Sonship and Sacrifice

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ONE OF THE MOST remarkable celestial phenomena in the theological firmament today is undoubtedly the multiple conjunction that has taken place between a large number of Catholic and Protestant luminaries on the subject of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, a conjunction that is all the more striking because it does not seem in all cases to have been either intentional or even recognized. Such names as those of Masure[1] and Journet,[2] developing the earlier contributions of de la Taille[3] and Vonier[4] on the Catholic side, and of Benoit,[5] D. M. Baillie,[6] Cullman and Leenhardt,[7] Geddes MacGregor,[8] Thurian,[9] Aulén[10] and Prenter[11] on the Protestant, will be sufficient indication of this; and if among Anglicans there has been little in recent years to set by the side of F. N. Hicks's ponderous but influential work, *The Fullness of Sacrifice*,[12] this may be attributed at least partly to the deeply rooted tendency of Anglican theologians to direct their energies into other channels than that of dogmatic theology. It is important not to exaggerate the extent to which agreement has been achieved, either between the two camps or within them severally. Nor should we forget that on the equally burning question of the Eucharistic Presence little agreement has up to now been either attempted or attained; and, while I would hold that the Sacrifice is primary to the Presence and not *vice versa*, I cannot agree with those who hold that without a satisfactory doctrine of the Presence an adequate understanding of the Sacrifice is either possible or sufficient. Perhaps on this point Lutheran theology may have some help to offer.

1. E. Masure, *The Christian Sacrifice* (London: Burns Oates, 1944); *The Sacrifice of the Mystical Body* (London: Burns Oates, 1954). The French originals were published in 1932 and 1950 respectively.
2. C. Journet, *La Messe, présence du sacrifice de la croix* (Bruges: Desclée, 1957).
3. Two volumes of an English translation of M. de la Taille, S. J., *Mysterium Fidei* (1915), have been published under the title of *The Mystery of Faith* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1940, 1950).
4. A. Vonier, O.S.B., *A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist* (London: Burns Oates, 1925).
5. J. D. Benoit, *Liturgical Renewal* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1958).
6. D. M. Baillie, *The Theology of the Sacraments* (New York: Scribner, 1957).
7. O. Cullmann and J. Leenhardt, *Essays on the Lord's Supper* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1958). The French originals were published in 1936 and 1955 respectively.
8. G. MacGregor, *Corpus Christi* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959).
9. M. Thurian, *The Eucharistic Memorial*, 2 vols. (London: Lutterworth Press, 1960–61).
10. G. Aulén, *Eucharist and Sacrifice* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958).
11. I am indebted to the Rev. A. M. Allchin for information about Professor Regin Prenter's Danish work on creation and redemption, *Skabelse og genløsning*, which has not been translated into English. (There is a German translation, *Schöpfung und Erlösung*, 2 vols. [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 1958–60].)
12. F. N. Hicks, *The Fullness of Sacrifice* (London: Macmillan, 1930).

Nevertheless the rapprochement on the question of the Sacrifice is highly significant, and it is in the hope of advancing it a little further that I propose in this paper to discuss first the nature of sacrifice in general, then that of the Sacrifice of Christ, and lastly that of the Sacrifice of the Eucharist.

I

First, then, let us consider sacrifice in general. I must leave it to the anthropologists to classify the extreme variety of sacrificial rites that have characterized human religion throughout the ages and the differing interpretations that men have placed upon them. I would, however, stress the virtual universality of sacrifice as a central feature, if not indeed *the* central feature, of human religious activity. The secularism that has more and more become the dominant mental presupposition of men and women in the sophisticated technological civilization of the post-Renaissance Western world, and has more recently begun to swamp the ancient cultures of the East and of primitive societies, must be reckoned as a highly exceptional phenomenon in human history, whether we interpret it as marking the long-awaited emancipation of the human race from the fetters of superstition and degradation or the atrophy and inhibition of a normal human faculty. Not less questionable is the assumption that it is a healthy and noble thing for human religious practice to be purely mental and spiritual and that the institution of sacrifice itself, and not merely perverted and horrible forms of it, is a deviation, an excrescence, or an outworn survival. If I may use a rather crude illustration, throughout almost the whole of human history and in almost every human social group, man's natural and spontaneous reaction, when he is perplexed about existence in general, anxious about his own future, desirous to recognize the claims of a supernatural order of reality, tormented by the problem of evil or burdened by the consciousness of sin, is not to chant the appropriate lyric from Robert Bridges' anthology, *The Spirit of Man*, or even *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, but to take the healthiest and plumpest chicken from his farmyard round to the local shrine and there cut its throat. Indeed, one of the main difficulties in deciding what is the essential meaning of sacrifice on anthropological grounds arises from the fact that men find themselves offering sacrifices simply because it seems to them the obvious thing to do long before they ask themselves why they are doing it. In consequence, doctrines about sacrifice tend to have the character of *a posteriori* rationalizations of an existing practice rather than of *a priori* reasons for instituting it.

It is in any case notorious that one of the greatest obstacles that confronts the Church today in its evangelistic and teaching functions arises from the twin facts that the religion of the Bible, in both Testaments, is expressed predominantly in sacrificial terms and that the institution of sacrifice has

become totally unfamiliar to modern industrialized man. I believe that Sir Edwyn Hoskyns used to say that he wished that a heifer could be regularly sacrificed on the Backs at Cambridge, in order that every theological student at some time in his career might understand what the religion of the Jewish Temple was like. Where the word "sacrifice" has survived in modern speech it has completely lost its traditional theological connotation, so that we get such instances as that of the advertisement in the *Church Times* for an exchange of benefices that ends with the words, "Cannot sacrifice"—a phrase that properly could only signify that the cleric in question was unable or unwilling to celebrate the Holy Eucharist—and the notice in the window of a tailoring establishment, "These trousers will be offered at a great sacrifice." Nevertheless, in spite of the exceptional character of our own time and setting, sacrifice is a central and universal feature of human religion as such, and both anthropologists and theologians have recognized this.

I have referred to the fact that the institution of sacrifice precedes all attempts to explain it; and indeed when the explanations appear they are bewilderingly numerous and often mutually incompatible. There has, however, been a tendency, which has had the most unfortunate consequences, to assume that the essence of sacrifice consists in the destruction of some valuable object, preferably a living one, in order to honour or to propitiate a deity, a destruction which, in the case of an animal victim, will involve its slaying and, in other cases, will involve some ritual act of equivalent significance. Nor is it only in the lower and more primitive forms of religion that this simple identification of sacrifice with mactation has been made; it has obtained a firm foothold even in the Christian Church and has provided the guiding concept for many doctrines of the Atonement. As Masure,[13], Galy,[14] and Mersch[15] have shown, the great leaders of the French School of spirituality, Bérulle, Condren, and Olier, found it very difficult, as is shown by their liking for such terms as *anéantissement*, to shake off the idea that God is glorified by the destruction of his creatures in homage to him and in recognition of his sovereignty.

It is therefore a matter for deep satisfaction that in recent years there has come to the fore a wider and more positive notion of sacrifice which, while finding a real place for the insights of what we might call the established view, altogether avoids it weaknesses. This movement, which is at least as much a recovery as an innovation, has resulted from a convergence of biblical, anthropological, and strictly dogmatic considerations. The chief honour for it must be given to the French theologian, Canon Eugène Masure, whose remarkable book, *Le Sacrifice du Chef*, has been translated into English by Dom Illtyd Trethowan under the title of *The Christian Sacrifice*. His argument has received confirmation from a quite independent work by an American Episcopalian scholar, Dr. R. K. Yerkes, *Sacrifice in*

13. Masure, *The Christian Sacrifice*, p. 31.
14. Galy, *Le Sacrifice dans l'école française de spiritualité* (Paris: Nouvelles éditions latines, 1951), p. 145f., 302f., 350, etc.
15. Mersch, *The Whole Christ* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1938), Part III, ch. 10

Greek and Roman Religions and Early Judaism.[16] While fully recognizing the grim and even horrible character that sacrificial rites have sometimes assumed, Yerkes warns us not to be misled by the fact that most sacrifices involve the slaying of an animal into concluding that the notion of sacrifice is essentially tragic or gloomy; the Greek *Thusia*, he points out, for example, was joyous and thankful.[17] I shall not attempt here to summarize his argument or to pass judgment upon its details. That would be beyond both the scope of this paper and the competence of its author; but I think it may be said that, even if some of the detailed interpretations were questioned, Yerkes' main point would stand firm, that sacrifice in its essence is not a gloomy or destructive activity but a joyous and affirmative one. We might perhaps emphasize his basic caveat by remarking that the fact that the central figure of a Christmas dinner is customarily the carcass of a slaughtered bird does not imply that the participants are engaged in a grim and terrible commemoration of its demise. Even of the primitive blood-rites Yerkes is able to write:

> We are apt to think of these as eerie, barbarous rites devoid of all spiritual content. If so we forget that those who performed them were striving, in the best way they knew, for that solid union in which alone is strength.

And he adds that "blood, to all ancient men, was symbolic, never of death, always of life. Blood and life were synonymous,"[18] making the same point with regard to primitive religion that was central to Hicks's account of the religion of Judaism.

To turn now to Masure. While he opens his discussion by giving some quite horrifying descriptions of sacrificial rites, he insists that the basic meaning of sacrifice is not the destruction of the creature but its offering to God for his acceptance in joyful homage. So, he remarks in a luminous phrase, "what was really immolated was, in men's minds, not the victim but the offerer."[19] I shall develop the subsequent argument in my own way, but before doing so I should like to emphasize my indebtedness to Masure, who seems to me to be one of the most brilliant and original of present-day theologians.

I shall therefore define sacrifice as the offering of a creature to God in recognition of him as its Creator, in order that it shall be accepted by him and transformed by his acceptance. We shall, I think, see that this definition will take us very far indeed.

First, we must observe that in being offered to God in sacrifice a creature is simply fulfilling the law of its being as a creature. God is both its efficient and its final cause, its alpha and omega, its beginning and its end. It is made by him and for him; its *esse* is both *esse a Deo* and *esse ad Deum*. The

16. R. K. Yerkes, *Sacrifice in Greek and Roman Religions and Early Judaism* (New York: Scribner, 1952).
17. *Ibid.*, p. 102f.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
19. Masure, *The Christian Sacrifice*, p. 37.

sacrificing of a creature to God is the ritual expression of its ontological status. The part that is normally played in this process by slaying or some equivalent action will be considered in a moment.

When the victim is a lifeless or an irrational object the sacrifice can hardly be more than symbolic or external, for neither the understanding nor the will of the victim has any part in it. As Masure points out, what is morally and effectively offered is not the victim but its owner, who offers it as a token of his own homage. And, as the Old Testament emphasizes, it is the intention of the offerer and not what happens to the victim that is in fact pleasing to God. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and a contrite heart thou will not despise" (Ps. 51:17). It is only when sacrifice is offered in righteousness in the rebuilt Jerusalem that God will again take pleasure in burnt offerings.

The true sacrifice, the sacrifice that God can accept and transform and that when transformed is then of value in itself, is the offering by a rational creature of himself. And in order to see the full implications of this truth we must, I suggest, give full weight to the biblical truth that man is made in the image of God and indeed trace back the essence of sacrifice to its prototype in the Holy Trinity.

We are accustomed to remember that, according to orthodox trinitarian doctrine, the Father eternally begets the Son by an act of complete self-communication, a self-communication so complete in fact that the Son who results from it is in no way inferior to the Father but coequal with him. We do not, I think, so often reflect on the correlative truth that the Son eternally responds to the Father in an act of filial self-giving, a self-giving that is no less complete because he who makes it is not an inferior but an equal. I have argued elsewhere[20] that the truth for which St. Athanasius contended against the Arians can be summed up in the phrase "derived equality," to describe the status that is enjoyed by the Son in consequence of the Father's eternal act of generation; I shall now use the phrase "filial response" to describe the correlative act by which the Son, eternally recognizing the Father as the source of his personal distinction, offers himself back to the Father as the Father's loving Son. It is this that St. John expresses when he tells us that in the depths of eternal Being, "In the beginning" the divine Word was not only *theos* but *pros ton theon*, leaning, as it were, towards the Father.[21] We might make the point by saying that it was the achievement of Nicene orthodoxy to see clearly that both derivation and response are strictly compatible with equality. In Masure's fine phrase, the Father's Almighty Word has sung his glory eternally in an invisible silence.[22] It would not, I think, be correct to describe this eternal response by the term "homage," for that would seem to imply that the Son was inferior to the Father; still less could we describe it as "worship" or "sacrifice." But it is, I

20. E. L. Mascall, *Via Media* (London: Longmans, 1956), ch. 2.
21. Cf. E. Masure, *The Christian Sacrifice*, p. 130.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

suggest, the uncreated prototype of the homage, worship, and sacrifice that a rational creature is bound to offer, for the Son is the Father's Image and man is created in God's image to be not only his creature but also his beloved and loving son. Adam, St. Luke tells us, was the son of God (Luke 3:38).

Man, then, created by God and for God, was meant to achieve his fulfilment and beatitude by offering himself to the Father in a life of joyful and loving filial obedience which would be an analogous reflection on the created level of the eternal act of filial response made by the Son on the uncreated level in the life of the Trinity. And if this offering had been made and maintained God's acceptance of it would, we cannot doubt, have transformed beyond our powers of imagination the nature of man and of the material world of which he was part. Here, then, there would have been established a relation between man and God that would have strictly conformed to the definition of sacrifice from which we began, the offering of a creature to God in recognition of him as its Creator, in order that it shall be accepted by God and transformed by his acceptance. The capacity of the creature to be thus transformed by God's acceptance is, of course, what theology calls the potentiality of nature for grace. In this there would have been neither pain nor death but the joyful return of the creature to its Creator, of the son to his Father, to enjoy all the riches of the Father's house. And in this sacrifice man would have been both victim and priest, for he would have been offering himself. "The substance of sacrifice . . . ," writes Masure, "is . . . the return of the creature to him who has made it for himself so that it may find its end and therefore its happiness in him and for his glory. . . . Sacrifice is the movement or action by which we try to bring ourselves to God, our end, to find our true beatitude in our union with him. *To sacrifice a thing is to lead it to its end.*"[23] And Masure quotes the famous sentence of St. Augustine: *Verum sacrificium est omne opus quod agitur, ut sancta societate inhaereamus Deo, relatum scilicet ad illum finem boni, quo veraciter beati esse possumus.*[24] "It is because of sin," writes Masure, "that death now precedes and conditions life, and that *without shedding of blood there is no remission.* But, *in the beginning it was not so.*"[25]

Sin, however, has entered in and man is, in the biblical phrase, at enmity with God (Rom. 8:7). He cannot make this free and joyful offering of himself; indeed his very will is perverted and internally divided. (I need only refer in passing to the classical description of this state given by St. Paul in Romans 7.) The consequence is that sacrifice now becomes something extraordinarily deviant and ambiguous. Man knows in the depths of his being that he can no longer offer himself to God, with the lower creation incorporated into his offering, so he finds himself offering other creatures to God instead of himself. The truth that he cannot apprehend but that will one day be revealed is that what is needed is not that he should offer other

23. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
24. *De civ. dei*, X, vi.
25. Masure, *The Christian Sacrifice*, p. 38.

creatures instead of himself, but that someone other than himself should offer him. The offering is, he believes, indeed accepted and transformed and may be returned, in whole or in part, to him as a sacred food by partaking of which he may himself be accepted and transformed. But now at the centre of his sacrifice there lies the death or destruction of the victim.

For man can no longer offer himself and his gifts to God spontaneously and effortlessly, in an act in which, because his will is set wholly upon God in loving and obedient sonship, what God wills and what man wills are the same. He can in his fallen and divided condition only put his gift into God's possession by removing it totally from his own. Therefore he slays or burns his offering so that it may wholly pass into the presence of God. But let us note that even here there is no suggestion that God is glorified by the destruction of his creature, for if it could be literally destroyed there would be nothing left for him to accept and transform. It is not being destroyed but transferred to him in such a way that it is no longer under the control of selfish and sinful man. But when it has been accepted and transformed it may be given to man as the vehicle of God's own life in a meal eaten at God's own table, where man sits down in his Father's house as the reconciled and once again accepted son.

Now all these things were done in an allegory, for the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin. All that even the sacrifices of the Old Law, still less those of heathen religions, could in fact do was to keep alive the memory of what needed to be done. And even this memory was clouded and curiously inverted; for as we have already seen, when man had become incapable of offering himself to God, what was needed was not that man should offer something else but that someone else should offer man. And here we enter on the second part of our discussion, that of the Sacrifice of Christ.

II

Nowhere, I think, has the simple identification of sacrifice with slaying done more harm than in the thought of theologians about the redemptive work of Christ. At its worst it has led to crude and horrible substitutionary theories of the Atonement, as exemplified by the preacher whose sermon reached its climax in the words, "And when Jesus cried, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' God struck him dead—instead of you!" Now I have no intention of minimizing the central and ineradicable significance of the death of Christ in the economy of redemption; I shall try later on to show what that significance is. And I think it would be unrealistic to attempt to eradicate from Christian speech such phrases as "The sacrifice of Calvary" and "The altar of the Cross." Nevertheless, if we are to interpret sacrifice by the threefold definition of offering, acceptance, and transformation, we shall see that the sacrifice of Christ includes in its sweep not only the death but the whole incarnate life of the eternal Son.

For when the Divine Word took flesh in the womb of his virgin Mother, it was surely in order that in manhood there might be made that perfect offering of filial homage to the Father that man throughout his history had so signally failed to make. (I may remark in passing that in the case of the Virgin Mother there are certain special considerations, arising out of her unique role in the Incarnation and out of the fact that she is, so to speak, *within* the redemptive act from the start, which I shall not develop here.) In virtue of the hypostatic union the manhood of Jesus is taken up by its union with the divine Person of the Eternal Son into that act of filial response that the Son ever makes to the Father in the life of the Trinity. In Masure's words, "His nature [viz., his human nature] like his Person is *pros ton theon*, because the Son keeps in his humanity his eternal attitude, his single unvarying direction; the activity which was his and from the beginning . . . he now performs in his finite and created nature, as St. Paul says, *sōmatikōs*."[26]

Elsewhere Masure rather puzzlingly writes: "We have therefore a sacrifice initiated on Calvary and crowned in heaven, and because it is there consummated, it is there eternally prolonged"; but I think the word "initiated" marks an unintentional lapse, as Masure almost immediately says:

> The immolation of Christ is a continuation in the sequence of acts and gestures accomplished by the Incarnate Word for the purpose of establishing him for all eternity as our intermediary between his Father and us, *semper vivens ad interpellandum pro nobis*.[27]

Dr. S. H. Hooke writes:

> At the heart of all beginnings, the beginning of the new creation, we have what may well be taken as the interpretation on the highest level of the baptismal scene, the Word *pros ton theon*, the Son, as it were, confronting the Father in an attitude of filial trust and obedience receiving from the Father the word by which he was to live.[28]

Thus, in Christ, human nature has once again become fully filial and more wonderfully than in man's first creation. God indeed wonderfully made the dignity of man's substance, but has yet more wonderfully restored it. Unfallen man in the original creation—the first Adam—would merely have reflected and analogically reproduced in his own life, in that union with God that we call grace, the filial response to the Father that the Divine Son makes eternally in the life of the Triune Godhead; in the second Adam, the man Christ Jesus, human nature is literally taken up into that eternal filial response, for this human nature is lived in, and this human life is led by, none other than the Person of the Divine Son himself. The Apollinarians

26. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
27. Masure, *The Sacrifice of the Mystical Body*, p. 59.
28. S. H. Hooke, *Alpha and Omega* (London: Nisbet, 1961), p. 129.

were right in their recognition that the Person of the Divine Son was eminently fitted to be the subject of a perfect human life, though they were wrong in supposing that he had to displace a constituent of human nature in order to do this.

Thus from the moment when the divine Word took flesh in Mary's womb, throughout his earthly life and beyond his Ascension to his present glorified condition in heaven, the human life of the Divine Son and the human nature in which he lives it are one continuous offering to the Father, continuously accepted and continuously transformed. Because, up to the Ascension, this life is lived under the conditions of human history, a succession of events and a development are inherent to it, and we can discern in it various stages, the Baptism, the Transfiguration, the Passion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, but it is all one thing, the perfect offering of a human life that is the human life of the Divine Son, in a human nature that is filial because it has received filiality from the person of the Son who is eternally filial. (In passing we may remark that the status of the man Jesus as the human Son of God derives immediately from the hypostatic union and not from the overshadowing of Mary by the Spirit. The Spirit does not take the place of a human father, to the destruction of Mary's virginity, but makes her a virgin mother, which is quite a different thing.) This whole complex of offering, acceptance, and transformation is not a static object but a developing process worked out in the detailed and contingent events of a human life, lived in one particular place at one particular time among a particular group of people, but it reaches its culmination as complete, and therefore no more subject to vicissitudes, in the Ascension and the heavenly session, in which all the previous stages and events that have contributed to its fulfilment are included as causes in their effect.

I must now say something about the part played in this by the Spirit. The scriptural indications are that, among its other functions, the gift of the Spirit indicates and implements the Father's acceptance of the object that is offered to him; by promitting the Spirit upon it the Father seals it as his own. Thus in the Baptism of our Lord, Christ's offering of himself as the obedient Son who has come to fulfil all righteousness is ratified by the Father's declaration from heaven, "Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," and by the descent of the Spirit, in virtue of which the baptism that Jesus himself will institute will be no longer merely a symbolic baptism of water but a transformed and transforming baptism of water, Spirit, and fire. We may see this same pattern exemplified at the Annunciation, when Mary's offering of herself in the words, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word," is accepted and replied to in the descent of the Spirit who transforms her into the Mother of God; at Pentecost, when the Spirit comes upon the potential or latent Body of Christ, waiting and offering itself in silent obedience to the Lord's command, and transforms it into the fully and actively energized Spirit-bearing Body; and, if we can accept the common Eastern Orthodox Eucharistic doctrine

as expressing at least a part of the truth, in the descent of the Spirit upon the Church's offering of the Eucharistic elements to signify the Father's acceptance of them and to transform them into the true Body and Blood of Christ. As Nicholas Cabasilas writes, "God makes these holy offerings so much his own that he transforms them into the Body and Blood of his only-begotten Son. Surely it is not possible to conceive of anything to equal such an appropriation, nor to set a measure to the way in which these gifts are accepted."[29] There is strong patristic support for the view that the Spirit is properly to be thought of as the Gift of the Father both to the Incarnate Son, to his Church and to his individual members. We find this, for example, in St. Augustine,[30] and St. Thomas asserts that "Gift" is the Holy Spirit's proper name.[31] Now I have argued that this whole pattern of offering, acceptance, and transformation, which in the created order is the essence of Sacrifice, is an analogical participation or reflection of the loving intercourse of the Son and the Father in the life of the uncreated Trinity. We might therefore expect to find in the Trinity the prototype of the gift of the Spirit in the created analogue. So we should expect to find in trinitarian doctrine the notion of the Father bestowing his Spirit on the Son to seal the Son's filial response to the Father's love in begetting him. I gather that neither the fathers nor the scholastics appear to have taken this step. It would, however, seem to be thoroughly in accord with the accepted principle, *Missiones sequuntur processiones*, that the operations of the Divine Persons in the created realm are, as it were, copies and prolongations of their mutual self-expressions in the Trinity itself, and we might suspect that attention to this notion could have done something to soften the acuteness of the *Filoque* dispute. I would add that, as regards the element of transformation, the uncreated prototype cannot in this case, any more than in the case of the elements of response and acceptance, involve any *change* in the Son. What it does involve is his eternal embracement by the Father in an utterly complete and loving interchange of self.

To return, now, to our main theme, we should, I have suggested, see the sacrifice of Christ as extending from the moment of the incarnation, through all the episodes of Christ's earthly life, into his present glorified condition in heaven, one continuous offering to the Father, continuously accepted and continuously transformed. At the time of the Ascension the offering was complete in the sense that no more events were to take place in Christ's human life, no more episodes to be added to it; thenceforth it persists as a finished and perfected product, perpetually offered to the Father and perpetually accepted by him. "All that he said, did and endured," wrote Denis the Carthusian, "he did and suffered for our salvation to the glory of the Father; all that he did and suffered was meritorious for our sake. Thus the whole life of Christ on earth was, as it were, one solemn Mass, in which

29. *A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy* (tr. J. M. Hussey and P. A. McNulty, London: S.P.C.K., 1960), p. 105.
30. *De trin.*, V, xv; XV, xix.
31. *Sum. theol.*, Ia, 38, 2.

he himself was the altar and the temple, the priest and the victim."[32] And we can parallel this with some words of the late Fr. P. N. Waggett, written as far back as 1906 but strangely ignored since then:

> We know that the Lord's Sacrifice is an offering of his whole life to the Father, and that it is such that his divinely unbegun life had already this character of presentation to the Father, from who, as from the Fount of Deity, it springs. So the Incarnation itself is from the first an offering, because it is a bringing of the creature into the great stream of the Son's love towards the Father by the Holy Spirit. Now in the Incarnation the Creature also is offered by the same Spirit to the Father and the whole life of Christ, from the Conception to the end, is one effectual sacrifice.[33]

What, then, is the place in this of the Cross and the death on Calvary? They are, I would affirm, essential and inevitable when a perfect offering of a human life was made in a fallen world. We have seen that even in pagan sacrifices and in those of the Jewish religion the death of the victim was seen not as its destruction but as the offering of its life to God. And I have suggested that the only way in which man, in his fallen and divided condition, can put his gift entirely and unreservedly in God's possession is by removing it totally from his own. So he slays or burns it, in order that it may wholly pass into the presence of God. No such necessity dogged the perfect offering of the sinless Incarnate Son. He gave himself completely in his whole life; he did not slay himself. But the making the perfect offering in a sinful world inevitably drew down upon itself the concentrated forces of evil in a desperate effort to destroy it or to mutilate its perfection. The onslaught had to be allowed to go to the ultimate point of ferocity, for without rendering his offering imperfect the Offerer could not meet force with force or hate with hate. So the life passed through death in a way of which the death of the victim in the ancient sacrifices was only the faintest and most remote foreshadowing. Nevertheless, the death was the offering of the life and not its destruction, and in the Resurrection it was accepted by the Father and transformed into a condition of perpetual efficacity. Christ ever liveth to make intercession for us.

III

What then of our third theme, that of the Sacrifice of the Eucharist?

The offering that the ascended Christ makes of himself to the Father in heaven in his glorified manhood is communicated to the Church, which is his body, by the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost, and to its members, who are his members, by their baptismal incorporation into him. As St. Paul told his Roman correspondents, Christian baptism is an actual participation in the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:3–11), and in the words of the Epistle to the Ephesians, God has raised us up and made us sit with him

32. Quoted by F. Clark, S.J., *Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformation* (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1960), p. 527.
33. P. N. Waggett, *The Holy Eucharist* (London: John Murray, 1906), p. 32.

in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephes. 2:6). And by this participation we are given back our lost sonship and our life becomes filial once more. This is precisely expressed by St. Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians:

> When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth his son born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them which are under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So that thou art no longer a bondservant but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God (Gal. 4:4–7).

So our lost sonship is restored through our incorporation into Christ, we are *filii in Filio*, and the Church, which is Christ's body, is also the family, the household of God.

As the Russian Orthodox theologian Dr. Paul Evdokimov writes:

> The formation of Christ in man, man's christification, is neither an impossible imitation nor the application to man of the merits of the Incarnation, but the projection into man of the Incarnation itself, operated and perpetuated by the Eucharistic mystery.[34]

So it is in the Eucharist that the Church is continually sustained and renewed in her character as Christ's body. By the Eucharist the Church is made what she already is and Christians are made what they already are. And I think it has come to be seen in recent years that the only doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice that is both realistic and tolerable is one that understands the Eucharist as neither a repetition nor a commemoration of the Sacrifice of Christ but as identically the *same* sacrifice, differing only in its mode of presentation. The title of Mgr. Journet's book, *La Messe; Présence du Sacrifice de la Croix*, is very significant in this connection. In it he argues that the Mass is "not another sacrifice than the unique redemptive sacrifice, but another presence, a sacramental presence, to us of that *unique sacrifice*,"[35] and he develops the concept of an *operative* presence of the Sacrifice as an *act*, side by side with the *substantial* presence of the Victim as an *object*.

However, welcome as is Journet's central theme, the very title of his book shows that he has not succeeded in breaking with the idea of Christ's sacrifice as simply coextensive with his death, and this assumption is indeed very deeply rooted in Roman Catholic thought. If Fr. Francis Clark is right in his recent book, *Eucharistic Sacrifice and the Reformation*, the late medieval theologians did not, as the Protestant critics claimed, view the Mass as a repetition of Calvary but, in fact, as a commemoration of it, though the critics could not be got to believe this. The key to this strange misapprehension, if misapprehension it be, seems to lie in a defect that Fr. Clark does not admit, though it appears from the material that he amasses. Every one of

34. Paul Evdokimov, *L'Orthodoxie* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1959), p. 113.
35. Journet, *La Messe*, p. 11.

the thirteen passages that he quotes in order to show that Catholics did not assert a literal immolation of Christ in the Mass views the death on the Cross as not merely central to the Sacrifice of Christ but as identical with it. (The passage quoted earlier from Denis the Carthusian appears as a rather rare exception.)

I do not think the needed corrective is supplied by substituting or simply adding the heavenly offering of the ascended Christ to the death on the Cross as the primary concern of the Eucharist. That was done by Bishop Gore and also by Fr. Waggett, and Fr. Clark shows that it was not absent even from the teaching of some of the late medieval Catholics. There is of course an obvious sense in which the Eucharist is related to the heavenly exaltation, for Christ is now exalted and if he is present in the Eucharist it is the exalted Christ who is present. If, however, I have been right in suggesting, first, that the Eucharistic sacrifice neither repeats nor commemorates, but simply *is* Christ's sacrifice and, secondly, that Christ's sacrifice, while centred in Calvary and reaching its completion in the Ascension, includes the whole sweep of his incarnate life, it will not do simply to identify the Eucharistic offering with the heavenly exaltation any more than with the death on the Cross. But then we are left with the question how a process most of which has already taken place can be present with us now.

One possible answer could be given by taking Journet's concept of the operative presence of an act and applying it not merely to the act of Christ's death but to the succession of acts or, better, the one continuous act of his whole human life and experience. However, much as I admire Journet's insight and ingenuity, I doubt whether, without considerable amplification, his concept can be given the necessary transcendence of the time-process. I find greater possibilities in the concept, expounded by Dom Anscar Vonier in 1925 in *A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist*, of "sacramental signification," a unique mode of supernatural causality, by which a divine reality is present, not in the normal mode of occupation of space and time but simply because some other reality is a divinely ordained effective sign of it. And, while Vonier applies this concept to the *object* of the Sacrifice—the Body and Blood of Christ—he is clear that it also applies to the *act* of the sacrifice. My only quarrel with Vonier is over his limitation of the Sacrifice to the event of Christ's death, but, as in the case of Journet, this limitation can easily be removed. In words that I have used elsewhere:

> The sacrificial character of the Mass does not consist in its being an event which happens to Christ after his Ascension and which in some way repeats or imitates his death, but in its being the means by which the whole sacrificial action of Christ, centred in the Cross and culminating in the Ascension, is made sacramentally present in the Church. It is not a repetition of the sacrifice, nor is it the completion of the sacrifice; it is simply the sacrifice itself, present in the unique mode of a sacrament, present, that is, simply and solely because the sacramental species are the divinely ordained effective signs of it.[36]

36. E. L. Mascall, *Corpus Christi* (London: Longmans, 1953), p. 96.

So, to return to our main theme, in the Eucharist the Church is taken up into the filial self-offering of the whole incarnate life of the Divine Son and her offering of herself is transformed by being made part of his. In Waggett's words, "Our sacrifice . . . is all one with the Sacrifice of Christ, which embraces in its unfaltering obedience and charity the whole sweep of his experience from his conception until now."[37] In St. Augustine's great phrase, it is shown to the Church in the Sacrament of the altar "that in that which she offers she herself is offered."[38]

So in the Eucharist, because the members are taken up into the manhood of their Head, the Whole Christ (*totus Christus, membra cum capite*) offers the Whole Christ in filial homage to the glory of the Father, so participating in that filial response that in the life of the Trinity itself the Son renders to the Father in eternity, and, being accepted in the Beloved, is transformed and sealed by the Spirit.

37. Waggett, *The Holy Eucharist*, p. 34.
38. *De civ. dei*, X, vi.