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Worship and Sacrifice

Charles J. **Evanson**

. . . if you want to engage in a marvelous, great worship of God and honor Christ's passion rightly, then remember and participate in the sacrament; in it, as you hear, there is a remembrance of him, that is, he is praised and glorified. If you practice or assist in practicing this same remembrance with diligence, then you will assuredly forget about the self-chosen forms of worship, for as has been said, you cannot praise and thank God too often or too much for his grace revealed in Christ. ¹

It is with this matter of the right remembrance of our Lord in the public worship of the Christian congregation that we mean to concern ourselves in this study. It will be our principal interest to consider *cultus*, the activity of the gathered people of God, the context in which we celebrate the sufferings and triumph of our Lord and receive the fruit of His merits. What we do in public worship has been variously understood in Christian history, not only among people of widely divergent theological schools and ecclesiastical communities, but even within those schools and groupings. With regard to our own Lutheran community, for example, significant criticisms against what are widely regarded as unjustified liturgical innovations in our parishes—in many cases sponsored and approved by the liturgical commission so synods and national **church-bodies**—have surfaced with increased frequency. Many of these criticisms have focused on the increased use of various eucharistic prayers and formulae incorporating with them a specific act of commemoration of the acts of God (the *Anamnesis*), one or another construction of the Words of Institution (the *Verba*), and a solemn prayer of blessing which calls upon the Holy Spirit to bless the people, or the elements, or both (the *Epiclesis*).

The literature of criticism regarding these prayers has mounted steadily, especially with reference to the proposals of the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship and the fruit of its labours, the **Lutheran Book of Worship**. Those who read Lutheran periodicals or attended the first "Symposium on the Theology of Worship" held at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, in 1977 will have little difficulty recalling many heated discussions in which the eucharistic prayer has been singled out for an especially critical examination. The

published essays of Oliver K. Olson, the critical survey of the situation in Germany of Wilhelm Oesch, the *tour de force* levelled against the ILCW's *The Great Thanksgiving* by Gottfried Krodel, and numerous other monographs have made it abundantly clear that many theological questions remain unresolved.²

Hermann Sasse's Letter #23, written in 1952 to Lutheran Pastors under the title *Der Schriftgrund der lutherischen Abendmahllehre*, may serve as a short summary statement of some of the objections to modern liturgical developments in Lutheran Churches around the globe. According to Sasse, the introduction of a eucharistic prayer • indeed, *any* eucharistic prayer • including either *an Anamnesis* or *Epiclesis*, in connection with the Words of Institution, represents the development within world Lutheranism of a theological crisis of the first order. According to Sasse :

Many have not realized that the use of *an epiclesis* is evidence of a completely different understanding of the presence of Christ from that which obtains in Lutheranism. The purpose of the Berneuchen Movement in Germany • and parallel movements in other Lutheran territories • to renew the thought of the sacrifice of the Mass indicate that the place of the Eucharist in the Lutheran Reformation is no longer understood. It has come to be understood as something that one does, rather than something that one *receives*. The central aspect of 'for the forgiveness of sins' retreats into the *background*.³

One does find that the primary Reformation emphasis on the Sacrament as *beneficium*⁴ appears to be in a state of eclipse in some modern studies, but it may still be questioned whether Sasse's characterization adequately covers the "High-Church" phenomenon. What is being done in many parishes • with the encouragement of official commissions • is for many both alien and upsetting. If for no other reason than this, the *caveat* of theologians of the stature of Sasse and Elert appear to them entirely valid, and the decision is both direct and simple: the only course which confessing Lutherans may legitimately follow is to *cont*inue in the familiar pattern of praying the Our Father, followed by the recital of the "simple words of our Lord."

It must be considered, however, that Lutheran theologians have long remarked about the gradual impoverishment of our Lutheran worship, and were doing so long before latter-day liturgical experts fell under the influence of Gregory Dix and the charm of things Anglican. Werner Elert (in his *Morphologie des Luthertums*) and Paul Graff (in *Geschichte der Aufloesung der Alten Gottesdienstlichen Formen in der*

Evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands) have long since provided particular documentation to the inexorable impoverishment of Lutheran worship since the Reformation era.

It was the appearance of Archbishop Brilioth's *Eucharistic Faith and Practice: Evangelical and Catholic* (with its analysis of basic eucharistic motifs of the various ecclesiastical traditions and the dominant moods of thanksgiving, **communion**, **commemoration**, **sacrifice**, and **mystery** which appear to predominate in the different traditions) which first brought the Lutheran Eucharist to the direct attention of non-Lutherans, and at the same time whetted the appetite of many Lutherans for what they now came to regard as a more complete, balanced, adequate, and even catholic form of eucharistic worship. Brilioth's work has been pivotal, of more significance even than the major labours of Dom Gregory Dix.⁵ Unfortunately, the work of neither of these "giants" is without serious faults. In the case of Brilioth, it must be noted that he fell heir to the destructive critical work of Spitta, Schweitzer, *et al.* As heir to a methodology which made it impossible for **him** to make any authoritative statement about what the congregation **ought to believe** and how it **ought** to worship, Brilioth had instead to be content with an empirical examination of the extant forms of the Eucharist and its place in the life of the churches. He was from the outset forced to face two important critical questions:

- (i) Can the **eucharist** of the church still be derived from the action of Jesus in the night that he was betrayed?
- (ii) Can any particular view of the rite be established on the basis of the New Testament evidence as the norm and standard by which all subsequent developments are to be **judged**⁶ ?

Unfortunately, on the basis of his methodology, Brilioth is not equipped to answer either of these important **questions** satisfactorily. For him the New Testament has dissolved into independent and perhaps even conflicting "theologies." Accordingly, only one answer can be given to the question of the relationship of the Eucharist to the Lord:

For our faith it must be sufficient to be certain, as we can be certain, that this holy rite stood from the very beginning at the centre of the stream **of spiritual life** which had its source in the Master himself, **and which is** itself the chief witness to the power which was in him.⁷

This answer is, of course, no answer **at all: it simply begs the** question. In the same way, it is impossible for Brilioth to answer the second question in any positive way. Since the Gospels are themselves witnesses to a variety of theological emphases, one can **posit** only that there can be no real norm

whatever outside the consensus of the extant liturgies themselves. Far from seeing the Scriptures as norm and standard, it **appears that these writings** themselves will admit to no norm. **Brilioth** draws this conclusion:

It follows that we ought to abstain from the attempt to **find in** the Scriptures one normative liturgical type. In this sphere as in others we ought to seek in the scripture less a system of doctrine than a life; life in its apparently inconsistent variety, rather than a standard **form. We** must take pains to appreciate the richness and manifoldness in the New Testament evidence; otherwise we shall miss the fullness of the Divine revelation, and take as a substitute some one-sided expression of fragmentary aspects of it.⁸

Much modern liturgical scholarship which seeks to determine the place of the Supper in the life of the Church appears to have been built upon the suppositions of just such a phenomenological understanding of the Eucharist. One finds the fruits of it, for example, in *Meaning and Practice of the Lord's Supper*, edited by Helmut T. Lehmann (1961), a work which is a valuable study of the "state of the art" of **liturgics**—but absolutely inconclusive from the standpoint of theology.⁹

In so far as modern liturgical scholarship stands in the tradition of a dogmatically inconclusive **phenomenology**, or seeks to correct an overly "Pauline" emphasis on communion with a dash of the "Johannine" aspects of mystery (which may exist in other models), one can see a fundamental justification for fears and mortification. Such fears have been borne out in **some** of the more recent liturgical productions. For **example**, Karl Bernhard Ritter included in *Das Eucharistische Feiern* of the German **Michaelsbruederschaft**, a complete eucharistic prayer which is sufficiently vague to be regarded as papist in tone. To pray, ". . . Cleansed and reconciled by His Blood, we enter with joy into the Holy Place and draw near to the Throne of Thy Grace in the power of this pure, holy, and all-sufficient sacrifice" is surely to invite misunderstanding, at least.¹⁰

One may, however, question whether the critics have put the real problem into proper focus. Is the problem so intimately connected with the **so-called** Eucharistic Prayer that it must, of necessity appear wherever such prayers are introduced? Is it always decisively avoided where such prayers are not found? The best answer to both questions is a resounding no! The appearance of such prayers is by no means a strictly modern phenomenon, nor is it universally indicative of theological defection. In the last century, Friedrich Lochner, in *Der Hauptgottesdienst der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche. Zur Erhaltung des liturgischen Erbteils und zur Befoederung des*

liturgischen Studiums in der americanisch-lutherischen Kirche erlaeutert und mit alkirchlichen Singweisen versehen, which appeared in 1895 under the *imprimatur* and *nihil obstat* of Concordia Publishing House, wrote approvingly of the *Epiclesis*. He includes in a footnote the form of such an invocation of the Holy Spirit, taken from the *Church Order of Ottheirich* (1543):

Lord Jesus Christ, Thou Only True Son of the Living God . . . we bring before Thy Divine **Majesty** these Thine own gifts of bread and wine, and beseech Thee that Thou wouldst, by the Divine Grace, Goodness, and Power sanctify, bless, and **make** this bread to be Thy Body and this wine to be Thy Blood. Bless also all those who eat and drink thereof, that they be granted Eternal Life . . .”

Lochner notes that the proper position of this prayer is after the Our Father (before the *Verba*). He notes further that the ancient Church, up to the fifth century, regarded the Our *Father* itself, the *ipsissima verba Christi*, as the true prayer of consecration. He quotes Pope Gregory the Great:

To me it appears unseemly that we speak over the Oblation a prayer that has originated with a theologian (*Scholasticus*) and pass over in silence, over the Body and Blood of the Redeemer, the prayer which He Himself authored.¹²

One should note also the specific approval which Melancthon, in Apology XXIV, gives to the Eucharistic Prayers of the Eastern Church. He regards them as an especially strong testimony against the contemporary papist understanding of the significance of the Mass. We shall examine his words in greater detail in another connection. Further evidences of the use of some form of Eucharistic Prayer within the Lutheran tradition are found in the *Agenda* of the Bavarian Church (1879), *Pfalz-Neubrug* (1543), and Kassel (1896).¹³

The 1942 *Svenska Kyrko-Handboken* of the Church of Sweden includes such a prayer, after the *Sanctus*:

Praise be to Thee, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that Thou hast had mercy upon the children of men and sent Thine Only-Begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. We thank Thee for the salvation which Thou hast prepared for us through Jesus Christ. Send forth Thy Spirit into our hearts, that He may enkindle in us a living faith and prepare us rightly to make this commemoration of our Saviour, and receive Him as He comes to us in His Holy Supper.¹⁴

The Norwegian *Alterbok for den Norske Kirke* (Fifth Edition,

1966), includes a similar prayer at the same place, but in this case, addressed directly to our Lord Himself:

We give Thee thanks, Lord Jesus Christ; we bless **Thy** Name, Thou -Only-Begotten Son of the Father, our Saviour. To Thee be glory for the love which endured even death. We beseech Thee, grant that we who come to Thy Table to partake of Thy Body and Blood, that we may come before Thy presence with humble and **confident** hearts. Unite us to Thyself as branches to the Vine; teach us to love one another, even as Thou hast loved us, and grant to us, with all Thy **Holy** Church, that we may find consolation and rejoicing in Thee! O, Thou Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. O, Thou Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, grant us Thy peace. ¹⁵

Mention should also be made of the post-war work of the German Lutheran territorial churches which culminated in the authorization of a common form for the celebration of the Holy Supper, in which congregations have been given the alternative of the traditional pattern of **Preface-Sanctus- Verba-Our** Father, *etc.*, or the addition of a short Eucharistic Prayer after the *Sanctus* and before the *Verba*:

Praise be to Thee, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that Thou hast had mercy upon Thy creation, and sent Thine Only-Begotten Son into our flesh. We thank Thee for the redemption which Thou hast prepared for us through the holy sacrifice of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the Tree of the Cross. We praise His victorious resurrection from the dead and exult in His ascension into Thy heavenly sanctuary, where He, our High Priest, ever intercedes before Thee on our behalf. In His **Name**, we beseech Thee, Lord: Send Thy Holy Spirit into our hearts; sanctify and renew us in body and soul, and grant to us that in this Holy Supper we may receive the true Body and Blood of Thy Son in true faith, with thanksgiving. Gather Thou Thine elect from the ends of the earth into Thy Kingdom, and grant that with sure confidence we may wait for the Coming-Again of Thy Son. To Thee be glory in eternity. ¹⁶

The author does not know to what extent German **congregations** have actually availed themselves of this option. The **appearance** of the prayer has excited some negative comment, as mentioned above. It is interesting to note that the recent *Lutheran Hymnal* of the Lutheran Church in Australia, which in so many details draws heavily on the *German Agende*, does not offer the option of this prayer, ¹⁷

The propriety of such prayers as have been introduced in various Lutheran churches cannot be adequately treated simply on the basis of statements about Reformation era models. The real question arises in a different connection. It has to do with the whole relationship between the Sacrament of the Altar and the **cultic** context in which it is found. As long **as** the Supper is the occasion of prayers, songs, preaching, and other pious exercises, the question must be faced: what, exactly, is happening as the congregation gathers with her pastor around the Table of the Lord?

Luther concerned himself with this question to an important extent. Already by **1520**, he was writing against the notion that the Mass is a propitiatory sacrifice offered by the Church to obtain the benefits of the passion of our Lord. The Scriptures do not speak of it as such (*W A 8*, p. 421), nor is it possible for us by any sacrifice to appease the wrath of God (*W A 6*, p. 367), nor is it even necessary for us to do so (*W A 8*, p. 441f.). We should rather offer to God nothing but prayers, thanksgivings, and praise (*W A 6*, p. 368), together with the faith that Christ, our High Priest in Heaven, offers Himself for us without ceasing, presents us, and makes us and our prayers and our praises acceptable to His Father. Luther speaks **as** follows:

To be sure this sacrifice of prayer, praise, and thanksgiving, and of ourselves as well, we are not **to** present before God in our own person. But we are to lay it upon Christ and let Him present it for us From these words we learn that we do not offer Christ as a sacrifice, but that Christ offers us. And in this way it is permissible, yes, profitable, to **call** the mass a sacrifice; not on its own account, but because we offer ourselves as a sacrifice along with Christ. That is, we lay ourselves on Christ by a firm faith in His testament and do not otherwise appear before God with our prayer, praise, and sacrifice except through Christ and His mediation. Nor do we doubt that Christ is our priest or minister in heaven before God. Such faith truly brings it to pass that Christ takes up our cause, presents us and our prayer and praise, and also offers himself for us in heaven. If the mass were so understood and for this reason called a sacrifice, it would be well. Not that we offer the sacrifice, but that by our praise, prayer, and sacrifice we move Him and give Him occasion to offer Himself for us in heaven and ourselves with Him Few, however, understand the mass in this way. For they suppose that only the priest offers the mass as a sacrifice before God. Actually, this is done and should be done by everyone who receives the

sacrament-yes, also by those who are present at mass but do not receive the sacrament. Furthermore such an offering of sacrifice every Christian may make wherever he is and at all times . . . If He is a priest for ever, then He is at all times a priest and is offering sacrifices without ceasing before God. But we cannot be continually the same; therefore the mass has been instituted that we may there come together and offer such sacrifice in common . . . Thus it becomes clear that it is not the priest alone who offers the sacrifice of the mass; it is this faith which each one has for himself. This is the true priestly office, through which Christ is offered as a sacrifice to God, an office which the priest, with the outward ceremonies of the mass, simply represents. Each and all are, therefore, equally spiritual priests before God. ¹⁸

Were Luther retains some of the traditional terminology which he has inherited, but the development gives evidence of a stark discontinuity with the medieval developments in the theology of sacrifice. One may, for example, speak in terms of the offering of Christ, but only in the sense of desiring the salvation which He has accomplished and believing that He has, in fact, accomplished it on our behalf. When one firmly desires and believes that Christ has died on his behalf and wishes to be heard and received by the Father on the basis of the Person and Work of Christ, then one may be said to be "offering Christ":

It is just as if I wished to offer the physical, earthly priest as a sacrifice in the mass and to appoint him to present my need and my praise of God, and he were to give me a token that he would do it. Just as in this case I would be offering the priest as a sacrifice, so it is that I also offer Christ, in that I desire and believe that He accepts me and my prayer and praise and presents it to God in His own person.¹⁹

In the Confessional writings, Luther speaks little about the sacrificial aspects of the Mass - excepting to condemn flatly the papist doctrine of sacrifice as ". . . a work of man, by which one attempts to reconcile himself and others to God, and to obtain and merit the remission of sins and grace."²⁰ His primary struggle is rather on a wholly different front-against those who have spiritualized the sacrament out of existence. "The fanatical spirits," he says in the Large Catechism, "regard the sacrament aside from the Word of God, as something that we do."²¹ The **sacrament** stands as the divinely appointed and ordained means by which the fruits of the saving person and work of Christ come to us: "For although the work

is accomplished and the forgiveness of sins acquired on the cross, yet it cannot come to us in any other way than through the Word.”²² The same thought appears in the *Confession Concerning Christ's Supper* (1528):

In the same way I carefully wrote against the heavenly prophets that the fact of Christ's suffering and the use of it are not the same thing: *factum et applicatio facti: seu factum et usus facti*. The passion of Christ occurred but once on the cross. But whom would it benefit if it were not distributed, applied, and put to use? And how could it be put to use and distributed except through Word and sacrament? But why should such great saints read my treatise? They know far better, Well, they have their reward, that they consider the fact and the application to be one and the same, and thereby reduce themselves to folly and shame. They fail to see that in the Supper the application of **the passion**, and not the fact of it, is **concerned**.²³

This point answers the problems of the fanatics, and at the same time underscores the Lutheran polemic against the papist notion of sacrifice. It would not be correct, however, to think that the “later Luther” drops the subject of eucharistic sacrifice. It *is* in the *Admonition Concerning the Sacrament* (1530) that Luther spells out in some detail the proper, evangelical understanding of the eucharistic sacrifice. The papists call their Mass a *misteriale* or *memoriale sacrificium*, he says, by which the sacrifice of Christ on the cross is recalled and interpreted as a form of contemplation. Luther continues:

However, they should not suppose that I want to argue about words. For where everything else is in order, the words are not as important (although such an attitude is dangerous in regard to Scripture). Very well, we are **ready** to concede and to permit not the sacrament itself but the reception or use of the sacrament to be called a sacrifice, with this difference and understanding: first, that it is not called an interpretative sacrifice or sacrifice of works but a sacrifice of thanksgiving; this means that whoever receives the sacrament is supposed to do it as a sign of thanksgiving by which he shows that he, as far as his own person is concerned, is thankful in his heart to Christ for his suffering and grace. Second, that the priests cannot make it into another sacrifice at the altar, but that they, too, receive it in no other way nor with any other significance than as a sign by which they indicate that they are in their own persons giving thanks to Christ in their hearts, in the same way that the other Christians to whom they offer

it from the altar also give thanks. So there will be one and the same sacrament both of the priests and of the laity, and the priests will have nothing better or different or more in the sacrament than that which one receives from them. Third, that henceforth they do not sell to anyone the sacrament or mass as a sacrament for others, either for the dead or for the living, in order to obtain grace. Rather, every priest should offer it for himself, like every other Christian, to demonstrate his thankfulness to God. Fourth (Dare I also touch on this?): If the use of the mass or sacrament has become a sacrifice of thanksgiving, they should repent and return all goods, seals, and letters, in addition to all cloisters and income from foundations, all of which they have received and possess through (their proclamation of) the mass as a sacrifice of works; for such possessions have been won with lies and deceptions, yes, with blasphemy of God and betrayal of Christ. If kings and princes had that a priest could do no more with the sacrament on the altar than a layman who receives it, namely, that he solely gives thanks to God in his own person, do you think they would have been so senseless and would have given so many possessions to someone who does not offer a sacrifice for them nor reconciles them to God but gives thanks only for himself? Tut, tut, tut, how it sets my teeth on edge! I do not believe that I can get this point across to them; I am quite sure of that. . . . The sacrament is one matter, the remembrance is another matter. He (Christ) says that we should use and practice the sacrament and, in addition, remember him, that is, teach, believe, and give thanks. The remembrance is indeed supposed to be a sacrifice of thanksgiving; but the sacrament itself should not be a sacrifice but a gift of God which he has given to us and which we should take and receive with thanks. For this reason I think that the ancients called this office *eucharistia* or *sacramentum eucharistia*, that is, a thanksgiving. For in this sacrament we should thank God according to the command of Christ, and we should use and receive the sacrament with thanks. In the course of time, however, through misunderstanding, this word came to be applied only to the sacrament. Even that would not have been a bad way of saying it if people had said, when going to mass or to the service, "I want to go to the thanksgiving," namely, to that office at which one thanks and praises God in his sacrament, as it appears the ancients intended that it should be done, ²⁴

We turn to Melancthon, who addressed himself to the

question of the **cultic** context of the Sacrament in Article XXIV of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession (1531). In the Augsburg Confession (1530) itself, he had directed his attention to the fact that the Mass itself and its accustomed ceremonies had not been cast aside in the churches **adhering** to the Confession, but that all these things had been **retained**, so that on every Sunday and holy day, they were used and held in high reverence. In addition, he stated, the people of our churches are accustomed to actually receive the Sacrament of the Altar; their pastors preach frequently concerning the great value of the Sacrament and its proper use, and none are admitted to the altar unless first they have been examined and absolved. "Such worship is pleasing to God."²⁵ The **major** thrust of the article is the correction of the abuses of private masses and unworthy communions, the notion that the Mass is a work performed by man which can be performed for the benefit of non-communicants (living or dead). At the same time, a most significant and positive emphasis is placed on the fact that what is important is that it is Christ whom we receive and whose benefits we remember.

In the eyes of the Roman Confutors, and later Roman Catholic critics, this article is clearly **unsatisfactory**.²⁶ In the **Confutation** the Romanists state that the Eucharist is offered in memory of the passion of Christ. Melancthon understands that there is something of real importance at stake here: it is the question of the orientation, the prior and over-riding emphasis in all Christian worship. Here one must carefully distinguish between the Sacrament itself and the service of worship in which the Sacrament is offered to us. They are not one and the **same**: the one **is** wholly **beneficium**; the other has within it legitimate elements of **sacrificium**, properly understood.

The fundamental observation of paragraph nine of the **apology** is a reminder that the most essential question is not whether the Eucharist is a sacrifice, but precisely in **what** sense it is to be understood as a sacrifice. In Melancthon's understanding, it is clearly not a propitiatory sacrifice which offers and confers grace *ex opere operato* to those for in whose benefit mass is said.²⁷ The primary intention of the original formulation of the *ex opere operato* concept was, it should be noted, to safeguard the objectivity of the operation of the sacrament. This formulation was initiated first among the theologians of the Franciscan School - particularly Alexander of Hales and Bonaventura. "The sacraments of the New Testament justify and confer grace of themselves *ex opere operato*," was Bonaventura's **dictum**.²⁸ The Franciscans regarded the relationship between the **substance** of the sacrament and the grace conferred by the sacrament to be primarily moral (i.e., the substance or element is arbitrary; the

grace of God is independent of the substance and is communicated alongside the **substance**),²⁹ whereas for Thomas of Aquino, the substance is itself the real cause of the communication of the grace of God. For the Franciscans, the efficacy of the sacrament stems not from the value of the material and form employed, nor from the personal power of the minister, but from the will of God in Christ who has instituted the sacrament, and the Holy Spirit who works in and through the sacrament. For Thomas and the Dominican School, the emphasis is placed on the effectiveness of the sacramental action, without regard to whether or not the recipient has faith in the empowering word of Christ. The results of a valid celebration are inevitably and invariably efficacious, but the effects will vary, according to the conditions under which the sacrament is administered.³⁰ What results is a new meaning to the *ex opere operato* formula. The accent moves from the command and promise of Christ and the faith of the participant to the validity of the action itself, without regard for the spiritual condition or motive of the recipient.³¹

Thus, this is the point at issue: whether the emphasis is to be placed on the word and action of the Institutor (Christ), or on the action of the individual or community which celebrates and offers. Medieval theologians put the emphasis on the latter, regarding the Mass as a sacrificial action which provides a point of connection between Christ, His person and works, and those who carry out the action in time and place. Such an action of sacrifice must, of necessity, be regarded as a propitiatory sacrifice, which seeks to placate God's wrath, take hold of the merits of Christ, win forgiveness, and make one right with God - on the basis of the human act of sacrificing. In this context it makes no significant difference whether one labours to prove that the sacrifice of the Mass is none other than the repetition, reappropriation, or representation of the one sacrifice of Christ Himself. In any case, the underlying misapprehension remains: it is by his own **labours** or by what he himself does in the celebration (under whatever terminology) that one seeks to appropriate, concretize, or realize the sacrifice of Christ and receive the fruits of His redemptive work.

Melanchthon is not willing on this account to disregard further consideration of sacrifice from his understanding of the chief service of the church. The problem is not indigenous to the concept of sacrifice itself, but rather represents the wholesale confusion of the necessary distinction, first, between **sacramentum** and *sacrificium*, and then between the two vastly different sorts of *sacrificii* of which the Scriptures speak. Some later historians have faulted Melanchthon for concentrating at all upon the ceremonial aspects of **sacramentum** and

sacrificium,³² but to him this is the reasonable starting point, for both are actions involving ceremonies. A *sacramentum* is a ceremony or work in which "God presents to us that which the attached promise offer,"³³ for there are ceremonies involved: bread and wine are placed upon the altar, God consecrates and blesses them, and communicants come forward, etc.

Sacrificium, on the other hand, denotes a ceremony or work which is rendered to God in order to show Him that honour which is due Him. All sacrifices fall into one of two categories: the *sacrificium propitiatorium* - "id est, opus satisfactorium pro culpa et poena" - which makes satisfaction and expiation for guilt and punishment.³⁴ Within this category are included only the one truly propitious sacrifice which Christ Himself has offered and the acknowledged antitypes of that sacrifice which were offered under the provisions of the Law.³⁵ There are and can be no, other expiatory sacrifice than that of **Christ**.³⁶ Now on the basis of Christ's propitiatory sacrifice, His people offer the *sacrificium eucharis tikon*—the so-called eucharistic sacrifice, which is not restricted to the celebration of the Sacrament of the Altar,³⁷ but encompasses and gives character to the whole life of the Christian. This new-life is itself a sacrifice of praise, including the proclamation of the Gospel, faith, prayer, thanksgiving, confession, the afflictions of the saints, all the good works of God's people, the righteousness of faith (which believes that by the sufferings and death of our Lord we have been reconciled with God).³⁸ This is the worship brought by those who have already been reconciled by the sacrifice of Christ; it is the worship of the "holy priesthood" of which St. Peter speaks in I Peter 2, and the "living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, your reasonable worship" of which St. Paul speaks in Romans 12:1.³⁹

This eucharistic sacrifice is the worship which faith alone can offer: it is the *cultus novi testamenti*, "worship of the New Testament" (as distinguished from the Levitical sacrifices of the Old Covenant),⁴⁰ which consists in the righteousness of faith in the heart and the fruits of faith (*iustitia fidei in corde et fructus fidei*). This is what was meant by Malachi (1:11) when he spoke of the offering of incense and a pure sacrifice, for the name of the Lord is magnified ". . . through the proclamation of the Gospel, which makes known the name of Christ and the Father's mercy promised in Christ. The proclamation of the Gospel produces faith in those who accept it. They call upon God, they give thanks to God, they bear afflictions in confession, they do good works for the glory of **Christ**."⁴¹ All this must be included in the "daily sacrifice," and not just the celebration of the Mass understood as a ceremony validly performed:

Our opponents always apply the term "sacrifice" only to the ceremony. They omit the proclamation of the Gospel, faith, prayer, and things like that, though it was for these that the ceremony was instituted . . .⁴² We are perfectly willing for the Mass to be understood as a daily sacrifice, provided this means the whole Mass, the ceremony and also the proclamation of the Gospel, faith, prayer, and **thanksgiving**.⁴³

It is these together - and not simply the outward ceremonies - which represent the true *anamnesis*:

the commemoration is the real daily sacrifice, the proclamation and the faith which truly believes that by the death of Christ God has been reconciled. There must be a drink offering, namely, the effect of the proclamation, as we are sanctified, put to death, and made alive when the Gospel sprinkles us with the blood. There must also be an offering in thanksgiving, confession, and affliction.⁴⁴

Melanchthon sees strong evidence for the evangelical understanding of sacrifice in the writings of the ancient Fathers. There is, of course, no mention of merit *ex opere operato* in the Western Church before the Franciscan Schoolmen, and the concept does not appear in the Eastern Church at all - until the development of the "theology of convergence" by which some post-Reformation Eastern theologians came to understand their own theology in Western, quite alien terms.⁴⁵ Melanchthon finds further evidence in the name by which the Mass is known in the East, *leiturgia*, "liturgy"- that is, a public service of and for the whole community.⁴⁶ Reference is made as well to the **eucharistic** liturgy of the Eastern Church, that of Chrysostomos.

The Greek canon also says much about an offering; but it clearly shows that it is not talking about the body and blood of the Lord in particular, but about the whole service, about the prayers and thanksgivings. This is what it says: "And make us worthy to come to offer Thee entreaties and supplications and bloodless sacrifices for all the people." Properly understood, this is not offensive. It prays that we might be worthy to offer prayers and supplications and bloodless sacrifices for the people. It calls even prayers "bloodless sacrifices." So it says a little later: "We offer Thee this reasonable and bloodless sacrifice." It is a misinterpretation to translate this as "reasonable victim" and apply it to the body of Christ itself. For the canon is talking about the whole service; and by "reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1) Paul meant the service of the

mind, fear, faith, prayer, thanksgiving, and the like, in opposition to a theory of *ex opere operato*.⁴⁷

In a subsequent passage, Melancthon notes that the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom offers thanksgivings for the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles long dead, but only in the form of a thanksgiving, and not as a satisfactionary sacrifice.⁴⁸ The commemoration of the departed in the form of a thanksgiving is not in itself objectionable. What is forbidden is the notion that the Eucharist can or should be offered on behalf of the dead as an *ex opere operato* performance.

We must admit that we face difficulties when we attempt to determine whether Melancthon was right, or even entirely fair, in his understanding of the concept of sacrifice in the Eastern Church. Few of us have ever taken in hand the Greek text of the *anaphorae* of Chrysostomos and Basileus. Modern translations and interpretations are often coloured by the theological stance of those who produce them. In addition, the flowery and symbolic language and images of the Easterners is sometimes rather inexact, and stands in sharp contrast to the terse directness of the Western tradition.⁴⁹ The language of Chrysostomos on sacrifice and priesthood is itself colourful and varies. One may quote first from his *Treatise on the Priesthood* (II,4):

But if any one should examine the things which belong to the dispensation of grace, he will find that, small as they are, yet are they fearful and full of awe, and that what was spoken concerning the law is true in this case also, that "what has been made glorious hath no glory in this respect by reason of that glory which excelleth" (2 Cor. 3:10). For when you see the Lord sacrificed, and laid upon the altar, and the priest standing and praying over the victim, and all the worshippers empurpled with that precious blood, can you then think that you are still among men, and standing on the earth? Are you not, on the contrary, immediately translated to Heaven, where, casting out every fleshly thought, you contemplate with disembodied spirit and pure reason the things which are in **Heaven?**⁵⁰

But one must balance this statement with the following passage from *Homily XVII* (on Hebrews):

What then? Do we make sacrifice every day? We certainly do, but be making a memorial of His death. And this memorial is one, not many. Why? Because the sacrifice was offered once, for all, as that great sacrifice was in the Holy of **Holies**. This is a figure of that great sacrifice, as that was of this: for we do not offer one victim today and another tomorrow, but always the

same: wherefore the sacrifice if one. Well, then, as He is offered in many places, are there not many Christs? Not at all. Everywhere there is one Christ, complete both in this world and in the other, one body. As then, though offered in many places, He is but one body, so is there but one sacrifice, Our High Priest is He who offers the sacrifice which cleanses us. We offer that now which was offered then: which is indeed unconsumable. This takes place now, for a memorial of what took place then. "Do this," said He, "for My memorial." 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.*

Again, Chrysostomos says in *Homily LXXXII* (on Matthew)

The works set before us are not of man's power. He that then did things at that supper, this same now also works them. We occupy the place of servants. He who sanctified and changed them is the same. . . This table is the same as that, and has nothing less. For it is not so that Christ wrought that, and man this, but he does this too. This is that upper chamber, where they were then; **and** hence they went forth unto the Mount of Olives. Let us also go out unto the hands of the poor, for this spot is the Mount of Olives. For the multitude of the poor are olive-trees planted in the house of God, dropping the oil, which is profitable for us, there, which the five virgins had, and the others that had not received perished thereby. Having received this, let us enter in, that with bright lamps we may meet the bridegroom; having received this, let us go forth hence.

In *Homily XLVI* (on John) Chrysostomos speaks as follows:

. . . **In order that** we may become of His body, not in desire only, but also in very fact, let us become commingled with that body. This, in truth, takes place by means of the food which He has given us as a gift, because He desired to prove the love which He had for us. It is for this reason that He has shared Himself with us and has brought His body down to our level, namely, that we might be one with Him as the body is joined with the dead, This, in truth, is characteristic of those who greatly love . . . The blood which we receive by way of food is not immediately a source of nourishment, but goes through some other stage first; this is **not so with this** blood, for it at once refreshes the soul and **instills** a certain great power in it. This blood, when **worthily** received, drives away demons and puts them at a distance from **us**, and even summons to *us* angels

and the Lord of angels. Where they see the blood of **the** Lord, demons flee, while angels gather. This blood, poured out in abundance, has washed the whole world clean. The blessed Paul has uttered many truths about this blood in the Epistle to the **Hebrews**. This blood has purified the sanctuary and the holy of **holies**.⁵¹

George Guenter Blum notes: "Christ is not simply the Institutor of the first Holy Supper, but He is as well the author and minister of every single Supper which the Church celebrates. We find countless witnesses to this point of view in Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Athanasius. In most cases the sacrificial character of the Eucharist is taken for granted by **them**."⁵² Characteristic is the statement of Theophilus of Antioch: "Christ Himself remains: both priest and offering, bringer of the gift and content of the **gift**, distributor and **distributed**."⁵³ The words of Chrysostomos, which we have quoted from **Homily LXXXII** represent perhaps the highpoint of this Christocentric tradition which is evident also in the homilies of Aphrahat and Ephraem the Syrian, and the Antiochean School.

What is clear in all this is that the sacrificial character is shaped and determined by the larger concept of the gift of communion, whereas the medieval development against which Melancthon argues does not concentrate upon the gift of communion at all. Actually, to this medieval **mindset**, the act of communion is simply a pious, optional exercise. The words of **Albertus Magnus** set the tone of this development: "There is not **only** a representative (*repraesentativa*), but a real immolation."⁵⁴ Where this is the primary purpose for the celebration of the Mass, communion must of necessity recede into the background.⁵⁵ But where and to the extent that the Eastern Churches have retained or returned to the primary emphasis which we have seen in Chrysostomos himself - at least with regard to the centrality of the gift of communion - we find an **emphasis** which is congruent with the conception of which Melancthon speaks.⁵⁶

One must now ask whether and to what extent the **Melancthonian** motif of eucharistic sacrifice has influenced Lutheran thought. Leaders of American Lutheranism, meeting a decade ago with representatives of the Roman church, seem to have given the impression that there was little done to develop the concept *of sacrificium eucharistikon*, outside of the ill-starred **Liber Ratisbonensis** of 1541:

- (i) [the eucharistic sacrifice] . . . is the church's **ever-renewed presentation, (*repraesentativa*) nomine, of the one sacrifice, which can never be repeated, but has an**

eternal efficacy, and still avails for those who in faith show it forth before God.

(ii) It is the church's self-oblation to God, as Christ's **mystical** body; in thankfulness for the sacrifice of the cross, whereby alone man is saved from perdition, the church **dedicates** herself to God. "And since she reaches out her branches to the past, the present, and the future, and includes among her members not **only** those who now live by **faith**, but also those who have passed away in the sign of faith; **therefore**, when the church, in **this** supreme oblation which she makes through the outward ministry, **calls** to mind how Christ once died that he might be the Lord of dead and living, then she does not divide herself, but rather gathers herself, as it were, into one, and remembers not only those there present, but also other brethren **and sisters** who are fallen asleep in the Lord, but not yet fully purified; and she testifies that in this oblation she intends the unity of Christ's mystical body."

(iii) It is a sacrifice of praise.

(iv) It includes the material offerings of bread and wine and other gifts to the poor; "For it is fitting that the people should not only in word dedicate themselves to God, but also testify by some external token that they wholly give themselves to **God**."⁵⁷

This **irenic** document was doomed to be regarded as unacceptable to either Lutheran or papist, particularly because of the total lack of precision in article ii. Here **Melanchthon's** terms of the evangelical understanding of **eucharistic** sacrifice are clearly violated. More important, however, are two works produced in the second generation of Lutheran theologians: the treatise *De Sacrificiis* by David **Chytraeus** (1569), which treats worship at least in passing, and Part II of Martin Chemnitz' *Examen Concilii Tridentini* (1578). Chemnitz examines and criticizes the chapters and canons of the Council of **Trent** concerning the sacrifice of the Mass and the concept of sacrifice in particular.

Concerning the word *sacrificium*, Chemnitz notes that in the Old Testament there were external and visible sacrifices of various kinds, differing according to the material offered: animal sacrifices were termed "victims;" sacrifices of foods (bread, wheat, salt, etc.) were "immolations;" liquids (wine and oil) were "libations, " A further distinction concerned the manner and **purpose** of the particular sacrifice: sacrifices relating to the sabbath, propitiation (for sins), peace, profession of faith, *et al.* Following Augustine, Chemnitz differentiates

also on the basis of significance; most significant is the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. Also of great importance are the spiritual sacrifices offered by the faithful. Further, **following** the apostolic example, one may classify separately (1) the sufferings of Christ (Eph. 5 and Hebrews), (2) the Gospel ministry (Rom. 15), (3) the conversion of the heathen and spread of the Gospel (Rom. 15; Phil. 2), (4) prayer (Hebrews 5; Rev. 5,8), (5) the sacrifice of praise or the action of giving thanks to God (Heb. 13), (6) alms-giving for the poor and the support of the ministry (Heb. 13; Phil. 4), (7) mortification of the old, evil flesh and consecration of oneself to God, in order to die to the world and live to God (Rom. 12), and (8) the whole worship of Christians in proclaiming the goodness of God, turning away from sin, and rendering the new obedience. "A true sacrifice is every work by which a holy fellowship cleaves to God and for His sake seeks the welfare of the neighbour" (cf. Augustine, *Ciuitas Dei*, X,5,6). "The true sacrifices consist in the love of God and the neighbour" (*Ciuitas Dei*, X, 5).⁵⁸

Under the title "In what sense, in accordance with Scripture, one may correctly use the term sacrifice of worship" (Quo **sensu actio liturgiae, juxta scripturam, recte possit sacrificium appellari**), Chemnitz notes the valid senses in which one may speak of sacrifices in connection with Christian worship. Seven senses are adduced: (1) Because in the *synaxis* the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures are read and explained, so that the death of Christ is proclaimed and the plan from the Word of God concerning the causes and benefits of the sufferings of Christ, the Mass may in this sense be called a sacrifice (Rom. 15; Phil. 2; I Peter 2). This is distinguished from the papist sacrifice which is murmured in secret, inarticulately, or in a foreign language. (2) In the administration of the Lord's Supper, the praises of God are celebrated, spoken, and chanted. Scriptures themselves bear witness to the sacrifice of praises in Hebrews 13 and Psalms 50. This concept stands over against the papist notions set down in Canon II of the Council. (3) On account of public prayers and the giving of thanks in common, it is possible, in accordance with the Scriptures, to call the Mass a sacrifice. The Tridentine Council does not admit such a sense. (4) Because in the celebration of the Lord's Supper it was always customary to contribute alms to the poor, it is possible for this reason to term the whole action a sacrifice: Again, this is not the sense in which the papists use the term. (5) In the *synaxis*, the whole man (*totus homo*) consecrates himself to God and puts this consecration into practice, so that the people form a holy fellowship which cleaves to God. Where the Lord's Supper is properly celebrated, repentance and faith are put to work and love for God and one's neighbour are enkindled. If, for

this cause, the Mass is called a sacrifice, and the matter is properly explained, then there is nothing alien to the Scriptures in such a designation. It is not for such an understanding of the term that the papists contend. (6) The blessing or consecration of the Eucharist is the work of the ministers of the Gospel. In Romans 15, Paul calls the whole of the Gospel ministry (*totum ministerium Evangelii*) a sacrifice. In this sense, the term can be admitted. (7) The distribution and participation, or communion of the Eucharist, which is in commemoration of the one sacrifice of Christ. Where the Victim who was once offered upon the cross for our sins is given and received, this too may be called a sacrifice, although the Scriptures do not use the term in this sense. The papists, however, expressly distinguish the sacrifice from the distribution and participation in the Eucharist. Groppius was ill received when, in the session of the Council, he asserted that the communion is of the substance of the sacrifice of the Mass.⁵⁹

Under Article VIII, Chemnitz enumerates at length the use of the term "sacrifice" by the Ancient Fathers, stating that it is clearly false to say that the Fathers used the term as the papists use it now. (1) In the early Church it was customary that at the celebration of the Eucharist bread and wine and other gifts should be offered for the use of the ministers and the poor, and from this some bread and wine was taken to be consecrated in the Supper. (2) The public fellowship and solemn prayers of the whole assembly (as prescribed in I Timothy 2) were also customarily regarded as a part of the action of the Supper. Such prayers of the faithful were called sacrifices. (3) The term "sacrifice" was used to speak of praises and thanksgivings for the benefactions of God. (4) Because in the Supper the death of the Lord is proclaimed (as Paul says), there was always public preaching in the Eucharist. Such is termed sacrifice. (5) The pious exercises which surround the celebration, which Peter calls spiritual sacrifices (including repentance, faith, hope, patience, love, and good works) were called sacrifices. Faith, which is, of course, the principal thing in the celebration of the Lord's Supper (*in usus coena Dominae*) is expressly called a sacrifice in Philippians 2. Irenaeus lists pure thoughts, faith without hypocrisy, firm hope, fervent love, mercy, obedience, righteousness, good works, and thanksgiving as sacrifices. (6) The whole Church and individual believers dedicate themselves, in the proper use of the Lord's Supper, in body and soul. They consecrate and dedicate themselves to the Lord, and for His sake to their neighbour as well (Augustine, *Civitas Dei*, X). All these the Fathers properly called sacrifices and oblations.⁶⁰

Chemnitz allows, indeed, that even the administration or celebration of the Eucharist (i.e., its sanctification, con-

secration, and distribution) was called *sacrificium* by the Fathers. Dionysius called it *hierourgian* (“priestly service”), because *it is* a sacred action. The word *hierourgein* was applied to the celebrant, because he does what Christ did at the first Supper. But here *hierourgia* is not understood in the papist sense, Quotations follow from Cyprian, Cyril, Augustine, Chrysostomos, and Theophylactos.

Finally, insists Chemnitz, the term *sacrificium* must never be allowed to obscure the correct doctrine and use of the Supper, for whereas a sacrifice is something we offer or give to God, the Lord’s Supper was instituted by Christ in order that, as a sacrament, it should be offered to us and granted to us, applying and sealing the pledge of Christ’s Body and Blood and the merits of His passion, and that what He offers and gives us should be accepted by us in faith.⁶¹

Chemnitz’ treatment of the term *sacrificium* as used in connection with the Eucharist is surely the most exhaustive in the history of Lutheran theology. It is not correct, however, to imagine that the later dogmaticians avoided the use of the term and concept. Quenstedt writes as follows:

The Eucharist is not an external, visible, and propitiatory sacrifice in the proper sense. Nor is it a procurer of all kinds of benefits, in which the Body and Blood of Christ are truly and literally offered to God under the visible form of bread and wine; but it is only a commemoration of the propitiatory sacrifice once offered by Christ upon the altar of the cross.

Hollazius makes these observations:

The word sacrifice may be used either literally or figuratively. Figuratively, it is used 1) for every act which is done that we may cleave to God in holy fellowship, having in view the end that we may be truly happy. 2) For the worship of the New Testament and the preaching of the Gospel (Rom. 15:16; Phil. 2:17). 3) For kindness and the works of charity toward our neighbour (Phil. 4:8; Heb. 13:16) , 4) For prayers and giving of thanks to God (Heb. 13:15; Rev. 5:8).

. . . We do not deny that the Mass, or the celebration of the Eucharist may be figuratively called a sacrifice, because 1) it is a work which is done that we may cleave to God in holy fellowship. 2) It is not the least part of the worship of the New Testament. 3) Formerly, when the Eucharist was celebrated, gifts were usually offered which fell to the use of the ministers of the Church and of the poor. 4) The administration of the Holy Supper was joined with prayers and the giving of thanks. 5) It was instituted in memory of the sacrifice of Christ , . . offered upon the altar of the cross.

materially and considered formally. If we view it *materially*, in the Eucharist the sacrifice is the same in number as that which was upon the cross; or, in other words, the object and the substance are just the same; that is, the victim is the same as that offered on the cross. But if we consider the sacrifice *formally*, of as the act of **sacrificing**, then, although the victim is one and the same, yet the act or the immolation which takes place in the Eucharist, is not the same as that which took place upon the cross. For upon the cross the oblation was made **through** the true suffering and death of an immolated living subject, without which there could not in any way be a sacrifice, properly speaking; in the Eucharist, however the oblation is made through prayers and through the commemoration of the death or of the sacrifice which was offered on the cross.⁶²

The development of the argument—first by Martin Chemnitz and then, after more than a century, by David Hollazius—is not incongruent, but clearly supplementary, to the position of Melancthon in Article XXIV of the Apology.

To move abruptly to the present day, two contemporary Lutheran scholars command our attention. The first is Peter Brunner, professor at Heidelberg, whose lengthy and detailed essay, *Zur Lehre vom Gottesdienst der im Name Jesu versammelten Gemeinde* (published in the English as *Worship in the Name of Jesus*), appeared in 1954 in the series *Leiturgia. Handbuch des evangelischen Gottesdienstes*. This essay represents perhaps the 'first attempt at a comprehensive theological study of the place of worship in the life of the church. Brunner's earlier monograph, *Das Wesen des kirchlichen Gottesdienstes* (1952),⁶³ seeks to explicate what Brunner regards as two interrelated aspects of the liturgy. First God **speaks** to us through His Holy Word, and then we reciprocally speak to Him through prayers and hymns and other acts of worship. Christ abides in the midst of His people as the Servant who gives Himself to us in His Word and Supper. And, in turn, we are enabled to serve Him as Lord of all Lords and King of all Kings. First God serves us • the worship service is *sacramentum*. But now we are enabled to serve Him • by His good pleasure the worship service is also *sacrificium*. These two aspects interpenetrate. The sermon stands as sacrament (the giving of the Word) and also as sacrifice (the giving of praise), The Gospel is prayerfully proclaimed and prayerfully received. The Supper is prayerfully celebrated and received. Prayer is "the total dimension of the liturgy" (Doerne). The great acts of God are proclaimed in hymns of praise. Thus, the Supper is not only a Means of

Grace, but at the same time becomes a thankful proclamation of the death of the Lord until He comes. The service of God to us (*sacramentum*) establishes the foundation of our service to God (*sacrificium*). His Word calls forth our response; His gift initiates our devotion. First we must hear and receive-as God serves us through the proclamation of the Word and the celebration of the Supper --and then we must consider how we should serve Him through prayer, confession of faith, and hymns of praise.

Brunner should not be understood to mean that sacrament and sacrifice become interpenetrated in the sense that they become intermixed and indistinguishable. Nor is a new "third force" • a combination of sacrament and sacrifice • created. The sacramental motif and element clearly predominates, but it initiates and perpetuates a reciprocal relationship with our response. The concept is spelled out in some detail in the later essay, *Zur Lehre vom Gottesdienst*, where Brunner indicates that the distinction of which he speaks is built upon the differentiation which Melancthon made between *sacramentum* and *sacrificium*, and Luther's concept of worship (as enunciated in the Sermon on the occasion of the dedication of the castle church at Torgau): ". . . that nothing else be done in it than that our dear Lord Himself talk to us through His Holy Word and that we, in turn, talk to Him in prayer and song of praise." ⁶⁴ Brunner argues as follows:

Melancthon's elaborations have also shown us that one dare not divorce these two sides of worship activity and mechanically assign them to individual parts of worship. Rather, the two sides pervade each other in the individual acts of worship, as the examples of sermon and Holy Communion illustrated.

The reason for this pervasion will be seen in the following facts. In worship, the Lord becomes present to His congregation only by man's proclamation of the Gospel and the administration of Holy Communion in obedience to the command of institution. Proclamation of the gospel and celebration of the Holy Communion vouchsafe the congregation the presence of the Lord and of His gift of salvation, because they are carried out in conformity with Christ's divine mandate of institution. Therefore the people who proclaim the Gospel and administer Holy Communion must place their human acts into the institution context implicit in Christ's mandate. And in large measure this is done also by the invocation of the mighty name of Jesus. . . , It is particularly in the Lord's Supper that we find God's gift and the congregation's devotion united into an indissoluble union. This mutual pervasion of the two sides of the worship activity does not eliminate the right to differentiate between the acts whose principal function it is to convey God's

gift of salvation and such as pertain principally to the congregation's devotion, It may have become clear now why the sacramental side of worship never appears without the sacrificial side, and, conversely, how the sacrificial side **may** always include the sacramental element.⁶⁵

Brunner accepts the confessional concept of the total celebration of the sacrament as the **anamnesis in the proper** sense, but asks whether in the "total dimension" of worship, it might not be proper to include, in the form of a eucharistic prayer, an express **anamnesis** which would declare before God just what the congregation is faithfully remembering. Such would not be necessary, answer Brunner's critics, as long as it is remembered that the real **anamnesis** is the receiving of the Supper.⁶⁶ Brunner does not agree. Where public worship is offered by the assembly, the interpenetration of sacramental and sacrificial elements is such that the **anamnesis serves as a** specifier . not as an act of unbelief, but as a confession of faith in which, in Brunner's words, ". . . the congregation, standing before God's throne, hides itself, as it were, in the Christ-event. With these words of prayer it appears before God's throne as a congregation which has been received into Christ's cross, resurrection, and ascent into heaven . . ."⁶⁷ Brunner wishes at the same time to avoid any notion of the congregation's **self-offering** to God or the imprecise notion that in some sense the congregation is offering God the sacrifice of the cross:

Here we must behold the memorial of Christ's sacrifice in its character of immeasurable grace, free from any alloy. The presentation of our offering must not be intermingled with the anamnesis of Christ's offering. Where Christ's presentation of His sacrifice eventuates, it surely behooves us to silence any declaration of sacrifice on our part.⁶⁸

With reference to the **epiclesis**, theologians which posit the work of the **Holy Spirit**, following an express invocation, as the completion of the work of Christ in the consecration, indicate an incorrect understanding of the **consecratory** power of the Word of Christ in the institution and a misunderstanding of the relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit. Early Egyptian liturgies show that the original position of the invocation of the Holy Spirit was before the words of institution. If such a prayer is to be included in a Lutheran formula at all, it must come in this place, so as not to foster the erroneous views **prevalent** among Eastern theologians and in Anglican circles.⁶⁹

Finally, Brunner offers guidelines by which a proper Eucharistic **Prayer** might be formulated with **some degree** of theological precision. (1) It is proper that the Words of Institution be spoken in the context of a prayer of thanksgiving

and praise. The proper eulogia, which begins at the Preface, ought to be continued follow'ing the *Sanctus*. (2) The Words of Institution represent the absolutely essential and **divinely**-enjoined element of the consecration of the bread and wine. They must predominate. They ought properly to be chanted. (3) A Prayer of Consecration before the *Verba* is both possible and appropriate. Patterns have come down to us from various Lutheran *Agenda*. (4) A spoken **anamnesis** may appropriately **be** joined to the *Verba*. (5) A prayer for proper reception ought to be expressed in the public prayer of the congregation. (6) The up-building of the Body of Christ and His return are fitting matter, in keeping with the tone of the prayer of thanksgiving. (7) The act of thanksgiving which begins with the Preface is best concluded with the Our Father, and followed by the *Pax* and *Agnus Dei*. The essay then concludes with a prayer patterned after Theodosius Harnack. ⁷⁰

The second writer to be mentioned is Begin Prenter, formerly of the theological faculty of the University of Aarhus, and now a parish pastor in Denmark, In the last decade Dr. Prenter was a leader in the gatherings of pastors and theologians which led up to the important meeting of several conservative, confessional, and pietist theologians at Sittensen, Germany. Previous to that he was known to Lutheran readers for his study of the place of the Holy Spirit in the theology of Martin Luther. (*Spiritus Creator, Studier i Luthers Theologi* (1946; English translation, 1953) and related topics. In his book *Skabelse og Genløsning 1955*; published in English as **Creation and Redemption**, 1966), Prenter presents an understanding of the **Real Presence** and the **eucharistic** sacrifice which is built principally upon Augustine's understanding of sacrifice as expressed in chapter 10 of his *City of God*. This concept Prenter believes to be quite in line with Luther's *Treatise on the New Testament, That is, the Holy Mass* (1520).

The Supper of the Lord, for Prenter, is the commemoration of Christ's own sacrifice of love on our behalf. It is the "constant presence in the church of the sacrifice of Calvary . . . in the Lord's Supper we bring not only communion elements and prayers as a sacrificial gift, but the memorial (**amanesis**) of His one sacrifice, which is the only gift of love we can bring." The identity between the Body of Christ on the cross and the bread and wine on the altar cannot be explicated in **terms** of metaphysics. There is no physical transformation involved, and yet there is at the same time a real identity between the Body and Blood of Jesus and the bread and wine which are distributed as sacrificial gifts.⁷² Thus, to participate in this Supper as a spiritual sacrifice of praise is the encounter of faith with Christ's perfect love, the source of all works of **love**.⁷³ Prenter draws this conclusion:

The unity between our "spiritual" worship and the Lord's supper means, then, that it is only in the sign of **praise**, where everything that we do dies with Christ on the cross, that our deeds and our death become true worship, the fruits of faith. Otherwise they will only be our performance, possibly our heroic suffering and death. In this sense, the Lord's Supper is the indispensable nourishment for our journey through death to life. And in this sense it is nourishment also for our resurrection body.⁷⁴

Prenter views the confessional polemic against the papist sacrifice of the Mass as now out-dated. The confessors, he believes, spoke against the separation of the sacrifice of the Mass from the sacrifice of the cross, a separation which turns the Mass into a work which stands alongside Calvary as an act of atonement:

The official Roman Catholic documents do not say that the sacrifice of Calvary is actually repeated. The sacrifice of the mass **represents** the once completed sacrifice. But when the sacrifice of the mass is spoken of as having a special atoning effect (for actual sins) alongside the sacrifice of Calvary, the sacrifice of the mass to a certain extent competes with the sacrifice of Calvary. However, the main point of the Reformation polemic is directed against the separation of the sacrifice of the mass from the act of communing, whereby the character of the mass as a work done by us is accentuated . . . the Reformation repudiated the notion that the sacrifice of the mass is an atoning sacrifice alongside the sacrifice at Calvary, a sacrifice for others besides those who actually commune, and which **can** thus bestow its benefits even upon others than those who in faith receive it.⁷⁶

There is much of value in **Prenter's** work, but it cannot stand by itself as an adequate presentation of the Reformation position. Luther's *1520 Treatise on the New Testament* provides a valid emphasis,, but it does not stand in splendid isolation from Luther's **own** confessional statements and the other documents already mentioned. The primary note there was that ". . . we go to the sacrament for there we receive a great **treasure**, through and in which we obtain the forgiveness of sins,"⁷⁶ Here **Prenter's** development finds its proper correction. One needs the Sacrament in order that the spiritual sacrifice might follow. "As in other matters pertaining to faith, love, and patience, it is not enough simply to teach and instruct, **but** there must also be daily exhortation, so on this subject we must be persistent in preaching, lest people become indifferent and bored."⁷⁷

Like many **Scandinavian** and American Lutheran theologians, Prenter is impressed by, and has problems in coming to terms with, the persistent Anglican assertion that through the Supper, the Church presents Christ to the Father as the one, perfect sacrifice:

The special and the general priesthods meet in the high priestly office of Jesus Christ himself, and in the sacrificial prayers of the mass it is the congregation which is the presenting subject. Of special importance, furthermore, is the clear acknowledgement of the worthlessness of all sacrifices apart from the sacrifice of Jesus Christ himself.

Even Lutheran dogmatics must therefore agree with Oliver C. Quick's view that the central idea of the original doctrine concerning the eucharistic sacrifice, namely, that through the remembrance (*anamnesis*) in the Lord's Supper the people present Christ as a prayer that he will incorporate them into his sacrifice, is neither unbiblical nor unevangelical. Only theories which make the sacrifice of the mass vicarious instead of representative, that is, theories which exempt man from sacrificing himself and which separate the sacrifice from communion, can be charged with being unbiblical and unevangelical.^{7 8}

But here Prenter has, in fact, moved far beyond the position of the Reformers and dogmaticians. It is neither necessary nor even possible that the *sacrifice* of the cross be represented in any sense. What is necessary is that the fruits of Christ's redemptive work be *sacramentally* offered to the people in the Supper. Prenter has truncated the Lutheran polemic against the papist Mass. It is not a question of a supplicatory, derivative, representative, or *applicatory* sacrifice at all. There is and can be only one sacrifice: that which has already been offered upon the Cross. That offering cannot be represented in our own sacrificial action. The merit of Christ won for us in His passion and death need to be applied to us sacramentally, not sacrificially. This strongly sacramental emphasis obtains throughout the Reformation period.

Where, then, has this short study led us? The author hopes that it has led us, first, back to the altar where as pastors and communicants we will have a renewed appreciation of the treasure of the sacrament and the tradition of worship and praise which through the centuries has grown up around it, What the Lord gives is at all times the living center of everything. But what we do in response to His gift is not a matter without consequence. The heritage of our fathers gives us no grounds for such an indifference, "You can do nothing" is a description of how the Lord finds us, not of how He leaves us.

Such a study as this ought also to worship better: that is, to

exalt the sacramental gifts which are imparted to us by Word and Sacraments; to draw attention to these gifts and make them more and more the center of our life in Christ. "We should so preach that, of their own accord and without any law, the people will desire the sacrament and, as it were, compel us pastors to administer it to them," is as sound a piece of advice today as when Luther first gave it.⁷⁹ We ought further to develop the understanding of the new obedience, the priesthood of believers, and the spiritual sacrifice-theological areas which are occasionally picked over and served up half-baked on "Stewardship Sunday," but which are otherwise untouched. It is precisely here that the true understanding of eucharistic sacrifice surfaces. Here we must realize that there are really two quite different odours involved in the well-known "*Stink vom Opfern*": one is the putrid smell of our own self-righteousness, and the other is the savoury fragrance of the incense of our prayers and the giving of ourselves to God.

FOOTNOTES

1. Martin Luther, *Admonition Concerning the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Lord*, in *Luther's Works*, 38, p. 106.
2. Oliver K. Olson, "Contemporary Trends in Liturgy Viewed From the Perspective of Classical Lutheran Theology," *Lutheran Quarterly* 26 (May 1974), pp. 110-117. Olson provides a critique of the "phenomenological methodology" of modern liturgies, the pervading influence of Gregory Dix, and the predominating influence of Melancthonianism-Calvinism in the productions of the I. L. C. W. Gottfried G. Krodel, "The Great Thanksgiving of the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship: It is the Christians' Supper and not the Lord's Supper," *The Cresset. Occasional Papers: I* (1976). Krodel submits the proposals of the I. L. C. W. to a minute examination and finds underlying them a strange mixture of Zwingli, Calvin, and Rome. See also Wilhelm Oesch, "Zur Krise des Opferbegriffs beim Abendmahl," in *Lutherischer Rundblick* 6 (1958) pp. 143-161; an overview of the work of Odo Casel, Peter Brunner, et al.
3. Hermann Sasse, *Der Schriftgrund der lutherischen Abendmahlslehre*, reprinted in *In Statu Confessionis. Gesammelte Aufsätze von Hermann Sasse*, edited by Fr. W. Hopf (1975), pp. 101-114.
4. Vilmos Vajta, *Luther on Worship. An Interpretation* (E.T.; 1958), chapter 2.
5. Dom Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, has long represented the "norm" of modern liturgical studies, and sets down the so-called "classical four-action shape" of the liturgy (Offertory-Prayer-Fraction-Communion).
6. Yngve Brilioth, *Eucharistic Faith and Practice: Evangelical and Catholic*, p. 2
7. Brilioth, p. 13.
8. Brilioth, p. 15.
9. Helmut T. Lehmann, ed., *Meaning and Practice of the Lord's Supper*; a resume of contemporary thought, with essays by Robert P. Roth, Arthur Voobus, Theodore G. Tappert, Reginald W. Deitz, and Martin J. Heinecken.
10. Karl Bernhard Ritter, *Die Eucharistische Feier. Die Liturgie der evangelischen Messe und des Predigtgottesdienstes. Herausgegeben in Verbindung mit der Evangelischen Michaelsbruederschaft* (1961). A very

- complete liturgical document for Sunday and daily worship. Complete propers for all services, with new Introits, Collects, Graduals, Closing Pulpit Prayers, Closing Collects, proper Votums, four forms of the Eucharist, special services, and several essays are included.
11. Friedrich Lochner, *Der Hauptgottesdienst der evangelisch=lutherischen Kirche . . .* (1895), p. 235.
 12. Lochner, p. 235, *vide* pp. 234-241.
 13. Peter Brunner, *Worship in the Name of Jesus* (E.T., 1968), pp. 300 ff.
 14. *Den Svenska Kyrko-Handboken* (Stadfaest av Konungen aar, 1942), p. 37.
 15. *Alterbok for Den Norske Kirke* (Femte Opplag, 1966), p. 18.
 16. Quoted from edition of *Agende fuer die evangelische Kirche der Union*, 1, pp. 126 f.
 17. *Lutheran Hymnal, Authorized by the Lutheran Church of Australia (1975)*.
 18. *Luther's Words*, 35, pp. 99 f.
 19. *L. w.*, 35, p. 100.
 20. SMALCALD ARTICLES, II, 7.
 21. LARGE CATECHISM, V, 7.
 22. *L. C.*, v, 30.
 23. *L. W.*, 37, p. 193.
 24. *L.W.*, 38, pp. 120-123.
 25. AUGSBURG CONFESSION, XXIV, 8 (Latin Text).
 26. See critique in Carl Fr. Wisloff, *Abendmahl und Messe. Die Kritik Luthers am Messopfer*, (G.T., 1969), pp. 54 ff.
 27. APOLOGY OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION, XXIV, 9.
 28. Reinhold Seeberg, *Text-book of the History of Doctrines*, 2, p. 129.
 29. Bengt Haeggglund, *History Of Doctrine*, p. 193.
 30. Francis J. Hall, *Dogmatic Theology, 9: The Sacraments*, pp. 321 ff. Hall presents the classical Anglo-Catholic position from the early days of the present century.
 31. Seeberg, p. 129.
 32. Wisloff, I, p. 4.
 33. *Apol.*, XXIV, 18.
 34. *Apol.*, XXIV, 19.
 35. *Apol.*, XXIV, 24.
 36. *Apoi.*, XXIV, 22
 37. *Apol.*, XXIV, 33
 38. *Apol.*, XXIV, 25, 30.
 39. *Apol.* XXIV, 26,
 40. *Apol.*, XXIV, 27
 41. *Apol.*, XXIV, 32
 42. *Apol.*, XXIV, 34.
 43. *Apol.*, XXIV, 35.
 44. *Apol.*, XXIV, 38.
 45. Alexander Schmemann, *The Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy*, pp. 320-333.
 46. *Apol.*, XXIV, 79f.
 47. *Apol.*, XXIV, 88.
 48. *Apol.*, XXIV, 93.
 49. N. V. Gogol, *The Divine Liturgy of the Russian Orthodox Church*, tr. Rosemary Edmonds, provides an example of the symbolic interpretation of the Eastern Rite.
 50. John Chrysostom, *On the Priesthood*, in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, 9, p. 46.
 51. Quoted from *The Mass. Ancient Liturgies and Patristic Texts*, ed. Adalbert Hamman, pp. 93-114.
 52. Georg Guenter Blum, "Eucharistie, Amt. und Opfer in der Alten Kirche. Eine Problemskizze" in *Oecumenica* (1966), p. 42.
 53. Blum, p. 43.

54. Seeberg, p. 135.
55. "In reality, the importance of this change cannot be exaggerated. It shifted the centre of gravity of the service to the consecration, and produced the new ceremony of the Elevation, and in time the new practices of Exposition of the Sacrament and Benediction. It made the laity no longer in the old sense participants in the mystery, but spectators of a ritual performed in the sanctuary by the clergy and ministers. Thereby the sacramental principle itself was in large measure lost, though its external forms remained. The eucharist was no longer exhibited as the common offering of the members of the Body in union with the Head, but was perforce interpreted as the act of the priest celebrating Christ's sacrifice. In Augustine the Communion had been the consummation of the sacrifice; but in Aquinas the sacrifice is identified with the priestly action, and the communion of the people becomes an optional addition to it. Their part is no longer to share in the sacrifice, but to engage in acts of individual piety, while the priest performs his part. The worship of the early Church had been the common act of the Church of God, as of a Body with an organic structure, hierarchically graded; the congregation now become more and more an aggregation of unrelated individuals, met together for a religious service." A. J. Hebert, *Liturgy and Society*, p. 82.
56. Perhaps we find such a congruence in the words of a modern Russian Orthodox theologian, writing about the elevation of the gifts before the consecration: "It is the Eucharist of Christ that has brought us to heaven, for we have followed Him in His perfect love and ascension to His Father. But now, as we stand in the joyful Presence of God, we have nothing to offer Him but Christ, the Offering of all offerings, the Eucharist of all thanksgivings. He made it possible for us to recover the Eucharist as the one essential relationship with God, and He also filled it with its absolute content; with Himself, the Perfect and Divine man, the Perfect and Absolute Sacrifice. The Eucharist of Christ is thus fulfilled in Christ as Eucharist. HE IS THE ONE WHO OFFERS, AND THE ONE WHO IS BEING OFFERED . . . The Eucharistic Prayer, after it has resounded with the glorious sound of the *Sanctus*, becomes now remembrance (*anamnesis*) of Christ-of His Coming to us (, *who when He had come . . .*) and of the fulfillment in Him of the whole purpose of salvation (. . . *and fulfilled all the dispensation for us . . .*). His Life, His Death, His Resurrection: one movement of sacrifice, of love, of dedication to His Father and to men-this is the inexhaustible content of our Remembrance. All this is our Eucharist which we 'show forth' before God, which we 'remember' before Him. . . . Until now, the movement of the Eucharist was directed from us to God. It was the movement of our sacrifice. In the elements of bread and wine we were offering ourselves to God, sacrificing our life to Him. Yet from the beginning this offering was the Eucharist of Christ, the Priest and the Head of the new humanity, and thus Christ was our oblation. The bread and wine symbols of our life and therefore of our spiritual sacrifice of ourselves to God were also symbols of His oblation, of His Eucharist to God. We were uniting ourselves to Christ in His unique Ascension to Heaven, we were partakers of his Eucharist, being His Church, His Body, and His People. Now, because of Him and in Him, our sacrifice is accepted. Him Whom we have offered-Christ-we now receive-Christ. We put our life in Him and we receive His Life as gift. We have united ourselves to Christ, and now He unites Himself to us. The movement of the Eucharist is reversed; the sign of our love for God becomes the reality of His love for us. God in Christ gives Himself to us, making us partakers of His Kingdom." Alexander Schmemmann, *Liturgy and Life: Christian Development through Liturgical Experience*. This statement appears to breathe the same air that Augustine of Hippo was breathing when he wrote *City of God*. which has been influential in Lutheran thinking, as we shall see below.

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57. Kent S. Knutson, Contemporary Lutheran Theology and the Eucharistic Sacrifice, in *Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue, III. The Eucharist as Sacrifice*, p. 171. The quotation is from Brilioth, p. 139.
58. *Examen Concilii Tridentini per Martinum Chemnicium*, ed. F.R.E. Preuss (Berlin: Schlawitz, 1861), p. 383.
59. *Ibid.*, pp. 383f.
60. *Ibid.*, pp. 399f.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 403.
62. Heinrich Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, pp. 578f.
63. Peter Brunner, *Das Wesen des kirchlichen Gottesdienstes* (reprinted in *Pro Ecclesia, 1: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur dogmatischen Theologie*, pp. 129-137).
64. Peter Brunner, *Worship in the Name of Jesus*, p. 123.
65. *Ibid.*, pp. 123f.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 125.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 308.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 308.
69. *Ibid.*, pp. 304-307.
70. *Ibid.*, pp. 309ff.
71. Regin Prenter, *Creation and Redemption*, p. 496.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 491.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 497.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 498.
75. *Ibid.*, pp. 503f.
76. L.C., V, 22.
77. L.C., v, 44.
78. Prenter, p. 504.
79. Small Catechism, Preface, 22.

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