The Propitiatory Nature of the Eucharist: An Inquiry into the Early Sources

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In the present ecumenical dialogue the Eucharist is undoubtedly one of the fields in which a gradual convergence of views is most noticeable. Past divisions in this area, which were crystallized around the doctrinal decrees of the Council of Trent and were subsequently hardened on both sides by a polemical *esprit de corps* seem to have given way of late not only to a fruitful and amicable dialogue but even to a doctrinal agreement which is certainly remarkable, even if it is not yet total and complete.[1] However, one can hardly help being surprised at

1. The increasing interest in an ecumenical Eucharist as a powerful means to achieve Christian unity (according to some *the* means, since Jesus' primary intention in instituting the Eucharist was to make it a source of unity) is evinced by the veritable flood of literature in recent years, which shows no signs of abating. Cf, e.g. M. Thurian, *The eucharistic memorial*, 2 vols (London, 1961); *Id.*: *Le pain unique* (Taizé, 1967); *Id.*: "La théologie des nouvelles prières eucharistiques", *Ver. Caro* n. 87 (1968) 17-43; "Eucharistic sharing: a new state of the question for Roman Catholics", *Ecum. Rev.* 22(1970)113-124; "Accord oecuménique sur l'Eucharistie", *Ver. Caro* n. 87(1968)1-10; "Au-delà de l'Intercommunion", *Ver. Caro* n. 91(1969)4-31; V. Vajta, *Intercommunion avec Rome?* (Paris, 1970); H. McSorley, "Protestant eucharistic reality and lack of Orders", *Ecumenist* 5(1967)68-75; H. McSorley, "The Roman Catholic doctrine of the competent minister of the Eucharist in ecumenical perspective", *One in Christ* 5(1969)405-422; Timiadis, E, "Geladen zum Hochzeitsmahl des Lammes. Die Eucharistie nach orthodoxem Verstandis", *Una Sancta* 23(1968)312-326; C. Hay, "Intercommunion: a Roman Catholic approach", *One in Christ* 5(1969)355-378; G. Baum, "Communicatio in sacris in the decree on Ecumenism", *One in Christ* 3(1967)417-428; J. Hughes, "Recent studies on the validity of Anglican Orders", *Consilium*, Jan. 1968, pp. 68-73; Tillard, J. "Catholiques romains et Anglicans: l'Eucharistie", *Nouv. Rev. Théol.* 93(1971)602-656; H. Bacht, "Zum Problem der Interkommunion", *Catholica* 24(1970)270-291) (with bibl.); Blank, J., "Eucharistie und Kirchengemeinschaft nach Paulus", *Una Sancta* 23 (1968)172-183; R. Schillebeeckx, "Catholic understanding of office", *Theol. Stud.* (1969)567-587; K. McDonnell, "Ways of validating ministry", *Jour. Ecum. Stud.* 7(1970)209-265; G. Tavard, "The function of the minister in the eucharistic

the fact that the propitiatory nature of the Eucharist, which at the time of the Reformation constituted one of the main points of disagreement, seems to be hardly discussed today. When going through the recent literature on the subject of the Eucharist one gets the impression that this concrete point is either hurriedly agreed on or is simply passed over in silence.[1] And yet the method of apparently ignoring controversial issues is hardly the means to achieve the desired unity. Ecumenical differences will hopefully be solved by bringing them out into the open, rather than by pushing them neatly under the mat.[2] This paper is but a modest attempt to examine, however fragmentarily, the early historical evidence in order to determine objectively how far the Eucharist can be said to be a sacrifice of propitiation.

The Jewish Background to the Supper

It is generally agreed today that the Christian Eucharist should be seen as inserted within the framework of the Jewish *Berakah*. The Last Supper cannot be considered as a monolith fallen from outer space, but rather as a plant that grew on the fertile soil of the Old Testament *chaburah*-meals and, more specifically, of the annual Passover celebrations of the Jewish community.[3] It is obvious that the religious meaning and doctrinal content of these liturgical celebrations will have to be deduced primarily from the Jewish prayers and formulas used in the synagogue and temple services.

The Jewish *Berakah* is primarily a blessing of God, rather than of the elements. The assembled community praises Yahweh for the *mirabilia* accomplished in the course of salvation-history, and this praise takes the form of a blessing in response to the

celebration", *Ibid.* 4(1967)629-649; Y. Congar, "Composantes et idee de la succession apostolique", *Oecumenica* 1966, pp. 61-80; G. Tavard, "Roman Catholic theology and recognition of ministry", *Jour. Ecum. Stud.* 6(1969)623-628; H. McSorley, "Unprecedented agreement on the Eucharist" *Ecumenist* 8(1970) 89-93; J. 7on Allmen, *The Lord's Supper* (London, 1969); S. Brenner, "De facto intercommunion throughout the world", *Jour. Ecum. Stud.* 7(1970)903-906.

2. Cf. the official Report of the second meeting of the Anglican-R. Catholic joint international commission: "Anglican-R. Catholic international commission", *One in Christ* 7(1971)256-276, esp. p. 267; Report of the third meeting (Sept. 1971), n. 5; "Eucharist and ministry: a Lutheran-Roman Catholic statement", *Theol. Stud.* 31(1970)712-734; "The Eucharist in the life of the Church: an ecumenical consensus", *Ecumenist* 8(1970)90-93.

3. Cf. J. Audet, "Esquisse historique du genre littéraire de la N'Bénédiction' juive et de l'Eucharistie chrétienne", *Rev. Bibl.* 65(1958) 371ff; J. Audet, "Literary forms and contents of a normal 'eucharistia' in the first century", in *Studia Evangelica* (ed. K. Aland, Berlin 1959) 643-662; G. Dix, *The shape of the liturgy* (London, 1945) 50ff; J. Jungmann, *The early liturgy* (Notre Dame, 1959) 29-38; J. Jeremias, *The eucharistic words of Jesus* (2nd ed. London, 1966) 41-88.

Word of God just read out to the community. Spoken by God to the community (scriptural readings) before the community speaks to God (*Berakah* or blessing), the biblical Word is not only revelatory or manifestative but essentially efficacious as well. The Word " is not a discourse but an action ",[4] as endowed with the transforming power of God himself.

The general structure of the liturgical service and particularly the prayers recited at the synagogue are of special importance to us. This service comprised the recitation of the *Shemah* (Dt. 6:4-9; 11:13-31 and later also Num. 15:37-41), the great *Tefillah* or prayer of the eighteen Blessings, and finally the meal, *Berakoth*.[5] The great *Berakah* of *Ahabah*, preceding the recitation of the *Shemah*, is predominantly a hymn of praise coupled with thanksgiving, but one notices in the second part a gradual shift of emphasis towards intercession. The prayer contains no reference whatever to sin or to forgiveness.[6]

But the prayer *par excellence* is the *Tefillah* of the *Shemoneh Esreh* or series of eighteen solemn blessings, which in its main structure is a prayer of supplication prefaced and concluded by three *berakoth*. The first three prayers, imbued with a deep sense of gratitude for God's promises and salvific intervention in history, are of no particular interest to us, but one should carefully note prayers five and six.

Prayer 5 (*Teshubah*) runs: " Cause us to return, our Father, unto thy Torah, and draw us near, our king, unto thy service, and bring us back in perfect repentance before thee. Blessed be thou, JHWH, who delightest in repentence." And prayer 6 (*Selishah*): " Forgive us, our Father, for thou art good and forgiving. Blessed be thou, JHWH, who art gracious and dost abundantly forgive."[7]

The theme of mercy is mentioned in prayers 9 (*Birkat hashamin*) and 16 (*Tefillah*), but one should be wary of seeing there an implicit reference to sin and forgiveness: as later on in many Oriental liturgies, the general context in which this reference to the divine mercy is inserted is one of entreaty and supplication, which envelops and surrounds it. There is no reference, even implicit, to sin, considered as an independent element.[8]

4. L. Bouyer, *Eucharist* (Notre Dame, 1968) p. 32. I am mainly indebted to this work for the first section of the paper. Cf. A. A. Feuillet, " Parole de Dieu ", in *Vocab. de théol. bibl.* (ed. X. Léon-Dufour, Paris, 1962)750-758.
5. Cf. L. Bouyer, *Eucharist*, p. 59.
6. The full *berakoth Ahabag* is given in D. Hedegard, *Seder R. Amran Gaon, Part I* (Lund, 1951). Cf. Bouyer, *op. cit.*, p. 63f.
7. Hedegard, *op. cit.*, pp. 87ff; Bouyer, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
8. This remark is of some importance, for it will have to be subsumed later in at least two other contexts, that of the Oriental anaphorae and that of Trent. Even when an explicit reference to sin and forgiveness does appear, it will always be within the context of intercession, rather than detached from it. The whole *Tefillah* is essentially a prayer of supplication. Cf. Bouyer, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

More directly pre-eucharistic, however, are the Jewish *berakoth* recited at family meals, particularly at the Passover celebration. After an introductory dialogue which according to the Talmud goes back to pre-Christian times,[9] the president recites a series of *berakoth* beginning with the *Seder Amran Gaon:*

> "Blessed be thou, JHWH, our God, king of the universe, who feedest the world with goodness, with grace and with mercy, who givest food to all flesh... Blessed be thou, JHWH, who givest food to all of us.
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> "We thank thee, JHWH, our God, for a desirable, good and ample land which thou wast pleased to give to our fathers and for thy covenant which thou hast marked in our flesh and for the Torah which thou hast given us and for life, grace, mercy and food... For all this, JHWH, our God, we thank thee and bless thy name...
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> "Have mercy, JHWH, our God, upon thy people Israel, upon thy city Jerusalem, upon Zion, the abiding place of thy glory, upon the kingdom of the house of David, thine anointed... Feed us, nourish us, sustain us, provide for us, relieve us speedily from our anxieties, and let us not stand in need of the gifts of mortals, for their gifts are small and their reproach is great, for we have trusted in thy holy, great and fearful name... Blessed be thou, JHWH, who rebuildest Jerusalem."[10]

One should only add that the *Seder Amran Gaon* prescribes certain variations in the third *berakah*, to be used on specially festive occasions:

> "Our God and the God of our fathers, may the remembrance of ourselves and of our fathers and the remembrance of Jerusalem, thy city, and the remembrance of the Messiah, the son of David, thy servant, and the remembrance of thy people, the whole house of Israel, arise and come, come to pass, be seen and accepted and heard, be remembered and be mentioned before thee for deliverance, for good, for grace, for loving-kindness and for mercy on this day. Remember us, JHWH, our God, on this day for good and visit us on it for blessing and save us on it unto life by a word of salvation and mercy, and spare, favour and show us

9. *Mishnah*, tractate *Berakoth*, VII, 2.

10. Hedegard, *op. cit.*, pp. 147ff. Cf. Bouyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-83. M. Thurian gives an abbreviated text, cf. *The eucharistic memorial*, II(1961) p. 43. The full text is analized by L. Finkelstein, "The Birkat Ha-Mazon", *Jewish Quart. Rev.* 1928-29, pp. 211-262. Cf. Rabbi S. Singer, *Authorized daily prayer book* (London, 1932), pp. 279ff.

mercy, for thou art a gracious and merciful God and King."[11]

This last prayer is firmly embedded in the context of the Hebrew *zikkaron* or anamnesis, which is substantially a prayer of supplication and thanksgiving, as a memorial directed both to God and to the people, with apparently no reference to sin or to forgiveness of sin. The original and deepest nucleus of the Jewish memorial, exemplified in the above variations for festive occasions, seems to have been a joyful praise for the *mirabilia Dei* which spontaneously issues into thanksgiving for the past and supplication for the future, asking God to bring to perfection, through his efficacious word, the work of salvation which he has started but not yet fulfilled. This last element of incompleteness will give rise later on to the eschatological aspect of the Christian Eucharist.[12]

The above is therefore in all likelihood[13] the *berakah* used by Jesus at the institution of the Eucharist, and it is to this original nucleus we shall have to refer later on when trying to determine which elements are essential and which are peripheral in the Christian eucharistic celebration.

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11. Hedegard, *op. cit.*, p. 152. The text is also reproduced in Thurian, *The one bread* (N. York, 1969), p. 18, but the English rendering is defective, for it reads:"... for deliverance, good, *forgiveness*, compassion....", when it should read *loving kindness* rather than *forgiveness*, according to Hedegard's translation. Hence the prayer makes no reference to sin and forgiveness, but rather to the OT *hesed* (=lovingkindness). The point, though minimal in itself, is of some importance for the present study. For the English translation of other *berakoth* cf. A. Lukyn Williams, *Tractate berakoth* (London, 1921).
12. This meaning of the Jewish memorial seems to have been conclusively established by J. Jeremias, *The eucharistic words of Jesus* (2nd Engl. ed. London, 1966)204ff and by M. Thurian, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 5-34 and passim, in spite of the doubts voiced by E. Schweizer (*The Lord's Supper according to the New Testament*, 1967, p. xi) and J. Von Allmen (*The Lord's Supper*, 1969, p. 29). Cf. J. de Watteville, *Le sacrifice dans les textes eucharistiques des premiere siècle* (Paris, 1966) pp. 17ff. The deepest core of the memorial, as an essential element of the *berakah* was, according to Audet, the joyful praise for the *mirabilia*, even more than thanksgiving and supplication. Cf. *art. cit.*, p. 656.
13. I say "in all likelihood" because perfect certainty cannot be reached. It all depends on the vexed question whether Jesus, at the institution, celebrated the Passover or not. Jeremias, in 1966 still upholds his former, affirmative opinion (cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 41-60) in spite of objections against his view. For the arguments on the negative side cf. mainly E. Schweizer, *op. cit.*, 30ff. Sceptical about ever reaching certainty in the question, H. Schurmann, "Jesus' words in the light of his actions at the Last Supper", *Concilium*, Dec. 1968, pp. 61-67. For, if the original Eucharist was not a Passover meal Jesus could, according to Jewish ritual, have improvised the *berakah*, departing from the set formula given above.

In the Jewish liturgical calendar the feast of *Yom Ha-Kippurim* stood out as the Day of Atonement or expiation for sin, when the High Priest, through a complex ritual of purification and blood-sprinkling, performed the rite of expiation for his own sins and for those of the community.[14] Through it all sins were forgiven, conscious, deliberate sins as well as those of frailty or ignorance; but this remission of sins was not achieved mechanically, it rather implied the sinner's personal act of conversion to God. Hence the ceremonies of Kippur and particularly the sprinkling of the *kapporah* were directed to man's sin rather than to God, whose graciousness was not the result of, but the presupposition for, the sprinkling. The Day of Atonement did not propitiate God in the sense of making him propitious, it rather purified man from his sin, consecrating him again to God by re-establishing the link of communion with him which had been snapped by sin. For a Hebrew, 'expiation' did not convey any idea of punishment for sin, but rather of cleanliness and purification. It is not God who becomes agreeable to man, but man who is rendered agreeable to God.

The *Kippur*, therefore, more than a sacramental act endowed with an *ex opere operato* efficacy, is a prayer of humble intercession for the remission of sins: the expiation of Moses (Ex 32:30; cf. 32:11ff) is in reality a prayer, according to the later interpretation of Wis. 18:21-25. Similarly the expiation in Lev. 4:20, 26, 31 is rendered by St. Jerome as 'rogabit'. The epistle to the Hebrews, in the same vein, considers Christ's sacrifice as patterned on that of the *Kippur*, and his entrance into heaven as an intercession (cf. Heb. 7:25; 9:24). Even on the Day of Atonement God could only be requested, not forced, to forgive sins.[15]

Biblically speaking it is hardly possible to find any real difference between the two terms "expiation" and "propiatiation", as the Hebrew *Kippur* can be rendered equally well by both. The *kapporeth* or cover of the Ark was sprinkled with blood as a means of expiation, but to consider the root of the Hebrew term (K-P-R: 'to cover') as signifying that, after the completion of the ritual, God "covered" their sins and the High Priest "covered or sprinkled a sacrifice with blood",[16] seems to carry the etymology of the word a little too far.

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14. The ceremonies of the Day of Atonement have often been described, cf. L. Ligier, *Péché d'Adam et péché du monde*, II(Paris, 1961) pp. 225ff; C. Spicq, *L'Epitre aux Hébreux*, II(Paris, 1955) pp. 277ff; A. Médebielle, *Expiations*, DBS, III, 51ff; etc...
15. Cf. S. Lyonnet, "Expiation", in *Vocab. Théol. Bibl.* (ed. ffl. Léon-Dufour) pp. 345-346.
16. M. Thurian, *op. cit.*, II, p. 96. It is true that according to Lev 16, 13 Aaron should burn incense before the *kapporeth* and the cloud of incense should cover it; but on the other hand, according

The New Testament refers indirectly to the Jewish Day of Atonement in two passages where Christ is respectively called *hylasterion* (Rom. 3:25) and *hylasmos* (1 Jn. 2:2; 4:10). In Rom. 3:25 Paul considers Christ either as the NT *kapporeth*, sprinkled with his own blood, or as the High Priest performing the sacrifice of expiation.[17] Here again God is not the object but the subject of this act of propitiation-expiation, for it is God's lovingkindness that has manifested or put forward this means of expiation, so that man, through faith in Christ, may be justified. Yet it would be wrong to interpret this Pauline *hylasterion* exclusively in the sense of a manifestation or revelation of God's pre-existing graciousness. It is revelation and it is fulfilment, it is manifestation because it is accomplishment. God manifests in Christ and operates through faith in him the expiation of man's sins.[18]

It is worth noting at this juncture that the term " expiation " (or its equivalent, " propitiation ") is *never* applied in the New Testament to the Eucharist, but exclusively to Christ's objective redemption. In fact, the only NT testimony in favour of an explicit connection between the Eucharist and sin is Mt. 26:28 in the context of the institution: " For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many *for the forgiveness of sins.*" Matthew is the only synoptist to add the italicized clause, which is absent from the parallel passages in Luke, Mark and Paul (cf. Lk. 22:7-38; Mk. 14:12-25; 1 Cor. 11:23-32). It is generally admitted today, even outside Roman Catholic circles, that at the Last Supper Jesus performed a true cultic sacrifice, the main reasons for this contention being the definitely sacrificial formulae used, the strict parallelism between the text of Matthew and that of Ex. 24:4-8 (Sinaitic covenant) and the very high probability that the Supper was a Passover meal, and

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to Ex. 26: 34; 35; 12; 39:35, *kapporeth* is not the cover of the Ark but, in general, a means of expiation. Nor is it easy to see, in Thurian's explanation, the transition from " to cover " to the " presentation of the blood " (*Ibid.*, p. 97). Cf. F. Büchsel, " Hylasterion ", in *Theolog. Wörterbuch NT*, III, 319-324.

17. The unavoidable ambiguity of *hylasterion* should be noted: it can stand for the golden *kapporeth* or cover of the Ark, but it can also designate the person of the High Priest, *Keli kapparah le-Israel* or instrument of expiation for Israel, in which case Paul would have in mind the totality of the expiatory rite. Cf. Ligier, *op. cit.*, II, p. 247 and S. Lyonnet, *De peccato et Redemptione*, II(Roma, 1960)106-117. F. Zorell gives, as possible meanings of *hylasterion*, " operculum arcae foederis " and " sacrificium piaculare ", cf. *Lexicon Greacum NT* (Paris, 1931) col. 614-615. On Christ as *hylasterion* c.f Moraldi, " Sensus vocis hylasterion in Rom 3, 25 ", VD, 1948, pp. 257-276; L. Morris, " The meaning of hylasterion in Rom 3, 25 ", NST 2(1955)33-44.
18. Cf. Büchsel, *art. cit.*, p. 322.
19. Cf. Büchsel, " Hylasmos ", in *Theolog. Worterbuch NT*, III, pp. 317-318.

therefore a sacrificial meal.[20] Yet most exegetes and theologians remain strangely silent about the Matthean clause '*for the forgiveness of sins*'.[21] This expression, which is "probably an addition, substantially correct"[22] to Jesus' own words, and which "is a correct exegesis" of Matthew[23] stresses further still the sacrificial character of the Supper. The entire liturgical action, together with the words of interpretation, is to be seen in the light of Is. 53: 12: "He poured out his life to death and was numbered among the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors." Matthew's addition presents the death of Jesus as the vicarious death of the suffering Servant who atones for the sins of many, whereas the act of offering bread and wine is to be explained as a prophecy of his imminent death, on the line of the OT *ot.* By partaking of his blood, the Apostles received "a share in the atoning power of his death".[24] The Supper is, therefore, presented as the anticipated sacramental re-enactment of the sacrifice for the remission of sins. The new Covenant will be sealed by Jesus' blood on the Cross as a true sacrifice of expiation (cf. Heb. 9: 14-22), but that unique and unrepeatable expiation for sins is anticipated sacramentally at the Supper, which becomes the anticipated sacramental repercussion of the Cross.[25] On the other hand, it

20. Cf. Jeremias, *op. cit.*, pp. 222ff; E. Schweizer *op. cit.*, p. 16; M. Thurian, *op. cit.*, II, 76-108; J. Von Allmen, *op. cit.*, pp. 68ff; L. Leenhardt, *Ceci est mon corps* (Neuchatel, 1955) 41-49.

21. Practically none of the authors consulted has anything of importance to say on the Matthean clause: Jeremias, Schweizer, Von Allmen, Leenhardt, A. Higgins (*The Lord's Supper in the New Testament*, London, 1952) and E. Kilmartin (*The Eucharist in the primitive Church*, N. Jeresy, 1965) have nothing to offer specifically on this point. Equally reticent are Allen, Lagrange and Fenton in their respectives commentaries on Matthew. Thurian devotes six pages to the text (*op. cit.*, II, pp. 56-62) by connecting Mt. 26: 28 with the Jewish Day of Atonement, 'largely on the basis of Heb. 13: 10-16. However, the connection between the Eucharist and Kippur, which will later be emphasized by some of the Oriental liturgies, cannot be established on strictly biblical grounds. It is more than doubtful whether Mt. 26: 28 has anything to do with Lev. 16. On the other hand, the eucharistic meaning of Heb. 13: 10-16 is, at most, indirect, the comparison been rather between the Cross and the Kippur. Cf. C. Spicq, *Epitre aux Hébreux*, II, pp. 424-428; B. Wescott, *The Epistle to the Hébrews* (1903) pp. 439f; A. Medebielle, *Epitre aux Hébreux* in *La Sainte Bibl.* ed. L. Pirot, t. XII (1946) p. 368.

22. J. Jeremias, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

23. R. Bultmann, *The theology of the New Testament*, I (London, 1952) p. 146.

24. J. Jeremias, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

25. Exegetically speaking, Mt. 26: 28 remains somewhat ambiguous: the key expression of v. 28b (*Ekchunnomenon eis aphesin hamartion*) is obviously to be linked with the *haima mou* of v. 28a and that blood was present in the cup, there and then. But on the other hand the participle *Ekchunnomenon* expressed probably an immediate future, rather than a present action, and this in turn would refer the "remission of sins"

would be futile to appeal to the sacrificial character of the Jewish Passover in order to establish or reinforce the propitiatory nature of the Eucharist, for in spite of authoritative voices defending the contrary opinion, it is highly doubtful whether the Passover was ever considered by the Hebrews as a sacrifice of expiation.[26]

In conclusion: The New Testament, including the Jewish background of the various *berakoth* and that of the *Kippur*, offers us a rather meagre testimony in favour of the propitiatory character of the Eucharist, and the patristic testimonies which follow immediately upon the NT era will continue to be reticent in this regard. It is only later, particularly in some of the Oriental liturgies, that this aspect will come to the fore.

Early Patristic Testimonies

After leaving the biblical field of the NT, one encounters the testimony of the *Didaché*, traditionally quoted as the oldest post-biblical eucharistic witness; but its eucharistic nature, the object of controversy for a long time, is only highly probable, rather than certain.[27] Written in an Antiochean milieu at the end of the first century,[28] this little document offers us the most ancient Christian liturgy of the post-biblical era. The pertinent passage of the text runs:

> "9. Give thanks in this manner. First over the cup: We *give thanks* to thee, our Father, for the holy vine of thy son David, which thou hast made known to

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to the Cross, not to the Supper. In conclusion, the text does retain its real value as an indication of the propitiatory charatcer of the Eucharist, but it should not be pressed too far.

26. For the affirmative opinion one could cite W. Eichrodt, *Theol. des A.T.I*, p. 99; E. König, *Theol. des A.T.*, p. 290: "Ein sühnendes Opfer ist das Passchopfer"; and P. Van Imschoot, *Théologie de l'A.T.* II p. 179. Yet the purpose of the Passover sacrificial blood seems to be, according to Ex. 12: 7,13 only to mark and preserve the elect. Cf. S. Lyonnet, *De peccato*, II, p. 122f. Without entering into this controversy, Audet thinks that the remission of sins is considered as one of the *mirabilia* "for which praise should be made" (*art. cit.*, p. 656), but this refers to the early Christian Eucharist, not to the institution itself.

27. G. Dix vigorously denies any eucharistic character, c.f *The Shape*, p. 92f; and so does J. Jungmann, *Missarum sollemnia*, I(Paris, 1954) p. 35. Most authors, however, affirm it unhesitatingly, cf. J. Audet, *La Didache. Instruction des Apotres* (Paris, 1958), passim; Watteville, *Le sacrifice*, p. 25; Bouyer, *op. cit.*, p. 117; N. M. Denis-Boulet, "La Messe" in *Introduction à la liturgie*, ed. A. Mortimort (Tournai, 1965) p. 268; J. Qasten, *Patrology* I(1950), p. 32. The prescription debarring the non-baptized from the meal and the parallelism with baptism, mentioned immediately before, seem to argue in favour of the eucharistic meaning.

28. Cf. J. Audet, *La Didaché*, p. 219, who suggests the years 50-57 AD as the time of composition. This early date, however, is unlikely The majority would place it rather at the end of the first century

us through Jesus thy son: thine be the glory forever. Then over the broken bread: *We give thanks* to thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which thou didst make known to us through Jesus thy son: thine be the glory forever...

"Let no one drink of this eucharist of yours except those who have been baptized into the name of the Lord. For on this point the Lord said, 'Do not give what is holy to the dogs.'

"10. And when you have had enough, *give thanks* in this form: We give thanks to thee, holy Father, for thy holy name which thou hast made to dwell in our hearts... Thou, almighty Master... didst give food and drink to men for their enjoyment so that they might *give thanks* to thee... Above all *we give thanks* to thee because thou art mighty... *Remember*, O Lord, thy Church, to deliver it from all evil and to make it perfect in thy love: and gather it together from the four winds... If any man is holy, let him come: he who is not, let him repent...

"14. On the Lord's Day assemble together and break bread and give thanks, first making public confessions of your faults, that your *sacrifice* may be pure. If any man has a quarrel with a friend, let him not join your assembly until they are reconciled, that your *sacrifice* may not be defiled. For this is the *sacrifice* spoken of by the Lord: 'In every place and time offer me a pure sacrifice...' (Mal. 1:11, 14)".[29]

The text is self-explanatory. For our purpose let it suffice to point out that its entire structure follows closely that of the Jewish *berakoth*, with its insistence on thanksgiving and supplication, which constitute precisely the core of the biblical memorial. The double reference to sin in ch. 10 and 14 is placed in a context of preliminary purification. Freedom from sin is presented as the condition for, not the result of, the eucharistic celebration. Again in ch. 14, strongly sacrificial in tone (*Thusia* is mentioned three times, *Prospherein* once), we find not the slightest trace of any expiation or propitiation for sins.

Neither Clement of Rome[30] nor Ignatius of Antioch shed any further light on the subject. The eucharistic teaching of the

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or early in the second century. Cf. J. Jungmann, *Missarum sol.* I, p. 34; Denis-Boulet, *art. cit.*, p. 262; J. Quasten, *op. cit.*, I, p. 30; J. Watteville, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

29. The English translation is taken from H. Bettenson. *The early Christian fathers* (London, 1956) pp. 69-72.

30. His Letter to the Corinthians supplies us with but scanty information regarding the eucharistic celebration in Rome about the year 95. He certainly makes use of sacrificial vocabulary (*Thusia Prosphora, leitourgiai* etc...) but that is about all. His

latter concentrates mainly on the unifying force of the Eucharist under the local bishop, and while the doctrine of the real presence and the eschatological nature of the Eucharist are clearly stated, its sacrificial character is somewhat left in the shadows.[31]

With Justin we reach the middle of the second century. Justin's testimony can hardly be overestimated, as he represents simultaneously the traditions of three Churches: Palestine, where he was born, Ephesus, where he lived and was probably converted to Christianity, and Rome, where he writes his Apology about the year 150.[32] His main eucharistic teaching is found in the *First Apology*, ch. 66-67, and in the *Dialogue with Trypho*, ch. 41.

The *First Apology* describes the eucharistic celebration as follows: The brethren gather on Sundays in memory of Christ's Resurrection (*Apol.* 67) and after the administration of baptism to the neophytes, " bread and a cup of wine are brought forward to the one presiding over the brethren " (*Ibid.* 65). After the preaching of the homily (*Ibid.* 67), " the president recites orations (*Euchai*) and prayers of thanksgiving (*Eucharistiai*) very intently and the people answer Amen " (*Ibid.* 67). Then distribution of communion follows (*Ibid.* 65; cf. also 67). This is but the execution of Christ's injunction to repeat the Supper as a memorial of him (*Ibid.* 67), and this is done " by commemorating his Passion " (*Dialogue*, 41), " in memory of his blood with thanksgiving " (*Ibid.* 70). " The food is ' eucharistized ' ... we are taught that they (the elements) are the flesh and blood of the incarnate Jesus " (*Apol.* 66).

More pointedly yet, on the sacrificial nature and in a polemical context with Trypho: " About the sacrifices which used to be offered by you, this is what God says through Malachi: ' I am not pleased with you... ' (Mal. 1: 10). Whereas about the sacrifice (*Thusia*) offered by us, Gentiles, that is, about the bread and the wine of the Eucharist, already then he announced ... that his name would be glorified by the Gentiles " (*Dial.* 41). This sacrifice has to be acceptable to God (*Ibid.* 117).

Dial. 41 establishes again a comparison between the OT sacrifices and the Eucharist, with an explicit reference to Lev. 14: 10ff, where the Hebrew *minha*, rendered by the LXX as *Doron* or *Thussia*, is transformed by Justin into *prosphora*, without

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testimony is too meagre to allow us to draw any definite conclusion from it. Cf. for the full text, C. Schaeffer, *S. Clementis Romani epistula ad Corinthios* (Bonnae, 1941) and Watteville, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-44.

31. Watteville (*op. cit.*, p. 5) seems to overstretch the evidence when he sees in the two vague allusions of *Philad.* 4 and *Smyn.* 7 an implied sacrificial meaning. But Ignatius often uses the term *Thusiasterion* (*Eph.* 5, 2; *Magn.* 7, 2; *Trall.* 7, 2) and this word certainly belongs to the sacrificial world. Full critical edition of his letters in K. Bihlmeyer, *Die Apostolischen Vater* (Tübingen, 1924).

32. Cf. Quasten, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 196f; B. Altaner, *Patrology* (5th ed. Edinburgh, 1960) p. 211.

altering its sacrificial meaning. But the comparison in *Dial.* 40 is between Christ's death on the Cross and the paschal lamb, not between Christ and the scapegoat of the *Kippur* as mentioned in Lev. 16.[33]

In conclusion: Justin epitomizes the belief of three early Churches in the Eucharist as instituted by Christ (*Apol.* 66; *Dial.* 70), the real presence (*Apol.* 66) and the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist (*Dial.* 41; 116f) which is reserved exclusively to the baptized (*Apol.* 66) as a sacrifice of praise (*Apol.* 65), thanksgiving (*Ibid.* 65, 67) and supplication (*Dial.* 41). Once again, the silence with regard to the propitiatory nature of the Eucharist is absolute.[34]

Approximately thirty years after Justin, Irenaeus begins his monumental *Adversus Haereses*, in whose fourth and fifth books he gives the eucharistic teaching which "the Church, scattered even to the ends of the earth, has received from the Apostles and disciples" (*Adv. Haer.* I, 19). Directly linked with Polycarp and through him with John the evangelist,[35] Irenaeus takes pride in the traditional character of his doctrine (*Demonstr.* 1-2). Specifically as regards his eucharistic teaching, he states that the reason why Christ instituted the Eucharist was that we may have a means to express our gratitude and our love (*Adv. Haer.* IV, 1-6). The value of the sacrifice does not depend on the intrinsic worth of the gift offered, but rather on the offerer's self-surrender symbolized by the material gift (*Ibid.* IV, 18, 1). The sacrifice is offered to God for his honour (*Ibid.* IV, 18, 6) and for the benefit and sanctification of the offerer himself (*Ibid.* IV, 18, 1.6). "It is not the sacrifice that sanctifies man, but rather man's conscience that sanctifies the sacrifice" (*Ibid.* IV, 18, 3).[36]

In the midst of his controversy with Marcion and the Valentinians he stresses that the presence of the Lord's body and blood is brought about through the instrumentality of material elements (*Ibid.* V, 2, 2). The eucharistic offering of the Church is "a pure sacrifice before the Lord and acceptable to Him . . . He is glorified in the offering if it is accepted by Him" (IV, 18, 1). The ecclesial offering, which is to be traced back to the Supper, is "the new offering of the new Covenant, which offering the Church,

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33. Wateville (*op. cit.*, p. 80) seems to have misread *Dial.* 40, where there is no reference whatever to the scapegoat of Lev. 16. A fortiori any implied comparison with the Eucharist in that text is an example of "einsegesis" more than of exegesis . . .
34. The English translation given above is my own, after having examined that of T. Falls in *The Fathers of the Church*, vol. 6 (N. York, 1948).
35. Cf. Eusebius, *Historia Eccles.* V, 20, 5-7, Quasten, I, p. 287.
36. One can hardly think of a better expression to dispel the misconception of any magical or mechanical efficacy of the Eucharist independently of the subjective disposition of the offerer.

after having received it from the Apostles, offers to God everywhere" (IV, 17, 5).

Irenaeus therefore, like Justin before him, considers the Eucharist as a sacrifice (IV, 18, 1; 17, 5) of praise (IV, 18, 1; 18, 6), thanksgiving (IV, 1-6) and supplication (IV, 18, 1.6), but he does not seem to be aware of any propitiatory value contained in it.[37]

In the first half of the third century, the young African Church could boast of two outstanding figures, both born probably at Carthage: Tertullian, the impetuous, original intellectual and his disciple Cyprian, gentle pastor of his flock. Nowhere do we find among Tertullian's works a fully developed doctrinal exposition on the Eucharist, hence the difficulty in gauging his exact position, all the more so that some of his expressions are far from clear to the modern reader. His eucharistic vocabulary is still somewhat fluid, lacking in precision. He makes use of the following terms: "eucharistia" (*De Praescr.* 36), "eucharistiae sacramentum" (*De corona*, 3), "dominica sollemnia" (*De fuga*, 14), "convivium dominicum" (*Ad uxor.* 2, 4), "convivium Dei" (*Ibid.* 2. 9), "coena Dei" (*De spect.* 13), "munditiae sacrificiorum" (*Adv. Marc.* 3, 22).[38]

Among his overconcise and even cryptic expressions, one discerns a firm belief in the eucharistic presence, as a solid argument to show against Marcion the reality of the body of Jesus of Nazareth: "Then, having taken the bread... made it his own body by saying, 'This is my body', that is, the figure of my body (*figura corporis mei*).[39] A figure, however, there could not have been unless there were first a veritable body".[40] Similarly

37. The critical edition of *Adv. Haer.* in Harvey's two vols. (1857) and that of books IV-V in *Sources chrétiennes*, n. 100 (Paris, 1965-1969). The English translation by A. Roberts and W. Rambant in *Anti-Nicene Christian Library* (=ANCL), vol. V (Edinburgh, 1868). Cf. also, for the appropriate eucharistic passages, J. Solano, *Textos eucaristicos primitivos*, I(Madrid, 1952) pp. 67 79; and P. Batiffol, *L'Eucharistie. La presence réelle et la transubstantiation* (Paris, 1930) pp. 167-183.

38. Quasten, II, pp. 335f.

39. For the realistic, and not purely symbolic meaning of the term *figura* in Tertullian cf. A. D'Ales, *La theologie de Tertullien* (Paris, 1905) pp. 360ff. Same expression in *Adv. Marc.* 3, 19. Similar difficulties of interpretation arise with regard to some other of his eucharistic expressions, like: "corpus eius in pane *censetur*" (*De orat.* 6); ... panem quo ipsum corpus *repraesentat*" (*Adv. Marc.* 1, 14). *Censetur* goes well beyond the merely subjective meaning and, the same as *repraesentat*, should be rendered as "to make present", not merely as "to represent". Cf. A. D'Ales, *op. cit.*, pp. 360-366, who comes to this conclusion after analizing all the passages (more than 60) in which these words occur. Cf. Quasten, II, p. 337, and Batiffol, *L'Eucharistie*, pp. 204-226.

40. *Adv. Marc.* 4, 40. Cf. also *Ibid.* 3, 19. English translation from A. Roberts-J. Donaldson, ANCL, vol. 7 (Edinburgh, 1868) p. 352.

when, in a famous passage, he speaks of the effects of the sacraments: " The flesh feeds on the body and blood of Christ that the soul may likewise fatten on its God."[41]

But we are more directly concerned with his sacrificial teaching. " When the body of Our Lord is received and preserved, both are preserved: the participation in the sacrifice and the fulfilment of a duty."[42] The Eucharist, instituted by Christ, is a pure, unbloody sacrifice.[43] And the strongest expression of all: " The apostate will recover his former garb... and Christ will again be immolated for him (*rursus illi mactabitur Christus*)."[44] The sacrifice is offered for the living and the dead, according to ancient custom.[45] None of Tertullian's numerous but scattered references to the Eucharist makes any mention of the propitiatory nature of the sacrifice, unless the practice of offering the sacrifice for the dead be considered as the first move in this direction.

Like his revered predecessor and master Tertullian, Cyprian too has but isolated references to the eucharistic doctrine prevalent in his time, if one excepts his Epistle 63, " On the sacrament of the Cup of the Lord ", " the only ante-Nicene writing dealing exclusively with the celebration of the Eucharist ",[46] which was occasioned by the error of those who arbitrarily substituted water for wine at the eucharistic worship.

The Eucharist is a true sacrifice, for " the Lord's Passion is the sacrifice which we offer. "[47] Cyprian calls it " the sacrament of the Lord's Passion and of our redemption ".[48] And commenting on the Supper: " For if Jesus Christ... is himself the chief priest of God the Father and has first offered himself a sacrifice to the Father and has commanded this to be done in commemoration of himself, certainly the priest... offers a true and full sacrifice (*sacrificium plenum et verum*) in the Church to God the Father ".[49] This sacrifice is offered for unrepentant

41. *De resurr. carnis*, 8: ANCL, 2, p. 230.
42. *De oratione*, 19, 4 (*The Fathers of the Church* (= FOC) vol. 40, pp. 174ff). The eucharistic body is simply called 'sacrifice', cf. F. Wieland, *Der vorireneische Opferbegriff* (München, 1909) p. 141.
43. *Ad scapulam*, 2, 8.
44. *De pudicitia*, 9.
45. *Ad scapulam*, 28; *De corona*, 3, 3; *De exhort. castit.* II, 1f; already the *acts of John*, about the year 150-180 mention the offering of the eucharistic sacrifice for the dead. Cf. Quasten, I, p. 136; Wateville, *op. cit.*, p. 113. The scriptural foundation for this practice can be found in 2 Mac 12, 39-45 where a sin-offering for the dead is mentioned (v. 43).
46. Quasten, II, p. 381.
47. *Epist.* 63, 17. But in the passage immediately preceding he includes the resurrection: " We celebrate the resurrection of the Lord in the morning " (*Epist.* 13, 16).
48. *Ibid.* 63, 14.
49. *Epist.* 63, 14: ANCL, I, p. 218, where, however, this letter is given as Epistle 62.

sinners[50] and for the dead as a *sacrificium pro dormitione*,[51] but grievous sins constitute an obstacle for communion, for the faithful must be pure before approaching the eucharistic table.[52]

Nowhere do we find in his eucharistic teaching any mention made of the purifying or expiatory character of the Supper. For Cyprian, purification from sin is the condition for, rather than the consequence of, the participation in the sacrifice,[53]

Going from the Western to the Eastern shores of North Africa, we meet, still in the third century, the renowned Alexandrian School, forever linked with the names of Clement and Origen. Outshining his predecessor[54] by the breadth of his knowledge and the originality of his thought, Origen however, took as his guiding theological principle to accept that alone as truth "which differs in no respect from ecclesiastical and apostolic tradition".[55]

As regards his eucharistic teaching, Origen is a firm believer in the Lord's presence in the consecrated bread.[56] Through the Eucharist we express our gratitude to God: "But with regard to God, who has showered so many graces on us, we are afraid of being ungrateful... We have a sacrament of our gratitude (*eucharistias*) towards God in the bread which we call

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50. *Epist.* 16, 2; 17, 2. From both these contexts it is clear that Cyprian is decrying as an abuse this custom of admitting sinners to share in the liturgy.
51. *Epist.* 1, 2.
52. *Epist.* 70, 2. Same as in *Didache*, 14.
53. This is the unavoidable conclusion after having studied the 34 eucharistic passages collected by Solano, *Textos eucaristicos*, I, pp. 140-183. Cf. Batiffol, *op. cit.*, pp. 227-247; A. D'Ales, *La théologie de S. Cyprien* (Paris, 1922) pp. 249-271. I could find only one obscure passage where Cyprian seems to attribute to the eucharistic sacrifice a purifying value: in *De lapsis*, 16 he states that apostates should not approach the holy table "ante purgatam conscientiam sacrificio et manu sacerdotia".
54. Clement has no developed eucharistic doctrine. For him the Eucharist is an offering an oblation (*Stromata* 1, 1, 19) in the sense of sacrifice (*Ibid.*, 7, 6, 32), the fulfilment of Melchisedek's oblation (*Ibid.*, 4, 25). By partaking of the eucharistic cup we attain incorruptibility (*Pedag.* 2, 2, 19); the eucharistic blood is a symbol of the Passion (*Pedag.* 1, 6, 46). On the whole his teaching remains traditional, even if at times clouded by allegorical explanations, in keeping with the Alexandrian tradition. Cf. Wateville, *op. cit.*, pp. 153-158; Batiffol, *op. cit.*, pp. 248-261. All the pertinent texts collected in J. Quasten, *Monumenta eucharistica* (Bonn, 1937) pp. 348f; and in Solano, *Textos*, I, pp. 105-109.
55. *De principiis*, Praef. 2.
56. "You receive the body of the Lord" (*In Ex. hom.* 13, 3). The offering of Christians becomes "a body which is both, holy and sanctifying" (*Contra Celsum* 8, 33). Cf. also *Comment. in Mat.* 26, 26 (PG 13, 1734A). Yet other times the Eucharist is interpreted allegorically, v.g. *In Mat. serm.* 85, and the right explanation in Quasten, II, p. 86f.

Eucharist ".[57] But a fruitful participation in this sacrificial meal prerequires a pure and uncontaminated conscience.[58]

And now, quite unexpectedly, we come across a clear text attributing to the Eucharist a propitiatory value. Commenting on the showbread of Lev. 24, he writes:

> " But this intercession is rather small and flimsy. What sort of value has it got to propitiate God (*ad repropitiandum*) if in the bread one has to consider the fruits of each tribe and in the fruits, the good works ? But if all this is referred to the greatness of the mystery, you will find that this commemoration has an effect of immense propitiation (*ingentis repropitiationis effectum*). If you go back to that bread which came down from heaven and gives life to this world (cf. Jn. 6 : 33), to that showbread that God manifested as a better propitiation (*propitiatiorem*) through faith in his blood (cf. Rom. 3, 25) and if you look at that commemoration of which the Lord says, ' Do this as a memorial of Me ' (1 Cor. 11 : 25); you will find that this is the only commemoration which renders God propitious towards men (*propitium facit hominibus Deum*). "[59]

It is remarkable and somewhat strange that Origen should link the eucharistic sacrifice with the expiatory sacrifice of the Cross by referring to the classical *hylasterion*-text, Rom. 3 : 25. But even here one should note that no explicit connection is established between the Eucharist and the liturgical celebration of the Jewish *Kippur*. Indirectly, however, one finds such a connection in a passage of *De orationa* where, after recalling that the priests of the Law did not offer any sacrifice for adultery or murder, Origen continues: " Therefore the Apostles also and the successors of the Apostles, priests according to the High Priest . . . know through the teaching of the Spirit for what sins it is right to offer sacrifice. "[60]

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57. *Contra Celsum* 8, 3. This passages is clearly reminiscent of Irenaeus' *Adv. Haer.* 4, 17, 5.
58. In this Origen is simply echoing the previous ecclesiastical tradition already found in Cyprian and the *Didache*. Cf. explicitly, *In Psalm. hom.* 2, 6; *In Ezech.* 7 : 22; *In Mat.* 15, 10sq.; *In Lev.* hom. 13, 5.
59. *Hom. in Lev.* 13, 3 (PG 12, 547).
60. *De oratione*, 28 (PG 11, 528D-529A). Similarly *In Jesu Nave* 2, 1: " You see that the altars are no longer sprinkled with the blood of oxen, but consecrated by the precious blood of Christ." It is surprising, however, that Origen has nothing to say on this in his commentary on the Matthean account of the institution, cf. *In Mat.* (PG 13, 1736B-1737A). Therefore in view of the scarcity of such passages, I would consider it an overstatement to assert that " Origen . . . frequently applied the themes of the Day of Atonement to penance *and the Eucharist*" (J. Quinn, " The Lord's Supper and forgiveness of sin ", *Worship*, 1968,

Now it is time to pause for a moment and cast a retrospective glance: the doctrine briefly reviewed testifies to the eucharistic belief of the churches in Palestine (Justin), Antioch (Ignatius), Syria (Didaché), Ephesus (Justin), probably Smyrna (Irenaeus), Lyons (Irenaeus), Carthage (Tertullian, Cyprian) and Alexandria (Clement, Origen). In all, eight prominent churches stretching along the shores of the Mediterranean basin and all of them, except for one or two isolated statements of Origen, seem to be strangely silent about the propitiatory character of the Eucharist. It is to be noted, however, that echoing a very ancient tradition, several of these churches do testify to the practice of offering the sacrifice for the dead and here we can possibly find the seeds of the later Tridentine definition regarding the intrinsic value of the Eucharist offered for the dead.[61]

In the 4th century we meet two explicit testimonies which are, however, surrounded by the patristic silence still prevailing in this regard. Cyril of Jerusalem, in his *Catecheses Mystagogicae* is an outstanding witness, not only to the doctrine of the eucharistic presence[62] and to the sanctifying effects of the sacrament[63] but directly for our purpose, to the propitiatory character of the eucharistic sacrifice, offered for the living and the dead. He writes: "And then, after having completed the spiritual sacrifice of unbloody worship, we entreat God upon that *sacrifice of propitiation* (*Thusias . . . tou ilasmou*) for the common peace of the churches, for the tranquility of the world . . . Then we remember those who have fallen asleep before us . . . By offering our prayers for the dead, even if they were sinners, we do not plait a wreath but rather offer up Christ sacrificed for our sins, *making the merciful God propitious* (*Exileoumenoi . . . tou Theou*) for them and for us."[64] Cyril certainly knows the traditional practice which requires purification from sin prior to the reception of the sacrament.[65] but at the same time he recommends his faithful, despite the apparent contradiction involved: "Do not forego communion, do not deprive yourselves of these sacred and spiritual mysteries on account of the stain of sin."[66]

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p. 288; italics mine). Similarly unguarded is Wateville's assertion that "Origen, *comme ses prédécesseurs*, croit au caractère sacrificiel *et expiatoire* de l'Eucharistie" (*op. cit.*, p. 163; italics mine). On my part I must confess I have not been able to find any patristic testimony which predates the above text of *Hom. in Lev.* 13, 3. Cf. J. Daniélou, *Origen* (London, 1955) pp. 61-67.

61. 22nd session, c. 3 (Denz.-Schön. 1753).
62. Cf. *Catech. mystag.* 4, 6.9; 5, 1.7.21.
63. Cf. *Ibid.*, 4, 3; 5, 21.22.
64. Cf. *Ibid.* 5, 8-10 (PG 33, 1116A-1117A).
65. Cf. *Ibid.* 5, 3 (PG 33, 1109A).
66. *Ibid.* 23 (PG 33, 1125B). Full Greek text of the *Catecheses* also in J. Quasten, *Monumenta eucharistica* (Bonn 1935) fasc. 7, pars II. All of Cyril's eucharistic passages conveniently collected in Solano, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 322-336. For his eucharistic

Almost at the same time, Ambrose was teaching a similar doctrine in the church of Milan: the Eucharist contains Christ's real body and blood[67] which confers on the communicant an infusion of life[69] because Christ's own word is operative in the sacrament.[69] The Eucharist is a genuine sacrifice[70] whose sacramental participation requires previous purification from sin,[71] and yet it has in itself the power to forgive sins: "Therefore you hear that whenever the sacrifice is offered, the death of the Lord, the resurrection of the Lord, the ascension of the Lord and *the remission of sins* are signified."[72] Similarly in another passage: "And (Christ) offers himself as a priest, *that he may forgive our sins.*"[73] And perhaps his most explicit statement: "Consequently, whenever you receive it [the sacrament], what does the Apostle tell you? As often as we receive it, we announce the death of the Lord' (1 Cor. 11:26). If we announce his death, we announce the remission of sins. If, whenever the blood is poured out, *it is poured out for the remission of sins*, I must receive it always, *that it may always forgive me my sins.* I who am always sinning, must always have a medicine."[74]

Hence, according to Ambrose, the remission of sins is both the condition for and the result of, the reception of the sacrament. It is not only that the sacrament purifies, but the eucharistic sacrifice itself tends to the remission of sins.

Yet this double testimony should be placed within its historical context: in the same fourth century other eminent writers like Eusebius of Caesarea, Athanasius, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Nazianzen, Didimus the Blind and Hilary say nothing of the propitiatory nature of the Eucharist.[75] This silence is all the more striking in an author like Chrysostom, rightly called *doctor eucharisticus* on account of the abundance and variety of

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doctrine in general, cf. Batiffol, *op., cit.* pp. 371-381; K. Baus, "Die eucharistische Glaubenskündigung der alten Kirche in ihren Grundzügen", in *Die Messe in der Glaubenskündigung*, ed. F. Arnold and B. Fischer (Friburg, 1953) pp. 55-70.

67. Cf. *De fide* 4, 10, n. 124; *De sacramentis* 4, 13f.19.23; *De mysteriis* 9, 58; *Expos. in Ps.* 118; etc...
68. Cf. *Expos. in Ps.* 118; *De myst.* 47; *De bened. Patriarch.*, 38.
69. Cf. *De sacram.* 15; *De myst.*, 52.
70. Cf. *De sacram.* 34; *Expos. in Ps.* 38, n. 25.
71. Cf. *De Elia et ieiunio*, 82; *Expos. in Luc.* 70; *De viduis* 3, 5, 22; *De sacram.* 2, 5.
72. *De sacram.* 25.
73. *De officiis* 1, 48: from the general context, this seems to refer to the Eucharist.
74. "Si quotiescumque effunditur sanguis, in remissionem peccatorum funditur, debeo illum semper accipere ut semper mihi peccata dimittat" (*De sacram.* 5, 28). Pointedly again: "He who eats this body will receive the remission of sins and will never die" (*Ibid.*, 4, 24).—"Whenever you drink (from the eucharistic cup) you receive the remission of sins" (*Ibid.*, 5, 17).
75. See their eucharistic texts in Solano, *op. cit.*, I, 191-212 (Eusebius); 215-236 (Athanasius); 309-321 (Hilary); 399-440 (the three Cappadoceans and Didimus).

his eucharistic doctrine. The Eucharist is for him the sacrament of Christ's real presence[76] effected by the action of the Holy spirit[77] through the word of Christ,[78] whose reception effects an intimate union with Christ[79] as well as among the faithful themselves;[80] proceeding from Christ's love, it is a pledge of eternal life.[81]

Furthermore, the Eucharist is a memorial of Christ's sacrifice,[82] a true and genuine sacrifice[83] of thanksgiving[84] and supplication.[85] As regards its relation to sin, Chrysostom also demands, and with extraordinary insistence, as no other author before him, that the communicant must first be free from sin.[86] Compared to this strong emphasis on the purity required from the recipient, his two solitary, though explicit, statements in favour of the purification from sin as effected by the sacrifice, look somewhat meagre. In his commentary on 1 Cor, he writes: " Let us therefore give them (the departed) help and let us celebrate commemorations for them . . . If the sacrifice of Job used to purify his sons, why do you doubt that some consolation can be given to those departed for whom we offer the sacrifice ? . . . That we may not hesitate to help the departed and offer prayers for them, for we have here a common *purification* (*Katharsion*) for the whole world. "[87] And in his commentary on Mt. 26:28 ('. . . for the remission of sins '), establishing a comparison between the new rite and the old (NT and OT), he states categorically; " It is necessary to perform even the old ? By no means. For He said ' Do this ', precisely to take us away from that. For if *this effects the remission of sins* (*aphesin hamartiōn ergazetai*), as it actually does, that is already of no use ."[88] Clearly Chrysostom's pastoral preoccupations led him to emphasize much more the

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76. Cf. *On bless. Filog. hom.* 6; *On Pen. hom.* 9; *Hom. on the Nativ., Hom. on Ps.* 109, n. 8; *Hom.* 25 *on Mt.* n. 3, etc . . .
77. The eucharistic body is " enveloped by the Holy Spirit " (*On bless. Filog. hom.* 6); c. *On cemet.* 3; *On Pentec.* 4; *On Mat. hom.* 82, 5; *On* 1 *Cor hom.* 24, 5; *On Eph hom.* 3, 5.
78. Cf. *On Judas hom.* 1, 6; 2, 6; *On Mat. hom.* 82, 5; *On John hom.* 47, 3.
79. Cf. *On Mat. hom.* 82, 5; *On John hom.* 47, 1; *Hom. to the baptized.*
80. Cf. *On Mat. hom.* 32, 7; *On* 1 *Cor hom.* 24, 2.
81. Cf. *On John hom.* 46, 3; 47, 1.
82. Cf. *On Hebr. hom.* 17, 3.
83. Cf. *On priest.* 3, 4; *Ag. Jews hom.* 3, 4; *On statues hom.* 11, 5; *On Christ's bapt.* 4; *On Judas hom.* 2, 6; *On Is. hom.* 6, 3; *On Acts hom.* 21, 4.
84. Cf. *On Mat. hom.* 25, 3; *On* 2 *Cor hom.* 18, 3.
85. Cf. *On priest.* 6, 4; *On* 2 *Cor hom.* 81, 3.
86. Cf. *On bless. Filog. hom.* 6; *Ag. Jews hom.* 3, 4.5; *On statues hom.* 11, 5.7; 20, 7; *On Judas hom.* 1, 6; *On Is. hom.* 6, 3.4; *On Mat. hom.* 82, 5.6; *On* 1 *Cor hom.* 24, 4; *On Eph. hom.* 3, 4; *On Hebr. hom.* 17, 4.
87. *On* 1 *Cor hom.* 41, 5 (PG 61, 360).
88. *On Mat. hom.* 82, 1 (PG 58, 740).

purity required by the sacrament than the purification effected by its reception.

One can wind up, therefore, the study of the eucharistic authors in the fourth century by stating that out of the ten Fathers examined, only three (Cyril, Ambrose, Chrysostom) can be adduced as clear testimonies, and even in these three latter cases, the texts found are extremely few, half a dozen at most.[89] As for the term itself, 'sacrifice of propitiation' (or expiation), Cyril stands severely alone.

Contemporary and countryman of Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia " is the most typical representative of the Antiochean school of exegesis and by far its most famous author."[90] With a less pastoral bent than Chrysostom but possibly deeper than him, bishop Theodore is an outstanding witness to the doctrine of Christ's eucharistic presence[91] which, in typically Oriental fashion, he conceives as closely associated with the operation of the Holy Spirit.[92] The Eucharist is a sacrifice,[93] a memorial of Christ's immolation on the Cross,[94] the memorial of his sacrifice.[95] In fidelity to traditional teaching, Theodore insists on the necessity of a previous purification before approaching the holy table,[96] and yet he attributes to the sacrament a truly purifying value, at least with regard to minor faults. In his second catechetical homily he states:

> " But if we are careful about our life and try to do good... the faults into which we fall without realizing, out of weakness, do us no harm at all, for we shall obtain considerable help for them in the reception of the (eucharistic) mysteries... In fact, without any doubt, *the communion in the sacred mysteries will grant us the forgiveness of such faults*, for the Lord himself said clearly:

89. I was greatly surprised myself to find only those two texts in Chrysostom's copious eucharistic literature, which in the collection of Solano numbers no fewer than 87 passages running into more than 220 pages (cf. Solano, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 441-663). For a brief, dense summary of his eucharistic doctrine, cf. J. Quasten, *Patrology* III (Utrecht, 1960) pp. 479-481; Batiffol, *op. cit.*, 408-421. I could not have access to the classical monograph of A. Naegle, *Die Eucharistielehre des hl. J. Chrysostomus* (Freiburg, 1900).
90. Quasten, *Patrology*, III, p. 402.
91. Cf. *Comm. on Mat.* c. 26, v. 26; *Catech. Hom.* 15, 10.11; 16, 24.26; R. Tonneau, *Les homélies catéchétiques de Théodore de Mopsueste*, Cittá del Vaticano, 1949, pp. 460-605.
92. Cf. *Catech. hom.* 15, 11.12; 16, 25.29.34 (Tonneau, pp. 475-481; 573f; 581; 589).
93. Cf. *Comm. on minor proph.* 3, 22 (PG 66, 621A); *Catech. Hom.* 15, 19.20.24 (Tonneau, pp. 495f; 501f).
94. Cf. *Catech. hom.* 15, 15 (Tonneau, pp. 485f).
95. Cf. *Ibid.* 15, 19 (Tonneau, p. 495).
96. Cf. *Com. on* 1 *Cor* 11, 34 (PG 66, 889); *Catech. Hom.* 16, 35 (Tonneau, pp. 589f).

'This is my body which has been broken for you for the remission of sins'; and 'This is my blood which has been poured out for you for the remission of sins' (Mt. 26, 26ff)... Hence if we sin without trying to avoid it, it will be hard for us to approach the sacred mysteries, but if we zealously do good, abhor evil and sincerely regret the faults into which we fall... *we shall certainly obtain the gift of the remission of sins through the reception of the holy mysteries* according to the word of Christ Our Lord."[97]

Yet it is not purification but rather the effect of acquired immortality, that will be most emphatically emphasized by Theodore.[98]

Personally antagonistic to Chrysostom, yet closely akin to him in his eucharistic teaching, is Cyril of Alexandria, who testifies to the doctrine of the real presence,[99] the sacrificial character of the Supper,[100] the unifying power of the sacrament and especially to its vivifying effects, in the best of the Johannine tradition.[101] Eucharistic vivification is Cyril's central theme, as much as immortality is that of Theodore. But as regards the relation between the Eucharist and sin, Cyril's uncompromising stand is that the faithful must receive the sacrament with an unsullied conscience.[102] Not a trace is found in him of the purifying effect of the Eucharist, let alone of its propitiatory nature. Origen's explicit conception in this regard seems to have found no echo whatever in his own Alexandrian church, since neither Athanasius, nor Didimus nor Cyril ever mention anything to this effect.[103]

97. *Catech. Hom.* 16, 34f (Tonneau, p. 589). Cf. also *Ibid.* 16, 35; *Com. on* 1 *Cor* 11, 34 (PG 66, 889); *Catech. hom.* 15, 7.
98. This seems to be Theodore's favourite topic if one is to judge by the number of times he comes back on it. Cf. *Catech. Hom.* 15, 6.9-11; 16, 25, 26 etc... For his eucharistic teaching in general, cf. J. Reine, *The eucharistic doctrine and liturgy of the Mystagogical Catecheses of Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Washington, 1942); J. Quasten, *Mysterium tremendum: Von christlichen Mysterium* (Düsseldorf, 1951) pp. 66-75.
99. Cf. *Com. on Mat.* 26: 26 (PG 73, 453); *Com. on Luc.* 22: 14-21 (PG 72, 908-912); *Com. on Jn.* 1: 4, c. 2 (PG 72, 584f); *Ibid.*, 1.10, c. 2 (PG 74, 341) etc...
100. Cf. *Ador. in sp.* 10 (PG 68, 708); *Com. on Is.* 3: 1 (PG 70, 561); *Com. on Habac.* 47 (PG 71, 916); *Com. on Zach.* 6, 115 (PG 72, 272); *Com. on Luc.* 22: 14ff (PG 72, 905).
101. Cf. *Com. on Jn.* 3, 6. (PG 73, 520); *Ibid.* 4, 2 (PG 73, 572-585); *Ibid.* 4, 3 (PG 73, 597-605); *Ag. Nest.* 4, 5 (PG 76, 189). For the ecclesial, unifying aspect of communion, cf. *Com. on Jn* 11, 11 (PG 74, 560-561).
102. Cf. *Com. on Jn.* 3, 6 (PG 73, 521).
103. The close study of 31 eucharistic passages, some of them extremely long, assembled by Solano (*op. cit.*, II, pp. 335-444) yields therefore a very negative result. Cf. Batiffol, *op. cit.*, pp. 466-477; H. Du Manoir, *Dogme et spiritualité chez St. Cyrille d'Alexandrie* (Paris, 1944) pp. 185-218) 435ff.

Equally reticent, apart from a couple of texts, is the great Augustine. His immense production makes it exceedingly difficult to ferret out all his eucharistic utterances and expressions, but a careful study of 95 such passages yields the following result: the Eucharist, "memorial of the Lord's Passion",[104] which is reserved only to the baptized,[105] is a real sacrifice[106] which contains the real body and blood of Christ.[107] The reception of the sacrament brings about a mutual immanence between Christ and the recipient,[108] as well as an increased unity among the faithful,[109] vivified by eucharistic communion.[110] Those who approach the holy bread and cup must be free from sin;[111] and yet, according to Augustine, in this sacrifice "a true remission of sins takes place" (*vera fit remissio peccatorum*).[112] Elsewhere he does not hide his puzzlement at the fact that God permits children to die without baptism and without having been "purified by the sacrifice of Christ's body and blood (*nec expiandos Christi corporis et sanguinis sacrificio*)."[113] This sacrifice, according to ancient custom, is to be offered for the dead.[114] That is all Augustine has to contribute to our patristic enquiry regarding the propitiatory character of the Eucharist: a disappointingly negative result on the whole, for the above double testimony, voiced so briefly and in passing, is almost entirely drowned in the vastness of his eucharistic output.[115]

The study of most of the great ecclesiastical authors, contemporary of or posterior to, Augustine has yielded no better result: Jerome, Leo the Great, Faustus of Riez and John Damascene seem to know nothing of the topic under study.[116] The only exception is Augustine's faithful disciple, Gregory the Great,

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104. *De Trinit.* 3, 4, 10 (PL 42, 873).
105. Cf. *Epist.* 140, 48 (PL 33, 557); *Epist.* 185, 29 (PL 33, 826); *Sermo* 56, 10 (PL 38, 381); *De meritis*, 1, 20, 26 (PL 44, 123).
106. Cf. *Explan. in Ps.* 21, 2, 28 (PL 36, 170), *Explan. in Ps.* 33, *sermo* 1, 5; *Ibid. sermo* 2, 2; *Sermo* 310, 2, 2; *De civ. Dei* 8, 27.
107. Cf. *In Jn.* 26, 15; 47, 2; *Sermo* 9, 10, 14; *Sermo* 59, 3, 6; *Sermo* 227; *Sermo de sacr. in die Pasch.* 2.
108. Cf. *In Jn.* 26, 18; 27, 1.6.11; *Sermo* 71, 11, 17; *De civ. Dei* 21, 25.
109. Cf. *Epist.* 185; *In Jn.* 26, 13; *Sermo* 57, 7, 7; *Sermo* 227; *Sermo* 272; *Sermo in Pasch.* 1.
110. Cf. *In Jn.* 26, 13, 15.16; 27, 6; *Sermo* 131, I, 1
111. Cf. *Epist.* 54, 3; *Epist.* 153; *In Jn.* 26, 11; *Sermo* 17, 5, 5.
112. *Quaest. in Hept.* 3, 57 (PL 34, 704).
113. *De anima* 2, 15, 21 (PL 44, 508).
114. Cf. *Sermo* 172, 2, 2; *De mortuis* 1, 3.
115. Cf. Solano, *op. cit.*, II, 105-285; A. Krueger, *Synthesis of sacrifice according to St. Augustine* (Mundelein, 1950); A. Camelot, "Réalisme et symbolisme dans la doctrine eucharistique de St. Augustin", *RevSciencPhTheol.* 31(1947)394-440.
116. Their testimonies collected in Solano, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 38-74 (Jerome, with 47 negative passages); 501-508 (Leo the Great); 511-520 (Faustus, Augustine's disciple); 760-718 (Damascene, whose silence in the matter is doubly eloquent, since he is known to be well acquainted with the doctrine of his predecessors).

whose explicit assertions in this respect could be a faithful echo of Origen or Cyril of Jerusalem. Commenting on Lk. 14: 26-33, he states:

> " Let us send to him (God) like an embassy, our tears, let us send works of mercy, let us immolate on this altar victims of propitiation (*mactemus in ara eius hostias placationis*), let us acknowledge that we cannot compete with Him in judgement ... As often as we offer Him the victim of his passion, so often do we revive the passion for our absolution (*toties nobis ad absolutionem nostram passionem illius reparamus*) ". After a reference to Cassium, bishop of Narbone, he continues: " He had the custom of offering daily victims to God, in such a way that hardly a day of his life passed on which he did not immolate to God the victim of propitiation (*hostiam placationis*) ... Cleanse, therefore, my dear brethren, your sins with tears, wash them with almsgiving, expiate for them with sacred victims (*sacris hostiis expiate*). "[117]

Given this expiatory character of the sacrifice it is obvious that Gregory should recommend the offering of the eucharistic oblation for the dead, that they may be absolved from their sins.[118]

It is time to conclude this section: this patristic study, obviously by no means exhaustive, has revealed that the traditionally admitted doctrine of the propitiatory nature of the Eucharist can hardly claim the general support of the early Fathers. Only three of them (Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory the Great), unambiguously apply to the Eucharist the term ' propitiation ', and even in their case, the three texts adduced above are single, isolated testimonies which do not seem to have been repeated by the same authors on other occasions. Three bright stars (but only three !) in the bleak silence of the patristic sky. Add to it the ten or twelve passages from other writers (Ambrose, Augustine, Theodore, Chrysostom), in which the Eucharist is presented as having the power to blot out sins, at least minor

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117. *In Evang. hom.* 37, 7,9.10 (PL 76, 1274-1281).
118. Cf. *Dial.* 4, 55.57. But it is to be noted that the context of pious, edifying stories into which he sets this traditional aspect of the doctrine weakens considerably the persuasiveness of his argument. One such story (cf. *Dial.* 4, 55) seems to be at the origin of the so called ' Gregorian set of Masses ', a practice which should be checked against the uncompromising stand taken by the Council of Trent on Sept. 17, 1562: the sacrifice of the Mass can help the departed, but " a fixed number of Masses, which has been introduced by supersition more than by true worship, is something that priests should remove from the Church " (*Conc. Trid. Act.* ed. Ehres, vol. VIII, p. 963).

ones, both for the living and the dead,[119] and the grand total that confronts us at the end is rather unexpected: only about fifteen texts can be adduced in support of the traditional doctrine, out of a mass of nearly 450 eucharistic passages studied.

I should finally add that Matthew's key sentence, 'for the remission of sins' (Mt. 26: 28) seems to have provoked no significant comment in the early patristic tradition of East and West. The commentaries on Matthew written by Origen, Hippolytus, Athanasius, Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Cyril of Alexandria, Ammonius, Peter of Laodicea, John Damascene, Theodore Prodromus, Theophylactus, Euthymius, Macarius, Theophanes, Hilary and Jerome, do not have a word which could help us in our enquiry, with the exception of Theodore of Mopsuestia's text quoted above.[120] The Matthean insertion seems to have attracted no attention whatever. Yet, this extraordinary patristic silence will be partly counterbalanced by the eloquent testimonies of some of the Oriental liturgies.

The Early Liturgies

Admittedly it is in the liturgy that the life and faith of the Church is mainly expressed, rendering it a *locus theologicus* of the utmost importance. Pursuing the attempt to trace the origins of the propitiatory aspect of the Eucharist, we shall now examine briefly the liturgies of East and West. For the sake of convenience, and following a geographical pattern, we shall successively consider the Syrian, Antiochean, Alexandrian and Roman liturgies, which span a period of two centuries (IV-V).

Possibly the most ancient liturgical testimony (barring that of the Didaché studied above) is that of the liturgy of Addai and Mari, belonging to the East Syrian tradition.[121] Prescinding now

119. This distinction between major and minor faults is applied to the Eucharist mainly by Augustine and Theodore of Mopsuestia, though one should be careful not to project our present distinction mortal-venial, back into the patristic writings. Cf. D. Tanghe, "L'Eucharistie pour la rémission des peches" *Irenikon* 34(1961)176-181; J. Quinn, "The Lord's Supper and forgiveness of sins", *Worship* 42(1968)281-291; J. Tillard, "L'Eucharistie, purification de l'Eglise pérégrinante". *Nouv. Rev. Theol.* 84(1962)449-475; J. Tillard, "Pénitence et Eucharistie", *Mais. Dieu*, n. 90(1967)103-131.

120. I have examined all these commentaries, some of them mere fragments, some others quite extensive, as given in Migne (PG) according to the references supplied in F. V. Cavallera, *Indices* (Paris, 1921), p. 152 and in PL 219, p. 210.

121. Cf. Bouyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-158. The time of composition of this important document is a matter of conjecture. C. Dix connects it with the second century Antiochean liturgy (*The Shape*, p. 177). Cf. E. Ratcliff's attempt at reconstruction of of the original text. "The original form fo the anaphora of Addai and Mari", *Journ. Theol. Stud.* 30(1929)23-32. For its bearing on our present problem, cf. L. Ligier's splendid study, "Pénitence et Eucharistie en Orient", *Orient. Christ. Per.*

from other doctrinal aspects to be found in it, and focusing our attention exclusively on the problem under study, in keeping with the set pattern found in most Syrian liturgies, it starts with a request for divine forgiveness, firmly encased in a sacrificial context.[122] Then a prayer by the celebrant follows: " O God . . . sanctify this sacrifice and grant through it the possiblity and power to forget our many sins and *to be propitious . . .*".[123] And pleading for the people, the priest says: " O God, our God, look at your people and at me, weak as I am . . . (and grant) that they may be worthy *to obtain the forgiveness of their sins through this holy body which they receive in faith . . .*".[124] And in the same vein: " And may there come, O my Lord, thine Holy Spirit and rest upon this offering of thy servants and bless it and hallow it, that it may be to us, O my Lord, *for the pardon of our offences and the remission of our sins* ".[125] Then, at the fraction of the host: " These divine mysteries have been . . . joined, commingled, so that they may be to us *for the pardon of our offences and the forgiveness of sins. . .*". And immediately after: " Pardon, O my Lord, by thy compassion, the sins and transgressions of thy servants, and hallow our lips by thy grace ".[126]

When distributing communion: " Hallow our bodies with thy holy body, *pardon our offences with thy precious blood . . .*". And finally, after communion, and shortly before the dismissal of the congregation: " May this earnest, O lord, which we have received and are receiving, be to us *for the pardon of our offences and for the remission of sins* . . . Let not the living body which we have eaten and the victorious blood which we have drunk be to us, O Lord, for judgement and vengeance, but for *pardon of*

29(1963)5-78, esp. 25-31; and B. Botte, " Problèmes de l'anaphora Syrienne des Apotres Addai et Mari ", *L'Orient Syrien* 10(1965)89-106; English translation of the anaphora in E. Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western* (Oxford, 1896)283ff; French translation in D. Dahane, *Liturgie de la Sainte Messe selon le rite Chaldéen* (Paris, 1937)72-79; Latin text in E. Renaudot, *Liturgiarium Orientalium collectio*, II (Paris 1716)587-597. A recent edition of the text has been published by W. Macomber, " The oldest known text of the Apostles Addai and Mari ," *Orient. Christ. Per.* 32(1966)336-371.

122. Cf. Renaudot, II, p. 587. That most Syrian liturgies follow a common pattern is Ligier's conclusion after having examined thirty of them, cf. *art. cit.*, p. 50.
123. Renaudot, II, p. 587. A similar prayer to Mary follows (*Ibid.*, p. 588).
124. Renaudot, II, p. 591.
125. Brightman, *op. cit.*, pp. 287f. This text is translated by Renaudot as " *propitiationem delictorum* " (*op. cit.*, II p. 592) instead of " pardon of our offences ". The table is called " *propitiatory altar* " (Brightman, p. 253) and the cup " *propitiatory blood* " (*Ibid.*, p. 291).
126. Brightman, *op. cit.*, pp. 292.295. Both these texts are more strongly rendered by Renaudot as " *propitationem* delictorum . . . *Propitiare*, Domine " (*op. cit.*, II, p. 594f).

trespasses and for forgiveness of sins and for the great hope of the resurrection from the dead . . .".[127]

These liturgical prayers are clear and explicit. Their strength and directness cannot be bypassed by considering them as part of the penitential service preparatory to the active participation in the sacrifice (in which case they would only be emphasizing the purity required before the reception of the Eucharist). For some of them clearly contain the hope and desire that the remission of sins may be effected precisely through the reception of the sacred body and blood. We have here the first of the many instances which amply justify Ligier's conclusion that in the Oriental liturgies, the Eucharist is ordained to the remission of sins.[128]

To the same Syrian group belong the *Apostolic Constitutions*.[129] Marked by a trinitarian pattern, they open with a long anamnesis of the creation of the world and of the dawn of salvation for man, addressed to the Father,[130] and this is immediately followed by a christological passage on the fulfilment of salvation history. Then comes the epiclesis: " Send down upon this sacrifice thine Holy Spirit, the witness of our Lord Jesus' sufferings, that He may show this bread to be the body of thy Christ and the cup to be the blood of thy Christ, that those who are partakers thereof . . . *may obtain the remission of their sins* (*apheseōs hamartematōn tuchōsi*) ".[131] In the long prayer of supplication that follows the priest prays for those repentant sinners who are undergoing public penance: " We beseech thee . . . that thou wilt accept the penance of the latter and forgive them and us our offences-".[132] Finally, the prayer after communion, which is reminiscent of the one we encountered in the liturgy of Addai and Mari: " Now we have received the precious body and the precious blood of Christ . . . and let us beseech Him that it may

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127. Brightman, pp. 302.304.

128. L. Ligier, " Pénitence et Eucharistie ", p. 69. The discussion whether the liturgy of Addai and Mari did or did not include the words of institution, need not detain us. Cf. Bouyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 149f; Dix, *op. cit.*, p. 239: opposite opinion in Jungmann, *The early liturgy*, p. 68f.

129. Composed probably at the end of the fourth century (Jungmann, *Miss. sollem.* I, p. 62; Bouyer, *op. cit.*, p. 119). Edited by F. X. Funk, *Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum*, vol. 1 (Paderborn, 1905) pp. 15-508; Brightmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-30 (Greek text only); Lietzmann, *Kleine Texte*, n. 61; J. Quasten, *Monumenta eucharistica*, IV, 35-45; Latin translation of the anphora in Ligier, *Péché*, II, pp. 403-406; English translation in J. Donaldson, ANCL, vol. 17 (1870).

130. See this long section, with an explicit reference to Adam's sin, in Bouyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 253-257.

131. *Apost. Const.* 8, 12: Donaldson, *op. cit.*, p. 232 and Brightmann, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

132. Ibid.,: Donaldson, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

not be to us unto condemnation, but ... *unto the remission of sins* (*eis aphesin hamartiōn*)".[133]

The *Apostolic Constitutions* contain no other reference to the remission of sins within the eucharistic liturgy. In general, therefore, it may be said that this purifying effect of the Eucharist is less emphasized than in the liturgy of Addai and Mari. As for the possible influence the Jewish liturgy of the *Kippur* might have exercised on the *Constitutions*, this may be detected, if at all, in the general structure more than in the spirit of the eucharistic prayers.[134] Theologically more significant is the fact that the reference to the purifying effect of the Eucharist does not stand in isolation as an independent element, but is rather subsumed in a context of supplication, specifically that of the epiclesis. We shall observe the very same feature in other Oriental liturgies also.

Undoubtedly a prominent witness to the Jerusalemite tradition, the liturgy of St James is considered to be one of the most accomplished liturgical productions which later gave rise to the liturgies of St Basil and St Chrysostom.[135] It follows the same trinitarian structure we have already observed in the *Apostolic Constitutions* with an overall emphasis on thanksgiving and supplication.

Among the preparatory prayers before the anaphora, one finds the following: "Lord, Lord, who ... have given confidence to your humble and unworthy servants to ... offer you this awesome and *unbloody sacrifice for our sins* (*huper tōn hemeterōn hamartematōn*) and the negligences of your people, look upon me, your unworthy servant and cleanse me from my offences ...".[136] The priest then prays for the people, that "this [eucharistic] mystery, given to us for our salvation, may not be for the condemnation of your people, but *for the remission of* [their] *sins* (*eis exaleipsin hamartiōn*)".[137] This is immediately followed by the *oratio velaminis*: "... We thank you, Lord our God ... We have been found worthy to enter the tabernacle of your glory,

133. *Ibid.* 8, 14: Donaldson, *op. cit*, p. 235; Brightman, *op. cit*, p. 25.

134. It is Ligier's contention that the *Séder Abodah* of Kippur has inspired the composition of the *Apost. Const.*, but apart from its general framework of salvation history the Syrian document contains too few references to purification from sin to warrant any firm conclusion in this respect. Cf. L. Ligier, *Péché*, II, pp. 295-297.

135. For the text, cf. I. M. Hanssens, *Institutiones liturgicae de ritibus orientalibus*, III (Romae, 1932) pp. 587ff; B. Mercier, "La liturgie de S. Jacques. Edition critique du texte Crec, avec traduction latine", in *Patrol. Orient.* (=P.O.)t.26(Paris, 1946). Part of the English text in Bouyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 269-277, and in Dix, *The Shape*, pp. 187-196. The document seems to be of the IV-V century (cf. Mercier, P.O., p. 125).

136. Mercier, P.O., p. 191. The same prayer continues with a further entreaty for purification from sin as a preparation to receive the "illumination of the Holy Spirit" (*Ibid.*, p. 193).

137. Mercier, P.O., p. 193.

be inside the veil and gaze on the holy of holies; we . . . are about *to offer this awesome and unbloody victim for our sins* and for the negligences of the people . . .".[138] The request is made that the Lord may accept the offering " sanctified by the Holy Spirit, *as a propitiation for our sins* (*eis exilasma tōn hemeterōn plemmelematōn*) and the negligences of your people. . .".[139]

Then, in the middle of the anaphora, and before the long series of prayers of supplication, reminiscent of the Jewish *Tefillah*, the priest proceeds to the epiclesis: " Have mercy upon us, God our saviour . . and send upon us and upon these gifts which we present to you, your all-holy Spirit . . . so that by visiting them with his holy, good and glorious presence He may sanctify them and make this bread the holy body of Christ and this cup the precious blood of Christ, *so that they may be to all those who partake of them for the remission of sins* (*eis aphesin hamartiōn*) and for eternal life. . .".[140]

The last section of the liturgy, preparatory to communion, is particularly emphatic on the purifying power of the sacrament, which is mentioned no fewer than five times, and four times more in the prayers after communion. The celebrant prays: " Lord, sanctify our souls and bodies so that we may be made worthy to communicate and *partake of your holy mysteries for the remission of sins* (*eis aphesin hamartiōn*) and for eternal life ".[141] More strongly yet: " *For the remission of our sins and the propitiation of our souls* (*Uper apheseōs . . . kai ilasmou*) let us all say intently: Lord, have mercy ".[142] Immediately before communicating himself, the priest says: " Lord Jesus Christ . . . make me worthy . . . to partake of your most holy body and blood *for the remission of sins* and for eternal life ". Similarly the formula of distribution of communion to the faithful: " The holy body of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ distributed to the faithful *for the remission of sins* and for eternal life ".[143] Finally the prayers after communion come back on the same idea: " We give you thanks, Christ our God, who considered us worthy to partake of your. body and blood *for the remission of sins* and for eternal life ": Then again: " Listen to us, God our Saviour . . . and *be propitious, propitious, propitious to our sins* (*hileōs heleōs, heleōs genou tais hamartiais hemōn*)."[144]

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138. Mercier, P.O., p. 195f.
139. Mercier, P.O., p. 195.
140. Bouyer, *op. cit.*, p. 272; Mercier, P.O., p. 207. In the institution narrative immediately preceding it is said, in typically Oriental fashion, that Jesus took the cup and " filled it with the Holy Spirit " (Bouyer, *op. cit.*, p. 272; Mercier, P.O., 202). This pneumatological dimension of the Eucharist has unfortunately been neglected for a very long time in our Western liturgy.
141. Mercier, P.O., p. 266.
142. *Ibid.*, p. 228.
143. *Ibid.*, pp. 232.234.
144. *Ibid.*, p. 236.

One notices in the above texts that " the remission of sins " (expression which recurs like a *leitmotiv* throughout the liturgy) is presented not only as the result of the participation in the sacrament but also as the direct effect of the sacrifice. If we keep in mind the strong terminology used towards the end (" propitious . . . propitious ") we can entertain but little doubt that, according to the liturgy of St. James the eucharistic memorial is certainly endowed with propitiatory power. This conclusion is further strengthened by the remarkable – and undoubtedly deliberate – parallelism between the eucharistic liturgy and the expiatory liturgy of *Kippur*: silent prayer of the High Priest before the anaphora, supplication for his own sins and for those of the people, prayer of the veil and reference to the holy of holies, request for the cancellation of the bond of sin (cf. Col. 2: 14), reference to the celestial Jerusalem. Most of these features are common to the liturgy of St. James and to that of the *Kippur*.[145]

Reasons of space prevent us from dwelling on the *Liturgy of the twelve Apostles*,[146] but the liturgy of St John Chrysostom and that of St Basil,[147] closely connected with the *Apostolic Constitutions*, deserve our attention. Rarely used today in areas influenced by Byzantium, the liturgy of St Basil contains in its Coptic version an *oratio veli* similar to that of the liturgy of

145. Cf. Ligier, *Péché*, II, 304-305, who refers to the Jewish liturgical prayers published in *Erech Hatephiloth ou Ritual des toutes les grandes fetes* (Paris, Durlacher, 1930) pp. 80-83. According to the same Ligier, it was the desire to stress the majesty of the eucharistic sacrifice that impelled 4th and 5th century Christians to have recourse to the Kippur liturgy (*op. cit.*, p. 305). One only wonders if such a reason can by itself account for the extraordinary insistence on the propitiatory nature of the Eucharist we have noticed in the various texts.

146. Critical edition with Latin translation in A. Raes, *Anaphorae Syriacae*, I (Romae, 1940) 212-257, with two different versions of the same anaphora. The English translation of the first in Bouyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 282-286. As in other Oriental liturgies, one notices here the insertion of the Matthean clause ' for the remission of sins ' into the words of institution pronounced over the bread also (cf. Raes, *op. cit.*, pp. 217 and 245). Definitely less emphatic in its eucharistic theology of sin than the liturgy of St. James, it explicitly entreats God, however, in an epicletic context: " We beg you, Lord . . . to send your Spirit upon these offerings . . . so that all those who taste of them (the body and blood) *may obtain . . . the forgiveness of sins* " (Raes, *op. cit.*, p. 285). The same epicletic supplication for the remission of sins in the second version of the anaphora (Cf. Raes, *op. cit.*, p. 247).

147. The critical text of St. Basil's anaphora in H. Engberding, *Das eucharistische Hochgebet der Basilius-liturgie* (Münster, 1931). The Latin translation of its Coptic version in Renaudot, I, pp. 1-25; and that of the Alexandrian version, *Ibid.*, I, pp. 57-89. The English translation of the anaphora only, in Bouyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 290-304. A Byzantine recension of the 9th century in Brightmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 309-344.

St James, even if the *Kippur* colouring is much less perceptible: "We plead and entreat your goodness, O lover of men, that this mystery which you have instituted for our salvation, may not be unto judgement, either to us or to your people, but *unto forgiveness of sins and remission of our negligences*".[148] Immediately after reciting the words of institution[149] the priest proceeds to the epiclesis: "We beseech you, Christ our God ... may your Holy Spirit descend upon these offerings, may He hallow them ... May He make this bread the holy body of Our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ, *which is given for the forgiveness of sins* and for life eternal, to him who receives it".[150] At the fraction of the host the celebrant says, echoing the epiclesis: "O Lord our God ... who have sanctified these offerings through the descent of the Holy Spirit upon them: *cleanse us, Lord, from our sins*, both hidden and manifest ...".[151]

And as an immediate preparation for communion: "We entreat and beseech you, O lover of men, *that you may purify us all* and draw us to you *through our communion in your divine mysteries*".[152] The prayer immediately preceding the reception and distribution of communion runs: "Make all of us worthy, O Lord, to receive your holy body and precious blood *for the purification of our souls and bodies and for the forgiveness of our sins*".[153] Then, after three postcommunion prayers, the congregation is dismissed.

This selection of prayers bearing on our topic reveals that both sacrificially and sacramentally the Basilian liturgy too, considers the Eucharist as tending to the remission of sins; and this eucharistic purification is once again firmly embedded in an epicletic context. Maybe that the first part of the anaphora, with its reference to Adam's sin, reveals clearly traces of the OT in its conception, testifying thereby to its Jewish origins,[154]

148. Renaudot, I, p. 9.
149. Once again we find here Matthew's propitiatory formula recited over the bread, cf. Renaudot, I, p. 15.
150. Then the same formula is repeated over the cup as well, cf. Renaudot, I, p. 16.
151. *Ibid.*, p. 20. In the long series of supplications which the Byzantine recension inserts between the epiclesis and communion, the celebrant recites this delicate prayer for himself: "Forgive me every voluntary transgression and do not take away on account of my sins the grace of the Holy Spirit from the gifts presented" (Bouyer, *op. cit.*, p. 302; Brightmann, *op. cit.*, p. 336).
152. Renaudot, I, p. 22. This is followed by a prayer for forgiveness addressed to the Father (cf. *Ibid.*).
153. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
154. Cf. Ligier, "Anaphores orientales et prieres juives", *Proche Orient Chrét.* 13 (1963)3-20, esp. 5-9. The reference to Adam's sin and even the entire pattern of the first part of the anaphora, focusing on sin, could as well come directly from the OT without passing through Jewish sources. We do not find in Basil's liturgy the uncontroverted evidence of Jewish influence we met in the liturgy of St. James.

but on the other hand we fail to see in it the imprint of the *Kippur* liturgy as was the case with the liturgy of St James. Hence its possibly Jewish inspiration does not seem to account for the texts quoted above.

The liturgy of St John Chrysostom,[155] very similar to, but briefer than that of St Basil, contains the same theology. Immediately after the words of institution[156] the priest says: "Therefore we beseech you, Lord, may this sacrifice we offer be acceptable . . . that *through it we may be made worthy of* [receiving] *the forgiveness of our faults and the remission of our sins* . . . And just as through your grace we have been made worthy of the gift of *the body and the blood of propitiation*, grant that we may be one with you . . . And may the mingling which is in this cup, the blood of Our God, be *a means of propitiation for the transgressions and sins we have committed*. . . Grant us, O Lord, that commingled with our souls and bodies, it may profit us *as propitiation for our transgressions, remission of our* sins and purification from all perversity. . .".[157] The epiclesis evolves into a prayer of forgiveness: "We offer you this spiritual and unbloody worship and we call upon you . . . to send your Holy Spirit upon us and upon these gifts presented and to make this bread the precious body of your Christ . . . and what is in this cup the precious blood of your Christ . . . so that they may be, to those who partake of them . . . *for the remission of sins* (*eis aphesin hamartiōn*), the communion of your Holy Spirit . . .".[158] Finally, the prayer of thanksgiving after communion reads: "Grant, O Lord, that the body of your only begotten Son may mingle with our bodies and his blood with our souls and may it be to us *unto the forgiveness of transgressions* [and] *the remission of sins*. . .".[159]

Approximately at the time these liturgies were taking shape, the fertile Alexandrian soil produced one of the most peculiar anaphoras: that of Serapion.[160] Among the peculiarities of this

155. The text, with Latin translation, in Renaudot, II, pp. 242-253. A Byzantine version of the 9th century in Brightmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 309-344. English translation of the Byzantine anaphora, as given by Brightmann, in Bouyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 286-289.

156. Here, too, the Matthean clause is recited over the bread (cf. Renaudot, II, p. 245), whereas in the Byzantine Version the clause, in fidelity to Mt 26, 28, appears only in connection with the blood (cf. Brightmann, *op. cit.*, p. 328).

157. Renaudot, II, pp. 245-246.

158. This prayer is taken from the Byzantine version. I have slightly modified Bouyar's translation (*op. cit.*, p. 288) so as to bring it closer to the original Greek of Brightmann (*op. cit.*, p. 330). A similar request, in the same epicletic context, is found in the Syrian version, where the priest prays that the body of Christ may be "for the purification of all stains of flesh and spirit" (Renaudot, II, p. 246).

159. Renaudot, II, p. 253.

160. Edited, with Latin translation, by F. X. Funk in the second volume of his *Didascalia et Constitutiones Apostolorum* (Paderborn, 1905) pp. 172-179. English translation only of the anaphora

anaphora one could mention the fact that the institution narrative overlaps the anamnesis; the double epiclesis, before and after the institution text, addressed, not to the Spirit but respectively to the Father and the Word; the fourfold mention of the Spirit in places where no other anaphora mentions Him; the briefness of the aspect of intercession, which is concluded in one short paragraph; and the presence of the mystagogical language so dear to the Alexandrian School.[161]

After the narrative of the institution, which includes Matthew's propitiatory clause in the formula over the bread, the priest continues: "Wherefore, celebrating the likeness of his death, we offer this bread and pray: *through this sacrifice, be reconciled to us all, be propitious* (*kattalagethi kai hilastheti*), O God of truth".[162] Then, still within the anaphora, the commemoration of the departed is made[163]. Before the dismissal, however, we notice a prayer of thanksgiving (the only one in the entire liturgy!) in which sinners are said to have been reconciled to God, apparently before their participation in the sacred mysteries.[164] After the previous prayer, strongly propitiatory, this comes as a surprise, pointing to the tension observable in other liturgies between the purification required and that effected by the eucharistic sacrifice.

The Alexandrian anaphora of St Mark yields only one text which seems to be a faithful echo of similar expressions found previously in the Syrian and Antiochean liturgies. This time the epiclesis has the traditional form of a request to the Father: "Send upon these loaves and these cups your Holy Spirit, that He may sanctify them and ... make this bread the body and this cup the blood of the new Covenant ... that they may be for us who are partakers ... *unto the remission of sins*".[165]

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in Bouyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-205 and in Dix, *The Shape*, pp. 163-164.

161. Cf. Bouyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-208.

162. Funk, II, p. 174. Bouyer's (*op. cit.*, p. 204) and Dix' (*op. cit.*, p. 164) renderings of this text are not quite accurate. We should remember that it was in the same Alexandrian church that we found in Origen the first explicit patristic text attributing to the Eucharist a propixiatory value, text which antedates the liturgy of Serapion by approximately one century, since the present anaphora is of the mid-fourth century. Cf. Bouyer, *op. cit.*, p. 203 and Dix, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

163. Funk, II, p. 176.

164. *Ibid.*, p. 178. It is surprising that Dix, in his long commentary on this anaphora (*op. cit.*, pp. 164-172) does not say a word on its propitiatory character, possibly due to the fact that on p. 164 he mistranslates the key-passage.

165. Text in Brightmann, *op. cit.*, p. 134. In the text of the institution this liturgy too, speaks, as that of St James had done, of "filling it [the cup] with the Holy Spirit" (Brightmann, *op. cit.*, p. 135). John Chrysostom had, in the same vein, spoken of the eucharistic body being "enveloped by the Holy Spirit" (cf. footnotes 77, above): precious indications for the development of a much needed pneumatological Eucharist.

Two different versions of the liturgy of St Gregory are extant, Coptic and Alexandrian, which will now be examined jointly.[166] In the opening prayer we find a clear statement as to the nature and purpose of the sacrifice about to be offered: "Almighty Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us, miserable sinners and your unworthy servants, confidence to stand at your holy altar and offer you this *awesome, unbloody sacrifice for our sins* (*huper tōn hemeterōn hamartematōn*) and the negligences of your people... You, who give life... grant us... that we may offer you this divine worship in a holy manner, *for the forgiveness of sins* (*eis aphesin hamartiōn*) and the enjoyment of future happiness...".[167]

And at the beginning of the anaphora: "It is meet and just that we should praise you... *who propitiates* (*ton enilateuonta*) for all our iniquities...".[168] Following the traditional practice among most Eastern liturgies, the epiclesis comes after the institution narrative: "Send your Holy Spirit... that He may make of this bread your holy body, Lord, God and Saviour... *for the forgiveness of sins* (*eis aphesin hamartiōn*) and for the eternal life of those who partake of it".[169] Immediately before the

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166. Both the texts in Renaudot, the Coptic liturgy in its Latin translation (*op. cit.*, I, pp. 26-38) and the Alexandrian both, in the original Greek and in Latin (*op. cit.*, pp. 57-126). A critical edition of the Coptic version in E. Hammerchmidt, *Die Koptische Gregoriosanaphora*, Berlin 1957; and an English translation of the anaphora in O. Khs-Burmester, *The Egyptian or Coptic Church* (Le Caire, 1957)91-96. Part of the Alexandrian text in French in Ligier, "Penitence et Eucharistie", *Orient. Christ. Per.* 29(1963)46-48. According to Hanssens (*Institutiones*, III, p. 634), this was the text used in Nazianzus, Cappadacia, and revised by Gregory.

167. Renaudot, I, pp. 90 and 92. Almost the same expression again in the *oratio veli* (*Ibid.*, p. 95). The Coptic version voices the the same idea in the first prayer: "Mitte super me Spiritum Sanctum tuum; et fac me dignum ut adsistam altari tuo sancto... [et] offeram tibi hoc sacrificium rationabile, incruentum, cum conscientia pura, *in remissionem peccatorum et iniquitatum mearum, veniam delictorum populi tui...*" (*Ibid.*, p. 26). Almost literaly the very same expressions in the Coptic liturgy of St. Cyril: Renaudot, I, p. 39. The aspect of purification recurs in other passages, but now it is purification as a prerequisite for, rather than a consequence of, the offering of the sacrifice (Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 27f). Similar prayers in the Alexandrian version, cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 109.119.

168. Renaudot, I, p. 99. No parallel expression is to be found in the Coptic version.

169. *Ibid.*, p. 106. Exactly the same formula is repeated over the cup (*Ibid.*). The parallel passage in the Coptic liturgy runs: "Send down upon us the grace of thine Holy Spirit that he may purify and change these gifts which are set forth, into the body and the blood of our Redeemer. And that he make this bread thine holy body... *to be given for the remission of sins* and life eternal of those who shall partake thereof... And this cup also the precious blood of thy New Testament... *to be given*

Lord's prayer the priest forcefully restates the purifying purpose of the sacrifice which he is about to complete: " Therefore we beseech and implore you, merciful God . . . that this sacrifice may not be . . . for the judgement and condemnation of my sins . . . but rather deign to sanctify the souls, bodies and consciences of these your servants, sinners . . .".[170] Then something which almost amounts to a full penitential rite follows as an immediate preparation for communion, in which the celebrant asks repeatedly for forgiveness and purity.[171]

We cannot close this cursory survey of the early liturgies without dwelling briefly on a document of the beginning of the third century, partially still shrouded in mystery, but which has in this century attracted considerable attention: the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus.[172] And yet for our purpose it has only a negative significance. The eucharistic anaphora, which is as ancient as the Syrian of Addai and Mari and possibly the oldest we possess at present, bears not a trace of any purifying or propitiatory effects of the Eucharist. The anaphora, extremely brief, contains explicitly the dimensions of memorial (" Doing therefore the anamnesis of his death and resurrection . . ."), praise (" we praise and glorify thee through thy beloved child Jesus Christ. . ."), thanksgiving (" We render thanks unto thee, O God, through thy beloved child Jesus Christ . . .") and supplication (" We pray thee that thou wouldst grant to all thy saints . . .") in an epicletic

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for the remission of sins and life eternal of those who shall partake thereof . . ." (Burmester, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-94).

170. *Ibid.*, p. 117.

171. Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 121f. The liturgy of Theodore of Mopsuestia refers to the Eucharist as the " pure oblation by which you are appeased and reconciled (placatus et reconciliatus)" and its reception is "*for the forgiveness of transgressions and for the remission of sins*" (Renaudot, II, pp. 619,621). Possibly the strongest expressions are to be found in the Nestorian liturgy, which speaks of eucharistic communion "*ad expiationem* corporum et animarum . . . *ad expiationem* delictorum et remissionem peccatorum " (Renaudot, II, pp. 633-634).

172. It is preserved only in its various translations, the original Greek having been lost. Edited by F. K. Funk in his *Didascalia et Const. Apostol.* II (Paderborn, 1905)97-119 under the wrong title *Constitutiones Ecclesiae Aegyptiacae*. Better editions by by B. Botte, *La tradition apostolique* in ' Sources chretiennes ', n. 11 (Paris, 1946), and again " La Tradition Apostolique de St. Hippolyte, essai de reconstitution ", in *Liturgiewissenschaftliche Quellen und Forschungen*, vol. 39 (Münster, 1963). English translation in G. Dix, *The treatise on the Apostolic Tradition of St. Hippolytus of Rome* (London, 1937). But possibly the most comprehensive study is that of S. M. Hanssens, *La liturgie d'Hippolyte* (Roma, 1959). More briefly, Watteville, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-180 and Bouyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 158-182. Copious bibliography in Quas,. II, pp. 182-183 and 190 The date of composition is usually fixed around A.D. 215 (cf. Dix, *The treatise*, p. xxxvii; Quasten, II, p. 181).

context which is only doubtfully genuine.[173] The absence of any idea of propitiation is so complete that not only is the additional propitiatory clause of Mt. 26: 28 not added to the formula over the bread (as was the case practically in every Oriental liturgy) but it is even taken away from the formula over the wine.[174] Similarly the formula for the distribution of communion at the paschal Mass reads: " The bread of heaven in Christ Jesus ",[175] without any of the references to its purifying efficacy we found in other liturgies.

At the end, we have an impressive liturgical testimony in favour of the propitiatory nature of the Eucharist but it should be noted that this tradition is restricted to the East: most of the thirteen liturgies studied witness to it, but twelve of them are Eastern.

Conclusions

Our inquiry into the early sources manifests the complexity of the problem and certain inner tensions we should not overlook: The Jewish background to the Supper considers the memorial as a liturgical celebration exclusively of joyful praise coupled with thanksgiving and supplication, without striking any propitiatory note. The patristic testimony as regards propitiation is extremely sober, especially if one keeps in mind the very copious eucharistic literature of the Fathers. We found only three of them (Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem and, much later, Gregory the Great) who unhesitatingly apply to the Eucharist propitiatory terminology, but even in their case it is to be remembered that their testimonies are found in single, isolated passages and never — apparently — twice in the same author. If we go beyond patristic terminology in search of the same idea differently expressed, we can add to the list the passing references to the purificatory aspect found in Ambrose, Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Augustine. But once again, their texts should be seen in the general perspective of their total eucharistic production, which in some of them (Augustine, Chrysostom) is very considerable. All in all, about fifteen patristic passages as contrasted with the immensity of the 450 or so examined. Some of the Fathers therefore are aware of and witness to, this tradition, but their combined testomony is certainly not impressive by any means.

Hence it is somewhat puzzling to contrast the patristic moderation in this regard, which in most cases amounts to total silence, with the massive testimony of the early Oriental liturgies

173. *Apost. Trad.* ch. 4 (Dix, *The treatise*, pp. 7-9). The epiclesis is probably an interpolation, cf. Dix, *ibid.*, p. 9 and the textual note on pp. 75-79.
174. *Apost. Trad.* 4, 9 (Dix, *The treatise*, p. 8).
175. *Apost. Trad.* 23, 5 (Dix, *The treatise*, p. 41).

which repeatedly and emphatically voice their belief in the propitiatory or purificatory character of the eucharistic sacrifice. That some of them have been influenced by the Jewish liturgy seems to have been conclusively proved, but I would be wary of going one step further and pointing to the *Kippur* liturgy as the origin of this liturgical insistence on the propitiatory nature of the Eucharist. One should not overlook the fact that, on the one hand, two of the most explicit sources — Cyril and the liturgy of St James — come precisely from Jerusalem, the place of the OT Jewish temple and that, on the other, this imprint of the *Kippur* is less marked in the liturgies of the churches outside Jerusalem, whilst it is non-existent in the liturgy geographically most distant from Jerusalem, *viz.* in that of Hippolytus of Rome. Does this fact suggest that the physical proximity to the place that once witnessed the solemn *Kippur* liturgy is partly responsible for the propitiatory colouring we find in some of the liturgies in the vicinity of Jerusalem ? Maybe, but further study on this point will be needed before reaching a definite conclusion.

Furthermore, both in the Fathers and in the liturgies one notices the tension present within the propitiatory nature itself: it is repeatedly asserted that the Eucharist, both sacrificially and sacramentally considered, has the power to forgive sins, and almost in the same breath, the very same testemonies demand purification from sin prior to its reception. The solution to this antimony found in some of the Fathers — Augustine to some extent and especially Theodore of Mopsuestia — is that the Eucharist purifies the faithful of their minor or only partially voluntary sins, whereas the major sins which imply a fully deliberate transgression should be forgiven before partaking of the eucharistic food. This solution, however, while pastorally valid and traditional, would not account for all the facts, for some of the Eastern liturgies seem to attribute to the Eucharist the power to forgive all sins, barring perhaps the extreme cases of apostasy, adultery and murder.[176] Nor should it be easily taken for granted that the ancient distinction between sins forgiven by the Eucharist and those to be previously remitted by the sacrament of Penance, corresponds exactly to our present division into mortal and venial sins: some of the sins which we would today call mortal seem to have been remitted in the eucharistic celebration itself, either by the overlapping of penitential and eucharistic services, or even directly by sharing in the sacrificial victim through eucharistic communion.[177]

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176. Cf. L. Ligier, " Pénitence et Eucharistie ", *Orient ChristPer.* 29(1963) pp. 24, 71 and passim. J. Quinn, *art. cit.*, p. 290, who cites P. Browe, " Die Kommunionvorbereitung in Mittelalter ", *Zeit. für Kath. Theol.* 56(1932)375-415.
177. Cf. L. Ligier, *art. cit.*, p. 178.

I should finally like to draw the reader's attention to the fact that even the liturgies which emphatically give witness to this purificatory character of the Eucharist, never consider this aspect in isolation, but always subsumed and enveloped, as it were, in the more general and more biblical dimension of supplication. The liturgies seem to have a very vivid consciousness of the existential condition of the offerer who, as *simul iustus et peccator*, approaches the altar with the full realization of the graces already received (and this makes him break into a hymn of thanksgiving, a real 'eucharistia') and those he stands in need of (which prompts him to ask for them: intercession), particularly those connected with his sinful condition (propitiatory dimension). Consequently, the propitiatory or purifying value of the Eucharist should be considered as a particular facet of intercession, corresponding realistically to man's concrete, sinful condition. All the more so that in many of the cases studied above we observed this propitiatory aspect not only expressed within an intercessory perspective, but clearly in a epicletic context. The eucharistic memorial issues forth into a humble, earnest request to the Father that He may send down the sanctifying Spirit through the glorified humanity of the Risen Christ and thereby purify man ever more from his intrinsic sinfulness. This is no magical power of any sort, but a humble supplication for a further outpouring of divine life and for forgiveness: it is the person of the Spirit, imparted to the communicant through the eucharistic Christ, that will fulfil this double petition. If we are not badly mistaken, this pneumatological dimension of the eucharistic mystery, besides echoing a constant Oriental tradition, is likely to carry a ring of familiarity for the members of some of the Reformed churches, particularly those who pride themselves on their Calvinistic origins and traditions.

And this brings us to a final, concluding remark: in the present ecumenical dialogue terminological precision is of the greatest importance, for history teaches that often enough among Christians of different churches, the same theological expressions mask deep-seated differences of opinion, whereas the usage of different terminologies hides at times substantial agreement. In perfect fidelity to the early, *common* Christian sources and especially to the Word of God, which *never* speaks of the mystery of the Eucharist in propitiatory terms, one should preferably refrain from referring to this mystery of life as a sacrifice of expiation or even of propitiation (and here traditional Catholic terminology stands in need of correction); but on the other hand the testimony of the liturgies should be taken seriously: the Eucharist, by infusing life, blots out sin (and this could profitably be heeded by some of the sons of the Reformation). The propitiatory value of the Eucharist should be neither unduly overstressed nor sedulously ignored, for the Eucharist is God's great gift to man as he is: a son of God steeped in sin.