὐτοῦ τὸ αἷμα, οὐκ ἔχετε ζωὴν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς. ὁ τρώγων μου τὴν σάρκα καὶ πίνων μου τὸ αἷμα ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον, καὶ ἐγὼ ἀναστήσω αὐτον.... ὁ τρώγων τοῦτον τὸν ἄρτον ζήσει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

8.1.3 Sacrifice in the Eucharist

The answer is found in the next quotation which is a fragment from the *Commentary on Matthew*:²⁰²

"But he said this in order to show that we believe through the energies of Almighty God to be changed truly into the body and blood of Christ which is being offered, and receiving this very thing we have in ourselves his life-giving and hallowing power."²⁰³

Here the significant word is *παρευνηγεμενα*²⁰⁴; so through the offering the bread and the wine are hallowed and when Christians receive them they obtain the power of God. This is also the case in a text from *Contra Celsum*:²⁰⁵

"We give thanks to the Creator of all, and, along with thanksgiving and prayer for the blessings we have received, we also eat the bread presented to us; and this bread becomes by prayer a sacred body, which sanctifies those who sincerely partake of it."²⁰⁶

Origen is "convinced of the sacrificial and expiatory character of the Eucharist"²⁰⁷; for he speaks of altars within the churches being consecrated with the precious blood of Christ;²⁰⁸

"When you see the Gentiles coming to the faith, churches built, altars not sprinkled with the blood of cattle, but consecrated with the precious blood of Christ, and priests and Levites ministering, not the blood of bulls and

²⁰² Mtt. Frag. 527 GCS page 216

²⁰³ Ἀλλὰ τοῦτο φησὶ δεικτικῶς, ἵνα πιστεύωμεν δι' ἐνεργείας τοῦ πάντα ἰσχυροῦ θεοῦ μεταποιεῖσθαι κατὰ τὸ ἀληθές εἰς σῶμα καὶ αἷμα Χριστοῦ τὰ παρευνηγεμένα, οὕτως τε δεχομενοὶ τὴν ζωοποιον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀγιαστικὴν δύναμιν ἐχωμεν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς.

²⁰⁴ "are being offered"

²⁰⁵ *Contra Celsum* 8.33 Chadwick Origen *Contra Celsum* Cambridge 1980 page 478 PG Vol.11 *ccel*. 1565

²⁰⁶ ἡμεῖς δὲ τῷ τοῦ παντός Δημιουργῷ εὐχαριστοῦντες, καὶ τοὺς μετ' εὐχαριστίας καὶ εὐχῆς τῆς ἐπὶ τοῖς δοθείσι προσαγομένους ἄρτους ἐσθίωμεν, σῶμα γεγομένους διὰ τὴν εὐχὴν ἁγίων τι καὶ ἁγιάζον τοὺς μετὰ ὑγίους προθέσεως αὐτῷ χρωμένους.

²⁰⁷ Quasten *Patrology* Vol.2 page 86

²⁰⁸ In *Jesu Nave* 2.1 PG Vol.12 *ccel*. 833/834

goats, but the Word of God through the Grace of the Holy Spirit, then say that Jesus is the Son of God, is the successor of Moses.”²⁰⁹

Here it is Christ who is the offerer, and in the place of animal sacrifices, the Word of God is offered. There is also a great significance in the use of the words *sacerdotes* and *Levitas*, for they are sacrificial terms. Commenting on the “sacrifice of Isaac”, Origen compares the wood of the burnt offering with the wood of the Cross; the former being a type of the latter:²¹⁰

”And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it on Isaac his son.’ For having shouldered his own cross outside the gate Christ suffered, not being forced into suffering by man’s strength, but by his own will, and the decision of God (the) Father.”²¹¹

In terms of the Eucharist, Origen sees the same kind of typology. He recalls the Letter to the Hebrews which speaks of Christ as the Great High Priest, offering himself to the Father in Heaven. One can see that his sacrifice is a “spiritual sacrifice” offered not only before the gate of Jerusalem on the Cross; but also perpetually in Heaven:²¹²

”Jesus was offered a victim not only for earthly but also for heavenly things, and there (at the gate) shed that very bodily material of his blood for men and for ministering priests in heavenly places (if there be any there) and sacrificed the vital virtue of his own body as a kind of spiritual sacrifice.”²¹³

²⁰⁹ Cum vero videris introire gentes ad fidem, Ecclesias extrui, altaria non cruore pecudum respurgi, sed pretioso Christi sanguine consecrari; cum videris sacerdotes et Levitas non sanguinem hircorum et taurorum, sed verbum Dei per Spiritus Sancti gratiam ministrantes, tunc dicito quia Jesus post Moysen suscepit et obtinuit principatum, non ille Jesus filius Nave, sed Jesus Filius Dei.

²¹⁰ Gen.Hom.22.6 Library of the Greek Fathers and Ecclesiastical Authors Vol.15 Athens 1958 page 138

²¹¹ Ἐλαβε καὶ Ἀβραὰμ τὰ ξύλα τῆς ὀλοκαρπώσεως, καὶ ἐπέθηκεν Ἰσαὰκ τῷ νῆπιον αὐτοῦ. Ἐπωμάδιον γὰρ ἔχων τὸν οἰκίον σταυρὸν ἔξω τῆς πύλης ἐπάθειν ὁ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρωπίνης ἰσχύος βεβιασμένος εἰς τὸ πάθος, ἀλλ’ ἐκ θεληματος οἰκείου, καὶ βουλήσει τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ Πατρός.

²¹² Lev.Hom.1.3 PG. Vol.12 v.409

²¹³ Recte ergo secundo nominat altare, quod est ad ostium tabernaculi testimonii, quia non solum pro terrestribus, sed etiam pro coelestibus oblati sunt hostia Jesus, et hic quidem pro hominibus ipsam corporalem materiam sanguinis sui fudit, in coelestibus vero ministrantibus, si qui illi inibi sunt, sacerdotibus, vitalem corporis sui virtutem, velut spiritale quoddam sacrificium immolavit.

It is possible to see the same theme demonstrated in another Homily on Leviticus²¹⁴ which is summarised by Bigg in these words: " At the heavenly altar till the end of the world Christ offers the incense which we must put into his hands, our sacrifices can have no propitiatory value unless he thus takes them, receiving from us both the incense and the coals, the fire of love."²¹⁵ Montgomery-Hitchcock quotes this saying that this means that our sacrifices, by which he understands the Eucharist, have no propitiatory value, for he says: " Origen could hardly have considered that that sacrifice was repeated at every Communion service."²¹⁶ In this he seems to have failed to understand that for Origen (as for Irenaeus) it is Christ who makes the offering in the Eucharist.

What part, then, does the Christian priest play in this offering? It has already been demonstrated above that the analogy between the Christian and the Mosaic hierarchy is constantly in the mind of Origen when he speaks of priests and levites ministering the Word of God; and Bigg says of Origen:²¹⁷ "...in his view the priest is no longer the minister of the congregation, but the vicar of God. The ordinary Christian is indeed a priest, but only in a figure, inasmuch as he offers to God the sacrifice of his own heart and mind." The proper balance between the priesthood of Christians and the Priesthood of Christ is indicated by these words:²¹⁸

"Our Lord and Saviour, who is the true High Priest, with his disciples who are true priests."²¹⁹

So Christ is described as the high priest (*pontifex*); Christian priests are said to be true priests (*veri sacerdotes*).

Finally one must ask what part do Christians play in the offering of this sacrifice? First of all they offer their virtue, their very selves. This is how Origen puts it:²²⁰

²¹⁴ Lev.Hom.8,9

²¹⁵ Bigg *The Christian Platonists* page 221 (footnote 2)

²¹⁶ Church Quarterly Review Volume 131 page 222

²¹⁷ Bigg *The Christian Platonists* page 215

²¹⁸ Lev.Hom.7.1. PG Vol.12 col. 477

²¹⁹ Dominus et Salvator noster, qui est verus pontifex, cum discipulis, qui sunt veri sacerdotes.

²²⁰ In Hom.Ps.65 PG Vol.12 col. 1501

"Indeed I wished to shake off the present sorrow, and will always send you the praises; whether sacrifices according to the Law before the Coming of the Saviour; or the spiritual (sacrifices) coming into the house of God, the Church, with burnt-offerings, perfect and faultless virtues made by all priests and appropriate prayers on their behalf."²²¹

Also the offering is made in prayer on behalf of the people. However, in *Contra Celsum*²²² Origen speaks not only of prayer, but also of " bloodless sacrifices " offered in prayer. What else can be intended by this but the Eucharist?

" He at least is keeping the feast who does what he ought, always praying and continually offering the bloodless sacrifices in his prayers to God..... He who remembers that Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us, and that we must keep the feast, eating the Flesh of the Word, at all times keeps the Passover, passing ever in thought, word, and deed from the things of this life to God, and hastening to his city...."²²³

In other words it is both by praying and offering that the sacrifice is made; for even though Christ has already been sacrificed for Christians, they eat his flesh when they receive him, and are then prepared for eternal life in the City of God.²²⁴

8.2 Conclusions

In conclusion, then, for Origen the sacrifice made by Christians is primarily that of the soul. However this is in no way separated from the Eucharist. One can see that Origen uses Biblical quotations that are so often used by other authors in

²²¹ Ἡνξάμην δὲ ὡς, τῆς θλίψεως τῆς παρούσης συσθείς, διαπαντός ἀναπέμφω σοὶ τὰς αἰνέσεις: ἦτοι τὰς κατὰ νόμον θυσίας πρὸ τῆς τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἐπιδημίας: ἢ τὰς πνευματικὰς εἰσερχόμενος εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ θεοῦ, τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν, ἐν δλοκαυτώμασι, τελείας τε καὶ ὁλοκλήρους ἀρετὰς ἐξ ὅλων ἱερουργῶν, καὶ τὰς καταλλήλους αὐτοῖς ἐκτινυῶν εὐχὰς.

²²² *Contra Celsum* 8.21ff PG Vol.11 *col* 1549/1552

²²³ καὶ ἑορτάζει γὰρ κατὰ ἀληθειαν ὁ τὰ δεόντα πράττων, αἰεὶ εὐχόμενος, δια παντός θυῶν τὰς ἀναιμάκτους ἐν ταῖς πρὸς τὸ θεῖον εὐχαῖς θυσίας.... Ἐτι δὲ ὁ νοήσας, ὅτι τὸ Πάσχα ἡμῶν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐτύθη Χριστός, καὶ χρῆ ἑορτάζειν, ἐσθιόντα τῆς σαρκὸς τοῦ Λόγου: οὐκ ἐστιν ὅτε οὐ ποιεῖ τὸ Πάσχα, ὅπερ ἐρμηνεύεται διαβατήρια, διαβαίνων αἰεὶ τῷ λογισμῷ καὶ παντὶ λόγῳ καὶ πάσῃ πράξει ἀπὸ τῶν τοῦ βίου πραγμάτων ἐπι τὸν θεόν, καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν πόλιν αὐτοῦ σπεύδων.

²²⁴ c.f. Irenaeus

the early Church, especially those which speak of feeding on the Body of Christ. Like Clement before him, he is found interpreting the Eucharist in a spiritual way; but unlike Clement, Origen is less concerned with its relation to the Greek pagan philosophies. Paul had said²²⁵ that " Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us", and Origen understands this to mean that the Cross was 'the' sacrifice, replacing the old animal sacrifices; but also that Christ is continually making an offering to the Father in Heaven. Also, the disciples of Christ are called *veri sacerdotes*, and he speaks of these priests and levites as ministering the blood of Christ. Christians are said to be making an "offering" at the Eucharist which sanctifies, and which is therefore a sacrifice. Although Origen was condemned in later centuries for some of his views, it would be reasonable to assume that his understanding of the Eucharist reflects that of the Alexandrian Church during his life. He had been, after all, head of the catechetical school there, and there is no reason to believe that there were any views held which were radically different in other parts of the Church. Origen, born as he was into a background of persecution, naturally emphasises the need for a personal sacrifice in the Eucharist as well as in the Christian life as a whole. This was to change during the following century; for with the Conversion of Constantine, and the establishment of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire, Christian writers were much more able to explore the true meaning of Eucharistic Sacrifice, as can be seen in the Cappadocian Fathers.

²²⁵ 1 Cor.5.7 καὶ γὰρ τὸ πάσχα ἡμῶν ἐτύθη Χριστός: ὥστε εὐορτάζειν,...

Chapter IX

EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA

Eusebius, a disciple and admirer of Origen, is remembered most of all as the 'Father of Church History'. He was probably born in Caesarea about the year 263 A.D., a city which had a tradition of learning going back to the time of Origen. The books which Origen left were added to by a Presbyter Pamphilus, and it was this library that formed the basis of the scholarship there. Pamphilus appears to have been Eusebius' teacher, until he was martyred during the persecution of Diocletian. Eusebius fled to Tyre at this time. He became Bishop of Caesarea in 311 A.D.²²⁶

At the Council of Nicaea Eusebius rejected the *ομολογιος* of Athanasius on the grounds that the word was not used in Scripture; but then he signed the Creed conforming to the wishes of Constantine, being a great admirer of the Emperor. When the Emperor died in 337 A.D. he delivered a lengthy eulogy. He himself died two or three years later.

9.1 The Sacrifice of Christ

The most important references to Eucharistic Sacrifice come in the *Demonstratio Evangelica*, but it is important to understand first how he understands the sacrifice of Christ. Eusebius was very concerned to be true to scriptural precedent, so he begins with the cross. In his *Commentary on Isaiah* he says this:²²⁷

" For the Lord himself handed over his own self for our sins, in order that he might be a living substitute and ransom for us. For in this way also the Lamb of God was made, carrying and purging the sin of the world. As Symmachus says, ' He was offered and he obeyed.' To whom was he offered

²²⁶ Quasten Patrology Vol.III pages 311.312

²²⁷ Comm.Is. 53.6 PG. Vol.24 *ed.* 457

but to Pilate? And since he was the accused he was silent, and being the subject of false witness answered nothing."²²⁸

Here Jesus is portrayed both as the offering and the one who offers himself. Hadrill says that " In such a manner does Eusebius treat the sacrifice for sin made by Christ, and the means by which the sacrifice is made effective in the Church. Side by side with it we may recall that the words food and wine in a biblical text do not automatically bring to mind a sacramental interpretation. The food is sometimes given by our Lord's teaching, the wine is sometimes the Scriptures."²²⁹ So it is important that one does not read too much into a particular text. For example earlier in the same work Eusebius says:²³⁰

" For this was not a bodily captivity in order that they might attain freedom through bodily ransoms, , because their souls have been purchased. For this reason they were not expecting to be ransomed with silver, but rather by the precious blood of Christ. "²³¹

Here the blood that is shed certainly refers to the blood shed on the cross; and this is generally the case in the writings of Eusebius. However there are occasions when one can be sure that Eusebius is speaking of the Eucharist as a sacrifice.

9.2 The Eucharistic Sacrifice

One example of this is found in the *Demonstratio Evangelica* where he says:²³²

" Those who in every place offer to God spiritual incense and the pure and bloodless and reasonable sacrifice through the one who is truly High Priest."

²²⁸ Αὐτός γὰρ ἑαυτὸν παρεδίδου ὁ Κύριος ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, ἵνα γενηται ἀντίψυχον καὶ ἀντιλυτρον ἡμῶν. Οὕτω γὰρ καὶ Ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ γέγονεν, αἴρων καὶ περικαθαίρων τὴν ἀμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου. Ὁ δὲ Σύμμαχος, Προσηνέχθη, φησι, καὶ αὐτὸς ὑπήκουσε. Τίτι δὲ προσηνέχθη ἀλλὰ τῷ Πιλάτῳ; Καὶ ἐπειδὴ κατηγορούμενος οὐδὲν ἀπεκρίνατο.

²²⁹ Hadrill Eusebius of Caesarea page 120

²³⁰ Comm.Is. 52.3 PG. Vol.24 col 452

²³¹ Οὐ γὰρ ἦν σωματικὴ αὐτῆ ἀιχμαλωσία, ἵνα διὰ λυτρῶν σωματικῶν τυχωσι τῆς ἐλευθερίας, ἐπειδὴ τὰς ψυχὰς ἦσαν πεπραμένοι. Διὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐν ἀργυρίῳ λυτροῦσθαι ἐμέλλον, ἀλλὰ δηλονότι τοῦ Χριστοῦ τῷ τιμίῳ αἵματι.

²³² Dem. Evan.4.17 Eusebiuswerke Vol.6 p.199

Here it is the phrase *αὐτῶ τὰς λογικὰς καὶ ἀναιμους θυσίας* that is significant; and it is very clear that the Eucharist is intended. The sacrifices of the Old Covenant and the sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross are 'bloody' sacrifices. The Eucharistic sacrifice is described as pure, bloodless, and reasonable; and it is offered through Christ - the true High Priest. Christ is also spoken of as the one who offers through prayer spiritual sacrifices in the same work.²³³

" Then precisely because he is familiar to him, as being a great High Priest who performs for us spiritual sacrifices with doxologies and theologues....."²³⁴

In other words it is because the Son is related to the Father that he is able to make the right offering as a new High Priest of the Christians, by offering himself for them and through them in praise and worship.

Eusebius also compares the ineffectual animal sacrifices of the Jerusalem Temple with the Eucharist in his *Demonstratio*:²³⁵

" He was no more to take pleasure in bloody sacrifices, or those ordained by Moses in the slaughter of animals of various kinds, and was to give them bread and wine to use as a symbol of his body."²³⁶

The implication of this is that the new sacrifice of the Eucharist using bread and wine has replaced the old 'bloody' sacrifices. This is a theme that is found in most of the Church Fathers in this examination.

There is also the suggestion that the observance of the Torah in respect of the offering of animals as sacrifices is to be seen as a weakness:²³⁷

" Naturally the memorial of him and the calling to mind of his own body

²³³ op.cit.4.16 Eusebiuswerke Vol.6 p.199

²³⁴ εἰτ' ἐπειδὴ περ ἐστὶν οἰκεῖον αὐτῷ, ἅτε μεγάλῳ ὄντι ἀρχιερεὶ, τὰς ἐν δοξολογίαις καὶ θεολογίαις πνευματικὰς ἱερουργίας ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐντελεῖν,....

²³⁵ Demonstratio Evangelica 8.1 Eusebiuswerke Vol.8 p.366

²³⁶ ἐπειδὴ γὰρ οὐκέτι τὰς δὶ αἵματων θυσίας οὐδέ τας παρὰ Μωσέϊ ἐν διαφόρων ζῶων ἀφαγαῖς νενομοθετημένας προσιέτο, ἀρτῶ δὲ χρῆσθαι συμβολῶ τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος παρεδίδου,...

²³⁷ op.cit. 1.10 Eusebiuswerke Vol.6 p.46

and his own blood, we perform daily, and these are the best [sacrifices], and we become worthy of the best [sacrifice] rather than the sacrifice and priestly-functions according to the [practice of the] old ones, we think that it is not reverent to fall [back] into the first things, the weak elements symbols and pictures, which do not contain the truth.”²³⁸

Here the Eucharist is seen by Eusebius as an effective sacrifice. It is said to be better than the old animal sacrifices whose offerings are seen as belonging to the weak. In his *Commentary on the Psalms*, he speaks of the new form of worship being performed at dawn on Sundays. This is clearly the Eucharist.²³⁹

” It signifies through it prophetically the worship which is performed at dawn and every morning on the Day of Resurrection throughout the world in his own Church.”²⁴⁰

9.3 Conclusions

It is clear that Eusebius wants to remain true to the language of Scripture. This is seen to be so not only because he objected to the word *ομοουσιος* on the grounds that it was not used in the Bible; but also because his writings imply this as well. Sacrifice for him is never separated from the cross. He does see the Eucharist as a sacrifice offered by Christ, but it is called an unbloody sacrifice clearly distinguishing it from what had gone before. It is offered to the Father by the Son and on behalf of the Christian people. He does not seem to speak about the prayer of consecration, but this gives no reason to suppose that his understanding of the Eucharistic sacrifice was in any way substantially different from that of the other Fathers.

²³⁸ εἰκότως τὴν τούτου μνήμην τοῦ τε σώματος αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῦ αἵματος τὴν ὑπόμνησιν ὁσημέραι ἐπιτελοῦντες, καὶ τῆς κρείττονος ἢ κατὰ τοὺς παλαιοὺς θυσίας τε καὶ ἱεροουργίας ἤξιωμένοι, οὐκεθ' ὅσιον ἡγοῦμεθα καταπιπτειν ἐπὶ τὰ πρῶτα, ἀσθεύη στοιχεῖα, συμβολα καὶ εἰκόνας ἀλλ' οὐκ αὐτὴν ἀληθειαν περιεχοντα.

²³⁹ Comm.Pss. PG. Vol.23 col. 552

²⁴⁰ Σημαίνει δὲ διὰ τούτου προφητικῶς τὴν κατ' ὄρθρον καὶ καθ' ἑκάστην πρῶταν τῆς ἀναστασίμου ἡμέρας καθ' ὅλης τῆς οἰκουμένης ἐν τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ αὐτοῦ συντελουμένην λατρείαν.

Chapter X

ATHANASIUS

It is believed that Athanasius was born in Alexandria about the year 295 A.D. He became Bishop of the city by 328 A.D. Gregory of Nazianzus calls him the "pillar of the Church",²⁴¹ for he had been at the Council of Nicaea and was regarded by the Arians as their 'chief enemy'.²⁴² He produced many works, most of which reflect his battle with the Arians. In particular the Easter letters reflect his understanding of the Eucharistic sacrifice.

10.1 The Festal Letters

These letters were written to announce the beginning of Lent and the date of Easter, and as a consequence of this many of them refer both to the Passover and to the Eucharist.

10.1.1 Festal Letter XI

In this letter²⁴³ Athanasius writes this:²⁴⁴

" For it is well that a man should depart from wickedness and deeds of iniquity, that he may be able properly to celebrate the feast; for he who is defiled with the pollutions of the wicked is not able to celebrate the Passover..."

Here the feast that Athanasius is speaking about is the Easter Eucharist, and the suggestion of ritual cleanliness is indicative of sacrifice. He makes this point more clearly further on in the same letter.²⁴⁵

²⁴¹ Or.21, 26

²⁴² Quasten Patrology Vol.III page 20

²⁴³ The original texts to the letters has survived mainly in Coptic and in Syriac

²⁴⁴ Festal Letter 11.10

²⁴⁵ Festal Letter 11.14

” Now this came to pass in the time of the Passion, in which Our Lord died for us, for ‘our Passover, Christ was sacrificed’. Therefore, because he was sacrificed, let each of us feed upon him, and with alacrity and diligence partake of his sustenance....”

The connection between the offering of the sacrifice and the feeding upon it, makes it quite clear that Athanasius thought of the Eucharist as a sacrifice. This is also the case in another letter.

10.1.2 Festal Letter XIV

In this letter Athanasius continues to show that Christ is the new Passover sacrifice of the Christians, for he says:²⁴⁶

” Therefore let us also, when we come to the feast, no longer come as to old shadows, for they are accomplished, neither as to common feasts, but let us hasten as to the Lord, who is himself the feast...”

Here again a relationship between the sacrifice and the Eucharist is apparent for the feast he is speaking about is of course the Christian Easter, which is contrasted with the former sacrifice of the Jews in another letter.

10.1.3 Festal Letter XIX

Here the true Passover sacrifice is described by Athanasius in these words:²⁴⁷

” Our Passover Christ, is sacrificed. Henceforth the feast of the Passover is ours, not that of a stranger, nor is it any longer of the Jews...”

In this quotation the feast referred to is the Easter Eucharist for as he says further on the the same letter:²⁴⁸

” I have been mindful.... to give you also notice of the great feast of Easter, that we may go up together, as it were to Jerusalem, and eat the Passover,...”

²⁴⁶ Festal Letter 14.3

²⁴⁷ Festal Letter 19.1

²⁴⁸ Festal Letter 19.8

The significant words here are "eat the Passover", for obviously in this context he is speaking about the Easter Eucharist. This is even more clear in the next letter.

10.1.4 Festal Letter XX

Describing the work of Christian saints, Athanasius says:²⁴⁹

" But the Saints, having their senses exercised by reason of practice, and being strong in faith and in understanding the word, and... passing through water and fire, to a place where they can breathe freely, they duly keep the feast, offering up prayers with thanksgiving to God who has redeemed them... For such is the love of the Saints at all times, that they never once leave off, but offer the uninterrupted, constant sacrifice to the Lord, and continually thirst and ask of him to drink."

This means that for Athanasius the Christian sacrifice is both an offering of Christians to God and a partaking of an eternal drink of God's grace by them, which centres itself on the Eucharist and also the sacrifice of Christ. This is put in another way in a later letter.

10.1.5 Festal Letter XXIV

Speaking about the former sacrifices of the Jews, Athanasius says:²⁵⁰

" ... the Jews... have adopted a superficial approach to the Law which has amde them to celebrate Easter in a fleshly manner, eating the flesh of an irrational animal and never arriving at the rational nurture of the true Lamb, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who is the true Bread, come down from heaven and giving life to the world."

Here Athanasius sees the sacrifice of Christ as a fulfilment of the old sacrifices, and this sacrifice is connected both with the holy life and participation in the Eucharist.

²⁴⁹ Festal Letter 20.

²⁵⁰ Festal Letter 24.

To Athanasius the Christian sacrifice is based on the sacrifice of Christ and it is celebrated in the Eucharist, for it is in the Eucharist that Christians receive the grace gained for them in the sacrifice of Christ.

10.2 The Eucharistic Sacrifice in other writings of Athanasius

The idea of sacrifice is clearly implied in certain of his writings. In particular in the *Apologia Contra Arianos*²⁵¹ one can read these words:

" Our sanctuaries are now, as they have always been, pure, and honoured only with the Blood of Christ and his pure worship."²⁵²

Here as in other Fathers the Church is seen as the successor to the sanctuary in the Old Temple. It is described both as a place of worship and a place of purification, which the reference to the Blood of Christ links with the Eucharist. This connection between the Eucharist and pure worship is even more obvious in the following passage from a fragment of one of his letters.²⁵³

" In order that he might become a sacrifice for all, we, nourished up in the words of truth, and partaking of his living doctrine, might be able with the saints to receive also the joy of Heaven. For thither, as he called the disciples to the upper chamber, so does the Word call us with them to the divine and truly incorruptible banquet; having suffered for us here, but there, preparing the heavenly tabernacles for those who most readily hearken to the summons....."²⁵⁴

The connection made between the Last Supper and the divine banquet clearly implies that the Eucharist is intended here, and the use of a future tense indicates

²⁵¹ Apol.Con.Ar.5

²⁵² Τὰ παρ' ἡμῖν ἱερατεία, ὡς περ ἄει, καὶ νῦν καθαρὰ, μόνῳ σεμνυνομένα τῷ αἵματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ τῇ εἰς αὐτὸν εὐσεβείᾳ.

²⁵³ Letter 28 PG Vol.26.1433

²⁵⁴ Ἰν' αὐτὸς μὲν ὑπὲρ πάντων θυσία γενῆται: ἡμεῖς δέ, ἐντρεφόμενοι τοῖς λόγοις τῆς ἀληθείας, καὶ ζωῆς αὐτοῦ διδασκαλίας μεταλαμβάνοντες, δυνηθῶμεν μετὰ τῶν ἁγίων καὶ τὴν ἐπουράνιον ἀπολαβεῖν χαρὰν: ἐκεῖ γὰρ ἡμᾶς, ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ ἀνωγαῖον τοὺς μαθητὰς, ἐπὶ τὴν θείαν καὶ ἀφθαρτὸν ὄντως ἐστίασιν ὁ Λόγος καλεῖ μετ' αὐτῶν: ἐνταῦθα μὲν παθῶν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, ἐκεῖ δὲ τὰς οὐρανίους σκηνας ἐτοιμάζων τοῖς μάλιστα προθύμως ὑπακούσασιν πρὸς τὴν κλήσιν,.....

that in some sense the sacrifice is yet to take place, enabling Christians to take their place with the saints in heaven.

The sacrificial terminology is also used in a surviving fragment of his address to the newly baptized:²⁵⁵

" You shall see the levites bring loaves and a chalice of wine, and place them on the table. As long as the invocation and prayers have not begun, there are merely bread and wine. But after the great and wonderful prayers have been offered, then the bread becomes the body, and the wine becomes the blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us come to the accomplishment of the mysteries. As long as the prayers and invocations have not taken place, this bread and this wine are simply [bread and wine]. But when the great prayers and holy invocations are pronounced, the Word descends into the bread and the cup, and this becomes his body."²⁵⁶

Here is recalled the offering of sacrifices by the levitical priests. Christian ministers are called levites, and it is also clear that the Eucharist is the sacrifice which is being offered.

On one occasion one of the Catholic churches was attacked by an Arianizing mob:²⁵⁷

"After this, that they might fully execute the orders they had received (.....) they seized upon the seats, the throne, and the table which was of wood, and the curtains of the church, and whatever else they were able, and carrying them out burnt them before the doors in the great square, and cast frankincense upon the flame."²⁵⁸

²⁵⁵ Newly Baptized PG Vol.26 col. 1325

²⁵⁶ Ὅψει τοὺς Λευίτας φέροντας ἄρτους, καὶ ποτήριον οἴνου, καὶ τιθέντας ἐπὶ τὴν τράπεζαν: καὶ ὅσον οὐπω ἱκεσίαι καὶ δεήσεις γίνονται, φίλος ἐστὶν ὁ ἄρτος καὶ τὸ ποτήριον: ἐπὶ δὲ ἐπιτελεσθῶσιν αἱ μεγάλαι καὶ θαυμασταὶ εὐχαί, τότε γίνεται ὁ ἄρτος, σῶμα: καὶ τὸ ποτήριον αἷμα τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Καὶ πάλιν: "Ἐλθωμεν ἐπὶ τὴν τελείωσιν τῶν μυστήριων: οὗτος ὁ ἄρτος καὶ τοῦτο τὸ μυστήριον, ὅσον οὐπω εὐχαὶ καὶ ἱκεσίαι γεγωνασι, φίλα εἰσὶν: ἐπὶ δὲ αἱ μεγάλαι εὐχαὶ, καὶ αἱ ἅγαι ἱκεσίαι ἀναπεμφθῶσι, καταβαίνει ὁ Λόγος εἰς τὸν ἄρτον καὶ τὸ ποτήριον, καὶ γίνεται αὐτοῦ σῶμα.

²⁵⁷ Apologia Contra Arianos PG Vol. 25 col. 268

²⁵⁸ Εἶτα, ὡς τὸ ὅλον τῆς ἐντολῆς πληροῦντες (.....), ἀρπάσαντες τὰ

Although Athanasius calls the altar τὴν τράπεζαν, this need not suggest that he did not see the Eucharist as a sacrifice, for it was the normal title for the altar in the Church at this time; and the descriptions of the other church furnishings again suggest the Temple sanctuary. Elsewhere²⁵⁹ he uses word for sanctuary (ἱερατεῖον) to describe where he was sitting in the church with the other clergy.

10.3 Conclusions

What conclusions can we draw from Athanasius' writings? First that there is no difference between his teaching and that of the other Fathers who came before him. He sees the Eucharist as the fulfilment of the Passover sacrifice of the Jews. He also speaks of 'levites', 'sacrifice', and 'sanctuary', and many other terms which recall the sacrifices of the Old Testament in the Temple in Jerusalem: but he is careful to show that these sacrifices are different from those of the Jews. They are 'spiritual' and not 'carnal'. They are unbloody sacrifices consecrated by the Word through the agency of God's priests to be in truth the Body of Christ; these sacrifices are offered truly only by those in communion with the Church, and ordained by the Church.

συμφελλια, καὶ τὸν θρόνον, καὶ τὴν τράπεζαν (ξύλινη γὰρ ἦν), καὶ
καὶ τὰ βέλα τῆς ἐκκλησίας, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα, ὅσα ἠδυνήθησαν, ἐξευέγκαντες,
ἔκαυσαν ἐμπροσθεν τοῦ πυλῶνος ἐν τῇ πλατείᾳ τῇ μεγάλῃ, καὶ
λίβανον ἐπέλαβον.

²⁵⁹ Apologia Pro Fuga Sua PG Vol.25 pages 673/676

Chapter XI

CYRIL OF JERUSALEM

It is generally believed that Cyril was born in the city where he became Bishop (probably two years after the election of Eusebius) in the year 315 A.D.²⁶⁰ He was consecrated by the Metropolitan of Caesarea Acacius, an Arian bishop, which cast some suspicion on Cyril. The reality was that Cyril was soon in conflict with the Arian party, and was expelled from his see three times. In 381 A.D. he took part in the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople, and probably died around 386 A.D.

11.1 THE MYSTAGOGICAL CATECHESSES

Cyril delivered a series of 24 *Catechetical Lectures* in the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, and these have been preserved for us by someone who took them down. Of these Lectures 19-23 are known as the *Mystagogical Catecheses*: Lectures 22 and 23 deal with the Eucharist.

Cyril begins Lecture 22 with an affirmation of the real presence of Christ in Eucharist. This is developed later into an understanding of Eucharistic sacrifice:²⁶¹

” Since then he himself has declared and said of the bread, This is my Body, who shall dare to doubt any longer? And since he has affirmed and said, This is my Blood, who shall ever hesitate, saying, this is not his blood?”²⁶²

This deals with the true presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the eucharistic elements, for here Cyril is explaining the mystery of Christ’s presence to the catechumens. He then continues:²⁶³

²⁶⁰ His own election was in 348 A.D.

²⁶¹ Cat.Myst. 4,5

²⁶² Αὐτοῦ οὖν ἀποφνηαμένου καὶ εἰπόντος περὶ τοῦ ἄρτου: Τούτο μου ἐστὶν τὸ σῶμα, τίς τολμήσει ἀμφιβάλλειν λοιπὸν; Καὶ αὐτοῦ διαβεβαιωσαμένου καὶ εἰρηότος: Τούτο μου ἐστὶ τὸ αἶμα, τίς ἐνδοιάσει ποτὲ λέγων μὴ εἶναι αὐτοῦ αἶμα;

²⁶³ Cat.Myst.4.3

" Therefore with fullest assurance let us partake as of the Body and Blood of Christ: for in the figure of bread is given to you his Body, and in the figure of wine his Blood, that you may by partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ, become one body and blood with him. For thus we shall become Christ-bearers because his Body and Blood are diffused through our members; thus it is that, according to St. Peter, we become partakers of the divine nature."²⁶⁴

This means that those who receive the sacrament become bearers of the Body of Christ. In them a change has taken place; the same kind of change that one would expect in a sacrifice, as we can see further on:²⁶⁵

" That what seems bread is not bread, though bread by taste, but the Body of Christ; and that what seems wine is not wine, though the taste will have it so, but the Blood of Christ."²⁶⁶

This is repeated further on:²⁶⁷

" Contemplate therefore the bread and wine not as bare elements, for they are according to the Lord's declaration, the Body and Blood of Christ; for though sense suggests this to you, let faith establish you. Do not judge the matter from taste, but from faith be fully assured without misgiving, that thou hast been vouchsafed the Body and Blood of Christ."²⁶⁸

²⁶⁴ Ὅστε μετὰ πάσης πληροφορίας ὡς σώματος καὶ αἵματος, μεταλαμβάνομεν Χριστοῦ. Ἐν τύπῳ γὰρ ἄρτου δίδοται σοι τὸ σῶμα, καὶ ἐν τύπῳ οἴνου δίδοται σοι τὸ αἶμα, ἵνα γένη, μεταλαβὼν σώματος καὶ αἵματος Χριστοῦ σύσσωμος καὶ σὺναιμος Χριστοῦ. Οὕτω γὰρ καὶ χριστοφόροι γινομεθα, τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῦ αἵματος εἰς τὰ ἡμέτερα ἀναδιδόμενοι μέλη. Οὕτω κατὰ τὸν μακάριον Πέτρον θείας κοινῶσι γινομεθα φύσεως.

²⁶⁵ op.cit. 4.3

²⁶⁶ ...ὡς φαινόμενος ἄρτος οὐκ ἄρτος ἐστίν, εἰ καὶ τοιοῦτος ἐστὶ τῆ γεύσει ἀλλὰ σῶμα Χριστοῦ, καὶ ὁ φαινόμενος οἶνος ἐστίν, εἰ καὶ ἡ γεῦσις τοῦτο βουλεται, ἀλλὰ αἶμα Χριστοῦ,....

²⁶⁷ op.cit. 4.6

²⁶⁸ Μὴ πράξε οὖν ὡς ψιλοῖς τῷ ἄρτῳ καὶ τῷ οἴνῳ; σῶμα γὰρ καὶ αἶμα κατὰ τὴν δεσποτικὴν τυγχάνει ἀπόφασιν, τυγχάνει ἀπόφασιν. Εἰ γὰρ καὶ ἡ αἴσθησις σοὶ τοῦτο ὑποβάλλει, ἀλλὰ ἡ πίστις σε βεβαιούτω. Μὴ ἀπὸ τῆς γεύσεως κρινῆς τὸ πρᾶγμα, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τῆς πίστεως πληροφοροῦ ἀνευδοιάστως, σώματος καὶ αἵματος Χριστοῦ καταξιώθεις.

Cyril speaks further about the miraculous change which takes place in an earlier part of this book, by referring to the miracle at Cana in Galilee.²⁶⁹

" He once turned the water into wine, at Cana in Galilee, at His own will, and shall we not believe him when he changes wine into blood?"²⁷⁰

In the next book, Cyril moves on to describe the way in which this change takes place, that is by the use of the Epiclesis, and the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the bread and the wine.²⁷¹

" We call upon the merciful God to send forth his Holy Spirit upon the gifts lying before him; that he may make the bread the Body of Christ, and the wine the Blood of Christ; for whatever the Holy Spirit has touched, is sanctified and changed."²⁷²

It is this change that suggests sacrifice.

11.2 EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE

The first real reference to a sacrifice comes in the next few chapters. Cyril is very explicit:²⁷³

" After the spiritual sacrifice is perfected, the bloodless service upon that sacrifice of propitiation, we entreat God for the common peace of the Church, for the tranquility of the world, for kings, for soldiers and allies, for the sick, for the afflicted, and, in a word, for all who stand in need of help, we supplicate and offer this sacrifice. Then we commemorate also those who have fallen asleep before us, first, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, that at their prayers and intervention God would receive our petition. Afterwards also on behalf of the holy Fathers and Bishops who have fallen

²⁶⁹ op.cit.4.2

²⁷⁰ Τὸ ὕδωρ ποτὲ εἰς οἶνον οἰκεῖω νεύματι μεταβέβληκεν ἐν Κανᾷ τῆς Γαλιλαίας, καὶ οὐκ ἀξιόπιστος ἐστὶν οἶνον εἰς αἷμα μεταβαλῶν

²⁷¹ op.cit.5.7

²⁷² ...παρακαλοῦμεν τὸν φιλόθρωπον θεὸν τὸ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα ἐξαποστεῖλαι ἐπὶ τὰ προκείμενα, ἵνα ποιῆσῃ τὸν μὲν ἄρτον σῶμα Χριστοῦ, τὸν δὲ οἶνον αἷμα Χριστοῦ; παντὸς γὰρ οὗ ἂν ἐφάψῃται τὸ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα τοῦτο ἡγιασται καὶ μεταβέβληται.

²⁷³ op.cit.5.8-10

asleep before us, and in a word of all who in past years have fallen asleep among us, believing that it will be a very great advantage to the souls, for whom this supplication is put up, while that holy and most awful sacrifice is presented... we offer up Christ slain for our sins in order to obtain pardon from our merciful God both for the [the departed] and for ourselves."²⁷⁴

This passage is the key to understanding the nature of eucharistic sacrifice. The Eucharist is described as a sacrifice, and it is a spiritual sacrifice. The expression *πνευματικὴν θυσίαν* implies a sacrifice offered in prayer and without the need for the death of an animal, for Christ has already made the "bloody sacrifice" on the cross. This is also why Cyril calls it an *ἀναίμακτον θυσίαν*. However, the Eucharist is a true sacrifice, for it is a propitiatory sacrifice, and it is offered for all who are in need. It is also known that Cyril is the first Theologian to use the expressions 'awful sacrifice' and 'awe-inspiring sacrifice'.

11.3 Conclusions

What conclusions then can we draw from this series of lectures, for it is reasonable to suppose that the *Catechetical Lectures* represent not only the views of one individual but the Teaching of the Church at that time. Quasten says that

²⁷⁴ Εἶτα μετὰ τὸ ἀπαρτισθῆναι τὴν πνευματικὴν θυσίαν, τὴν ἀναίμακτον λατρείαν, ἐπὶ τῆς θυσίας ἐκείνης τοῦ ἰλασμοῦ, παρακαλοῦμεν τὸν θεὸν ὑπὲρ κοινῆς τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν εἰρήνης, ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου εὐσταθείας, ὑπὲρ βασιλείων, ὑπὲρ στρατοπέδων καὶ συμμάχων, ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐν ἀσθενείαις, ὑπὲρ τῶν καταπονουμένων, καὶ ἀπαξαιπλῶς ὑπὲρ πάντων τῶν βοηθείας δεομένων δεσμένοι δὲ πάντες ἡμεῖς ταύτην προσφέρομεν τὴν θυσίαν. Εἶτα μνημονεύομεν καὶ τῶν κεκοιμημένων, πρῶτον πατριαρχῶν, προφητῶν, ἀποστόλων, μαρτύρων, ὅπως ὁ θεὸς εὐχαῖς αὐτῶν καὶ πρεσβείαις προσδέξῃται ἡμῶν τὴν δέησιν. Εἶτα καὶ ὑπὲρ τῶν κεκοιμημένων ἁγίων πατέρων καὶ ἐπισκοπῶν, καὶ πάντων ἀπλῶς τῶν ἡμῖν προκεκοιμημένων, μεγίστην ὀνησίην πιστεύοντες εἶσεσθαι ταῖς ψυχαῖς, ὑπὲρ ὧν ἡ δέησις ἀναφέρεται, τῆς ἁγιαῖς καὶ φρικωδεστάτης προκειμένης θυσίας. Καὶ βούλομαι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ ὑποδείγματος πείσαι. Οἶδα γὰρ πολλοὺς τοῦτο λέγοντας ὅτι: Τί ὠφελεῖται ψυχῇ, μετὰ ἁμαρτημάτων ἀπαλλασσομένη τοῦδε τοῦ κόσμου, ἢ οὐ μεθ' ἁμαρτημάτων, εἰ ἐπὶ τῆς προσφορᾶς μνημονεύηται; Ἄρα γὰρ, εἰ τις βασιλεὺς προσκεκρονοκότας αὐτῷ ἐξοπλιστοὺς ποιήσειεν, εἶτα οἱ τοῦτοις διαφέροντες, στέφανον πλεξαντῆς, ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐν τιμωρίαις αὐτῷ τοῦτον προσενεγκόειεν, οὐκ ἂν αὐτοῖς ἀνεσις δῶη τῶν κολάσεων; Τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον καὶ ἡμεῖς, ὑπὲρ τῶν κεκοιμημένων αὐτῷ τὰς δεησεις προσφέροντες, καὶ ἁμαρτωλοὶ ὡσιν, οὐ στέφανον πλεκομέν, ἀλλὰ Χριστὸν ἐσφαγιασμένον ὑπὲρ τῶν ἡμετέρων ἁμαρτημάτων προσφέρομεν, ἐξιλεοῦμεν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν τε καὶ ἡμῶν τοῦ φιλανθρώπου θεοῦ.

for Cyril and the whole Church the Eucharist is " nothing less than Christ slain as a victim for our sins."²⁷⁵ In the last quotation given above, he uses a most remarkable expression: "...we offer up Christ sacrificed for our sins". By using these words Cyril implies not only that in the Eucharist Christ is truly offered to the Father, but that he is offered by "us" (in other words by Christians). The use of the first person plural in προσφέρομεν suggests the sacrificial understanding of the Eucharist in the thought of the Church by this time.

A similar development was also taking place in the West, so it will be helpful to see how Hilary of Poitiers sees the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

²⁷⁵ Patrology Vol.III page 376

Chapter XII

HILARY, BISHOP OF POITIERS

Hilary was born about 315 A.D. In 350 A.D. he became Bishop of Poitiers in Gaul. Between 350 A.D. and 360 A.D. he was exiled by the Emperor to Asia Minor; and this was of the utmost importance to the western Latin Church as he was able to explain to his brethren some of the important aspects of the *ομoουσιοιoν* and the doctrine of the Trinity as it was understood in the Greek-speaking Church in the East. Like Athanasius he also struggled hard against the Arians in Gaul, so much so that he came to be called the "Athanasius of the West"²⁷⁶. He is believed to have died in 367 A.D.

12.1 The Eucharist

12.1.1 De Trinitate

There is not much in the works of St. Hilary about the Eucharist, but there are three texts that are worthy of attention in *De Trinitate*. In this work Hilary is discussing the nature of God the Son and his relationship with the Father.²⁷⁷ Like most anti-Arian works, Hilary is less concerned with "an exposition of Trinitarian doctrine than with the proof of the divinity of the Son."²⁷⁸ Book I is an explanation of his purpose, which is to combat Sabellianism and Arianism. Books II and III establish the concept of three Persons and then their real distinction from each other, especially the Father from the Son. Books V to XII develop the doctrine of the *ομoουσιοιoς* basing this on the Old and the New Testaments.

" Christ himself gives evidence of the nature of our life in him through the sacrament of the flesh and blood imparted to us, when he says... 'Since I live, you also will live; since I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I

²⁷⁶ Cayre Manual of Patrology page 357

²⁷⁷ De Trinitate 15 PL Vol.10 *col.* 247ff

²⁷⁸ Cayre Manual of Patrology page 357ff

am in you.' If he means a unity merely of will, why did he describe a kind of order of ascent in the establishment of that unity? His purpose surely was that we should believe that he was in the Father by nature, as being divine; whereas we are in him in virtue of his birth in the flesh, and he is in us through the mystery of the sacraments: and thus we should have a doctrine of a unity consummated through the Mediator, since, while we abide in him, he would abide in the Father, and, thus abiding, should abide in us; and thus we should advance to unity with the Father. He is in the Father naturally, because of his generation: so we also should be in him naturally, while he naturally abides in us. Christ also gives evidence of this natural unity in us: ' He who eats my flesh, and drinks my blood, dwells in me, and I dwell in him'. For no one will be in Christ, unless Christ is in him, unless he has taken into himself the flesh of Christ, who took man's flesh..."²⁷⁹

Here Hilary is using John 6 to argue his case. He distinguishes the dwelling of the Son in the Father by nature as God, from the indwelling of Christians in God through the Incarnation. He does this to oppose the view of the Arians that the Father and the Son enjoy only a union of wills. A little further on he speaks also of the indwelling of Christ in Christians through the Eucharist:

" ..he lives 'through the Father'; and as he lives through the Father, so we live through his flesh.... This is the cause of our life, that we have Christ dwelling in our fleshly nature, in virtue of his flesh, and we shall live through him by nature, according to the flesh, that is, having acquired the nature of his flesh. Then surely he has the Father in himself according to the Spirit,

²⁷⁹ Perfecta nobis, Christo mediante, cum Deo unitas. - Quam autem in eo per sacramentum communicatae carnis et sanguinis simus, ipse testatur dicens, Et hic mundus me iam non videbitis, quoniam ego vivo, et vos vivetis; quoniam ego in Patre meo, et vos in me, et ego in vobis. Si voluntatis tantum unitatem intelligi vellet: cur gradum quemdam atque ordinem consummandae unitatis exposuit: nisi ut cum ille in Patre per naturam divinitatis esset; nos contra in eo per corporalem eius nativitatem, et ille rursus in nobis per sacramentorum inesse mysterium crederetur: ac sic perfecta per Mediatorem unitas doceretur, cum nobis in se manentibus ipse maneret in Patre, et in Patre manens maneret in nobis; et ita ad unitatem Patris proficeremus, cum qui in eo naturaliter secundum nativitatem inest, nos quoque in eo naturaliter inessemus, ipso in nobis naturaliter permanente? Unitas haec quam naturalis. Unitas Filii cum Patre. Quam autem naturalis in nobis haec initas sit, ipse ita testatur est: Qui edit carnem meam, et bibit sanguinem meum, in me manet, et ego in eo. Non enim quis in eo erit, nisi in quo ipse fuerit, eius tantum in se assumptam habens carnem, qui suam sumpserit...

since he lives through the Father. The mystery of the real and natural unity is to be proclaimed in terms of the honour granted to us by the Son, and the Son's indwelling in us through his flesh, while we are united to him bodily and inseparably."²⁸⁰

In these texts Hilary shows how Christians achieve Unity with the Father, through Christ. This is brought about through the sacrifice of Christ. In the Eucharist Christians become part of that sacrifice, and so the idea of sacrifice is implicit in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is presented as the means by which we dwell in Christ. The Eucharist is a sign of the unity of the human and the divine, and no one can be said to be in Christ unless he has taken Christ into himself in this sacramental way, through eating the Body of Christ.

Hilary also connects the Eucharist with the Incarnation in the following text:²⁸¹

" If the Word was truly made flesh, and we truly take the Word-flesh by means of the Lord's food; surely we must think that he naturally remains in us, seeing that by being born as man he assumed the nature of our flesh as now inseparable from himself, and has mingled the nature of his flesh with the nature of eternity under the sacrament of the flesh which is to be communicated to us."²⁸²

Here Hilary speaks about the continuing presence of the Lord within us (sacramentally). The Word Christ became flesh, Christians consume his body, and that presence continues to dwell within them.

²⁸⁰ Vivit ergo per Patrem: et quo modo per Patrem vivit, eodem modo nos per carnem eius vivimus.... Haec ergo vitae nostrae causa est, quod in nobis carnalibus manentem per carnem Christum habemus: victuris nobis per eum ea conditione, qua vivit ille per Patrem. Si ergo nos naturaliter secundum carnem per eum vivimus, id est. naturam carnis adepti: quomodo non naturaliter secundum Spiritum in se Patrem habeat, cum vivat ipse per Patrem?...cum et per honorem nobis datum Filii, et per manentem in nobis carnaliter Filium, et in eo nobis corporaliter et inseparabiliter unitis, mysterium verae ac naturalis unitatis sit praedicandum.

²⁸¹ op.cit. 17 PL Vol.10 c. 246

²⁸² Si enim vere Verbum caro factum est, et vere nos Verbum carnem cibo dominico sumimus; quomodo non naturaliter manere in nobis existimandus est, qui et naturam carnis nostrae iam inseparabilem sibi homo natus assumpsit, et naturam carnis suae ad naturam aeternitatis sub sacramento nobis communicandae carnis admiscuit?

12.2 Conclusions

Hilary does not speak about the Eucharistic sacrifice explicitly; but he does affirm a real presence in the eucharistic species. There is a sense in which a sacrifice is something that makes holy²⁸³; and certainly Hilary says that receiving communion brings about a unity with the Father through the Son. More than this it is impossible to say.

²⁸³ *sacri-facere*

Chapter XIII

THE CAPPADOCIAN FATHERS

The three Fathers known to the Church as the Cappadocians were Basil, his friend Gregory (son of the Bishop of Nazianzus), and Basil's brother, also called Gregory.

Basil, known as "the Great" was born in the year 330 A.D. near Caesarea - the Provincial capital of Cappadocia in Asia Minor. He studied first of all in Caesarea where he first met Gregory Nazianzen. Together they went to Athens in 351 A.D.; where they studied at the University. Gregory writes later that during this time they knew only two routes - to the classroom and to the Church. At the end of his studies Basil left Athens and travelled throughout Palestine and Egypt meeting holy men who were practicing asceticism. He returned to Caesarea in 356, and began to establish religious communities in the desert areas to the North of Caesarea. Gregory Nazianzen was to visit him there in 358 A.D., and it was during this time that Basil's two rules of Monasticism and their joint effort - the *Philocalia*²⁸⁴, should be ascribed. Two years later Basil was appointed Bishop of Caesarea. He died in 379 A.D. Gregory who was about the same age as Basil returned to Nazianzus and there was ordained a priest by his father (apparently against his will) in 362 A.D. After this experience which he later describes as an act of 'tyranny', Gregory fled to Basil's monastery in Pontus, however he soon returned and worked with his father who was unwell. Basil who a few years later (as Bishop of Caesarea) appointed Gregory as Bishop of Sasima - which was a staging post of a rather unpleasant nature because of the Arians. Gregory however could not go and he remained at Nazianzus to help his father. This appointment placed a great strain on their friendship; particularly as it was a result of the division of Cappadocia into two provinces - and a challenge to Basil's right to be Metropolitan over the whole of Cappadocia by the Bishop of the newly created Provincial capital. In 374 A.D. Gregory's father died, and Gregory continued to

²⁸⁴ A collection of some of Origen's best texts

administer the Diocese in his place. In 380 A.D. the oppressed orthodox Christian community in Constantinople asked Gregory to be their Bishop; and during *the following year*, Orthodoxy was restored to the Capital and the Arians removed from office. Gregory led his flock in triumph to the Church of the Twelve Apostles which at that time was the Cathedral; but when his position as Patriarch was challenged he offered his resignation to the Emperor. In 381 A.D. he returned to Nazianzus; where he died in 389 or 390 A.D.

The other Gregory who was born in 335 A.D. , Basil's brother, appears to have been largely a pupil of his brother. During the same ecclesiastical dispute over the division of Cappadocia, Basil appointed him as Bishop of Nyssa in 371 A.D. He was deposed from this appointment in 376 A.D., but he returned there two years later. In 380 A.D. he seems to have become Bishop of Sebaste. He is thought to have died in 394 A.D.

13.1 BASIL THE GREAT

If one looks at the works of Basil which relate to the Eucharist they seem to fall into three main categories. Epistle 93 will be examined first; then a number of quotations from the Shorter Rules; and finally the text of the Liturgy of Saint Basil. In one of Basil's letters he writes:²⁸⁵

" Both to make communion every day and receive the holy Body and Blood of Christ is good and beneficial, he says clearly: 'He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.' For who doubts that to partake frequently of life is nothing else but manifold life? Indeed, we make communion four times a week, on Sunday, on Wednesday, on Friday, and on Saturday, and on other days if there is a commemoration of a saint. But when forced in times of persecution, not having priest or minister, to take communion in your own hand is in no way shown to be serious, *Since long established custom has sanctioned the practice under pressure of circumstances.* For all the solitaries of the desert, where there is no priest, keeping communion at home, receive communion from themselves. And in Alexandria in Egypt, each of the laity mostly have communion in their house and when they wish to take communion by

²⁸⁵ Epistle 93 - written to a Patrician Lady about Communion PG Vol.32 col. 494/485

themselves. For when the sacrifice of the priest is completed and he has given it, the receiver, taking the whole, as each receives, is bound to believe that he properly takes and receives from the giver. And even in the church the priest gives the portion, and the recipient takes complete power over it, and so lifts it to his lips with his own hand. This has the same force, whether one portion is received from the priest, or many."²⁸⁶

It is possible in this letter to see the distinction that is made between communion and the 'offering of the sacrifice', τὴν θυσίαν τοῦ ἱερέως, made in Church. First the sacrifice is offered by the priest, then the communicant takes what has been offered and lifts it to his or her own lips. Elsewhere, Basil says that the sacrifice ought only to ^{be} made in church (apart from emergencies); but that it has been a long-standing tradition in the Church to make communion at home.

There are also a number of references to communion in the Shorter Rules. In Rule 21 Basil lists the New Testament passages that are concerned with worthy reception of communion: these are Jn.4.53,54; Jn.6.53; Jn.6.62,63; 1 Cor.11.27-29; 1 Cor.5.15; Lk.22.19,20; 1 Cor.11.23-26; 2 Cor.5.14,15; and 1 Cor.10.16,17 (Basil's order). Later in Rule 80, ch.21, he asks what is appropriate for the Christian life, Τί ἴδιον Χριστιανῶν; Part of this reads as follows:²⁸⁷

²⁸⁶ Καὶ τὸ κοινῶναι δὴ καθ' ἑκάστην ἡμέραν καὶ μεταλαμβάνειν τοῦ ἁγίου σώματος καὶ αἵματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ καλὸν καὶ ἐπωφελές, αὐτοῦ σαφῶς λέγοντος: Ὁ τρώγων μου τὴν σάρκα καὶ πίνων μου τὸ αἷμα ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον. Τίς γὰρ ἀμφιβάλλει ὅτι τὸ μετεχειν συνεχῶς τῆς ζωῆς οὐδὲν ἄλλο ἐστὶν ἢ ζωὴν πολλαχῶς; Ἡμεῖς μεντοῖγε τέταρτον καθ' ἑκάστην ἑβδομάδα κοινῶναι, ἐν τῇ Κυριακῇ, ἐν τῇ Τετράδι καὶ ἐν τῇ Παρασκευῇ καὶ τῷ Σαββάτῳ, καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις ἡμέραις, εἰάν ἡ μνημὴ ἁγίου τινός. Τὸ δὲ ἐν τοῖς τοῦ διωγμοῦ καιροῖς ἀναγκάζεσθαι τινα, μὴ παρόντος ἱερέως ἢ λειτουργοῦ, τὴν κοινῶναι λαμβάνειν τῇ ἰδίᾳ χειρὶ μηδαμῶς εἶναι βαρὺ περιττόν ἐστιν ἀποδεικνύειν, διὰ τὸ καὶ τὴν μακρὰν συνήθειαν τοῦτο δι' αὐτῶν τῶν πραγμάτων πιστώσασθαι. Πάντες γὰρ οἱ κατὰ τὰς ἐρήμους μονάζοντες, ἔθνα μὴ ἐστὶν ἱερεὺς, κοινῶναι οἱκοκατεχόντες ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν μεταλαμβάνουσιν. Ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ δὲ καὶ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ ἕκαστος καὶ τῶν ἐν λαῷ τελούντων, ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πλεῖστον, ἔχει κοινῶναι ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ καὶ ὅτε βούλεται μεταλαμβάνει δι' αὐτοῦ. Ἀπαξ γὰρ τὴν θυσίαν τοῦ ἱερέως τελειώσαντος καὶ δεδωκότος, ὁ λαβὼν αὐτὴν ὡς ὅλην ὁμοῦ, καθ' ἑκάστην μεταλαμβάνων, παρὰ τοῦ δεδωκότος εἰκότως μεταλαμβάνειν καὶ ὑποδέχεσθαι πιστεύειν ὀφείλει. Καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ὁ ἱερεὺς ἐπιδίδωσι τὴν μερίδα καὶ κατέχει αὐτὴν ὁ ὑποδεχομένος μετ' ἐξουσίας ἀπάσης καὶ οὕτω προσάγει τῷ στόματι τῇ ἰδίᾳ χειρὶ. Ταῦτόν τινον ἐστὶ τῇ δυνάμει, εἴτε μίαν μερίδα δέξεται τίς παρὰ τοῦ ἱερέως εἴτε πολλὰς μερίδας ὁμοῦ.

²⁸⁷ Rule 80.XXII PG Vol.31 col. 868

"...What is appropriate for a Christian? To be clean from all pollution of body and spirit in the blood of Christ, and to achieve sanctity in fear of God and love of Christ, and neither to have dirtyness, nor wrinkle, nor anything of this kind, but to be holy and uncontaminated, and in this way to eat the body of Christ, and drink the blood. For eating and drinking unworthily (brings) condemnation on the one who eats and drinks. What is appropriate (for those) who eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord?

.....²⁸⁸

This theme is found throughout the rules. However he does not mention the sacrifice itself. The next quotation is from Rule 172:²⁸⁹

"As regards fear, the apostle teaches us when he says: 'He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself.' Conviction is implanted in us by faith in the words of the Lord: 'This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me'..... Such a disposition and preparation ought he to have who partakes of the Bread and the Cup."²⁹⁰

Again Basil stresses the importance of worthy reception; but he does not speak of the sacrifice. This is also the case in Rule 309:²⁹¹

"But as for coming near the holy things in a state of uncleanness, we are taught from the Old Testament that the condemnation is terrible. But if something greater than the temple is here the apostle will surely chastise us

²⁸⁸ Τί ἴδιον Χριστιανοῦ; Τὸ καθαρισθῆναι μὲν ἀπὸ παντὸς μολυσμοῦ σαρκὸς καὶ πνεύματος ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἐπιτελεῖν δὲ ἀγισσύνην ἐν φόβῳ θεοῦ καὶ ἀγαπῇ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ μὴ ἔχειν σπίλον ἢ ρυτίδα, καὶ τὶ τῶν τοιούτων, ἀλλ' εἶναι ἅγιον καὶ ἄμωμον, καὶ οὕτως ἐσθίειν τὸ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ πίνειν τὸ αἶμα. Ὁ γὰρ ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων ἀναξίως, κρίμα ἑαυτῷ ἐσθίει καὶ πίνει. Τί ἴδιον τῶν ἐσθιόντων τὸν ἄρτον καὶ πινούτων τὸ ποτήριον τοῦ Κυρίου;

²⁸⁹ PG Vol.31 col. 1196

²⁹⁰ Τὸν μὲν φόβον διδάσκει ἡμᾶς ὁ Ἀπόστολος λέγων: Ὁ ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων ἀναξίως κρίμα ἑαυτῷ ἐσθίει καὶ πίνει: τὴν δὲ πληροφορίαν ἐμποιεῖ ἡ πίστις τῶν ρημάτων τοῦ Κυρίου εἰπόντες: Τοῦτο ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμα μου, τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν διδόμεν τοῦτο, ποῦτε εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀναμνησιν:.... Τοιαύτην διάθεσιν τε καὶ ἐτοιμασίαν ὀφείλει ἔχειν ὁ μεταλαμβάνων τοῦ ἄρτου καὶ τοῦ ποτηρίου

²⁹¹ PG Vol.31 col. 1301

in a more terrible manner, saying: 'He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself.'"²⁹²

Here two things are significant: firstly that he uses the expression "a state of uncleanness", which recalls the offering of the Old Testament sacrifices; and secondly that something greater than the temple is present in the Eucharist. In other words the Eucharist is a greater sacrifice.

Finally in Rule 310 about making the offering in a private house he writes this:²⁹³

"Since the scripture allows no common vessel to be taken into the holy place, so it does not allow the holy things to be celebrated in a common house, command plainly allows no such thing to be done. But when the Lord says: 'One greater than the temple is here'; and the apostle says: 'What, have ye not houses to eat and drink in? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not in this. For I delivered unto you that which I also received etc..' By which we are taught not to eat and drink a common supper in Church nor to insult the Lord's Supper by celebrating it in a private house, except when in some emergency some one has chosen a pure place or house on a suitable occasion."²⁹⁴

In this Basil does speak of the making of the offering, and the way in which he uses the Old Testament is interesting for the holy place of which he speaks is of course the place of sacrifice.

²⁹² Το δὲ ἐν ἀκαθαρσίᾳ ὄντα τινα ἐγγίξειν τοῖς ἁγίοις καὶ ἐκ Παλαιᾶς Διαθήκης φοβερώτερον διδασκόμεθα τὸ κρίμα. Εἰ δὲ πλείον τοῦ ἱεροῦ ᾧδε, φοβερώτερον δηλονότι παιδεύσει ἡμᾶς ὁ Ἀπόστολος εἰπών: Ὁ ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων ἀναξίως, κρίμα ἑαυτῷ ἐσθίει καὶ πίνει.

²⁹³ PG Vol.31 col. 1304

²⁹⁴ Ὡς περ οὐδὲν κοινὸν σκεῦος ἐπιτρέπει ὁ Λόγος εἰσφέρεισθαι εἰς τὰ ἅγια, οὕτως οὐδέ τὰ ἅγια εἰς κοινὸν οἶκον ἐπιτελείσθαι, τῆς Παλαιᾶς Διαθήκης φανερώς προσταγματι θεοῦ μηδὲν τοιοῦτον ἐπιτρεπούσης γίνεσθαι: τοῦ δὲ Κυρίου λέγοντος: Μὴ γὰρ οἰκίας οὐκ ἔχετε εἰς τὸ ἐσθίειν καὶ πίνειν; Τί εἶπω ὑμῖν; ἐπαινέσω ὑμᾶς; Ἐν τούτῳ οὐκ ἐπαινώ: ἐγὼ γὰρ παρέδωκα ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ παρέλαβον, καὶ τὰ ἐξῆς. Ἐξ ὧν παιδενομέθα μῆτε τὸ κοινὸν δεῖπνον ἐν ἐκκλησίᾳ ἐσθίειν καὶ πίνειν, μῆτε τὸ Κυριακὸν δεῖπνον ἐν οἰκίᾳ καθυβρίζειν, ἔκτος εἰ μὴ ἐν ἀνάγκῃ ἐπιλέξηται τις καθαρώτερον τόπον, ἢ οἶκον ἐν καιρῷ εὐθέτω.

Finally, there is a reference in the Liturgy of St. Basil to sacrifice which comes in the Offertory Prayer:²⁹⁵

"...be thou pleased therefore, O Lord, that we may be made ministers of thy new covenant and servants of thy holy mysteries: according to the multitude of thy mercies do thou accept us who now draw nigh to thy holy altar, that we may be worthy to offer unto thee this reasonable and unbloody sacrifice for our own transgressions and for the ignorances of the people,..."²⁹⁶

Here in the Liturgy itself is the crux of the matter. To Basil the Eucharist is a sacrifice (*θυσία*); of which Christians are made ministers by God. Christians ask that they may draw near and by the grace of God make the offering which is said to be a "reasonable and unbloody sacrifice" this distinguishing it from the sacrifices of the Old Covenant which are also mentioned later in this prayer. Further on, during the Prayer of Consecration, one also sees these words:²⁹⁷

"...since thou hast accounted us thy sinful and unworthy servants also to be worthy to serve thy holy altar, not for our own righteousness, for we have done no good thing upon earth, but for the sake of thy mercy and the bounties which thou hast plenteously shed upon us; we presume to draw nigh unto thy holy altar, and, presenting unto thee the figures of the holy body and blood of thy Christ, to call upon thee and beseech thee,.... ..."298

This section also emphasises the ministry of the altar, where the offering is to be made. The whole of the Consecration Prayer suggests that here is being offered the sacrifice of the New Covenant.

²⁹⁵ PG Vol.31 page 1632

²⁹⁶ ...Εὐδόκησαν δὴ, Κύριε, τοῦ γενέσθαι ἡμᾶς διακόνους τῆς Καινῆς Διαθήκης λειτουργοὺς τῶν ἁγίων σου μυστηρίων, ἵνα ἄξιοι γενώμεθα τοῦ προσφέρειν σοὶ δῶρα τε καὶ θυσίας ὑπὲρ τῶν ἡμετέρων ἁμαρτημάτων καὶ τῶν τοῦ λαοῦ σου ἀγνοημάτων.

²⁹⁷ The Orthodox Liturgy page 72 S. P. C. K. London 1939

²⁹⁸ Διὰ τοῦτο Δέσποτα, Πανάγιε, καὶ ἡμεῖς οἱ ἁμαρτωλοὶ καὶ ἀνάξιοι δούλοι σου, οἱ καταξιωθέντες λειτουργεῖν τῷ ἁγίῳ σου θυσιαστηρίῳ σὺ διὰ τὰς δικαιοσύνας ἡμῶν οὐ γὰρ ἐποιήσαμεν τί ἀγαθὸν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς: ἀλλὰ διὰ τὰ ἔλεή σου οὐς ἐξεχεῖας, πλουσιῶς ἐφ' ἡμᾶς, θαρροῦντες προσεγγίζομεν τῷ ἁγίῳ σου θυσιαστηρίῳ καὶ προθέντες τὰ ἀντίτυπα τοῦ ἁγίου Σώματος καὶ Αἵματος Χριστοῦ σου, σοῦ δεόμεθα καὶ σέ παρακαλοῦμεν....

The conclusion that must be drawn from this is that Basil saw this Sacrament as *par excellence* the sacrifice of the New Covenant, and that for him this was not an innovation but the tradition of the Apostles handed down and received by the Church of the Fourth Century.

13.2 GREGORY OF NAZIANZUS

In the case of Basil's friend, Gregory, rather less evidence is available. In his letter to the Bishop of Iconium (Amphilochius) he writes:²⁹⁹

" The tongue of a priest meditates on the Lord, raises the sick. Do, then, the greater thing by celebrating the liturgy, and loose the great mass of my sins when you lay hold of the Sacrifice of the Resurrection. Most Reverend friend, cease not both to pray and plead for me when you draw down the Word by your word, when with a bloodless cutting you sever the Body and Blood of the Lord, using your voice for the lance."³⁰⁰

So as all prayer brings healing, the liturgy in particular, when offered brings a great healing. It is called by Gregory of Nazianzus the "Sacrifice of the Resurrection"; and also it is a " bloodless cutting ", to distinguish it from the pagan sacrifices. Then in his *Apology for Flight* he writes the following:³⁰¹

" Since then I knew these things, and that no one is worthy of the mightiness of God, and the sacrifice, and priesthood, who has not first presented himself to God, a living, holy sacrifice, and set forth the reasonable, well-pleasing service, and sacrificed to God the sacrifice of praise and the contrite spirit, which is the only sacrifice required of us by the Giver of all; how could I dare offer to him the external sacrifice, the antitype of the great mysteries?"³⁰²

²⁹⁹ Epistle 171 PG Vol.37 εσβ. 280

³⁰⁰ Γλώσσα γὰρ ἱερέως φιλοσοφοῦσα τὸν Κύριον, ἀνεγείρει τοὺς κάμνοντας. Ποίει τοίνυν τὸ κρείττον ἱερουγῶν καὶ λύε τῶν ἀμαρτημάτων ἡμῶν τὸ μέγεθος, τῆς ἀναστασίμου θυσίας ἀπτόμενος... Ἀλλ' ὦ θεοσεβέστατε, μὴ κατοκνεῖ καὶ προσεύχεσθαι καὶ πρεσβεύειν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, ὅταν λόγῳ καθέλκης τὸν Λόγον, ὅταν ἀναιμάκτῳ τομῇ σῶμα καὶ αἷμα τέμνης Δεσποτικόν, φωνὴν ἔχων τὸ ξίφος.

³⁰¹ Apologetica.95 PG Vol.35 εσβ. 497

³⁰² Ταῦτα οὖν εἰδὼς ἐγώ, καὶ ὅτι μηδεὶς ἄξιος τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ καὶ θυμάτος καὶ ἀρχιερέως, ὅστις μὴ πρότερον ἑαυτὸν παρέστησε τῷ θεῷ

Here the Eucharist is called the ' sacrifice of praise ', which before being offered should be preceded by the offering up of the individual. The Eucharist is also the ' external sacrifice '. One can see in these two quotations that Gregory sees the Eucharist as a sacrifice in the same way as Basil.

Finally, in *On the Death of his Father*, Gregory describes the way the Bishop of Nazianzus celebrated the Eucharist:³⁰³

" while he, leaning upon his hand as upon a staff, imitates Moses upon the Mount, arranges his feeble hands in prayer, and in union with, or on behalf of, his people eagerly celebrates the mysteries, in such few words as his strength allowed, but, as it seems to me, with a most perfect intention. What a miracle! In the sanctuary without a sanctuary, sacrificing without an altar, a priest far from the sacred rites: yet all these were present to him in the power of the Spirit,... and... in the new day of the feast, as we call the first Sunday after the festival of the Resurrection, he entered the temple and inaugurated his life which had been preserved, with the full complement of the clergy, and offered the sacrifice of thanksgiving."³⁰⁴

This quotation contains a description of the Eucharist, celebrated initially in private (perhaps in the Bishop's bedroom); and finally in the Church. The Eucharist is clearly described in sacrificial terms for the Bishop is said to be offering a sacrifice, albeit without an altar; and also offering in Church a " sacrifice of thanksgiving " .

θυσίαν ζῶσαν, ἁγίαν, μηδὲ τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν εὐάρεστον
 ἐπεδείξατο, μηδὲ ἔθυσε τῷ θεῷ θυσίαν αἰνέσεως καὶ πνεῦμα
 συντετριμμένου, ἣν μόνην ὁ πάντα δοῦς ἀπαιτεῖ παρ' ἡμῶν θυσίαν,
 πῶς ἐμελλοῦ θαρρῆσαι προσφέρειν αὐτῷ τὴν ἔξωθεν, τὴν τῶν μεγάλων
 μυστηρίων ἀντίτυπον;

³⁰³ Funeris in Patrem Ch.29 PG Vol.35 col. 1021

³⁰⁴ ...καὶ ὡς βακτηρία τῇ χειραγωγία χρησάμενος, μιμεῖται τὸν ἐπὶ τοῦ
 ὄρους Μωυσέα, καὶ τὰς παρειμένας χεῖρας εἰς εὐχὴν σχηματίσας, συντελεῖ
 προθύμως ἢ προτελεῖ τοῦ λαοῦ τὰ μυστήρια, ῥημασι μὲν ὀλίγοις καὶ
 ὀσσοῖς ἐσθνευεν, διανοια δὲ, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ, καὶ λίαν
 τελεωτάτῃ ὡ τοῦ θαύματος, ἀνευ βήματος ἐπὶ βήματος, ἀνευ
 θυσιαστηρίου θύτης, ἱερεὺς πόρρω τῶν τελουμένων: καὶ ταῦτα παρῆν
 αὐτῷ παρὰ τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος,... καὶ... ἡ καινὴ παρῆν ἡμέρα τῆς
 εορτῆς ἢ οὕτως ὀνομάζομεν πρώτην Κυριακὴν, μετὰ τῆν ἀναστάσιμον
 ταύτην ἔχοντες: καὶ τὸ ἱερόν καταλαβὼν σὺν παντὶ τῷ τῆς Ἐκκλησίας
 πληρωματι ἐγκαινίζει τὴν σωτηρίαν, καὶ θύει τὰ χαρίσθηρια.

It is quite clear that Gregory saw the Eucharist in sacrificial terms.

13.3 GREGORY OF NYSSA

In the works of the other Gregory, the main reference is in the *Catechetical Oration* Ch.37 On the Eucharist:³⁰⁵

"....For as by the admixture of a poisonous liquid with a wholesome one the whole draught is deprived of its deadly effect, so too the immortal Body, by being within that which receives it, changes the whole to its own nature....The question was, how can that one Body of Christ vivify the whole of Mankind, all, that is, in whomsoever there is Faith, and yet, though divided amongst all, be itself not diminished?.. ...Therefore, from the same cause as that by which the Body was changed to a Divine potency, a similer result now takes place...it is changed into the Body by means of the Word....He gives these gifts by virtue of the benediction through which he transelements the natural quality of these visible things to that immortal thing."³⁰⁶

Although Gregory of Nyssa does not mention sacrifice as such, it is clear from the passage above that the activity of consecrating the Bread and the Wine in the Eucharist brings a real transformation from the corrupt to the immortal, cleansing the partakers of it from the corruption of the flesh, in the same way as the sacrifices of the Old Covenant were believed to cleanse the people from their sin.

13.4 Conclusions

What conclusions, then, can be drawn from the three Cappadocian Fathers? First that they reflect the view of the the Church in their time, that the Eucharist

³⁰⁵ Catechetical Oration Ch.37 PG Vol.45 ἐκ. 143ff

³⁰⁶ ὡς γὰρ τῷ φθοροποιῷ πρὸς τὸ ὑγιαῖνον ἀναμιχθέντι ἅπαν τὸ ἀνακραθὲν συνηχρεῖται, οὕτως καὶ τὸ ἀθάνατον σῶμα ἐν τῷ ἀναλαβόντι αὐτὸ γινόμενον πρὸς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ φύσιν καὶ τὸ πᾶν μετεπόθεν... ἐζητέιτο γὰρ πῶς τὸ ἐν ἐκείνῳ σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ πᾶσαν ζωοποιεῖ τὴν τῶν ἀνθρώπων φύσιν, ἐν ὅσοις ἡ πίστις ἐστὶ, πρὸς πάντας μεριζόμενον, καὶ αὐτὸ οὐ μειούμενον... οὐκοῦν ὅθεν ὃ ἐν ἐκείνῳ τῷ σώματι μεταποιηθεὶς ἄρτος εἰς θεῖαν μετέστη δύναμιν, διὰ τοῦ αὐτοῦ καὶ νῦν τὸ ἴσον γίνεται... πρὸς τὸ σῶμα διὰ τοῦ λόγου μεταποιούμενος,... ταῦτα δὲ δίδωσι τῇ τῆς εὐλογίας δυνάμει πρὸς ἐκεῖνο μεταστοιχειώσας τῶν φαινομένων τὴν φύσιν.

is a sacrifice - a sacrifice that is unbloody to distinguish it from the sacrifices of the Old Covenant. The sacrifice is offered by Christ through the action of consecration; that is through the prayer of the priest and of the faithful people. It is a sacrifice which brings healing. It should almost always be offered in church and always by a priest; who together with the people should be properly prepared for this role. The consecration and the offering of the Sacrifice are clearly distinguished from the act of Communion, which is seen as a valid responsibility of the laity in this and previous centuries.

Chapter XIV

AMBROSE - BISHOP OF MILAN

Ambrose was born in Trier in 339 A.D. This was the Imperial Capital at this time for most of the Western provinces of the Roman Empire, and his father was the Prefect controlling the Gallican provinces. The family moved to Rome while he was still a child and in 353 A.D. his sister was veiled as a virgin by the Pope. During a riot at the cathedral in Milan, Ambrose was acclaimed Bishop of Milan by the people. In October of 373 A.D. he was baptized, and in December consecrated Bishop. In 387 A.D. he baptized Saint Augustine. He died in 397 A.D.

The works of Ambrose which deal with the Eucharist are *De Officiis Ministrorum*, *De Fide*, and *De Mysteriis*. The *De Sacramentis* has had its authorship questioned. Dudden says:³⁰⁷ " It is conceivable that *De Sacramentis* is an authentic work of Saint Ambrose which was cut down and utilized by Ambrose himself as the basis of his *De Mysteriis*. But it seems more probable that *De Sacramentis* is an expansion of a work of Ambrose by another hand."

According to Dudden³⁰⁸ "the sacrificial character of the Eucharist is maintained.' Our Lord Jesus Christ is made the sheep of the feast. Do you ask how he is made? Hear the words of the Apostle, Christ our Passover is sacrificed. And consider how our forefathers took and ate the lamb, signifying the Passion of the Lord Jesus, whose sacrament we eat daily.' In this quotation³⁰⁹ and in others, Ambrose sees the Eucharist as a sacrifice in as much as it is the type of a sacrifice. " An examination of the most pertinent texts will make this amply clear.

14.1 What happens in the Eucharist

The thinking of Ambrose on the Eucharist on the Eucharist (which had a great effect on subsequent theologians, particularly in the Western Church,) concentrates

³⁰⁷ Saint Ambrose His Life and His Times Volume II

³⁰⁸ op.cit. Vol.II page 648

³⁰⁹ In Ps.43 enarr.36

on the nature of the change brought about in the bread and the wine. He believed that the power of God was greater than the power of nature, so that the elements become truly the body and blood of Christ. This can be seen in the following quotation from *De Fide*.³¹⁰

” He added: ‘For my flesh is truly food, and my blood is truly drink.’ You hear of ‘flesh’ and ‘blood’: you recognize the sacraments of the Lord’s death... Now we, whenever we take the sacraments, which through the mystery of the sacred prayer are transfigured into his flesh and blood, ‘proclaim the Lord’s death’.³¹¹

How do the bread and the wine become the body and blood of Christ? They do so through prayer; in particular through the Prayer of Consecration, the *sacrae orationis* as Ambrose calls it. This is also the case in *De Sacramentis*:³¹²

” Do you wish to know how it is consecrated by heavenly words? Hear what the words are - the priest says: Make for us this oblation ratified, reasonable, acceptable, because it is the figure of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. ”³¹³

Three words here are of great significance. First the use of *sacerdos* for the presbyter (or bishop) making the offering, which clearly has sacrificial overtones. Secondly the use of *oblatio* for the offering which is being made, and finally the use of *figura* to describe what is going on. This is seen even more clearly in his Commentary on Psalm 38.³¹⁴

14.2 The Eucharistic Sacrifice

” We have seen the High Priest coming to us; we have seen and heard

³¹⁰ De Fide 4.125 PL Vol.16 ~~col.~~ 641

³¹¹ Denique addidit: Caro enim mea vere est esca, et sanguis meus est potus. Carnem audis, sanguinem audis, mortis Dominicae sacramenta cognoscis... Nos autem quotiescumque sacramenta sumimus, quae per sacrae orationis mysterium in carnem transfigurantur et sanguinem, mortem Domini annuntiamus.

³¹² De Sacramentis 4.21 PL Vol.16 ~~col.~~ 443

³¹³ Vis scire quis verbis coelestibus consecratur? Accipe quae sunt verba. Dicit sacerdos: Fac nobis, inquit, hanc oblationem ascriptam, ratem, rationabilem, acceptabilem: quod figura est corporis et sanguinis Domini nostri Jesu Christi.

³¹⁴ In Ps 38.25 PL Vol. 14 ~~col.~~ 1051

him offering his blood for us. We priests follow, as well as we can, so that we may offer sacrifice for the people. Though we can claim no merit, we are to be honoured in the sacrifice; for, although Christ is not now visibly offered, yet he is himself offered on earth when the body of Christ is offered. Moreover, it is made clear that he himself offers in us, since it is his words which sanctify the sacrifice which is offered."³¹⁵

This is much more explicit than anything one can see in other authors before this time. Christ is the Great High Priest who offers himself for all mankind, but Ambrose goes much further than this. He says " *sequimur...sacerdotes* ", that is to say that the Christian priesthood follows the example of Christ in offering a sacrifice on behalf of the people.³¹⁶ Ambrose does not use the expression "unbloody sacrifice", but instead speaks of an invisible offering: the sacrifice of the Cross being the visible offering. Christ offers himself in the Eucharist, through the repetition of his own words during the Prayer of Consecration.

There is of course a sense in which the Body of Christ is in heaven, and it is in this sense that we perceive only the symbol of the reality which lies in heaven:³¹⁷

" Here is the shadow and the image; there is the reality: the shadow in the Law; the symbol in the Gospel; the reality in heaven. Formerly a lamb was offered, and a calf; now Christ is offered. But he is offered as man, accepting suffering; and he offers himself as priest, so that he may forgive our sins: here in image; in reality there, where he intercedes for us as an advocate before the Father. "³¹⁸

³¹⁵ Vidimus Principem sacerdotum ad nos venientem. vidimus et audivimus offerentem pro nobis sanguinem suum: sequimur, ut possumus, sacerdotes; ut offeramus pro populo sacrificium: etsi infirmi merito, tamen honorabiles sacrificio; quia etsi nunc Christus non videtur offerre; tamen ipse offertur in terris quando Christi corpus offertur: inno ipse offerre manifestur in nobis, cuius sermo sanctificat sacrificium quod offertur.

³¹⁶ ut offeramus pro populo sacrificium.

³¹⁷ De Officiis 1.238 PL Vol.16 *col.* 94

³¹⁸ Illa igitur nobis expetenda, in quibus perfectio; in quibus veritas est. Hic umbra, hic imago, illic veritas. Umbra in Lege, imago in Evangelio, veritas in coelestibus. Ante agnus offerebatur, offerebatur et vitulus, nunc Christus offertur: sed offertur quasi homo, quasi recipiens passionem; et offert se ipse quasi sacerdos, ut peccata nostra dimittat: hic in imagine, ibi in veritate, ubi apud patrem pro nobis quasi advocatus intervenit....

14.3 Conclusions

It seems that in the works of Ambrose, Christ is seen to have made a visible offering on the Cross, but also that he makes an invisible offering of himself in the Eucharist. Ambrose has no hesitation about speaking of this offering as a sacrifice. The Eucharist is seen also as a symbol in the Gospel of a heavenly reality. The former offerings, those of the Old Covenant, are replaced by the offering of Christ. The image on earth is the bread and the wine. The physical body exists as a true reality in heaven, which does not mean that the only true reality is in heaven, but rather that it is in heaven that Christ intercedes for Christians at the throne of the Father.

Returning now to the East, two Fathers came from that great centre of early Christianity, where the "disciples of Christ were first called Christians, the city of Antioch. They were Theodore of Mopsuestia and John Chrysostom.

Chapter XV

THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA

Theodore, a contemporary and friend of St. John Chrysostom, was born at Antioch. As a boy he had studied both rhetoric and literature. Before the age of nineteen he had entered a monastery near Antioch; but shortly afterwards he expressed a wish to get married and to become a lawyer. Two letters from his friend, John Chrysostom, brought about another change of mind and he returned to the monastic way of life. In 383 A.D. he was ordained priest in the Antioch diocese, and in 392 A.D. became Bishop of Mopsuestia in southern Asia Minor. He died in 428 A.D.

After many centuries of loss, his *Catechetical Homilies* have been discovered in a Syriac version, and these form the basis for Theodore's understanding of the Eucharist. This work was discovered by Mingana and published in the Syriac with an English translation in 1932. There are ten homilies on the Creed; on on the Lord's Prayer, three on Baptism, and two on the Eucharist.³¹⁹

15.1 The Eucharistic Sacrifice

15.1.1 The Fifteenth Homily

The two homilies on the Eucharist are of supreme importance for an understanding of the Eucharistic sacrifice in this period. In the Synopsis to the Fifteenth Homily Theodore writes:³²⁰

" We must first of all realise that we perform a sacrifice of which we eat and that it is the office of a priest of the New Testament to offer this sacrifice, as it is through it that the New Covenant appears to be maintained. We must think that the priest who draws nigh unto the altar performs the image of

³¹⁹ In the Homily on the Lord's Prayer: " Give us this day our daily bread " is understood as referring to sustenance.

³²⁰ Woodbrooke Studies Vol.VI 1933 page 70

the (heavenly) sacrifice, and we must also think that the deacons represent the image of the service of the invisible hosts..."³²¹

It is clear from this that for Theodore, the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist is derived from the way in which it is an image of the sacrifice of Christ. The Christian priest is said to perform the image of that sacrifice, not merely to recall. Theodore also says that it is the function of a priest to offer this sacrifice, and indeed all who are communicants eat the sacrifice, recalling the language of the Passover sacrifice of the lamb. The 'we' in this instance is presumably addressed not just to priests but to the baptized as it is within a catechetical work; implying that when the catechumens have been baptized they will become a part of that 'we'.

The word 'sacrifice' is used consistently by Theodore for the Eucharist, and so within the fifth chapter of the work he uses Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians to demonstrate what happens when Christians communicate: " we remember, but also we receive resurrection and immortality".³²² Theodore repeats what he said in the Synopsis: "we must first of all realize that we perform a sacrifice of which we eat" and "it is the office of a priest of the New Testament to offer this sacrifice".³²³ Theodore continues:

" It is indeed evident that it is a sacrifice, but not a new one and one that [the priest] performs as his, but it is a remembrance of that other real sacrifice [of Christ]. Because the priest performs things found in heaven through symbols and signs, it is necessary that his sacrifice also should be as their image, and that he should represent a likeness of the service of heaven."

The words "that other real sacrifice" imply that the Eucharist is to be understood as a real sacrifice. Theodore means by this that it is in reality Christ in heaven who is making the offering of himself to the Father. It follows that what Christian people do together in the Eucharist, and in particular the actions of the priest assisted by the deacons, should resemble as closely as possible what is being

³²¹ The original text is in Syriac

³²² 1 Cor.11.26 (Woodbrooke Studies Vol.VI 1933 page 73)

³²³ op.cit. page 79

done in heaven. Attempts to portray what Heaven is like recall Isaiah 6, Job 1-2, Hebrews 9.11, and Revelation 4-5. Both Christian and Jewish worship are reflected in these writings. As Theodore says " It would be impossible for us to be priests and do service outside the ancient law if we did not possess the likeness of heavenly things."³²⁴

Theodore sees no contradiction between his use of the present tense for Christ's offering: "He performs a real high priesthood and offers to God no other sacrifice than himself,..." and quoting Paul:³²⁵ "He offered one sacrifice for our sins for ever".³²⁶ This is so because when Christian priests offer the Eucharist it is one sacrifice.³²⁷

" As to the priests of the New Testament they immolate the same sacrifice always and everywhere, because one is the sacrifice that has been immolated for us, that of Christ our Lord who suffered death for us..."

The rest of this chapter (the Fifteenth Homily) is concerned with a description of the Eucharist and the symbolic actions of the ministers. Theodore gives a reason for each action of the clergy, because for him Christian worship is an image of the heavenly worship. At an earlier point in this chapter he said this:³²⁸

" It is with justice, therefore, that when he gave the bread he did not say: 'This is a symbol of my body', but: 'This is my body': likewise when he gave the cup he did not say: 'This is a symbol of my blood', but: 'This is my blood' because he wished to look upon the [elements] after their reception of grace and the coming of the Spirit, not according to their nature but to receive them as they are the body and blood of the Lord. We ought..... not to regard the elements merely as bread and cup, but as the body and blood of Christ."

In this quotation Theodore makes the point that the bread and the wine are not just mere symbols but that after the invocation of the Holy Spirit, they become the

³²⁴ op.cit. page 79

³²⁵ Theodore accepts the authorship of Paul for Hebrews

³²⁶ op.cit. page 80 quoting Hebrews 10.12-14

³²⁷ op.cit. page 83

³²⁸ Quasten Patrology Volume III page 420

body and blood of Christ. He puts this in a different way in a surviving fragment of his Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew:³²⁹

" He [Christ] did not say: 'This is the symbol of my body and my blood', but: 'This is my body and my blood', teaching us not to consider the nature of the laid-out things, but through the accomplished thanksgiving they have been changed into the flesh and blood."³³⁰

Theodore clearly understands that real events are taking place when the Thanksgiving is completed: there is a real change, and so a real sacrifice. At the same time however, he is saying that the actions are symbolic of the heavenly sacrifice of Christ to his Father. The symbol, then, contains the thing symbolized.

This chapter continues with the washing of hands by the priest, which is done "not..... for the cleanness of hands"³³¹, but because "the officiating priests offer the sacrifice for all"³³² All the congregation then rise for the prayers, after which the deacon shouts.³³³

" 'Look at the oblation'. In this he exhorts everyone to look at the sacrifice, as if a public service was about to be performed, and a public sacrifice was about to be immolated, and a public sacrifice was about to be offered for all.... It is clear that we also call this service 'offering the sacrifice' and 'immolating the sacrifice', because an awe-inspiring sacrifice is being immolated, and if he is offered to God, 'He did this once, when he offered up himself' as the blessed Paul says,³³⁴ and another time now when [the priest] must needs have something to sacrifice. This is the reason why we call 'sacrifice' or 'immolating the sacrifice' the likeness of the sacrifice [of Christ], and this is the reason why the deacon also says before the offering

³²⁹ Frag.Gosp.acc. to Mtt PG Vol.66 col. 713

³³⁰ Οὐκ εἶπε: Τοῦτο ἐστὶ τὸ σύμβολον τοῦ σώματος μου, καὶ τοῦτο τοῦ αἵματος μου, ἀλλὰ: Τοῦτο ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμα μου καὶ τὸ αἷμα μου. διδάσκων ἡμᾶς μὴ πρὸς τὴν φύσιν ὄραν τοῦ προκειμένου, ἀλλὰ διὰ τῆς γενομένης εὐχαριστίας εἰς σάρκα καὶ αἷμα μεταβάλλεσθαι.

³³¹ Woodbrooke Studies Vol.VI 1933 page 94

³³² op.cit. page 94

³³³ op.cit. page 95

³³⁴ Heb.9.14ff

of the sacrifice: 'Look at the sacrifice'. When all those things which are spoken are accomplished the priest begins with the sacrifice itself."

This concludes the Fifteenth Homily. The frequent use of the word "sacrifice" here in this quotation from the Liturgy of his time, suggests that Theodore felt able to use liturgical language as an authority for his understanding both the Eucharist and the meaning of the Letter to the Hebrews. The actions of the priest and the deacon suggest the offering of a sacrifice, which is displayed, and then offered up to God.

15.1.2 The Sixteenth Homily

In the next chapter (the Sixteenth Homily), Theodore says in his Synopsis:³³⁵

" ...the priest begins the Anaphora, and offers a public sacrifice,....the priest who offers the sacrifice draws nigh and partakes of it first,..."

This sets the scene for the rest of his homily. The Liturgy is described in great detail, with a commentary on the three main elements of Theodore's eucharistic theology: the offering of a sacrifice, the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the real change that takes place when these two things happen: both in the congregation and in the bread and the wine.³³⁶

In the remaining part of the Homily it is said of the priest that:³³⁷

" He offers a sacrifice for the community, and a reverential fear, which embraces both himself and us all, is cast upon him on account of what has happened, namely that our Lord suffered for us all a death, the remembrance of which is about to be performed in the present sacrifice."

So the Eucharist is seen both as a sacrifice and the remembrance of a sacrifice. There is no contradiction between these two ideas, for the remembrance to Theodore is not just a recalling of the past but it is an action which is to be "performed" in the present. The rest of the chapter is primarily concerned with worthy

³³⁵ op.cit. page 96,97

³³⁶ op.cit. page 96

³³⁷ op.cit. page 99

reception and the Christian life. Theodore only mentions sacrifice once more:³³⁸

” The priest who is offering the sacrifice draws nigh first and partakes of [it], so that it may be made clear that he is offering the sacrifice for all according to the order written in, but that he is in equal need with the others of partaking of it, and asserts that there is utility in this food and drink. In saying ’ He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, shall live for ever’. He [our Lord] refers not to the one who offers the sacrifice but to the one who eats [of it], and this, like the sacrifice belongs equally to all of us.”

It is quite clear from the context that it is the President of the Eucharist who is here called the priest, for he is said to be the first one to receive Communion. He is said to be offering for all, which is of course the very function of a priest. He offers for all, but the benefit is for all who consume the sacrifice. Elsewhere,³³⁹ Theodore says that the role of a priest is to be the eyes and the tongue of the whole Body of Christ: higher up to perform the function of seeing or speaking, but only part of the body.

15.2 Conclusions

How, then, is Theodore’s understanding of Eucharistic Sacrifice to be interpreted? It is clear that there is now only one effective sacrifice: that of Christ. The animal sacrifices of the Old Testament are no longer effective for he says:³⁴⁰ ” It is indeed clear that all the injunctions and ritual of the Law were only partially suitable ”. The sacrifice of Christ which is the true sacrifice not only makes these sacrifices obsolete, it also makes the Eucharist an effective sacrifice. Theodore also says:³⁴¹ ” As to the priests of the New Testament they immolate the same sacrifice always and everywhere, because one is the sacrifice which has been immolated for us, that of Christ our Lord...” ;and also:³⁴² ” That is the reason why they [the Christian priests] do not immolate at all times new sacrifices like priests of the

³³⁸ op.cit. page 111

³³⁹ op.cit. page 90,91

³⁴⁰ op.cit. page 79

³⁴¹ op.cit. page 83

³⁴² op.cit. page 82

law." In other words each Eucharist can be called a sacrifice, but it is not a separate sacrifice nor a repetition of the sacrifice of Christ: because it recalls and is an image of the one sacrifice it is a sacrifice which is made truly present. Theodore also says that the animals who were sacrificed died, but Christ died and rose again conferring immortality on those who receive him.

All this means that while it would be wrong to speak of Eucharists as sacrifices on their own, they are sacrificial in the sense that they are related to the sacrifice of Christ, and that they are the vehicle through which the eternal sacrifice of Christ in heaven is brought to mankind, through the working of the Holy Spirit.



Chapter XVI

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

John was named "Golden-mouthed" because of his great eloquence. He was a great friend of Theodore of Mopsuestia and was also born in the city of Antioch, the son of a rich and noble Christian family. In September 397 A.D. he was elected Patriarch of Constantinople. Like so many before him, his episcopate was stormy and troubled. He was driven out and deposed; and died in exile as a martyr.

John Chrysostom is regarded as one of the greatest Doctors of the Church, particularly in the realm of eucharistic theology. His writings have been almost entirely preserved.³⁴³ Most of his works are in sermon-form; but there are also exegetical homilies on the Old and New Testaments; dogmatic and polemical homilies; moral discourses; and treatises on the priesthood, monastic life, virginity, and the education of children, suffering; and a number of letters. Of the treatises *De Sacerdotio* is by far the most important for a study of Eucharistic Sacrifice.

16.1 THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE

John Chrysostom clearly regarded the Eucharist as a sacrifice as we can see in his Homily on Hebrews:³⁴⁴

"There is one Christ everywhere, complete both in this world and in the other; one body. As then, though offered in many places, he is but one body, so there is but one sacrifice... We offer that which was offered then; which is indeed unconsumable... We do not then offer a different sacrifice as the High Priest formerly did, but always the same; or rather we celebrate a memorial of a sacrifice."³⁴⁵

³⁴³ Quasten Patrology Vol.III page 429

³⁴⁴ Hom.17 In Hebr.3 Enchiridion Patristicum page 466

³⁴⁵ἀλλ'εἰς πανταχοῦ ὁ Χριστός, καὶ ἐνταῦθα πλήρης ὢν, καὶ ἐκεῖ πλήρης, ἐν σῶμα. Ὡσπερ οὖν πολλαχοῦ προσφερόμενος ἐν σῶμα ἐστὶ, καὶ οὐ πολλὰ σώματα, οὕτω καὶ μίᾳ θυσίᾳ. Ἐκείνην προσφέρομεν καὶ νῦν τὴν τότε προσενεχθείσαν, τὴν ἀνάλωτον..... Οὐκ ἄλλην θυσίαν,

Here John Chrysostom stresses the unity of the sacrifice of Christ; and he is careful to demonstrate that we are not talking of a different sacrifice in the Eucharist, as it recalls the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. One cannot separate the two, for it is the same Christ who makes the offering in both instances. John Chrysostom says this in a different way in his homily on Matthew:³⁴⁶

” Believe that there takes place now the same banquet in which Christ sat at table, and that this banquet is in no way different from that. For it is not true that this banquet was prepared by a man while that was prepared by himself. ”³⁴⁷

This means that Christ is both the Offering and the One who offers, as can be seen in a homily on 1 Corinthians:³⁴⁸

” Today as then, it is the Lord who works and offers all. ”³⁴⁹

John Chrysostom also implies that earthly priests act only as the Lord’s deputies. Christ is the one who is truly active, for in the Homily on Matthew John Chrysostom writes:³⁵⁰

” We assume the role of servants; it is he who blesses and transforms. ”³⁵¹

In other words the priest cannot consecrate on his own; but only through the power of God working in him. As the priest recalls the Last Supper, the miracle is enabled and through the power of God (from the present day to the Second Coming of the Lord) the sacrifice is completed and perfected on the altars of the Holy Church:³⁵²

καθάπερ ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς τότε, ἀλλὰ τὴν αὐτὴν αἰεὶ ποιούμεν: μᾶλλον δὲ ἀνάμνησιν ἐργαζόμεθα θυσίας.

³⁴⁶ Hom.50 In Matt.n.3. PG Vol.57-58 col. 507

³⁴⁷ Πιστεύσατε τοίνυν, ὅτι καὶ νῦν ἐκεῖνο τὸ δεῖπνον ἐστίν, ἐν ᾧ καὶ αὐτὸς ἀνέκειτο. Οὐδὲν γὰρ τοῦτο μὲν ἄνθρωπος ἐργάζεται, ἐκεῖνο δὲ αὐτός, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῦτο κακεῖνο αὐτός.

³⁴⁸ Hom.27 In 1 Cor.n.4.. PG Vol.61 col. 229

³⁴⁹ Καὶ γὰρ καὶ σήμερον αὐτός ἐστὶν ὁ πάντα ἐργαζόμενος καὶ παραδίδούς, ὡσπερ καὶ τότε.....

³⁵⁰ Hom.82 In Matth.5 PG Vol.58 col. 1741

³⁵¹ Ἡμεῖς ὑπηρετῶν τάξιν ἐπέχομεν: ὁ δὲ ἀγιαζῶν αὐτὰ καὶ μετασκευάζων αὐτός.

³⁵² Hom.2 De Prodit.Judae n.6 Enchiridion Patristicum page 439

" It is not man who causes what is present to become the Body and Blood of Christ, but Christ himself who was crucified for us. The priest is the representative when he pronounces those words, but the power and grace are those of the Lord. 'This is my Body', he says. This word changes the things that lie before us; and as that sentence 'increase and multiply', once spoken, extends through all time and gives to our nature the power to reproduce itself; even so that saying, 'This is my Body', once uttered, does at every table in the Churches from that time to the present day, and even till Christ's coming, make the sacrifice complete."³⁵³

It is Christ who is the victim, and it is Christ who makes the offering. John Chrysostom also says that the offering was made for all, even though the New Testament says that the offering was made 'for many', in other words for those who believe in Christ.

In the Homily on Hebrews quoted above, John Chrysostom also says this:³⁵⁴

" 'Thus Christ also was offered.' By whom? By himself to be sure. Here the author shows that he is not only a priest, but also a victim and sacrifice. Thus he gives the reason for his being offered: 'Offered once to bear the sins of many'. Why 'many' and not 'all'? Because all did not believe. He, for his part did indeed die for all, to save all; for his death was equivalent to the death of all...."³⁵⁵

Even though Christ is in heaven, this sacrifice of the Eucharist is still possible; for in another homily on Hebrews John Chrysostom writes:³⁵⁶

³⁵³ Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄνθρωπος ἐστὶν ὁ ποιῶν τὰ προκείμενα γενέσθαι σῶμα καὶ αἷμα Χριστοῦ. ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ὁ σταυρωθεὶς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν Χριστὸς. Σχήμα πληρῶν ἕστηκεν ὁ ἱερεὺς, τὰ ῥήματα φθεγγόμενος ἐκεῖνα, ἣ δὲ δύναμις καὶ ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστὶ. Τοῦτο μου ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμα, φησί. Τοῦτο τὸ ῥήμα μεταρρυθμίζει τὰ προκείμενα.

³⁵⁴ Hom.17 In Hebr. Enchiridion Patristicum page 465

³⁵⁵ Οὕτω καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἀπαξ προσενεχθεὶς. Ὑποτινὸς προσενεχθεὶς; Ὑφ' ἑαυτοῦ δηλοῦσι. Ἐνταῦθα οὐδὲ ἱερέα δεικνυσὶν αὐτὸν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ θῦμα καὶ ἱερεῖον. Εἶτα προστίθησι τὴν αἰτίαν τοῦ, προσενεχθεὶς: Ἀπαξ, φησί, προσενεχθεὶς εἰς τὸ πολλῶν ἀνενεγκεῖν ἁμαρτίας. Διὰ τί δέ, πολλῶν εἶπε καὶ μὴ, πάντων; Ἐπειδὴ μὴ πάντες ἐπίστευσαν. Ὑπὲρ πάντων μὲν γὰρ ἀπέθανεν, εἰς τὸ σῶσαι πάντας, τὸ αὐτοῦ μέρος: ἀντίρροπος γὰρ ἦν ὁ θάνατος ἐκεῖνος τῆς πάντων ἀπωλείας....

³⁵⁶ Hom.11 In Hebr. PG Vol.63 col. 92

" We have our victim, our priest, in heaven. Then let us offer such sacrifices as can be offered on that altar.... 'our reasonable service', the oblation made through the soul, 'through the spirit', gentleness, moderation, patience, endurance, humility, and the like; things which are independent of material vehicles and particular places."³⁵⁷

In other words the service offered is a reasonable sacrifice. This is expression λογικη is often linked with αναιμακτος. It implies a difference from the animal sacrifices of the Jews. It is in the end the only thing Christians can offer, and it is not just an offering of bread and wine, but it is a spiritual offering of the gifts of the Holy Spirit; for example it is an offering of patience and humility.

16.2 De Sacerdotio

Amongst John Chrysostom's many other works one stands out as the greatest. This is his treatise 'On the Priesthood', which contains the following much quoted text. This sums up his doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice:³⁵⁸

" When you see the Lord offered there in sacrifice, and the priest standing and praying, and all being reddened by the precious blood, do you feel that you are still standing among men, on earth?"³⁵⁹

This leaves no doubt whatever about John Chrysostom's understanding of the Sacrifice of the Eucharist. There on the altar the Lord is truly offered in sacrifice. The priest stands there and prays and God brings the miracle about. It is not possible for Christians to see what is happening, but everything is reddened by the precious blood of Christ. Those of the faithful are being challenged to see the truth, perhaps in a vision, and to wonder whether they are on earth or in heaven.

³⁵⁷ Ὅρα γὰρ, ἄνω ἔχομεν τὸ ἱερεῖον, ἄνω τὸν ἱερέα, ἄνω τὴν θυσίαν. Οὐκοῦν τοιαύτας ἀναφέρομεν θυσίας τὰς ἐν ἐκείνῳ δυναμένας προσφέρεσθαι τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ:.... ἡ λογικὴ λατρεία.... Τὰ διὰ ψυχῆς, τὰ διὰ πνεύματος... τὰ δὲ ἐστὶν οἶον ἐπιεικεία, σωφροσύνη, ἐλεημοσύνη, ἀνεξικακία, μακροθυμία, ταπεινοφροσύνη.

³⁵⁸ De Sacerd. 3,4 Enchiridion Patristicum page 423

³⁵⁹ Ὅταν γὰρ ἴδῃς τὸν Κύριον τεθυμένον καὶ κείμενον, καὶ τὸν ἱερέα ἐφεστῶτα τῷ θύματι, καὶ ἐπευχόμενον, καὶ πάντας ἐκείνῳ τῷ τιμῷ φοιτισσομένους αἵματι, ἀρα ἐπὶ μετὰ ἀνθρώπων εἶναι νομίζεις, καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς εἶσθαι, ἀλλ' οὐκ εὐθέως οὐρανοὺς μετανίστασαι, καὶ πᾶσαν σαρκικὴν διάνοιαν τῆς ψυχῆς ἐκβαλῶν, γυμνῆ τῇ ψυχῇ καὶ τῷ νῷ καθαρῷ περιβλέπεις τὰ ἐν οὐρανοῖς;

16.3 Conclusions

It would be fair to say that in the texts of John Chrysostom there is a culmination of what all the early Fathers are trying to express. The consecration of the Eucharist is a real and effective miracle, and it is identified with the once and for all sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. It cannot be perceived except through the experience of the faithful. Many of the other Fathers speak about a 'bloodless sacrifice': Chrysostom sees the blood, and he sees the Holy Spirit coming down from Heaven and bringing about the miraculous transformation in the Bread and the Wine, changing them into the Body and Blood of Christ. In all this Chrysostom is not advocating something different from the Apostles and other authors of the New Testament. It is the perception of the event that has changed; for by the time John Chrysostom was writing the Fathers are able to express much more clearly their understanding of Eucharistic Sacrifice.

Chapter XVII

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA

Cyril was born at Alexandria about the year 380 A.D. He was the nephew of the Patriarch Theophilus. In 412 A.D. he succeeded his uncle as Bishop and proceeded to expound the Scriptures and oppose the heretics. Most of his later work (after 428 A.D.) was devoted to opposing the teachings of Nestorius, and he took a lead in the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D. He was a very great theologian, and he died in the year 444 A.D.

The works of Cyril are very numerous, for they consist of commentaries on the Old and New Testaments, dogmatic-polemical works against Arians and Nestorians. An apology against Julian; paschal letters; sermons; and letters, one of which includes twelve anathemas against Nestorius. Of these works the New Testament commentaries are the most significant.

17.1 The Eucharist

In his commentary on the Gospel according to St. John, Cyril explains how the partaking of the one Loaf of the Eucharist means that the Church cannot be divided:³⁶⁰

"...By means of one body he blesses those who believe in him and incorporates them in himself and in each other; and that body is his own. And who can divide and remove them from this mutual union of nature, when they have been bound together in unity with Christ by means of that holy body? We all partake of one loaf, and so we are all made into one body: for Christ cannot be divided. Therefore the Church is called the 'Body of Christ, of which each individual is a member' as Paul understands."³⁶¹

³⁶⁰ In Jo,17.21 Commentary on John Pusey Edition page 735

³⁶¹ ἐνὶ γὰρ σώματι, τῷ ἰδίῳ δηλαδή, τοὺς εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεύοντας εὐλογῶν διὰ τῆς μυστικῆς μεταλήψεως, ἐαυτῷ τε συσσωμους καὶ ἀλλήλους ἀποτελεῖ. τίς γὰρ ἂν καὶ δειλοὶ καὶ τῆς εἰς ἀλλήλους φυσικῆς ἐνώσεως

This quotation describes the way in which the Eucharistic lies at the very heart of the Church's life and unity; and the way in which that unity is sealed: but it is necessary to look elsewhere for an understanding of its sacrificial nature.

17.2 Sacrifice in the Eucharist

Gebremedhin says that "For Cyril the eucharistic flesh is the very sacrifice of Christ - the unbloody sacrifice is not carnal but spiritual."³⁶² It is possible to see this in an epistle to Nestorius:³⁶³

" We proclaim the death, in the flesh, of the only-begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, and acknowledge his return to life from the dead and his ascension into heaven, and as we do this we perform the bloodless sacrifice in the churches: and thus we approach the consecrated gifts of the sacrament, and are sanctified by partaking of the holy flesh and the precious blood of Christ, the Saviour of us all. We do not receive it as common flesh (God forbid), not as the flesh of a mere man, sanctified and linked with the Word in unity of standing, or as enjoying a divine indwelling; we receive it as truly life-giving, as the flesh that belongs to the Word himself. For as being God he is in his own nature life, and when he became one with the flesh which is his own, he rendered it life-giving."³⁶⁴

From these words it is possible to see that Cyril gives both a clear affirmation

ἔξοικιεῖ τοὺς δι' ἐνός τοῦ ἁγίου σώματος πρὸς ἐνότητα τὴν εἰς Χριστὸν ἀναδεσμούμενος; εἰ γὰρ οἱ πάντες ἐκ τοῦ ἐνός ἄρτου μετεχομεν', ἐν οἷ πάντες ἀποτελούμεθα σῶμα: μερίζεσθαι γὰρ οὐκ ἐνδεχεται τοῦ Χριστοῦ. διὰ τοῦτο καὶ σῶμα Χριστοῦ κεκλημάτικεν ἡ Ἐκκλησία, μέλη δὲ καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀνὰ μέρος, κατὰ τὴν τοῦ Παύλου σύνεσιν.

³⁶² Life-Giving Blessing page 78

³⁶³ Ep.17 Ad Nest.3 Wickham Edition page 22

³⁶⁴καταγγέλλοντες γὰρ τὸν κατὰ σάρκα θάνατον τοῦ μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, τουτέστιν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τὴν τε ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναβίωσιν καὶ τὴν εἰς οὐρανοῦς ἀνάληψιν ὁμολογοῦντες, τὴν ἀναιμακτον ἐν ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις τελούμεν λατρείαν προσίμεν τε οὕτω ταῖς μυστικαῖς εὐλογίαις καὶ ἁγιαζόμεθα μέτοχοι γινόμενοι τῆς τε ἁγίας σαρκὸς καὶ τοῦ τιμίου αἵματος τοῦ πάντων ἡμῶν σωτήρος Χριστοῦ καὶ οὐχ ὡς σάρκα κοινὴν δεχομενοι, μὴ γένοιτο, οὔτε μὴν ὡς ἀνδρὸς ἡγιασμένου καὶ συναφθέντος τῷ λόγῳ κατὰ τὴν ἐνότητα τῆς ἀξίας ἢ γοῦν ὡς θείαν ἐνοικησιν ἐσχηκότος, ἀλλ' ὡς ζωοποιὸν ἀληθῶς καὶ ἴδιαν αὐτοῦ τοῦ λόγου. ζωὴ γὰρ ἦν κατὰ φύσιν ὡς θεός, ἐπειδὴ γέγονεν ἐν πρὸς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σάρκα, ζωοποιὸν ἀπέφηνεν αὐτήν,...

that the Eucharist is a 'bloodless sacrifice'; and also what the sacrifice effects. First of all, Christians proclaim what Christ has done in the flesh and on the cross, and also in his resurrection and ascension. Next they perform the sacrifice: that is they celebrate the Eucharist. Finally they approach and take communion. The end result is that they are sanctified, and receive an indwelling of divinity. The Eucharistic Sacrifice is therefore life-giving.

This theme of a life-giving blessing imparted by the Eucharist is central to Cyril's eucharistic theology, for the word *ευλογία* is the favourite description of Cyril for the Eucharist. In his *Commentary on Luke* he says this:³⁶⁵

" It was necessary for him to be present in us in a divine manner through the Holy Spirit: to be mixed, as it were, with our bodies by means of his holy flesh and precious blood, for us to have him in reality as a sacramental gift which gives life, in the form of bread and wine. And so that we should not be so struck down with horror, at seeing flesh and blood displayed on the holy tables of our churches, God adapts himself to our weakness and infuses the power of life into the oblations and changes them into the effective power of his own flesh, so that we may have them for life-giving reception, and that the body of life may prove to be in us a life-giving seed."³⁶⁶

This means that it is necessary for Christ to be received sacramentally; for it is through the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist that Christians become one with Christ. God chose to use bread and wine in this sacrifice so that Christians would not be shocked and the sight of real flesh and blood; otherwise in their weakness they might fail to comprehend the mystery. God gives life to Christians by the exercise of his power, so that the ordinary bread and wine may become the vehicle of his blessing: in other words a sacrifice.

³⁶⁵ In Luc.22.19 PG Vol.72 col. 912

³⁶⁶ Ἐδει τοίνυν αὐτὸν διὰ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος ἐν ἡμῖν γενέσθαι θεοπρεπῶς: συνανακρίνασθαι δὲ ὡσπερ τοῖς ἡμετέροις σώμασι, διὰ τῆς ἁγίας αὐτοῦ σαρκὸς καὶ τοῦ τιμίου αἵματος: ἃ δὴ καὶ ἐσχηκαμεν εἰς εὐλογίαν ζωοποιῶν, ὡς ἐν ἄρτῳ τε καὶ οἴνῳ. Ἴνα γὰρ μὴ ἀποναρκησωμεν, σάρκα τε καὶ αἶμα προκείμενα βλέποντες ἐν ἁγίαις τραπέζαις ἐκκλησιῶν, συγκαθιστάμενος ὁ θεὸς ταῖς ἡμετέραις ἀσθενείαις, ἐνίησι τοῖς προκειμένοις δύναμιν ζωῆς, καὶ μεθίστησιν αὐτὰ πρὸς ἐνέργειαν τῆς ἐαυτοῦ σαρκὸς: ἵνα εἰς μεθεξὲν ζωοποιῶν ἐχωμεν αὐτὰ, καὶ οἶον σπέρμα ζωοποιῶν ἐν ἡμῖν εὐρεθῆ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ζωῆς.

17.3 Conclusions

It is possible to say in conclusion, that Cyril "The Seal of the Fathers" demonstrates most fully the nature of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. At the Last Supper Christ promised that He would do this thing for Christians, and when the Church offers up the Eucharist, it is a 'bloodless sacrifice' that is performed. A sacrifice made not by Christians (as Cyril is careful to say) but by Christ. This is a sacrifice which makes Christians holy, by virtue of their reception of it.

Chapter XVIII

AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

St. Augustine was born in the Carthaginian Province of the Roman Empire (in North Africa) in 354 A.D. His father was a pagan, but he was strongly influenced by his mother Monica who was a devoted Christian. After several years he came to Milan, and was converted to Catholic Christianity largely through the influence of the Bishop, Ambrose. In the years following his baptism, he returned to North Africa, eventually becoming Bishop of Hippo.

Throughout his life he was a prolific author, and in many places he suggests the idea of Eucharistic Sacrifice. The principal works where this is the case are the *City of God*, which sees History in terms of the existence of two cities, one of God and the other of man; Sermon 22, called *Ad Infantes, de Sacramento* (to children on the Sacrament); Epistle 98, which asks what harm is done to babies whose parents make sacrifices to demons on their behalf; commentaries on Psalms 32 and 33; *De Baptismo*; *De Doctrina Christiana*, which is a thesis on Christian Education as biblical knowledge and priestly eloquence; and a commentary on the Gospel according to St. John.

18.1 Terms Used by Augustine to Describe the Eucharist

In a fairly exhaustive doctoral thesis by Lawrence Frankovitch.³⁶⁷ the introduction to Chapter III lists the various names given to the Eucharist by Augustine. These include: "sacrifice of Christians", "sacrifice of the Body of Christ", "sacrifice of the Church", "sacrifice of the New Testament", "sacrifice of the Mediator", "eucharist", "sacred offering", and "sacrament of the altar". He also says that "one should not limit Augustine's views on the Christian sacrifice to those explicitly designated by the word 'sacrifice'". In other words sacrifice is sometimes intended even when it is not specifically mentioned.

³⁶⁷ Augustine's Theory of Eucharistic Sacrifice Marquette University, Ann Arbor, Michigan U.S.A.

18.1.1 Sacrifice of Christians

The first of these expressions is found in *Civitate Dei*:³⁶⁸

” Aaron’s seed has now no priest; and his whole offspring behold with failing eyes and fainting hearts the sacrifice of the Christians offered all the world through.”³⁶⁹

The significant words here are ”sacrifice of the Christians”. The singular of the word *sacrificium* is used, so the personal sacrifices of Christians cannot be intended. The Christian Priesthood is contrasted with the Jewish priesthood, and it is clear that Augustine intends the reader to understand that the Eucharist is the new sacrifice.

18.1.2 Sacrifice of the Body of Christ

This is made even more explicit further on in the same work:³⁷⁰

”...one passed through, he offered the sacrifice of the body of Christ...”³⁷¹

Here Augustine is describing what appears to have been an early exorcism. A man was suffering from possession by a demon and the Bishop of Hippo was sent for. The Bishop being absent, one of his presbyters came and successfully exorcised the demon by celebrating the Eucharist in the man’s presence. The use of the words *sacrificium Corporis Christi* show that Augustine experienced no difficulty whatever in describing the Eucharist as a sacrifice.

18.1.3 Sacrifice of the Church

The Eucharist is also described as the particular sacrifice of the Church, for elsewhere Augustine says:³⁷²

³⁶⁸ Civ. Dei 17.5 Corpus Christianorum 48:563

³⁶⁹ Nullus sacerdos est secundum ordinem Aaron. et quicumque es eius genere est homo, cum videt sacrificium Christianorum toto orbe pollere. sibi autem honorem illum magnum esse subtractum, deficiunt oculi eius et defuit anima eius tabe maeroris.

³⁷⁰ op.cit. 22.8 Corp.Christ. 48.820

³⁷¹ Perrexit unus, obtulit ibi sacrificium corporis Christi,....

³⁷² Against the Adversaries of the Law and the Prophets 1.18.37 PL Vol.41 c.624

"...because the faithful know everything in the sacrifice of the Church..."³⁷³

The context here makes it clear that Augustine is speaking about the Eucharist, for in this paragraph he compares the sacrifice of the Church with the sacrificed flesh of bulls;³⁷⁴ in such a way that the Eucharist has to be seen as the sacrifice of the New Testament in contrast to the sacrifices of the Old Testament.

18.1.4 Sacrifice of the New Testament

In one of his letters he actually uses the phrase "sacrifice of the New Testament".³⁷⁵

"... in this we give thanks to the Lord our God, because there is a great sacrament in the sacrifice of the New Testament."³⁷⁶

The use in the same sentence of *sacramentum* and *sacrificio* clearly indicates that these two concepts are closely identified by Augustine. Only the Eucharist can be intended.

18.1.5 Sacrifice of the Mediator

The role of Christ as the one who offers the sacrifice is clearly demonstrated by the use of the expression "sacrifice of the Mediator" in the *Enchiridion*.³⁷⁷

" Nor can it be denied that the souls of the dead are benefited by the piety of their living friends, who offer the sacrifice of the Mediator, or give alms in the Church on their behalf."³⁷⁸

Here Augustine is speaking both of those who make the offering, that is to say the Christians; and also of the offering made Christ himself. As the Mediator, he makes an offering of his own Body to the Father; and so the mourning Christian

³⁷³ Quod totum fideles in Ecclesiae sacrificio sciunt.....

³⁷⁴ non manducat taurorum carnes

³⁷⁵ Letter 140.19.48 C.S.E.L. 44.196

³⁷⁶ ...hinc gratias agimus domino deo nostro. quod est magnum sacramentum in sacrificio novi testamenti,..

³⁷⁷ Ench.29.110 Corp.Christ. 46.108

³⁷⁸ Neque negandum est defunctorum animus pietate suorum viventium relevari, cum pro illis sacrificium mediatoris offertur vel eleemosyne in ecclesia fiunt...

friends of a deceased person can also offer the Lord's Body for the benefit of the departed.

18.1.6 Eucharist

Sometimes the Sacrament is simply called Eucharist or Thanksgiving, as is the case in another of Augustine's letters.³⁷⁹

" When you come together in one it is not to eat the Lord's Supper, hence calling the very receiving of the Eucharist can move men more so that now on the Day of Rest either they offer or they received the Eucharist."³⁸⁰

18.1.7 Sacred Offering

In another situation the Eucharist is called a "sacred offering" as well as a "sacrifice".³⁸¹

" Whence now the Christians commemorate the same sacrifice, in the sacred offering and participation of the body and blood of Christ."³⁸²

18.1.8 Sacrament of the Altar

Finally, the expression "sacrament of the altar" is used alongside "sacrifice of Christians" clearly demonstrating the sacrificial nature of this sacrament.³⁸³

" This is the sacrifice of Christians; the many who are one body in Christ. This sacrifice the Church celebrates in the sacrament of the altar, which the faithful know well, where it is shown to her that in this thing which she offers she herself is offered."³⁸⁴

³⁷⁹ Letter 54.5.7 C.S.E.L. 34.166

³⁸⁰ *Convenientibus ergo vobis in unum non est dominicam cenam manducare hanc ipsam acceptionem eucharistiae dominicam cenam vocans...*

³⁸¹ Reply to Faustus 20.18 C.S.E.L. 25.559

³⁸² *Unde iam Christiani peracti eiusdem sacrificii memoriam celebrant sacrosancta oblatione et participatione corporis et sanguinis Christi,...*

³⁸³ *Civ. Dei* 10.6 Corp.Christ. 47.279

³⁸⁴ *Hoc est sacrificium Christianorum: multi unum corpus in Christo. Quod etiam sacramento altaris fidelibus noto frequentat Ecclesia, ubi ei demonstratur, quod in ea re quam offert, ipsa offeratur.*

This text demonstrates the relationship between the mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church, and the sacrificial offering of the Body of Christ in the Eucharist when he says: *quod in ea re quam offert, ipsa offeratur*. This is highly significant.

18.2 Augustine's Understanding of the Eucharistic Sacrifice

Augustine seems to use the word *sacrificium* and the word *sacramentum* almost interchangeably. When he is speaking about what the Church does, it is called a sacrament; when he is describing what this means it is called a sacrifice: so he can say that in the sacrament of the altar (the Eucharist) the church celebrates a sacrifice. He goes further than this implying that the Church herself becomes an offering.

When Augustine speaks of sacrifices (using the plural) he intends that the reader should understand he means the sacrifices of the Old Testament, or even in some cases the pagan sacrifices; for later in *Civitate Dei* he talks about sacrifices to devils:³⁸⁵

" On this matter of sacrifices I have already said in the foregoing books that the devils arrogate divinity to themselves, and require sacrifice that they may be esteemed gods, and delight in these honours. This is because they know that the true sacrifice is due to the true God."³⁸⁶

Here such sacrifices are dismissed, although it is recognized that they take place. In the last sentence of this quotation, we see the very important concept of the true sacrifice (*verum sacrificium*). Augustine recognizes three categories of sacrifice. Firstly the false sacrifice that is offered to demons (which is totally ineffective); secondly the sacrifices of the Old Covenant (which although they are offered to the true God have been superseded); and thirdly the true sacrifice of Christ on the cross, which is represented by the Church in the Eucharist.

³⁸⁵ Civ. Dei 15.16 Corp. Christ. 48.479

³⁸⁶ De qua re in praecedentibus libris iam diximus, non ob aliud daemones arrongantes sibi divinitatem deosque se credi cupientes sibi expetere sacrificium et gaudere huius modi honoribus, nisi quia verum sacrificium Deo debere sciunt.

In an earlier part of the *Civitate Dei*, Augustine had already used the expression "a true sacrifice"³⁸⁷

" Thus a true sacrifice is every good work which is done that we may be united to God in holy fellowship, and which has a reference to that supreme good and end in which we alone can be truly blessed. And therefore even the mercy that we show to men, if it is not shown for God's sake, is not a sacrifice.... Since therefore, true sacrifices are works of mercy to ourselves and to others, done with reference to God... it follows that the whole redeemed city, that is to say, the congregation or community of saints, is offered to God as our sacrifice through the great high priest."³⁸⁸

Here Augustine says that it is when Christians are united in a holy fellowship, that their good works become an effective part of the offering made by Christ to the Father. Good works that are done without reference to God are not sacrifice; but the whole Church is offered as a sacrifice through the mediation of Jesus Christ.

In Augustine's works good acts are sometimes called sacrifices: so for a Christian mercy may also be a true sacrifice:³⁸⁹

" Whence it is written, ' I desire mercy rather than sacrifice', nothing else is meant than that one sacrifice is preferred to another; for that which in common speech is called sacrifice is only the symbol of the true sacrifice. Now mercy is the true sacrifice, and therefore it is said, as I have just quoted, 'with such sacrifices God is well pleased.'³⁹⁰

Recalling the words of Hosea, Augustine interprets them to mean that good works are only symbols and signs of the true sacrifice which can only be offered by

³⁸⁷ Civ. Dei 10.6 Corpus Christ.47.278

³⁸⁸ Proinde verum sacrificium est omne opus. quo agitur, ut sancta societate inhaereamus Deo, relatum scilicet ad illum finem boni, quo veraciter beati esse possimus. Unde et ipsa misericordia, qua homini subvenitur, si non propter Deum fit, non est sacrificium....Cum igitur vera sacrificia opera sint misericordiae sive in nos ipsos sive in proximos, que referuntur ad Deum;.... profecto efficitur, ut tota ipsa redempta civitas, hoc est congregatio societasque sanctorum, universale sacrificium offertur Deo per sacerdotem magnum.....

³⁸⁹ Civ. Dei 10,5 Corp.Christ. 47.278

³⁹⁰ Ac per hoc ubi scriptum: Misericordiam volo quam sacrificium nihil aliud quam sacrificium sacrificio praelatum oportet intelligi; quoniam illud, quod ab omnibus appellatur sacrificium, signum est vere sacrificii. Porro autem misericordia verum sacrificium est; unde dictum est, quod paulo ante commemoravi: Talibus enim sacrificiis placetur Deo.

Christ:

Finally, Augustine says that all the former sacrifices are only signs of the love we must have for God and for our neighbour:³⁹¹

” All the divine precepts which refer, under different forms, to sacrifice either in the service of the tabernacle or of the temple, are to be understood as signifying the love of God and the neighbour.”³⁹²

What, then, can be drawn from these various uses of the word *sacrificium*. Frankovitch says that ” the word 'sacrifice' in Augustine's writings appears in many contexts; for it is used both for the invisible realities and for the visible symbols, and within the wide spectrum of usages there is the ritual celebration of the eucharist.”³⁹³ He goes on to say that he will show that all these sacrifices are ”inter-related and really form one sacrifice”.³⁹⁴

Having said this, there can be no doubt that Augustine does see the Eucharist as a sacrifice, and it is in his own terms a ”true sacrifice”. Of course he does use ”sacrifice” in other ways, but if these are discounted then there are clearly three main uses. Firstly an offering made to the One True God; secondly, the spiritual sacrifices of the individual exemplified in good works; and thirdly the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. The Eucharist is related to all these three: for in the Eucharist the Sacrifice of Christ is represented, the good works are offered, and the Church makes the offering of herself to the One True God.

18.3 CONCLUSIONS

It can be seen, then, that it is possible to justify calling the Eucharist a sacrifice; and also that its sacrificial character is derived from the recalling of the Sacrifice of Christ on the cross. In the Old Testament sacrifices were offered to God: Augustine sees these sacrifices as foreshadowing the true sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. Jesus offered himself to his Father on that cross, and this is the source of salvation for all

³⁹¹ Civ. Dei 10.5 Corp.Christ. 47.278

³⁹² Quaecumque igitur in ministerio tabernaculi sive templi multis modis de sacrificiis leguntur divinitus esse praecepta, ad delectationem Dei et proximi significando referuntur.

³⁹³ Augustine's Theory of the Eucharistic Sacrifice p.77

³⁹⁴ op.cit. page 78

Christians. However as a result of that sacrifice the Church also has her sacrifice (the Eucharist) made effective. The old sacrifices are seen to be just a shadow, the Eucharist becomes the symbol; and because it is symbolic of what has taken place: those who participate in it, participate in the sacrifice of the cross, for as has been seen elsewhere, it is Christ who is the true High Priest.

Chapter XIX

CHURCH LITURGIES

In addition to the texts of the Fathers, a considerable part of Church Liturgy text has survived to the present day. The quotations below are all taken from prayers in the Eucharistic Liturgy, and in all of them the Eucharist is clearly described as a sacrifice. The fact that often the authorship of these prayers is often obscure is not important in this context, for they clearly indicate the mind of the Church at the time of their composition; a fact that is shown by their widespread use at the time, and even (in some cases) by their continuing usage in the Church.

19.1 THE APOSTOLIC CONSTITUTIONS

Jeremias in his book "The Eucharistic Words of Jesus" suggested a relationship of Jewish prayers to early Christian Liturgy, which in the course of time came to be written down. Such a fragment has survived in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, which used to be ascribed to Hippolytus. In the Early Church, the president of the Eucharist appears to have been the Bishop, as the successor to the Apostles; so it is in the prayer at his ordination that the reference to the offering of the Holy Eucharist is found.³⁹⁵

19.1.1 Prayer for the Consecration of a Bishop

"...that this thy servant whom thou hast chosen to be a bishop, may feed thy holy flock, and discharge the office of an high priest to thee, and minister to thee, unblameably night and day; that he may appease thee, and gather together the number of those that shall be saved, and may offer to thee the gifts of thy holy Church. Grant to him, O Lord Almighty, through thy Christ, the fellowship of thy Holy Spirit, so that he may have power to remit sins according to thy command... and that he may please thee in meekness

³⁹⁵ Ante-Nicene Christian Library Vol 17. page 215

and a pure heart, with a steadfast, unblameable, and unrepovable mind; to offer thee a pure and unbloody sacrifice, by which by thy Christ thou hast appointed as a mystery of the new covenant.”³⁹⁶

Here³⁹⁷ the Bishop is described as high priest. It was the office of the High Priest to offer sacrifice and atone for the sins of the people in a very special way. The Bishop is here described as a high priest within the Church, one who offers the gifts of the Church to God. It is clear from what follows that it is the Eucharist which is intended here: for the prayer goes on to speak about a pure and unbloody sacrifice, an expression used by many Fathers to describe that Sacrament.

19.2 THE LITURGY OF SAINT JAMES

Perhaps of even greater antiquity is the Liturgy of St. James, which some have ascribed to the Apostolic period. This was used in Jerusalem as a Eucharistic liturgy, and its exact origins are unknown; but it seems to predate 200 A.D. There are several places where the Eucharist is described in sacrificial terms, and amongst these are the prayers listed below.

19.2.1 A Prayer of the Incense

” Sovereign Lord, Jesus Christ, O Word of God, who didst freely offer thyself a blameless sacrifice upon the cross to God even the Father, the coal of double nature, that didst touch the lips of the prophet with the tongs, and didst take away his sins, touch also the hearts of us sinners, and purify us from every stain, and present us holy beside thy holy altar, that we may offer thee a sacrifice of praise:...”³⁹⁸

³⁹⁶ Δὸς ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι σου, καρδιογνώστα Θεέ, ἐπὶ τὸν δοῦλον σου τούδε, ὃν ἐξελέξω εἰς ἐπισκοπὴν, ποιμαίνειν τὴν ἁγίαν σου ποιμνην καὶ ἀρχιερατεύειν σοι, ἀμέμπτως λειτουργοῦντα νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας καὶ ἐξίλασκόμενον σου τὸ πρόσωπον, ἐπισυναγαγεῖν τὸν ἀριθμὸν τῶν σωζομένων καὶ προσφέρειν σοι τὰ δῶρα τῆς ἁγίας σου Ἐκκλησίας. Δὸς αὐτῷ, δέσποτα παντοκράτορ, διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ σου τὴν μετουσίαν τοῦ Ἁγίου Πνεύματος, ὥστε ἔχειν ἐξουσίαν ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας κατὰ τὴν ἐντολὴν σου... εὐαρεστεῖν δὲ σοι ἐν πραότητι καὶ καθαρὰ καρδιά, ἀτρέπτως, ἀμέμπτως, ἀνεγκλήτως προσφέροντα σοι καθαρὰν καὶ ἀναίμακτον θυσίαν ἣν διὰ Χριστοῦ διετάξω, τὸ μυστήριον τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης,...

³⁹⁷ VIII.5.5-7 SC Vol.336 page 146,148

³⁹⁸ Δέσποτα Κύριε Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ, ὦ θεοῦ Λόγε, ὁ ἐκουσίως ἑαυτὸν θυσίαν

This prayer³⁹⁹ recalls the sixth chapter of the Book of Isaiah, from which is derived the words of the Sanctus. The need for ritual purity was part of the sacrificial system; and the Eucharist is described both as a "blameless sacrifice", and a "sacrifice of praise". Again the sacrificial terminology is very explicit.

19.2.2 Prayer VII From the Gates of the Altar

"...in order that with a pure conscience we may bring unto thee gifts, offerings, and fruits for the remission of our transgressions, and for the propitiation of all thy people,....."⁴⁰⁰

Here⁴⁰¹ the significant word is propitiation, for if the Eucharist is propitiatory, then it must also be sacrificial. However the language is much more explicit in the next quotation.

19.2.3 The Cherubic Hymn

" Let all mortal flesh be silent, and stand with fear and trembling, and meditate nothing earthly within itself: for the King of kings and Lord of lords, Christ our God, comes forward to be sacrificed, and to be given for food to all the faithful;..."⁴⁰²

This hymn⁴⁰³ speaks about Christ. What is important here is the linking of the sacrifice with its consumption by the faithful. The tense of the verbs *σφαγιασθῆναι* and *δοθῆναι* is both passive and future, which suggests that the work has yet to be completed. These prayers and hymns

ἄμωμον ἐπὶ σταυροῦ τῷ θεῷ καὶ Πατρὶ προσαγαγών, ὁ διφυῆς ἄνθραξ ὁ τῆ λαβίδι τῶν τοῦ προφήτου χειλέων ἀψάμενος καὶ τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτοῦ ἀφελόμενος: ἀψαι τῶν νοερῶν ἡμῶν αἰσθήσεων καὶ καθάρισον ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτημάτων κηλίδος, καὶ παράστησον ἡμᾶς ἄγνοῦς τῷ ἁγίῳ σου θυσιαστηρίῳ τοῦ προσενέγκαι σοι θυσίαν αἰνέσεως...

³⁹⁹ Early Christian Liturgies page 12

⁴⁰⁰ ἵνα ἐν καθαρῷ συνειδῶτι προσφερομεν σοι δῶρα δόματα καρπώματα εἰς ἀθέτησιν τῶν ἡμετέρων πλημμελημάτων καὶ εἰς ἔλασμον παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ σου:...

⁴⁰¹ op.cit. page 14

⁴⁰² Σιγησάτω πάσα σὰρξ βροτεία καὶ στήτω μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου καὶ μηδὲν γήμιον ἐν ἑαυτῇ λογίζεσθω, ὁ γὰρ βασιλεὺς τῶν βασιλευόντων Χριστὸς ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν προερχεται σφαγιασθῆναι καὶ δοθῆναι εἰς βρώσιν τοῖς πιστοῖς,...

⁴⁰³ op.cit. page 19

should not be seen in isolation from each other; but it is the whole that reflects the mind of the Church at that time. Taken with the prayers that follow these words clearly suggest that the Eucharist must be regarded as a sacrifice.

19.2.4 Prayer XXIV

"O Sovereign Lord, who hast visited us in compassion and mercies, and hast freely given to us in compassion and mercies, thy humble and sinful and unworthy servants, boldness to stand at thy holy altar, and to offer to thee this dread and bloodless sacrifice for our sins, and for the errors of the people,..."⁴⁰⁴

In this prayer⁴⁰⁵, the significant words are "dread and bloodless sacrifice". The use of this expression in this context is a normal description of the Eucharist in this Liturgy, for it is repeated in some of the prayers that follow:

19.2.5 Prayer XXV

"..O God, who through thy great and unspeakable love didst send forth thy only-begotten Son into the world, in order that he might turn back the lost sheep, turn not away us sinners, laying hold of thee by this dread and bloodless sacrifice;...."⁴⁰⁶

This prayer⁴⁰⁷ describes the Eucharists in a similar way to the one that precedes it; calling the sacrifice φοβερά and αναιμάκτω.

19.2.6 Prayer XXVI

"receive us as we draw near to thy holy altar, according to the greatness

⁴⁰⁴ Ο ἐπισκεψάμενος ἡμᾶς ἐν ἐλέει καὶ οἰκτιρμοῖς δέσποτα Κύριε καὶ χαρισάμενος παρρησίαν ἡμῖν τοῖς ταπεινοῖς καὶ ἁμαρτωλοῖς καὶ ἀναξίοις δούλοις σου παρεστάναι τῷ ἁγίῳ σου θυσιαστηρίῳ καὶ προσφέρειν σοι τὴν φοβερὰν ταύτην καὶ ἀναιμάκτον θυσίαν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἡμετέρων ἁμαρτημάτων καὶ τῶν τοῦ λαοῦ ἀγνοημάτων:

⁴⁰⁵ op.cit. page 24

⁴⁰⁶ Ο θεὸς ὁ διὰ πολλὴν καὶ ἄφατον φιλανθρωπίαν ἐξαποστείλας τὸν μονογενῆ σου Υἱὸν εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἵνα τὸ πεπλανημένον ἐπαναστρέψῃ πρόβατον: μὴ ἀποστραφῆς ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἁμαρτωλοὺς ἐγχειρουντας σου τῇ φοβερᾷ ταύτῃ καὶ ἀναιμάκτῃ θυσίᾳ:...

⁴⁰⁷ op.cit. page 24 ff

of thy mercy, that we may become worthy of offering to thee gifts and sacrifices for our transgressions and for those of the people; and grant to us, O Lord, with all fear and a pure conscience to offer to thee this spiritual and bloodless sacrifice,...⁴⁰⁸

The next prayer⁴⁰⁹ uses a slightly different expression; *πνευματικην* merely emphasizes the spiritual nature of the sacrifice being offered.

19.2.7 Prayer XXVII

"...and to offer this dread and bloodless sacrifice for our own sins and the errors of the people... that with a pure conscience we may bring to thee an offering of peace, a sacrifice of praise."⁴¹⁰

The last of these prayers⁴¹¹ again calls the Eucharist a "dread and bloodless sacrifice" yet again. This phrase and the others used in this Liturgy to describe the nature of the offering are encountered elsewhere in the writings of the Fathers; and they all clearly testify to a sacrificial understanding of the Eucharist.

19.3 THE LITURGY OF ST. MARK

Another Liturgy that contains similar expressions to those above is the Liturgy of Saint Mark. This was the Liturgy used by the Church in Alexandria, and is still in use today by Egyptian Christians.⁴¹²

19.3.1 Anaphora

"...we offer this reasonable and bloodless sacrifice, which all nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun, from the north and the south, present

⁴⁰⁸ καὶ πρόσδεξαι ἡμᾶς προσεγγίζοντας τῷ ἁγίῳ σου θυσιαστηρίῳ κατὰ τὸ πλῆθος τοῦ ἐλέους σου ἵνα ἄξιοι γενώμεθα τοῦ προσφέρειν σοὶ δῶρα τε καὶ θυσίας ὑπὲρ τε ἑαυτῶν καὶ τῶν τοῦ λαοῦ ἀγνοημάτων καὶ δὸς ἡμῖν Κύριε μετὰ παντὸς φόβου καὶ συνειδήσεως καθαρᾶς προσκομίσαι σοὶ τὴν πνευματικὴν ταύτην ἀνάιμακτον θυσίαν...

⁴⁰⁹ op.cit. page 47

⁴¹⁰ καὶ προσφέρειν τὴν φοβερὰν ταύτην καὶ ἀνάιμακτον θυσίαν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἡμετέρων ἁμαρτημάτων καὶ τῶν τοῦ λαοῦ ἀγνοημάτων... ἵνα ἐν καθαρῷ συνειδῶτι προσφέρωμέν σοι ἔλεον εἰρήνης, θυσίαν αἰνέσεως.

⁴¹¹ op.cit. page 48

⁴¹² The Pope referred to in the prayers is the Bishop of Alexandria.

to thee, O Lord; for great is thy name among all peoples, and in all places are incense, sacrifice, and oblation offered to thy holy name.”⁴¹³

Here⁴¹⁴ the Eucharist is said not only to be a "bloodless sacrifice", but also a "reasonable sacrifice". This is also an expression found in the writings of the Fathers: however the word used is *λατρεία* instead of *θυσία*. The quotations from the Old Testament clearly indicates that the Eucharist is seen as the sacrifice of the New Covenant.

19.3.2 Prayer XV

"...Accept, O God, by thy ministering archangels at thy holy, heavenly, and reasonable altar in the spacious heavens, the thankofferings of those who offer sacrifice and oblation..."⁴¹⁵

It is the word *θυσία* which is used in this prayer⁴¹⁶ and it emphasizes the heavenly element in the offering of the sacrifice. Clearly in the Liturgy of St. Mark the Eucharist can only be seen as a sacrifice.

19.4 THE LITURGY OF ST.BASIL

This liturgy has also been referred to in the chapter on St. Basil. It may be dated to c. 370 A.D. when Basil became a Bishop. Amongst the many references to a sacrificial understanding of the eucharistic liturgy are the following:

19.4.1 First Prayer of the Faithful

" Thou, O Lord, hast made known unto us this great mystery of salvation: thou hast accounted us, thine humble and unworthy servants, worthy to be

⁴¹³προσφέρομεν τὴν λογικὴν καὶ ἀναίμακτον λατρείαν ταύτην ἣν προσφέρει σοι Κύριε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν ἡλίου καὶ μέχρι δυσμῶν, ἀπὸ ἄρκτου καὶ μέχρι μεσημβρίας, ὅτι μέγα τὸ ὄνομα σου ἐν πάσι τοῖς ἔθνεσι καὶ ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ θυμιάμα προσφέρεται τῷ ὀνόματι τῷ ἁγίῳ σου καὶ θυσία καθαρὰ ἐπιθυσία καὶ προσφορά.

⁴¹⁴ op. cit. page 126

⁴¹⁵ Τῶν προσφερόντων τὰς θυσίας, τὰς προσφοράς, τὰ εὐχαριστήρια πρόσδεξαι ὁ Θεὸς εἰς τὸ ἅγιον καὶ ἑπουράνιον καὶ νοερόν σου θυσιαστήριον εἰς τὰ μεγέθη τῶν οὐρανῶν δια τῆς ἀρχαγγελικῆς σου λειτουργίας,....

⁴¹⁶ op. cit. page 129

ministers of thine holy altar. Do thou, by the power of thy Holy Spirit, enable us for this ministry, that so we may without condemnation draw nigh unto thy holy glory, and offer unto thee the sacrifice of praise:....”⁴¹⁷

This prayer⁴¹⁸ speaks about those who are making the offering, in other words the bishops and priests who are celebrating the Eucharist. This time the expression used is the "sacrifice of praise".

19.4.2 Offertory Prayer

”....according to the multitude of thy mercies do thou accept us who now draw nigh unto thy holy altar, that we may be worthy to offer unto thee this reasonable and unbloody sacrifice for our own transgressions and for the ignorances of the people:....”⁴¹⁹

Also⁴²⁰, as was in case in the Liturgy of St. Mark, the Eucharist is described as a "reasonable" as well as an "unbloody sacrifice".

19.5 THE LITURGY OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

It is possible that this Liturgy may be an abbreviation of St. Basil belonging to the Seventh or Eighth Century. However some of the prayers may well date from the pre-Chalcedonian period. Those which are different from the Liturgy of St. Basil are the following:

19.5.1 Prayer of the Faithful

”...and render us worthy to offer unto thee prayers and supplications and

⁴¹⁷ Σὺ Κύριε, κατεδειξας ἡμῖν τὸ μέγα τούτο τῆς σωτηρίας Μυστηριον: σὺ κατηξίωσας ἡμᾶς τοὺς ταπεινοὺς καὶ ἀναξίους δούλους σου γενέσθαι λειτουργοὺς τοῦ ἁγίου σου θυσιαστηρίου: σὺ ἰκάνωσον ἡμᾶς, τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ Ἁγίου σου Πνεύματος, εἰς τὴν διακονίαν ταύτην: ἵνα, ἀκατακρίτως ὅσταντες ἐνώπιον τῆς ἁγίας δοξῆς σου, προσαγωγῶμεν σοὶ θυσίαν αἰνέσεως.

⁴¹⁸ op.cit. page 400

⁴¹⁹ ...πρόσδεξαι ἡμᾶς, προσεγγιζόντας τῷ ἁγίῳ σου θυσιαστηρίῳ κατὰ τὸ πλῆθος τοῦ ἐλέους σου: ἵνα γενώμεθα ἄξιοι τοῦ προσφέρειν σοὶ τὴν λογικὴν ταύτην καὶ ἀναίμακτον θυσίαν ὑπερ τῶν ἡμετέρων ἀμαρτημάτων...

⁴²⁰ op.cit. page 401

unbloody sacrifices for all thy people:"⁴²¹

The first of these prayers⁴²², again calls the offering of Eucharists as "unbloody sacrifices".

19.5.2 The Offertory Prayer

" O Lord God Almighty, who only art holy, who dost accept the sacrifice of praise from such as call upon thee with their whole heart, accept and receive also unto thy holy altar the prayer of us sinners, enabling us to present unto thee both gifts and spiritual sacrifices for our own sins and for the ignorances of the people: and count us worthy to find such favour before thee, and the good Spirit of thy grace may rest upon us, and upon these gifts set forth, and upon all thy people:"⁴²³

This prayer⁴²⁴ calls the Eucharist a sacrifice no less than three times. First of all it is a "sacrifice of praise". Secondly, the presentation of the gifts in the Eucharist are called "spiritual sacrifices". Thirdly, there is a request that "our sacrifice", in other words the "sacrifice of praise" may be accepted by God. It is quite obvious, then, that the prayers in this Liturgy see the Eucharist as a sacrifice.

⁴²¹ποιήσον ἡμᾶς ἀξίους γενέσθαι τοῦ προσφέρειν σοὶ δεήσεις καὶ ἱκεσίας καὶ θυσίας ἀναιμάκτους ὑπὲρ παντός τοῦ λαοῦ σου...

⁴²² op.cit. page 381

⁴²³ Κύριε, ὁ θεὸς παντοκράτωρ ὁ μόνος ἅγιος, ὁ δεχόμενος θυσίαν αἰνέσεως παρὰ τῶν ἐπικαλουμένων Σε ἐν ὅλῃ καρδίᾳ, πρόδεξαι καὶ ἡμῶν τῶν ἁμαρτωλῶν τὴν δέησιν καὶ προσάγαγε τῷ ἁγίῳ Σου θυσιαστηρίῳ. Καὶ ἱκάνωσον ἡμᾶς προσενεγκεῖν Σοὶ δῶρα τε καὶ θυσίας πνευματικὰς ὑπὲρ τῶν ἡμετέρων ἁμαρτημάτων καὶ τῶν τοῦ λαοῦ ἀγνοημάτων. Καὶ καταξιώσον ἡμᾶς εὐρεῖν χάριν ἐνώπιόν Σου, τοῦ γενέσθαι Σοὶ εὐπρόσδεκτον τὴν θυσίαν ἡμῶν καὶ ἐπισκηνώσαι τὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς χάριτός Σου τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐφ' ἡμᾶς καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ προκείμενα δῶρα ταῦτα καὶ ἐπὶ πάντα τὸν λαόν Σου

⁴²⁴ op.cit. page 381

19.6 THE ROMAN LITURGY

Some ascribe these prayers to Leo the Great, who became Bishop of Rome in 451 A.D. There appears to be complete accord with the Greek Liturgies about the nature of the eucharistic sacrifice.

19.6.1 Arian Fragment from the Sacramentum Veronese

A fragment of the old Latin Liturgy may well have survived in this fragment from the *Sacramentum Veronese*.

"...as we ask your great and compliant mercy to accept this sacrifice, which we offer you as we stand in the sight of your divine majesty through Jesus Christ our Lord and God..."⁴²⁵

This prayer shows that the Latin Church also understood the Eucharist as a sacrifice; a sacrifice which by the grace of God, the Church can now offer.

19.6.2 De Sacramentis: Prayer of Offering

A very important reference is found in *De Sacramentis*⁴²⁶:

"...we offer you this spotless sacrifice, this spiritual sacrifice, this bloodless sacrifice, this holy bread and chalice of eternal life, and we beseech and pray you to take this offering by the hand of your angels to your altar on high, just as you were graciously pleased to receive the gift of your just servant Abel, the sacrifice of our father Abraham, and the offering the high priest Melchizedek made to you."⁴²⁷

These words presumably belong to the Liturgy used in Milan by St. Ambrose as it is quoted by him. The Eucharistic Sacrifice is described as: "spotless",

⁴²⁵ ...nec sufficere possumus petentes de tua magna et flexibili pietate accepto ferre sacrificium istud, quod tibi offerimus stantes ante conspectum tuae divinae pietatis per Jesus Christum dominum et deum nostrum...

⁴²⁶ Bk.V.6 op.cit. page 192 PL Vol.16 cols. 445,446

⁴²⁷ ...offerimus tibi hanc immaculatam hostiam, rationabilem hostiam, incruentam hostiam, hunc panem sanctum, et calicem vitae aeternae: et petimus et precamur, ut hanc oblationem suscipias in sublimi altari tuo per manus angelorum tuorum, sicut suscipere dignatus es munera pueri tui iusti Abel, et sacrificium patriarchae nostri Abrahae, et quod tibi obtulit summus sacerdos Melchisedech.

"spiritual", and "bloodless"; and although the word used is hostia rather than sacrificium, the meaning is the same. These are all expressions used in Greek liturgies; but in addition there is a link made between the Eucharist, and some of the sacrifices of the patriarchs of Genesis. This serves to emphasize the sacrificial nature of the offering that is being made.

19.7 Conclusions

In conclusion it would be fair to say that the Church in this period regarded the Eucharist as a sacrifice; albeit a complex one. Certainly, like the Old Testament sacrifices, the Eucharist is reckoned to be a propitiatory sacrifice. The sacrifice of the New Covenant is also different. It is offered by Christ through the prayers of his priests and his faithful people as a "sacrifice of praise". It is also called spotless, holy, unbloody, reasonable, and blameless. It is offered by Christians (who are all unworthy) through Christ (who alone is worthy). In the Eucharist, Christ offers himself to the Father. In other words, the Liturgies reflect the theology of the Fathers; or perhaps more correctly, the Fathers are reflecting the Liturgy with which they were familiar through constant usage. Undoubtedly, the Eucharistic Liturgy has always lain at the heart of the life of the Church, and they reflect the Apostolic Tradition that comes down from the hand of the Lord.

Chapter XX

CONCLUSIONS

Looking back through the writings of the Fathers, there appear to be three main stages in the development of the Church's understanding of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. First there is the Apostolic period, which includes the New Testament and the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. Secondly, there are the two centuries prior to the conversion of Constantine. Thirdly there is what Quasten calls the "Golden Age of Patristic Literature", when Christianity had been established as the official religion of the Roman Empire. The traditional rigid division of the Fathers into Eastern and Western seems to be unjustified from the texts themselves.

In the first stage, while the memory of the Lord's life and Passion were still alive in the hearts of those who had known him, Christians seem to have had no reason to explicate in written form the great gift that Christ had left to the Church in the Holy Eucharist. The absence of any written Liturgy, the expectation of the Second Coming, and the apparent contradictions caused by the split with Judaism, all contributed to this state of affairs. In a period when the Temple sacrifices were still continuing, and there was still a hope for the conversion of Israel (and the Church in Jerusalem was still influential), it is not surprising that the concept of "sacrifice" centred on the Passion; and also on the ineffectiveness of the animal sacrifices. However, it is clear from the Gospel that Jesus Christ had said that he had come to fulfil the Law and the Prophets, and not to abolish them. Many times when Jesus was asked about the road to eternal life he referred his followers to the Torah; but it was a Torah understood spiritually and not legalistically. The prophets had begun to understand it in this way. Most of the Fathers return again and again to the verse: "I desire mercy and not sacrifice". The fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. that was such a catastrophe for the Jews was also a liberation for the Christian theology of sacrifice. Christians were able to see the words of their Lord come true, and in the virtual destruction of Israel to see themselves as the true

inheritors of Moses.

The second stage begins in the time of the Apologists and continues through the period of the great persecutions. During this time, the Christian Faith spread rapidly throughout the Roman Empire, breaking free from its Jewish origins as it spread through the great cities of the Roman world. The removal of the influence of the Church in Jerusalem, after the fall of the city and the destruction of the Temple, resulted in Paul's labours (and indeed those of others) bearing much fruit. Antioch, and then Rome and Alexandria rose to prominence as a result of their apostolic origins. In particular, Rome as the capital city of the Empire acquired a particular prominence, which was greatly strengthened by its strong adherence to "orthodoxy". However, its gradual abandonment of Greek as the language of the Liturgy and theology was bound to cause problems in later centuries. In this stage, which is best exemplified by Irenaeus, the Fathers are able to talk of a Eucharist which is a sacrifice made by the people of God as they invoke the Holy Spirit, and they are united with Christ as "he offers his own". Without doubt, the shedding of the blood of the martyrs throughout this period had a profound effect on the way Christians saw the relationship between the Passion of Christ and the Eucharist. They asked to what extent the blood of the martyrs was able to mingle with the blood of Christ, and also what was happening when Christians celebrated the Eucharist. Suffering and a fear of discovery turned the Church in on itself to some extent. Baptism was normally delayed, and there was much preparation before anyone went to the font. Refugees in the desert began to experiment with various forms of monasticism. Self-sacrifice began to be expressed sacramentally in the life of the Church: and this was done in the Eucharist.

In the third and final stage, the sudden freedom from persecution (after Constantine became Emperor) resulted in much more communication between Christian theologians as they were able to circulate their writings much more freely. Many works from the time of the persecutions had been lost: but great Bishops like Basil, John Chrysostom, and Augustine were able to build upon the foundation of earlier centuries. In this period, the Eucharist is seen clearly as the sacrifice of the Church. It is sometimes described as an "unbloody sacrifice" as in the Liturgy

of St. Basil, sometimes a "sacrifice of praise", and on some occasions as a "spotless sacrifice", or a "life-giving sacrifice" (an expression which is particularly used by St. Cyril of Alexandria). This sacrifice is celebrated by the Church through the hands of ordained priests, and there is a constant reminder that this is done by God's help and not just by men. For Christ is the Great High Priest. He became man for the salvation of mankind. He, who was the Word made flesh, offered himself to his Father once and for all; but in a mysterious mystical way, he is also present in the Eucharist offering himself as a sacrifice on behalf of the Church and the world. Without him Christians can do nothing. With him miracles are possible. If a Virgin can conceive and bear a son, ordinary bread and wine can indeed become the Body and Blood of Christ. Here in this sacrament the Church is caught up into heaven, and through the power of the Holy Spirit the Church is transformed. The Church becomes the Body of Christ. The Bride is made ready to meet the Bridegroom, and she is washed clean by the power of God.

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