

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

Bachelor of Divinity

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

6-1-1959

St. Augutine--Sacrifice in Eucharist and Life

John Meether

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir_meetherj@csl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv>



Part of the [History of Christianity Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Meether, John, "St. Augutine--Sacrifice in Eucharist and Life" (1959). *Bachelor of Divinity*. 609.
<https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv/609>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bachelor of Divinity by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

ST. AUGUSTINE--SACRIFICE
IN MICHIGAN AND LIFE
SHORT TITLE
ST. AUGUSTINE--SACRIFICE

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

BY
John M. ...
1900

Approved by J. A. Thiele
Advisor
...
Reader

**ST. AUGUSTINE--SACRIFICE
IN EUCHARIST AND LIFE**

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

by
John Meether
June 1959

Approved by:

J. A. Thiele
Advisor
Phil Schneider
Reader

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
The Lutheran Situation	1
Limitations of the Study	2
II. THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE	3
The Eucharist and Unity	3
The One Sacrifice of Christ	8
Christ's Sacrifice and its Relation to the Church	13
Propitiatory Value of the Eucharist	20
III. THE SACRIFICE IN LIFE	22
The Relationship to the Eucharistic Sacrifice	22
Unity and the Sacrifice in Life	26
Loving the <u>Summum Bonum</u>	28
Humility and Love	34
The Influence of Neoplatonism	38
IV. THE REAL PRESENCE	40
A Sign and the Reality	40
V. CONCLUSION	47
BIBLIOGRAPHY	49

good work is the Gospel and not the law. It seems to this writer that we can avoid legalism in good works and activities by centering the life of our people in the service of worship where the Gospel is preached and the Sacraments are administered. Only as our people enjoy the free grace of God can they in return give themselves wholly to God in every

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Lutheran Situation

In the sixteenth century Luther proclaimed to the Church that we are justified by grace and his preaching of Law and Gospel awoke a new dimension of faith in the hearts of those who heard him. It was clear to Luther that good works proceed from one who is under the Gospel. All who are forced to do works are not presenting or offering anything that is pleasing to God. It appears, however, from the controversies that raged in Lutheranism over the third use of the Law and synergism that such an understanding of the relationship between the Christian and good works did not remain clear. It has also been asserted by some that Article Six of the Formula of Concord is not clear in its interpretation.

In a country whose theology is largely governed by Reformed principles we must be certain that the motivation for good works is the Gospel and not the Law. It seems to this writer that we can avoid legalism in good works and activism by centering the life of our people in the service of worship where the Gospel is preached and the Sacraments are administered. Only as our people grasp the free grace of God can they in return give themselves wholly to God in every

part of their life. In such a situation good works then flow freely without any need of legalism. The Eucharist plays a vital part in God's grace coming to us and we in turn giving ourselves to Him. We remember that all sacrificial terms were removed from the German Mass, thus not leaving room for an offering of self to God. Such an act, though motivated by the abuses of the time, seems detrimental to the meaning of the Eucharist.

Where shall we look to find a more definite and yet not less Lutheran doctrine of Eucharistic offering? This author is proposing Augustine as an attempt toward a theology of worship, offering, good works, stewardship, evangelization, every member canvass, etc.

Limitations of the Study

The amount of material produced by Augustine is very great, and an examination of all of it is beyond the scope of this work. The polemical writings will not be considered at all. Of the other works, the City of God will be the basic work used in the thesis with considerable dependence upon his sermons and commentary on the Psalms. Other non-polemical writings were used where they were relevant to the thesis.

CHAPTER II

THE EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE

The Eucharist and Unity

Augustine's theology of the Eucharist and sacrifice revolves around his emphasis upon the Church as the Body of Christ. One can hardly escape this theme which runs through so many of his works. He never seems to tire of telling his parishioners of their unity with the Head of the Church nor of showing them the relationship and the indispensability of this fact in their lives. This emphasis is so evident, even in his writings on the Eucharist, that Harnack makes the incorporation into Christ's mystical body the core of Augustine's sacramental teaching.¹

Augustine builds this doctrine upon the unity of all mankind in Christ. Even as all men are one in Adam and thus heirs of the sin that he brought into the world, so also are all men one with Christ through His humanity and thus may become heirs of salvation through Him. Yet for the Christian this unity has still other consequences. Not only are all men one with the humanity of Christ, but the unity of all

¹J. N. D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1958), p. 446.

Christians is one Man, Christ.² The reason for our unity in Christ is that we cleave to Him. Even though we are many, yet we are all one in Him who is our Head.

Since all are in His body, as it were one man speaketh; and he is one who is also many. For in themselves they are many, but they are one in Him Who is One.³

This point is more fully developed in the City of God where he uses St. Paul's analogy of the head and the body. Here Augustine pictures our incorporation in Christ even more vividly than St. Paul. The faithful are the individual members (arms, legs, etc.) which make up the one Body of Christ. It is a living organism which grows with the addition of new members and continually moves towards that fullness or perfection at the end of time. Leaving this analogy from Ephesians, Augustine then goes to 1 Corinthians. We are all one because the bread which we eat in the Eucharist is one loaf even though it was made of many grains of wheat.⁴

In his homilies on the Epistles of St. John, Augustine uses the analogy of the bride and the bridegroom to show the

²Augustine, "Psalm XXIX, ii, sec. 5," An Augustine Synthesis, compiled by Erich Przywara (New York: Random House, Inc., 1950), p. 217. Hereafter this book will be referred to as EP.

³EP, "Psalm CXXX, sec. 1," p. 217.

⁴Augustine, The City of God, in The Fathers of the Church, edited by Joseph DeFerrari (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1954), XXIV, xxii, chap. 18. Hereafter this series will be referred to as FOG.

relation of Christ to His Church. Here the Church is joined to the flesh of Christ. He begins by showing the unity of the person of Christ, divinity and humanity. Just as we cannot think of the Son of God except as one in His two natures, neither can we look upon the Church except as the Head joined to the Body.

So finely does Isaiah make the two one, when he speaks of Christ's person, "He put a band upon my head as on a bridegroom, and adorned me as a bride with her ornaments." The one speaker makes himself both the Bridegroom and Bride; for they are "not two, but one flesh," since "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." When to that flesh is joined the Church, there is the whole Christ.⁵

The unity of all Christians in the Body of Christ is never to be considered without taking into account the Eucharist and sacrifice. Only when the reality of our unity is taken seriously can we find the fullness of the Eucharist as it is developed in the theology of Augustine. The whole purpose of the sacramental system in the Church is to unite the individuals who are the followers of Christ into a visible and organized society for spiritual purposes. The height of this system is the Eucharist where Christ unites all into His Body. Augustine sees in the bread and the wine the symbols of the real unity which we have in or with Christ. Just as the bread is formed of many grains of wheat

⁵Augustine, "The Epistles of St. John, Homily I," The Library of Christian Classics, edited by John Baille (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1955), VIII, 261. Hereafter this series will be referred to as LCC.

and the wine of many grapes, so too the multitude of individuals is made into a single body, the mystical body of Christ.⁶ Again we see the same theme in the sermons on the Gospel of St. John,

the Apostle Paul, expounding to us this Bread, saith, "One Bread, one Body are we, being many." O sacrament of piety! O sign of unity! O bond of charity!⁷

The analogy of the bride and bridegroom is also used in relation to the Eucharist. The King's Son, Himself a King, and the Church as the Bride are united in the flesh of Christ. The disciples on the way to Emmaus recognized their unity with Him in the breaking of bread.

For all the Church is Christ's Bride, of which the first fruits is the flesh of Christ: there was the Bride joined to the Bridegroom in the flesh. With good reason when He would betoken that same flesh, He brake bread, and with good reason "in the breaking of bread" the eyes of the disciples were opened, and they knew Him.⁸

This sense of unity with Christ in the Sacrament is so strong that the wicked who are living in sin but still receiving the Sacrament do not eat the body of Christ nor are they to be called living members of Christ. They still eat the outward sign of the Sacrament but they are not true

⁶Stanislaus Grabowski, The Church (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1957), p. 184.

⁷Augustine, "The Gospel of St. John, Homily XXVI, sec. 15," A Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1848), XXVI, 409. Hereafter this series will be referred to as LOF.

⁸LOF, "The Epistles of St. John, Homily II, par. 2," XXIX, 1112.

living members of His Body and Christ does not dwell in them.⁹ This is not to say that they do not eat the flesh and blood of Christ, but that these elements turn into pain and punishment for those who receive them unworthily.

Augustine's main emphasis here is not on the outward eating and drinking, but his purpose is "that Christ may remain in him who eats and drinks sacramentally."¹⁰ The greatest fear of a Christian is that he might be separated from the Church and the Eucharist for he knows that when he eats the flesh of Christ and drinks His blood Christ dwells in him. This also assures him of his unity with Christ and all other members of the Church.¹¹

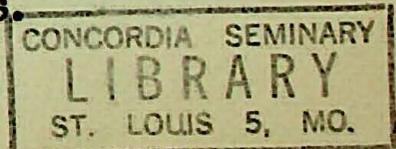
The unity of the Head and Body is also inseparably linked with sacrifice. It is the purpose of sacrifice to honor God and to bring the one sacrificing into a holy fellowship with God.¹² The priest or victim who honored God most is He who assumed humanity and offered Himself as a sacrifice to God. The purpose of Christ's pure and holy sacrifice was to enable the Church to be united with God in a holy fellowship. Here again the analogy between the two natures of Christ and the Church as Head and Body is used.

⁹FOC, The City of God, XXIV, xxi, chap. 24.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹LOF, "The Gospel of St. John, Homily XXVII, sec. 6," XXVI, 419.

¹²FOC, The City of God, XIV, x, chap. 6.



Thus Christ being still one with God took upon Himself humanity (thus being one with man also) and offered the sacrifice of peace that man might be united with God.¹³

The unity in sacrifice offered by the Church is not limited to those who are now living upon earth, but also includes the saints whose life is with the Lord. The earthly and the heavenly city together constitute one sacrifice to God.¹⁴ Augustine shows this unity of the saints again when speaking of the monuments erected in honor of the martyrs. The Church does not offer sacrifice to the martyrs because the sacrifice which the Church offers is the Body of Christ and the saints themselves are part of that Body.¹⁵

The One Sacrifice of Christ

The relation between the one sacrifice of Christ upon the cross and the Eucharistic sacrifice is of importance especially in the context of the Roman Catholic interpretation that is sometimes given Augustine. There are four possible views of the Eucharist as a rite of sacrifice. They are as follows: (a) The Church presents itself as a sacrifice in Christ's body; (b) Christ's sacrificial death is symbolically repeated by the priest in memory of Him;

¹³Grabowski, op. cit., p. 189.

¹⁴FOC, The City of God, XIV, x, chap. 7.

¹⁵Augustine, The City of God, in The Modern Library, translated from the Latin by Marcus Dods (New York: Random House, Inc., 1950), xxii, chap. 10.

(c) Christ's body is really offered anew by the priest; (d) Christ as priest continually and everywhere presents Himself as a sacrifice to the Father.¹⁶ Harnack says that all of these views are found in Augustine except the third.¹⁷

Gregory Dix also concludes that even though the idea of a fresh destruction or mactation of Christ in the Eucharist is not unknown in the early centuries and especially in the East, it lies outside of the broad line of tradition. Thus, he says that Augustine also associates the idea of sacrifice with the act of communion in The City of God (x, chap. 6), yet in another reference in the same work he makes it clear that strictly it cannot be a part of it.¹⁸ His argument against such an idea is based on xxii, chapter 10. The context here is the question of sacrificing to the martyrs which Augustine quite explicitly rejects. It is to God and not to any of the saints that the priest sacrifices, and the sacrifice that is offered is not Christ, but His Body, the Church.

The sacrifice itself, too, is the body of Christ, which is not offered to them [the martyrs], because they themselves are this body.¹⁹

¹⁶Adolph Harnack, History of Dogma, translated from the German by Neil Buchanan (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1903), V, 159.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1945), p. 241.

¹⁹Augustine, The City of God, in The Modern Library, translated from the Latin by Marcus Dods (New York: Random House, Inc., 1950), xxii, chap. 10.

Before any conclusion can be made final we must take into consideration some of Augustine's writings, especially his letter to Boniface. This letter is used by Grabowski to prove that Christ is immolated in each Mass.²⁰ Since this letter is of crucial importance it will be quoted with part of its context.

When we speak of the approach of Easter, it is usual for us to say that the Lord's Passion is tomorrow or the next day, although He suffered so many years ago, and the Passion itself happened once and for all. . . . No one would be so foolish as to accuse us of lying when we speak thus, knowing that we name those days in memory of the events that happened on similar days, and that, when the day is mentioned, not itself but one like it in the passage of time is meant, and it is so called because we recall the mystery which happened on it so long ago. Was not Christ offered in His Person only once, yet in the sacred mysteries He is offered for mankind not only on every Easter Sunday but every day? If the sacred rites had no resemblance to the things which they represent, they would not be called sacred rites. . . .²¹

First we must note that Grabowski translates offerō as immolation and not "as offered" as is done above. According to Harper's Latin Dictionary this word means to offer to God, to consecrate, to dedicate, to offer up, or to be a sacrifice.²² To translate it as immolation would then seem to be rather prejudiced and would change the connotation of the word considerably. It would seem that if such were the intention of Augustine he would have used the word, immolatio.

²⁰Grabowski, op. cit., p. 191.

²¹FOC, "Epistle 98," XVII, 137.

²²E. A. Andrews, Harper's Latin Dictionary (New York: American Book Company, 1879), p. 1259.

This letter in question was written when the African Bishop Boniface inquired how baptized children can be said to have faith. Augustine's reply was to the effect that baptism itself was called faith, and that the current usage allowed one to designate the sign by the name of the thing signified. Thus, even though Christ was offered only once it is possible to speak of a sacramental offering also. If this resemblance was not present, there would be no reason for calling these Sacraments sacred rites. The same parallel is made here to the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament.²³ Thus, unless one is willing to deny that he taught the real presence (which does not seem to be the case as will be seen later) one can hardly deny that there is a real, though sacramental, offering of Christ in the Eucharist. The question is what kind of an offering is made? Before trying to answer this question, let us look more thoroughly at Augustine's concept of sacrifice.

Augustine's conception of the Eucharistic sacrifice is closely linked with his ideas on sacrifice in general. Thus, he writes that a true sacrifice is whatever work is done with the purpose of establishing us in a holy fellowship with God.²⁴ Essentially this sacrifice is an interior transaction of the will, and what is usually termed the

²³Kelly, op. cit., p. 448.

²⁴FOC, The City of God, XIV, x, chap. 6.

sacrifice is the outward sign. Thus, the visible sacrifice is the Sacrament or sacred symbol of the invisible sacrifice.²⁵ The supreme sacrifice is quite naturally that of Christ which He made on Calvary and it is this sacrifice that is foreshadowed in all the Jewish sacrifices. The Christian Eucharist presupposes the death on the cross and the self-same Christ who is slain there is, according to Kelly, in a real sense slaughtered daily by the faithful upon the altar.²⁶ It must be remembered as has been stated before that Augustine does not think of the Head without the Body. An offering then would also include the Church as His Body being offered by Christ as He offers Himself to the Father. Any idea of a new offering of Christ's Body would seem foreign to Augustine's way of thinking.

What influence Ambrose of Milan had upon Augustine is probably quite questionable, but the theology of the former would still give the traditional view which Augustine knew and used. Ambrose also holds that Christ is still offering sacrifice when the Eucharist is offered. It is interesting to note that this oblation externally consists of the repetition by the priest of the efficacious words of Christ, and internally it consists of Christ's perpetual intercession to the Father on behalf of the Church. He also suggests that Christ is immolated on the altar so that we receive in

²⁵ Ibid., x, chap. 5.

²⁶ Kelly, op. cit., p. 454.

communion the Paschal Lamb slain on the cross. Such an idea is not prominent in his theology.²⁷

Christ's Sacrifice and its Relation to the Church

When anyone desires to offer anything to God without the sacrifice of Christ he finds that such an act is impossible. Sacrifice to demons, as intermediators, is not only without value but is also forbidden by God. The only way is through Christ.²⁸ Christ is the only One who had the power to lay down His life for sinful mankind and to take it up again. It is He who is our Victor and our High Priest. He is our Victor only because He became our Victim sacrificed to God, and He is our Priest only because He was made our sacrifice.²⁹ When a person asks where there is hope for salvation, and how he can appease God, he is told that there is propitiation of God only through the sacrifice of Christ which has been offered for us. Through the pouring out of His innocent blood, Christ has blotted out all the sins of the guilty. The price that He paid redeemed man from the hands of the devil who held him captive.³⁰

When Augustine pictures man asking what he can do to

²⁷ Ibid., p. 453.

²⁸ Grabowski, op. cit., p. 193.

²⁹ LCC, Confessions, VII, x, par. 43.

³⁰ LOF, "Exposition of the Psalms, Psalm CXXX," XXXIX, 65.

appease God this does not presuppose that man can do anything. His answer is that it has been already done in Christ. The Word of God, Who was before all things and through Whom all things were made, took from us humanity and dwelt among us in order that He might make this sacrifice or offering to God. Just as any pagan priest receives from the people what he offers to appease the god, so also Christ receives from us what He might offer to God to appease for our sins; namely, humanity. Thus, He received from us flesh and in the flesh was made a holocaust, a sacrifice. In His Passion, He was made a sacrifice but in the Resurrection, He renewed the flesh which was slain and offered it as His first-fruits to God. Then He says to the Christians:

All that is thine is now consecrated: since such first-fruits have been offered unto God from thee; hope, therefore that that will take place in thyself which went before in thy first-fruits.³¹

Note here also the close relation or association with the flesh and blood of Christ which is offered to God and the Church as the Body of Christ which is offered.

Christ, the High Priest, who offered Himself to God also makes His Body, the Church, a sacrifice which is offered to God through Him. In the Sacrament, the people are made into the flesh and blood of Christ so that they might become what they are--the Body of Christ. Augustine uses the analogy of the threshing floor to portray this fact. The members

³¹Ibid., p. 68.

of the Church are brought to the floor by the preaching of the Gospel and are there threshed. Then they are brought to water (undoubtedly a reference to Holy Baptism), are moistened, and baked into the one loaf by the heat of the Holy Spirit. The analogy of the wine press completes the picture. Many clusters are pressed out and become one in the "sweetness of the chalice."³² The one loaf and the one cup then become the flesh and blood of Christ which is offered up to God the Father in the Eucharist. The offering is then also the Church as one with Christ, the Head.³³ "And there you are on the table, there you are in the chalice,"³⁴ says Augustine.

By far the most important aspect of Augustine's Eucharistic theology is that of the people willingly offering themselves as a sacrifice to God. They have the ability to carry out such an act because Christ has gone before and made the perfect and most supreme sacrifice of all and bringing His Body with Him in His offering to the Father.³⁵ Through His sacrifice the Church learns to offer herself.

And it was His will that as a sacrament of this reality [the sacrifice of Christ] there should be the daily

³²EP, "Sermon CCIX," p. 234.

³³Roy Battenhouse, editor, A Companion to the Study of St. Augustine (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 65.

³⁴EP, "Sermon CCIX," p. 234.

³⁵FOC, The City of God, XIV, x, chap. 20.

sacrifice of the Church, which being the Body of Him, her Head, learns to offer itself through Him.³⁶

Because the people have been cleansed from their sins through the work of Christ and freed from the fetters that held them, they are now able to become a sacrifice of complete and perfect holiness. This sacrifice of the whole Church to God is the most acceptable of all sacrifices which we can offer to Him.³⁷ Augustine compares the two cities saying that the earthly city makes for herself false gods out of any sources at all and even out of human beings so that she might adore them with sacrifices. The heavenly city, however, lives as a wayfarer in this world, making no false gods for herself. She is formed by God Himself so that she may be a true sacrifice to Him.³⁸ Anyone who sacrifices to demons or to false gods will be put to death. It is only to the true God that anyone can sacrifice. And this is not because God needs anything from us but simply because it is good for us to belong to God alone. To sacrifice to God is a witness that we belong to Him and that we look to Him for life. The best and most worthy sacrifice is that of ourselves, and it is the Mystery that is celebrated in the offering of the Eucharist.³⁹

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ FOC, The City of God, XXIV, xx, chap. 25.

³⁸ Ibid., xviii, chap. 54.

³⁹ Ibid., xvix, chap. 23.

It is also evident in The City of God (x, chap. 6) that the sacrifice which Christians offer is the one Body of Christ, the Church. This sacrifice is the unity of all Christians. His reasoning begins with his idea of sacrifice in general as being works of mercy done to ourselves and our neighbor but directed to God. These works are done that we might be freed from misery and have the happiness and joy that is found by clinging to God. The culmination of such sacrifices is that the whole redeemed city is offered as a universal sacrifice to God through our High Priest who took the form of flesh so that He might become our sacrifice and join us to Him as His Body. Thus when St. Paul exhorts us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice he is exhorting us to be aware of our unity in the One Body and shun the evils of the world. We are to be transformed in the newness of our mind so that we know the good and acceptable will of the Father. To be aware of our unity in Christ means that we must all work together in this Body even as all the members of a human body work together for the good of the whole. Just as different members of a human body have different gifts and use them accordingly so also in the Church we must use the different gifts which God freely gives His Church. This Body working together for the good of the whole is the Christian sacrifice. It is linked to the Eucharist.

Such is the sacrifice of Christians: "We, the many are one body in Christ." This is the Sacrifice, as the faithful understand, which the Church continues to celebrate in the sacrament of the altar, in which

it is clear to the Church that she herself is offered in the very offering she makes to God.⁴⁰

This sacrifice of all Christians is not an abstract concept but it includes the whole person, body and soul. Our spiritual service as members of this one Body is to chasten our bodies and keep them from sin. Then they become a sacrifice to God. The soul, also, which is greater than the body, when it is used willingly and rightly in the service of God, is purged by Him of all its worldly desires and becomes "beautiful in His sight by reason of the bounty of beauty which He has bestowed upon it."⁴¹

The most profound meaning of the word "sacrifice" in Augustine, according to Louis Bouyer, is to make holy. The holy thing which is made, or the thing which is made holy, is the people. The people become a People only when they are made the People of God. These People are made a holy thing only when they are made by God into His People. The sacrifice offered to God in Christianity is then the whole redeemed city offering itself to its Redeemer. Bouyer says, "This act is the final and unavoidable conclusion of Augustine's great principle of sacrifice as every work which has as its object our cleaving to Him in a true fellowship."⁴²

The act of the whole Church offering herself to her

⁴⁰FOG, The City of God, XIV, x, chap. 6.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Louis Bouyer, Life and Liturgy (London: Sheed and Ward, 1936), p. 161.

Savior is not only an offering in time, but it reaches forward to the eschaton when it shall reach its fullness and be freed from the imperfections that still lie within it. The Body of Christ, the Church, offers herself to become the sacrificed Body of Christ, the Sacrament, so that the Church may become within time what it is as an eternal reality before God; namely, the fullness or fulfillment of Christ. Each redeemed member is to become what he has been made by baptism and confirmation.⁴³ Thus, Augustine never tired of telling his parishioners that the Lord desired to give His body and blood which He shed for the remission of sins that if one received well he is that which he has received--the body of Christ.

Your mystery is laid on the table of the Lord, your mystery you receive. To that which you are you answer "Amen", and in answering you assent. For you hear the words [of administration] "the Body of Christ" and you answer "Amen". Be a member of the Body of Christ that the Amen may be true.⁴⁴

Even though the sacrifice of Christians is always striving towards the fullness or perfection of the new man, even in time, this goal will never be fully realized in this life. Speaking of the Last Judgment, Augustine says that our sacrifice will never be perfect until the Day of Judgment when we shall be purified in the fire. Only then will we be able fully to give ourselves as a pure sacrifice to

⁴³Dix, op. cit., p. 247.

⁴⁴Augustine, "Sermon CCLXXII," quoted in Dix, op. cit., p. 247.

God. Even the one who offers sacrifice in faith, basing his hope on the passage, "the just man lives by faith" (Rom. 1:17), can be sacrificing justly only as long as he still realizes that he is a sinner. The sacrifices made now cannot be compared with those which will be offered by those who have been purified by the fire of the Last Judgment.⁴⁵

Propitiatory Value of the Eucharist

The sacrifice of the Eucharist is also related to the sacrifice of the cross in that it has a propitiatory value, especially in connection with its offering for the departed.⁴⁶ Of the various references to this concept, we shall deal with two. The first is from the Confessions appearing in the narration of the death and funeral of Augustine's mother. We note the custom of celebrating the Eucharist by the grave is still part of the tradition of the Church. The prayers and the Eucharist were celebrated in her behalf. Thus Augustine says, "the sacrifice of our redemption was offered forth to thee for her. . . ."⁴⁷ Another reference, in the Enchiridion, is much more explicit in speaking of the value of the Eucharist.

There is no denying that the souls of the dead are benefited by the piety of their living friends, when

⁴⁵FOC, The City of God, XXIV, xx, chap. 26.

⁴⁶Battenhouse, op. cit., p. 65.

⁴⁷LCC, Confessions, VII, ix, par. 12.

the sacrifice of the Mediator is offered for the dead, or alms are given in the church.⁴⁸

It would seem, however, that the benefit derived from such acts of charity are not obtained so much by offering a sacrifice but rather by the prayers of the people that take place when such acts are done. Augustine calls the Eucharistic sacrifice and the giving of alms "those means which the Church constantly uses in interceding for the dead. . . ." ⁴⁹ There are also degrees of benefit which these services give to the dead and are measured in accord with the spiritual condition of the deceased in his life. For the good they are offerings of praise to God. For the "not-so-very-bad" they are propitiations, but for the very bad they are of no value except that they may be a comfort to those surviving. Where they are of value their benefit consists either in obtaining a full forgiveness or else making damnation more tolerable. These offerings can be made only for the baptized dead.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ ICC, Enchiridion, VII, xxix, par. 110.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

CHAPTER III

THE SACRIFICE IN LIFE

The Relationship to the Eucharistic Sacrifice

The Eucharistic sacrifice is not merely a static action or a mere knowledge of what we are as members of the Body of Christ, but it is a living and vital union spreading out into every area of our life. The relationship between the two sacrifices begins with the Spirit of Christ which we receive through the Eucharist. This Spirit gives the Christian his motive for love and good works.¹ Just as a man lives by the spirit that is in his body, so also the Church must live by the Spirit of Christ. Augustine says,

Let a man come to the Eucharist that he may be incorporated and quickened. He is thus given life, the life of Christ, so that he may live to God by God, and produce good works while here on earth.²

To eat the body and drink the blood of Christ is to live by Him and have eternal life. We are made better by our participation in Him Who is Life.³

¹Augustine, "The Gospel of St. John, Homily XXVI, sec. 13," A Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1848), XXVI, 409. Hereafter this series will be referred to as LOF.

²Ibid.

³LOF, "The Gospel of St. John, Homily XXVI, sec. 19," XXVI, 413.

The Eucharist becomes the center of the Christian life and the power for sanctification.⁴ It may be said to reach its height in giving us the ability to lay down our lives for others. What does it mean to sit at the table of the Almighty and to receive the body and blood of Him who laid down His life for us, but that we also must be ready to lay down our life for others? Here then, in the Eucharist, the Church prepares herself to give her life in great works and deeds. The martyrs are our example.⁵ Part of the daily bread for which we pray in the Lord's Prayer is the spiritual food that we receive in the Eucharist.⁶ The power from receiving this "Good" becomes the source of our works and love which is the sacrifice of our life.

To understand how everything that we do in life is a sacrifice to God, we must look again to the nature of sacrifice in Augustine. There is a true sacrifice in every work which unites us in a holy fellowship with God. The works which unite us to God are only those which are aimed at the final "Good" in which alone we can be truly blessed.⁷ These

⁴Stanislaus Grabowski, The Church (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1957), p. 186.

⁵LOF, "The Gospel of St. John, Homily CXXXIV, sec. 1," XXIX, 841.

⁶Roy Battenhouse, editor, A Companion to the Study of St. Augustine (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 65.

⁷Augustine, The City of God, in The Fathers of the Church, edited by Joseph Deferrari (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1952), XIV, x, chap. 6. Hereafter this series will be referred to as FOC.

true sacrifices do not begin with the outward act. It is the inward condition of the heart that produces the outward acts of love. A sacrifice, therefore, is the visible Sacrament or sacred sign of an invisible sacrifice. God does not want mere outward performance, but He wants the inward sacrifices of the heart--the sacrifice of praise.⁸ Thus, we offer to God prayer and praise in audible words but these are only an outward expression of the real feelings that we are expressing with our hearts.⁹

The whole life of a Christian becomes a sacrifice with the goal of seeing Him as He is. This goal is realized by cleaving to Him. God is the fountain of our happiness and the end of all our desires. We tend towards Him by love so that we may rest in Him and find our blessedness by attaining that end. Such fellowship with God, it must be remembered, is not possible without Christ who has cleansed us from all stain.¹⁰

Through the cleansing work of Christ every Christian's heart is a temple with its altar on which pleasing sacrifices are offered to God. Every Christian, by virtue of his Baptism, is a priest in his own right because he has been made a member of Christ, the High Priest.¹¹ Here the

⁸ Ibid., x, chap. 5.

⁹ Ibid., x, chap. 19.

¹⁰ Ibid., x, chap. 3.

¹¹ Grabowski, op. cit., p. 192.

Christian offers himself and all the gifts that he possesses. An offering is the sweetest of incense to God when it is brought before Him by a person burning with a holy and pious love.¹² Such love is the desire for the ultimate "Good," God. This love unites us in a holy fellowship with Him.

In giving the entire person to God in a sacrifice, one must include both the body and soul. Our bodies become a sacrifice when they are chastened by temperance and become instruments of righteousness to God.¹³ The soul also is a sacrifice when it offers itself to God so that it may be inflamed by the fire of His love and receive of His beauty and become pleasing to Him.¹⁴

Because love to God is the center of Augustine's concept of sacrifice, it does not remain merely in our own person (body and soul) but spreads to others in our life. All works of mercy done to others are truly sacrifices because they are done for the sake of God.¹⁵ The Christian lives by faith which works through that charity which loves God as He should be loved, and his neighbor as himself.¹⁶

¹²FOG, The City of God, XIV, x, chap. 3.

¹³Ibid., x, chap. 6.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶LOF, The City of God, XXIV, xix, chap. 23.

Unity and the Sacrifice in Life

Just as the idea of unity is central in Augustine's theology of the Eucharist, so also it is central in his teaching of love and good works. Even though the Church is diffused through many nations they still speak with one tongue because the unity of the members of this Body is of one heart by charity. The Spirit plays a large role in this unity. If we receive the Holy Ghost, we will love the Church and, if we are compacted together into one by charity, we will rejoice in the Catholic name and faith. One can recognize the Spirit of God in a man by his love for the Church.¹⁷ Love then becomes the means by which one can know whether a person is in the Church or not. In the early times when the Spirit came upon a person the usual result was a miracle. This, however, is not a test for the Church at this time. Let a person look to his heart and if he loves his neighbor he can know that the Spirit of God dwells in him. Let him examine himself to see if there is in him the love of peace and unity, and the love of the Church. When such a person looks to see if he loves his brother, he should not merely look to the people whom he knows. There are many other brothers throughout the world whom he has never seen,

¹⁷ LOF, "The Gospel of St. John, Homily XXII, sec. 8," XXVI, 468.

yet he should know that he is one with them in charity.¹⁸

Love is more than merely proof that a person is in the Church and one with all its members. The unity that we have through love finds its purpose in using all its gifts for the good of the whole Church. The Spirit is given for the manifestation of the gifts that the Church possesses, using them for the good of the whole. Even as all members of the human body work together for the whole with no member possessing selfishly but in union with all, so also the Church holds all things in common for the good of the whole.¹⁹ The love resulting from the unity brought by the Spirit is evident in the early Church. In the baptism of the five thousand all received the Holy Spirit by which spiritual love was built up in them. The natural result was that they began, in the very oneness of fellowship, to sell all that they had and to bring the money to the Apostles so that everyone who was in need might be supplied.²⁰

The unity of all Christians in love and works is also illustrated by the Head and the Body. We are all one in Christ and follow the commandment of love which binds us

¹⁸Augustine, "The Epistles of St. John, Homily VI, par. 10," The Library of Christian Classics, edited by John Bailie (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1955), VIII, 308. Hereafter this series will be referred to as LCG.

¹⁹LOF, "The Gospel of St. John, Homily XXII, sec. 8," XXVI, 469.

²⁰LOF, "The Gospel of St. John, Homily XXXIX, sec. 5," XXVI, 536.

together. When one suffers, all suffer and when one is glorified, all are glorified. We all love because we are gods and the sons of the Most High. We love so that we might be brothers to His Only Son, loving one another with the love with which He loved us.²¹ The love of the Christians is a social love in the most comprehensive sense. All Christendom is "one Christ, loving Himself."²² The true Christian is never alone and never solitary. He is always conscious of his union with Christ and His members. His sympathies are not confined or restricted, but always go out to the whole great fellowship.²³ It is not the mere individual who believes in Christ, prays, and loves, but Christ in him through His Holy Spirit. It is the Head in His members.²⁴

Loving the Summum Bonum

The whole of Christianity for Augustine turns upon caritas. Of the different forms of love--God's love, love to God, and love to neighbor--the one that is central for Augustine is love to God. The meaning of caritas is love to God. Augustine has much to say about God's love to man, but

²¹LOF, "The Gospel of St. John, Homily LXV, sec. 1," XXIX, 761.

²²ICC, "The Epistles of St. John, Homily X, par. 3," VIII, 341.

²³Karl Adam, Saint Augustine, The Odyssey of His Soul, translated from the German by Dom Justin McCann (London: Sheed and Ward, 1932), p. 52.

²⁴Ibid., p. 50.

it is not for him, as for St. Paul, the foundation upon which rests all other Christian love. For him, God's love has as its aim man's love to God. Love to neighbor is brought in by its relationship to the love of God.²⁵ Thus, according to Nygren, Augustine regards love to neighbor as fully legitimate only in so far as it can be referred ultimately, not to the neighbor, but to God Himself.²⁶ Loving God as the Summum Bonum is then the peak of Augustine's theology.

Augustine's concept of the Summum Bonum is built upon a very complicated system (undoubtedly influenced by Neoplatonism) and to understand his system we must follow his thinking to its roots. The most elementary and fundamental phenomenon in human life is desire and it finds its ultimate meaning only when it is directed to God.²⁷ This is evidenced by the fact that all nature loves or desires to live, and strives to escape death.

It is clear that the love by which our existence and knowledge of it are loved is itself the object of our love. This is proven, in that which is really loved, in men who desire to be loved, is love itself. A man is not called good because he knows what is good but because he loves it.²⁸

²⁵Anders Nygren, Agape and Eros, translated from the Swedish by Philip Watson (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), p. 452.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid., p. 493.

²⁸FOC, The City of God, XIV, xi, chap. 29.

This basic concept in love (caritas) for Augustine then means that all love is acquisitive--a love which desires a "good." To love means to direct one's longing and desire to an object by the possession of which one expects to be made happy. With the connection of love and happiness, Augustine makes it possible to regard love as the most elementary manifestation of human life. Thus, he can say that there is no one who does not seek his own happiness--there is no one who does not love. The man of the world perversely loves the things that pass away while the Christian loves God and eternal life. Yet the goal that both seek, even though they are going different ways, is the same--a happy life.²⁹

Love, for Augustine, is by no means free and foreign over against its object. It is the object itself which by its very nature evokes love, inflames desire, and awakens longing. Only that which is in some respect good or advantageous (that which is a bonum) can be loved. This is true because only such an object can exercise upon the soul that power of attraction which is essential in all love. To love is to seek one's good in the object loved. An object can be loved only if it can be conceived as including this good in itself. It is not enough that the object should be a bonum in general, but it must be a bonum in particular for the one who is the lover. Since love means that a person seeks the satisfaction of his own need, it follows that he can only

²⁹ Nygren, op. cit., pp. 476-478.

love his bonum. Even the wicked do not contradict this system because they do not love the evil they do, but the benefits which they derive from it.³⁰

As man searches for "the bonum," he has the choice of caritas or cupiditas. His love can be set upon either of the two. In caritas he can raise himself up to his Creator, or in cupiditas he can sink down into the lower creation. The choice that man makes is quite serious because a person is transformed into conformity with that which he loves. Love binds the person to the beloved object, which enters as his bonum into him and sets its stamp upon him. He thus becomes like the object he loves. By loving God he becomes as a god, and by loving the world he becomes merely a bit of the world.³¹ This does not presuppose that man can raise himself to God by his own works or desires. The pride of man which prevents such an accomplishment will be discussed later.

It does not follow that once man has chosen a bonum for himself that he will find the happiness he seeks, for not every bonum can satisfy the needs of man. As they are created by God, all temporal things are good but they were not created to be the objects of man's love and desire in which he is to seek his final needs. It is most perverse, if in order to satisfy its needs, the soul takes recourse to

³⁰ Ibid., p. 478.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 483-484.

that which is less and emptier than itself.³² (This idea presupposes a ladder of values beginning with the lowest created beings which are closest to non-existence and then moving up to man who is the highest of all created beings, and finally to God.) This does not mean that a person cannot love anything except God, but a person's love for lower things must not be preferred to the love of God. Thus, bodily beauty which is created by God cannot be loved without sin if it is preferred to God who from eternity to eternity is "Goodness" itself. Gold also can be loved well or ill, depending on whether it is put above God. Everything must be loved in order, and God who made all these things demands a person's first and highest love. Even a paschal candle can be loved ill if the wax is loved too much and God too little.³³ The important factor in loving is then the order or preference with which one loves. God always demands our first love.

It is only when the Creator is rightly loved, that is, when He is loved for what He is, and when no creature is loved in place of Him, that there cannot be too much of love. For, even love itself, whereby we love well what is well to love [i.e. creation, etc.] must not be loved too well, if we want virtue by which we live to dwell within us.³⁴

Real rest and satisfaction for man can be found only in the "highest good," and he cannot be content with less. If

³²Ibid., p. 490.

³³FOC, The City of God, XXIV, xv, chap. 22.

³⁴Ibid.

man desires, he can seek rest in a lower good but in doing so he prevents himself from going higher. As long as anything higher and better can be conceived or known, it is this that must be sought. Man can only find true rest in the final goal, and this "Highest Good," the Summum Bonum, is God Himself.³⁵ Into this context, we must put Augustine's famous words from the Confessions: "Thou hast made us for thyself and restless is our heart until it comes to rest in Thee."³⁶

God alone is able to fulfil the needs of man and He alone is the Summum Bonum. God alone is immortal and has life in Himself. He has His bonum in Himself, and thus there can be no need or desire in Him as there is in man. Not only is He the "Highest Good" but He is also the Absolute Being who is unchangeable. There cannot exist anything good which He does not already possess, for He is self-sufficient. Man, however, does not have his bonum in himself but must seek it through love. Love is good because it is part of God's purpose for us and part of our creation.³⁷ Man, then, who has no bonum of his own and whose life is fleeting and changeable, must look to God for in Him alone there is rest.

³⁵ Nygren, op. cit., p. 491.

³⁶ LCC, Confessions, VII, i, chap. 1.

³⁷ Nygren, op. cit., p. 479.

Humility and Love

Humility and love are the two basic virtues which one must have in order to attain the "highest good." It is eros that seeks to find God and to ascend to Him, but Augustine finds that it can never attain this goal of itself. When eros seeks God it becomes filled with pride and self-sufficiency. Because of this pride the soul is chained to itself and can never ascend.³⁸ The only cure for the pride of eros is humility as seen in Christ. The Christian directs his gaze not upon himself but upon the incarnate Son of God, and from His lowliness (humilitas) he learns to know his own pride and to put it away. It is apparent in the early period of Augustine's thought that the incarnation was little more than a guide and example for finding the truth. When Christ died the death of the cross and rose again, he showed men that in the pursuit of wisdom no obstacle is insurmountable, and that he need fear no manner of death.³⁹ This early view of Augustine changed through study of Scripture, especially the Epistles of St. Paul. For Augustine, humility now ceases to be mere subordination of self for the attainment of truth and love is no longer mere service to our fellows. Both of these virtues obtain a universal scope. Since Christianity is essentially the grace of God, therefore, humility is the

³⁸Ibid., p. 474.

³⁹Adam, op. cit., p. 35.

fundamental attitude of the Christian. It is a complete consciousness of our unlimited dependence upon God. Love also becomes a social love in the most comprehensive sense.⁴⁰ We see this later view of humility in one of Augustine's works written in 426 A.D.

God makes all things work to the good of those who love Him. Even when in pride such wander away He makes these wanderings turn to good because when they return they are more humble. They learn that they can never trust in themselves, nor in what they think they can do, but in humility must trust in God. They are not to set their minds on high things, but in love and fear trust in God. . . .⁴¹

Augustine thus teaches a theologia humilitatis, but only as a means for rising to a theologia gloriae in the life to come. He is rightly called "Doctor of Grace," but his theologia gratiae finds its significance in his theologia caritatis.⁴² Love is the other great virtue standing by the side of humility. Caritas, or love to God, is not merely religious but also forms the ethical center of Christianity. It is the root of all real good just as fleshly desire is the root of all that is evil.⁴³

Love or charity rules the inner man. Works of mercy, affections of charity, sanctity of piety, incorrupt chastity, and modesty or sobriety are all virtues which must be

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 51-52.

⁴¹ FOC, Admonition and Grace, VI, chap. 9, par. 24.

⁴² Nygren, op. cit., p. 532.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 454.

practiced in public and in private. They have their origin in the inner man. Just as an Emperor does what he wills by his army, so our Lord, once beginning to dwell in the inner man, uses these virtues as His ministers. Charity then is the principle itself which rules and actuates our lives.⁴⁴

Charity is also the root of all godliness and the ground of all virtues. It is not good for us to love the world lest we fall from the Church and the only effect the Sacraments have in us is toward our condemnation.

The stay of our salvation is to have charity at the root, to have the virtue of godliness and not the form only. The form [of the sacrament] is good and holy; but it avails nothing apart from the root. The severed branch is cast into the fire. You should keep the form, but in union with the root; and there is no way to be firmly rooted but by holding fast to charity, according to the words of the Apostle Paul: "rooted and grounded in charity."⁴⁵

Charity is also the ground of all virtues. Augustine appeals to St. Paul, who, when contrasting the works of the flesh and the Spirit, says: "The fruit of the Spirit is love." To this base, St. Paul connects all virtues of joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.⁴⁶ This love of the Christian is based in Christ who loved first. If one does not believe in the love

⁴⁴LOF, "The Epistles of St. John, Homily VIII, par. 1," XXIX, 1189.

⁴⁵LCC, "The Epistles of St. John, Homily II, par. 9," VIII, 274.

⁴⁶LOF, "The Gospel of St. John, Homily LXXXVII, sec. 1," XXIX, 854.

of Christ he cannot love anyone else.

Behold whence are our good works! For whence should they be, but as "faith worketh by love?" But whence should we love, except we were first loved?⁴⁷

Charity spreads out into many phases in the life of the Christian. It is the end of all perfection. The new commandment that we should love one another means that we should bear the burden of our brother. The consummation of all our works is love. It is the end for which, and unto which, we run our course in this life. When we reach our goal, we shall have rest.⁴⁸ Charity is also the means by which we know we are in the Church,⁴⁹ and it is the way by which we recognize the children of God.⁵⁰ It is also the source of prayer. The Spirit that intercedes for us is nothing but the same charity which He has worked in us.

Charity itself groans in prayer, and he who gave it cannot shut his ears to its voice. Cast away care, let charity make request, and the ears of God are ready to listen.⁵¹

⁴⁷ LOF, "The Gospel of St. John, Homily LXXXII, sec. 2," XXIX, 834.

⁴⁸ LCC, "The Epistles of St. John, Homily X, par. 4," VIII, 343.

⁴⁹ LCC, "The Epistles of St. John, Homily V, par. 10," VIII, 300.

⁵⁰ LCC, "The Epistles of St. John, Homily V, par. 7," VIII, 298.

⁵¹ LCC, "The Epistles of St. John, Homily VI, par. 8," VIII, 298.

The Influence of Neoplatonism

It is not within the scope of this thesis to discuss in detail the effect Neoplatonism had upon the theology of Augustine. Some effects have been noted earlier. We shall limit ourselves to a general overview of such influence. It is obvious that there was considerable change or development in his theology as he matured. We have already noted the change that was apparent in his concept of humility. Along with it came a change in his view of the work of Christ, necessitated by his development of original sin.⁵² When he came to view man as a mass of sin which had nothing of value in him that was fit for the kingdom of God, there could be no idea of man working himself to God by the example of Christ. The only way was to find a new foundation, a new man, to whom men could bind themselves and thus find life and salvation. Redemption became possible only when God graciously ordained that such a Man, Christ, should come down to earth so that His life should be our life, His death our death, and His resurrection our resurrection.⁵³

The concept of the Summum Bonum is also clearly a view taken from Neoplatonism. Yet it must not be forgotten that the man ascending to God does not focus his gaze upon

⁵²Adam, op. cit., p. 44.

⁵³Ibid.

himself, but upon the Son of God.⁵⁴ The goal of Neoplatonism was union with the One, but such is an impossible view for Augustine.⁵⁵

Even though the eros motif of love is present in Augustine's thinking (ascent to God, etc.) it is not the dominating force. Because of Augustine's centrality of grace and predestination, it is certain that the agape motif is a basic factor in his religious life and thought.⁵⁶ There are many aspects of his concept of love which show Neoplatonic ideas. Yet his energetic affirmation of the incarnation was a safeguard for the agape motif. In conclusion, it must be said that the agape motif never triumphed over the eros concept. Augustine tried to maintain both eros and agape at the same time.⁵⁷

⁵⁴Adam, op. cit., p. 35.

⁵⁵LOF, "The Gospel of St. John, Homily CX, sec. 1," XXIX, 984.

⁵⁶Nygren, op. cit., p. 468.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 470.

CHAPTER IV

THE REAL PRESENCE

A Sign and the Reality

Augustine's method of presenting his view concerning the real presence has been used by some of the sixteenth century reformers to prove a purely symbolical presence in the Sacrament. It must be admitted that Augustine's theology on a Eucharistic presence is not systematic and at many times contradictory. In spite of the many difficulties it still seems hardly possible to impose a purely spiritual view upon him.

To understand his doctrine, it is necessary to realize what he meant by a symbol. We must distinguish between the outward sign and the inward power and efficacy of the Sacrament. The visible signs are symbols of an invisible content and they are called Sacraments because in them one thing is seen and another thing is understood.¹ The distinction is then between the sign and the res or reality of the Sacrament. The bread and the wine, considered as physical, phenomenal objects, are properly called signs of Christ's body and blood. It must be admitted that they are

¹Reinhold Seeberg, History of Doctrines in the Ancient Church, in the Text-Book of the History of Doctrines, translated from the German by Charles Hay (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1952), I, 321.

not called the body and blood in a straight-forward manner but after a fashion. Yet, on the other hand, it must also be said that there is both what one sees and what one believes in the Sacrament. There is the physical object of perception and the spiritual object apprehended by faith. It is the latter which the soul of the Christian feeds upon.²

The ideas of a type and a reality behind the sign are part of Augustine's Neoplatonic thinking as Seeberg argues,³ yet the concept is not altogether original with him. In the early Church, there were two basic ways of interpreting the consecrated bread and wine as our Lord's body and blood. One was the figurative or symbolical view which stressed the distinction between the visible elements and the reality which they represent. Such ideas go back to Tertullian and Cyprian and are of course given much emphasis in the writings of Augustine.⁴ The second tendency was to explain the identity as being the result of an actual change or conversion in the bread and the wine. Supporting such a view would be Cyril of Jerusalem and Gregory of Nyssa.⁵

The Apostolic Constitutions may be used to illustrate the former view and to bring out the meaning conveyed in

²J. N. D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1958), p. 448.

³Seeberg, op. cit., p. 321.

⁴Kelly, op. cit., p. 440.

⁵Ibid., pp. 442-443.

such a proposal. Here the mysteries are described as "anti-types (ἀντίτυπα) of His precious body and blood," and they speak of the commemoration of Christ's death "by virtue of the symbols (συμβολῶν ἁγίων) of His body and blood." Yet, at the same time the formula used at the communion is "the body of Christ" and "the blood of Christ."⁶ It is evident then that the types or symbols are not empty signs. The theologians also used the same language as the liturgies.

So Eusebius of Caesarea, while declaring that "we are continually fed with the Saviour's body, we continually participate in the lamb's blood," states that Christians daily commemorate Jesus' sacrifice "with symbols (διὰ συμβολῶν) of His body and saving blood," and that He instructed His disciples to make "the image (τὴν εἰκόνα) of His own body," and to employ bread as its symbol.⁷

Even though the liturgies upheld the real presence (and this was the tradition that Augustine received and used), such evidence does not by itself mean that Augustine interpreted them in the usual way. One of the passages often used to give Augustine a purely spiritual meaning is that from his sermon on the Gospel of John 6:28-29. Here he makes the famous statement, "Why make ready the teeth and belly? Believe and thou hast eaten."⁸ This statement is

⁶Apostolic Constitutions as quoted by Kelly, op. cit., p. 441.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Augustine, "The Gospel of St. John, Homily XXV, sec. 12," A Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1848), XXVI, 389. Hereafter this series will be referred to as LOF.

rejected as teaching a purely symbolical view by Seeberg because the context does not deal with the Sacrament but with faith. Augustine is here speaking only of the command to believe on Christ, and in order to receive (eat) this, the teeth are not needed, but faith only.⁹ It is also important to note that Augustine does not use these words, crede et manducasti, in his exposition of John 6:27.

Another passage where a spiritual meaning can be easily given to the Eucharistic presence is in his Epistle 98. Here he says that if the Sacraments did not bear a certain resemblance to the things they represent they would not be called Sacraments. In most cases the Sacraments receive their names from the mysteries which they represent. The argument here presupposes the distinction between the sign and the reality and, therefore, the language of this passage is consistent with Augustine's recognition of the reality of our Lord's body and blood.¹⁰

There are many passages which reveal Augustine's belief in the real presence. Evidence of this belief is seen in his sermons by the way he used the distribution formula. The formula was Corpus Christi and the reply of the communicant was "Amen." The cup was given the words, Sanguis

⁹Seeberg, op. cit., p. 323.

¹⁰Kelly, op. cit., p. 448.

Christi and the answer again was the same.¹¹ In one of his sermons he tells his parishioners that our Lord desired to give them His body and blood which was shed for the remission of sins. Here, too, he shows his belief in the distribution formula.

If you have received well, you are that which you have received. . . . For you hear the words of distribution "the Body of Christ" and you answer "Amen."¹²

It is important to realize that the "Amen" was always understood as a confession, "Yes, I believe that." Sasse also says that it is difficult for anyone to imagine a man like Augustine distributing the Sacrament for so many years without firmly believing what he said and what he made his people confess.¹³

In commenting on the exhortation in Psalm 99 that we should adore the foot stool of His feet, Augustine first points out that the foot stool must mean the earth. But since to adore the earth would be a blasphemous thing, he concludes that the reference must pertain to the flesh which Christ took in the incarnation and which He also gives us to eat in the Sacrament. Thus, it is the Eucharistic body of

¹¹Hermann Sasse, "A Lutheran Contribution to the Present Discussions on the Lord's Supper," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXX (January, 1959), 32.

¹²Augustine, "Sermon CCLXXII," quoted in Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1945), p. 247.

¹³Sasse, op. cit., p. 32.

Christ which the Psalmist exhorts or demands us to adore.¹⁴ Another passage where Augustine's belief in the real presence is evident is in another of his sermons on the Gospel of St. John. Here he states that even those who killed our Lord, but afterwards believed, were given the blood of our Lord to drink for their deliverance.¹⁵

In conclusion, it must be said that Augustine is neither systematic nor consistent in his theology of the real presence. No doubt, his Neoplatonic views prevented him from working out not only the theology of the presence of our Lord's body and blood but also the incarnation. Versfeld feels that Augustine accepted the views of the Church which he received, and because he could not understand some of these matters of vital importance he had the sound instinct to keep quiet. It is also his view that it was a distorted concept of being that caused Augustine all his difficulties.¹⁶ Not only did Augustine leave the Church with a confused and contradictory view of the Sacrament, but he also left the idea that the body of Christ is in heaven and cannot be here on earth at the same time. From this idea, according to Sasse, sprang not only the Reformed doctrine but also the

¹⁴LOF, "Exposition of the Psalms, Psalm XCIX, sec. 9," XXXII, 445-446.

¹⁵LOF, "The Gospel of St. John, Homily XXXVIII, sec. 7," XXVI, 527.

¹⁶Marthinus Versfeld, A Guide to the City of God (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1958), p. 107.

Roman doctrine of transubstantiation.¹⁷

¹⁷Sasse, op. cit., p. 31.

We have noted the theme of unity running through Augustine's thought concerning the Eucharistic sacrifice and also the sacrifice in life. Undoubtedly, his dealings with the Donatists made him extremely conscious of schism in the Church and the necessity of being in the one Body for salvation.

The Eucharistic sacrifice is each individual, in the unity of the whole, giving himself as a sacrifice to God. Such an act presupposes Christ's entrance into the world as our High Priest and Supreme Sacrifice and also our faith in Him. He not only shows us how we are to be a sacrifice to God, but it is only in Him that we can be a pleasing sacrifice. Not any works of our own make us pleasing to God, but the work of Christ--the grace of God. We must, in humility, trust upon our great God to fill us with His mercy.

The sacrifice in life is only a broader view of the Eucharistic sacrifice. It is based on the idea that every work done with the purpose of bringing us into a holy fellowship with God is a sacrifice to Him. This does not imply work righteousness. Through faith, we are dependent upon God. Through the Spirit which dwells within us we have love which is the basis of every virtue that springs from our heart. There is no legalism in the theology of

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

We have noted the theme of unity running through Augustine's thought concerning the Eucharistic sacrifice and also the sacrifice in life. Undoubtedly, his dealings with the Donatists made him extremely conscious of schism in the Church and the necessity of being in the one Body for salvation.

The Eucharistic sacrifice is each individual, in the unity of the whole, giving himself as a sacrifice to God. Such an act presupposes Christ's entrance into the world as our High Priest and Supreme Sacrifice and also our faith in Him. He not only shows us how we are to be a sacrifice to God, but it is only in Him that we can be a pleasing sacrifice. Not any works of our own make us pleasing to God, but the work of Christ--the grace of God. We must, in humility, trust upon our great God to fill us with His mercy.

The sacrifice in life is only a broader view of the Eucharistic sacrifice. It is based on the idea that every work done with the purpose of bringing us into a holy fellowship with God is a sacrifice to Him. This does not imply work righteousness. Through faith, we are dependent upon God. Through the Spirit which dwells within us we have love which is the basis of every virtue that springs from our heart. There is no legalism in the theology of

Augustine. His is truly a theology of love. Love to God stands at the center of his theology, but the love of God to man in Christ, and man's love to one another is not lacking.

To say that the theology of Augustine fully answers the problems raised in the introduction would be a gross overstatement. There are many points in the theology of Augustine which we cannot accept as Lutherans. We could never entertain any propitiatory ideas of the Eucharist, nor could we accept his Neoplatonic interpretation of some of the vital Christian doctrines. Yet we can learn from his concern for the unity of the Church and the role that love plays in our lives. We note how the Eucharist and the life of the Christian are so closely linked that one merely flows into the other.

Christian Classics, VII-VIII.
 Translated by John Phillips and others. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1908.

Hatchfield, Roy, editor. A Commentary to the Book of St. Augustine. New York: Oxford University Press, 1907.

Moyses, Louis. Life and Liturgy. London: Sheed and Ward, 1906.

Wick, Gregory. The Mass of the Liturgy. Westminster: Dacre Press, 1908.

Grabowski, Stanislaus. The Church. St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1907.

Karnack, Adolph. History of Rome. V. Translated from the German by Neil Richardson. Chicago: Middle, Brown, and Co., 1903.

Kelly, J. N. D. Early Christian Doctrines. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1906.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adam, Karl. Saint Augustine, The Odyssey of His Soul. Translated from the German by Dom Justin McCann. London: Sheed and Ward, 1932.
- Andrews, E. A. Harper's Latin Dictionary. New York: American Book Company, 1879.
- Augustine. A Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church. XVI, 1844; XX, 1845; XXIV, 1847; XXV, 1848; XXVI, 1848; XXIX, 1849; XXX, 1849; XXXII, 1850; XXXVII, 1853; XXXIX, 1857. Oxford: John Henry Parker.
- . An Augustine Synthesis. Compiled by Erich Przywara. New York: Random House, Inc., 1950.
- . The City of God. In The Modern Library. Translated from the Latin by Marcus Dods. New York: Random House, Inc., 1950.
- . The Fathers of the Church. VI, 1945; VIII, 1950; XII, 1951; XIV, 1952; XVIII, 1953; XXIV, 1954. Edited by Joseph Deferrari. New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc.
- . The Library of Christian Classics. VII-VIII. Edited by John Baillie and Others. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1955.
- Battenhouse, Roy, editor. A Companion to the Study of St. Augustine. New York: Oxford University Press, 1954.
- Bouyer, Louis. Life and Liturgy. London: Sheed and Ward, 1936.
- Dix, Gregory. The Shape of the Liturgy. Westminster: Dacre Press, 1945.
- Grabowski, Stanislaus. The Church. St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1957.
- Harnack, Adolph. History of Dogma. V. Translated from the German by Neil Buchanan. Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1903.
- Kelly, J. N. D. Early Christian Doctrines. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1958.

- Marrou, Henri. St. Augustine and His Influence Through the Ages. In the Harper Torch Books. Translated from the French by Patrick Hepburne-Scott. New York: Harper and Brothers, n.d.
- Nygren, Anders. Agape and Eros. Translated from the Swedish by Philip Watson. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953.
- Sasse, Hermann. "A Lutheran Contribution to the Present Discussions on the Lord's Supper," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXX (January, 1959), 18-40.
- Seeberg, Reinhold. History of Doctrines in the Ancient Church. Vol. I of the Text-Book of the History of Doctrines. Translated from the German by Charles Hay. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1952.
- Sparrow-Simpson, W. J. The Letters of St. Augustine. London: The Macmillan Company, 1919.
- Versfeld, Marthinus. A Guide to the City of God. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1958.