

## NOTES

### A EUCHARISTIC SACRIFICE IN CALVIN'S THEOLOGY?

In any reflection on the relationship between the cross of Christ and the Lord's Supper, the idea of sacrifice necessarily enters. Since Christ's redeeming act on the cross was a sacrifice, it follows that our reflection is on the relationship between Christ's unique sacrifice and the Supper of the Church.

The sixteenth century was an age of challenge and polemic, and the doctrinal treatises of that period were written in this spirit. When Calvin directed his three treatises against Joachim Westphal,<sup>1</sup> his emphasis was on a true presence of Christ<sup>2</sup>—he refused to be categorized as a sacramentarian;<sup>3</sup> and in his response to Tilemann Heshusius, his emphasis was on a true communion in the body and blood of Christ.<sup>4</sup> Specific treatises had specific emphases; as a result, the treatises do not present the totality of Calvin's teaching on the Eucharist.

In the two chapters devoted to the Lord's Supper in the *Institutes*, Calvin presents his over-all belief in the Eucharist as sacrament and sacrifice,<sup>5</sup> but even here his teaching is expressed in a language intended to cut away at the foundations of his opponents' arguments. Though Calvin never wrote a fully-developed, self-contained, dispassionate treatise on the Eucharist, this does not mean that his Eucharistic teaching is truncated. The whole is there, but certain aspects received greater development than others. One aspect that suffers from this imbalance is

<sup>1</sup>These treatises may be found in *Opera Calvini* (in the series *Corpus reformatorum*), Vol. 9, cols. 6–252; references to this series will be made as follows: *OC* 9, 6–252. An English translation by H. Beveridge is in *Calvin's Tracts and Treatises 2* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958) 221–494. For the background of these treatises, cf. J. N. Tylenda, "The Calvin-Westphal Exchange: The Genesis of Calvin's Treatises against Westphal," *Calvin Theological Journal* 9 (1974) 182–208.

<sup>2</sup>Calvin maintained a true presence rather than a real presence; for further discussion cf. J. N. Tylenda, "Calvin and Christ's Presence in the Supper—True or Real," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 27 (1974) 65–75.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 4, 17, 5 (tr. Ford Lewis Battles, in *Library of Christian Classics* 20–21 [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960]); also *Joannis Calvini opera selecta (OS)*, ed. P. Barth and G. Niesel (Munich: Kaiser, 1926–36), Vol. 5, pp. 346–47. References to this series will be as follows: *OS* 5, 346–47.

<sup>4</sup>This treatise, "The Clear Explanation of Sound Doctrine concerning the True Partaking of the Flesh and Blood of Christ in the Holy Supper," is in *OC* 9, 457–524; an English translation is in *Calvin: Theological Treatises*, tr. J. K. S. Reid, in *Library of Christian Classics* 22 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964) 257–324. Subsequent references to this treatise will be as *True Partaking*.

<sup>5</sup>I.e., in Book 4, chap. 17 is on the Lord's Supper as a sacrament, while chap. 18 deals with sacrifice.

the present topic. Our question can be phrased very simply: What is the relationship between Christ's unique sacrifice on the cross and that of the Christian celebration of the Eucharist?

Calvin once wrote that God "has . . . given us a Table at which to feast, not an altar upon which to offer a victim; He has not consecrated priests to sacrifice, but ministers to distribute the sacred banquet."<sup>6</sup> He also wrote: "There is as much difference between this sacrifice and the sacrament of the Supper as there is between giving and receiving."<sup>7</sup> Should we conclude from these words that the Lord's Supper is *only* a Communion service? Is there an unbridgeable gap between sacrament and sacrifice? Is this a case of one or the other, but not both? Some of Calvin's expressions may seem to lead to such a conclusion—but is it truly compatible with his basic understanding of the Eucharist? Throughout his life Calvin maintained a necessary relationship between the cross and the Supper, and because of this relationship Calvin has the foundational basis for a doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice.<sup>8</sup>

To speak of the Eucharist as a sacrifice is a live issue in ecumenical theology.<sup>9</sup> It is also a subject of great controversy, and therefore it is a

<sup>6</sup> *Institutes* 4, 18, 12 (OS 5, 428).

<sup>7</sup> *Institutes* 4, 18, 7 (OS 5, 423).

<sup>8</sup> Pierre-Yves Emery states that Calvin "maintained all the elements of a positive doctrine of the eucharistic sacrifice despite everything" ("The Teaching of Calvin on the Sacrificial Element in the Eucharist," *Reformed and Presbyterian World* 26 [1960–61] 111). This is an extract from the introduction to his larger work, "Le sacrifice eucharistique selon les théologiens réformés français du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Verbum caro* 13 (1959) 245–328, esp. pp. 251–55. Emery is interested in the seventeenth-century French Calvinist theologians and hence he does not investigate or develop Calvin's thinking on the Eucharistic sacrifice. Kilian McDonnell (*John Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist* [Princeton: Princeton Univ., 1967] p. 285) feels that it is possible to construct a theology of sacrifice from Calvin's writings, but it would be misleading to think that this more positive approach to sacrifice is characteristic of his Eucharistic teaching. McDonnell says the texts are there, but Calvin has left them undeveloped. McDonnell too leaves them undeveloped.—In general, authors shy away from treating the question of the Eucharist as sacrifice when writing on Calvin and the Lord's Supper. E.g., in F. Wendel's discussion on the Lord's Supper (*Calvin: The Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*, tr. P. Mairet [New York: Harper & Row, 1963] pp. 329–55) surprisingly there is no mention made of sacrifice, not even of a "sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving." B. Meyer's article "Calvin's Eucharistic Doctrine 1536–39," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 4 (1967) 47–65, promisingly begins with "The nature of the Eucharist, both in its sacramental and sacrificial aspects, is a paramount problem for ecumenical concern" (p. 47). But on the following page he disappointingly says: "The final limitation of this study will be to focus attention upon the nature of Christ's presence in the Eucharist rather than upon its sacrificial character" (p. 48).

<sup>9</sup> E.g., Gustaf Aulén reviews early ecumenical discussion on the Lord's Supper in his *Eucharist and Sacrifice* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1958) and says: "we found that from a theological point of view these discussions revolve around the idea of sacrifice" (p. 185). Cf. also C. G. W. Nicholls, "The Eucharistic Sacrifice—A Live Issue," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 8 (1955) 365–84, and E. L. Mascall, "The Eucharistic Sacrifice," *Church*

question that needs discussion, clarification, and solution. Even though there exists general agreement among scholars writing on Calvin's Eucharistic theology that the sacrificial character of the Eucharist has great importance, nevertheless there is a great reluctance to treat it.

Calvin speaks about the Eucharist as a sacrifice in the eighteenth chapter of Book 4 of the *Institutes*. Sacrifice is there defined as any offering made to God.<sup>10</sup> This general definition has two subdivisions. First, if it be an offering made to God for sin through some kind of satisfaction, with the result that man's sins are washed away, then this is a sacrifice of propitiation and expiation. Second, if it be an offering which symbolizes man's worship of God, either by asking Him for His favor, or by thanking Him for benefits received, or whether it be a simple act of piety, this offering is called a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

The name "sacrifice of propitiation and expiation," for Calvin, can only be applied to Christ's sacrifice on the cross. That action took place at a definite point in time and in a particular place, and since the victim of that sacrifice was one who was capable of effecting redemption by a single historic act, it follows that there is no need of, nor can there be, another sacrifice of propitiation and expiation.

The expression "sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving" is, on the other hand, applicable to the Eucharist; for it is in the Lord's Supper that the faithful receive the once-immolated body and blood of Christ as well as the benefits following from that unique sacrifice. The Supper communicates the benefits of an expiatory sacrifice; the faithful receive gifts—their proper response is praise and thanksgiving.

In his emphasis on the "gift" aspect of the Eucharist, Calvin was affirming the unrepeatable nature of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. The Supper as celebrated by the Church is not a new and independent repetition of Christ's sacrificial action. The Christian's Eucharistic celebration today is not a totally new act of satisfaction that brings about

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*Quarterly Review* 162 (1961) 188-99, 279-93. In recent years the Lutheran and Catholic Churches have been in dialogue on this very point and have published a joint statement, *Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue 3: The Eucharist as Sacrifice* (U.S.A. National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation and Bishops' Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, 1967). In similar fashion the Anglicans and Catholics have published their "Agreed Statement on Eucharistic Doctrine" that grew out of their meetings at Windsor Castle, Sept. 7, 1971. Section 2 deals with "The Eucharist and the Sacrifice of Christ." The entire statement may be found in *Ecumenical Trends*, June, 1972, pp. 5-7, and in *Documents on Anglican-Roman Catholic Relations 2* (Washington: United States Catholic Conference, 1973) 12-17. The Roman Catholic/Presbyterian Reformed Consultation has also published a joint statement, "Ministry in the Church" (cf. *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 9 [1972] 589-612), but the only Eucharistic question treated is that of intercommunion (section 11).

<sup>10</sup> *Institutes* 4, 18, 13 (OS 5, 428-29).

remission of sins. The faithful do not engage in an expiatory sacrifice; rather they are the beneficiaries of Christ's unique sacrifice.

All this is true if we look upon the Supper as *our human creaturely* celebration. But there is another way of viewing the Lord's Supper, a very important way. It is to view it precisely as the Supper *of the Lord*, of the one who commanded "Eat . . . drink . . . Do this as my memorial." The one who spoke these words is the one who makes himself present in the Supper. We do not make him to be present. These are the words of him who alone can give us his body and blood, who alone can grant us the fruits of his redeeming act. In viewing the Supper from this point, we are looking upon the *giver* of the Supper, *giving himself* in his Supper. It is this *giver* who becomes present in the Supper, and because it is *his* Supper, he gives *his* gifts to us.

This is the precise aspect of the Supper that we are interested in, and to which we limit our discussion. Calvin never treated this aspect with any explicitness, but there are several statements of his which implicitly touch on this matter. Why did not Calvin make himself explicit? Some authors think that this aspect of the Eucharist was marginal to Calvin's thinking, peripheral to his Eucharistic preoccupations.<sup>11</sup> Do they mean to say that Calvin considered this aspect unimportant? The Reformer's lack of explicitness, it seems, may have been due to his pastoral concern in getting a noncommunicating congregation to communicate in the body and blood during the Eucharistic celebration. His practical goal was communion, and so he naturally emphasized the words "take and eat" rather than the words "Do this as my memorial."<sup>12</sup>

The purpose of this presentation is to show that it is compatible with Calvin's Eucharistic theology to say that the Lord's Supper is a sacrifice, over and above that of praise and thanksgiving. To put it another way: the Lord's Supper is the sacramental presence of the Lord's sacrifice on the cross. This presentation presupposes an understanding of Calvin's Eucharistic theology and the role of the Spirit in sacramental activity. It is also very sensitive to modern Continental Reformed discussion on the Eucharistic sacrifice. Authors such as M. Thurian, J.-J. von Allmen, and F.-J. Leenhardt favor a sacrificial view of the Lord's Supper, but none of these has attempted to find a basis for his opinion in Calvin's writings.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Emery, *art. cit.*, p. 111; McDonnell, *op. cit.*, p. 286.

<sup>12</sup> Geddes MacGregor suggests another reason: "It is by no means improbable that their rejection of the medieval doctrine that Christ's sacrifice was 'repeated' or 'renewed' in the Mass coloured their thought on the subject of eucharistic sacrifice so as to cause them to overlook certain theological questions of considerable importance for the Reformed tradition. That the Eucharist was from the earliest times accounted in some sense a sacrifice is abundantly plain" (*Corpus Christi* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1958] p. 188).

<sup>13</sup> Some Reformed theologians treating the Eucharist as sacrifice are the following: Max Thurian, *L'Eucharistie: Mémorial du Seigneur, sacrifice d'action de grâce et d'intercession*

First, we would like to recall Calvin's teaching on the relationship between the Supper and the cross, then indicate that this relationship implies the presence of Christ's sacrifice in the Supper, and finally argue that Calvin's understanding of memorial permits such an interpretation.

## I

When Calvin commented on the New Testament account of the institution of the Eucharist, he joined the Eucharist to that of Christ's sacrifice, thereby giving the Supper a sacrificial orientation.

Referring to the words from Luke 22:19, "This is my body, which is given for you," Calvin says that the eating of Christ's body is of no importance unless it is in reference to his sacrifice. "To feed as we ought on the flesh of Christ we must consider his sacrifice."<sup>14</sup> It is Christ's sacrifice, then, that makes his body our true spiritual food, and the Reformer repeats this when he comments on the words "This is my blood" (Mk 14:24). He writes: "when the blood is said to be poured out . . . for the remission of sins . . . we are directed to the sacrifice of Christ's death, and to neglect this thought (*memoria*) makes any celebration of the Supper impossible."<sup>15</sup> Not only are the sacrifice of Christ and the Supper joined, but they are so joined that without Christ's sacrifice the Supper is nothing. It is the sacrifice that vivifies the Supper, makes it what it is. The Supper receives its meaning and efficacy from Christ's cross. Without the cross, there can be no Lord's Supper.

In his comments on 1 Corinthians 11, Calvin says that this linking of the Supper and the sacrifice of the cross is by the Lord's own design: "For the Lord could have entrusted the covenant to the disciples on some earlier occasion, but he was waiting for the time of his sacrifice."<sup>16</sup> And referring to the words "This is my body, which is broken for you" (1 Cor 11:24), he admits that there are some who understand this as referring to the gesture of the breaking of the bread, but he says: "For myself, while acknowledging that Paul has made allusion to the breaking of the bread,

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(2nd ed.; Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1963; the first edition [1959] was translated by J. G. Davies as *The Eucharistic Memorial* [2 vols.; Richmond: John Knox, 1960]); Jean-Jacques von Allmen, *Essai sur le repas du Seigneur* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1966), tr. W. F. Fleet as *The Lord's Supper* (Richmond: John Knox, 1969) esp. pp. 75-100; F.-J. Leenhardt, *Ceci est mon corps* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1955), tr. J. G. Davies as "This Is My Body," in *Essays on the Lord's Supper* (Richmond: John Knox, 1958) esp. pp. 56-63.

<sup>14</sup> *A Harmony of the Gospels* 3 (tr. A. W. Morrison; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972) 138 (OC 45, 710).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* (OC 45, 711).

<sup>16</sup> *The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians*, tr. J. W. Fraser (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960) p. 242 (OC 49, 484). Calvin is commenting on the words "on the night in which he was betrayed" (1 Cor 11:23).

yet I take broken to be used here in the sense of sacrificed.”<sup>17</sup> Calvin sees a double promise in the words “body which is broken,” and says: “For the Lord does not offer his body to us, just his body with nothing else said about it, but his body as having been sacrificed for us. The first part, then, tells us that his body is held out to us; this second part brings out what we come to enjoy through it, viz., a share in redemption, and the application to us of the benefit of his sacrifice.”<sup>18</sup> Therefore, in the celebration of the Supper, the breaking of the bread represents Christ’s sacrificed body. And it is with this thought in mind that Calvin concludes his comments on the verse: “That is why the Supper is a mirror which represents Christ crucified to us, so that a man cannot receive the Supper and enjoy its benefits, unless he embraces Christ crucified.”<sup>19</sup>

The same 1 Cor 11:25 text also speaks of a “new covenant,” and Calvin understands this as a covenant in Christ’s body and blood, “a covenant which has been once for all ratified by the sacrifice of his body, and is now confirmed by eating, viz., when believers eat that sacrifice.”<sup>20</sup>

From Calvin’s New Testament commentaries it is evident that the cross and the Supper are in intimate relationship. This is a necessary relationship, because it is impossible to have the Supper without the cross; it is an essential relationship, because to neglect Christ’s sacrifice is to render the Supper void; it is a constitutive relationship, because the benefits of Christ’s sacrifice are the gifts given in the Supper.

## II

Granted this relationship between sacrifice and Supper, the next point is the presence of that sacrifice in the Supper.

One of Calvin’s earliest treatises was on the Eucharist. It was so brief a treatment that he called it a *Short Treatise on the Lord’s Supper*.<sup>21</sup> In this treatise the young Calvin presupposes the relationship between the cross and the Supper, and hints at something more. He writes: “Now our heavenly Father . . . gives us the Supper as a mirror in which we contemplate our Lord Jesus Christ crucified.”<sup>22</sup> The mirror image was somewhat of a favorite of Calvin’s,<sup>23</sup> and he repeated it throughout his

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 248 (OC 49, 488).

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* (OC 49, 489).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 249 (OC 49, 489).

<sup>21</sup> The treatise was written in 1539 or 1540, when Calvin was in Strasbourg, and was printed in Geneva in 1541, either before or shortly after Calvin’s return to that city. It first appeared in French, a critical edition of which may be found in OS 1, 503–30. A modern English translation is in *Calvin: Theological Treatises*, pp. 142–66. Subsequent references to this treatise will appear as *Short Treatise*.

<sup>22</sup> *Short Treatise*, p. 145 (OS 1, 506).

<sup>23</sup> Ford Lewis Battles finds that Calvin used “mirror” thirty-four times in the 1559 edition of the *Institutes*; cf. *A Concordance of Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 1972.)

life. Five years after the *Short Treatise*, he uses it in his *Commentary on First Corinthians* in a passage previously quoted: "the Supper is a mirror which represents Christ crucified to us, so that a man cannot receive the Supper and enjoy its benefits, unless he embraces Christ crucified."<sup>24</sup> And later on, in his *Harmony of the Gospels*, published during the last decade of his life, he again uses it, this time when he speaks of Christ and the disciples: "He meant in the holy Supper to set his death before their eyes as in a mirror . . ."<sup>25</sup>

Calvin so brings the crucified Christ and the Supper together as to imply that Christ's cross is present therein. Otherwise, how can he say that in the Supper we contemplate the crucified Christ, or that the Supper sets Christ's death before our eyes?

Calvin's use of the image of the mirror, at first meeting, may be somewhat disturbing.<sup>26</sup> In fact, someone may say that the mirror proves the very opposite, for a mirror merely reflects the reality immediately outside it. The conclusion would then be that the crucified Lord is outside the Supper! But this is a conclusion foreign to Calvin's teaching on the true presence of Christ in the Supper. By using the figure of the mirror, Calvin could not have intended to make it an adequate image of the Eucharist, i.e., an image that fills the bill in every detail, as if the Supper were exactly like a mirror. Rather, Calvin uses it to indicate presence. Just as an individual can contemplate his or her countenance in a mirror because the countenance seen is in the mirror, so also in the Supper we contemplate the crucified Christ and his death, because Christ and his cross are represented, exhibited, made manifest, present in the Supper.

This is not a forced interpretation of Calvin's words; in fact, it goes hand in hand with what he says in the *Institutes*, viz., that in the Supper "the Lord has left graven and inscribed the remembrance (*memoriam*) of his passion,"<sup>27</sup> or that "the sacrifice of Christ is so shown to us there that the spectacle of the cross is almost set before our eyes . . ."<sup>28</sup>

Could Calvin have expressed his belief in the presence of Christ's cross in the Supper in more vivid or more graphic terms? Christ's cross and passion are inscribed, almost tangibly, in the Supper; the spectacle of the cross is set, almost visibly, before our eyes.

<sup>24</sup> *Commentary on First Corinthians*, p. 248 (OC 49, 489). The date of this commentary is 1546.

<sup>25</sup> *Harmony of the Gospels* 3, 136-37 (OC 49, 709). Calvin is commenting on Mt 26:29; the commentary was published in 1555.

<sup>26</sup> F. M. Higman speaks of Calvin's use of mirror as an image: "Sometimes the result is a colourless, familiar image which, even in the sixteenth century, was banal, if not dead." Cf. his *The Style of John Calvin in His French Polemical Treatises* (Oxford: Oxford Univ., 1967) p. 133.

<sup>27</sup> *Institutes* 4, 18, 7 (OS 5, 423).

<sup>28</sup> *Institutes* 4, 18, 11 (OS 5, 427).

Precisely because of this presence of the cross in the Supper, Calvin can then teach that "in the Supper we eat the same body as was crucified,"<sup>29</sup> and that "in the bread we receive that which hung upon the cross."<sup>30</sup> In the Supper we are "made partakers of the death and passion of Jesus Christ,"<sup>31</sup> and "in communicating in his body we have part in the sacrifice which he offered on the cross to God his Father."<sup>32</sup> Could the faithful become partakers of Christ's death and passion if that death and passion are not present in the Supper? Could the faithful have part in the sacrifice Christ offered to his Father if that sacrifice is not present in the Supper?

Calvin's understanding of the Eucharist indicates the presence of Christ's cross. And since Christ's sacrifice on the cross was unique, then that unique sacrifice is somehow present in the Supper.

### III

This presence of Christ's sacrifice in the Eucharist naturally brings us to the words "memorial/anamnesis."

Memorial and anamnesis are very much in use today, and Calvin is one with all Christians in affirming the Supper as the Lord's memorial.<sup>33</sup> Does today's understanding of the word coincide with Calvin's understanding of it? Should we expect the sixteenth century to have understood the word in the way we interpret it in our modern New Testament dictionaries?<sup>34</sup> Calvin never defines memorial, but this does not mean that we are totally without direction in trying to get to his understanding of it. In his *Commentary on First Corinthians*, chap. 11, he writes that some, when they read the words of Paul "Do this in remembrance of me," "draw the inference . . . that . . . Christ is not present in the Supper, because there can only be a memorial (*memoria*) of something that is absent." Now Calvin cannot agree with this

<sup>29</sup> *True Partaking*, pp. 269-70 (*OC* 9, 471).      <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 276 (*OC* 9, 476).

<sup>31</sup> *Short Treatise*, p. 145 (*OS* 1, 507).

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* p. 155 (*OS* 1, 517).

<sup>33</sup> E.g., *Institutes* 4, 18, 6-7; 4, 10, 18 (*OS* 5, 423, 423, 426); also *Short Treatise*, p. 156 (*OS* 1, 518).

<sup>34</sup> E.g., J. Behm, "anamnēsis," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 349: "Christians are to enact the whole action of the Supper . . . in recollection of Jesus and this is not merely in such a sort that they simply remember, but rather, in accordance with the active sense of *anamnēsis* . . . in such a way that they actively fulfil the *anamnēsis*. The making present by the latter community of the Lord who instituted the Supper and who put the new *diathēkē* into effect by His death, is the goal and content of their action in which they repeat what was done by Jesus and His disciples on the eve of His crucifixion." Cf. also "*mimnēskomai*," *ibid.* 4, 676. Also Thurian, *op. cit.* 2, 5-33, as well as his "L'Anamnèse du Christ: Vers une doctrine oecuménique de la sainte cène," in *L'Évangile hier et aujourd'hui: Mélanges offerts au Professeur Franz-J. Leenhardt* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1968) pp. 263-76; von Allmen, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-30.



viewpoint, and so he says that this position is easily answered: "according to this way of thinking of the Supper as remembrance (*recordatio*) Christ is indeed absent from it."<sup>35</sup> To give memorial the meaning of *recordatio*, that is, recalling something to mind, or making it into a mere mental operation, Calvin agrees in this sense Christ is absent. But since Calvin does not want *memoria* to become *recordatio*, it follows that for the Reformer memorial involves a presence. This is clear from the same passage, because Calvin immediately goes on to speak of Christ's presence, even though he is not visibly present nor seen by our eyes as are the symbols which represent him. Memorial is not an individual's remembering of a past event, but a present reality.<sup>36</sup>

Calvin could, in fact, be said to approach the modern understanding of memorial. In the *Institutes* he writes: "For he in some measure renews, or continues, the covenant which he once for all ratified with his blood . . . whenever he proffers that sacred blood for us to taste."<sup>37</sup> If the covenant continues in the Supper, it is more than a remembrance of a covenant enacted in the past; it is a covenant memorialized in the present, granting us, here and now, the benefits of his sacrifice.

It was the word "memorial" that led the seventeenth-century French Calvinist theologians to their teaching of the Eucharistic sacrifice. Together with Calvin, they agreed that the Fathers of the Church did in fact call the Supper a sacrifice since it was the memorial of the Lord,<sup>38</sup> but these theologians were searching for a principle that would permit them to conclude that the Supper is a sacrifice. They found it in Calvin's teaching that in the sacraments it is customary to give to the sign the name of the thing signified.<sup>39</sup> The theologians concluded that, since the

<sup>35</sup> *Commentary on First Corinthians*, p. 248 (OC 49, 488).

<sup>36</sup> J.-D. Benoit, speaking about the Reformed liturgy, describes anamnesis in this manner: "It is more than just a memorial—the memory, that is, of a past event. The Lord's Supper is a re-presentation of the event. It actualizes it; it makes it something that is happening now, so that its effects may be made operative, now and always. It is not just the memory of the upper room: the words and actions of Christ and of his disciples as they received the bread and the wine become once more present and alive. It is the same voice—his Voice—which invites us; it is the same hand—his Hand—which holds out to us the bread of life; it is the same love, the love that led him to the Cross, with which he loves us still" (*Liturgical Renewal: Studies in Catholic and Protestant Developments on the Continent* [London: SCM, 1958] p. 44). Von Allmen (*op. cit.*, p. 24) writes: "The anamnesis is therefore much more than a mnemonic ceremony; it is a re-enactment of the event which the celebration commemorates." M. H. Sykes ("The Eucharist as 'Anamnesis,'" *Expository Times* [1959–60] 115–18) offers this description: "The celebrating of the Eucharist as a 'memorial' is the releasing of Christ's power and personality afresh" (p. 117). Also cf. F.-J. Leenhardt, "La présence eucharistique" *Irénikon* 33 (1960) 146–72, esp. pp. 168–69.

<sup>37</sup> *Institutes* 4, 17, 1 (OS 5, 343).

<sup>38</sup> Cf. *Short Treatise*, p. 156 (OS 1, 518); also *Institutes* 4, 18, 10 (OS 5, 426).

<sup>39</sup> *Institutes* 4, 17, 21 (OS 5, 370).

Supper is the sign of Christ's sacrifice, the Supper can rightfully be called sacrifice.<sup>40</sup> The Eucharist takes the name of sacrifice from Christ's sacrifice. Calvin made use of this principle to call bread "body" and wine "blood," but in his writings he never extended it so as to call the Supper "sacrifice." Where Calvin manifested a reluctance in making a logical conclusion from his principle, his friend and associate Pierre Viret had no hesitation in doing so.<sup>41</sup>

This principle did not originate with Calvin, but he found it in Augustine.<sup>42</sup> Three centuries prior to Calvin's use of the Augustinian principle, it was already invoked by Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa theologiae*, and he used it precisely to call the Supper "sacrifice."<sup>43</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Cf. P.-Y. Emery, "Le sacrifice eucharistique selon les théologiens réformés français du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Verbum caro* 13 (1959) 256.

<sup>41</sup> Viret seems to have used this principle in the manner of the above-mentioned theologians. He says that the Fathers called the Supper a sacrifice since it was "memoire, signe et temoinage" of Christ's sacrifice, but he adds "au sens où le pain est appelé corps du Christ" (cf. Emery, *art. cit.*, p. 266). Interestingly, Calvin also calls the Supper "memoria, imago, testimonium," but says nothing about the manner in which the bread is called the body of Christ. He first inserted this expression in his 1543 edition of the *Institutes*. In the 1559 edition it reads: "non alia ratione vocari Coenam Domini sacrificium, nisi quod est memoria, imago, testimonium illius sigularis, veri et unici sacrificii quo nos Christus expiavit" (*Institutes* 4, 18, 10 [OS 5, 426]). From among the modern Reformed theologians I am only aware of J.-J. von Allmen (*op. cit.*, p. 90) suggesting the use of this principle: "Protestant theologians speak freely of a 'sacramental phraseology' which enables us to make identifications by analogy, such as the identification bread-body. One might have recourse to this prudent method of expression and speak of a 'sacrificial phraseology' which uses an analogy to describe the Supper as sacrifice."

<sup>42</sup> Calvin finds his basis in Augustine's words: "If sacraments did not have a certain likeness to those things of which they are the sacraments they would not be sacraments at all. Moreover, from this likeness they often also take the names of the things themselves. Therefore, just as in a certain manner the sacrament of Christ's body is Christ's body, the sacrament of Christ's blood Christ's blood—so the sacrament of faith is faith" (*Institutes* 4, 17, 21 [OS 5, 371]). Calvin says there are many such similar passages in Augustine, but one is enough for his readers. The quotation is from Augustine's *Ep. 98 (ad Bonifacium)*, 9 (PL 33, 364).

<sup>43</sup> Cf. *Summa theologiae* 3, q. 83, a. 1. Thomas entitled this brief article "Whether Christ Is Sacrificed in the Celebration of This Mystery?" His response is: "For two reasons is the celebration of this sacrament called the sacrifice of Christ. First, because, as Augustine writes, *Images are called by the names of the things of which they are images; thus looking at a picture or fresco we say, That is Cicero, or, That is Sallust*. Now, as we have said, the celebration of this sacrament is a definite image representing Christ's Passion, which is his true sacrifice. . . . Second, in respect of the effect of Christ's Passion. By this sacrament we are made sharers of the fruit of the Lord's Passion" (*St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae* 59: *Holy Communion* [tr. Thomas Gilby, O.P.; New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975] 135). Thomas here quotes from Augustine's *De diversis questionibus ad Simplicianum* 2, 3 (PL 40, 143). For Thomas, the celebration of the Eucharist is a sacrifice because (1) it is the sacrament of Christ's unique sacrifice, and (2) because by means of it the faithful become sharers in the fruits of Christ's redeeming death.

## CONCLUSION

Calvin's understanding of the relationship between Christ's sacrifice and the Lord's Supper indicates a unity between sacrifice and Supper. This unity underlies Calvin's teaching that "in the Supper we eat the same body as was crucified,"<sup>44</sup> and that through it our souls are washed by the shedding of his blood.<sup>45</sup> This unity is the foundation permitting the Reformer to assert that in the Supper "we have part in the sacrifice he offered on the cross to God his Father."<sup>46</sup> It is this unity that urges Calvin to affirm that the Supper imparts "the fruit and efficacy of his death and passion."<sup>47</sup>

Because of this unity, the Lord's Supper is the Lord's memorial. It is the anamnesis of Christ's unique sacrifice, an anamnesis in which Christ "in some measure renews, or continues, the covenant which he once for all ratified with his blood."<sup>48</sup> Both on the cross and in the Supper it is Christ who acts, who gives himself; on the cross he gives himself in sacrifice, in the Supper he gives his sacrificed body and blood; on the cross he dies to redeem us, in the Supper he lives to offer us the gift of redemption.

Since Christ's sacrifice on the cross has a historical quality entirely its own, its presence in the Supper cannot be of the same order as it was on Calvary's mount. It is present, but it is present in sign—it is the sacramental presence of Christ's sacrifice.<sup>49</sup> Since this is a presence of the sacramental order, in the order of anamnesis, it is not a new and independent repetition of Christ's sacrifice. Just as we take care that Christ's historical sacrifice is in no way impaired by our Eucharistic theology, we must take equal care to preserve the sacrificial nature of the Lord's Eucharistic memorial. The Lord's Supper, then, is a Eucharistic sacrifice—the sacrament of the unique sacrifice of Christ by means of which he today applies the salvation which he once obtained for us by his expiation on the cross.

Such an understanding of the Eucharistic sacrifice is compatible with Calvin's basic Eucharistic theology. Though he did not explicitly treat the Supper from this point of view, nevertheless the various texts quoted from Calvin's writings suggest that he does have a foundational basis for a doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice.

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<sup>44</sup> *True Partaking*, pp. 269–70 (*OC* 9, 471).

<sup>45</sup> *Short Treatise*, p. 146 (*OS* 1, 507).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146 (*OS* 1, 507).

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145 (*OS* 1, 507).

<sup>49</sup> *Institutes* 4, 17, 1 (*OS* 5, 343).

<sup>48</sup> Thurian (*op. cit.* 2, 79) maintains that the Eucharist "is a sacramental presence of the sacrifice of the cross and a liturgical presentation of that sacrifice to the Father." Von Allmen (*op. cit.*, p. 96) agrees: "the Eucharist is a sacrament of the sacrifice of Christ and a channel of the Church's sacrifice. . . ."