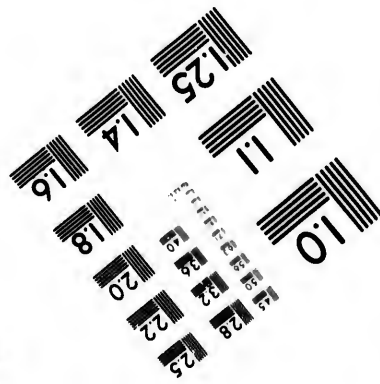
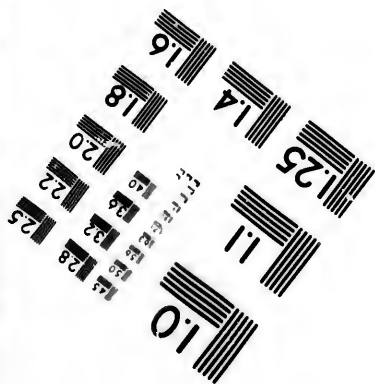
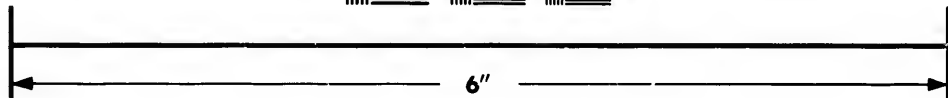
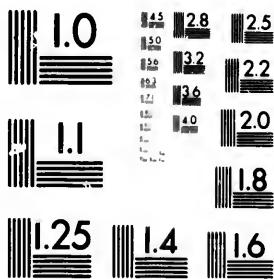


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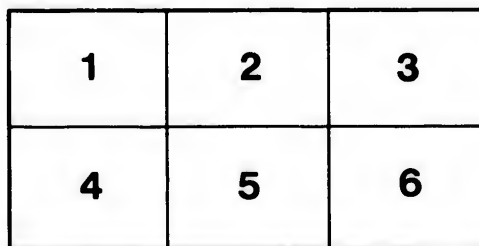
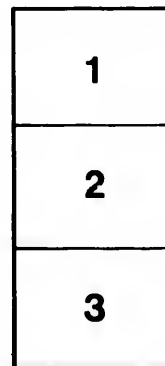
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AN EXPOSITION  
OF  
OLD TESTAMENT SACRIFICES

BY  
REV. D. MCKENZIE, B.A.,  
TORONTO.

TORONTO:  
WILLIAM BRIGGS,  
1900

ENTERED according to Act of the Parliament of Canada, in the year one thousand nine hundred, by REV. DONALD MCKENZIE, at the Department of Agriculture.

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## PREFACE.

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THE material of these chapters was originally made use of in the course of the author's pulpit ministrations. The profit then derived from preparation, and the results otherwise apparently produced, suggested that a wider influence for good might be exerted by publication. Time not otherwise fully occupied recently afforded opportunity to act upon the impulse years ago felt. In the course of rewriting, some alterations were thought desirable, prominent among these the addition of illustrations from the sacrificial rites of non-Hebrew peoples. Such, judiciously made use of, would have been found an advantage even in public discourse, and, in a more complete treatment of the subject, may now be deemed essential. The closing chapter on "The Sacrifice of Christ" was not intended to be exclusively expository. An attempt is made to show that it involves the fuller application of laws by which God in His providence governs human affairs. Christ's atonement is confessedly



unique, but because of the uniqueness of His person and not because of the fundamental principles which it involves. It is hoped that there is nothing new in the interpretation given the Lord's sacrifice, and yet that a real content has been found not only for the scripture language usually employed, but for the ordinary theological terminology as well. There is much unrest of thought associated at the present time with the word atonement. The author has long found rest of mind and heart in the exposition given in this chapter, and the hope may not be unfounded that what has helped one may prove of help to another.

D. MCKENZIE.

TORONTO, September, 1900.

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AN EXPOSITION  
OF  
OLD TESTAMENT SACRIFICES.

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CHAPTER I.

*THE RELIGION OF SACRIFICE.*

THE religion of the Bible is a sacrificial religion. Many of its blessings are secured through sacrifice. This does not mean that the sacrifice itself is the source of the blessing received, or in any way creates it. The meaning rather is, that the sacrifice is the medium through which the blessing is imparted. God is the source of all the good that man enjoys or can hope to enjoy ; the divine heart is the never-failing fountain whence every blessing flows. Sacrifice is only the means by which something of the divine favor is conveyed into man's dependent life.

The religion of the Old Testament had an elaborate sacrificial system, which must needs be administered if the wealth of promised blessing was to be received. A central place of worship had been established with its priesthood, its altars, and its sacred furniture, and there must sacrifice be offered by the nation, and individual, according to the appointed

ritual, if the idea that God had in His thought in their regard was to become realized. His thought was to make Israel a holy people through whom He could redeem the world. He purposed that they should be in communion with Himself, be possessed of His spirit, become sanctified from every evil, and developed in every virtue and grace, without which national and individual life must remain incomplete. In the accomplishment of all this, sacrifice was to have a large place. It was intended to secure the closest possible communion with God, and to overcome any alienation that might arise. Men burdened by a sense of guilt were to find in it an enjoyment of pardon, and the strength of character that pardon alone can give. Through its medium the grace that sanctifies and upbuilds was to enter the life with all its transforming power. In short, sacrifice was to retain and restore the happy relationship which had been formed between God and His people, and upon the maintenance and cultivation of which all that was distinctive and desirable in their life was to depend.

It is true enough that there were periods in their history when the Israelites were deprived of their temple privileges, and when acceptable sacrifice was impossible. These, however, were times of judgment, and were regarded as the most trying experiences through which the nation was led. Benefits of the highest order might be derived, and sometimes were derived. The condition, nevertheless, was not the ideal one, that for which the people longed, and in which alone could they be happy, and the benefits

were only such as could follow in the wake of judgment. During the long years of the captivity in Babylon the best of the Israelites felt their lot to be one of great religious privation. They had their religious teachers, and were probably in the enjoyment of the synagogue exercises, but they were not contented. In Jerusalem alone, with its temple service, could they find satisfaction, and would their heart rejoice in God.

These years of exile were of unspeakable advantage to Israel as a whole. The truth of God's unity became more thoroughly rooted in the national consciousness than it ever had been before, and the very fact that the ordinances of the altar and temple were wanting, went to discover the fundamental doctrine that the divine worship is essentially spiritual, and is ultimately independent of a cultus, however helpful under fitting limitations such external observances may prove. And yet, instructive as the exile was, it was felt to be a calamity, and was rightly regarded a divine infliction because of past unfaithfulness. The life intended for Israel was one gravitating about the temple and its services, and only when this intention was approximately fulfilled was there reached the high-water mark of prosperity, moral, religious and material.

It should not be overlooked in the case of the individual, that a worthy life was possible without sharing in the sacrifices of the central altar. Many a son of the covenant was found true to the God of his fathers and the traditions of his people, whom

circumstances prevented from taking advantage of such privileges. Still these conditions were deemed peculiarly trying, and required uncommon watchfulness if real faithfulness was to be preserved. In a position of that kind every loyal-hearted Israelite would feel as the Psalmist did when, bemoaning his exile, he said, "I pour out my soul in me for I had gone with the multitude. I went with them to the house of God with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday" (Ps. 42: 4). The only circumstance in which the individual Israelite attained the highest perfection of character was in intimate communion with his people, within reach of the divinely appointed temple worship. The sacrificial ordinances for the nation and individual had not a little to do in moulding his life and character, and were practically essential aids to his religious development.

It has not infrequently been otherwise held. From the very earliest times the claim has been made that the religion of Israel in its most spiritual form was independent of sacrifice, that sacrifices were even a survival of heathen worship, allowed only because of the religious inability of the ordinary worshipper. The sect of the Essenes were advocates of this opinion, as have been also many Jewish and Christian theologians. Its most plausible form is that which sees among the more spiritual of the prophets a non-sacrificial religion, side by side with the popular religion of rites and ceremonies.

Many passages of Scripture which revealed the

divine estimate of much that passed for the required sacrificial ordinance, lend countenance to this view. Prophets and psalmists in every age are found to have censured much of the customary altar service. Through Amos the Lord said: "I hate, I despise your feasts. . . . Yea, though ye offer me your burnt offerings and meal offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts" (5: 21, 22); and through Hosea: "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings" (6: 6). In Isaiah are found these words: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? . . . I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. . . . Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth" (1: 11-14); and in Jeremiah: "To what purpose cometh there to me frankincense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices pleasing unto me" (6: 20); and in Malachi: "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand" (1: 10). Several statements by psalmists are to like effect: "Sacrifice and offering thou hast no delight in. . . . Burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required" (40: 6); "Thou delightest not in sacrifice. . . . Thou hast no pleasure in burnt offering" (51: 16).

The usual explanation given such strictures is, that they refer to unbelieving sacrifice offered often as a



substitute for righteous living, and not to the devout sacrifice required by the law. As ordained of God, the ordinance was intended to be an expression of religious emotion, and a means of comfort and edification. Whenever it ceased to fulfil this intention and was made a substitute of right life and conduct, or became regarded as an end in itself, or an effective means apart from the motive of the worshipper, it became an evil that required to be exposed; this prophet and psalmist did in passages such as those quoted.

That this is a satisfactory explanation is evident from the fact that prophets and religious leaders of the nation expressed on occasions their approval of the appointed sacrificial system, and indicated their conviction that it was a necessary feature of the required worship. To Joel, one of the hardships of the dearth that had overtaken the land in his day, was that it rendered impossible the continuance of the ordinary temple service (1 : 13), and one of the blessings of returned prosperity would be the restoration of the former sacrificial worship (2 : 14). Hosea numbered among the judgments that impended because of sin, the discontinuance of the customary sacrifices (3 : 4). Isaiah intimated that the extension of the true religion to the people of Egypt would carry with it the institution of sacrifice (19 : 21). Jeremiah described the blessings of the Messianic era under the figure of the altar service (33 : 17, 18). Ezekiel, in his vision of the restored kingdom, sees an elaborate sacrificial ritual in operation (43 : 18-27,

etc.). Haggai tells the people that the drought which continued to waste their harvests, came because of delay in completing the restoration of the temple (1 : 11). Zechariah shows that a reform in the religion of Israel required a sanctified priesthood (3 : 1-10). Malachi declared that the man who withheld an unblemished victim and offered what was marred, was cursed (1 : 14), as were also those who robbed God by withholding their tithes and offerings (3 : 8). In the closing chapters of Isaiah the Lord complains that Israel did not offer Him the required sacrifices : "Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings ; neither hast thou honored me with thy sacrifices. I have not made thee to serve with offerings nor wearied thee with frankincense. Thou hast bought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices" (43 : 23, 24), and He promises to accept their burnt offerings and their sacrifices upon His altar (56 : 7). The psalmist who declared that God had no pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices (51 : 16), also said in view of restored Jerusalem : "Then shalt thou delight in the sacrifices of righteousness, in burnt offering and whole burnt offering ; then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar" (51 : 19). Elsewhere in the Psalms it is commanded to offer freewill offerings (54 : 6), and thank offerings (107 : 22 ; 116 : 17). There are not wanting instances, moreover, of prophets actually presenting sacrifice or giving instruction that such should be done. In place here are Elijah on Carmel (1 Kings 18 : 31, *seq.*), Samuel at Mizpah

(1 Sam. 7 : 9), and Gad in Jerusalem (2 Sam. 24 : 18). All of which goes to show that, however much prophets and inspired men condemned mechanical sacrifices, they regarded the ordinance, properly observed, an essential feature of Hebrew worship.

Proof of the vital connection between sacrifice and the religion of Israel is also afforded by the fact that on every great occasion in the national life, whether accidental or recurring, sacrifice formed a prominent part of the service. This was the case when Israel formally possessed Canaan in the Lord's name (Josh. 8 : 30), when their first king was crowned (1 Sam. 11 : 15), when Jerusalem was made the religious capital (2 Sam. 6 : 13, 17, 18), and when the temple worship was inaugurated (1 Kings 8 : 63). The recurring festivals and Sabbaths were also distinguished by a multiplicity of sacrifices. This was true of the Passover (2 Chron. 30 : 24), the feast of tabernacles (Ezra 3 : 4 ; Neh. 8 : 18), the feast of weeks (2 Chron. 8 : 13), and "of all the set feasts that were consecrated" (Ezra 3 : 5). Indeed, was sacrifice so interwoven into the religious life of the people that in the early days family reunions of a religious order became the occasion of burnt offerings and sacrifices (1 Sam. 20 : 6 ; 16 : 3). But perhaps more than in any other way is its inseparable connection with Hebrew worship indicated by the facts, that the prophets' glowing picture of the Messianic dispensation involved the offering of sacrifice (Zech. 14 : 20, 21), and that the Messiah himself was to accomplish redemption through sacrifice (Isa. 53 : 10 ; 52 : 15). Were the

institution not inextricably involved in the prevailing religious conception, the future towards which the devout heart ever reached forward would not have been so conceived.

Without hesitation may it be repeated that the Old Testament religion was a sacrificial religion. It is not otherwise with that of the New Testament. There also the promised blessing is obtained through sacrifice. The Mediator, Christ, through whom the most clamant human needs are met, accomplished His work largely by the offering of sacrifice. This is almost universally taught throughout the New Testament. All its inspired writers, with two exceptions, regard the Saviour's work as in some sense sacrificial. They may differ in their point of view and the phase of His work on which they lay the chief emphasis, but all, with the exception of James and Jude, unite in representing it as sacrificial.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says: "Now once in the end of the world hath he (Christ) appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (9: 26); and "This Man after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever sat down on the right hand of God" (10: 12). Paul writes: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood" (Rom. 3: 25); also, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin" (Eph. 1: 7). In Peter's writings we read: "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1: 18, 19); and

again, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Pet. 2 : 24). John writes: "He is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 2 : 2); also, "Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood" (Rev. 5 : 9). John the Baptist points to Christ and says: "Behold the Lamb of God" (John 1 : 36); and "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1 : 29). And finally Christ himself says: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20 : 28); also, "This cup is the new testament in my blood which is shed for you" (Luke 22 : 20). Indeed, so inwrought is the conception of sacrifice into the thought of the New Testament that one can unhesitatingly make these words of Cave his own: "Not only portions but the whole of the New Testament—not only the New Testament teaching but every type of that teaching—must be cast aside unless the work of Christ be in some sense or other regarded as a sacrifice."

Indeed, it may be affirmed in a general way that no religion can meet the demands of man's condition that does not involve sacrifice. Effective deliverance can never come except through sacrifice. Be the sphere what it may in which help is proffered, there must be an expenditure of time, means and energy in proportion to the magnitude of the results to be accomplished. The grain of wheat that falls to the ground must transfer its vital energies to the blade and the ear and the full corn in the ear. It cannot retain its resources undisturbed and at the same time

yield a harvest. If it refuses to die, it will be condemned to eternal solitariness. The parent must give of his strength for the life of his child. He cannot husband what he possesses for his own personal ends, and at the same time secure the welfare of his offspring. Energies mental, moral and physical must be expended if the boy is to develop into a symmetrical well-equipped man. The so-called lapsed masses cannot be recovered by those whose powers are impoverished as their own. The work can be accomplished only by men who have amassed a wealth of character, and who have the diversified resources at their disposal, from which the needs of those who have not may be supplied. To increase the measure of force in any quarter it is necessary to draw upon its store somewhere else. A weak man cannot be made strong nor a foolish man wise, nor a bad man virtuous, except by drawing upon some centre of strength, and wisdom, and righteousness. This means that improvement made in any quarter is possible only by a corresponding sacrifice somewhere else. If the religion of the Bible is to avail for those who embrace it, it must needs be a religion of sacrifice; the Hebrew religion to help the Hebrew, the Christian religion to help the Christian, must each have its own sacrifice, and ultimately a divine sacrifice.

The saving sacrifice in either dispensation was that of life. In the old dispensation the life of the sacrificial victim; in the new, that of God's Son. Other offerings had their attributed effects; the meal offering, the tithe, the firstfruits and all similar ordinances

fulfilled their own purpose. It was only the offering of life, however, that met the most pressing and universal needs.

At this point it is well to call attention to the peculiar prominence given the blood in Scripture, and the efficacy ascribed to it. In some of the more important sacrifices of the Old Testament everything else is almost overlooked. In the first Passover, it was the blood of the lamb sprinkled upon the doorposts and lintel that delivered the Israelites from the angel of death that wrought such havoc among the Egyptians. In the covenant sacrifice, described in Ex. 24, the use made of the blood is the most prominent part of the service. In 2 Chron. 29 : 24 the blood of the victim slain is said to constitute the sin offering. Indeed, one of the recognized principles of the law was, that it was the blood that made atonement (Lev. 17 : 11). The case is analogous in the New Testament, where the most far-reaching effects are ascribed to Christ's blood. Thus we are said to be justified by His blood (Rom. 5 : 9); to have redemption through His blood (Eph. 1 : 7); to be redeemed by His precious blood (1 Pet. 1 : 19); to be made nigh by His blood (Eph. 2 : 13); He is said to make peace through the blood of His cross (Col. 1 : 20), which is again said to cleanse from all sin (1 John 1 : 7).

The reason for attaching such vast importance to the blood is given in Leviticus 17 : 11, that most classic of passages on matters of sacrifice. There we read : "It is the blood that maketh atonement by

reason of the life" (R.V.). According to this statement the blood is, or was supposed to be, the seat of life, and consequently the effects resulting from the offering of life are attributed to the presentation of the blood. When the blood is said to atone, and to redeem, and to sanctify, the meaning is that the life offered in sacrifice effects these happy results. This is true of the usage in the Old Testament; it is also true of that in the New. It was the life of the victim slain that secured for the Israelite the benefit desired, so it is the life of Christ given up in sacrifice that now justifies, redeems, and sanctifies the believer; not the blood that poured from His wounds, but the offered life which that blood represented. When thus interpreted the unspeakably important results ascribed to the blood shed justifies the statement made in the above paragraph, that the saving sacrifice is that of life.

The sacrifice of life which produced the results which have been mentioned, was only that which culminated in death. In popular language it is common enough to speak of life being sacrificed when its energies are expended in behalf of any cause, whether or not the life itself is actually given up. This usage is also frequent in Scripture, but must be regarded as a secondary and figurative employment of the term. The sacrifice that has ascribed to it a saving efficacy, is a literal sacrifice which culminates in death, which involves the shedding of blood.

A curious view has found favor recently in regard to this matter, which holds that the killing of the



victim in the Old Testament dispensation had as its only object to secure the blood. According to this theory the death itself had no significance, and would have been unnecessary could the required blood be otherwise procured. Such a view cannot be maintained. One consideration that makes it untenable is, that the blood could have been obtained without the actual giving up of life. In rites common enough among Semitic and Oriental peoples, in which no victim was slain, the use of blood was an essential feature. All the blood required was drawn from the veins without the destruction of life. And so in these sacrifices of the Mosaic ritual, the necessary blood could have been secured without the actual slaying of the victim. What could not have been, was the sacrifice of the life which the condition of the offerer required. For as long as the victim lived, its life could not have been offered as a sacrifice, however much of its energies might thus be expended.

Somewhat analogous to this novel theory of the Old Testament sacrifice, is the interpretation of our Lord's work which sees in His death only an incident in His earthly ministry. The important matter, it is claimed, is His life's activity, His preaching, His teaching, His works of mercy, in comparison to which His death is of minor importance. The chief part of His sacrifice, according to this view, was the life of self-denying labor to which He devoted himself rather than the death that He died.

It is clear that the Lord himself did not hold this opinion, to say nothing of His inspired apostles.

What little He taught in regard to His death, and the attitude that He assumed towards it, shows that He looked upon it as the heart of His sacrifice and the chief part of the work which He came to accomplish. When He said : " The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many " (Matt. 20 : 28), He was thinking of His death at least as much as of His life ; and when He said : " This is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sins " (Matt. 26 : 28), He was thinking especially of His death, and thinking of it as a sacrifice. And many a given hint proves that from the beginning of His ministry He had the awful tragedy in view, and that if He did not make frequent reference to it the reason was not a low estimate of its significance, but the knowledge that His followers were not sufficiently advanced to understand its meaning, and that their faith was for many a day far too weak to bear the strain.

The fact that His death was the result of His own choice, shows what infinite significance He attached to it. The Lord was not forced to die, He died voluntarily. He went up to Jerusalem for the very purpose of dying. He left His work of teaching and healing, He turned away from the throng eager for His help, and set His face steadfastly towards the cross. He was still in the prime of His manhood, His labor was as effective as ever, He could carry on His work, at least, in the remote districts with perfect safety, and even in Jerusalem He had the power at

His disposal to thwart all the evil purposes of His enemies. What does His death mean in such circumstances? It can mean nothing else than that He knew it would prove more resultful than the labors of His life. Our best judgment would condemn the man who would turn his back on vast opportunities of service, and forsake a life of infinite helpfulness unless he had something still more important in view, and the only satisfactory explanation of our Lord's conduct in abandoning His most merciful ministry, and deliberately giving up His life, is that He foresaw His death would have a vastly more beneficial effect than His ministry could have. And so the inference is secure that Christ's death was an essential part of His work, was indeed the work that He especially came to accomplish. The sacrifice which He began to offer when He left the Father's bosom, which He had been offering indeed from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13: 8), must needs culminate upon the cross, and could be accomplished in no other way.

Human life needed something more than the inspiration of precept and example, and the healing balm of compassion. It needed to have beaten back an irretrievable past that persisted in invading the consciousness with baneful results. It would seem true in the moral sphere as in the physical, that every action has its reaction. There is from every transgression a recoil upon the transgressor himself that affects him with infinite harm, unless something intervenes to break its force. The consequences of his sin pursues man like his shadow, and the only evident way of escape is that a deliverer throw himself between.

The statement seems thoroughly scientific that the Lord could become Saviour only by bearing our sin, that is, its consequence, in His own body (1 Pet. 2:24). The conditions required that His sacrifice should consist not only in a life of devoted service, but also in patient endurance of all that should overtake Him because of identity with sinful man.

The evil effects that rebound upon the life from wrong-doing are in their worst forms indefinite in nature and extent. The conscience that awakens such paralyzing alarm never states what the impending judgment is. What Herod dreaded when he heard of Christ's mighty works he knew not, only that it was some fateful visitation that threatened him because of his having murdered the Baptist. Iscariot could not describe the content of that terror that hounded him to death, only that it was conjured by the thought of his unpardonable crime. Scripture is here more specific than conscience in its instruction. It speaks of sin alienating from God, incurring His displeasure, driving into darkness, and causing death. But even these statements, though definite in form, have an awful significance that cannot well be comprehended. Who can say what the displeasure of God means, or what form it may assume! What mind can measure the content of alienation from God, outer darkness, and death! Some of the results of sin are specific enough, but those that men dread most have an awful indefiniteness about them. For the Lord to become identified with man and to bear his sin must have meant a manifold infliction of infinite extent.

One alarming effect of sin that is sufficiently specific is death. Long before man appeared in his place the myriad forms of life that swarmed on every hand were born only to die. Human life, because of its moral and spiritual powers, might originally have been made exempt from this universal mortality, but it is probable that it was not. Accidents and disease were sure to affect it from the first in a way that made an experience akin to death unavoidable, if not desirable. Sin, however, has introduced an element without which death would not have been what it is now felt to be. And so physical death is numbered among the consequences of sin, and He who came to bear the sin of man must needs be made to die. The death of Christ is a phrase that includes all that He endured because of sin, and among the rest the actual giving up of His life upon the cross. His sacrifice of self-denying service and patient endurance culminated, and must needs culminate, in His violent death. The New Testament sacrifice no less than the Old required the actual giving up of life.

The relation holding between the sacrifices of the Old and New Testaments is a matter that has been much discussed, and is not without interest. It is usually described by saying that the one is typical of the other, a description that is sufficiently accurate as far as it goes. By the phrase "typical" is meant that the Old Testament sacrifice was a prediction of that of the New, and indicated something of its character—is meant, in short, that the former was a prophetic symbol of the latter.

So understood, the term gives a true if incomplete description of what the relation really was. The Old Testament sacrifice was clearly a symbol of the sacrifice offered by Christ ; the truth that was taught by the former was realized by the latter. A study of the Levitical sacrifices will show that in their instruction they treated of such truths as atonement, satisfaction, consecration, and the conditions required to secure these results. The New Testament teaches that it was the work of Christ to make atonement, to offer satisfaction, and to sanctify Himself for His people ; and it shows that the conditions symbolized in the earlier sacrifices as necessary to attain such results, were fulfilled in Him. Moreover, it was indicated in the Old Testament sacrifice that some of the happy effects of atonement, satisfaction, and consecration were reconciliation, pardon, and sanctification ; and again the New Testament shows that these are some of the results accomplished by Christ's sacrificial work. What was symbolized by the one sacrifice was realized in the other ; the one was a symbol of the other.

It was also a prophetic symbol. It predicted that what was taught in the one sacrifice would become embodied in the other. When the Old Testament sacrifice spoke of atonement, satisfaction, consecration, pardon, reconciliation, and such like truths, it prophesied that these would all be made a reality in the sacrifice yet to be offered. All the Old Testament looked forward towards Christ and was a prediction of His coming. Everything that it taught about man's moral and spiritual need, and the way in which

it was to be met, was a prophecy of Him in whom His people are made complete. The ordained sacrificial system in a peculiar way brought to light what man required, and how what he required was to be provided; it thus became in a very special manner a prophecy of that perfect life which by its light was to reveal what men are, and should be, and by its service and endurance was to provide what they needed. One must deny Hebrew sacrifices all reference to sin and redemption, if he refuses to admit their predictive character.

This does not mean that every devout worshipper saw in the sacrifice that he offered a reference to the promised Messiah. It does not even mean that those who under divine guidance instituted the sacrifices or incorporated them into the established system, were able to perceive this part of their significance. One may venture the statement that the average Israelite never looked upon his sacrifice as having any other purpose than meeting his own need at the time. It is not necessary to suppose that even Moses saw very clearly a connection between the ordinances that he had instituted and the Saviour to whom they pointed. Indeed, it was only in the closing chapters of Isaiah that it was distinctly made known that the promised Messiah was also to be the offerer of the required and all-sufficient sacrifice. What is meant is that He who sees the end from the beginning, and directs every movement toward that end, constituted these sacrifices a prophecy and a symbol of the redemptive work to be accomplished by the coming Messiah.

The Old Testament sacrifice was, in this sense of the term, without doubt a type of Christ. It was also very much more. It was a medium through which the symbolized benefits were actually imparted. The devout worshipper found in his sacrifice the blessing of which it spoke. The atonement, or satisfaction, or consecration which it symbolized, became to him a matter of actual enjoyment. The offering did not have the intrinsic value that would make it effective in these regards. It was quite impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats should in its own potency take away sin (Heb. 10 : 4). What gave the effectiveness was God's appointment. He constituted a connection between the sacrifice and what it symbolized, with the result that the faithful worshipper without fail received the blessing of which his sacrifice spoke. This is much the same as saying that He constituted a connection between the sacrifice and the grace of the pre-incarnate Saviour, with the result that when the sacrifice was devoutly offered the grace was imparted. The virtue of the Old Testament sacrifice was that of an effective medium connecting the needy life of the offerer with the unfailing source of the divine helpfulness. This to the people of that day was by far its most important property. In Christian times it may be prized because of its typical character, but in pre-Christian times its value lay in the power to secure divine grace.

Nor were these characteristics independent of each other. The Old Testament sacrifice was constituted a means of grace because it was an eloquent symbol of grace.



## CHAPTER II.

### *PRINCIPLES OF INTERPRETATION.*

1. **H**OW sacrifice originated is a question of considerable interest, and one that requires to be answered before progress can be made in the work of interpretation.

A view that is still met and was at one time generally held, traces the origin of sacrifice to an explicit divine command. Thus Bachelor, in his treatise on sacrifice, says : " It has long been our conviction that it (the origin of sacrifice) must be traced to a divine command of which we have at present no record. We fail to discover in human nature the impulse out of which the practice of sacrifice could spring." Professor Murphy holds that " Sacrifice is . . . altogether of divine origin." The understanding is that God at the beginning gave command that He should be worshipped in this way, and from that divine decree all subsequent developments in the institution resulted. Even the sacrifice of the remotest pagan is accounted for in this way. Wherever men went they are supposed to have carried with them a tradition of the original injunction, and to have continued the practice of offering sacrifice in obedience to its requirement.

In the course of the centuries corruptions would in many quarters naturally creep in that would largely deprive the ordinance of its original helpfulness, and even make of it a hurtful agency, but this fact should not be allowed to obscure its divine origin. It is not uncommon for the best of institutions to suffer deterioration in human hands that defeats their original purpose, and so it was with sacrifice among heathen peoples. Among the Hebrews the ordinance retained its original purity and became elaborated into a complex system, but among other races it suffered deterioration. In both cases it had its origin in the one divine command. Such is the theory.

The opinion now usually held is that sacrifice had its origin in a human instinct rather than in a divine command. In their efforts to express their religious thoughts and emotions, and to satisfy their deepest spiritual needs, man resorted to the offering of sacrifice. The practice was found so comforting and helpful that it was continued, and its ritual gradually made more elaborate as the growing needs required. Among the Hebrews the institution received explicit divine sanction, and its rites became modified, as the generations went by, to meet the peculiar needs of that people. This view derives sacrifice from a source similar to that from which prayer and praise are derived. As such spiritual exercises were common enough before any divine instruction was given in reference to them, or before being modified by any divine revelation, so it is claimed was sacrifice offered long before God gave any verbal instruction

in regard to it. Delitzsch puts the case well in these words: "Although sacrifice in general reaches up to the earliest time of man's history and is met with in every nation, it was not enjoined upon the human race by any positive demand of God, but sprang out of a religious necessity for fellowship with God the Author, Protector, and Preserver of life."

In favor of this view is the fact, as Bachelor says, that no trace of an original command requiring sacrifice can be found. The usual method of inspiration is to put upon record the revelation in which any institution originated, or if it originated in a human instinct, to preserve the injunction by which it had been incorporated among the established ordinances of the nation. Thus there are recorded the divine intimations according to which were instituted the Sabbath, and the passover, and the day of atonement, and also those incorporating circumcision, and the priesthood, and the agricultural festivals among theocratic institutions. Every divinely given instruction that had originated any great religious movement among God's chosen people, has been preserved in divine records. Therefore, because no intimation or command remains in which sacrifice originated, but many modifying and incorporating it among the religious institutions of the nation, the inference is legitimate that the ordinance originated in a human instinct and was afterwards appropriated by God for the good of His people. Sacrifice thus stands in a similar position with circumcision, and tithing, and the priesthood, and the agricultural festivals, all of

which had a human origin but were afterwards appropriated by God to be among the religious ordinances of the Israelites. Had sacrifice originated in a divinely given command addressed to primeval man, a record would certainly have been made testifying of the fact.

In favor of the view that originates sacrifice in a human instinct, is also the fact that it gives a more satisfactory explanation of the diversity and universality of the ordinance than does the competing view. It is not impossible that the remotest races offer their sacrifices still because a command was given at the beginning to that effect, and it is conceivable that the elaborate sacrificial system that had been instituted in Israel had a common origin with the primitive rites of a barbarian tribe. It is far more reasonable, however, to suppose that there is an innate tendency in man that leads him to this mode of worship, and that it begins to assert itself wherever he in his wandering takes up his abode. The superiority of the Hebrew sacrificial system is quite consistent with this theory. God gave supernatural light and guidance to that people, and developed their institutions and ordinances so as to produce, and meet the needs of, a religious life ever becoming fuller and more complete. Under His instruction the simple homogeneous sacrifice of primitive man grew into the expressive system described in the Levitical law. It is also quite consistent with the theory that the offering of sacrifice began with the common ancestors of the race, and by reason of the natural tendency to such worship was

afterwards, in spite of every vicissitude, kept alive among the tribes and nations that became scattered abroad throughout the continents. This indeed is the theory. An institution established at the beginning could scarcely survive in its influence in the most diverse and conflicting circumstances, were there not a deep-seated and universal human impulse working towards its preservation.

What is important for the interpreter to remember is that the change in opinion in regard to the origin of the ordinance affects in no way the divine authority of the Mosaic and other Old Testament sacrifices. It is quite untrue that the manner in which the sacrificial rites originated, "deprives them necessarily of that higher authority with which the author of Leviticus deemed it desirable to invest them" (Kalisch). Sacrifice is as much a divine institution as if it originated in a divine command; and, as a matter of fact, every essential feature of the Levitical sacrifices did receive an explicit divine sanction. God at the very beginning approved the offering of sacrifice (Gen. 4: 4), and every alteration and development subsequently made received in some way His authorization. Consequently the origin of sacrifice in a human instinct in no way affects its authority. Circumcision had undoubtedly a natural origin, and was practised from a very early date among the Egyptians and other African peoples, but after it was made by divine direction a seal of the covenant with Abraham (Gen. 17: 10), it became as much a divine institution as if it had originated in a divine command. Tithing

was a well-known institution centuries before it became a part of the Mosaic law (Gen. 14: 20), and was certainly of natural origin, but as soon as it was incorporated into the Levitical law, it rose to as much supremacy as if its origin had been supernatural. In the same way one's theory of the origin of sacrifice has nothing to do with his estimate of the authority attached to the institution. In any case it was a divinely sanctioned ordinance, and is to be acknowledged as such if the work of interpretation is not to fail.

The recognition of sacrifice as a divine institution will beget the reverence and sobriety of thought without which exposition cannot succeed. When one thinks of the Levitical sacrifices as a system ordained of God for the spiritual edification and sustenance of His people through long ages, his conviction will be that it must ever remain a fertile field of religious knowledge to those who are ready to work it, that its every essential feature must have its own deep significance, and fulfilled at one time its own weighty purpose. One could not imagine any institution, or any rite receiving divine sanction, and appropriated as a means of worship without its becoming rich in significance and being made to fulfil an important purpose. An ordinance of human origin might at first be vague enough, and without any profound meaning, but its appropriation by divine authority for purposes of religion would be a guarantee that henceforward it would abound in significance, and would be given an important function

to discharge. If one's study of any Old Testament sacrifice has not discovered in it any truth capable of exerting an influence upon life and character, or any evidence of its having at one time met some profound spiritual need, he may feel sure that his efforts have not been wisely directed. When, for instance, the sin-offering is looked upon as a shrewd means of supplying flesh for the priests, and the incense as only the fumigating in true Oriental fashion of the tabernacle and temple, no doubt need be felt that the vital significance of either ordinance is still undiscovered. A full conviction of the divine authority of the Levitical sacrifice would make it impossible to rest satisfied with such interpretation.

2. Another fact that the interpreter must consider is that the Old Testament represents an earlier and a preparatory stage in the history of revelation. It preceded Christianity in the order both of time and of nature. It was the pedagogue whose work was largely finished when it had led the immature youth to the perfected Christian system (Gal. 3 : 24), the early dawn whose dim light was to rise to the perfect day. Christ's own testimony was that He came to fulfil the law and the prophets (Matt. 5 : 17). The Baptist saw in Him the lamb provided by God to take away the sin of the world (John 1 : 29), and Philip knew that it was of Him that Moses in the law and the prophets did write (John 1 : 45). Paul taught that Christ was the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth (Rom. 10 : 4). But especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews is the

preparatory and prophetic character of the Levitical law made manifest. Certainly the New Testament regards the Old as prior to itself both in nature and in time.

From this it follows that the intelligent expositor will not look for the same fulness of doctrine in the Levitical law as in the New Testament. Perhaps almost every New Testament doctrine is either implied, or with some distinctness expressed, in the Old, but certainly it is only in the New that the full-orbed system of revealed truth is to be expected. To say, for instance, that the book of Leviticus: "Contains a full system of truth, exhibiting sin and the sinner, grace and the Saviour, comprehending also detail of duty, and giving openings into the ages to come—whatever, in short, bears on a sinner's peace with a reconciled God and conversation in this present evil world," is to proceed on an understanding that disqualifies for interpretation of the sacrifices or any other part of the Mosaic law. It is to read into the Old Testament what is found in the New rather than to expound from the Old what it really contains. Such a method may produce good homiletical results, but can add nothing to the knowledge of Scripture and its contents. The law and every other portion of the Old Testament did their own work, and met the needs of the times in which they were given. Men found there all the religious knowledge which they had the capacity to receive and make use of. The sacrifices proved themselves efficient means of grace, and every devout worshipper found in their



offering pardon, and peace, and fellowship with God. There is no doubt that in the circumstances of the people the provision made for their spiritual needs in the earlier dispensation was the best possible, and produced the best attainable results. As soon as the nation was ready for anything more advanced it was forthwith provided. But it would be arbitrary to infer from this that the Hebrew found in the law a knowledge of Christ and His sacrificial work similar to that in which the Christian finds spiritual blessedness, and without which he has neither spiritual peace, nor is able to make moral or spiritual progress. The expositor must proceed on manifest development in the revelation of truth, and the means of grace employed in Scripture.

Again, because of the preparatory character of the Levitical law, and the Old Testament throughout, exposition must be made from the standpoint of Christianity if what is of permanent value is to be distinguished from what was only temporary, and the essential from the accidental. If one is to discover the doctrinal value of the Mosaic sacrifices, he must examine their ritual in the light of the New Testament. The significance of any movement as a whole, or of its initial stages, can be satisfactorily determined only from its ultimate issues. It is only when the end has been reached that the observer can trace unerringly the lines that were intended to converge upon it. At any earlier point of view he could easily mistake a diverging pathway for the direct course, and be misled

by a temporary digression as to the direction in which the final goal lay. No movement of life approaches its end in a straight line, the evolution of principle is always by devious ways, and so only when the final result has been reached can the significance of a movement as a whole and of its several parts be unerringly understood.

Because the Old Testament sacrifice led up to the sacrifice of Christ, and was intended to do so, its permanent value for instruction, its doctrinal significance for every age, can be ascertained only in the light of what Christ actually accomplished. It is generally accepted that Messianic prophecy can be safely interpreted only in the light of its fulfilment; the same should be recognized in regard to the Old Testament sacrifices, which were prophecies in symbol. This is true not only of their typical significance, but of their symbolic significance as well. Some of the most serious misinterpretations that have been made of this ordinance have arisen from this oversight. To take but one illustration: It has been held that the slaying of the victim in the Mosaic sacrifices symbolized the giving up to death of the selfish, sinful life of the offerer, in order that God might transform it into a new life (Bähr). It goes without saying that such an interpretation would be quite impossible were it kept in view that Old Testament sacrifice found its fulfilment in the works of Christ, in which there is nothing analogous to the offering of what is sinful upon the divine altar.

The only scientific method of procedure is to

discover first of all what each sacrifice meant in the language and thought of its own time, and then in the light of Christ and the New Testament to discover what it contains of permanent significance. The expounder must first make use of every help, grammatical, historical and archæological, which he can call to his side, in order to discover what the sacrifice under consideration meant for those who offered it, and then in the light of Christianity ascertain what it means for all time. The sacrifice must be first studied in its historic setting and then in the light of its fulfilment.

3. A fact of considerable importance for the exposition, especially of the pre-Mosaic sacrifices, is that the Levitical sacrificial system was itself the product of a development. It began with scarcely any ritual, and gradually became elaborated into the involved and imposing institutions of the first and second temple. Between the sacrifice of Abel, with neither priest nor altar nor sanctuary, and the detailed system described in the opening chapters of Leviticus, and administered at the religious capital, there appears little in common, and yet the narrative of Genesis and Exodus shows how the one developed into the other.

As to the *sacrifice* itself, it was originally of one kind; then the burnt offering became distinguished from the others (Gen. 8 : 20); afterwards appeared the peace offering side by side with the burnt offering; finally, were added in order the sin offering and trespass offering. Meal offerings, too, of different kinds

had a prominent place in the Mosaic ritual, and while not mentioned in the preceding narrative may have been gradually introduced in earlier times. As to the first *victims* mentioned, they are said to be the firstlings of the flock (Gen. 4 : 4). Noah's sacrifice eliminated what was not ceremonially clean ; Abraham's sacrifice showed that human victims were not to be offered (Gen. 22), and the law of Moses added two additional limitations—the first, that the victim must be without blemish, and the second, that it must be from domestic animals and birds. An *altar* is first mentioned in connection with Noah's sacrifice ; for ages after it was often but a hastily gathered heap of stones or a mound of earthen clods. With Moses this grew into the massive brazen altar of the court, and the smaller of beaten gold in the sanctuary. As to the *sanctuary* itself, there was at first none but the lonely high place ; then a movable tent was consecrated for the purpose, and finally, after the kingdom had become established and its enemies subdued round about, a massive temple was erected, able to withstand the ravage of years. In the patriarchal period every man was his own *priest*, and every father that of his household ; then a tribe was selected from the nation, and a house from the tribe ; the end was reached in the sacred person of the anointed high priest, distinguished in his glittering official robes and studied stately gestures. The completed sacrificial system was very manifestly the product of a development through the ages from the simple and indefinite sacrifice of primitive times to the involved and specific sacrifice of later days.

This fact shows the necessity of interpreting the earlier sacrifices in the light of the later, just as the preparatory character of the Mosaic ritual required that it be interpreted in the light of Christianity. The adoption of this method will discover in some of the more primitive sacrifices an unexpected wealth of instruction and beauty, and will at the same time save from forced and unnatural constructions which are generally more picturesque than scientific. If one makes his exposition of the passover, for instance, in the light of the sin offering and peace offering, he will not only ascertain its real significance to a degree that otherwise would be impossible, but he will also see that the deliverance effected, and the calm of spirit that it afforded, were secured through essentially the same means as were elsewhere employed to attain similar ends.

If the Mosaic sacrificial system is to be regarded as largely the product of development, its essential identity in instruction and purpose with the preceding sacrifices must also be acknowledged. Development does not prevent the introduction of new truths or new phases of truth, but it does prevent the truth taught at a later stage being essentially different from that previously known. If the Levitical sacrifices grew out of those that preceded, their significance and purpose can only be a fuller development of truths already revealed less distinctly, and the more perfect realization of purposes previously fulfilled less perfectly. New phases of truth, and perhaps new truths of less importance, the completed system will

probably have, but everything fundamental and central will be found essentially the same as in the past.

A view very commonly held by modern expositors is, that pre-Mosaic sacrifice had no expiatory intention. Thus Oehler says: "There is no hint of the idea of atonement in the sacrifice of Isaac. Nor are there any expiatory sacrifices in the Old Testament before Moses." Such interpretation entirely overlooks the fact of development in the history of sacrifice. The recognition of any vital connection between the Mosaic sacrifices and those of the patriarchal ages would make impossible the denial to the latter of a truth that found in the former so great a prominence as did expiation. The fact of development would scarcely allow the introduction of such a fundamental principle to its recognized place of power without its being foreshadowed in preceding institutions.

If the pre-Mosaic sacrifices are expounded simply in the light of their own time, as embedded in the narrative of Genesis and Exodus, it will be easy to conclude that no thought of expiation is present in them. No mention is made of atonement, nor are they ever said to have been offered in view of sin. When, on the other hand, the interpretation is made in the light of later sacrifices, the conclusion arrived at will be of another kind. Atonement is so prominent in Mosaic sacrifices that its presence can hardly be denied in connection with the earlier forms of the ordinance, even though no explicit mention be made of it. The incoming of the law naturally gave such

a deepened conviction of sin as would demand a prominent place for expiation in sacrificial institutions. But even before the law was given there must have been a sufficient knowledge of sin to require that sacrifice be a medium of atonement as well as an expression of gratitude and longing desire. Only the complete separation in thought of the later from the earlier sacrifices would make possible the entertainment of any other view.

4. Another consideration that must not be overlooked in exposition, is that Hebrew sacrifices grew into their final form in contact more or less close with a heathen people whose language, ideas and customs had much in common with those of the chosen people. The Israelites had generally for neighbors a Semitic people, who spoke a Semitic language, were much given to the offering of sacrifice, and were in their own way deeply religious. They all had a common name for God, and nearly all for sin, sacrifice and atonement. When Abraham reached the promised land he found there a race akin to his own, who spoke a dialect of his mother-tongue, and who almost surpassed himself in their readiness to offer sacrifice. Isaac, Jacob and the twelve patriarchs spent all their days with similar surroundings. After the exodus from Egypt, and possession of the promised land, the united tribes found it not otherwise. During the forty years' sojourn in the desert their neighbors were of their own race; the Amalekites, the Edomites, the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Midianites were all Semites. After their settlement in Canaan it was

still largely the same; the Phœnicians, the Syrians, the Assyrians, the Amorites, and, it would seem, the Canaanites, generally, were their own kinsmen more or less remote. Their sojourn in Egypt was the only period of isolation during the formative years of their national life, and even during this period there was not a little intercourse between them and their neighbors. Their connection with other Semitic peoples never entirely ceased, and they were often in friendly touch with the Egyptians.

This living and continued contact with so many heathen peoples, especially with heathen Semites, must have had a large influence on the religious terminology and institutions of the Hebrews, and should be taken into consideration in discussing all their observances, including their sacrifices. If this is not done, beliefs and sentiments will be ascribed to their religious leaders which they never entertained and which never prevailed anywhere except in heathen or semi-heathen communities. Many a phrase occurs in Leviticus and in the other Mosaic books which must be taken figuratively if confusion is to be avoided and the real sentiments of the author understood. Such expressions had their origin in a rude condition of religious thought, and were understood literally, but long before made use of by inspired writers they had lost their earlier significance and were employed in a purely figurative sense. Only the recognition of this process will, in many cases, secure a trustworthy interpretation.

For example, the sacrifices are called in Leviticus



the "Bread of God" (Lev. 21 : 6, 8, 17, 21, 22 ; 22 : 25), but the description does not imply a conviction on the part of Moses and his people that God literally partook of the sacrifices offered Him. It only means that He found pleasure in the offerings which His people were wont to make. The phrase looked back to a time when the deity was supposed literally to eat the sacrifices which were offered, and in such a condition of religious thought it had its origin. Before the term became incorporated into the religious language of Israel it had lost its literal significance and was used only figuratively. When met in the Mosaic law it carried with it nothing of its original meaning except that God was pleased with the sacrifice which He had appointed. Should any one infer from its occurrence that the Israelites still believed that their God ate the sacrifices which they presented Him, he would overlook the vast distance in religious thought between the stages represented by the literal and the figurative use of the expression. No intelligent Israelite would interpret literally the phrase, "Bread of God." He would know something of its history, and would be able to discriminate between the literal and figurative use.

A somewhat similar illustration is afforded by the oft-recurring words, "An offering made by fire of a sweet savor unto the Lord" (Lev. 1 : 17, etc.). The phrase refers to the burning of the sacrifice or its fat upon the altar, and the emotion which it awakened in the divine heart. Originally the understanding was that the deity was pleased with the fragrance of

the burning flesh and fat, that it was to him literally a sweet savor. A Babylonian poet described the effect of the burnt offering which Noah offered on leaving the ark in these words: "The gods smelt the savor, the gods smelt the sweet savor; the gods gathered like flies about the sacrifice." In his thought the diffused fragrance of the burning sacrifice was literally a sweet savor to the deity, and this was the usual heathen conception, and that in which the phraseology had its origin. In the Mosaic law it stands otherwise. There the words bear nothing of their original literal meaning, and are used in a figurative sense expressing God's acceptance of, and pleasure in, the sacrifice offered Him. Did a heathen of crude religious ideas read these passages of the Mosaic law, he would at once understand them to mean that Jehovah, the God of Israel, like the gods of the nations, enjoyed the fragrance of the offerings burnt in His honor, but every intelligent Israelite would know that the words had left their literal meaning behind when appropriated by the religion of Israel, and were used in a sense purely figurative.

Many another illustration might be given to the like effect, all of which goes to show that Hebrew sacrifice and sacrificial language had a history that cannot be overlooked in reliable exposition of the Levitical sacrifices. A recognition must be given to the fact, that, corresponding to the elevation in religious thought of the Hebrews, was there carried on a spiritualizing process in the significance of language and ordinances.

5. In expounding the Mosaic sacrifices it may be assumed that, in addition to their common significance, each was intended to teach some distinctive truth and to accomplish some distinctive purpose. The interpretation that discovers the same meaning in the sin offering as in the burnt offering or the trespass offering, may well reconsider the method which it has pursued in arriving at its conclusions. In the patriarchal sacrifices there was a convenient simplicity and indefiniteness that made possible a diversity of instruction and purpose. With the Levitical system this condition came to an end, and each sacrifice became the embodiment of some specific truth and intention. All that was latent and implicit in the more primitive sacrifice, became disintegrated into the several sacrifices of the law, and was thus given an explicitness that it could not otherwise have had. Each Mosaic sacrifice took up its own portion of the significance and purpose of the patriarchal sacrifice, and by an undivided attention secured a distinctness of expression and result previously unattained. Thus each sacrifice of the law was given its own peculiar truth to teach and purpose to accomplish.

What this truth and purpose were is to be discovered in the distinctive feature of the ritual. Every one of the five great Levitical sacrifices had, in addition to the common features of its ritual, one that distinguished it from all the other sacrifices. In this distinctive feature is to be found the specific instruction that the sacrifice was intended to give, and

the specific effect which it was intended to produce. Its significance in common with the remaining sacrifices is discovered in what is general in its ritual, but its distinctive significance in what is distinctive. If, for instance, one compares the burnt offering with all the other animal sacrifices, he will discover that it had one, and only one, prominent feature peculiar to itself, and the meaning of this guiding principle is that in that distinguishing feature is to be found the specific function of that sacrifice. The principle is a very obvious one, but its adoption provides sufficient safeguard in the work of interpretation.

6. There remains another inquiry as perplexing as any. How much of the common features of the ritual is to be regarded as symbolic? Not a little harm has resulted in going to either extreme in this regard. Some have erred in finding a meaning in every feature, in the place of slaughter north of the altar, in the pouring of the surplus blood at the foot of the altar, in the flaying of the slain victim, in the division of the carcass into its parts, and in other such minor detail. Others have gone to the other extreme of refusing a symbolic significance to features intended to be symbolic, as, for instance, the slaying of the victim. There is, therefore, needed a guiding principle to enable the expositor to avoid both these faulty extremes.

Some help may be found in the method of regarding the sacrifice as a sort of parable in action. In the interpretation of a parable the only successful procedure is to find the central truth, that it was

intended to teach, and then to seek a meaning only in those features that were evidently intended to modify and elaborate that truth. So in the sacrifice one should discover, first of all, the central truth it was intended to teach and the chief purpose it was intended to accomplish, and then to attach significance only to what develops and modifies this truth and purpose. A wise exposition will ever refuse to seek a meaning in the drapery of a parable; a similar carefulness will prevent one attaching a symbolic meaning to what may be called the drapery of the sacrificial ritual.

This leaves still undecided what may be regarded as the drapery and what of value for instruction. To help in making this discrimination this obvious principle will be found most serviceable: Anything necessary to round off the essential features of the ritual may be overlooked as without meaning, and what is an obvious addition is to be accepted as symbolic in its intention. To illustrate: it was not a necessary feature of the sacrificial idea that a victim should be ceremonially clean, or without blemish, or chosen from domestic animals and birds; other religions allowed unclean victims, as the camel and horse, and victims that were not domestic, as the gazelle, and the wolf, and fish. Consequently it is safe to infer that the Mosaic enactment requiring the above qualities in the victim were intended to give religious instruction.

On the other hand, the slaying of the victim on the north side of the altar was unavoidable because every other side was otherwise occupied, the east as the

place of ashes (Lev. 1 : 16), the west by the laver (Ex. 30 : 18), and the south by the approaches to the altar; the pouring of the blood at the place of ashes was almost as unavoidable, as that was the only fitting place that was convenient; the flaying of the victim and the division of the carcase into its parts may also be regarded as necessary. It may, therefore, be concluded that neither of these features of the ritual was intended to be symbolic. In a similar way may every action of the ritual be tested, and the intention of the inspiring spirit in regard to it be discovered. By such a method all fanciful interpretations will be eliminated, and nothing intended to be of instruction will be overlooked.

The above principles and observations, if sufficiently considered and made use of, will be found to afford all necessary help in the work of expounding Old Testament sacrifices. They will be found to deliver from the intricacies and confusion that arise from all allegorizing tendencies in interpretation, as well as from the cold barrenness that results from rationalistic methods.

## CHAPTER III.

### *COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF MOSAIC SACRIFICES.*

THE five principal Mosaic sacrifices may be divided into two classes, the Animal Offerings and the Vegetable Offerings. The Animal Offerings again may be subdivided into two classes, the Expiatory Sacrifices, and the Non-expiatory Sacrifices ; to the former class belong the sin and trespass offerings, and to the latter the burnt and peace offerings. All these sacrifices have features in common which may be discussed to advantage in a separate chapter. This will make it necessary to discuss in connection with the individual sacrifices only what is distinctive of each.

1. One of the most insistent requirements of the Mosaic law was that every sacrifice should be offered at the central altar, at the tabernacle and temple. In the pre-Mosaic era every family and tribe had its own altar, and at the place where its dwelling might happen to be. Abraham in his wanderings built an altar at every encampment and there offered his sacrifices. This did Isaac and Jacob as well. With the Mosaic law began a new order in this regard,

according to which an offering anywhere but at the central altar was regarded as treason and punishable by death (Lev. 17 : 3-5). Such a fundamental change, so unique and so difficult in its realization, must have had some large underlying intention. What that intention was is not far to seek. It was intended to teach Israel the unity of God, and to check any inclination that might be felt toward idolatry. As long as every town and community had its own altar and high place, the disposition would be to suppose that the gods were as manifold as were the places of worship at which they met their votaries ; but when all became obliged to appear with their offerings at one great centre, and to join in the common service there, the conviction would gradually gain strength that God is one, and that He alone is to be worshipped.

Even after men had attained sufficient intelligence to recognize a sort of unity in the deity, a plurality of altars seems to have proved an enticement, encouraging the belief that a peculiar divine manifestation was made at the several important sanctuaries. Among the widely scattered votaries of the heathen Baal there appears to have been some vague idea of his unity, and yet alongside that belief there was the conviction that many a sanctuary had its own local deity of that name, or at least some peculiar manifestation of the one general deity. Thus the inhabitants of Shechem had their Baal-berith (Jud. 9 : 4) ; the Moabites worshipped on Mount Peor, a Baal-peor (Num. 25 : 3 ; *cf.* 23 : 28) ; there was a Baal-zephon on the shore of the Red Sea ; and a



Baal-gad near Mount Hermon. Indeed, the probability is that wherever Baal is found as a component in the name of a place, there is at hand the record of a time when a local deity of that name received there the worship of his votaries.

Whether anything corresponding to this is found in the religious history of Israel it is difficult to say. There are names of places not a few which have God's name as a constituent part. Jehovah-jireh (Gen. 22 : 14), Jehovah-nissi (Ex. 17 : 15), Jehovah-shalom (Jud. 6 : 24), are of this class. But whether any Israelite departed so far from the faith of his people as to suppose that Jehovah became a local deity at such places it is difficult to say. In any case, the experience of other peoples makes it plain enough that a multiplicity of altars tended towards such a result. And as for the chosen people themselves it is safe to add that monotheism never became with them an ineradicable conviction until the law of the central altar was faithfully enforced.

To those of easy mind such an enactment would seem severe and painfully inconvenient, but as nothing could be more effective than it was in teaching the unity of God, and in making that sublime truth a force in the national and individual life, it was in reality most gracious. Nor were the derived advantages of a central altar only religious. It had as well happy social and political effects. The concourse of people from all parts of the land at frequent intervals would go to unify the nation, and save its several members from hurtful provincialisms.

2. The law also required that a priest should minister at every sacrifice. In the pre-Mosaic age every worshipper was his own priest, but according to the new order every offering must be presented through an Aaronic priest duly ordained. The Levite, Korah, and his company disputed the authenticity of this law, and sought to burn incense at the altar after the manner of the priests, but the Lord broke out in judgment against them (Num. 16: 1-35). Uzziah, the king, intoxicated by success, pressed his way into the holy place, determined there to discharge priestly functions, but the Lord punished his temerity by smiting him with leprosy (2 Chron. 26: 18-20). None but a priest could minister at the sacred altar according to the Mosaic law.

This was a sweeping change from the former free and unrestrained practice that had been sanctioned by generations of the faithful fathers, but there were advantages to be derived from the new rule that far more than compensated for its obvious inconveniences. It went to secure law and order at the altar as nothing else could. Were each offerer allowed to lay his victim on the altar how and when he pleased, confusion could not be avoided, and the interests, or at any rate the convenience, of the different worshippers would be sure to conflict. As long as every town and village had its own place of sacrifice where offerings might be presented at any time, unseemly disorder and rivalry might be avoided though every offerer was allowed to be his own priest. When all were required to present their gifts at one common altar,

and throngs of worshippers would simultaneously appear in the temple courts, it was absolutely necessary, if the utmost confusion was to be avoided, to commit the priestly ministrations to an authorized body of men.

Then, too, it was necessary after the ritual had developed to its fullest complexity, to have men so skilled in the diverse sacrificial actions that the entire service might be executed with desired dignity and ease. In the simpler worship of the patriarchs, when all that was required was to slay the victim and prepare its carcass for the altar and feast, the most unpractised villager could discharge the priestly functions with the happiest results, provided only that he had the qualities of spirit required. With the elaboration of the sacrificial system, when sacrifices were multiplied in kind, and each had its own distinctive features of ritual, and all had a prolonged series of sacrificial actions, all this was changed. An offerer who appeared at the sanctuary but once or twice a year, could not be expected even to remember all the detail in connection with the sacrifices that he might be called upon to offer, much less would he be able to execute all such detail in a manner conducive to sober and reverent worship. The ordinances of sacrifice at the altar being what they became at the tabernacle and temple, a priesthood was required to administer them in a way that would be edifying to the people. Anything grotesque, or uncouth, or awkward in a service where so much depended upon the perfection of symbolism, would prove a serious disturbance to

worshippers not yet far advanced in the culture of the heart and spirit, and such outbreaks could be avoided only by having men devote their life to the altar ministry.

And what was of infinitely greater importance, the priestly office helped to beget a conviction of God's transcendent and holy character. One of the serious defects of heathen religion, especially in its primitive form, was the conception that the deity was a natural power with few ethical qualities. His god was to the heathen often but a reproduction of himself on a somewhat larger scale. The order of the priesthood helped to raise the Hebrew idea of God far above such gross materialism. It went to surround Him with mystery, and to clothe Him with inapproachable majesty. It went to create the conception that He was raised far above the human sphere into an isolated position of transcendent glory. The numerous intermediaries through whom an Oriental monarch was approached, went to deepen in his subjects a sense of his peculiarly exalted position; in a somewhat analogous manner the care with which every approach to Jehovah in His tabernacle and temple was guarded from profane intrusion, went to intensify the holy awe with which His most devout followers ever regarded Him. When men attain the highest condition of spiritual development, a free access to the most holy place will not diminish their reverence. The Israelites were, at the time they received the law, in a condition in which it was necessary to keep them at a distance if their awe of God and His dwelling-place was to grow

into the intensity necessary for healthy, spiritual activity. Indeed, the fact is, that the holiness of God finds no mention in Scripture until about the time the Levitical law was given. Its first mention was in the song of Moses, composed after crossing the Red Sea. From that time forward it became a frequently expressed truth, and one which gradually grew into the consciousness of the people. The revelation that God then made of himself, and the laws and ordinances which He had given, all united to produce this happy result ; but the significance of the priestly office will be misapprehended unless it is accorded an important place among the forces working to that end.

But if the priesthood went to distinguish and separate God from man, raising Him far above the work of His hands, it went as well to bring man near to God for whom he was made, and in whom alone his blessedness is found. The priest, because of his official sanctity, could go into the presence of God, even into the most holy place where His glory was miraculously manifested. He thus was a medium of communication between God and His people, which made them feel His nearness and accessibility, though so transcendently exalted, and so impregably guarded against all irreverent intrusion. Then, too, the priest, because of his skill in executing the ritual, and his knowledge of the law, and the official sanctity with which he was clothed, could make the sacrifices and offerings of the people acceptable with God, and in this way again create a bond of union and a medium of communion.

In short, the Aaronic priest was a mediator between Jehovah and Israel, and in that capacity he distinguished the infinite difference between God and the best of His people, and at the same time effected union and communion between the people and their God. In this respect he was a type of the Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. None has ever distinguished between God and man as He has done, and none other has effected an inseparable union between believing man and his God. Christ was the first to give God His place of indisputable supremacy over all the works of His hand, as He was also the first to recognize His nearness to the lowliest of His creatures, and to make that nearness a matter of conscious enjoyment.

3. Of the five sacrificial actions observed in offering victims, according to the law, three are the same in all the sacrifices, and may be considered to advantage in this chapter.

(1) Taking these in order, the presentation of the victim comes first. This part of the service took place, as it is so often put, "at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation" (Lev. 1: 3; 3: 2, etc.), or as it is more definitely described, at the north side of the altar of burnt offering (Lev. 1: 11; 7: 2). There was nothing symbolic in presenting the victim at the north side of the altar, but there was in the presentation itself. Every other side of the altar but the north was otherwise occupied. At the west side was the laver, at the east side was the place of ashes (Lev. 1: 16), and at the south side, at least, in the temple, there

was the ascent to the altar (Josephus, Wars, 5 : 5, 6). There was, therefore, no convenient alternative than that the victim should be presented at the north side of the altar.

The ceremony meant the dedication of the victim to the Lord. The offerer had selected it from the animals offered for sale about the temple, or perhaps from the flocks or herds of his distant home, and now he formally devotes it to the Lord to be made use of in His service—sets it apart from a common to a sacred use. Up to that moment the victim was still his own, and he could have disposed of it as he might desire, but by the presentation he has conveyed what right he had in the victim to the Lord of the altar, to whom it henceforth inalienably belonged. The act was a formal one, embodying a previous intention ; but, formal though it was, it gave rise to an entirely new relation. As a devout Israelite, the worshipper would have confessed even before the presentation that the animal in his possession belonged to his Lord, and that his right in it was only that of a steward, the right to make a wise use of it for his own good and the good of his neighbor. By the act of presentation, however, he gave up even this relative right ; he was not recognized as even a steward of what he had presented ; it had become absolutely the Lord's. It was an article of faith with every faithful Hebrew that " the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof ; the world, and they that dwell therein " (Ps. 24 : 1). His possessions, he recognized, were but a trust committed to him by his divine Master, and his place was to

make use of it according to the divine guidance accorded him. By a dedication such as was made at the altar, even possession in that sense came to an end.

It stands not otherwise with the Christian. He is only a steward of what he is pleased to call his property, and a steward who will in due time be asked to render an account of his investments to his rightful Lord. But even the right of stewardship he foregoes when he devotes a specific portion of his possession to the immediate service of God. There is no doubt that one stands in a different relation to what has been formally consecrated to the Lord and to what has not been so consecrated. The formal act of dedication makes a change in the relationship which it is necessary to acknowledge. What has been consecrated to God is to be made use of exclusively for His service.

(2) The second sacrificial action was the imposition of hands. This feature of the ritual consisted in laying the hands on the victim's head, and not simply in laying the hands on the head but in pressing with the hands upon its head as if resting the weight of the body upon it. "It was a forcible pressure of the hand upon the head of the victim" (Delitzsch). The term that describes the act is that which expresses the leaning upon his staff of one overcome by weakness (2 Kings 18: 21; Isa. 36: 6), and also the dependence of the believer upon his God (Isa. 26: 3; 48: 2). The hands imposed were those of the offerer, or if the sacrifice was for the nation, the hands of the



elders of the people (Lev. 4: 15). On the day of atonement there was the exceptional occurrence of the high priest laying his hands on the goat of the sin offering which was intended for Azazel.

As to the meaning of this action opinions differ. It has been very commonly held to indicate the transference of the offerer's guilt to the victim that has become his substitute. "It symbolized," says Dr. Kellogg, "a transfer of the obligation . . . to suffer for sin, from the offerer to the innocent victim." There is much that can be advanced in support of this interpretation. It is distinctly stated that when the high priest laid his hand on the goat for Azazel, he "confessed over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel" (Lev. 16: 21). According to Lev. 5: 5 a confession of sin was required in connection with the sin offering for certain kinds of sin. Num. 5: 7 shows that this was the case also in connection with trespass offerings for certain trespasses. It is not stated in either of these cases that the confession was to be made during the imposition of hands, but that is assumed as probable.

Against this view is the fact that the burnt and peace offerings are dominated more by other thoughts than that of sin, and consequently it is improbable that confession of sin should have the prominence in connection with these two sacrifices that it would have were that the significance of the imposition of hands. Some have inferred from Deut. 26: 13 that prayer was offered with every sacrifice, and have made use of that fact as an argument to prove that

confession of sin was always associated with the imposition of hands. Such a course of reasoning is altogether inconclusive. Were it the case that prayer did accompany every sacrifice, that would not necessarily mean that confession of sin was made on every such occasion. The prayer would be the expression of the thoughts and emotions that prompted the offering, and if these were of a joyful, thankful character, confession of sin would be excluded, or at any rate would receive but little prominence. Indeed, the sentiments expressed in Deut. 26: 13-15 have no trace of the feelings from which confession arises, and were such a prayer offered with the imposition of hands, it would rather go to show that confession was not made in connection with that ceremony, and that the ceremony itself did not mean the transference of guilt from the offerer to the victim to be offered.

The opinion now usually held is: "That the imposition of hands was a visible devotion of the victim to the purposes of animal sacrifice" (Cave), or as otherwise expressed: "The meaning of the rite was that the individual conveyed his purpose of heart over to the animal and thus consecrated it as a sacrifice" (Oehler). According to this interpretation the thought accompanying the imposition of hands will vary according to the nature of the sacrifice. Every sacrifice has its own associated sentiments and dominating purpose, and as the imposition of hands is a dedication of the victim to embody and realize these, its meaning will be different in each kind of sacrifice. With the sin offering, for instance, which

was intended as a remedy for sin, the dominant thought will be sin and its remedy, and the imposition of hands will be a designation of the victim to the purposes of atonement, and will in the nature of the case involve a confession of sin expressed or implied. The purpose of the burnt offering is consecration; accordingly the imposition of hands would mean that the victim was devoted to the purpose of being made a medium of consecration. Here also the confession of sin might be involved, but only to a subordinate degree.

This exposition has much to commend it, and not least the fact that it retains the unity of thought and purpose that must be expected to dominate each sacrifice as an organic whole. The other view would make such a complete break in the flow of thought in some of the sacrifices that it becomes altogether untenable when regarded as an interpretation applicable in every case. It was quite impossible that in the peace offering, for instance, which was intended to bring the offerer into the fullest possible enjoyment of the pardon and reconciliation effected by another sacrifice, an essential feature of the ritual would be the transfer to the victim of guilt which had already been removed. It was not otherwise with the burnt offering, which also in the Levitical sacrificial system proceeded on the basis of an atonement, and consequent forgiveness already effected. Only an interpretation like the last mentioned can be adopted, which adapts the significance of this part of the ritual to the recognized symbolism and purpose of each sacrifice as an organic whole.

The imposition of hands was the natural sequence to the presentation at the altar. In the presentation the offerer devoted the victim to the Lord, and in the imposition of hands he indicated the purpose for which he so devoted it. Leaning upon the victim's head, he in effect said: "I rely on this substitute to express my sentiments, and be a medium of the divine blessing in the hope of which I offer it." The ceremony expressed the sense of dependence which all men feel, and which is fully met only in Christ, who alone gives full expression to man's religious emotions, and who is the only medium through which every needed blessing is secured.

(3) The third sacrificial act was the killing, the significance of which has given rise to more discussion than almost any other feature of the sacrificial ritual. It was usually performed by the offerer, the priest standing by only to receive the blood. There were instances in which it became the duty of the priests and Levites, as at the morning and evening sacrifice (Lev. 6: 12); and at the passover in its later form (Ezra 6: 20; 2 Chron. 30: 15-17; 35: 1-11). Indeed, it is probable that in all the sacrifices of a public character, and for the nation, the priests and Levites did the killing (Lev. 16: 15; 2 Chron. 29: 21-24). With these exceptions the offerer slew his own victim.

The interpretations that have been given of this part of the sacrificial ritual, may be classified into three groups. First of all, there is that which attaches no significance to the killing, but sees in it only the means to secure the blood. Oehler says: "The

slaying of the victim was only to secure the blood, and there is no indication that it meant that its death atoned for the sinner to the justice of God." To like effect is Strack's view: "The killing is a means of securing the blood and preparing for the burning;" and Nowack's: "The killing was merely the means to secure the blood in order to present it before God." It is urged in behalf of this interpretation that had the killing a symbolic purpose, it would have been performed by the priest and not by the offerer; to which it is enough to answer that the presentation at the altar and the imposition of hands were by the offerer, and were indisputably symbolic in intention. A fatal objection that might be urged is that the blood could have been secured without the killing, if nothing further was required. Moreover, it was not always necessary in sacrifice to shed the blood of the slain victim. Tradition has it that the goat for Azazel on the day of atonement was slain by being cast from an overhanging cliff, and not by the shedding of its blood. The victim that was offered to atone for murder committed by an unknown offender (Deut. 21 : 1-9), may well be regarded as sacrificial, and yet the killing was not effected by shedding the blood but by breaking the neck (v. 4). This goes to show that while the killing of the victim was essential in sacrifice, the shedding of the blood was not, which would not have been the case were the killing merely a means to secure the blood. The sacrificial rites of other peoples afford similar evidence. As will be elsewhere discovered, it was no uncommon

practice among non-Hebrew peoples to burn their sacrificial victims alive, while killing by strangulation was still more common, and killing by wrenching the neck and casting from an elevation was not unknown, which again goes to show that while killing was involved in the idea of sacrifice, the shedding of blood was not.

A second interpretation which has been more generally accepted, regards the killing, to use theological terminology, as penal and vicarious. This view connects itself with that which sees in the imposition of hands a transference of guilt from the offerer to the head of the victim, and it regards the killing of the victim as an infliction because of the sin which it has thus been made to bear. The offerer, according to this view, enjoys pardon and deliverance from all his fears because justice has been satisfied in the death of the substituted victim and the dread consequences of the sin thus exhausted. The wages of sin is death and since the victim has died for the offerer's sin he is permitted to enjoy life.

A serious objection to this view is that it is not applicable to every case of sacrifice. It is not applicable, for instance, to the peace and burnt offerings in which atonement and pardon were present only as subordinate ideas. In sacrifices such as the sin and trespass offerings, where the removal of sin was almost the only consideration, such an interpretation might be accepted with certain qualifications, but in sacrifices such as the burnt and peace offerings, which presupposed that the offerer was already,

through atonement made for him, in the enjoyment of reconciliation and pardon, it is altogether impossible. Penal suffering must have been an idea altogether foreign in sacrifices which symbolized the consecration to God, and the fellowship with God, of an offerer already reconciled and forgiven. The thought of substitution was present in every sacrifice, and perhaps also the thought of substitutionary suffering, but penal, substitutionary suffering is a different conception and cannot be regarded as the general significance of the slaying in the Mosaic sacrifices.

A less objectionable view is that which sees in the killing the actual giving up of the life for the purpose of sacrifice. When the victim was slain the action indicated that its life was given up to do for the offerer what the sacrifice under consideration was intended to accomplish. If the victim was offered as a burnt offering, the slaying meant that its life was given up to be for the offerer a medium of consecration, or if the sacrifice was a sin offering, then the slaying meant that the animal's life was given up to make atonement. This interpretation makes the killing an essential feature of the sacrifice, not, however, in order to secure the blood, but to give up the life without which the sacrifice was not accomplished. Had the law so decreed, death by strangulation would have been equally effective with death by shedding of blood. What was required was the giving up of life, and had not the law decreed otherwise, it would have been entirely immaterial how that was accomplished. This interpretation connects itself with that which

sees in the imposition of hands a dedication of the animal to the purpose of sacrifice, and like that interpretation given the imposition of hands, has in its favor the consideration that it allows one great purpose to dominate all the essential actions of the ritual.

(4) In the fifth sacrificial action there was a feature common to all the sacrifices. In every offering it was required that a portion of the carcase, usually the fat (Lev. 3 : 4 ; 4 : 9, etc.), should be consumed with fire upon the altar. In the burnt offering the entire victim was so disposed of, and in all the other sacrifices the fat. This symbolized the Lord's acceptance of the sacrifice. The fat being the choicest portion of the victim was given Him on the altar, and when it was wrapped up in the flame there was indicated that the entire sacrifice, of which the fat was a part, was accepted for the purpose for which it was offered. In several instances a miraculous fire from the Lord indicated the acceptance of the specific sacrifice then offered. This happened when Aaron began his official work (Lev. 9 : 24), when David set up an altar and sacrificed on Mount Moriah (1 Chron. 21 : 26), when the temple worship was instituted (2 Chron. 7 : 1), and on several other instances (Jud. 6 : 21 ; 1 Kings 18 : 38). From this it may be inferred that the burning on the altar always symbolized the acceptance of the sacrifice. The fire on the altar was the Lord's fire, which was not allowed to die out (Lev. 6 : 12), and when it caused the offering to ascend heavenwards in the pillar of flame and smoke, the significance was the Lord's acceptance of what had been



offered. This is confirmed by the oft-recurring phrase referring to the portion consumed upon the altar: "An offering made by fire of a sweet savor unto the Lord." The fact that the burning is called "a sweet savor unto the Lord," implied the acceptance of the entire offering.

A very unwarranted and offensive rendering sees in the consumption on the altar a symbol of hell fire. "It (the fire) was divinely intended to show the wrath of God revealed from heaven against all ungodliness of men. . . . The fire burns all night—an emblem of the sleeplessness of hell." How this can be harmonized with the fact that the Lord sent miraculous fire at the institution of the tabernacle sacrifices (Lev. 9: 24), and afterwards when the temple worship was established (2 Chron. 7: 1), it is impossible to see. That fire cannot possibly have been a symbol of the Lord's wrath descending from heaven, and as little could its continuance through the watchful care of the priests. The Lord was well pleased when the worship of the tabernacle, and afterwards of the temple, was inaugurated, and His miraculous fire was an expression of His approval and not of His displeasure. It is still more impossible to see how such an interpretation can be harmonized with the recurring statement that the burning on the altar was a sweet savor unto the Lord. Would it not lead to the conclusion that the burning in hell was a delight to the most gracious God?—a conclusion so hideous that it would cause the rejection of any premise that led up to it. It is one of the mysteries of interpretation how any

one could associate such a conception with an institution so gracious as the altar and its sacrifice.

4. There were three characteristics required in every sacrificial victim which were symbolic in their intention. In some sacrifices additional qualifications were required, but these were demanded in all.

(1) First of all, it was necessary that every victim should be selected from domestic life, from the flock or herd, from pigeons or doves. Other religions allowed offerings from the spoils of the chase and the sea. The Babylonians, and the Phœnicians, and the Egyptians delighted in sacrificing the gazelle, the Persians were wont to offer the hind (Ovid), and the Egyptians fish, but the Israelites only what was raised on their own farmsteads. This rule has been taken to signify that a sincere devout spirit should prevent the Lord's worshippers from offering Him anything that did not cost labor and care. David is on record as saying: "Neither will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God which cost me nothing" (2 Sam. 24 : 24), and the claim is that it was the development of this sentiment the law had in view when it forbade the offering of anything but domestic animals and birds. Other religions might be satisfied with sacrificing what chanced to come to hand, but the Hebrew religion only with what was reared by human industry.

Such a truth is doubtless suggested by this requirement of the law, but it by no means exhausts its significance. Far more important was the implication that victims for acceptable sacrifice must be closely associated with the offerer's life, and be the object of

his deep regard. Other peoples might offer their gods the wild and savage beasts of the field, but the Israelite only animals such as he loved. The flocks and herds of an Oriental peasant were interwoven with his life in a manner unknown in western lands. Through unceasing contact continued by day and by night, and through watchful care, on the one hand, and the almost complete dependence, on the other, a strength of mutual affection sprang up that was quite unique, and that resulted in an identity of life and interest equally unique. Read in the light of this circumstance, the exclusion of other victims than domestic is seen to mean that the only acceptable sacrifice is that of a victim so closely identified with the offerer that the giving up of its life may be deemed almost like the offering of him in whose stead it stands. It indicated that man's redemption could be wrought out only through a life closely bound to his own, so closely that obligations and virtues could freely course from one to the other. How true a prophecy was this of the coming Saviour, who, being God's Son, was for our salvation emptied of His glory and made in all points like those whom He was to save!

(2) The law also required that victims should not only be closely allied to the offerer's life, but be also ceremonially clean. The camel was quite as domestic as the ox and the sheep, so were the horse, and the ass, and the swine, and the dog, but they were never offered in sacrifice at Jehovah's altar. Other peoples might use such victims in sacrifice. The Persians valued the horse for sacrifice above every other

animal ; the Egyptians and the Romans were wont to offer swine ; the bedouins offered the camel ; the inhabitants of Lampsacus offered the ass (Ovid), and the Romans once a year offered the dog (Ovid). The Israelite rejected these every one because they were unclean. If he would offer to the Lord only what was closely identified with his own life, neither would he offer anything that he in any way abhorred.

The opinion has often been expressed that ceremonial cleanness or uncleanness of an animal resolved itself into its acceptability or inacceptability as a sacrifice to the deity. Anything was regarded clean that could be offered in sacrifice, and what could not be so offered was said to be unclean. The evidence in the case does not sustain such a view. According to the Mosaic law there were numbers of clean animals and birds that were excluded from the altar. The antelope, and gazelle, and wild goat, and chamois (Deut. 14: 5), and several domestic birds were of such a class, but according to the above stated principle these would be all unclean because they were not allowed in sacrifice. Nor can the opinion be harmonized with the usages of other peoples who drew the distinction between clean and unclean. The Egyptians regarded the swine as unclean (Her. 2: 47), but they sacrificed it to one of their gods, and they regarded the cow as clean but permitted it in no circumstance to be sacrificed (Her. 2: 41). On the other hand, the people of Haran considered the swine holy (Marti), but do not seem to have used it for sacrifice. Indeed, with some tribes holiness was a bar

to sacrifice. Some principle must be sought back of this that explains why certain animals were clean and others unclean. To say that everything was clean that could be offered to the deity, and everything unclean that could not does not explain the facts in the case.

A more satisfactory principle of classification was the sanitary, or supposed sanitary, qualities of the different forms of animal life. That was clean that was thought suitable for food, and that was unclean that was thought injurious. Animals that parted the hoof and chewed the cud were found wholesome, palatable food, and were declared clean. All other animals were found less satisfactory when placed under this test and were declared unclean (Deut. 14 : 61). Birds of prey and such as lived on carrion were objectionable as food, and they also were all declared unclean. The same principle was applied to fish and to the insect tribe with like effect. To say, then, that only the clean could be offered in sacrifice was much the same as saying that only that could be offered that proved to be appetizing, wholesome food.

The flesh of nearly all the sacrifices was either in part or whole, in one way or another, made use of as food. The flesh of the peace offering was in part given to the priests, and became in part a sacrificial meal for the offerer and his friends. The flesh of the trespass offering was given to the priests, and the flesh of the sin offering was disposed of in the same way, except when the blood of the victim was brought into the holy place (Lev. 6 : 30). It was, therefore,

a beneficent provision that only such animals were permitted to be offered whose flesh made pleasant, wholesome food. God in His watchful care provided that nothing should be presented at His altar whose use would prove prejudicial to His people. He would accept no gift but what would be to their comfort and strength.

This rule may be given a general reference, to the effect that God will not accept as a gift anything from any one that will prove injurious in its results. The sacrifice, the service, the worship that does not help but hurt, that does not advance but retard human well-being, can never be pleasing to God. As His prophets are known by their fruits (Matt. 7: 15 *seq.*), so may His acceptable sacrifices. What does not bear good fruit in human life He will in the end reject. The ultimate test of everything that offers itself for approval at His altar, is its effect on human character.

There may be in the demand for clean victims at the altar also an echo of ruder times when men thought of their sacrifices as food literally prepared for the deity. In such a primitive condition of religious thought there would be an additional reason why only animals ordinarily used for food should be offered in sacrifice. Naturally there would be ascribed to the deity something of the preferences of His worshippers, and as a result there would be no disposition to offer Him what they themselves would not enjoy as food. This conception had been for long outlived by the Hebrews before the Mosaic law had been given, and yet it contained a principle applicable

to the activities of all ages. Men should never offer to God what was not thought good enough for themselves. It is not fitting that they should be eager in what pertains to their own service and indifferent in regard to what concerns His. If they throw their whole energy into works having reference to their own interests, they should not think that a slothful spirit is allowable in the works of the Lord. It is surely wrong to be satisfied with less success in what is undertaken in God's name than one would hope for from what is undertaken in his own interests.

The principle can be variously applied. It was implicitly used by David when he reasoned that it was not fitting that the Lord should dwell in a tent while he, the king, lived in an house of cedar (1 Chron. 17 : 1). When Malachi urged upon the Jews the necessity of offering unblemished victims in sacrifice, by reminding them that they would not dare give their governor anything that was blemished (1 : 8), he was making use of a somewhat similar argument. What is not good enough for man's use should not be offered to God. The primitive reason for offering only clean victims may well be an actuating motive in the conduct of the most highly developed peoples.

In addition to the unwholesome and unpalatable character of what was unclean, there was sometimes the additional property of producing, because of appearance, or habit, or association, a feeling akin to repugnance, especially when regarded as food. Even yet, one would be repelled by a repast prepared from many of the forms of life which were pronounced

unclean in the Old Testament, though advanced culinary skill might remove any injurious qualities. There are instances in which such feelings do not now sanction these ceremonial discriminations made by the Levitical law, but this may in part be accounted for by improved conditions having gradually dislodged the more repugnant features. Though pork is considered wholesome and palatable food now, there are evident reasons why it should have been regarded differently in eastern lands and in earlier ages. Its condition and habits would then afford good reason for the entertained disfavor towards its use as food. Perhaps in every instance the unclean, according to the Mosaic law, was not only less wholesome but had also characteristics that were repulsive to refined taste. In some instances this may have had more to do with the declared uncleanness than had the unsanitary qualities. Consequently the ban pronounced against the sacrifice of unclean victims taught the Israelite that nothing repellent, or abhorrent, or loathsome should be offered the Lord in sacrifice.

But intelligent men would not stop at this. They would soon remind themselves that nothing is abhorrent, or repulsive, or loathsome to God but what is morally unclean. He who pursued His work of creation until He was able to say, "It is good," of everything that left His shaping hand, sees a fitness and beauty in His creatures every one, as well in sulky camels and asses as in amiable sheep and oxen. That alone is to Him an abomination which is



morally impure and misshapen. The law rejecting unclean victims from sacrifice, therefore, symbolized that God accepted nothing that was offered Him except what was morally clean.

Elsewhere in the law it was written : "Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, nor the wages of a dog into the house of the Lord thy God for a vow" (Deut. 23 : 18), and this can be generalized according to the symbolic instruction here given until it excludes from the number of acceptable sacrifices everything gained in violation of God's law. The spoiler grown fat in purveying to human weaknesses may be able to offer gifts acceptable to his fellows, tolerant of everything but failure, but he cannot, it is here made plain, make a sacrifice acceptable to God from the multitude of his ill-gotten gains. The defrauder and oppressor may bring his gifts to the altar, but if his offering is bespattered with tears and stained with blood, the divine eye will read the cruel record and His merciful heart will recoil with abhorrence. Only the fruits of righteousness will be to the Lord a pleasing sacrifice. Everything else will be rejected as unclean.

(3) A third requirement of the law was that the victim be without blemish. "Blind, or broken, or maimed, or having a wen, or scurvy, or scabbed, ye shall not offer these unto the Lord" (Lev. 22 : 22). "If it have any blemish, as if it be lame, or blind, any ill blemish whatsoever, thou shalt not sacrifice it unto the Lord thy God" (Deut. 15 : 21). The Jews in the days of Malachi brought their blind and lame and sick to the altar, but their sacrifice was not respected

(1:8). The Lord's message to them in effect was: "When ye offer the blind for sacrifice it is no evil! and when ye offer the lame and sick it is no evil!" (1:8). So say ye, but not the Lord." Every victim, the law demanded, must be the best of its kind.

This taught that whenever men bring their gifts to the Lord they are to offer their best. If men give their service, or their talents, or their years, they are in every case to give their best. Half-hearted service, indifferently executed workmanship, is not acceptable with either God or man. It is required of every man to seek the best possible results from the material which Providence lays to his hand. It is not so much what one gives, only that it be the best of its kind. The law does not require so much the highest sort of employment as that the best be made of the employment in which one is already engaged. To take an illustration from John the Baptist's teaching. When the publicans and the soldiers asked John what they should do in preparation for the coming kingdom, his answer was that they should guard against the temptations peculiar to their occupation, and render the best service of which they were capable. He told them in effect to be good soldiers and good publicans (Luke 3: 12, 13). And so it generally is that an unblemished sacrifice is offered by faithful service in whatever position it is given one to occupy. John did not advise the soldiers and the publicans to seek a more merciful service: he only asked them to be faithful in the service in which they were already engaged.

But the best service sometimes requires a change of occupation. The dictum, become so popular in late years, that all work is sacred, that no work is secular, may prove a stimulating truth when properly understood, but if it is taken to mean that all work is equally sacred, it will prove a corrupting error. The most menial task is holy service for those intended for such an occupation, but it would be a sinful waste of endowment for those otherwise qualified to spend their days. A Dante, and a Raphael, and a Handel, and a Whitefield engaged in work that did not call into action their peculiar God-given powers, could not be said to render the best service, however honest their efforts or necessary the sort of work which they pursued. In order to offer themselves as living sacrifices, and as sacrifices that could be characterized as unblemished, it would be necessary to forego their lowlier task and undertake the work for which God intended them: They would not be justified in reasoning that all work was sacred, and that therefore they were as well engaged in one occupation as in another. The sacred work for them was the work for which God endowed them, and any other life's occupation would be but profane. The only unblemished sacrifice is that which renders the highest and best possible service.

It is not without interest to notice that in one sacrifice, the freewill offering, a less perfect victim was allowed than in the other sacrifices. The law in this regard read: "A bullock or a lamb that hath anything superfluous or lacking in its parts, that thou

mayest offer for a freewill offering" (Lev. 22 : 23). The reason usually given for this relaxation of the law is that the most prominent feature of the freewill offering was the feast which the offerer and his family were invited to enjoy. In the other sacrifices the reference was to God, and consequently the victim must be without blemish, but in this sacrifice there was a prominent manward reference, and as a result the victim might be less perfect. This was fitted to teach that one should be more scrupulous in the service which he renders to God than he would be in service that had more special reference to his own interests.

It is a notable fact that among other peoples than the Hebrews great care was taken lest blemished victims should be offered in sacrifice. The Egyptians appointed a priest for the very purpose of examining the victims that were to be offered their deity, and they punished with death the man who sacrificed an animal that had not been officially examined (Her. 2 : 38). The Romans also exercised great care in securing what they regarded as suitable victims. It would seem that men instinctively recognize the obligation to offer what is best to God. When they act otherwise they sin not only against the light of revelation, but also against the light of nature.

These common features of the Mosaic sacrifices having been now interpreted, there may be next considered what is peculiar in the purpose and symbolism of each. And first in the order of time comes the burnt offering.

## CHAPTER IV.

### *BURNT OFFERING.*

(Lev. 1 : 1-17; 6 : 8-13.)

THE burnt offering was the most prominent of all the Old Testament sacrifices. Its fire never went out on the altar, nor did its fragrance ever cease to ascend. By day and by night its curling pillar of flame and smoke rose to meet the clouds as if, like Jacob's ladder, to unite together the interests of earth and heaven. The law required that it should be offered for the nation every morning and evening in the year, and that on sacred days like the Sabbath, and during sacred seasons like the festivals, it should be largely multiplied. For the individual Israelite, also, it was required in quite a number of circumstances, and the pious heart without legal compulsion often felt disposed to draw near through its medium. The only sacrifice that at all compared in prominence was the peace offering. The sin offering and the trespass offering were quite as necessary, and occupied even a more fundamental place in the services of the altar, but in the matter of prominence they occupied quite a secondary position. The burnt offering was offered far more frequently than any other

sacrifice, and generally made use of a larger number of victims than did any other.

In the order of development, also, the burnt offering occupied the first place, at least among the Israelites. It was the first to distinguish itself from the homogeneous sacrifices of more primitive times, and to become elaborated into a definite and permanent form. The sin and trespass offerings do not appear in the preserved Jewish literature until the Mosaic law, while the burnt offering can be traced back to the days of Noah. The peace offering also is one of the oldest forms of sacrifice. It is described in Scripture for the first time at the ratification of the covenant at Sinai, but it must have been in common use centuries before that fruitful event. Perhaps the earliest reference to it that remains is found in Gen. 31 : 24, where it is said that "Jacob offered a sacrifice in the mountain, and called his brethren to eat bread." The offerings made by Cain and Abel were so undeveloped and indefinite that it is impossible to classify either among those of later times, and so the conclusion seems inevitable, that as far as Israel is concerned, the burnt offering was the first of all the sacrifices to assume an explicit and definite form.

Among other peoples the order may have been different, and probably was, as the burnt offering implies more advanced ideas than are necessarily implied in the peace offering. The burnt offering represents the age of altars and high places; the peace offering may precede all these. The former must have originated after men began to think of the

deity as dwelling on high, and as too spiritual to partake literally of the offerings presented him ; the latter can be traced back to an age when the gods were regarded as natural powers, and partaking with men of the food offered in sacrifice. In the order of thought, therefore, the peace offering preceded the burnt offering, and there can be little doubt that that was the actual order of development among heathen communities when there was found sufficient spiritual vigor to rise above the rudest religious ordinances. In the line of the chosen people it was otherwise. There, from the very beginning, God was conceived of as supernatural and spiritual, and not partaking of the sacrifices offered in any material sense ; consequently it was just as probable that the burnt offering should appear before the peace offering as that the peace offering should appear before the burnt offering. The religious conditions were unique, and the law of development operating among other peoples did not necessarily hold.

The distinctive feature of the burnt offering is found in the manner in which the carcass of the victim offered was disposed of. The sprinkling of blood was the same as in the peace and trespass offerings. The presentation at the altar, the imposition of hands, and the slaying, were the same as in the peace, sin and trespass offerings. The only point of difference was in the use made of the carcass. In the peace offering this was in part made use of by the offerer and his friends as a sacrificial meal, and in part became the portion of the priests ; in the trespass offering it all

fell to the priests, who made use of it as food ; in the sin offering it was sometimes consumed by fire without the camp, and in other cases was given to the priests. The peculiar feature of the burnt offering was, that it was consumed by fire on the altar. In this feature is to be sought the chief significance of the sacrifice, the distinctive truth it was intended to teach, and the distinctive purpose it was intended to accomplish. If in the other actions of the ritual one is to discover its meaning in common with other sacrifices, in this action he is to discover the meaning peculiar to itself.

In the burning of the carcase upon the altar the offerer saw his consumed victim rising heavenward in the ascending flame and smoke—he saw it, in other words, rising towards God who dwelt on high. Indeed, the literal meaning of the term, rendered burnt offering in the English version, is the sacrifice that ascends. Not as some would render it, the sacrifice whose victim is placed on the altar (Oehler), but that which rises from the altar towards heaven and God. The burnt offering was, therefore, the sacrifice in which the offered victim was through the agency of the altar fire so transformed in its material as to be wafted upwards into the presence of the Most High. The victim, however, represented the offerer. He had selected and set it apart for the very purpose of taking his own place, made it his substitute to represent him before God. When, therefore, transformed by the fire he saw it ascend from the altar towards the clouds, his pursuing thought would lift the entire



self, of which it was the substitute, towards the same goal. The consuming victim would thus prove a medium through which the offerer would be enabled to devote himself to God. In other words, the distinctive purpose of the burnt offering was to secure the consecration of the worshipper. Through it he "Presented himself a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God" (Rom. 12 : 1). It symbolized consecration, and was made the means of its realization. "It was an embodiment of the idea of the consecration and self-surrender of the whole man to the Lord, to be pervaded by the refining and sanctifying power of divine grace" (Delitzsch). "The resolute surrender and willing resignation which the religion of Jehovah taught, found vigorous expression there" (Ewald). "What was specially aimed at in the burnt offering was to express complete surrender to the Lord with a view to the renewal and sanctification of the entire man" (Keil). When a member of the congregation, impelled by desire for a more spiritual life and service, laid his burnt offering on the altar, his intention was to devote himself in more complete consecration to God. This may in part account for the prominent place given this sacrifice. Consecration is an element in all true worship, and the sacrifice which embodied it would naturally be made the general sacrifice of worship.

In the burnt offering the entire victim was consumed upon the altar. The hide became the perquisite of the ministering priest (Lev. 7 : 8), but the rest of the carcase, the body, the head, the fat, the

inwards, and the legs (Lev. 1 : 8, 9) was disposed of as stated. In other sacrifices it was only the fat that was burnt on the altar, but here it was the entire victim. This doubtless symbolized that the consecration of the offerer was to be entire. He must needs devote to the Lord his entire manhood, body, soul and spirit, understanding, will and affections, reason, conscience and imagination ; every side of his many-sided nature ; every faculty of his being ; his entire self. Nothing was to be withheld.

In every age and among every people consecration is in danger of being defective ; in one age and among one people the defect may be in one feature ; in another age and among another people it will probably assume some other form. Among the Jews, as among primitive people generally, there was an unceasing tendency to a defective consecration on the moral side of their nature. They were usually zealous enough in what pertained to religion, ready to observe the most elaborate ritual and to adhere to every required regulation, but when it came to the moral requirements upon which God insisted they were not always found so scrupulous. They were willing enough to be religious, but not so willing to be moral. They would bring their gifts to the altar and would depart only "to sell the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes" (Amos 2 : 6). They would observe the Sabbath and the monthly feasts with apparent devotion, but were all the while saying in their hearts : "When will the new moon be gone that we may sell corn ? and the Sabbath that we may set

forth wheat? making the ephah small and the shekel great, [and dealing falsely with balances of deceit" (Amos 8: 6). They would satiate God with their burnt offerings and the fat of fed beasts, but they did not give ready heed when He said: "Cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the faithless, plead for the widows" (Isa. I: 11-17). Prophet after prophet urged this upon them as one of their most serious faults, their habit of thus divorcing morals and religion, adhering to the latter and neglecting the former.

A defect the very opposite of this is sometimes met in cultured circles that have little in common with the conditions prevailing in more primitive times. It is the defect of ignoring religion as something fanciful and unreal, and advocating the claims of morals as necessary for the good of the individual and of society at large. The materialistically inclined scientific spirit errs in this direction with an error that ultimately proves as subversive of true living as the converse error which so often marred the life of the Jews in pre-Christian times.

Two other defects are far too characteristic of modern thought, the habit of alienating religion and the understanding, conscience and imagination. Religion, it is said, is a matter of feeling only, and morals should not be allowed to invade the realm of art. Science and religion are supposed to have each its own sphere isolated and independent, separated by a gulf that was never intended to be bridged either by science seeking to pass over into the sphere

of religion, or by religion seeking to enter into the domain of science. Similar, it is claimed, should be the relation between art, on the one hand, and conscience, or morals, on the other. Art, it is said, has nothing to do with morals, or conscience. It is an end in itself without any reference to some dominating higher and more remote end. The thought of God and the voice of conscience have nothing to do, so it is said, with the verse of the poet, the canvas of the painter, and the image of the sculptor. Art for art's sake is the motto.

Not so teaches the burnt offering. It demands for God the whole man with all his activities. It would have His thought dominate the understanding and color every imagination. It would reconcile in him science and religion, morals and art, and claim them all in His name. And surely this is as it should be. God is the essence of all that is, the life and the wisdom of the world, in whom everything lives and moves and has its being. It is the most fatal error, therefore, to exclude Him from any sphere of human activity, be it theoretical or practical, material or spiritual. Well might it be said of isolated, God-forgetting knowledge :

“What is she cut from love and faith  
But some wild Pallas from the brain  
Of Demons? fiery-hot to burst  
All barriers in her onward race  
For power. Let her know her place—  
She is the second not the first.”

And as well might it be said of art that is satisfied with itself, and defies conscience and the law of God :

“Art for art’s sake! Hail truest Lord of Hell!  
Hail Genius master of the moral will!  
The filthiest of all paintings painted well  
Is mightier than the purest painted ill!  
Yes, mightier than the purest painted ill!  
So prone are we toward the broad way to Hell.”

It is to be observed that not only was the entire victim consumed on the altar, it was also to be completely consumed. It was to remain there until the flame had finished its work. Nothing was to be left that either priest or offerer could use for his own service; all was to be completely given up to God. This taught that the whole man was to be *completely* as well as entirely consecrated. It declared in symbol what was elsewhere put into words, that man was to love the Lord his God with *all* his heart, and with *all* his soul and with *all* his strength. God was to be in *all* his thoughts, his will was to coincide in *all* things with the divine will, his affections were to be supremely fixed on God. *All* his learning, *all* his art, *all* the wealth of his manhood were to be devoted to God.

The opposite to this is illustrated by James when he speaks of a doubleminded man (1: 8). He understood by the phrase one who would share his service between two masters without being committed to either past recall; who would serve God and mammon, the Church and the world, the spirit and the flesh, duty and inclination, conscience and convention;

giving a partial service to each but an undivided service to none. The Israelites on Carmel afford another illustration. They were there halting between two opinions, undecided whether to serve Baal or Jehovah, willing to give partial service to each but an undivided service to neither. Indeed, the history of the nation until the discipline of the captivity in Babylon was far too much characterized by an indecision that was ready to serve now one god and now another, not altogether forsaking the worship of Jehovah but sharing with the gods of the nations what was due to Him alone.

All such incompleteness of consecration the burnt offering opposed. It required the full self-surrender of man's many-sided nature to the service of the living God. The religion of the Bible is an exclusive religion. It requires an absolute surrender of the whole man. Other religions may share their worship among a plurality of gods; Scripture demands all for Jehovah. This exclusiveness is emphatically symbolized in the burnt offering.

In its selection of victims the law was more exacting in the burnt offering than in any other sacrifice. It always required the most perfect victim of its kind, a male without blemish (Lev. 1 : 3, 10). This indicated that man was to consecrate himself to the Lord at his best and for the best ends. One should preserve all his powers intact and aim at their orderly development, that he might present to God his manhood in its most complete condition, equipped for the highest possible service. Primarily intended for God, and, it

may be, formally devoted to His service from infancy, the obligation arises to care for and train himself, that his continual consecration in subsequent years may have the best possible results. It is not overlooked that it is only in a life consecrated to God that one can attain to his completion, but that should not weaken the aspiration to place himself always at God's disposal for service in the best condition, with the best attainable equipment. Nor is it overlooked that God will cordially and graciously accept the offering when there is left only a poor wreck of the former self to present, though it is felt the better way to make the consecration before the wreck has been wrought and so be for all time prevented.

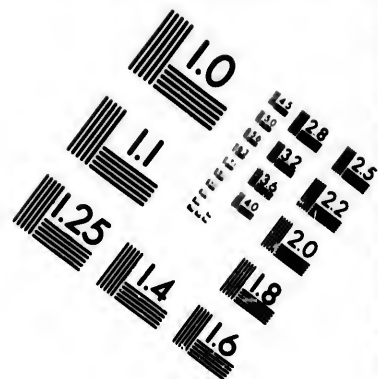
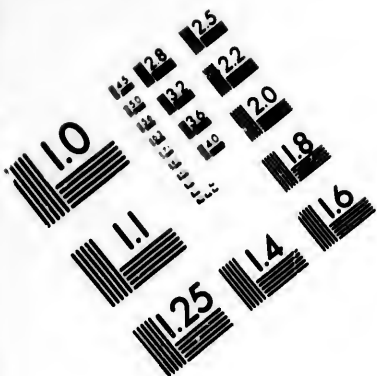
The best end for which one consecrates himself to God is a life of intelligent service. Mere activity would not be sufficient even were it at the fullest capacity. The purposeless butterfly may realize its idea flitting thoughtlessly from flower to flower, but not so man. His life's activities must be devoted to wise and useful ends if all prove not in vain. Man consecrated at his best is man consecrated to a worthy purpose.

The best purpose for such a life must ultimately be an ethical one. Man's service is never at its highest except when directed to moral ends. The only consecration that will meet the divine approval is that which determines everything towards the triumph of righteousness and truth. There is working in all history and in every providence a power that maketh for righteousness. God has in view in everything that

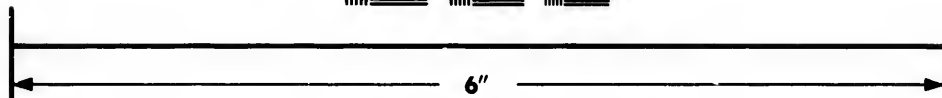
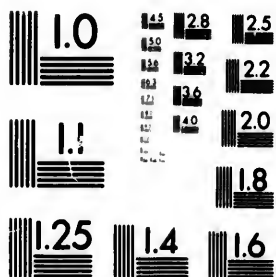
He permits, originates, and promotes, the ultimate triumph of His kingdom, that kingdom which consists in "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." The life, therefore, that is devoted to God and lives in harmony with His will, must have a moral motive dominating it throughout. Intellect, imagination, and sensibility, knowledge, art, and physical powers must all be harmonized in one great moral purpose. Other and subordinate motives will have their place, and must be recognized; the father labors to provide for his home, the scientist experiments to enlarge his knowledge, the artist practises to perfect his skill. In the truly faithful life, however, everything subordinate will be embraced in a final moral purpose; nothing will be allowed a place for itself simply, but everything for a moral end.

It is not necessary, indeed, it is not practicable, to be always conscious of this order. The best results are usually produced under inspiration of the immediate end in view. What is necessary and practicable is to have the moral end as the regulative principle directing and controlling the life as an harmonious whole. The scientist would be embarrassed in his experiments were his thoughts engrossed with the moral effects of his hoped discovery upon himself and others, but he would fall below the highest, if his life's pursuit did not have in view the ultimate betterment of man as an ethical creation. The same holds true in some measure of those engaged in every department of human endeavor. Man never gives himself at his best to God, except when resolved to direct every





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energy to moral ends. The religion of the Bible, from first to last, is an ethical religion, and the consecration that it requires is to God and the right.

Exacting though the law of the burnt offering was in its choice of victims, it nevertheless accepted different varieties. Oxen, sheep, goats, doves and pigeons might be offered. This provision was made to meet the circumstances of all worshippers. Those who could not afford to offer an ox, were allowed to offer a sheep, if a sheep was beyond their means they might present a goat, and in case of extreme poverty a dove or pigeon might be substituted. This went to teach that poverty could not be urged as a reason for withholding one's burnt offering, for the poorest could afford a dove or pigeon. Translated into the spiritual sphere, this meant that one's poverty of endowment would not justify him in withholding his life and its powers from God.

Our Lord's parable was true to life when it was the man with the one talent who was described as hiding his trust in a napkin. No excuse is more frequently urged for inactivity than the lack of ability. One feels himself incapable of rendering large service, and so he justifies himself in rendering none. The man conscious of power to achieve knows that he cannot shirk his duty unobserved, and is thus ever spurred to effort by the thought of the world's watchful eye, but he who feels that his best energy must fail to arrest attention in a tumult of labors more weighty than his own, is in danger of yielding to the inclination of less robust natures to seek compensation for the want of

recognition in the softer satisfaction of retirement and ease. There is, therefore, need to urge the universal duty of service with special emphasis in the case of those who rightly or wrongly make a low estimate of their powers natural or acquired. This the burnt offering did in its regulation permitting a variety of sacrifices. In asking costly victims from the rich and cheaper victims from the poor, it teaches that poor and rich alike must devote to the Lord life with all its endowments.

In Lev. 1:4 appears the statement that "It (the burnt offering) shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him." From this some expositors infer that atonement and not consecration was the prominent thought of the burnt offering. Thus Professor Murphy says: "It (the burnt offering) is the only full and proper symbol of the atonement, the acceptance of which is the legal acceptance into the kingdom of God." Oehler holds virtually the same opinion when he says: "The burnt offerings were adapted to secure the favor of God and to atone for sin." Those who give this interpretation, relate the significance of the burnt offering to that of the sin offering by saying that the former makes atonement for man's general sinfulness and the latter only for particular sins. This distinction between the two sacrifices is a very plausible one, but it does not render tenable the significance that it attaches to the burnt offering.

Nothing can be more certain than that the burning on the altar was the distinctive feature of the burnt offering, and as this could not mean atonement it is

equally certain that atonement cannot have been the central thought of the sacrifice as a whole. Besides it is nowhere else stated that atonement was its chief significance. There is at least one instance on record in which it was offered because of sin. It was a custom with Job to offer burnt offerings after the feast days of his sons, and the reason that he gave was: "It may be that my sons have sinned and renounced God in their hearts" (1: 5). Job's explanation shows that he offered his burnt offering in order to make atonement, but this cannot be taken as a proof that it was generally offered for such a purpose. The many instances in which it is known to have been offered without a special reference to sin, shows that such could not have been the case. The fact that in the completed Hebrew sacrificial system it was always offered after a sin offering, makes it evident that at any rate since the Mosaic law was given, its chief significance could not have been atonement.

The true explanation of the statement in v. 4 is that the accomplishment of atonement was a subordinate purpose in the burnt offering, while consecration was its chief purpose. The truth seems to be that whenever a victim was slain in sacrifice, the thought of atonement was either implied or expressed, whatever the nature of the offering and whatever its predominant thought and purpose. From the sacrifice of Abel onward the shedding of blood always spoke of atonement, and when the burnt offering became incorporated into the Mosaic ritual it carried this thought with it, though the distinctive purpose

and meaning was consecration. The devout worshipper might ever say in view of his burnt offering : "In this I consecrate myself and also make atonement."

Indeed, the two are, in fact, always inseparable. Consecration can take place only on the basis of atonement. Before the worshipper can be accepted and received into the blessedness of divine service, the sin of his past must be covered and removed. Before the Israelite could offer himself acceptably in his burnt offering, atonement must be regarded as accomplished either by that sacrifice itself or by some other. It was, therefore, very natural that in the detailed description given of the ritual, explicit mention should be made of the subsidiary purpose of atonement which the burnt offering accomplished.

So far, the place of prominence has been given to the symbolic significance of the burnt offering. It must be made clear, however, that it not only symbolized consecration, but also actually accomplished it. The offerer who presented his sacrifice in the proper spirit, with mind and heart intent on its purpose, found himself through its medium consecrated to God. This meant two things : on the one hand, it meant the divine acceptance, and on the other, the consecrating disposition on the part of the offerer. By making atonement for the sin, because of which God could not but condemn, it secured the offerer's acceptance with God, and by symbolizing in the most expressive manner the devotion of life and its powers, it evoked and strengthened those thoughts

and feelings which on man's part beget consecration. When there is acceptance on the divine side, and the devoting spirit on the human side, consecration becomes a fact. These conditions the burnt offering went to secure, and thus became not only a symbol, but also a medium of consecration.

Nor can it be supposed that in every case even the combined purpose of consecration and atonement exhausted the significance of the burnt offering. It did so only where it was found in organic connection with other sacrifices of the Mosaic law, but not when offered in isolation from all other sacrifices. Such a burnt offering as was offered just as the armies of Israel and the Philistines were to engage in conflict, meant more than consecration and atonement. It also, and especially, voiced the supplication of Samuel, and perhaps of the people, as the need of divine help became manifest, because of the imminent danger (1 Sam. 7:9). Of the offerings which the patriarchs made, something similar may be said. When they built their altar and called upon the name of the Lord (Gen. 13:4; 26:25; 35:7) their burnt offering was an expression of all the religious thoughts and emotions which their approach to God evoked. Gratitude, supplication, confession, consecration, atonement would all be implied. Everything that was afterwards made explicit in the Mosaic sacrifices would be found in germ in these patriarchal burnt offerings. It has been well said: "The burnt offering is the general offering for worship, the thought of consecration to God comes in it to the most complete

expression" (Strack). And just as well in these words: "All the varying moods that influence the life of a community in its public worship are expressed by this class of offerings, so that its meaning is richer and more varied than that of other sacrifices" (Schultz).

A careful exposition will always distinguish the burnt offering when offered in connection with other Levitical sacrifices, and when offered in isolation, as was done in the patriarchal age, and frequently in times subsequent to Moses. It is only in the latter case that it can justly be defined as the sacrifice of worship, and be said to have as its function the expression of every religious thought and emotion. When offered as a part of the Mosaic system, consecration is its chief significance, as has been already stated, with a subordinate reference to atonement. The rest of its original meaning in such a connection was taken up by other sacrifices. Much of the difference in interpretation of this offering that is met, arises from overlooking this distinction between its earlier isolated position and that which it occupied as a part of the perfected sacrificial system.

Jesus, the promised Messiah, has offered the alone perfect burnt offering. He alone embodied in life the perfection of every religious activity. He alone was entirely and completely devoted to God, and He alone made a full atonement. None other could say: "I do always the things that please him" (John 8:29), and, "This is my blood . . . which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28). How much, or how little, of all this the early Hebrew



felt it is impossible to say. What he certainly knew was, that when he made his offering in the appointed way he received an enrichment; how much more cannot now be discovered. The most faithful Christian feels the need of some sacrifice to fill up the defects of his service, other than he can offer, and it may be that the growing spiritual intelligence of Israel came in its best members to the consciousness that something else not yet made manifest was necessary to complete what the burnt offering began. Their most devout offering would often leave unsubdued the conscious need of something still more complete.

## CHAPTER V.

### *THE MEAL OFFERING.*

(Lev. 2: 1-16; 6: 14-18.)

THE meal offering comes first into prominence in the Mosaic legislation. Nowhere in the Biblical story of the patriarchal period is mention made of it. The burnt offering is frequently referred to and other sacrifices occasionally, but never the meal offering. The sacrifice that Cain made so fruitlessly, bore a resemblance to the meal offering, but it is not so named, and was lacking in some features that afterwards came to be regarded as essential. Its first explicit reference is made in the instruction given in Exodus regarding the tabernacle service (Ex. 29: 41; 30: 9; 40: 29), and its first detailed description is in Leviticus (Lev. 2: 1-16; 6: 14-18), where all the instituted sacrifices are described.

From this it cannot be inferred that the meal offering had its origin with Moses. Indeed, the manner in which it is introduced in both these sections, would indicate that like the burnt offering it was a well-known institution long before it came to be incorporated into the established sacrificial system of Israel. Among the surrounding nations no sacrifice was better known or more frequently offered.

Semitic and non-Semitic peoples alike were wont to approach their gods through its medium. Robertson Smith says: "In all parts of the world . . . the stated gifts by which the gods are honored in private and in public feasts, are drawn from the stores upon which human life is supported—fruits, grain, wine, oil, the flesh of animals and the like." And he adds: "Not only in Canaan but among the Greeks there is evidence that cereal oblations had a great place in early ritual, though they afterwards became second in importance to animal sacrifices." Nowack writes that: "Certainly in the earlier times the vegetable offerings were by far the most frequently offered." In his "Assyrian Echoes of the Word," Laurie states that: "Among the Assyrians were not only grains of wheat and flour and corn" offered to the deity, "but dates, and pine cones, . . . honey and butter, oil and fruits, green herbs, clean herbs, and pieces of food, etc." Kalisch holds that: "The comprehensiveness of the original meaning of the term *mincha* bespeaks also a period when vegetables formed the principal gifts or sacrifices."

The patriarchs during their sojourn in the land of promise must have seen their heathen neighbors on every hand making their offerings of fruit and grain to their many gods, and when they paid their visits to Egypt they must have found the same ordinance commonly observed among that historic people. That they themselves abstained largely if not entirely from such an offering may be inferred from the silence of the narrative in Genesis, but that they were

well acquainted with it from the religious rites of their neighbors must be supposed from the prominence which such sacrifices had attained in the worship of heathen peoples.

The occupation of the patriarchs may have had something to do with the absence of the meal offering from their sacrifices. They were a pastoral people, and the meal offering is peculiarly adapted to the conditions of an agricultural life. The Israelites had never much to do with agriculture until after the exodus from Egypt and their settlement in the promised land, and it was not until about that time that the meal offering became a prominent part of their sacrificial system. Previously their possessions had consisted in their flocks and herds, and from these they made their offerings unto the Lord. With their settlement in the fertile plains of Canaan their interests became as largely agricultural as they had formerly been pastoral, and so they began to make offerings from their stores of grain as well as from their flocks and herds. Presentations to the deity are usually made from what is the chief means of subsistence, and a pastoral people could not be expected to make frequent offerings of grain, especially when these were to be spontaneously given.

Whether the Mosaic law gave the meal offering an independent place or required that it should always be associated with an offering of life, is a question that has provoked no end of discussion. Distinguished authorities can be quoted on either side, and the matter has not yet been set at rest. On the

one side the statement of Delitzsch may be regarded as typical when he says: "The meal offering was presented sometimes by itself, at other times in connection with burnt offerings and peace offerings." Typical on the other side is Murphy, who writes: "The conclusion of this whole discussion is that the burnt offering and the fruit offering (*i. e.*, the meal offering) taken together form a complete whole. In practice they were generally united, and if ever the fruit offering was presented by itself or appended to other sacrifices, it referred to a burnt offering that had gone before." Other expounders appear quite undecided, sometimes leaning towards the one view and sometimes towards the other. Thus Cave says in one place: "That the meal offering was always preceded by some blood sacrifice, with two exceptions, *viz.*, the daily offering of the high priest, and that offering which was substituted for the blood sacrifice in the case of the poor;" elsewhere he writes: "These offerings (*i. e.*, bloodless sacrifices) always accompanied either burnt or peace offerings."

Where there is found such diversity of opinion among the best authorities, it would be unwise to speak dogmatically; nevertheless the truth seems to be that the offerings from which the independence of the meal offering has been inferred, were not in reality meal offerings, and cannot be regarded as indicating conclusively what the law or usage in regard to that offering was. Much is made of the ordinance, described Lev. 5 : 11-13. In these verses, the man so impoverished that he could not offer a turtledove or a

young pigeon, is instructed to substitute a tenth part of an ephah of fine flour. The offering which he thus presented, however, was not regarded as a meal offering but as a sin offering, having neither the incense nor the oil essential to the meal offering. It was an entirely exceptional offering, introduced to teach as distinctly as possible that in Israel atonement was within reach of all, and cannot be regarded as indicating the independence of the meal offering, which was of an entirely different order, and was offered for an entirely different purpose.

The meal offering of jealousy, described Num. 5 : 11 *seq.*, is also frequently quoted as proof. But what has been said in regard to the sin offering of meal is equally applicable to this offering. It was not an ordinary meal offering, lacking both the incense and oil which the meal offering required, and can no more be taken as showing that the meal offering could be independently offered than can the sin offering of meal.

The most conclusive evidence is supposed to be afforded by the meal offering of the priests, described Lev. 6 : 19-23. But this also loses its evidential force when it is remembered that a burnt offering was sacrificed at the same time. The meal offering of the priests was offered every morning and every evening, when was also offered the burnt offering for the nation, including the priests. Because of this connection in time, this instance, instead of proving the independence of the meal offering generally, rather goes to prove its inseparable connection with a sacrifice of life.

The fact is that there is no instance recorded where a meal offering was offered independently of all other sacrifices. When to this is added the circumstance that where it was regularly offered there was always associated a blood sacrifice, the conclusion appears unavoidable that it was the intention of the law to have it always offered in such a connection: (Lev. 9: 4; 14: 10; 23: 37; Num. 6: 15-17; 8: 8; 15: 1-10; 28: 16-19; 29: 3, 9, 12 *seq.*).

Because of this dependent character the meal offering could not have been intended to have the profound religious significance that the other sacrifices had. It must have been incorporated into the sacrificial system of the nation, not to meet any great fundamental and universal need, but a need that began to press upon the national consciousness when entering upon its long-promised possessions.

The most distinctive feature of this ordinance was that already suggested, the negative characteristic that no victim was slain, no blood shed. This shows that it had no immediate reference to the most deep-seated needs of man, such as reconciliation, pardon, and sanctification. It had not these qualities that would fit it to remove the sense of alienation from God that makes life so very empty, or still the fear that the thought of wrong-doing awakens, or break the bonds of strength with which sin enslaves. Only the offering of life could give relief in these regards. It was rather such an offering as the innocent and the reconciled would make out of gratitude and kindred feelings towards the Author of all good. Adam could

have presented it with deep and pleasing emotion before a consciousness of sin became a part of his life's experience, and he probably did so morning and evening until his unhappy disobedience destroyed the joyful outlook of the soul. Others could afterwards offer it with equal enjoyment who elsewhere found a covering for their guilt and felt themselves in a state of reconciliation and forgiveness. For men sensible of estrangement and overpowered by the fear that guilt awakens, it could have little attraction and could afford but slight relief.

This may be an additional, and the most weighty reason, why it never gained prominence among the early patriarchs, and why even among the later Israelites it never became an independent sacrifice. The law had gradually developed a deep consciousness of sin, it had also given axiomatic force to the principle that blood alone made atonement. The result naturally would be a disposition to approach God with gifts and sacrifices only through the giving up of a life that would cover the conscious wrong-doing. Other peoples less enlightened and less sensible of guilt might find satisfaction in offering their independent meal offerings; the Israelites would offer theirs only in association with the blood sacrifice, not simply because the law so required but because they felt the religious fitness of such an arrangement.

Even the patriarchs were sufficiently conscious of their imperfections to be disposed to limit their sacrifices to the offering of life. They knew that at best their days were few and evil, and required to be atoned



for by a life more innocent than their own. Their neighbors, Semitic and non-Semitic, ethically less developed than themselves, might find relief in offering from the products of garden and field, but they would rest their confidence only in the sacrifice of victims slain. The principle that blood alone makes atonement, had not been made a matter of revelation in those pre-Mosaic days, but a somewhat clarified spiritual vision had gained some glimmering anticipations of it through the natural means of acquiring spiritual knowledge, and so decided the sort of sacrifice in which alone the offerer could find peace.

The meal offering consisted in offering a portion of the offerer's food. From the cereals which he was wont to use he made in the meal offering an offering unto the Lord. For this reason it has been called a meat offering (A.V.), that is, food offering, and meant that the offerer consecrated his food to the Lord. As the burnt offering symbolized the consecration of the worshipper himself, the meal offering symbolized the consecration of his food. He had received all that he enjoyed from the bountiful hand of his God, and now he consecrated it in return to the service of the gracious Giver. None knew better than the Israelite that it was the Lord who gave him "corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied his silver and gold" (Hos. 2 : 8). The conditions of climate and the topography of his land taught him that his own labors would bring no return unless the Power that controlled the rains and dews was ready to co-operate. The sense of his dependence upon God for seed time and harvest

had thus grown to almost peculiar proportions, and he gave it frequent expression in the oft-recurring meal offering.

In the detailed account given in Lev. 2: 1-16, seven different sorts of meal offerings are mentioned. (a) First comes the offering of fine flour. This consisted of the most costly flour to be had, and which was probably manufactured from the choicest wheat. (b) In verse 4 are mentioned two sorts of offerings prepared in the oven, one described as cakes mixed with oil, and the other as wafers anointed with oil. The first of these was probably "a thick kind of cake perforated with holes after the manner of our bakers' biscuits" (Lange), the second was a thinner cake like that in common use still in the rural districts of Palestine, but not to be identified with the beautiful wafers of finest flour made use of by the Jews at such ceremonies as the passover. (c) Verses 5 and 6 describe an offering made from cakes baked in a pan. These cakes were probably quite large, resembling those baked by the Arabs at the present in their large iron pans, and for the purpose of the offering were broken in oil. The size of the pan may be inferred from Ezek. 4: 3, where the prophet is commanded to place one of these vessels as a wall of iron between him and the city. (d) The next offering described was made from cakes prepared in a frying-pan (verse 7). This utensil is only mentioned here and Lev. 7: 9, and little is known as to its form. The root from which the name is derived, indicates that it must have been a dish in which food was boiled, and this

makes it highly probable that the cakes prepared in it and offered in sacrifice were boiled in oil. (*e*) In verses 14-16 instruction is given in regard to the offering of grain fresh from the harvest. According to verse 14 it might be offered in two forms, (1) scorched in fire while still in the ear, and (2) crushed in a mortar. Some understand the statement to mean that it was the scorched grain that was afterwards crushed in a mortar and consequently that the offering was made only in one form. Against this interpretation, and in favor of that given, is the fact that the fresh grain was made use of as food both as scorched in fire and crushed in a mortar.

These seven different offerings represent all the usual forms in which cereals were used for food. In Jud. 7: 13 there is mentioned a cake not found among the offerings here described; another is mentioned, 1 Kings 17: 12. Inasmuch, however, as each of these is referred to only once, and in either case by a foreigner, their occurrence does not make it necessary to modify the statement made, that the different sorts of meal offering represent the different forms in which the Israelites were wont to prepare their grain for food.

This went to teach that every man was to consecrate all his food to the Lord, poor and rich alike. The rich who prepared his bread from the finest of the wheat, and in every form known to the culinary art, and the poor who could afford nothing better than the fresh plucked ears scorched in fire or crushed in a rude mortar, must each offer his food unto the

Lord, all of it and in every form. The rich in his abundance was in danger of overlooking a part in the magnitude of the whole at his disposal; the poor in his leanness would be disposed to think that it mattered not if his little all was left unacknowledged; the law came to the rescue of both, demanding that all be consecrated, the swelling garner of the wealthy and the poor man's scanty store.

His food supply largely represented the entire wealth of the Israelite. His dwelling was the humblest possible, his garments were few and homespun, his fields were the inheritance of his descendants. His energies were chiefly directed towards securing his daily bread, and this constituted the greater part of his possessions. There were a few traders who accumulated wealth and lived luxuriously in costly palaces (Amos 6:4; 3:15; Isa. 5:8). The majority of the people were in every period of the nation's history simple farmers who tilled their ancestral fields, and had no ambition beyond meeting the humble needs of family and household. Their daily food was their wealth, beyond which they did not look, and to which alone they aspired. The numerous flocks and herds of their patriarchal forefathers became reduced to a narrow number that could be housed in their lowly villages.

When, therefore, the Israelite consecrated his food he consecrated his material all, and the meal offering that symbolized the consecration of his food also symbolized the consecration of his entire possession. There were required by the Mosaic law specific

offerings which indicated God's claim upon particular portions of what was possessed. The offering of the firstfruits, and of the first-born of flock and herd, and the money tax in support of the temple symbolized the consecration respectively of the harvest, the flock and herd, and the money treasures. The meal offering, however, which symbolized the consecration of the food, may be regarded as covering all these forms of wealth and every other form that it might assume. As the burnt offering symbolized the consecration of the entire person, so the meal offering the consecration of the entire wealth.

The material offered in the meal offering was only a small fraction of what the offerer possessed. The meal offering which the priests offered every morning and evening, amounted to only a tenth part of an ephah of fine flour (Lev. 6:20); the usual quantity offered with a burnt offering of a lamb was a tenth ephah of flour; with a burnt offering of a ram the quantity was doubled, and with a burnt offering of an ox it was increased threefold (Num. 15:5 *seq.*); the offering of firstfruits was only one sheaf from the whole harvest (Lev. 23:10). What was actually offered, however, represented the whole from which it was taken, and in the offering of the part the whole became consecrated. On the principle that "if the firstfruits be holy then shall the lump be holy" (Rom. 11:16), the consecration of the part involved the consecration of the whole, the little measure offered in the meal offering symbolized the dedication of all that was possessed.

In the Old Testament as well as in the New, God lays claim to all that a man has. Through the psalmist Asaph He says: "Every beast of the field is mine and the cattle upon a thousand hills" (Ps. 51:10); and through his prophet Haggai He adds: "The silver is mine and the gold is mine (2:8). Because of this divine claim it became an obligation resting upon every Israelite to consecrate everything that he possessed, not only what he expended in religious and philanthropic enterprises, but also what he reserved and laid out to meet his own needs and those of his household. The object for which the meal offering was incorporated into the Mosaic system was to provide a helpful means by which this requirement might be fulfilled. The Israelite was regarded as a steward of what God had committed to his trust, and in the meal offering he acknowledged this relation.

One of the features that cannot be overlooked in interpreting the meal offering is, that it was always enriched with oil. This is to be regarded as having some symbolic significance. Were oil always made use of by the Jews in the preparation of food, it might be justly concluded that its addition in the meal offering was not intended to give religious instruction, but oil was not always used either in the preparation or the consumption of food. Much of the bread one sees made use of in rural Palestine to-day has not a suggestion of oil about it, and the extreme conservatism of the people justifies the supposition that the ancient Jew, as well as the modern Arab,

often prepared and ate his bread without using oil in any form. Moreover, in the offering of roasted or crushed grain the oil must have been added for a symbolic purpose, and not because it was customary to use oil with food of that sort. One cannot suppose that when the simple mountaineer dined on his frugal meal of fresh grain roasted on the fire or crushed in an extempore mortar, it was his wont to enrich it by the addition of oil. Far more likely is it that when this sort of food was prepared for a meal offering, the oil was added to teach some religious truth.

The use of oil in religious ceremonies was quite common in Israel. Designation to any important office was usually made by anointing the appointee with oil. The high priest (Lev. 8:12), the king (1 Sam. 10:1; 16:13; 1 Kings 1:39; 2 Kings 9:6), the prophet (1 Kings 19:16) were appointed to their trust this way. In such cases the symbolism was not simply a designation to the position to be held, but also an impartation of the grace for the work to be done. When a priest was consecrated to the priesthood the anointing symbolized not only that he was so consecrated, but also that he received, or was to receive, the necessary grace to discharge the high duties of his office. The same was the symbolic significance when a prophet or a king was anointed, kingly grace for the king, prophetic grace for the prophet. Similarly would the anointing of the meal offering indicate its designation to a sacred purpose, as by the laying on of hands in the animal offerings,

and also the grace required on the part of the offerer to make the offering acceptable ; the gratitude, the love, the good cheer, without which God accepts no sacrifice.

The anointing oil was also in the Old Testament a symbol of the Holy Spirit and His grace (Zech. 4 : 6), and its use in the meal offering would indicate those gracious effects of the Spirit's work inwrought in the life, the presence of which alone gives a sacrifice the power to prevail with God. God has little regard for mere material gifts ; silver and gold, bread and flesh, He can create at will. The offering that He delights in is the gracious disposition with which the Spirit informs His people and qualifies them for His service. A loving, thankful, cheerful heart will make the meanest material sacrifice a sweet savor unto the Lord—will itself, indeed, constitute the most acceptable sacrifice, independent of external accompaniments. The addition of oil to the meal offering signified that only as the Holy Spirit poured into the life begets such graces will the offering made be acceptable.

Incense was also invariably added to the meal offering. In the sacrifice described (vs. 4-13) no reference is made to this requirement. From this it has been inferred that no incense was added to that sort of meal offering. Such an inference cannot be justified. One might as well infer that hands were not laid on the burnt offering, described Lev. 1 : 10-14, nor on the sin offering of Lev. 5 : 1-6, nor on the trespass offering in any case, because that part of the ceremony is not



mentioned in these instances, as to infer that incense was not added in the meal offering of vs. 4-13, because it is not distinctly stated that such was the case. It was explicitly stated in v. 2 that incense was required, and that statement is sufficient to cover all similar offerings that follow. In v. 15 it is mentioned anew that incense must be offered with the meal offering of grain. This repetition cannot be taken to imply that in those instances referred to, where no allusion is made to incense, the intention was that none should be offered ; rather does it imply that there was danger because of the peculiarity of this last kind of meal offering, that the incense would be overlooked if no statement was made of its necessity. There can be no doubt that the intention was to have it offered with every meal offering, and that its addition was intended for religious instruction.

Incense is in Scripture a symbol of prayer. This the Psalmist taught when he said : " Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense " (Ps. 141 : 2) ; also John the Evangelist, when he wrote : " The smoke of the incense, with the prayer of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand " (Rev. 8 : 4). The presence of incense, therefore, in the meal offering meant that the offering should be made in a spirit of prayer. The man who consecrated his substance to the Lord was to accompany his gift with his heart's prayer. He was to pray that God would accept his offering and use it for His service. The Psalmist's prayer for his people was, that the Lord should " Remember all thy offerings and accept thy

burnt sacrifices" (Ps. 20 : 3); the prayer of Moses for Levi was: "Bless, Lord, his substance, and accept the work of his hands" (Deut. 33 : 11). A similar prayer may every man offer for himself and others when he brings his gifts to the divine altar. The offering up of one's possessions is an intensely religious act when its significance is that which it professes to be. It is, therefore, fitting that it should be associated with the most eager activity of the Spirit, grappling with God in prayer. There is always danger that such an ordinance as the meal offering may lose its spiritual significance and deteriorate into a mere mercantile transaction. To make prayer an inseparable requirement is the most effective way to counteract this tendency, and preserve for the institution its original sacred intention. Incense must never be wanting in the meal offering if it is to accomplish for the offerer its happy purpose.

The presence of the incense in the meal offering has led Professor Murphy to the strange interpretation that the offering itself was a symbol of intercession. His words are: "We come now to the question, What is the special significance of the fruit offering? This we find to be intercession. The priest has a part in the presenting of it. Now, the two priestly functions are offering sacrifice and making intercession. In the burnt offering he offers sacrifice, in the fruit offering he makes intercession."

In this reasoning Professor Murphy overlooks or does not give sufficient consideration to the important fact that the offering of incense every morning and

evening by the priest (Ex. 30: 8, 9) was specially intended to symbolize his intercessory work. Accordingly, if the meal offering is taken to symbolize intercession, the law is found providing two offerings to symbolize that duty, while it provides none to symbolize the consecration of the people's possessions. For this and other reasons there need be no hesitation in rejecting Professor Murphy's interpretation and in adhering to that already given which regards the addition of the incense as intended to teach the necessity of a devout, prayerful spirit in offering one's substance to the Lord, and not that intercession was the significance of the entire offering.

Besides oil and incense, salt also was required in the meal offering. The law read: "Neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meal offering" (Lev. 2: 13). This meant that the consecration made in the meal offering was to be for all time. Salt, because of its preserving properties, naturally became the symbol of that which endures. For this reason its ceremonial use in any transaction went to give permanency to the obligations incurred. "Treaties were rendered firm and inviolable according to a well-known custom among the Greeks, and still among the Arabs, by the parties to an alliance eating bread and salt together" (Delitzsch). "A covenant of salt" came to mean a covenant that was to last forever (Num. 18: 19; 2 Chron. 13: 5), and the "salt of the covenant" was the salt that went to give it this enduring character.

Accordingly, when the law gave instruction to add

salt to every meal offering, the intention was to teach that the consecration made must be allowed to continue, that the substance devoted to the Lord must be permanently left at His disposal.

For weak human nature it is not an easy task to preserve its noblest impulses always in the place of supremacy. Far too often it happens that after a wave of self-denying emotion has devoted one's all to the highest cause, a reaction sets in that recalls what had been done so well and begins again a selfish enjoyment of the bounties which had been set apart for a nobler use, all forgetful of the claims of God and the cries of humanity. The salt of the offering was to counteract this reaction and to make the symbolized consecration permanently binding. Men can never secure an absolute right to any earthly possession; they can never be anything more than stewards, accountable to the Supreme Owner. In adding salt to their meal offering they acknowledge this relation and agree to act upon it always in the disposal of what is to them entrusted.

A negative requirement of the meal offering is stated in the words: "No meal offering which ye shall offer unto the Lord shall be made with leaven" (Lev. 2: 11). Among the Jews leaven was regarded as a symbol of corruption, and to have it forbidden in the meal offering must have taught that nothing of a corrupting nature was to be presented at the divine altar. Transferred to the sphere of the spiritual, this regulation would symbolize that in devoting his substance to the Lord the offerer's mind and heart must

be free from corruption, the motives that actuate him must be pure.

The grace of liberality has a high place among the graces. It wins almost more good-will than does any other trait of character. Job found that because "He delivered the poor that cried, the fatherless also that had none to help him" (29: 12), he was received at the gate with every mark of esteem. "The aged rose up and stood, the princes refrained from talking and laid their hands upon their mouth, the voice of the nobles was hushed and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth" (29: 8-10). A like distinction follows beneficence in every age, and men become peculiarly tempted to simulate a liberality that they do not feel. The desire for applause and personal advantage may come to supplant the true spirit of charity, and the narrowest selfishness be thus made to wear the garb of large-hearted virtue. There is needed, therefore, a note of warning against corrupt motives in every form of benevolence, and this the law of the meal offering gave when it excluded leaven from presentation at the altar. The oil and the incense symbolized the positive graces required in all religious and charitable expenditure; the demanded absence of leaven forewarned against offering from selfish motives.

The offering of honey was also forbidden (Lev. 2: 11). It might be presented as firstfruits (Lev. 2: 12; 2 Chron. 31: 5), but not as part of an offering upon the altar. This enactment had much the same significance as that in regard to leaven. In

the hot climate of Palestine honey speedily became fermented. An offering of honey would accordingly prove to be, in ordinary cases, an offering of leaven. And so the law that forbade the use of honey also with the meal offering, taught much the same as that which forbade the offering of leaven.

The relation of the meal offering to the other sacrifices is suggestive. It was preceded by the burnt offering (Ex. 29: 38-41; Lev. 14: 20; Lev. 23: 37; Num. 6: 15-17). This shows that the divine order is, first, the burnt offering, and then the meal offering, and this again means that consecration of the person must precede consecration of possessions. Men sometimes reverse this order and try to win a divine acceptance of their person by an offering of what they have, but God will not have it so. He has far more delight in the man himself than He has in anything that belongs to him, and will have no regard to the material gift that is not preceded by a devotion of the heart and life. Paul revealed the divine order in the case when he commended the Macedonian Church because "they first gave themselves to the Lord" and then gave "unto us by the will of God" (2 Cor. 8: 5).

The converse of this was also true, that the meal offering completed the burnt offering. Before the inauguration of the Mosaic law the burnt offering was offered quite independently of any other sacrifice, but in the completed sacrificial system it appears to have been invariably followed by a meal offering. From this it is to be inferred that when one devotes himself to God's service, the law requires that he devote his

possessions also. The one consecration will not be complete until it is followed by the other. The youth that came to Christ asking the way of life, was quite willing to devote himself, but he was distinctly told that it was also necessary to devote his substance. The command came to him like thunder from the blue: "Sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven" (Matt. 19: 21). The inseparable connection between the burnt and the meal offering shows that if the consecration of the person must precede that of the substance, the consecration of the substance is required to complete that of the person.

Finally, it is to be observed that of every meal offering except his own the priest received a portion. Indeed, it may be said once for all that of every sacrifice offered, except the meal offering referred to, and the sin offerings for himself and for the nation, the priest received a share. This taught that "they who wait at the altar are partakers with the altar" (1 Cor. 9: 13).

Christ's fulfilment of the meal offering assumed the special form that is called for in special circumstances. His life during His public ministry was, in its relation to possessions, the ideal attitude of one who, engrossed with higher concerns, severs all connection with commercial interests and pursuits. It was not an illustration of how a man should conduct himself who had possessions at his disposal and assumed the responsibility of administering them to the greatest human advantage, but rather what is expected in case one

becomes so absorbed in moral and religious projects as to refuse every connection with earthly gains. Christ might have possessed untold material wealth if He were so disposed—the kingdoms of the world with their glory were offered Him. But He refused to accept responsibility for any portion, and devoted Himself entirely to His work of redemption. In His addresses He at different times gave instruction sufficient to guide those who assume the stewardship of worldly resources, but His own life during His official ministry was one of complete abstention from all such responsibilities. He owned nothing and sought nothing, and had nothing whose use He directed. Apart from His teaching, therefore, His life did not shed the light that those need who have possessions and who are ready to administer them to the advantage of their fellows. His conduct here illustrated what one should do who was so engrossed with other interests that he could not assume the responsibility of directing the use of any part of the world's wealth.



## CHAPTER VI.

### *THE PEACE OFFERING.*

(Lev. 3: 1-17; 7: 11-21; 7: 28-38.)

THE peace offering has been variously designated. The authorized English version of the Bible, as well as the Revised, always call it peace offering; the same is the name given by the Latin Vulgate, and sometimes by the Greek Septuagint. Luther always calls it thank offering, as do many of the German theologians. Sometimes the Greek Septuagint gives the name, salvation offering, a title which has been adopted by a few theologians, modern and patristic. The uncertainty as to the derivation of the term used in the original Hebrew to describe the offering has had not a little to do with this diversity of designation.

As a sacrifice the peace offering had a prominent place in the temple service among the Israelites. Throughout the historical books of the Old Testament it is found standing side by side with the burnt offering, sometimes even disputing with that sacrifice the place of honor. Three times are they mentioned together in Joshua (8: 31; 22: 23, 27), twice in Judges (20: 26; 21: 4), in the later historical books no less than fifteen times, and in Ezekiel five times

in his later prophecies. At the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem the numerous and costly peace offerings which were presented, were the most marked features of the occasion (1 Kings 8: 63). At the crowning of King Saul no other offering was offered (1 Sam. 11: 15), nor are any others mentioned in connection with the restoration of the temple worship after the conversion of Manasseh (2 Chron. 33: 16). With the exception of the burnt offering, the peace offering had certainly by far the most prominent place among the Old Testament sacrifices.

Even among non-Israelite people the case was somewhat similar. All the historic nations of antiquity had among their sacrifices what resembled to some extent the peace offering of the true religion, and of all the sacrifices that such peoples were wont to make, this seems to have been held in the highest regard. If it is true that among the heathen "ordinarily sacrifice is a feast of which gods and worshippers partake together," it follows that their most common sacrifice was essentially similar to that of the Hebrew peace offering.

Among the Mosaic sacrifices the peace offering was peculiarly festive in character. In it the people gave expression to the most exuberant joyfulness of their spirit. Their religion in its healthy days was a most joyful religion. When the life was laid open to its influence, sorrow and sadness speedily gave place to a merry heart, and in this sacrifice the revived spirit found the readiest channel for the pouring forth of its happy emotion. For this reason the peace

offering naturally had the first place on occasions of public rejoicing. It was by far the most prominent at the inauguration of the temple service (1 Kings 8 : 63); it was the only sacrifice offered at the coronation of Saul (1 Sam. 11 : 15), and at the ratification of the covenant between Jacob and Laban (Gen. 31 : 54), and during the feast following the passover observed at the command of Hezekiah (2 Chron. 30 : 22-27), and at the reformation effected by Manasseh after his conversion (2 Chron. 33 : 16). All these were joyful events, and the prevailing mood of the occasion found expression in the peace offering.

Even in the semi-heathen worship into which the people sometimes fell back, this sacrifice preserved much of its festive character, only that in those cases the joy became more sensuous and tumultuous. The lapse at the foot of Mount Sinai shows this (Ex. 32 : 1-6). On that occasion the people just offered before their newly made idol such sacrifices as they had seen their heathen neighbors offer in like circumstances, and in which they had far too often joined, and the most prominent feature of the whole incident was the wild unrestrained character of its enjoyment. "The people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play" (32 : 6). Long before Moses and Joshua reached the camp on their return from the mountain, they could hear the riotous shout and song of the multitude as they pursued their mad religious merry-making. The whole unhappy scene gives a glimpse of the orgiastic rejoicing that so often accompanied heathen sacrificial worship.

Alongside this regression at Sinai may be placed the still more paganized religious festivals of Baal worshippers in the northern kingdom. The account of the ruse that Jehu adopted to destroy that foreign importation, has preserved some knowledge of the festive sacrifices of that system which was more than half heathen (2 Kings 10: 19-24). He had, under pretence of unapproachable zeal for the Baal cultus, convoked an assembly of all its sympathizers in order to observe one of its characteristic religious feasts. The convocation was brought to a tragic end before there had been time given to develop its chief features, but enough happened to suggest what such an occasion ordinarily produced. There was, first of all, numerous sacrificial meals upon which the assembled throngs were to regale themselves (v. 24). Then there were the festive garments of which nothing was heard at the outbreak near Sinai, but which were never wanting at a heathen religious feast (v. 22). These would themselves by their brightness heighten the sensuous enjoyment of the occasion. Besides there were the priests and prophets (v. 19), whose duty it would be to preside at the most sacred ceremonies and gradually enkindle the multitude to the highest pitch of enthusiasm. Had the occasion been allowed to ripen, it would have reproduced essentially the scene in the Sinai desert, only in a more intensified form.

Daniel has given a description of a religious festival entirely heathen (5: 1-5). He shows that at such functions the votaries were maddened with sensuous

gratification until the sacred halls became scenes of wildest revelry. The light-hearted joyfulness that so often characterized primitive religions, had in these cases sunk into coarse debauchery.

The religion of Israel was no less joyful than that of their neighbors, but decidedly more so. When under inspiration of the Spirit, it appropriated for its own purposes the peace offering which all peoples had in common, it did not eliminate the gladsome character of that ordinance, but rather increased and transformed it until it became a spiritual delight worthy of those who served the one supernatural and righteous God. The Hebrew sacrificial meal was a happier event than that of their heathen neighbors, with a happiness that was more satisfying and more enduring.

The distinctive ritual of the peace offering was the manner in which the carcass of the victim was disposed of. The blood was sprinkled as in the burnt and trespass offerings; the fat was burnt upon the altar as in the sin and trespass offerings; the presentation, the imposition of hands, and the killing were the same in all the sacrifices. The only point of difference was that in the peace offering the flesh of the sacrifice was prepared into a banquet, or, as it is usually called, into a sacrificial meal. In this feature, therefore, is to be sought the peculiar symbolism and purpose of the sacrifice. As the burning of the entire victim upon the altar was made use of as a key for the interpretation of the burnt offering, so must the sacrificial meal be made use of for the interpretation of the peace offering.

The law gave definite instruction upon certain matters to be observed in connection with this meal. The parties to partake were the offerer and his household, including his son and daughter, manservant and maidservant, and the Levite within his gate (Deut. 12 : 18). The food provided for the occasion was to be the flesh of the victim offered in sacrifice and the cakes of the meal offering that was to be presented at the same time (Lev. 7 : 12). The place was to be the courts of the temple, or as it is put : "Before the Lord thy God in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose" (Deut. 12 : 18). The spirit in which the observance was to be kept was to be unrestrained joy : "Thou shalt sacrifice peace offerings and shalt eat there ; and thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God" (Deut. 27 : 7). The sacrificial meal was thus a joyful feast for the offerer and his household, prepared from what had been offered in sacrifice and enjoyed in the Lord's presence. It was not an ordinary meal ; it was a joyful religious banquet, prepared from sacred food and partaken of in a sacred place. Food eaten elsewhere than in the temple, or prepared from any material than that offered in sacrifice, could not constitute a sacrificial meal.

Partaking before the Lord had a far deeper meaning than merely holding the feast in the temple. It meant that He was present at the feast and was thought of as one of the parties enjoying it. This is made evident from the sacrificial meal observed when the covenant between God and Israel was ratified

(Ex. 24: 9-11). There it is said that "they (*i.e.*, the representatives of the people) beheld God and did eat and drink." Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy elders had at God's invitation ascended the mount where a feast was prepared. At the appointed place they saw the Lord standing on a pavement clear as the heavens, and there in His presence they ate and drank. This description can only mean that on that occasion the Lord was thought of as present with His servants at their festal board; and what was true of that sacrificial meal was true of every other. So that the sacrificial meal was a feast in which the Lord and His worshippers were thought of as enjoying together the bounties provided, and therein lay its religious significance and that of the peace offering to which it belonged.

In the cruder and more primitive condition of religious thought the deity was supposed to share literally with his worshippers in the food provided, was believed to enjoy the eating and drinking as fully and literally as any of his votaries. Indeed, in the earlier times and later among ruder and more benighted peoples, the banquet was prepared for his special benefit, and everything, or all that was of special value, was set apart for his use. From such material conceptions Israelites were in all ages far removed, or at least the best of the people always were. They never thought of their God needing, or partaking of, material food. They did not doubt His presence at their religious festivals nor His enjoyment of what was there offered, but they thought of

that presence as an invisible visitation, and of His enjoyment as purely spiritual and not carnal. Such a transformation in the manner of conceiving the peace offering and its sacrificial meal wrought by the inspired thought of God's peculiar people, largely increased the religious significance of the ordinance, and, what was more important, infused it with higher and more spiritual conception, to the consequent removal of what was cruder and more sensuous.

A feast is an eloquent symbol of friendship, and the presence of God and His worshippers at the sacrificial meal could signify nothing less than that He and they were in that relation to each other. To break bread together was for Semites the strongest evidence of good-will, and the best guarantee of its future maintenance. Even at the present day travellers in the East seek to increase their security by finding occasion, if at all possible, to eat and drink with the Arab encampments by the way. A guide who understands his business, will feel more assured as to the safety of his company if he has been allowed to share even a dish of milk with his temporary and not too trustworthy neighbors. Dr. Thomson, in "The Land and the Book," recounts how he succeeded in securing the pledged good-will of a tribe at the Sea of Galilee by breaking bread with the Sheikh. He describes the incident thus: "Taking his seat by my side, he (the Sheikh) broke off a bit of bread, dipped it in the dibs, and gave it to me to eat: and in like manner he required all my companions to partake, and even had the muleteers called in to eat of it. After



this, all those about the tent tasted of it. This was the ceremony, and he (the Sheikh) explained its significance somewhat in this fashion: 'We are now brethren. There is bread and salt between us; we are brothers and allies. You are at liberty to travel among us whenever you please; and, so far as my power extends, I am to aid, befriend, and succor you, even to the loss of my own life.'

Full of such thoughts as to the obligations of hospitality, the Israelite, allowed to partake in the divine presence of the sacrificial meal, would possess what was to him the strongest possible assurance that he was at peace with God. He would feel with an overflowing heart as he enjoyed the feast, that the God of his fathers was now his pledged friend. If because of some wrong done he had been borne down by guilty fears at the thought of the divine displeasure, his conscience would now be persuaded that his fault was overlooked, and that he was reconciled to God. With rejoicing heart he could sing: "Though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me" (Isa. 12: 1), "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" (Ps. 32: 1).

The peace offering signified to the Israelite as nothing else could that God was his friend. It spoke to him of perfect peace. It whispered pardon and reconciliation to his fearful conscience. It disclosed a fellowship by which every enriching grace would flow into the life. Little wonder that it was to be the occasion of rejoicing! As the offerer and his house-

hold reclined about the sacred board, assured of the divine friendship, seeing about them evidence that their sins were forgiven, they might well, as the law required, "rejoice before the Lord." They might well say: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, and the people whom he has chosen for his inheritance" (Ps. 33: 12), "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits" (Ps. 103: 2).

In both the Old and the New Testaments the blessings of the Messianic kingdom are frequently described under the figure of a feast. Isaiah says: "In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined" (25: 6). John the Apostle describes the redeemed as "they which are called unto the marriage feast of the Lamb" (Rev. 19: 9). The Lord Himself says to the disciples: "I appoint unto you a kingdom that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom" (Luke 22: 30). This usage which is more common in Scripture than a few quotations would indicate, confirms the interpretation just given of the peace offering. In the Messianic kingdom men shall be in a state of perfect peace with God, "Their sins and their iniquities will" He "remember no more" (Heb. 10: 17), and they shall be "Reconciled to him by the death of his Son" (Rom. 5: 10). Since, therefore, a feast symbolizes such blessings as peace, and pardon, and reconciliation, when used as descriptive of Christ's kingdom, it is safe to say that the festive meal of the peace offering was intended to

symbolize similar blessings. And so it may be repeated with all necessary emphasis that the distinctive meaning of the peace offering was peace, friendship, reconciliation, communion with God.

As has been already suggested, the sacrificial feast indicated not merely the present enjoyment of the blessings symbolized: it was in addition a guarantee of their continuance in the future. As the guest at the board of the nomad chieftain had an implied, if not an expressed, assurance of his host's protection to the farthest bound of his influence, so the worshipper at the peace offering meal saw in all that was in his presence a guarantee of Jehovah's friendship for all the incoming years. The peace symbolized was not a passing relation that ended with the feast, whose invigorating advantages would soon be but memory of a paradise enjoyed and lost. It was rather a relation based upon the divine good-will, and intended to secure for the dependent participant in future years inviolable and unceasing protection and an all-providing care.

As the vision of the offerer from its temporary vantage ground pursued the way of life, winding onwards and upwards towards the city of God, it would rest on many a peaceful vine and figtree, swelling garners and well-fed stalls, as well on attendant hosts whose sleepless vigilance could baffle any foe. The realization would doubtless develop many an unguarded chasm, many privations and losses, many dangers and repulses where the power of a helping hand was not felt, but of all this the symbolism of

the hour had not a suggestion. The peace offering had more in view what God is to man than what man should be to God, and as He has made Himself known He appears as the incarnation of unfailing helpfulness, fatherly sympathy, protection and care, unwearying readiness to be reconciled and to forgive. Men have erred and will, they have been tormented with guilty fears and will often continue to be so, they have wandered in loneliness and alienation and do so still, but the reason has not been and never will be that God is not ready to help, pardon and befriend. If the Israelite would not find the future to be all that the sacrificial feast promised, the cause would lie in his unfaithfulness and not in God's.

A matter that has provoked not a little discussion in connection with the peace offering is, whether God was to be regarded at the feast as a guest or as the host, whether the offerer prepared the feast for Him or He for the offerer. Some have maintained that He was regarded as a guest and others that He was the providing host. Smend, a modern radical German theologian, says: "Through the offering men invited the Godhead to appear at His sanctuary," and Oehler, one of the most conservative of German critics, holds that, "The chief significance of the meal was that God Himself became a guest and imparted a blessing." Indeed, perhaps, the majority of commentators hold this view, though one would venture to think, in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Probably the strongest argument that can be employed in support is the analogy of

heathen sacrifices, where, without doubt, the deity is regarded as the guest of the occasion. There the offerer, anxious to secure the favor of his god, prepares for him a feast and invites him to attend and partake.

Sufficient evidence is at hand to show that in the Hebrew religion the relation was thought to be the reverse. The revelation that had been made of God in the course of generations among that people, manifested Him to be so gracious and so ready to impart His blessing, that instead of His people providing a feast for Him in the peace offering, He was thought of as providing a feast for them. The meaning of the presentation at the altar points in this direction. By that act the victim had been entirely consecrated to God, and was no longer regarded as the property of the offerer. Flesh and blood and fat and all had been formally transferred. In view of this the thought would be incongruous, if not impossible, that from the flesh of the victim the offerer prepared a feast for the Lord; the only congruous, and, indeed, the only possible thought would be, that from that flesh which was now His, the Lord prepared a feast for His worshipper, or speaking more strictly, gave instruction that a feast be prepared for him.

The sacrificial meal of the covenant sacrifice (Ex. 24: 10, 11) is very clear on this point. There the representatives of the people are represented as ascending the mount at the Lord's invitation and enjoying a feast in His presence which had been prepared for them. The material used for food on the

occasion was doubtless the flesh of the victims slain in sacrifice, and it was very probably prepared by some of those who ministered at the altar, but the inspired historian, desiring to teach the real religious significance of the ceremony, represents the feast as having been prepared for the people by their covenant Lord. One can hardly read the narrative as it has been preserved, without feeling that the impression the writer wished to make was that God was the host and His partaking people the guests.

The same is the relation presented in those passages where the blessings of the Messianic kingdom are described under the figure of a feast. In Isaiah (25 : 6) it is the Lord who prepares a feast for His people on Mount Sion, not they for Him. In Rev. 19 : 9 the redeemed are invited unto the marriage feast of the Lamb ; they have nothing to do with the preparation of the feast, they are only asked to partake of it. The Lord calls the table at which His disciples are to eat and drink, " My table " (Luke 22 : 30), that is, a table which He prepares for them, not they for Him. In every one of these passages, and in many others of a like import, the Lord prepares the feast ; He is the host, His people are the guests. This usage is itself sufficient evidence that in the feast of the peace offering the relation was thought of in a similar way.

This emphasizes the gracious character of the favor bestowed in the sacrifice. It was God's gift spontaneously imparted. He is the source of the friendship, the peace, the reconciliation, the communion, that so enriched the worshipper. It is He who

descended with His fulness of blessing into His people's life, not they who have risen up into His. The movement that attained to such happy results, and which found a response in the heart of the offerer and his household, originated with God. The worshipper does not reconcile himself and remove the impediments preventing communion ; God reconciles and opens the true and living way. This explanatory superscription might be placed over the sacrificial meal : "By grace are ye saved through faith ; and that not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God ; not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2 : 8, 9). It may be true to the thought of heathen religions to conceive the votary preparing a feast for his god, in the timid hope that the object of his worship may be made propitious ; that idea alone is in harmony with the analogy of Scripture, which represents the God of Israel as eagerly waiting to be gracious, lovingly ready to bless, even moving His people to offer their gifts that He might pour His benefits into their life so laid open to receive. The heathen gods may be always waiting to obtain, our God is always in a ready attitude to impart.

" Rejoice, we are allied  
To that which doth provide  
And not partake, effect and not receive."

According to Lev. 7 : 11-21 there were three sorts of voluntary peace offerings. These were the thank offering, the vow offering, and the freewill offering. The only point of difference in the ritual of these

sacrifices was the minor one, that in the thank offering it was necessary to use the flesh of the victim on the day on which it was offered (7 : 15), while in the vow and freewill offering a part might be made use of on the following day as well (7 : 16). The important point of difference was the motive that actuated the offering. This was different in each of the three classes of sacrifice, and thus there was constituted three varieties of peace offering, each distinguished by the sentiment which impelled the offerer. When this is interpreted in terms of the spiritual, it resolves itself into three different reasons that may be found urging men to cultivate their peace and friendship with God—three different considerations that cause believers to say : “ Being justified by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ” (Rom. 5 : 1, R.V.).

A thank offering was a peace offering sacrificed because of gratitude to God. The offerer, because of some happy experience, finds his heart overflowing with thanksgiving, and this moves him to offer his sacrifice. The gratitude, love and praise that surge within, gather themselves up into a longing desire for closer fellowship, more intimate friendship, a fuller enjoyment of peace with Him who has been so gracious, and the peace offering is brought as the most effective means at hand to carry out that desire. God had bestowed some rich and almost unhopèd-for blessing, a good that had been awaited for many a day. The result was a lively uplift of the whole life towards Him, an eagerness to know Him better, to



walk more closely with Him; to imbibe His spirit more fully, to cultivate His friendship more faithfully; and so the sacred feast was prepared as a help towards these much-desired results. We find one of the psalmists urging men by the thought of God's goodness to offer Him the sacrifice of thanksgiving. (Ps. 107:22). He had in view at the moment men who had brought trouble upon themselves, and whom God had delivered (vs. 17-19). Their transgressions and their iniquities had brought them near the gates of death; but God heard their cry and saved them. This, the Psalmist reasons, should cause them to offer their thank offering. It should certainly make them more devoted, more anxious to live in communion with God, and in the thank offering they would find a means that would help them to do so. In Psalm 116:17 is found the same thought. God had delivered the Psalmist from some bonds that afflicted him, and in return he offers his thank offering. God's work of deliverance drew the heart of His servant after him with the cords of love. Some men may be hardened by a continued experience of God's goodness, but the faithful are quickened into a more ardent love and a heartier desire to know and serve Him better (Rom. 2:4).

The vow offering was sacrificed in accordance with a vow. When one who had pledged himself to offer a peace offering in the circumstance of his receiving a desired boon, has fulfilled his self-imposed obligation on having his wish gratified, he has offered a vow offering. When Jacob was on his way to Paddan-aram,

he promised the Lord that if success waited upon him during the years of his sojourn in the land towards which he was journeying, and he was brought back in safety to his home, he would, among other things, offer Him a tithe of all his increase (Gen. 28 : 21, 22). If, on his return, he remained true to his promise, he offered what was essentially a vow offering. Jephthah had vowed to offer what first met him on his return home, if he were successful in the war undertaken against the children of Ammon (Jud. 11 : 30). When, in obedience to this vow, he offered in sacrifice his only child, he offered what may be regarded as a vow offering. Neither of these offerings mentioned were peace offerings, but the circumstance in which they were offered illustrates when a peace offering was to be regarded as a vow offering. Some take Jonah 1 : 16 as an indication that the vow offering was presented when the vow was made, but those instances referred to above, and other instances as well, show instead that it was presented when the object desired had been secured.

The vow offering was thus a peace offering presented in fulfilment of a vow, and not one presented while the vow was being made. It represented a state of mind in which one sought to cultivate his relation of peace with God, because he had promised to do so ; sought to render a more faithful service, to develop a better life and character, because he had pledged himself to do so. The vow and the vow offering were in those early days a common means of grace in the East, and the vow is still. Even in the

West it is not unknown as a moral and spiritual influence. The men are not few who are struggling towards a better and more useful life, because in some hour of danger or difficulty they promised to do so if deliverance and help were afforded. The objection may be urged that a motive of such a sort is not of the highest order, but it should not be overlooked in passing judgment, that where a right course is pursued, even from considerations that have much alloy, a purifying process is carried on that will, if continued sufficiently long, eliminate from the life and character all that is foreign and impure. Better to seek God and the right because of a vow than not to seek at all.

The third sort of peace offering was the freewill offering. As the name implies, this sacrifice was not presented like the other two under the stimulus of special conditions, but as the result of a spontaneously originated impulse constraining towards such a service. The offering of silver and gold which Artaxerxes voluntarily made towards the restoration of the temple at Jerusalem is called a free-will offering (Ezra 8 : 28), so is the offering of material for the construction of the tabernacle, "which every man and woman, whose heart made them willing," brought and laid at the feet of Moses (Ex. 35 : 29). The author of Psalm 119 calls the praise of God that freely welled up from his heart, "the freewill offering of my mouth" (v. 108). The statement in Deut. 23 : 23 appears to show that an offering made because of a vow, was sometimes called a freewill offering, but that certainly

was not the ordinary usage. It was when a desire after God, rising without compulsion, swelled so tumultuously in the heart that a peace offering became a necessary outlet, that the sacrifice made was called a freewill offering. A healthy life in its normal condition ever rises towards God. Without any special experience of His favor, without being impelled by any promise or vow, it seeks after His fuller enjoyment as the lusty deer in the thirsty desert seeks the well-known water brooks (Ps. 42 : 1). Man was made to know and serve God. In his saner moods he will have a healthy desire to realize that intention. In the Jewish dispensation that desire frequently resulted in a freewill offering ; in the Christian dispensation it results in a diligent use of the means which secure moral and spiritual improvement.

Besides these three kinds of peace offerings, every one of which may be said to have been offered voluntarily—though in the first and third that feature was more marked than in the other—there was what may be called a compulsory peace offering which was demanded of the offerer. When a Nazarite had fulfilled the days of his separation, the law required that he should offer a peace offering (Num. 6 : 14). It was not a matter of his choice, but of the divine command. It was the same on the day of atonement (Lev. 23 : 19). On that great occasion also the peace offering was compulsory, only there it was for the nation and not for an individual. The ritual in these cases did not differ very much from that of the voluntary offerings ; the necessity that dominated the

sacrifice constituted the greatest distinction. Keeping in mind the general significance of the sacrifice, this feature indicated that it was the duty of the Israelites to press forward to the full enjoyment of their happy relation to God ; whether they felt disposed to do so or not, they were to yield to their obligation in the matter. There should be in every heart a love towards God and a desire after Him that would make His conscious presence, and the cultivation of His friendship, a delight to be sought after. Sometimes, however, love grows cold, and divine desire begins to fail. Then self-compulsion finds its opportunity. Then the voice of duty, than which none is more sacred, must be obeyed, and the presence of God sought as the only atmosphere in which human life can realize itself. Because they need God, men should seek after Him, whether they feel like doing so or not. Compulsory peace offerings have their place as well as those that are voluntary.

The place of the peace offering among the other sacrifices was intended to teach its own lessons. It followed upon the burnt and meal offerings. It is put thus in the law : " And Aaron's sons shall burn it (*i.e.*, the fat of the peace offering) on the altar upon the burnt offering, which is upon the wood that is on the fire " (Lev. 3 : 5). With the interpretation given to these three sacrifices in view, this order must be understood to mean that before one enters upon the enjoyment of peace and communion with God, he must consecrate himself and his means to the divine service. There was here, therefore, symbolized what the Lord taught when He said : " Whosoever shall

save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 16 : 25). "Who-soever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14 : 33). "The connection between the peace offering and the burnt and meal offerings is simply this: 'A justified soul devoted to the Lord in all things, spontaneously engages in acts of praise and exercises of fellowship. The Lord takes for granted that such a soul having free access to Him now, will make abundant use of that access'" (Bonar).

Some regard it suggestive that the sacrificial meal was enjoyed after the blood of the victim had been sprinkled upon the altar and the fat consumed in the sacred fire. This order is understood to mean that it was only under cover of the atoning blood, the acceptance of which had been signified by the burning of the fat, the Israelite could calmly commune with God at his sacrificial meal and receive the moral and spiritual renewing which the thought of His peace and friendship can give. That the connection here stated holds between atonement and the enjoyment of God's favor is certainly taught in Scripture, and is daily a matter of Christian experience. The only way in which man can rest in God is through the use, conscious or unconscious, of the atoning sacrifice made in his behalf. That this truth was taught in the requirement that in the peace offering the sprinkling of blood and the burning of the fat preceded the sacrificial meal, may be justly doubted, but the consideration that in the Mosaic ritual the sprinkled blood always spoke with greater or less emphasis of

atonement, makes it quite possible that such was the case.

In Lev. 7 : 28-34 is described the priests' portion in the peace offering. They were given "the wave breast" and "heave shoulder" (v. 34). The priestly families received "the wave breast" (v. 31), and the priest who ministered at the offering the "heave shoulder" (v. 33). The shoulder was in reality the hind-quarter. This is proved by the twofold consideration that the word here used in the original sometimes designates the human thigh (Isa. 47 : 2 ; Canticles 5 : 15), and that an entirely different word is made use of when the shoulder is specifically referred to (Num. 6 : 19 ; Deut. 18 : 3). So that the priests received from every peace offering the breast and the right hind-quarter, regarded as the most valuable parts of the victim, except the fat, which became the Lord's.

The words "wave" and "heave" have caused no end of discussion. The rabbis argued their meaning in the early days, and modern critics are still engaged in the task. Delitzsch gives the usual interpretation of the waving in the words: "The name is applied to a ceremony peculiar to the peace offerings and the consecration offerings. The priest laid the object to be waved on the hands of the offerer, and then placed his own hands underneath and moved the hands of the offerer backwards and forwards in a horizontal direction to indicate by the movement forward (*i.e.*, towards the altar) . . . the presentation of the sacrifice . . . to God, and by the movement

backward the reception of it back again as a present which God hands over to His servants the priests." Indeed, almost the only difference in the opinions held of this ceremony is as to the direction in which the movements mentioned were made. As to the meaning all are agreed. It indicated that the Lord restored to His priests a portion of what had been consecrated to Himself, and in so doing had given a guarantee that He would provide for their needs.

A greater difference of opinion is met in the discussion of the "heaving." Many hold that the term simply indicated the lifting up of the part heaved from the rest of the carcase, and had no ceremonial significance (Lange, Delitzsch, Keil, etc.). On the other hand "the Rabbinical writers hold that there was a special ceremony of 'heaving,' . . . and here again they are followed by a majority of Christian archæologists." The fact that the "heaving" is so often placed side by side with the "waving" is enough to compel one to accept this latter view. The rabbis described the ceremony as "a heaving up and a bringing down." By this they meant that the portion heaved was lifted up as if to be thrown upon the altar and then let down again; and this, as far as can be known, was the movement really performed. Its meaning was much the same as that of the waving, a presenting of the object to the Lord upon the altar and a receiving of it again from Him. So that both the "waving" and the "heaving" taught that God would provide for His own priests from the gifts presented Him at His altar. They who ministered at the altar were to live by the altar.



## CHAPTER VII.

### *THE SIN OFFERING.*

(Lev. 4: 1-5: 13; 6: 24-30.)

THE sin offering is first mentioned in the book of Exodus (29: 14, 36; 30: 10), and its first complete description is in the sections of Leviticus mentioned in the superscription.

A sacrifice of similar import may have existed among other peoples before the Mosaic ritual was instituted. It is said that the Assyrians were wont to offer a sacrifice which was essentially a sin offering and should be so designated. Of the Canaanites Sayce says: "Their sacrifices and offerings were of two kinds, the *zau'at* or sin offering, and the *shelem* or peace offering." Herodotus mentions a sacrifice common among the Egyptians in which many imprecations were heaped on the head of the victim, and in which the flesh as in the Hebrew sin offering was afterwards made use of for food (2: 39). It is quite possible that a fuller knowledge of primitive Semitic institutions may discover that the sin offering, like the three sacrifices which have already been expounded, was only a modification for religious ends of something that went before. At any rate, in

preceding Hebrew institutions it found distinct foreshadowing. This position was occupied by the sacrifice of the covenant and more especially by the passover. The vast importance attached to the blood in these two ordinances shows a close relationship between them and the sin offering. But even should it be ultimately established that the Mosaic law had introduced in the sin offering an entirely new institution, it would still remain true that its thought and purpose had been symbolized and effected in a less perfect way by earlier and more primitive rites. One is not to expect anything entirely new in the significance of the sin offering, only a fuller revelation of truths already known, and a more complete accomplishment of a purpose which in early days was more imperfectly performed.

It may be justly claimed that the sin offering was the most fundamental, and in that respect, the most important of all the Old Testament sacrifices. It never attained the prominence of either the burnt or peace offerings, which were offered in far greater numbers and much more frequently. Outside the Mosaic books it is mentioned only six times in the historic portions of the Old Testament (2 Chron. 29: 21, 23, 24; Ezra 6: 17; 8: 35; Neh. 10: 33). In the prophets it is seldom mentioned except in Ezekiel. Hosea probably mentions it once (4: 8), and a psalmist once (40: 6). This cannot be taken as a complete statement of the occasions on which it was offered during that period, but the great infrequency of reference throughout the record does justify

the statement that the offering now under consideration never became so prominent in the public worship of the people as the other two mentioned. Prominence and importance, however, are two different things. Though not very frequently offered, and less frequently mentioned, the sin offering was thoroughly fundamental in the religious life, both of the nation and individual. It was presupposed in every other acceptable sacrifice, and only on the ground of what it was intended to accomplish could the peculiar religion of Israel, and the high moral life required, be maintained. Its chief purpose was to preserve intact the covenant relation entered upon between the Lord and His people, and to symbolize how alone it could be preserved, and upon this relation all that was distinctive in their moral and religious life entirely depended. Without the sin-offering, or perhaps, more correctly, without the truth that it represented, Israel could not continue to be Israel.

In seeking to discover the significance of the sin offering, the first truth that becomes manifest is that it was offered in view of sin. The name suggests this at once, and statement after statement is discovered to the same effect. In the section dealing with this sacrifice in Leviticus, a description is given of sin offerings for the high priest, for the nation, for a ruler, and for the private individual, and in each case it is said that it was to be offered on the occurrence of sin. "If the anointed priests shall sin so as to bring guilt upon the people, let him offer for his sin" (4: 3), "If the whole congregation of Israel shall err, . . .

then the assembly shall offer a young bullock for a sin offering" (vs. 13, 14), "When a ruler sinneth . . . he shall bring for his oblation a goat" (vs. 22, 23), "If any of the common people, . . . then shall he bring for his oblation a goat, a female" (vs. 27, 28). It may be that in every other sacrifice as well in which a victim was slain, there was some suggestion of sin implied (Lev. 1:4), but in the sin offering this characteristic received such prominence that every other activity of spirit was kept out of view. Above everything else the sin offering dealt with the fact of sin. Had Israel lived a perfectly righteous life, this offering would never have been instituted or incorporated among the nation's institutions.

According to the interpretation given in the law itself, the purpose which the sacrifice was intended to accomplish in relation to this fact of sin, was atonement. This is stated explicitly in regard to the sin offering of the nation (4:20), the ruler (4:26), and the private individual (4:31, 35; 5:6; 5:10; 5:13). Similar information is not given in regard to that offered for the high priest, but this cannot be taken to mean that it had a different significance, besides no other purpose is attributed to it. The statement is perfectly safe from the passages cited, that the chief purpose of every sin offering was to make atonement for sin, and an examination of the ritual required in the sacrifice bears out such a generalization.

Following out the method of interpretation adopted in the exposition of the other sacrifices, the distinctive

feature of the sin offering is found in the manipulation of the blood. The presentation, the laying on of hands, and the killing are the same as in the other sacrifices; the burning of the fat is the same as in the peace and trespass offerings; the carcase, except in two instances, was disposed of as in the last named offering. The point of difference is in the sprinkling of blood. It was presented at different places and in a different way. In the sin offering for the ruler and the private individual, it was applied to the horns of the altar of burnt offering; in that for the high priest and the nation it was applied to the horns of the altar of incense, and sprinkled seven times before the veil of the sanctuary (4: 6); on the day of atonement it was brought even into the most holy place and sprinkled on the mercy-seat and before the mercy-seat (Lev. 16: 14). In all other sacrifices the blood was dashed against the sides of the altar of burnt offering, but in the sin offering it was put upon the several sacred places mentioned. The terms employed to describe the manipulation of the blood in the sin offering are quite different from that made use of to describe the corresponding action in the other sacrifices. That which designated the act by which it was applied to the horns of the altars, simply meant that it was presented there, and the other term was the ordinary word for sprinkling. Both as to place and manner the manipulation of the blood in the sin offering was quite distinctive. For it is unnecessary to say that pouring the surplus blood in the place of ashes had no symbolic significance (Lev. 4: 7).

The peculiar way in which the blood was presented, meant that it was brought as near the Lord as possible. The horns of the altar were regarded as its most sacred location, the part nearest God, and the application of the blood there meant, as has been said, that it was brought as near the Lord as possible, pressed on His notice as much as possible. The altar of incense has been called the priests' altar. It was there the Lord met His priests, and to it they could come every day. The altar of burnt offering has been called the people's altar, and there He promised to meet and bless them (Ex. 29: 42, 43). They could not, like the priests, enter the holy place, and meet with Him at the altar of incense. When, therefore, the blood of the sacrifice for the ruler and private member of the theocracy was presented on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and that of the sacrifice for the high priest and for the nation was presented on the horns of the altar of incense, the conception was that in either case it was brought as near the Lord as possible, pressed so much on His notice that He could not overlook its presentation. This was the meaning also when the blood was sprinkled seven times before the veil behind which the Most High made Himself known in the thick cloud (Lev. 16: 2), and when once a year it was brought into His very presence at the mercy-seat (Heb. 9: 7). When with this pressing of the blood upon the divine attention is connected the well-known principle that it is the blood that maketh atonement (Lev. 17: 11), the result arrived at is that so frequently

stated in the law itself, that the purpose of the sin offering was to make atonement. As the burnt offering spoke of consecration, and the peace offering of peace and fellowship, so the sin offering spoke of atonement.

“To atone” literally meant in the thought of the Israelite “to cover.” An atonement was something that “covered.” When the sin offering was said to atone, or to be an atonement, the conception was that it “covered” or provided a “covering.” It was a covering for the worshipper who offered it (Lev. 4 : 20, 31), or it covered him upon his sins (Lev. 4 : 35 ; 5 : 13), or it covered him from his sins (4 : 26 ; 5 : 6 ; 5 : 10). Here are three ideas associated with the sin offering—it covered the offerer, it covered him upon his sin, and it covered him from his sin. When examined with a little care, these ideas are found to represent the same result looked at from different points of view. “To cover the offerer from his sin” meant that he was so protected that the consequences of his sin could not overtake him, “to cover him upon his sin” meant that his sin became so hidden that it could not invite its natural effects to enter the life, and inasmuch as the offering was made in view of some sin chargeable against the offerer, “to cover him” indicated that he was shielded against the evil consequences of that which he had done amiss. According to either point of view the sin offering provided a covering that saved the offerer from the results of his wrong-doing. The blood presented before the Lord, or, speaking more strictly, the life that it contained (Lev. 17 : 11),

covered him and warded off the evil consequences which he feared.

What the Israelite feared above everything else was the Lord's displeasure. To him the most serious feature of sin was that it made the Lord angry. Its every other evil quality was insignificant compared with its power of provoking God. What the sin offering did was to neutralize this dread characteristic. It so covered the offerer that his sin no longer provoked God, or what is the same thing, it so covered his sin that it no longer aroused the divine displeasure. The life of the innocent victim slain, brought before God in the sprinkled blood, came between Him and the guilty offerer, thus covering his sin and depriving it of its power to induce the deserved penalty. "Blessed is he whose sin is covered" (Ps. 32 : 1), says the Psalmist; that blessedness was secured in Israel by the provided sin offering. As the blood of the passover lamb in Egypt, sprinkled on the doorposts and the lintel, covered the first-born of Israel from the condemning angel of death, so in succeeding generations the blood of the victim sprinkled on the horns of the altar covered from the divine displeasure every penitent Israelite who offered the Lord his sin offering. In other words the sacrifice made secured the forgiveness of sin (Lev. 4 : 20, 26, 31, 35 ; 5 : 10, 13). It readjusted the disturbed covenant relation.

To atone and to forgive meant virtually the same thing. In the passage, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered" (Ps. 32 : 1), the Psalmist practically identifies the forgiveness of



sin with the covering of sin or atonement. Such passages as: "He being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not" (Ps. 78: 38), "The good Lord pardon every one that setteth his heart to seek God" (2 Chron. 30: 18), "Forgive not their iniquity, neither blot out their sin from thy sight" (Jer. 18: 23), might substitute "atone" for "pardon," and "forgive," without altering the sense. Indeed, the term in the original is that usually rendered "atone." All of which goes to show that throughout the Old Testament the two phrases to atone and to forgive have much the same meaning. The only difference that can be recognized is in the point of view. Forgiveness points to what God does, and atonement to what is done for man. When one is said to be forgiven, the meaning is that God refrains from visiting him with His displeasure, and when he is said to be atoned for, the idea conveyed is that he is hidden from the divine displeasure, or more strictly, his sin is so hidden as not to provoke the divine displeasure. The intervening life that covers the offerer so that his sin does not appear, must also be thought of as delivering from the divine displeasure which the manifest sin would necessarily arouse. And thus the sin offering that is said to atone is inevitably said also to secure forgiveness. The statement rings again and again throughout this law: "And the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be forgiven" (4: 20, 26, 31, 35; 5: 10, 13).

How the life of the victim presented before the Lord in the blood was thought to accomplish this

twofold result, it is not so easy to say. The great variety of the answers that have been given by those who have wrestled with the question, and the inconceivable vagueness of much that some of them have written, show how great the difficulty really is. The fact seems to be that sufficient information has not been given either in the law itself or in the subsequent writings to make an entirely satisfactory solution possible. That the life presented before God secured atonement and pardon is affirmed again and again ; the way in which it did this is not made so clear.

The question does not appear to have engaged the attention to any extent in those early days. The Jew was not very philosophical or theological in his tendencies, and was usually satisfied with a knowledge of the fact without ascertaining what its meaning was. When he knew that the life of the victim slain in the sin offering covered his sin and saved him from the divine displeasure, he did not concern himself very much to discover how it succeeded in doing this. The law informed him that atonement and forgiveness were thus provided ; that was all that he was anxious to know, and that was all that was clearly revealed. God does not unravel for men perplexities that do not baffle, nor solve problems with which they have not wrestled. When, therefore, attempts are made to discover among the inspired teachers of Israel a rationale of the results accomplished by the sin offering, there are found only hints and suggestions of what the divine thought really was, and these do not prove sufficient to prevent diversity and uncertainty of conclusion.

Among the theories that have been offered to show how the life of a victim "covered" the offerer, five may be mentioned, having been strongly advocated :

1. First of all, it is held "that the sin-offering, which, like every other offering, is a korban (Lev. 1 : 2), . . . is to be regarded as a gift presented to God" (Nowack). As Jacob hoped by his costly offerings to appease the wrath of Esau, whom he had so flagrantly wronged (Gen. 32 : 20), so the Israelite hoped by the gift of his victim's life to avert the divine displeasure to which his sin exposed him.

2. A second view advocated by Keil and others is, that "sin offerings were instituted for the purpose of putting an end to the separation between God and man," and that it accomplished this by bringing the offerer's life into peaceful contact with God through the life of the substituted victim, which was brought near to God at the horns of His altar. The proof given the offerer that this peaceful contact had been effected, was the consumption of the victim's flesh, which symbolized the destruction of the offerer's sin.

3. Another explanation places the efficacy of the sin offering in its being an expression of contrition. The only condition that God required in order to pardon was repentance. By offering his sin offering the worshipper showed that he was penitent and was a deserving object of the divine forgiveness (H. Schultz).

4. Others regard the sin offering as a ransom, a payment, to recompense for the injury done. It is supposed to have taken the place of the money

fines (2 Kings 12 : 16), which had been often levied, and like them, to have been a satisfaction for the wrong done.

5. The view ordinarily held thinks of the victim as suffering for the offerer, and so securing his deliverance, suffering in his stead, and in his behalf, and so expiating his guilt. The sacrifice is not regarded as a case of substitution, simply, for every sacrifice of the law was confessedly substitutionary. It is in addition regarded as having been a case of substitutionary suffering, and as having secured pardon because it was such. This does not mean that the victim was thought of as having been punished because it had been made a substitute for the offerer, and much less that it endured as such a substitute, just what the offerer would otherwise have endured. The idea of a positive infliction of an arbitrary and equivalent penalty is not to be thought of. The thought rather is that the victim, because of its identity with the worshipper, was regarded as enduring until exhausted, the wrath which the sin committed had aroused. That this infliction was thought to be confined to, and focussed in, the death, it is impossible to say. All that can be safely stated is that the victim was considered to have endured and exhausted the dreaded displeasure which the wrong done had provoked.

In favor of this last view is the fact that the doctrine of vicarious suffering, and its advantages to those in whose favor it was borne, received some prominence in the prophets of the Old Testament. The classic passage in this regard is Isaiah 53. There the Servant

of Jehovah, by many different figures, and a large variety of expression, is described as justifying many through suffering in their stead the consequences of their sin. In the light of such a chapter, written perhaps in a period when the sin offering was receiving greater attention than formerly, it is not difficult to discover vicarious suffering in Israel's greatest sacrifice.

Micah 6 : 6 also shows that the truth of deliverance by the suffering of another, was a source of comfort to the Hebrews, though the prophet condemns the application suggested in the passage. Giving the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul was a brutal misdirection of a great redemptive truth, but the presence of its misdirection even is proof that the truth itself was felt a considerable force in the religious life.

Deut. 21 : 1-5, which describes how the elders of a town were required to kill a victim because of an undiscovered murder committed in the neighborhood, affords another illustration of the same principle. The animal was not said in this instance to have been offered as a sin offering, but it was distinctly understood to have been slain because of the guilt which had been unavoidably incurred through the commission of the crime, and also to have delivered the elders from their liability because of their imputed guilt. The process was thus an instance of deliverance through the endurance of another, and the peculiarity that in it the suffering was equivalent to what the offerers would otherwise have endured—for the penalty of murder was death—in no way renders less explicit the involved principle.

The inevitable conclusion from these and similar passages is that the truth of substitutionary suffering was to a considerable extent known among the Israelites, and that finding it in the purpose and symbolism of the sin offering is only bringing that sacrifice into line with the revelation of God's mind otherwise made.

The serious objections that might be urged against the other interpretations mentioned, should also be regarded as evidence in favor of that here adopted. An insuperable obstacle in the way of accepting the view which looks upon the sin offering as a payment, a compensation for the injury done, lies in the fact that another sacrifice, the trespass offering, was specially intended to embody that truth and purpose. A fatal objection to the interpretation which has been associated with the name of H. Schultz, is that it throws the meaning of the offering out of harmony with the analogy of Scripture. Nowhere, either in the Old or in the New Testament, is pardon promised on condition of repentance, independent of all consideration of expiation and satisfaction ; and to say that the sin offering was nothing but the proclamation of such an offer, would be to change the whole character of the Old Testament religion from being a religion of real sacrifice into one in which sacrifice was regarded as only a symbol. Against the second interpretation mentioned might be urged the circumstance that it gives, as will be elsewhere shown, an impossible meaning to the consumption of the carcass ; and against that which regards the offering as a mere gift lies the

more serious objection that, at the time the law was given, Israel had risen far beyond the stage in religious development in which sacrifice was regarded as a gift intended to make the deity auspicious.

There is no doubt that difficulties can be discovered in any theory that may be advanced in regard to the atoning power of the sin offering, and while many may be discovered in what may be called the "substitutionary suffering" theory, it has the weighty consideration in its favor, that it is more in harmony with the religious conceptions of Israel than is any other. The important matter, however, is not the theory, it is rather the fact, that in this sacrifice Israel found atonement and forgiveness, which, translated into human experience, means that they found in it peace and spiritual renewing. The dreaded disturbance in their covenant relation to God became readjusted, and they once more lived in the enjoyment of His fellowship. This was their faith, and in comparison it was unimportant to know how the sacrifice offered effected such a desirable result.

The sin offering did not secure deliverance from every form of sin. The law gives a statement of the offences for which it provided a remedy. There are mentioned, first of all, sins of ignorance (Lev. 4 : 2, 22, 27). The word here translated "ignorance," literally meant a "wandering," or "mistake," and would cover every form of wrong-doing committed in haste, through carelessness, without evil intention, or through weakness. It was further stated that the sacrifice was to be offered when the sin came to the

knowledge of him who was guilty of it (Lev. 4 : 14, 23, 28). This implies that it kept in view also such sins as were committed unconsciously, without the doer knowing that his conduct was sinful. In Lev. 5 : 1-4 are mentioned in addition the sin of hiding evidence that would convict the wrong-doer, and the sin of making rash vows. Lev. 5 : 2, 3 increases the list by making mention of some ceremonial sins.

Indeed, the only offences for which the sin offering did not atone were what are called "high-handed" sins (Num. 15 : 30). This phrase covered every wrong done in a deliberate, defiant spirit, and could be regarded as nothing less than treason against the theocratic king. For such guilt the law provided no atonement, but inflicted rather the penalty of excommunication, and even death.

In this twofold classification of sin, and contrast of results, the Old Testament bears no slight resemblance to the New. For there, too, it is to the ignorant and erring (Heb. 5 : 2, R.V.) that compassion is shown, and not to the deliberate and defiant. The grace of Christ is offered to all, and His atonement is sufficient for all, but it is only those who are contrite and submissive that enjoy the blessings provided. In the New Testament, as well as in the Old, the stubborn, defiant wrong-doer finds himself finally shut out, and only the penitent receive pardon.

Because the law excluded high-handed sins from benefit of atonement, the inference has been drawn that the sin offering had no reference to moral offences, only to such as were ceremonial ; that it



made atonement for transgressions of the ceremonial law, not for those of the moral law. Such a conclusion is altogether inadmissible. The sins of which the Mosaic law took cognizance cannot be classified under the two categories of high-handed and ceremonial. Between these two extremes was a third category, which included under it the far more numerous moral offences that have been called "sins of ignorance," and "sins of infirmity," and it was for these especially that the sin offering was intended to make atonement. It was certainly offered quite frequently for transgressions purely ceremonial, as for defilement caused by contact with an unclean object (Lev. 5 : 2, 3), by leprosy (Lev. 14 : 13), and by childbirth (Lev. 12 : 6), but to suppose that it was limited to such sins would be a most arbitrary conclusion.

No one will maintain that the sins mentioned in Lev. 5 : 1-4 were not violations of the moral law. Withholding evidence that would convict the wrongdoer and making rash vows are clearly moral offences. Nor can it be shown that the sins mentioned in the description of the sin offering in Lev. 4 : 1-31 were not of the same character. The word rendered "sin" in that section occurs elsewhere in Scripture upwards of 150 times, and in no case does its meaning appear to be limited to what is ceremonial. It frequently refers to idolatry, and sometimes to disobedience against constituted authority, but nowhere does it refer exclusively to ceremonial defilement. In every instance the term appears to imply a moral element. From this the inference is inevitable that in the use

of the word in this section its meaning cannot be limited to what is ceremonial. It may include the ceremonial, probably does, but it cannot exclude the moral.

Indeed, were the sin offering limited in its purpose to the removal of ceremonial defilement, it would have proved of little advantage. Israel was at this time sufficiently advanced in moral and spiritual development to recognize that moral failure was a much more serious matter than failure in the sphere of rites and ceremonies, and that if the sin offering had reference only to the latter, it left unrelieved their most distressing need. Their greatest sacrifice would have been entirely unworthy of their religion, if not of so enlightened a people, if it limited its purpose to the removal of mere ceremonial guilt.

The law of the sin offering required that the costliness of the sacrifice should vary with the position of the offerer in State and Church. The high priest, the most exalted official in the land, was required to offer an ox, a ruler escaped with a male goat, and a private individual was required to sacrifice only a female goat. It required more to atone for the sin of a priest than for that of a ruler, and more for that of a ruler than for that of an ordinary subject. This meant that graded responsibility, and a corresponding aggravation and palliation of guilt were recognized.

The sin of the high priest was more heinous than that of any other. He occupied the highest position of trust in the land, in his faithfulness the people were blessed, and by his sin they were involved in guilt

(Lev. 4 : 3). He was guide to the assembled congregation, and when he failed their light grew dim ; he was their earthly mediator, and his blame disturbed their relation to God. With so much depending on what he did, it was necessary that he retain a conscience sensitive to the call of duty, and a disposition ever ready to obey. Interests of infinite importance, big with eternal destiny, were in his keeping, and if he proved untrue the fault was, O how great ! a pilot dashing his crew upon the rocks, a faithless leader betraying his followers to the foe.

Next came the sin of the ruler (4 : 22), which was also aggravated by the responsibilities of the position occupied. The term here translated ruler usually designated the tribal princes (Num. 7 : 11 ; Joshua 22 : 14, etc.), but was sometimes applied to the king (1 Kings 11 : 34). The law regulating the offering to be sacrificed by those bearing the title, indicates that unfaithfulness of men, to whom an important civil trust has been committed, is a most serious sin. Their guilt may not be so great as that of those who betray a religious trust, but it is nevertheless very great. The interests at stake are momentous. Not only does the material well-being of the people suffer through corruption in high places, but their moral well-being as well, decay spreading from the centres and places of prominence to the remotest and most obscure parts. "The king by judgment establisheth the land, but he that exacteth gifts overthroweth it" (Prov. 29 : 4).

Nor can the special costliness of the sacrifice be limited in its significance to the ruler's official conduct.

There is nothing in the law to justify such a twofold division of his actions. It must be understood to extend to his private life as well, and to teach that his official position aggravates the guilt of his unofficial wrong-doing. The claim has been often made that the public has nothing to do with the private life of those that serve it, but zeal for the common good will never accept such a view of official obligation. Even should successful covering of misdeeds prevent the hurtful effects of bad example, it cannot be overlooked that wrong-doing of every form goes to incapacitate for the best service, perceptibly or imperceptibly. God requires nothing less than that all conduct, official and unofficial, be actuated by the law of righteousness and truth.

Side by side with the sin of the high priest the law places that of the nation (4 : 13), and by demanding a like sacrifice (4 : 14) teaches that the one is heinous as the other. The nation no less than the individual has duties that it is under obligation to discharge, and these it cannot neglect without incurring a guilt more aggravated than that which its subjects can. This, at least, the law of the sin offering teaches, and one fears that it is a truth sadly overlooked. There are nations that go so far as to refuse any acknowledgment of God in their official conduct, and many more that practise a duplicity in their national and international dealings that would not be tolerated in transactions between private individuals. It would almost seem that a different code of morals ruled in diplomacy and the varied undertakings of nation with nation

from that which is recognized as the standard in the ordinary walks of life. Even governments that eschew secularism from their official creed, and formally acknowledge the divine authority over nations as over individuals, are far too slow to bring their practice up to the requirements of that moral law which they individually obey in private life. How different with the Levitical law! Its claim is that wrong-doing is more culpable far in the nation than in the individual, that its neglect of God and His law involves guilt unapproachably great.

The State has duties which it owes to God, and duties which it owes to man. These it must set its heart to discharge if it is to escape the severity of the divine condemnation. Interpreters of history, inspired and uninspired, have ever emphasized this truth, and the wonder is that in face of its certainty there should be such a tendency to ignore its obligations.

In the law of the sin offering for private individuals it was provided that the costliness of the victim be in proportion to the means of the offerer (4 : 27—5 : 13). If one could not afford to offer a female goat he was to bring a lamb, and if a lamb was more than he could afford he might present two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and if he was even too poor for such an offering he was to take with him a handful of meal. In this way the benefit of the sin offering was brought within reach of the most indigent, and the inspiring announcement made that God had in Israel brought salvation within reach of all, the poor as well as the rich. One of the tokens of the Messiah's presence in

later days was that the Gospel was being preached to the poor (Matt. 11 : 5), its messengers having been sent into the highways and byways, lanes and alleys. The law of the sin offering shows that the same gracious quality characterized the Old Testament religion, that there, too, the Gospel of forgiveness was preached unto all. The poorest in the land could afford to offer a handful of meal, and such an offering brought pardon (5 : 11-13). It had become an axiom in Israel that it was the blood that made atonement (Lev. 17 : 11), and that without the shedding of blood there was no remission of sin (Heb. 9 : 22), but in order to show the unrestrained freeness of divine grace, this universally acknowledged principle was for the once transgressed, and a small offering of meal accepted for atonement instead of an animal sacrifice.

Though the law accepted the cheapest possible offering when none other could be afforded, it required that a sacrifice of some sort should be offered without fail. Whenever the consciousness of sin was awakened the law demanded that a sin offering should forthwith be offered. The large number of the peace offerings sacrificed were quite voluntary. It was the same with many burnt offerings, but the sin offering was always offered under compulsion. It was not a matter of the offerer's choice, but of the law's requirement. This taught the alarming truth that every sin demanded an atonement. It indicated that there were two alternatives, either of which must be accepted, to offer an atoning sacrifice or to endure the penalty which pursued the wrong done. That

is ever the law of God's righteous government, either an atonement to be offered, or the penalty to be endured.

The place of the sin offering among the other sacrifices is instructive. It preceded the burnt, meal and peace offerings. Though its origin was later than that of these sacrifices, and is accordingly described in Leviticus after the others had been described, it always preceded them in actual ministration when together they constituted one service (Lev. 14: 19; 16: 3 *seq.*). This meant that the sin offering was fundamental to all these sacrifices, or in other words, that every successful approach which man makes to God is to be on the basis of atonement made. God brings His good-will towards man into realization by making atonement for his offences, and man can acceptably respond to all God's gracious intimations only in the reconciliation and pardon which His atoning sacrifice secures. While alienation and guilt exercise their destructive influence in the life, there is no pleasing service rendered to God. These must, first of all, be removed and their deadly effect counteracted. Because this is accomplished only through an atoning sacrifice, such a sacrifice must ever have a fundamental place in all true religion.

Complementary to this was the fact that a sin offering was invariably followed by a burnt and a meal offering. A burnt offering might have been offered without an immediately preceding sin offering, but a sin offering always required a burnt offering to

complete it, and with the burnt offering went the meal offering. This symbolized that in order to enjoy in actual experience all that the sin offering was intended to accomplish, one must consecrate himself and his substance to God. Those only participate in the salvation which Christ has secured who give themselves up to God in faith and obedience. God is reconciling the world unto Himself, but they only are delivered from their alienation who turn their heart to seek Him. He abundantly pardons, but only such as discontinue their disobedience and resume His service.

The significance of the manner in which the flesh of the sin offering was disposed of, is a matter that has been much discussed. In the ordinary sin offering the flesh of the victim became the portion of the priest, who ate it in the tabernacle or the temple (Lev. 6: 26); when the offering was for the high priest or for the nation, the flesh was consumed with fire in a clean place without the camp (Lev. 4: 11, 12, 21). The question is, What did the eating of the flesh by the priests in the one case, and the burning of it in the fire in the other, mean?

The best supported opinion is that it had no symbolic meaning. Giving the flesh to the priest was a very fitting way to dispose of what had been consecrated to a sacred use, and it at the same time helped to secure his livelihood. When the offering was for the high priest, or for the nation, which was priestly in its character, and which at any rate included the priests, there was a manifest fitness in disposing of it



in some other way, or perhaps it was regarded as too holy for even a priest to eat, (Kurtz), and so it was consumed by fire, as the best means to prevent its being profaned. In either case there was no intention of giving religious instruction, except indeed that there was taught God's care in providing for His servants, and in preserving from profanation what has been consecrated to a sacred use.

In favor of this interpretation many considerations might be urged. 1. First of all, there is the fact that the verb used for burning in these cases (Lev. 4: 12, 21; 6: 30) was not a sacrificial term, but one of the ordinary words in every-day use. When sacrificial burning was to be expressed, a different term was usually employed (Lev. 1: 9, 13, 15, 17; 4: 10, 19, 31, etc.). 2. Another consideration is that the regulation according to which the flesh was given to the priest, was not enacted in the description of the sin offering, but in the special instruction intended for the guidance of the priest (Lev. 6: 26-29), which would not have been the case were it intended to have a symbolic purpose. 3. When the sin offering was of two turtledoves or two young pigeons, there was no portion given to the priest, nor was any burnt in the fire without the camp (Lev. 5: 8-10). This fact itself is sufficient to decide the matter; it shows that giving a portion to the priest or burning the flesh without the camp had nothing to do with the significance of the sacrifice. 4. In the sin offering of meal (5: 11-13) the priest's portion was the same as in the ordinary meal offering, which shows that the portion of the

priest had no more significance in the one case than in the other. The wonder is that in the face of such evidence any other view should have received countenance, and the wonder grows when these other views are mentioned and examined.

An interpretation that has received reverent support is that, "At this part of the ceremonies there was meant to be exhibited a type of hell. This burning afar off, away from the holy place, yet seen by the whole congregation, was a terrible glance of the truth, 'They shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, etc.'" (Bonar). Against this view is the fact that nowhere in the law was fire made use of as a symbol of hell. It was only in later times that such a symbolism became common. Moreover, the burning of flesh that was declared most holy, could not be made to symbolize the punishment of sin. Finally, the burning without the camp and the consumption of the flesh by the high priests meant the same, and certainly the latter could not be construed into an infliction of penalty. On every hand this interpretation is encompassed with impossibilities.

A more reasonable exposition is that "This twofold method was based on one and the same idea. In both cases there was the annihilation of the flesh, that part of the man to which sin was imputed; in the one the essence of the sin was swallowed up in the bodies of the priests, in the other was manifested the result of sin as seen in that death which is the fruit of sin" (Keil). A fatal objection to this rendering is that the flesh of the victim was not considered a symbol of the

offerer's sinful flesh. The fact that it was declared most holy makes such a symbolism impossible, as it also makes impossible the interpretation that is based upon it.

H. Schultz holds that "The flesh of the sin offering was given to the priests on the understanding that they eat it, 'in order to bear the iniquity of the congregation to make atonement for them' (Lev. 10 : 17). By appropriating the flesh of the sin offering, by means of which the most sacred act of expiation is performed, the priesthood, taking upon itself, in its official holiness, the danger of contact with what is sacred, has to bring the act of expiation to a worthy conclusion." This view is open to two serious objections. In the first place, it rests upon a false exegesis of the passage of Scripture which it quotes. A glance at the text shows that it was not the flesh of the victim that was given to the priest in order to make atonement, as Schultz supposes, but the sin offering itself. The almost invariable statement in the law is that it is the priest who maketh atonement (Lev. 4 : 20, 26, 31, 35 ; 5 : 6, 10, 13), and the statement in the passage which Schultz quotes is that God gave the sin offering to the priest to make atonement for the people, and thus bear away their iniquity. The second objection is that the law of the sin offering does not represent the sin of the offerer as laid upon the priest, but upon the victim. The argument of Schultz is that in eating the flesh the priest takes upon himself the sin of the offerer, and so makes himself liable to what the offerer would have been otherwise exposed,

and the fatal objection is that nowhere is the priest represented as taking the offerer's guilt upon himself. Certainly, again, the fact that the flesh is said to be most holy, shows that he could not have taken it upon himself at any rate through eating the victim's flesh.

Other views somewhat akin to these, that might be referred to, would be found burdened with similar difficulties, which all goes to establish the truth of the interpretation that refuses to see anything symbolic in the disposing of flesh, either as food for the priests or by burning with fire, but which regards it simply as a reverent and wise use of what had been consecrated to the Lord. It was no more a part of the ritual required to constitute the sacrifice than was the pouring of the unused blood in the place of ashes at the foot of the altar.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### *THE TRESPASS OFFERING.*

(Lev. 5 : 14—6 : 7 ; 7 : 1-8.)

THE trespass offering was the last instituted of the Mosaic sacrifices. The term occurs for the first time in these chapters of Leviticus in which it is described, and nothing corresponding to it is found in the offerings that have been recorded in the preceding narrative.

It does not appear to have ever gained a very prominent place among the other sacrifices. The law required that it should be offered at the cleansing of a leper (Lev. 14 : 12 *seq.*), when a Nazarite had transgressed his vows (Num. 6 : 12), because of wrong done in the case of a bondwoman (Lev. 19 : 21, 22), and in other instances specified in the description of the sacrifice (Lev. 5 : 14—6 : 7). There is not on record, however, one occasion in which it had been actually offered. From what Ezekiel says of the provision made for this and other sacrifices (40 : 39 ; 42 : 13 ; 44 : 29 ; 46 : 20), it may be inferred that he knew of its being offered in the temple service, but the fact that it is never mentioned along with the other sacrifices on the great occasions in the

national life, which have been described by the inspired historians, proves that it must have been the most obscure of all the sacrifices. The gift with which the Philistines accompanied the ark, when sent back to Israel because of the wrath that it brought upon their cities, was called a trespass offering (1 Sam. 6 : 3, 4, 8, 17), but differed very much from the sacrifice of that name described in the law. The significance may have been much the same, but the form in which it was expressed was very different. In 2 Kings 12 : 16 (R.V.) mention is made of "money for the guilt offerings," in which the reference probably was to money fines paid at the temple because of trespass committed. If this be the true interpretation, there is here, also, a case where the meaning of the trespass offering was present, but its ritual entirely absent. Nowhere else is even the name met in the historic books of Scripture, and exclusive of Ezekiel, only once in the prophets, Isa. 53 : 10.

The ritual of the trespass offering is described Lev. 5 : 14—6 : 7, to which may be added Num. 5 : 5-8. With these sections some have united Lev. 5 : 1-13, and in doing so have multiplied for themselves perplexities in the work of interpretation. Everything goes to prove that Lev. 5 : 1-13 belongs to the law of the sin offering, and not to that of the trespass offering. Lev. 5 : 14 uses a formula that was meant to be an introduction to something different from that which immediately preceded. It is the same as that with which the law of the burnt and sin offerings was introduced (Lev. 1 : 1 ; 4 : 1), and also the law for the

special instruction of the priesthood (Lev. 6 : 8, 19, 24). The offering of meal, described chap. 5 : 11-13, is distinctly called a sin offering (v. 12), which makes it sufficiently certain that the offering, described 5 : 1-10, must also have been of the same sort, as its description is inclosed in the section dealing with the sin offering (4 : 1—5 : 13). In the instruction given in 5 : 1-10, it is provided that the costliness of the victim may be in proportion to the resources of the offerer, while in the trespass offering, the victim is required to be the same in every instance. In the trespass offering, moreover, compensation must be made when possible, whereas no mention is made of compensation in section 5 : 1-10. Some of the instances, mentioned 5 : 1-10 as requiring a sacrifice, are nothing more than ceremonial uncleanness, but according to Lev. 12 : 8, etc., ceremonial uncleanness required a sin offering. It is true enough that the sacrifice, described 5 : 1-10, is once called a trespass offering (v. 6), but it is also called a sin offering in the same verse. Besides all this, a different term is made use of to describe the offence for which the trespass offering was to be sacrificed, from that which describes the offence for which the offering of 5 : 1-10 was to be offered. There can be no doubt that the law of the trespass offering begins with Lev. 5 : 14 ; and all agree that it extends to chap. 6 : 7.

From what is said in this section it is evident that the trespass offering was sacrificed on the occasion of some trespass. The sin offering was presented on the occasion of any sin of "ignorance," but the trespass offering

only on occasion of trespass. The law divided trespasses into two classes, those committed against God (5 : 15), and those committed against man (6 : 2, 3); accordingly a trespass offering might be offered either on occasion of trespass against God, or trespass against man. The law deals with the former in section 5 : 14-16, and with the latter in 6 : 1-7. The relation of the intervening verses (5 : 17-19) is somewhat uncertain. The probability is that they belong to neither the preceding nor the succeeding passages, but form a subordinate division by themselves, and treat of a trespass offering somewhat different from that described in either of the other two subordinate sections.

What went to distinguish the sin of trespass from other forms of sin is not stated in any one of these subdivisions, nor indeed in any other part of the law, nor even of the Old Testament. The instances that have been given of that sin here and elsewhere, show, nevertheless, what its distinctive feature must have been. In the section dealing with trespass against a neighbor, are mentioned as illustrations, embezzlement, fraud, robbery, spoliation, and retaining unlawfully what had been lost (6 : 2, 3). These all consisted in depriving a neighbor unlawfully of his just possessions, and are explicitly designated trespass (6 : 2).

There are no illustrations given of trespass against God, in the section dealing with that sin (5 : 14-16). In other portions of Scripture, instances are given which show wherein it essentially consisted. When Achan hid away the Babylonian mantle, the two



hundred shekels of silver, and the wedge of gold, his sin was a trespass (Josh. 7 : 1), and consisted in appropriating for his own use what belonged to God. "All the silver and gold and vessels of brass and of iron" in Jericho, had been consecrated to God's service in the tabernacle (Josh. 6 : 19), and Achan's trespass consisted in taking as his own what had been so consecrated. Had the tribes whose possessions were beyond the Jordan, built an altar for the purpose of offering sacrifice thereon, as the other tribes accused them of doing, they would have been guilty of trespass (Josh. 22 : 16), and in that trespass they would have deprived the Lord of the sacrifices which, according to the law, He could have accepted only at the central altar. Idolatry is frequently designated trespass (Ezek. 20 : 27 ; 2 Chron. 28 : 19, etc.), and it was a sin in which the sacrifice due to God was offered Him in a way that made its acceptance impossible, or was altogether given to strange gods.

A complete induction of the some twenty-nine instances in which the term trespass appears in the Old Testament, would doubtless show that it invariably denoted sin, in which the party sinned against had been deprived of what was justly his. If the trespass was against the Lord, then He had been deprived of what was His possession ; if against a neighbor, then the neighbor had been deprived of what was his. It may be objected against such a definition that every form of sin withholds from both God and man something that is due. One can never sin without being guilty of such a wrong. This must be admitted.

The difference between trespass and other sins is, that in trespass the most marked feature is that it deprives another of what justly belongs to him, while in other sins this fact is more obscurely indicated. According to this meaning of the word trespass, a trespass offering was sacrificed only when the sin committed markedly deprived God or man of something that was due.

There were some instances where the law required a trespass offering, in which the description here given of that sacrifice does not appear to hold good. The cleansed leper, and the Nazarite who had transgressed his vow, were required to offer a trespass offering (Lev. 14 : 12 ; Num. 6 : 12), but trespass does not appear to be the most marked feature of their failure, and yet it was. The leper, during the days of his affliction, was excluded from fellowship with his people, and was not in a position to render those services to the Lord at the temple and elsewhere, which were required of every subject in the theocracy. He was thus guilty of trespass in withholding from the Lord the service that was due. It was not otherwise with the Nazarite. By breaking the vow that he had made, he deprived the Lord of the specific service which he had promised to render, and thus trespassed against Him.

The case described in Lev. 19 : 20-22 is more difficult than either of these. It appears less a trespass than a flagrant carnal sin, and yet the law required a trespass offering. This peculiarity arose from the low moral standard that prevailed in Israel upon such matters. The bondwoman was regarded as her

master's property, and the most serious feature of the offence committed with her was not thought to be its transgression of the seventh commandment, but its transgression of the eighth. It was not the unchastity that was thought to demand punishment, but the trespass that had been committed against a neighbor's property. Because of this point of view the law required in the case a trespass offering, and not a sin offering. In each of these peculiar instances, therefore, the regulation held good that a trespass offering was presented on the occasion of depriving either God or man of what was justly due.

When the ritual of the trespass offering is examined to discover what it was intended to accomplish in reference to the sin that occasioned its being offered, there are met three features which distinguished it from other sacrifices. The blood was sprinkled as in the burnt and peace offerings (7 : 2); the fat was consumed with fire on the altar as in the sin and peace offerings (7 : 3, 4); and the flesh was given to the priest as in the ordinary sin offering (7 : 7). The characteristics in which it differed, and which revealed its significance, were something entirely new in the ritual of Hebrew sacrifices.

One of these characteristics which received very considerable prominence, was, that the ministering priest should estimate the value of the victim in terms of the sanctuary coinage. He was to examine it with care, and state what its worth was in shekels of the sanctuary (5 : 15). The victim was slain and given to the Lord with its value estimated at so many shekels.

It became thus the equivalent of a payment. The trespass which had been committed, had caused a certain amount of damage, and the sacrifice was offered as a recompense. Because of the injury done, the wrong-doer became indebted to him who had suffered the wrong, and he offered his sacrifice as a payment that would go to discharge the debt. The leper who had been unable to live up to what the law required of every Israelite, found a large accumulation of indebtedness against himself, which must be wiped out before he could resume his place in the congregation; his trespass offering was intended to accomplish that much-desired result. The Nazarite who had transgressed his vows, failed to give God the service which he had promised, and he offers his trespass offering as an equivalent that might compensate for the loss resulting from his neglect. In every case the trespass offering was intended to make satisfaction for the injury done by the trespass, because of which it had been offered. If its thought is given a general reference, it will be found to regard sin as debt, and to have as purpose its removal by payment. The sin offering views sin as guilt that requires atonement and expiation; the trespass offering views it as an indebtedness that requires satisfaction.

The suggestion has been made that the valuation of the victim was to be made in terms of the sanctuary shekel, in order to indicate that a divine standard was to be employed in estimating the satisfaction required to be given for the injury done. God, and not the offerer, was to decide what would be sufficient

satisfaction for the trespass committed. It is doubtful whether this interpretation can be maintained. The probability is that the sanctuary shekel was made use of as the standard of value in the case, because it was the current coin at the tabernacle and temple. It is questionable that the law designated it as the standard, in order to give the symbolic instruction that has just been mentioned ; and yet it is true that God alone can justly estimate the compensation necessary for any trespass or sin. He alone knows the extent of the injury done, and He alone can fix the amount of satisfaction that it requires. When any one commits a trespass "in the holy things of the Lord," God alone can estimate the harm that has been done ; He is also the only capable judge of the wrong committed when one "deals falsely with his neighbor ;" He alone, therefore, is able to decide what must be done to undo the wrong. In the end, no doubt, the voice of conscience will be found in harmony with the judgment of God ; the record that is written on the human heart will correspond with the memorial that is written above. In the meantime, because of the perplexities and confusion of sin, the voice of conscience often falters, and the characters engraved on the heart have become largely illegible, and the only safety lies in receiving with a docile spirit what God says is necessary to undo the evil of the past, and realize the best hopes of the future. Wisdom will let Him decide what compensation is necessary, what satisfaction must be given.

Every commentator calls attention to the fact, that

in giving its instruction as to valuation the law uses the plural of the word "shekel" (5 : 15). The phrase literally is "silver shekels" or "silver of shekels." Different interpretations have been given of this usage. "The Vulgate and many commentators understand the plural to stand for two" (Lange). "Eben Ezra and others understand it less definitely as meaning at least two shekels" (*id.*). "The expression is probably left indefinite for the purpose of leaving some margin for the valuation, so that there might be some proportion between the value of the ram and the magnitude of the trespass committed" (Delitzsch and many others). However much these views may differ, they agree in holding that the use of the plural indicated that every victim must be worth at least two shekels, and this may be accepted as true as far as it goes. The phraseology may have been intended to teach much more than this, but certainly not less, and this itself is of much practical significance. Human nature, ever inclined to be easy with itself, might be tempted to offer an inferior sacrifice, but the law anticipated any such disposition and demanded that the victim should be of some value, worth at least two shekels. It was not enough that it be free from all blemish, it must also have been worth a certain price. This would teach that when one committed trespass against either God or man, he was required to make a satisfaction that meant something, that would cost him something. The wrong-doer would naturally hope to escape any reaction that might set in because of his sin, or at least any reaction that would cause

him serious inconvenience, but this requirement of the law showed that such could not be. The wrongdoer must suffer the recoil from his misdeeds, he must be made to feel that "the way of the transgressor is hard." "Fools make a mock at sin," but God's law shows that its evil effects cannot be removed except at a cost that will be felt. Every acceptable satisfaction for injury done must be made at a real cost.

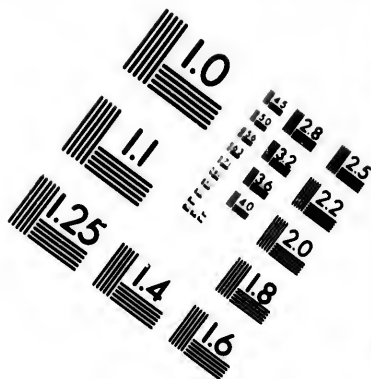
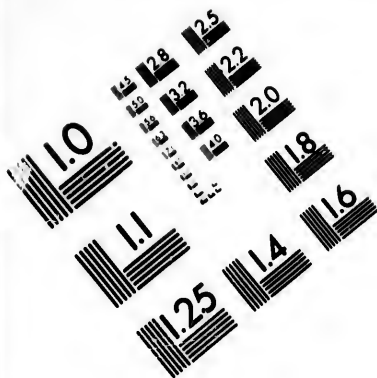
A second distinctive characteristic of the trespass offering was that it required restitution. Not only was a victim to be offered, the wrong done must also be put right. If, for instance, an Israelite had sinned in withholding his tithe (Neh. 13 : 10 ; Mal. 3 : 7), it would not have been sufficient in such a case to offer a sacrifice to atone for what he had done amiss, he must needs bring with his sacrifice the tithe that he had unlawfully withheld (Neh. 13 : 10 ; Mal. 3 : 10). The same was the case if one had trespassed against his neighbor, say, by embezzlement, or by spoliation. Before his sacrifice would be accepted, or his sin forgiven, he would be required to make restitution of all his unjust gain. The trespass offering has been well defined "as an expiatory sacrifice united with a corresponding restitution" (Nowack), and to this it might be added that without the accompanying restitution it would lose its expiatory virtue.

Zacchæus won the Lord's approval when he said : "The half of my goods I give to feed the poor ; and if I have wrongfully exacted aught of any man, I restore him fourfold" (Luke 19 : 8). He had been in his day an unscrupulous publican, who lived very

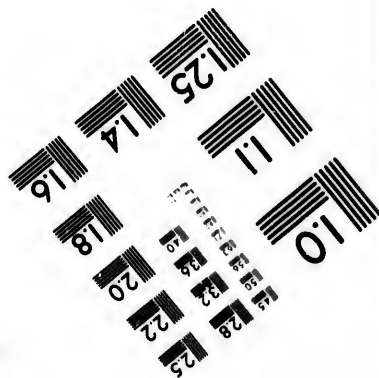
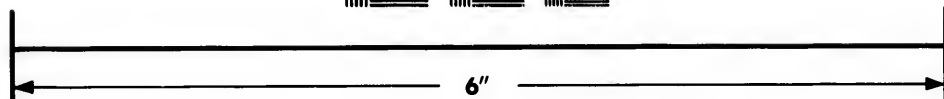
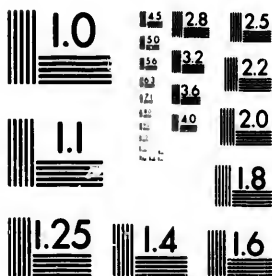
largely on the plunder of his countrymen. When he had made his choice for a better life he determined to disgorge all his unjust gains, and because he did so he received the Lord's approval. Had he held a firm grasp of his spoil he would never have been able to rejoice in the pardon of his sin, however punctilious he might have become in other matters.

In every dispensation restitution must accompany every prevailing trespass offering. In every age and among every people, one of the conditions of the divine pardon has been the restoration of what has been unjustly won. This may be generalized into saying that before any sin will be forgiven, steps must be taken to undo the injury that it involved. This condition holds not only when the wrong has been of a material order, but also when it happens to be in a higher sphere, and of a more hurtful character. If the man who held back his tithes was required, before he could enjoy forgiveness, to bring with his sacrifice all that he had unjustly retained, surely the inference is safe that the man who scatters fatal error and blasphemes the holy Name, must, before he can be assured of pardon, not only offer the sacrifice of contrition, but also recall his heresy and confess with reverence where he had formerly done dishonor. If the robber of his neighbor's purse finds that the forgiveness of his sin is conditioned on the restoration of his plunder, it cannot be expected that he who slanders his neighbor's good name and undermines his character will be granted the favor of the Most Holy until he begins to repair the reputation that





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he had marred, and strengthen the character he did so much to destroy.

When Manasseh of Judah "knew that the Lord he was God," "he took away the strange gods, and the idol out of the house of the Lord, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the Lord, and in Jerusalem, and cast them out of the city. And he built up the altar of the Lord, and offered thereon sacrifices of peace offerings, and of thanksgiving, and commanded Judah to serve the Lord, the God of Israel" (2 Chron. 33 : 15). Manasseh had formerly been bent on destroying the worship of Jehovah, but the light that broke into his life during the affliction of his captivity, revealed the evil of such a course and made him zealous to build up what he formerly sought to overthrow. The testimony that the Christians at Jerusalem bore Paul was : "He who persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith that once he destroyed" (Gal. 1 : 23). Both Manasseh and Paul accompanied their trespass offering with unceasing effort to repair the injury of their former sinful career, and this must ever be true of those who can confidently await the approval of God when He comes at last as the judge of men.

Besides making along with the trespass offering restitution of all that had been unjustly retained or taken, the law required that a fifth part be added. If the trespass had been committed "in the holy things of the Lord," it was necessary that the offerer "add the fifth part thereto and give it unto the priest" (5 : 16); if it was against a neighbor in

possessing unlawfully a part of his property, the command was that "he shall even restore it in full and shall add the fifth part more thereto: unto him to whom it pertaineth shall he give it in the day of his being found guilty" (6: 5). A good illustration of this law in regard to trespass against the Lord is found in the words: "If any man eat of the holy things unwittingly, then he shall put the fifth part thereof unto it, and shall give unto the priest the holy thing" (Lev. 22: 14), and several instances are described in Lev. 27: 9 *seq.* A number of illustrations of trespass against a neighbor, which required that a fifth be added, are described in Lev. 6: 2-5. In the civil law instances are given where the injury was to be repaid two, three, four and even five fold (Ex. 22: 9, 4, 1), but these were more criminal than the cases mentioned in Leviticus, and did not probably allow of a trespass offering being sacrificed.

A fifth part appears to have been always the increase required with the trespass offering, and this was regarded as full compensation for the loss endured through the temporary detention. The meaning of the fifth part being added, therefore, was that the restitution accompanying the trespass offering should be complete. There must needs be not only full restitution of what had been unlawfully possessed, but also complete compensation for the injury inflicted by the unlawful detention. This is only what justice required, and the awakened, enlightened conscious will always act upon it. When Zacchæus came to himself and began to see what right living

was, he came to the determination not only to make full restitution of all he had unlawfully gained, but also to compensate fully for all the injury that he had inflicted. To make sure that everything should be covered, he went far beyond the requirement of the law and restored fourfold. After Manasseh had been converted, he not only removed every idol and every strange altar that he had placed in the temple in Jerusalem, but he urged the people with all the intensity of genuine and youthful discipleship to be faithful to the Lord their God. He would undo all the injury that he had done against the cause of God and His people, and he would undo it completely. It was the same with Paul. The memory of his persecuting zeal grieved him to the end of his days (1 Cor. 15 : 9), and kept him ever under the constraint of a noble endeavor to do all that could be done for the people and cause that he once persecuted and sought to destroy. The man is not at his best who is not ready to repair all the harm resulting from his doings, and he may well suspect the happiness of his relation to God. Full restitution, complete reparation will alone satisfy a true man.

Reference has been already made to the isolated position of the subordinate section (5 : 17-19) not being connected either with what precedes or what follows. The suggestion was then made that this was because it was intended to describe a trespass offering different from either of the other two mentioned in the preceding and following sections. That

difference may now be specified as consisting in the fact, that in this trespass offering no restitution was required. None is mentioned in the recorded description of the ritual, and this confirms the opinion based on other grounds that none was required.

Many instances of trespass would occur in a complex community of such a character that restitution would be impossible. The injury arising from the sin committed might be so far-reaching and so intangible that it could not be estimated in terms of any material restitution that the wrong-doer might be willing to make. The law dealt with such a case in Lev. 19: 20. The wrong that even the master suffered in that case, could not be estimated in such a way that a corresponding material reparation might be made. Then there was the trespass of the cleansed leper who had been unable during the isolation caused by his affliction to discharge his theocratic duties, and of the Nazarite who had broken his Nazarite vow. By neither of these men who were by law held guilty of sins that required a trespass offering, could any material restitution be made that would be considered an equivalent to their transgression, and so none was required. Unnumbered instances of the same kind would arise in every community, and for these provision was made in this additional variety of trespass offering. The injury inflicted being of such a character that a corresponding restitution was not possible, the law graciously provided that a sacrifice without an accompanying restitution would be accepted.

Yet even in these cases the desire to make restitution would be required. The leper would be expected to be all the more diligent in his service because of the fruitless years during which he had been excommunicated because of his malady. While the Nazarite could never again have the opportunity of rendering the precise service which he had promised, but did not perform, he would be only all the more desirous of undertaking something else that would in some poor measure compensate for his unfaithfulness. Whoever found himself shut out from making restitution by the nature of his trespass would be expected to hold an attitude of readiness to do whatever offered itself by way of compensation.

This was not stated anywhere in the instructions given concerning the sacrifice, but was implied in the condition of mind and heart that was required. Confession of the sin committed was to be made when the offering was presented (Num. 5 : 7), and all true confession involves a readiness to compensate for any harm that has resulted from the sin confessed. King Manasseh could never hope to counteract all the evil effects of his earlier years (Jer. 15 : 4). His persecution of the faithful crushed many a home that he could never restore, and the idolatrous system that he sought to enforce caused a decay of morals and religion that his best efforts could not afterwards check. But the knowledge of all this did not prevent him doing what he could in that direction when, towards the end of life, his regenerated nature began to assert itself. Although he could not make full

restitution either to God or the nation, he devoted all his energies to repair, as far as possible, the desolation that he had caused, and turn the evil into good wherever that might be done.

Paul could not restore to the Church the lives that he had destroyed, nor assuage the sorrow of those whom he had widowed and orphaned. He could not recall the past, but he would make all possible compensation for the damage that it caused. He would build up that which he once destroyed, and if he could not, in individual cases, heal the wounds and dry up the tears which he had occasioned, he would, as far as possible, make up for the injury by the health and joy that he would bring to other members of the great human family. A sincere man will never make the impossibility of restitution an excuse for not making what compensation is within his reach. If he cannot restore the conditions which his sin disarranged, he will strive to secure what may prove to be conditions even more favorable. The trespass offering, that required no restitution, was not an easy way out of the difficulties in which sin involved the sinner, but the only possible way which the circumstances allowed.

The third feature that distinguished the trespass offering from all the other sacrifices, was that it did not provide for a variety of victims. In the trespass offering for the leper and the Nazarite a male lamb a year old was to be offered (Lev. 14: 21; Num. 6: 12); in every other case a ram was required (Lev. 5: 15, 18; 6: 6); so that even in the two exceptional cases mentioned the difference allowed was only one



of age. A feature so markedly peculiar to this sacrifice must have had some significance, and that is usually admitted to have been the necessity of full restitution, compensation, satisfaction from rich and poor alike. A debt means the same for a creditor whether the debtor is rich or poor; the loss is the same to the investor whether the embezzler is worth much or little; it matters nothing to the injured what the material condition of the man is who inflicted the injury. The heinous character of guilt varies with the person and the circumstances, but a debt, a loss, an injury are always the same independently of the circumstances of the wrong-doer in the case. Because of this, the obligation to make satisfaction, restitution and compensation is quite the same irrespective of wealth or poverty, and this was indicated by the regulation of the trespass offering, which required every man, rich or poor, to bring the one sort of victim for the sacrifice. In case of absolute inability to make restitution the obligation naturally ceased, and this was indicated by the law of that trespass offering that made no mention of restitution. As long as the ability continued, so long did the obligation rest similarly upon each, without regard to the extent of his possessions. In order to enjoy pardon, the few ill-gotten gains of the poor man must be restored no less than the dishonest hoards of the wealthy.

Thus it appears that the three distinctive features of the trespass offering taught the need of satisfaction, restitution, and compensation for all alike. The

act of valuing the victim taught that the sacrifice was satisfaction for the injury done. The addition of a fifth indicated that the restitution, to be complete, must compensate for any loss suffered by the misappropriation. The regulation demanding the same sort of victim from every offerer showed that the obligation to make satisfaction, restitution and compensation, in order to pardon, was binding upon all. If the word "satisfaction" is taken, as is often the case, to carry with it not only the idea of payment, but also of restitution and compensation, the meaning of the trespass offering can be summed up in that one word. It symbolized satisfaction, it was intended to make satisfaction.

The circumstance is instructive, that in trespass against a neighbor, there was required, in order to forgiveness, both a sacrifice and full restitution involving the addition of a fifth part to compensate for any loss that might arise from the temporary detention. It manifested very distinctly the many-sided nature of sin. It made it clear that a remedy capable of counteracting its evil effects must be varied in the powers which it is capable of exerting. An Israelite might very naturally suppose that when he had given his neighbor full restitution for his trespass, he had done enough without offering a sacrifice in addition. If he completely repaired the wrong, that would appear sufficient without anything further being required. To reason in such a way would have been to overlook one very important fact of which the law

takes cognizance, that every trespass against man is sin against God. One can do no harm to his fellow-man without involving himself in guilt in relation to God. It was this that made a sacrifice, as well as restitution, necessary in case of trespass against a neighbor. After the restitution had readjusted the strained relations towards his fellow, there was still left the need of a sacrifice to readjust relations with God. Did trespass of this sort disturb only human relations, full restitution would have been sufficient to meet all the needs of the case, but since it invariably included guilt in relation to God, there was also required an atoning sacrifice. That the victim slain had in this case special reference to the guilt against God, which the trespass involved, is evident from the words: "And he (the offerer) shall bring his guilt offering unto the Lord, . . . and the priest shall make atonement for him before the Lord, and he shall be forgiven" (6 : 6, 7).

It is to be observed, further, in regard to the trespass offering for sin against a neighbor, that while its chief function was to make atonement for the guilt of the trespass (6 : 7), the symbolic valuation of the victim was made (6 : 6) as if the sacrifice had been regarded a satisfaction for its indebtedness. The explanation for this characteristic probably lies in the fact that trespass against a neighbor involves, in relation to God, not only guilt, but indebtedness as well. God regards every sin against Himself as involving both the elements of guilt and indebtedness. He expects men to serve Him in all that they do, and as

every sin withholds the service required in the case, it necessarily becomes regarded as a debt. So, also, the sin of trespass against a neighbor : it involves, in relation to God, not only the element of guilt but also of indebtedness. The most important service that God requires is ministration to human needs. Consequently, when one trespasses against his neighbor, he not only becomes guilty before God, but he also becomes indebted to Him, and the sacrifice offered to meet the needs of the case must not only be an atonement for guilt, but a satisfaction for indebtedness. Hence the victim is valued and offered as payment for the debt incurred.

Of the sacrifice offered for trespass "in the holy things of the Lord," it is to be observed that it also was offered along with a full restitution (5 : 16). The restitution itself was not sufficient in that case any more than when the trespass had been against a neighbor. And the reason was much the same. The trespass was not only a debt to be paid, but also guilt to be atoned for. After a full restitution had been made by restoring what had been unlawfully taken or withheld, there still remained the guilt of the trespass to be atoned for, and this could be accomplished only by the offering of a victim. Accordingly, the law read : "And he shall make restitution for that he hath done amiss in the holy thing ; . . . and the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering, and he shall be forgiven" (5 : 16).

Finally, it must not be overlooked that the place which the trespass offering occupied among the other

sacrifices, had its suggestions to make. While it was the last of the sacrifices to have been instituted, it was the first to be offered when the service observed involved its being presented along with other sacrifices. The order was, first the trespass offering, then in succession the sin, burnt, meal, and peace offerings. This meant that in the effort to remove the results of sin, satisfaction must always precede every other exercise. The first thing that a wrong-doer must do in his pursuit after forgiveness, is to make compensation for the injury that he has done. If he has trespassed in any of the holy things of the Lord, in withholding what he should have offered, or if he has trespassed against his neighbor in depriving him of his due, the first step should be to undo the wrong done. "If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matt. 5 : 23, 24).

Like the sin offering, the trespass offering was always compulsory. There were no voluntary trespass offerings. When an Israelite found himself guilty of trespass, the law demanded that he should offer a trespass offering. An option was not allowed ; necessity reigned in the circumstance. If he was to escape the infliction that his trespass deserved, he must offer a compensatory sacrifice. The debt of sin cannot be absolved but through the satisfaction made by a divine sacrifice.

The exposition has been given that the chief significance of this last ordained offering was the necessity of repentance in order to pardon. No fault need be found with such instruction if repentance is made to include the penitent sorrow that seeks to repair all the ruin which the acknowledged misconduct had wrought. With any understanding of the new attitude of spirit assumed that excludes the need of compensation, such interpretation must needs be rejected. The repentance that does not involve all possible restitution, is not the repentance of the trespass offering.

## CHAPTER IX.

### *THE SACRIFICE OF THE COVENANT.*

(Ex. 24 : 1-11.)

THIS sacrifice has no parallel among Old Testament sacrifices. It was offered on an occasion that never repeated itself in the nation's history, and naturally showed characteristics that never reappeared in any sacrificial service. It had in it all the essential features of the chief animal sacrifices incorporated afterwards in the Mosaic law, and is explicitly said to have included burnt and peace offerings (24 : 5), but the part of the ritual that peculiarly embodied the significance of the hour never afterwards recurred. The nearest approach made by any of the prescribed ordinances of the law, was by the sacrifice offered at the consecration of the priesthood (Lev. 8 : 14), and perhaps, also, by that offered at the cleansing of a leper (Lev. 14 : 12 *seq.*), and this for reasons that may afterwards be seen.

The sacrifice was offered in connection with the covenant made between God and Israel. After the Israelites had left the land of Egypt, God revealed Himself to them at Sinai, and entered into a covenant with them. He formally took them to be His people,

and pledged Himself to be their God. It was at that time this sacrifice was offered, in connection with that unique transaction. This may in part account for its similarity to the sacrifices offered in connection with the ordination of the priesthood and the cleansing of a leper. The ordination of a priest was regarded as the enactment of a covenant. (Num. 25:13; Mal. 2:4, 8), and the cleansing of a leper which restored him to the enjoyment of his theocratic rights, of which he had been deprived by his malady, might well have been considered the renewal of his covenant vows.

The Israelites regarded their entrance into covenant with God at Sinai the most important event in their history. They looked upon it as the beginning of their national life, and to the unique relation which it effected between them and God, they were wont to trace what was distinctive in their experience and character, all that was good and great in them as a people. Amos finds in that relationship the reason for the severe discipline to which they were subjected (3:2), and by which the sinners among them were cut off (9:10), but the faithful so established that they should never be plucked out of their land (9:15). Hosea discovers in the same event the source of the national sonship of Israel (11:1), which secured for them divine protection, discipline and care, and resulted in their spiritual solidarity and final triumph (1:11). No more than other peoples were they naturally the children of God, and they became such only when by the covenant enacted God adopted the nation to be His Son (11:1). Deuteronomy, with



special emphasis, reminds the people of their covenant relation (5 : 2), urges again and again the need of rendering the implied service (4 : 13, 23 ; 17 : 2), and gives the assurance that God will not fail in the help that He has promised to give (4 : 31 ; 7 : 9, 12). In the covenant it sees the mightiest motive to spiritual endeavor, and the best foundation for assured confidence. Exodus and Leviticus account for God's peculiar presence in Israel, by the fact of the covenant which He made with the nation, and that presence they regarded as the source of all the blessedness which Israel hoped to enjoy (Ex. 33 : 16), and of any distinction which they might hope to gain. Later prophets like Zechariah (9 : 11) and Malachi (2 : 10) show that the same conception continued to be held in their day.

It is not too much to say that throughout all their history as a nation, the Israelites regarded their covenant relation to God as the ground of their national existence, and as the source of all their peculiar blessings, material, moral and spiritual. Its enactment was to them the outstanding event in their history, towering so high above all else that it never disappeared below their horizon. In its transaction God formally received the people into what may be called a supernatural relation to Himself, and that accounts for everything distinctive in their after life, a relation such as He assumed towards no other nation, and which finds an analogy only in that which He bears towards His universal Church. The enactment of the covenant was a unique event, not only in the

history of Israel, but also in the history of the world, and this unparalleled sacrifice finds its prominence and significance in its association with that majestic and history-making transaction. Were it not for the covenant the sacrifice would never have found a place among the recorded doings of the nation, but would have disappeared like much else that has well filled its place on the stage of life, and has passed for ever behind the scenes.

The connection between the sacrifice and the covenant was much more than that of contiguity in place and time. The sacrifice was the ratification of the covenant. In it God attached His seal and the nation its seal to the instrument that had been prepared. For the strength of the people's faith God gave in this sacrifice a visible and tangible pledge that He would fulfil everything that He had promised in the covenant, and to make the people all the more conscious of the obligations which they had assumed He accepted from them a similar pledge. On God's part the sacrifice corresponded to the oath by which He bound Himself in His covenant with Abraham and the other patriarchs (Gen. 22: 16; Deut. 1: 8, etc.), and on the part of the people to the oaths they were wont to swear to the Lord (Num. 30: 2).

But the sacrifice was more than a pledge given on either side that the conditions of the covenant would be fulfilled. It was also a symbolism illustrating the nature of the covenant and the promises that it involved. The Israelite who would follow all the ritual of that eventful day, the preparation of the

altar and its surroundings, the sprinkling of the blood, the burning of the victims, the sacrificial meal, would understand the transaction better than he could by simply listening to what had been read. He would there see the meaning wrought out in a sort of parable in action that would impress his imagination and memory as words could not. Long after what he had heard would be forgotten, what he had seen would stand out vividly before his thoughts.

Of other covenants than that at Sinai had exposition been given by the method of ratification. In that made with Abraham, in which the land of Canaan was promised his descendants (Gen. 15: 18), the accompanying service was both a seal and a symbol. God passing with Abraham between the parts of the animals slain illustrated the vital character of the relation which had been formed by the covenant just enacted (15: 17). The covenant of circumcision, as the general covenant with Abraham has been called (Gen. 17: 10 *seq.*), affords another illustration. The seal in that case was circumcision, and it was also a symbol of the life and character that was to be required of Abraham and his posterity because of their peculiar relation to God. Indeed, it may be said that all the diversified ways in which the Semites were wont to ratify their agreements, were intended to illustrate as well as seal the procedure with which they were connected, and when a symbolic significance is attributed to the sacrifice of the covenant at Sinai, nothing is done but what is necessary to develop the full meaning of that historic service. It was a religious cere-

mony, and as such must have had a symbolic intention that harmonized with the occasion on which it was observed.

The first circumstance that would arrest the attention of the onlooker, would be the erection of an altar and twelve pillars in a circle round about it (24 : 4). The altar would have been a simple mound of earth or a rude heap of stones gathered in the vicinity (Ex. 21 : 24, 25), or what is more likely, was made partly of earth and partly of stones. The twelve pillars would have been nothing more than twelve huge boulders found near at hand and rolled into position for the occasion. Many a deserted and ruined place of worship in every land in Europe shows that it was no uncommon custom in the early days to surround the altar and the place of worship with an enclosure of rough stone pillars, and there is no reason to suppose that the pillars encircling the altar at Sinai were anything of a more artistic order.

The altar was a symbol of God's presence. There He was wont to meet with His people and receive their gifts (Ex. 29 : 42, 43). The circle of twelve pillars represented the twelve tribes of Israel (v. 4). It was doubtless also intended to mark off the sacred vicinity of God's altar, and restrain at a distance every unauthorized approach. That was the chief significance of such circles in every other land, and to attach it here would be only to see exercised in this case the undying care with which the laws of Israel preserved from being profaned everything devoted to sacred uses. The additional purpose of representing the

twelve tribes is explicitly stated in the narrative (v. 4), and is also in harmony with the usage of the law which took delight in orderly grouping the people about the tabernacle where the Lord had taken up His abode (Num. 4 : 1 *seq.*).

This symbolic arrangement of the twelve tribes about the altar on the occasion of ratifying the covenant could mean nothing less than that the covenant enacted was between God and the twelve tribes represented by the encircling pillars ; not between God and Moses, not between God and the seventy elders, but between God and all the people who "answered with one voice and said, All the words which the Lord hath spoken will we do" (v. 3). Every man who looked upon these pillars representing the nation in the transaction, would be forced to feel that he was interested in the covenant, that its promises of divine blessings were directed towards him, and that its obligations were resting upon him. It was impossible for him not to see that as a member of any one of the tribes represented by some one of the pillars, he was personally included in the covenant, an heir of its promises and bound by its obligations.

By far the most important part of the sacrifice, and the most prominent, was the sprinkling of the blood. The studied care with which this part of the service was conducted, would arrest every eye. The blood was first collected in basins and then sprinkled, the one half upon the altar and the other half upon the people, or upon the pillars which represented them (vs. 6 and 7). This was an entirely new rite in Israel.

Observances somewhat similar were common enough among the neighboring Semitic and non-Semitic peoples, and would have for this reason become somewhat familiar to the Israelites, but as far as the preserved records of the nation indicate, nothing of such a character had been customary within the limits of the twelve tribes. Afterwards, in the ordination of the priests, there was a somewhat similar ceremony, and also in the cleansing of the leper. When a priest was consecrated to his sacred office, some of the shed blood was put upon the tip of his right ear, the thumb of his right hand, and the great toe of his right foot, and what remained was dashed against the four sides of the altar (Lev. 8 : 24). At the cleansing of a leper, the blood of the guilt offering sacrificed in his behalf was made use of in a very similar way, a part was smeared upon the tip of the right ear, the thumb of the right hand, and the great toe of the right foot, and the rest, though this is not stated, was sprinkled round about the altar (Lev. 14 : 14).

These were the only rites recognized by the law, which at all resembled the use made of the blood in the sacrifice of the covenant, and these are sufficiently distinct to make that ceremony unique among the sacrificial observances of the nation. It stands out by itself, a religious ceremony, performed once among their other exercises, and never afterwards repeated. And the question is, What did it mean, how did the people interpret it? About its meaning in part, at least, there could have been no doubt. The sprinkling of the blood upon the altar meant its

presentation to God, and its sprinkling upon the people or their representatives, its application to the nation. This much is self-evident. Further, the sprinkling of the blood upon the altar may be taken to mean God's acceptance of the blood, and its sprinkling upon the people or their representatives, the nation's acceptance of it. This again would indicate that God and Israel were united together as they are who have been made sharers in a common blood. And inasmuch as according to Hebrew thought the blood was the life, or the seat of life (Lev. 17; 11), the union effected by sharing in a common blood would resolve itself into a union in which the uniting bond was a common life; in other words, it would resolve itself into a vital union.

As has been stated above, the peoples neighboring on Israel, Semitic and non-Semitic, were accustomed in their covenant-making to make use of rites similar to the sprinkling of the blood in the sacrifice of the covenant. Different records of such observances have been preserved. Herodotus writes that the Scythians made solemn contracts in the following manner: "Having poured wine into a large earthen vessel, they mingle with it blood taken from those who are entering into covenant, having struck with an awl or cut with a knife a small part of the body; . . . when they have done this they make many solemn prayers, and then those who make the contract and the most considerable of their attendants drink up the mixture" (4: 70). The same writer says of the Medes and Lydians that they

"In their federal contracts observe the same ceremonies as the Greeks; and in addition, when they have cut their arms to the outer skin, they lick up one another's blood" (1: 74). Dr. Geikie makes a quotation from an Arab writer, which shows a somewhat similar custom to have prevailed among the bedouins of Arabia: "After solemn pledges of mutual and inviolable faith, each of us opened a vein of his left arm, somewhat above the elbow, letting the blood run down and mingle in a brass cup. . . . Out of this cup we drank, each a full draught, becoming thus, according to bedouin usage, 'brothers' for life and death." Xenophon describes an agreement entered into between the Greeks and the barbarians, during the march of the ten thousand, in these words: "These things they swore, having slain a bull, a wolf, a boar, and a ram, receiving the blood on a shield, the Greeks dipping a sword and the barbarians a spear" (Anabasis 2: 2, 9). His meaning is that these parties ratified their engagement by dipping their weapons in the blood of the victims, which had been collected in the hollow of the shield.

When one compares all these and similar ceremonies, he finds their common feature to have been that the parties entering into the agreement had made themselves sharers in a common blood poured out for the purpose. This could have meant nothing less than that, because of the completed transaction, they were bound together as those only could be who were partakers of a common blood. As the blood was looked upon as the seat of life, this again could



only mean that the parties were united together in the indissoluble bonds of a common life. With such ceremonies the Israelites, as has been said, must have been familiar through contact with other peoples, and when in ratifying the covenant at Sinai they made use of something similar, only modified to fit into their peculiar circumstances, the associated thought must have been similar too. The sprinkling of the blood upon the altar and the people must have meant to them, that through the covenant enacted they were bound to their God by the bonds of a common life, that the union effected by the engagement was a vital union.

Such an understanding would have been the truth. By the covenant made Israel was brought into relation of life to God. In a much more profound sense than the modified rites of their neighbors would indicate, God and Israel entered in the covenant into a vital union. He descended into their life, and they were raised up in thought and feeling towards Him. He was to become the life of their life, and they were to be made the expression of His thought and purpose. He was to take up His abode within them, possessing mind and heart, moulding their character, and guiding their destiny, and they were to be the agents of His intention in reference to themselves and others. Within certain limits it may be said, and no statement can express the case better, that because of the covenant Israel was gradually to become an incarnation of God. In that transaction He began to enter into the nation's life with the intention of

making its character the embodiment, and its conduct the expression, of His mind and will. It is not all the truth of God's vital connection with Israel, that He assumed control of the people's life, not only in its outward, but especially in its inner activities. That He did this is evident from all that the laws of the covenant required (20:1—23:19). He also brought Israel into touch with Himself, entered into their life, imparted to them His spirit, and made them partakers of the divine nature. This was by far the most important result of the covenant relation, and it was this that produced in Israel the life and character that distinguished them from other peoples. Giving a law to guide towards, and insist upon, the right was a great favor, but to bring into living contact with an animating and transforming Spirit was a favor infinitely greater. God's indwelling of the nation afterwards, symbolized by the tabernacle and the Shekinah, was the greatest advantage that the covenant had secured.

It is not too much to suppose that the sprinkling of blood symbolized in addition the thought of atonement as in the law it always did. In ordinary ratification of covenants by the manipulation of blood, there was not present the suggestion of such a truth. In those instances already referred to of covenant-making among the heathen, there is nothing to indicate that the parties to the transaction had anything approaching such an idea in their thoughts. It is safe to infer that it was otherwise in the ratification at Sinai. The sprinkling of sacrificial blood had by this

time become so connected in thought with atonement among the Israelites that the marked prominence given that part of the ritual in the sacrifice of the covenant must have without fail suggested that great truth. And it would have been a timely suggestion, reminding the people that it was only on the basis of atonement made that God would bring them into such a happy relation to Himself. They were very far from deserving such a favor. Even since leaving Egypt they had transgressed so often that justice could bestow no peculiar blessing upon them. At the Red Sea, at Marah, in the Wilderness of Sin and at Rephidim they failed so flagrantly that it must have been evident to themselves that grace alone could receive them into the divine fellowship. They had come far short, and a covering or atonement must be theirs before they can be made to rejoice in the presence of God. To provide this, as well as to symbolize the vital character of the union effected by the covenant, was the purpose of the sprinkled blood.

There are those who refuse to see in the sprinkling of the blood upon the altar and the people an allusion to the blood covenants of other communities and races. The points of divergence that are noticed between the ritual observed by the Israelites in their covenant, on the one hand, and by their neighbors in their covenants, on the other, is the ostensible reason for assuming such a position. "For this (*i.e.*, the use of the blood at Sinai) was not a mixture of different kinds of blood, but it was a division of one blood, and that sacrificial blood" (Keil). There is here over-

looked the consideration, that in such ratifications mentioned above as were accomplished by the parties to the covenant dipping their weapons in the blood collected in the upturned shield, the aim was to make the parties sharers in one common blood, and this is what was actually accomplished. Even in those instances in which the symbolic act consisted in mixing the blood of the parties entering into the engagement, the purpose was the same, only that in that case it was accomplished by the admixture of blood drawn from all the parties interested in the transaction. Moreover, in other varieties of the ceremony the blood made use of was that of victims slain in sacrifice.

The fact is, the points of resemblance are so much more prominent than the points of difference, that it is impossible not to see a kinship between the ratification at Sinai and the blood covenants of other peoples. Even those who reject the oneness of the ceremonies in the different cases, are prepared to acknowledge the essential identity of thought. Thus, Keil says: "In this way the sacrificial blood acquired the signification of a vital principle indued with the power of divine grace; and this was communicated to the people by means of the sprinkling of blood. . . . In this way the blood not only became a bond of union between Jehovah and His people, but as the blood of the covenant it became a vital power, holy and divine, uniting Israel and its God." Briefly put, these words mean that the sprinkled blood symbolized the vital character of the union between God and

Israel effected by the covenant made, and this is the interpretation that follows from recognizing the resemblances between the sprinkling of blood at Sinai and the ratification by blood common in surrounding lands, only that in the latter case the meaning is arrived at in a much more natural and obvious way. Indeed, the connection between the ceremonies in the one case, and in the others, is so manifest, and the advantage of its recognition so great that the wonder is how any one could overlook it in his work of interpretation.

The next feature of the sacrifice was the burning upon the altar. According to the order given in the narrative, it might be inferred that this part of the service preceded the sprinkling of the blood, but the analogy of every other sacrifice shows that such could not have been the case. The sprinkling of the blood always, according to the law, preceded the burning upon the altar. The inspired writer adopts what appears to be a different arrangement, because he first gives a general statement of the offerings to be made (v. 5), and then proceeds to give details without observing the place in the order of time which the different parts of the ritual actually occupied.

The burning on the altar on the occasion constituted a burnt offering (v. 5). This meant that some of the victims slain were entirely consumed in fire upon the altar. The flesh of some was reserved for a later part of the service, but the name burnt offering implies that others were totally burnt upon the altar. This symbolized consecration, the burnt offering in

connection with other sacrifices always did, and it indicated what Israel, as one of the parties to the covenant, was expected to do. They were to consecrate themselves entirely and completely to the service of God; body, soul and spirit were to be placed so thoroughly at his disposal that their every activity would be in harmony with His will. That summed up their duty in their new relation.

The section of the book of the covenant which states what was required of Israel, and what the people actually promised to do, when they said: "All the words which the Lord hath spoken will we do" (24 : 3), is found in chapters 21 : 1—23 : 19, or if the decalogue is to be regarded as belonging to the book of the covenant, in chapters 20 : 1—23 : 19. The entire section is seen to deal almost exclusively with the people's obligations in relation to their fellowmen. Chapter 21 deals with nothing else; the same is true of chapter 22, except vs. 20, 29, 30; the first nine verses of chapter 23 have a similar purpose in view, and if the decalogue is to be included, vs. 12-17 of chapter 20 must be placed in the same category. Only the following passages refer to the obligations assumed in relation to God: "He that sacrificeth unto any god save unto the Lord only shall be utterly destroyed" (22 : 20), "The firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto me, likewise shalt thou do with thine oxen and thy sheep" (22 : 29, 30), "Six years shalt thou sow thy land and shalt gather in the increase thereof, but the seventh year thou shalt let it rest" (23 : 10), "Six days shalt thou do thy work, and on the seventh day

shalt thou rest" (23 : 12), "Make no mention of the name of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth" (23 : 13), "Three times shalt thou keep feast unto me in the year" (23 : 14), "The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep . . . and the feast of harvest . . . and the feast of ingathering" (23 : 15, 16), "Thou shalt not offer the blood of any sacrifice with leavened bread" (23 : 18). "The first of the firstfruits of thy ground shalt thou bring unto the house of the Lord thy God" (23 : 19), "Ye shall not make other gods with me ; gods of silver or gods of gold ye shall not make unto you" (20 : 22), "An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me" (20 : 24), "And if thou make an altar of stones thou shalt not make it of hewn stones" (20 : 25). To these must be added the first four commandments of the decalogue. All else deals with the duty of an Israelite towards his neighbor, and this, accordingly, receives by far the greater amount of space and prominence in the stated duties of Israel as the second party to the covenant.

But this does not conflict with the interpretation given the burnt offering as a part of the ratification service, in which it was understood to teach that the duty of Israel, as a member of the covenant, was to be completely and entirely devoted to God. Man's duty to his fellowman is indirectly a duty to God, and a life of unflinching faithfulness to man is a life of unceasing consecration to God. When the burnt offering of the covenant sacrifice symbolized that the Israelites, as members of the covenant, were to be completely and entirely devoted to God, it included

every duty to man and to God inculcated in chapters 20:21—23:19. Nay, more, it included every possible duty whether to God or to man.

The closing part of the service was the most awe-inspiring event of the day. It consisted in the sacrificial meal, which always occupied the last place in sacrificial ordinances. It was prepared as law and custom required from the flesh of the victims offered in the peace offering, and was observed in God's presence up the mountain side. The law afterwards required that the sacrificial feast was to be enjoyed at the sanctuary where God had taken up His abode (Deut. 12:18). In anticipation of this requirement, the place selected for the purpose on this occasion was the mountain side, at the peak of which God was revealing Himself. The people, as a whole, did not partake, were not even eye-witnesses of what transpired. Perhaps the procedure was encompassed with more glory than men of ordinary spiritual attainment were able to endure. Only Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders were allowed to attend (v. 4), and from these the others afterwards gathered all that happened. They ascended the mountain, saw the Lord in His glory, "and did eat and drink" (v. 11).

This observance symbolized what God promised to do in His new covenant relation. Moses and the seventy-three men with him represented the entire nation, and their eating and drinking before the Lord indicated what He was to be to the whole body of His covenant people. The sacrificial meal was always



a symbol and a pledge of reconciliation, peace, friendship, communion and kindred blessings. It was also a guarantee of future beneficence and care. It implied a promise that God would continue to provide for His people, in the future, similar feasts of material and spiritual enjoyment. God's friendship ever carries with it the assurance of all needed protection and provision. When the representatives of Israel partook on the mountain side of the feast that God had prepared, the significance was that He would be all that the peace offering symbolized to the entire nation, which He had taken to be His peculiar people. Israel would understand from what took place that they were reconciled to God, that He was their friend, that they were received into His fellowship, that He would provide for their material and spiritual needs, would, in short, leave nothing undone that was necessary for their good. If they had covenanted to be devoted to His service, He also covenanted to be to them all that they should require.

What God in the book of the covenant promised to do for Israel, is found, chapter 23 : 20-33. Among the promises there given are the following : God would send His angel before Israel to keep the people by the way and lead them into the promised land (v. 20) ; He would be an enemy to their enemies and an adversary to their adversaries (v. 22) ; He would cut off before them the inhabitants of the land which they were to possess (v. 23) ; He would bless their bread and their water, remove all sickness, and multiply their flocks and herds (vs. 25, 26). There is not

explicitly contained in the passage as much as was symbolized by the peace offering, but that only shows all the more distinctly what an advantage it was for the comprehension of the multitude to have the covenant ratified by well-known rites, that would indicate its significance by familiar symbols. At the same time, the extent of the agreement between the words of the written covenant and the ratifying ceremonies that lies even upon the surface, confirms the interpretation given to the effect that the sacrifices offered on the occasion both ratified the covenant and illustrated its meaning.

A feature characterized the sacrificial meal observed on this occasion that is met in connection with no other sacrificial meal. The Lord manifested His presence in a miraculous way (v. 10). He was present just as surely at other such feasts, and the devout worshipper believed that He was, but on this occasion He made Himself manifest to the senses, and those who were present saw Him with their physical vision. This was intended to give a firmer assurance than would be otherwise possible, that all the promise of the peace offering would in due time be fulfilled. Their future, as a people, depended more on an abiding conviction of God's good-will towards them than upon anything else. It was, therefore, necessary at the very beginning of their national career to impress this joyful, buoyant truth indelibly upon them. In order to accomplish this God gave a supernatural manifestation of His glory. It was a crisis in their history, and lest the occasion might fall short of what

it might accomplish, God specially manifested Himself at the feast. By so doing He gave miraculous evidence of His approval of all that transpired. As He ratified His covenant with Abraham in the most unmistakable way by miraculously passing between the parts of the slain victims in the glowing furnace (Gen. 15 : 17), so He ratified that with the nation at Sinai by showing something of His hidden glory to His invited guests.

A difficulty which suggests itself in connection with the interpretation which regards the ratifying sacrifice a symbol of the covenant, is that the usual significance attached to such sacrifices would make the relation effected by the covenant more spiritual than it appears from the book of the covenant to have been. The sprinkling of the blood, the burnt offering and the peace offering are intensely spiritual in their instruction, while the statutes and judgments of the written covenant deal almost entirely with the external and the material.

In section 21 : 1—23 : 19, which contains the duties which Israel promised to discharge, nearly everything pertains to outward activities. What is required in relation to God is to shun false gods, and the worship of idols, and in relation to man to fulfil those duties that make one an irreproachable citizen. There is nothing said of loving the Lord with all the heart, nor being charitable and merciful and sympathetic towards a neighbor. The motive, the disposition, the attitude of mind and affection which find such a prominent place in the higher forms of religion, seem here to be entirely ignored.

In section 23 : 20-33, which deals with what God promised to do in His new relation to Israel, the blessings referred to, at least on the surface, are only material, such as victory over enemies, bountiful harvest, numerous flocks and herds, and vigorous, unceasing health. While the sacrifices speak of a vital union with God, consecration of body, soul and spirit to His service, of peace and fellowship with Him, the written covenant speaks of good conduct, religious ceremonies and material advantages.

That such a difference existed in this case between the symbol and what it was intended to symbolize, cannot be disputed, and yet it is possible to push the matter too far and conjure too great a difficulty out of it. First of all, it should be recognized that the laws of section 21 : 1—23 : 19, while devoting their attention chiefly to the external, do not ignore the internal. Cognizance is taken of the motives that actuate conduct, and provision is made to encourage the kindly and merciful spirit that should permeate all man's relations towards his fellows. Punishment was modified or entirely withheld when an injury inflicted was unintentional (21 : 12, 13); encouragement was given to every disposition that would ameliorate the hard condition in those days of the people who served (21 : 2-6); restrictions were placed upon the rich in relation to the poor that really meant a demand for something more kindly than strict justice (22 : 25-27); the helpless were commended to the consideration of those more capable for something better than could be secured by legal enactments (22 :

21-24); an interest was required in a neighbor's property beyond that which a mere sense of right could command (23 : 4, 5). These statutes and judgments were the civil laws of the nation, and as such occupied themselves chiefly with what was outward, and yet as much encouragement as possible was given to the kindness of heart and life that mere law cannot demand. Then, too, if the ten commandments were included in the book of the covenant, it becomes evident at once that the new relation between God and Israel involved the spiritual. The tenth commandment has for its sole purpose the enlisting of the inner life in the divine service, and every true interpretation of the decalogue as a whole will sum up its requirements in the duty of loving God and loving man.

Further, in connection with the material character of the blessings which God promised in virtue of His covenant with His people, it must be remembered that the Israelites regarded their material condition as an expression of God's attitude towards them. They prized worldly prosperity chiefly because it was to them an unfailling token of God's good-will, just as they bemoaned disaster because they deemed it an evidence of His displeasure. From their point of view, the promises of victory, and health, and abundant harvests made in the covenant, would carry with them a guarantee of God's favor in all their relations; the material promises would imply every needed spiritual blessing. Uniting every hint and suggestion together, there is formed a chain of evidence which

proves that even on the most literal interpretation of the conditions of the covenant, the relation between God and Israel which the covenant effected, included the spiritual as well as the material, the internal as much as the external.

And yet, after every indication of the spiritual and the internal that can be discovered in the words of the covenant, has been given full value, the transaction still remains very largely external and material, more external and material than one would naturally expect it to be. This made it desirable that a supplement of some sort would be added that would emphasize the spiritual element, that would make it very manifest that the service which God required was a spiritual service and that the most valued blessings that He had to bestow were spiritual blessings; such a supplement the ratifying sacrifice of the covenant provided. It made it clear that the union effected between God and Israel was a vital union, that the service He required of His people united with Him included the devotion of mind and heart, and that the blessings that He would give would meet the needs of the soul as well as of the body.

Even before the days of Moses it was becoming understood that the Lord was God of the living and not of the dead, that those who were made His people were received into a living relation to Himself, were quickened by Him into a new life. It was, therefore, impossible that the covenant at Sinai, by which He constituted Israel to be His people, should be essentially material and external. It must needs involve

the spiritual and the internal. For that reason an associated sacrificial service, rich in spiritual suggestion, would be a most fitting complement to the covenant transaction. It would bring into prominence its spiritual significance, and lessen the danger of the material and the formal rising to the supremacy. This the sacrifice of the covenant effected.

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## CHAPTER X.

### *THE PASSOVER.*

(Ex. 12 : 1-36 ; Lev. 23 : 4-6 ; Num. 9 : 2-14 ; Deut. 16 : 1-8.)

THE feast of the passover was one of the great events of the Jewish year. At its observance the people gathered from all parts of the land, and with united hearts appeared before the Lord (Deut. 16 : 6). After the dispersion among the Gentiles, Jews and proselytes throughout the known world were wont to go up to Jerusalem to share in the happy event.

A somewhat detailed account has been preserved of passovers observed during the reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah (2 Chron. 30 : 1-27 ; 35 : 1-19 ; 2 Kings 23 : 21-23). On the first of these occasions, crowds gathered from Asher, Zebulun and Manasseh (v. 11), and the tribe of Judah appeared almost to a man (v. 12). Some of the less devout among the northern tribes refused to attend (v. 10), but the majority threw their whole heart into the service. "There assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast, . . . a very great congregation" (v. 13). So great was the enthusiasm that the festivities were continued seven days beyond the usual time (v. 23). There is not so



much information given in regard to the passover in the reign of Josiah, but what has been preserved indicates that it was even more elaborate than that observed in the reign of Hezekiah. People came from all Judea and Israel, and entered into the festivities of the hour (35 : 18). The writer of the book of Kings states : " There was not kept such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah " (2 Kings 23 : 22). After the return from the exile in Babylon the interest was continued. Ezra gives a brief account of the passover observed in his day (6 : 19-22). He says that all those who had returned from the captivity were present, and as many who had continued to live in Palestine during the exile as were willing to break away from the heathen customs of their neighbors. The whole service appears to have been full of gladness, and of much benefit to the community as a whole.

Josephus makes several allusions to this feast in his writings, which reveal the place that it occupied in the popular thought in his day. He says that innumerable multitudes came out of the country, nay, from beyond its limits also, to join in the service, and that they offered more sacrifices in number than at any other festival (Antiq. 17 : 9, 3). He estimates that at one passover held during the reign of Nero, upwards of two million, seven hundred thousand, two hundred people were present, and that two hundred and fifty-six thousand, five hundred victims were offered in sacrifice (Wars, 6 : 9, 3). Even yet,

the passover has a prominent place in the affection of every unchristianized Jew. After the temple was destroyed it could not continue to be observed in its fulness, for there was no altar upon which to make the sacrifice, but to the extent that its rites are independent of the temple, to that extent has it been observed in every generation, with more or less heartiness. In Jerusalem, at the present time, the passover week is to the Jew the greatest week in the year.

The institution derives its importance from its origin. It was associated with the redemption of Israel out of Egypt and the beginning of their national life. They had been for generations sojourners in that land, and during a considerable part of the time endured a harsh bondage. God took pity upon them in their sore distress, broke the chains of their slavery and led them into a land of liberty. In that gracious work the passover was one of the means employed, and of its accomplishment it was constituted the memorial. For this reason it ever held a large place among the national festivals, at least when the national life was in a healthy, forceful condition.

The passover was observed in the month Nisan or Abib (Deut. 16 : 1 ; Ex. 13 : 4), beginning with the evening of the fourteenth and continuing through the seven following days. In exceptional circumstances it might be observed during the corresponding days of the subsequent month (Num. 9 : 10), but the usual time was that stated. At this date began the exodus from Egypt, the people having left their homes sometime between the evening of the

fourteenth and the morning of the fifteenth (Ex. 12 : 29-34), and the same became the date of the passover, because it commemorated that great event. The Israelites also made the same point of time the beginning of their calendar. The nations of antiquity often reckoned time from the beginning of their national life, as, for instance, the Romans and the Egyptians; and the Israelites, considering their departure from Egypt the beginning of their independent and organic existence, made that occurrence the beginning of their year and era (1 Kings 6 : 1). The month Abib or Nisan, formerly the seventh month, continued ever after the exodus to be the first month (Ex. 12 : 2).

It is very probable that the Israelites in the very earliest ages were wont to hold a feast at the season of the year occupied by the passover after the deliverance from Egypt. The request of Moses and Aaron seems to imply this when they asked from Pharaoh permission for the people to go and hold a feast in the wilderness (5 : 1), and to offer sacrifice to the Lord (5 : 3). Many of their Semitic neighbors held feasts at that time of the year, as did also the Egyptians, and the institutions of Israel were often similar to those of the people about them, except when originated in, or modified by, a divine command. It is also probable that the occasion consisted essentially in offering the firstfruits of the field and the firstborn of the flock and herd. This is suggested by the punishment meted out to Pharaoh and his people. Because Pharaoh would prevent Israel from offering

the firstborn and the firstfruits to the Lord, the Lord retaliated by slaying among the Egyptians the firstborn of man and beast (Ex. 12 : 12), and destroying the fruit of the fields (Ex. 9 : 31 ; 10 : 15). There is an opinion now very commonly held that the spring feast of other Semitic tribes consisted essentially in offering the firstfruits and the firstborn of flock and herd. The facts that at no other time could the first ripe grain be well presented, and that lambs and kids would be then sufficiently old for festive purposes, lend some countenance to such an opinion, and afford another reason for supposing that the early Hebrews held a similar feast at that season of the year. This natural institution the passover at once supplanted, or such parts of it as could not be modified and appropriated for its moral and spiritual purpose, and ever afterwards continued to be the only Hebrew festival of the opening ecclesiastical year.

In its wider significance the passover embraced a twofold feast. There was, first of all, the passover strictly so called, and then there was the feast of unleavened bread (Lev. 23 : 4-6, etc.). The passover was observed on the evening of the fourteenth of Nisan, and consisted in the killing of the designated lamb, the sprinkling of blood, and the enjoyment of the sacrificial meal. The feast of unleavened bread began on the following morning and was continued for seven days (Ex. 12 : 15, etc.). Its distinctive feature was the removal of all leaven from their dwellings and abstinence from all leavened foods. In some instances the term passover covers these two feasts

(Deut. 16: 1-6; 2 Chron. 30: 5), but often it designates only that part of the service observed during the evening of the fourteenth. Josephus shows that a similar usage prevailed in his day, when he makes such statements as these: "The Feast of Unleavened Bread was celebrated, which we call the Passover" (Antiq. 14, 2, 1), "which feast is called the Passover" (*id.* 17, 9, 3).

These two feasts, never after separated in the worship of Israel, were quite different in the purpose they continued to fulfil, as also in their origin. The passover, strictly speaking, commemorated the gracious passing over the Hebrew homes by the angel of the Lord when he swept in judgment through the land of Egypt (Ex. 12: 27). The feast of unleavened bread, on the other hand, was intended to commemorate the actual departure from Egypt on the way to the promised land (Ex. 12: 17; 13: 3, etc.). It is of confirmatory instruction to notice that the passover feast derived its name from the merciful passing over the Israelite dwellings by the angel of judgment. Some critics see in the term also an allusion to the passing in judgment over the desolated homes of Egypt, but this twofold origin of the word cannot be maintained. An entirely different verb is made use of in describing the passing over in mercy the homes of Israel, and the passing over in judgment the homes of Egypt, and it was only from the former the name passover (pascal) was derived. It was not the judgment upon their enemies, but the favor granted themselves, that the Israelites remembered in the feast. The institu-

tion was not intended to encourage, year after year, a gloating over the awful havoc wrought among the Egyptians, but to renew with every returning season the joyful memory of God's mighty work of deliverance in behalf of His people. Both the passover and the feast of unleavened bread were memorials of manifested divine grace, and such are the memorials that God delights in instituting.

As to origin, the passover appears as an absolutely new ordinance on the night on which it was instituted. It was not an evolution of a somewhat similar ceremonial observed in preceding ages ; nothing like it can be discovered before the days of Moses ; it breaks upon the scene without making any preparation for itself, except what was made by the ordinary sacrificial system of patriarchal times. It was otherwise with the feast of unleavened bread. It was a development and modification of the feast that had been commonly observed among eastern people at that season of the year. As the primitive agricultural feasts of summer and autumn were afterwards, by divine instruction, transformed into the harvest feast and the feast of ingathering, so at the time of the exodus the early spring festival was modified into the feast of unleavened bread. "The old feast of spring was, therefore, from this time, changed to a yearly celebration of a unique and transcendent event" (Geikie). The unerring Creator of the nation took the material which He found at hand, and so remoulded it that it became an eloquent medium of the higher revelation which He was beginning to make.

The passover in the narrower sense of the term was a sacrificial service. This some of the reformers denied on dogmatic grounds, and the denial continues to be persisted in on exegetical grounds. The evidence going to show the sacrificial character of the ordinance renders any such position utterly untenable. The passover is on two different occasions called a "sacrifice" (Ex. 12 : 27 ; 34 : 25), on three different occasions the ceremonial act by which the service was executed, is described by the ordinary verb for "sacrificing" (Deut. 16 : 2, 5, 6), and Paul shows the current opinion in the early church when he wrote : "Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5 : 7).

The regulations enforced in the observance of the feast were such as were afterwards laid down in the law of sacrifice. The victim must be without blemish, must have been selected from sacrificial animals, and required to be of sacrificial age (Ex. 12 : 5). The sprinkling of the blood indicated a sacrificial intention, and after the tabernacle and temple worship had been organized, was performed by a priest, and at the central altar (Ex. 23 : 18 ; 34 : 25 ; 2 Chron. 30 : 16 ; 35 : 11). It was also required that all who partook of the feast should be ceremonially clean (Num. 9 : 6). There were doubtless circumstances associated, especially with the first observance, that were not present in ordinary sacrifices, but these rose out of the unique occasion and the peculiar nature of the service, and do not afford sufficient reason to cast doubt upon the sacrificial purpose of the whole institution. Some who maintain that the passover

subsequently became a sacrifice, yield to the contrary opinion to the extent of admitting that "the idea of sacrifice is not brought out in the first celebration in Egypt; for there was then no priesthood and no altar" (Orelli). Such a compromise must be rejected. A priest was not necessary to mediate a sacrifice in pre-Mosaic worship, and the sacrifice of Abel shows that even a regularly constructed altar was not originally a necessity (Gen. 4 : 4). The only opinion consistent with the evidence offered is, that from the very first the passover was intended to be a sacrifice.

Though unmistakably a sacrifice, the passover differs from all the other Biblical sacrifices. When compared with those of the Levitical law, which have already been examined, it is found to differ in important features from each of them. A similar result, and to a larger degree, follows a comparison with the instances described in Genesis and the earlier part of Exodus. It has much in common with all the preceding and succeeding sacrifices, but it has also several distinguishing features. Like the sacrifice of the covenant it finds no parallel in the sacrifices of Scripture, and also, like it, may be regarded as marking a stage in the development from the homogeneous sacrifices of the patriarchal age to the perfected system of the Mosaic law. Compared with any earlier observance, the passover is discovered to be much more elaborate in ritual, and much more significant and explicit in its thought, but compared with the system afterwards instituted, it is seen to be



much poorer in both these regards. It belonged to a transition stage in the history of sacrifices, but because of the era-marking movement that begun with its inauguration, it secured a permanent place among the ordinances of the nation.

The most prominent and the most important feature of the original passover was the manipulation of the victim's blood. On this the efficacy of the sacrifice largely depended. The instruction given was to put the blood on the two side posts and on the lintel of the entrance to the dwelling of those making the offering (Ex. 12:7), and upon their faithful compliance with this instruction the deliverance of the people depended. Where the angel of judgment saw the protecting blood, he in mercy passed by (Ex. 12:23); into the homes for whose safety no such provision had been made, he entered as the remorseless messenger of death. The chief purpose of the passover sacrifice was to deliver the Israelites from the judgment threatening the Egyptians, and this it accomplished by the stipulated sprinkling of the blood.

In centring its chief purpose in the use made of the blood the passover showed a close resemblance to the sin offering. The difference between the two sacrifices in this respect was only one of degree. In the sin offering the sprinkling of the blood involved the whole purpose of the sacrifice, while in the passover it only involved the most important purpose that was to be accomplished. Because of this relationship the passover might be described as a modified sin offering, or more correctly, since it was the first to be

instituted, an incompletely developed sin offering. It was something more than a sin offering, since it had an associated ritual which, in the perfected sacrificial system, became embodied in a separate sacrifice; and it was something less, in that it expressed less intensely than the sin offering did the thought and purpose of that sacrifice.

The passover required, in addition to the sprinkling of blood, a sacrificial meal. The flesh of the victim was to be prepared into a feast for the household that had offered it and had been saved by its blood. Accordingly, the passover might be defined as a sin offering accompanied by a sacrificial meal. The Mosaic law of sacrifice required that the flesh of every sin offering, except that offered for the high priest and for the nation, should be given to the ministering priest, who was to use it as an article of food (Lev. 6: 26-30). This did not mean that the priest observed a sacrificial meal in connection with the sin offering. In the sacrificial meal it was always the offerer of the victim and not the presiding priest who partook of the feast that had been prepared. The consumption of the flesh by the priesthood in the sin offering did not constitute a sacrificial meal, and was not regarded as a distinctive feature of the sacrifice. The passover, on the other hand, required that the offerer and his household should prepare the flesh of the victim for such a festive purpose, and so the ordinance may well be defined as a sin offering modified by a sacrificial meal.

The sacrificial meal was ever in Israel the distinctive

feature of the peace offering. It is, therefore, quite right to say that "The passover was a sacrifice which combined in itself the signification of the future sin offerings and peace offerings" (Delitzsch). The only objection that might be offered against such a rendering, is that it overlooks the peculiar importance which the law of the passover attached to the sprinkling of blood above that which it attached to the sacrificial meal. It was the blood upon the two door-posts and upon the lintel, and not the sacrificial meal, that saved the Israelites from the fate of the Egyptians; accordingly, the sprinkling of the blood must be regarded as having much more importance, at least, in the first passover than the subsequent enjoyment of the feast. To say that the passover was a combination of the sin offering and the peace offering obscures this relatively greater prominence of the blood, and brings down the use made of it to an equality in importance with the enjoyment of the flesh prepared in the sacrificial meal. It is truer to fact to define the passover as a sin offering modified by an accompanying peace offering. This secures for the blood sprinkled on the door-posts and lintel the prominence which it was intended to have.

In later ages the original relative importance of the two parts of the service was not preserved. The sprinkling of the blood descended from its place of prominence, and the sacrificial meal advanced farther to the front, until, at least, the one became as important as the other, if, indeed, the original relation did not become reversed. If one were speaking of the

passover after it had undergone this change, it would be very appropriate to describe it as a combination of the sin and peace offerings, but while considering it in its original form, it gives a truer exposition to regard it as a sin offering modified by an associated peace offering.

As a sin offering the passover made atonement for the household in whose behalf it was offered. It provided a covering from the condemnation that was to break out in judgment over the land of Egypt. The blood brought before the Lord on the door-posts and the lintel, which for the time being had been constituted into an altar, atoned for those within and delivered them from the threatened infliction. Their guilt was covered and condemnation could not overtake them. Perfect security was afforded behind the sprinkled blood. While the angel of death was measuring out destruction to the Egyptians, the Israelites could wait with calm expectation, confident in the saving efficacy of the atoning blood. Cries of distress arose from the dwellings of Egypt because of the judgment that had befallen them, but Israel, confiding in the remedy that God had provided, might have made melody in their hearts to the Lord.

The saving power of the passover sacrifice is made all the more evident when regard is had to the moral and religious condition of the people. Different statements made in the Old Testament leave no room to doubt that the Israelites had become largely involved in the idolatry of their neighbors, and had fallen away with them in working their abominations

(Josh. 24 : 14 ; Ezek. 20 : 6, 7 ; 23 : 27). They doubtless continued to look upon Jehovah as their God and to offer Him the wonted services, but they allowed their worship to become so entangled with the superstitions and practices of idolatry that it was not much better than that of the heathen about them. The simple ennobling religion of Abraham was largely a matter of the past, and in its stead had risen a compound containing elements of heathen as well as Hebrew origin, which could exert but little influence for good in the formation of pure and stable character.

The evidence in the case forces the conclusion that the life and character of the Israelites was very much like that of the Egyptians, and that the former were saved when the latter were destroyed, because of the atoning sacrifice which God had provided. Had the Israelites been all men like Moses and Aaron, true and devout servants of Jehovah, it might be supposed that they were delivered because of their superior character, and that the blood sprinkled on their dwellings had but a small effect in producing the desired result; but when it is remembered that their religion was corrupt, and that probably their morals were little better, it becomes obvious that such a view cannot be maintained. Their moral and religious condition was such that they did not deserve any special favor, and their exemption from the fate that overtook the Egyptians must have been a matter of grace mediated through the sacrifice made in their behalf. Had the issue been a matter of merit and demerit, the

Israelites would have fared little better than the Egyptians, and their marvellous deliverance shows the power of a divinely appointed sacrifice in averting judgment and procuring blessings positive and undeserved. The first passover was one of the most striking instances that Scripture affords of an atoning and expiatory sacrifice, and its observance may almost be said to have marked a new era in the sacrificial observances of the nation.

A fair interpretation will not fail to discover in the animal sacrifices of the patriarchal and earlier ages an expiatory intention, but in many of them, at least, this will be found to be more implicit than expressed. In an offering such as that of Noah, the thought of expiation was doubtless present, but it cannot be disputed that gratitude to God for His deliverance vouchsafed, and desire for a continuance of His favor in the future, were the most prominent ideas to which the occasion gave rise. A devout and intelligent worshipper, like Abraham, would naturally seek a covering from the consequences of his sin in his every approach to God, but there is nothing in the context to justify the view that in his offering on Mount Moriah the thought of atonement was the strongest actuating motive prompting him to the sacrifice made. Only in the passover can this be said to have become the dominant idea. There, for the first time, is a sacrifice seen to avert a threatened judgment, and the offerer enabled to rest in calm security because of the blood that had been shed. There the expression of gratitude and kindred religious emotions cease to

be the compelling motive, and the desire to procure a covering from dreaded condemnation lays hold of the will. With the rapid strides in religious intelligence made in those days of turmoil, there was associated a deeper conviction of sin than was ever felt before. This required that the sacrificial system should embody more fully the thought and purpose of atonement than it did in the past, if the religious institutions of the nation were to keep pace with its growing spiritual necessities. In the passover an attempt was made to give expression to this new order of things, and to meet this newly wakened sense of need. To an extent never before approached in any sacrifice did atonement become the dominant thought.

The unusual prominence given the blood in the passover indicated the new intensity of its expiatory intention. There, for the first time, was the manipulation of the blood constituted an essential feature of the sacrifice, or was made the subject of divine instruction, or was even mentioned in connection with sacrifice. In preceding ages it does not seem to have been regarded as constituting any feature of the sacrificial ritual. The probability is that the victim was ordinarily bound upon the altar before it was slain (Gen. 22 : 9), and that the blood was allowed to flow out freely without any intention of its being afterwards put to some special sacrificial use. Only with the passover did the blood begin to be regarded as an essential feature of every animal sacrifice. Interpreting this fact in the light of the Levitical principle,

that "It is the blood that maketh atonement" (Lev. 17:11), it becomes obvious that a new era in the development of sacrifices had now begun, and that ever afterwards expiation received a prominence far beyond that accorded it in more primitive religious thought. As it was in the passover that the sprinkling of blood first gained recognition among the nation's religious ordinances, so it was there that the truth of atonement first rose to supremacy in the nation's religious thought.

The ritual of the first passover which was intended to emphasize its expiatory import, finds no parallel in the other expiatory sacrifices of the law, or indeed in its other sacrifices of any sort. Nothing analogous to the sprinkling of blood on the door-posts and lintel of the offerer's dwelling is met in any of the nation's religious ordinances. The universal law was that the blood of victims offered in sacrifice should in part, at least, be sprinkled on the altar, and in the most important expiatory sacrifices, on the horns of the altar. This peculiarity should not be allowed to cast doubt on the interpretation given of the passover. The reason why the law required that the blood should be sprinkled on the altar or upon its horns was, that it was there pressed on the divine attention as was not possible elsewhere. God promised to meet with His people at the altar, and when the blood was presented to Him there, it fulfilled to its utmost capacity the purpose for which it was offered. It is not without warrant to suppose that had there been any other meeting-place appointed for the Lord and His worshippers, the blood



could have been as effectively sprinkled there as upon either of the altars. At the time when the passover was instituted, no altar had received a special divine sanction, and the blood could be brought more prominently into the divine presence on the door-posts and lintels of the dwellings over which He was to pass, than in any other place. This would be still more manifestly the case if it were true that, "In ancient and in modern times, and in widely different parts of the world, there are indications that the threshold of the home was the primitive altar" (Trumbull). If the expiatory character of a sacrifice is to be measured in its intensity by the prominence given the blood in the divine presence, the passover must be given a place among the most effective in this regard.

It is not without interest to observe that the disposal of the blood in the original form of the passover, though without any known parallel in Israel, bore some resemblance to rites common among other peoples. The Romans, in order to protect their children from evil spirits of the night, were wont to smite the lintel and threshold with a branch, which presumably had been dipped in the blood of the sacrifice offered on the occasion (Ovid, *Fasti* 6 : 145). The Arab tribes usually sprinkled with blood the tents of an army called out to war (Marti). At the present day an anxious Bedouin sprinkles his tent with blood, in order to place it under divine protection (Smith). It is possible that the ritual of the passover appropriated under divine instruction such an ancient custom, and modified it to meet the peculiar need to which the

occasion gave rise. The ordinary method of revelation is to make use of any suitable material at hand as a medium through which to make known the divine mind, and if sprinkling tents with blood for security was a common practice among primitive tribes, it is more than likely that the Divine Spirit guided Moses to adopt that method in securing Israel from the judgment that overtook the firstborn of Egypt. It is not necessary to suppose that an atoning virtue was ascribed to the rite in its native form, but as soon as it was introduced among the institutions of Israel, such a significance would be attached because of the accepted principle that it was the blood shed in sacrifice that made atonement. The origin of the rite neither increased nor diminished its atoning significance. If it originated in a divine command addressed to Moses without thought of anything analogous in the religious ceremonies of other people, or if it was borrowed from the customs of neighboring tribes, its meaning remained the same. The important consideration is, that it brought the shed blood into greater prominence than was formerly given it among the Israelites, and that by so doing it gave the truth of atonement a place in the religious thought of the nation that was up to that time unknown. Whatever its origin, it began a new era in the sacrificial system of Israel, as it was also the expression of, and partial provision for, a new era in its religious thought.

After the sprinkling of blood came the sacrificial meal; after the passover as sin offering came

the passover as peace offering. This is an order, or rather connection, quite unknown among the later sacrifices. Between the sin and peace offerings the Levitical law required a burnt offering and a meal offering. The order invariably was when these sacrifices were offered at the one service: sin offering, burnt offering, meal offering and peace offering. Because of this the attempt has been made to discover in the passover something corresponding to the burnt offering, that might be regarded as mediating between the passover as a sin offering and the subsequent sacrificial meal. The regulation requiring that what remained of the lamb at the close of the feast should be burnt with fire before the following morning, might appear to provide such a feature, but in reality it was only a provision made to guard the consecrated flesh from being profaned through decay. The fact that the same requirement afterwards appeared as a permanent law in the instruction given the priests in regard to the peace offering (Lev. 7:15), is enough to show that the attempt is vain to interpret it into any real resemblance to the burnt offering. There remains, therefore, in the passover the unique feature of what was virtually a sin offering being immediately followed by what was virtually a peace offering. If one were to seek a spiritual parallel to such a sacrificial arrangement, he would find it only in the calm enjoyment of redemption met in childhood, without any corresponding intelligent spiritual activity. It may be that the Israelites, in a somewhat similar manner, calmly rejoiced in the redemption wrought in their behalf in

Egypt without as yet any intelligent apprehension of its significance, or of the service with which they were expected to respond. They passed from their sin offering to the enjoyment of their peace offering without presenting the usual intermediate burnt and meal offerings.

Like every other sacrificial meal, the sacrificial meal of the passover indicated that those who partook were in the enjoyment of peace, reconciliation, and communion with God, and had an implied promise given that such blessings would be continued in the future. There were, however, features associated with this sacred festival that were not elsewhere observed in connection with such services, and which for that reason demand special mention.

1. First among these the law required that the lamb be prepared entire. It was to be "roast with fire; its head with its legs, and with the inwards thereof" (Ex. 12:9), neither was one of its bones to be broken (Ex. 12:46). In the ordinary peace offering the flesh of the victim was divided into its parts, and thus prepared for the feast; but in the passover the whole carcase was roasted in the fire without breaking a bone or parting a joint. This taught the unity of the nation, not of the household simply, but of the entire body of the people. They did all eat the same spiritual food (1 Cor. 10:17), and became united in one spiritual body. They were one, not simply because they were all by nature children of Abraham, but especially because their faith and hope centred in the one living and true God. This truth

afterwards proved itself a strong formative force in the religious life of the people. It went to counteract the tendency to idolatry that showed itself so often in subsequent years, and helped as well to prevent assimilation with heathen neighbors, a danger all the more imminent because usually men of like blood and tongue. It was far easier to believe in the unity of the Godhead as long as a sense of national unity was preserved ; and the pressure of external influences could be more effectually resisted while the people felt themselves one in life and destiny. It is a fact that the most impoverished periods in the history of Israel were those in which tribal and sectional feeling prevailed over the consciousness of national solidarity. Their oneness as a people was a very fruitful truth, and it was well that provision was made for its instruction at the very beginning of their national career.

2. A second distinctive feature was, that the lamb should be eaten with bitter herbs (Ex. 12 : 7 ; Num. 9 : 11). The herbs made use of at the present day by the Jews for this purpose are lettuce and endive, and it is altogether likely that the same were made use of from the beginning. The Talmud mentions five different varieties that were allowed by tradition. This addition to the feast was intended to remind the Israelites of their bitter experience in Egypt, and so prevent forever an overmastering desire to return. In their new life they were sure to meet unexpected difficulties that might warp their judgment and cause them to regret their choice. The splendid privileges

and opportunities which had become their portion, could be neither gained nor retained without great self-sacrifice. Sufferings would need to be endured, dangers encountered, losses incurred, hardships and trials met in such a life as that upon which they had entered. The danger was that, because of this, the miseries of Egypt would be forgotten, and its few poor advantages a thousand-fold magnified. The hard lines of the past softened through distance, and the present misinterpreted because of its temporary trials, the tendency would be to turn with longing eyes to the body-satisfying, soul-deadening servitude of fertile Goshen. This the bitter herbs of the pass-over were intended to prevent, by keeping green the memory of what the earlier condition really was.

All that was needed was a true apprehension of the facts in the case. No man could turn to the unmaning slavery of Egypt from the new-born freedom of the desert and the promised land, with their character-forming surprises and embarrassments, if he were given to see the two sorts of life in their true light. It would be to declare himself lacking in the primary elements of manhood to do so. The bitter herbs of the passover meal were intended to always provide one side of the needed contrast by being an everlasting reminder of what the life in Egypt was. How much such an ordinance was needed was soon made manifest. Time and again during their desert life the Israelites broke out into rebellion against the goodness of God, and threatened to return to the servitude whence He had saved them (Num. 11:5 *seq.*; 14:2 *seq.*; 20:5; 21:5).

Under the stress and strain of a self-denying and God-centred life, men will look back to the supposed ease and content of an indulgent past, and the danger is that they will do so with something akin to regret. It is, therefore, wise to remember with all possible vividness how disappointing and distressing that carnal past as a matter of fact was. The process will show that the spiritual present, in spite of its conflicts, transcends what preceded in advantage and satisfactoriness as far as the heavens transcend the earth. Let men only keep the facts in view and they will never regret starting out towards the promised land, though doing so may lead them through many a howling wilderness.

3. A third feature of the passover meal not found at any other religious festival was, that it was to be enjoyed in readiness for a journey. The words of instruction were: "Thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste" (Ex. 12: 11). The reason for this attitude was, that God at any moment might give the command to advance, and they, as His people, should be ready to render prompt obedience. God had done much for them, and they were expected to respond by assuming an attentive attitude that would act in a moment on whatever instructions were issued. That should ever be the position of His people, always ready to advance in the conquest to which the Captain of their salvation calls.

4. Finally, it was required that at every subsequent

passover the significance of the sacrifice was to be explained. The father was to teach the children how it originated and what it meant. This was in order that all should observe the ordinance intelligently, and thus receive the greatest possible benefit. The observance was a memorial of the redemption effected for Israel, of God's manifested power and grace. Because of this its annual recurrence would prove a season of quickening to such as understood its significance. The religion of the Bible throughout makes a demand on the intelligence, and only as it is understood and intelligently believed does it transform and upbuild life and character. Magic is entirely foreign to its thought and purpose. It blesses only those who hear and understand (Matt. 13: 23).

It will at once be seen that some of these characteristics mentioned were of special importance in the first passover, while others could not develop their full meaning until later. There is no evidence, for instance, that an attitude of readiness for a journey was strictly adhered to except on the occasion of the first observance. In the instances mentioned in the New Testament, those present at the feast reclined about the food, and showed no indication of eating in haste or of being prepared for a journey. The terms made use of in these cases express the ordinary posture of reclining assumed at table in those early days in eastern lands (Mark 14: 18; Luke 22: 14; John 13: 12). And certainly as the feast is observed to-day, there is no restless watchfulness, nor any preparations made for a journey. On the other hand, the use of



bitter herbs and the custom of explaining the meaning of the service could be of much importance only in later passovers. At the first passover the bitter experience of the sojourn in Egypt was so recent that no institution could impress it more deeply on mind and heart, and the purpose of the service was so well understood that a further explanation was quite unnecessary. All this affords evidence of what has been already several times suggested, that in after generations the passover became a somewhat different ordinance from what it originally was. This matter, however, is so vital in any exposition of the institution that it merits a separate paragraph.

The change which the passover underwent in the course of years, is emphatically seen in the alteration made in the manner of sprinkling the blood. Instead of being presented before the Lord on the door-posts and lintel of the offerer's dwelling, it was presented at the central altar (Deut. 16: 2; 2 Chron. 30: 16; 35: 11). Nor did the presenting of the blood at the altar instead of upon the door-posts and lintel constitute the greatest change. The place of presenting the blood might have been changed to such an extent without any alteration in the significance of the ordinance. It was the manner in which it was presented at the altar that wrought and expressed the change that had taken place. It was dashed against the sides of the altar of burnt offering as in the burnt and peace offerings. The word made use of in 2 Chron. 30: 16; 35: 11 to describe the action indicates this. It is the word made use of to describe the disposal of the blood

in the instruction given in Leviticus in regard to the burnt and peace offerings (1 : 5 ; 3 : 2). Had the blood been sprinkled on the horns of the altar as in the sin offering, the sacrifice would have retained its significance unaltered, but having been disposed of as in the burnt and peace offerings a change must needs take place. Instead of being akin to the sin offerings, it now becomes more akin to the burnt and peace offerings ; instead of being essentially an expiatory sacrifice, it now expresses no more expiation than did these sacrifices just mentioned. It cannot now be described as a sin offering modified by a peace offering. From what is said of it in the later books of the Old Testament, it instead continued to be little more than a commemorative peace offering. Its expiatory character became submerged in its festive character. The sin offering, which was always growing into prominence, and which was frequently offered during the feast of unleavened bread (Num. 28 : 22-25), had so completely assimilated the function of atonement that all other sacrifices, including the passover, might well be relieved of their expiatory character. An intelligent discussion of the passover must thus always distinguish between its earlier and later forms, otherwise the significance of its first observance cannot be appreciated.

A novel interpretation of the passover has been given by Dr. Trumbull in his work, entitled "The Threshold Covenant." He holds that the sacrifice enacted a covenant of friendship between Jehovah and the families of Israel, and that instead of passing

over their dwellings, as is usually supposed, He entered by their thresholds as an honored guest. Without taking time to discuss the view, it may be remarked that one of the difficulties with which it has to contend, is that "the passing over" referred to can hardly mean anything else than what the generally accepted interpretation has indicated. The phrase, "I will pass over you" (Ex. 12 : 13), is never found elsewhere to mean an entrance into a dwelling, and cannot without violence to the language be so understood here. The somewhat similar phrase in v. 23 might possibly be rendered "to pass over the threshold," if the word rendered "door" could be rendered "threshold," which, however, is never the case in Scripture, and to understand the words, "to pass over the door," as meaning "to enter the house," is altogether unwarranted. In v. 27 the same idea is expressed by the phrase, "passed over the houses of the children of Israel," which cannot be understood to describe an entrance into their homes. Interesting, therefore, though the new interpretation may be, it breaks upon the fact that the narrative does not represent the Lord as entering the homes of Israel, but as passing them by in mercy.

But even should it be established that the description means what Dr. Trumbull says, it would in no way alter what has been usually regarded the fundamental significance of the ordinance. According to Hebrew thought, the sprinkling of blood always involved atonement, and the prominence given that rite in the first passover must have meant that atonement

was with it a fundamental purpose. Moreover, it was a recognized truth in Israel that peace with God was effected only by means of atonement, and to have Him enter the homes of Israel in peace because of the sacrifice offered, would imply that the sacrifice in question had an expiatory result. It may be repeated, then, that the new interpretation, even if true, leaves unaffected all that was essential in the interpretation usually accepted, and there are difficulties associated which can hardly allow of its being accepted as true.

## CHAPTER XI.

### *THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC.*

(Gen. 22 : 1-19.)

**A** BRAHAM'S conduct in binding his son Isaac upon the altar affords an illustration of obedient faith that has never been surpassed. He loved his son with the strength of an affection that waited long to be gratified, and he saw intertwined with his life the fulfilment of God's purpose of grace that had been made known; nevertheless, at the divine command he unwound every tie of nature, stilled every rising doubt as to the fulfilment of the divine promise, and proceeded forthwith to make his costly sacrifice. The great faith which his devotion manifested, has, ever more than anything else, arrested the attention of the reader. It was this that appealed to the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (11 : 17-19), and after him has appealed to a whole army of teachers who, generation after generation, have sought to influence the world for good. The theological value of the whole incident was never so fully paralleled exemplification of a difficulty-subduing, life-ennobling faith.

There will be here considered an interest of a more

theoretical character. Attention will be directed exclusively to the knowledge which the occurrence gives on the doctrine of sacrifice. It involved the first divinely given revelation on the question of human sacrifice, which at that time, and afterwards, exerted such a harrowing influence upon religious thought. When a voice from heaven restrained the patriarch's outstretched hand (v. 11), and permitted him by implication to substitute a provided ram for his devoted son, it was made known, that while God accepted the sacrifice of animal life, He would not allow human life to be offered on His altar.

From the day that Abel's sacrifice had been approved and that of Cain rejected, the knowledge of sacrifice had been gradually enlarged. A great step in advance had been taken in the sacrifice of Noah, when the first recorded altar had been erected and the intimation given that animals ceremonially unclean were eliminated from among acceptable victims. The next important development was made when the sacrifice of Isaac brought to light the truth that God rejected human sacrifice. From that day the descendant of Abraham would be without excuse who would venture to propitiate his God with such an offering.

As has been said, this was the first recorded revelation that was given on this awful subject. According to the usual divine method pursued in such matters, amplifications were afterwards made, and God's will restated as occasion required. In subsequent books of the Old Testament, human sacrifices are frequently

denounced and forbidden. In Deut. 18: 10 it is written: "There shall not be found with thee any one that maketh his son or his daughter pass through the fire." As the phrase, "pass through the fire," was the customary expression for the offering of human life, the words contain an explicit disapproval of such sacrifices. The law further enacted that any who disobeyed in this regard, should suffer the death penalty (Lev. 20: 2-5). The prophets of Israel also spoke with like emphasis against the practice. Jeremiah was especially strong in his denunciation (7: 31; 19: 5; 32: 35). Ezekiel was no less severe (16: 20, 21; 23: 37). Isaiah at one stroke shows his stern opposition (57: 5). Micah mentions its possibility only to repudiate it with horror (6: 7). A psalmist calls it, "sacrifice to demons," and declares it most offensive to Jehovah (106: 37). The historic portion of the Old Testament mentions different instances in which the offence was practised and always with disapproval implied or expressed (2 Kings 16: 3; 17: 17; 21: 6; 23: 10; 2 Chron. 33: 6). As long as the evil was a menace to the well-being of the nation, God continued to declare His undying opposition. While the danger lasted He never left Himself without witness against the unnatural crime. The truth that He revealed for the first time in the sacrifice of Isaac, He continued to repeat and make more explicit in the generations that followed.

The Old Testament Scriptures by many a hint and statement make it clear that this evil against which Abraham and his descendants were so faithfully

warned, was very prevalent among the nations and tribes with which they had necessarily to do. People who spoke a dialect of their Hebrew tongue, and in whose veins coursed their tribal blood, like others of more remote connection, are found charged with such an abomination. Deut. 12: 31 and 2 Chron. 28: 3 involve the Canaanites in this guilt. In the first of these passages the Israelites are exhorted to shun the evil practices of the nations whose lands they are about to possess, and among these practices human sacrifices are particularly mentioned. In the second passage Ahaz is denounced because "He burnt his children in the fire, according to the abomination of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel." In both passages the "nations" or the "heathen" who are charged with the evil custom, are said to have been driven out before the Israelites, and this could only have been written of the Canaanites. Ps. 106: 38 also shows that the Canaanite worship involved human sacrifices. In 2 Kings 3: 27 the offence is brought home to the Moabites. There it is stated that at a period of great national distress the king offered his son as a burnt offering. It is not stated that his subjects were given to such sacrifices, but the fact that the king himself resorted to such a means of averting disaster in the hour of his direst need, justifies the inference that human sacrifice was one of the recognized institutions of the nation. The Ammonites appear to have been notorious in this direction. Among their gods the two most prominent were Milcom (1 Kings 11: 5, 33; 2 Kings 23: 13;



Jer. 49 : 1) and Moloch (1 Kings 11 : 7), and the latter of these was never auspicious but when his altar reeked with human blood (Lev. 18 : 21 ; 2 Kings 23 : 10 ; Jer. 32 : 35). The inhabitants of Sepharvaim were wont to offer their children to their gods Adrammelech and Anammelech (2 Kings 17 : 31). Sepharvaim was a town on the east bank of the Euphrates above Babylon. This brings the custom of human sacrifice into the very heart of Babylonia. It does more. It shows that the custom prevailed throughout the empire. Adrammelech was the war god of Babylonia and Assyria, and Anammelech their god of the heavens, and the fact that the people of Sepharvaim offered their children to these deities, warrants the conclusion that their worship throughout these far eastern lands was everywhere associated with this horrifying rite. It is not going too far to say that the Old Testament shows the practice of human sacrifice to have prevailed in all the countries between the Mediterranean Sea and the Persian Gulf.

Non-Biblical sources reveal a still more deplorable condition. From ancient historians and more recently discovered archæological remains, the evil is seen to have been more intense in degree and more universal in extent than Scripture would lead one to suppose. It existed in the valley of the Tigris and the Euphrates before the dominion of Babylon began. Sayce quotes an old Acadian ritual text which reads thus : " The offspring that raised its head among men, the offspring for his life he gave ; the head of the offspring for the head of the man he gave ; the neck of the

offspring for the neck of the man he gave." That the Assyrians and Babylonians continued the practice of their predecessors in this respect is only far too evident from the sources at hand. The Bible does not charge the Phœnicians with this crime against nature, but other sources show that they were infamously guilty in its regard. Even one of their gods was said to have sacrificed his firstborn son. Moloch was recognized as one of their principal deities, and he everywhere required human victims to satiate his thirst for blood. Carthage, a colony of the Phœnicians, was notorious for its human sacrifices. On one occasion it offered two hundred of its choicest children to avert a dreaded calamity, and offerings of its firstborn in fewer numbers were a matter of yearly occurrence. Of the Hittites it is said: "Children were sacrificed by their parents in this way, after first being tied up in skins and told that they were not children but oxen" (Sayce). Herodotus denies that the Egyptians offered sacrifices of this sort (2: 45), but his information on this point must have been very defective. Other authorities show that they sacrificed prisoners of war in great numbers, and that to some of their deities they offered from their own people. The legend of Iphigenia shows that the Greeks at the earliest times resorted to human sacrifices under the strain of circumstances, and abundant proof is at hand that in historic ages they frequently presented such offerings. By the old Italic tribes, "All domestic animals and all children that had been born between the beginning of March and the end of April were

devoted to the gods" (Kalisch), and Roman generals were allowed to choose victims for sacrifice from among their soldiers until the power of Christianity outrooted the evil. The practice was so inwrought into the religious fibre of the Germanic tribes that "The old Prussians and Goths adhered to the custom for centuries after their own adoption of Christianity" (Kalisch). Gaul, Spain and Britain have each the same dark record in this regard. The ancient peoples of Europe, Asia and Africa all stand here under like condemnation.

The truth appears to be that of all the nations of antiquity, the Hebrews alone were exempt from this abomination. Among every other people of whom sufficient knowledge has been preserved by ancient writers, or acquired from monuments, slabs, cylinders, and tablets of antiquity unearthed in more recent years, the baneful practice is found to have prevailed to a greater or less extent. The Israelites were often surpassed in trade and commerce, in the arts and sciences, but they occupied the unique position of never having sanctioned this unnatural offence which has left so many a lurid stain upon the record of other nations, some of whom were of like speech and origin with themselves. It is not that they were naturally better than their contemporaries; it is not that they had naturally higher ethical ideals or were endowed with a truer spiritual intuition. Their great privilege was to have been made heirs of a religion that quickened what was best in their life and restrained those carnal tendencies that encompassed the decay of all

the earlier forms of civilization. It can hardly be questioned that they would have gone the way of all the earth in this evil practice, had not their unique religion prevented them.

It is not overlooked that, especially during the Assyrian encroachment upon their liberties, there were those among the descendants of Abraham who sinned in this regard. King Ahaz is recorded to have "Made his sons to pass through the fire according to the abomination of the heathen" (2 Kings 16: 3; 2 Chron. 28: 3). A similar charge is made against Manasseh (2 Kings 21: 6; 2 Chron. 33: 6). There is also evidence that in the kingdom of Israel many of the people fell away in this respect, at least during the reign of king Hoshea (2 Kings 17: 17). Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the author of 2 Kings show that the people of Judah, as well as their two kings, were about that time involved in the same guilt (Jer. 7: 31; 19: 5; 32: 35; Ezek. 16: 20; 23: 37; 2 Kings 17: 17).

Because of crushing defeats and irreparable losses, despair laid hold of rulers and ruled. Faith in Jehovah and dependence upon the ordinary accessories of religion had largely given way. As a last resort, and in the hope to recover lost ground, the most costly sacrifice that the human heart can offer began to be presented, and to the deities which were supposed to be made propitious in such a way. It is possible that as early as the days of Solomon, human sacrifices had been introduced into Jerusalem, along with other heathen abominations. He is said to have built a

high place to Moloch on the slopes of Olivet (1 Kings 11:7), and the worship of Moloch, "horrid king," always required human sacrifices. There is some doubt, however, about the rendering of the word, Moloch in this passage. The Septuagint renders it as if the Hebrew text in its day read Milcom or Milkam instead of Moloch. In v. 3, moreover, the god of the Ammonites is said to have been Milcom and not Moloch. In addition to all this, Topheth, in the valley of Hinnom, was afterwards the place of human sacrifice in Jerusalem, and not Mount Olivet (2 Kings 23:10; 2 Chron. 28:3; 33:6; Jer. 7:31, etc.). Finally, the happy prosperity enjoyed throughout the kingdom during Solomon's reign, and the supremacy over all foreign foes made sacrifices of this sort highly improbable. It is only in the distress of later reigns that such a disorder of natural affections and religious ideas as human sacrifices presuppose could be expected. It is, therefore, possible that with all the faults of his religious life, Solomon did not commit the folly and crime of allowing this greatest of heathen abominations to invade his dominions. It would be well if similar doubt could be thrown upon the religious crimes of his successors, but that is not possible. Prophet and historian combine in charging Ahaz and Manasseh of Judah, and Hoshea of Israel, with the crime of sacrificing their children to strange gods, and encouraging their people to do the same. It cannot be denied that the heathen practice worked its way into Judah and Israel during the oppressive encroachment of the Assyrian Empire, and it is possible that

traces of it survived down to a much later date (Isa. 57 : 5).

This does not mean that such sacrifices became a recognized feature in true worship, or were given a place among the Hebrew institutions. The contrary was the case. The sacrifice of human life was always regarded a foreign rite that had been introduced into Israel from foreign sources, was generally spoken of as a heathen abomination (2 Kings 16 : 3 ; 2 Chron. 28 : 3), and was offered to strange gods such as Baal (Jer. 19 : 5), and Moloch (2 Kings 23 : 10 ; Jer. 32 : 35), but never to Jehovah, the God of Israel. The inspired historians were wont to classify it with other heathen institutions and rites, such as augury, enchantment, familiar spirits, wizards, and idols (2 Kings 21 : 5-7 ; 2 Chron. 33 : 6, 7) and to condemn it with them as a transgression against Jehovah. The law of the Lord denounced it and demanded that its practice should be punished by death (Lev. 18 : 21 ; 20 : 2-4 ; Deut. 18 : 10), and His prophets ever set their face against it (Jer. 7 : 31 ; Ezek. 16 : 20 ; Micah 6 : 7 ; Isa. 57 : 5, etc.). It seems perfectly established that human sacrifice never belonged to Hebrew religion, and that when either king or subject practised it, he did so in opposition to God's revealed will. An Ammonite or a Moabite, or a member of any other heathen community who offered a human victim to his deity, only did what his religion required and approved ; but a Hebrew who offered such a gift, did so in opposition to every prophet and lawgiver of his nation. As well might one say that the killing of heretics was a

feature of Christianity because misguided Churchmen have resorted to such a measure in the name of religion, as to think that human sacrifice was a recognized element of Hebrew worship because men like Ahaz and Manasseh, blinded by superstition and maddened by the distress of foreign invasion, sacrificed their children to Moloch or Baal. The sacrifice of human life was never a recognized factor in the worship of Jehovah.

Instances recorded in the Old Testament in which Hebrew authority inflicted the death penalty, have latterly, because of certain peculiarities, been interpreted as cases where human life had been offered to Jehovah, and as consequently affording proof that at one time such a rite was as much a part of Hebrew as it was of heathen worship. The two instances of this sort which have been most frequently made use of for such an object, are the execution of Agag, king of the Amalekites, by Samuel (1 Sam. 15:33), and that of Saul's seven sons by David (2 Sam. 21:6 *seq.*). The evidence of sacrificial intention in these executions is chiefly found in the phrase, "before the Lord": "Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord" (1 Sam. 15:33), and the Gibeonites "hanged them (the seven sons of Saul) in the mountain before the Lord" (2 Sam. 21:9). The argument is that "before the Lord" is a phrase frequently employed in connection with the offering of sacrifice, and that the inspired narrator, in making use of the phrase in describing these executions, must have thought of them as instances of sacrifice.

A circumstance that makes such reasoning entirely inconclusive is, that the phrase, "before the Lord," is not exclusively made use of in connection with sacrifices. Hezekiah spread Sennacherib's letter "before the Lord" (2 Kings 19:4), but that does not mean that in doing so he had any sacrificial purpose in view. The Lord said of David that he had shed much blood "in my sight" (literally "before me"), but His reference was not to the blood that David had offered in sacrifice, but to the enemies which he had overthrown as captain of the Lord's forces (1 Chron. 22:8). Such examples show that it is absolutely arbitrary to infer that the execution of Agag and Saul's sons was sacrificial, because they are said to have been "hewed" and "hanged" "before the Lord." All that the phrase means in either case, is that the execution was a judicial act righteously performed—a judicial act, in other words, that carried out the divine sentence.

An additional consideration shows that the execution of Saul's sons could not have been regarded a sacrifice. They were hanged, and their bodies allowed to remain hanging until the bones were washed bare by sun and rain (2 Sam. 21:9, 10). Sacrifices were never made in Israel by hanging, nor were the carcasses of victims ever profaned by decay. It is true that David speaks of the proposed act as an atonement (v. 3), but not in the sense of making atonement to the Lord. He rather thinks of making atonement to the Gibeonites for the wrongs they had suffered, as Jacob would appease (*i.e.*, make atonement



to) Esau by the gifts which he sent (Gen. 32 : 20). The reason that David gives for his proposition supports this interpretation: "That ye may bless the inheritance of the Lord" (v. 3). It is true that the author of the narrative believed that what had been done averted the divine wrath from the land (v. 14); but this, it would appear, was accomplished through an act of justice which had been too long delayed, rather than through an atoning sacrifice (*cf.* Achan's crime and punishment, and the consequent deliverance of Israel, Josh. 7 : 1—8 : 29). Moreover, he attributes the relief which had been effected from the famine, as much to the honor shown the bones of Saul and Jonathan as to the execution of the seven sons (vv. 12-14). A consideration in reference to the execution of Agag, that affords positive evidence that it was not intended to have been sacrificial, is, that the word which describes the killing (1 Sam. 15 : 33), is never made use of in connection with sacrifice—does not, indeed, appear elsewhere in Scripture.

The fullest examination creates an irresistible conviction, that in neither of these executions was there ever sacrificial intention. The case of Jephthah's daughter (Judges 11 : 29-40) is much more difficult. The question here turns on the fact of the young woman's death, not on the manner of it. If she was killed it was as a sacrifice, and that to the Lord (vs. 31, 39), and not because of any judicial sentence. There was no doubt about the killing of Agag and the seven sons of Saul; the doubt there was in regard to the significance of the killing. In this case all the

difficulty is as to the fact of the killing; as to its meaning, if it was accomplished, there can be no doubt. The matter must be decided chiefly from the significance of Jephthah's vow, and the manner in which he performed the vow which he had made (vs. 30, 39). As to the vow itself, there can be no doubt that he had undertaken to offer a burnt offering to the Lord (v. 31). The term of which he made use to describe the content of his vow, is one of the most frequently met words in Scripture, and it is always rendered burnt offering or burnt sacrifice. It is conceivable that the term might be occasionally made use of in a figurative sense, but there is no unmistakable instance of such usage, and certainly it could not be expected in unadorned narrative. It must be granted, therefore, that Jephthah determined to offer the Lord a literal burnt offering, should he return victorious from the Ammonite war.

The only doubt remains as to the sort of victim which he had in view when he made his vow. Some maintain that he thought of an animal victim; others, on the contrary, hold that he meant a human victim. The phrase which is rendered "whatsoever" (v. 31), might designate either an animal or a member of his household. Our English version leans towards the former rendering; the Septuagint accepts the latter. The phrase, "door of my house," doubtless refers to Jephthah's dwelling, and the victim that he vowed to offer was to issue forth from his dwelling. Because of the intimate connection between the people and their domestic animals in the East, it is quite possible

that the description was intended to indicate an animal from the flock or herd ; but it is much more likely that the speaker had in view a member of his household. An identical phrase in Joshua 2 : 19 must refer to the people of the dwelling. Then, too, the terms of the vow imply that the victim to be offered was to be from among what came out to greet Jephthah in honor of his victorious return. The description cannot refer to some person or some animal that might chance to be in his way when about to step over his threshold ; it must have meant some person or some animal that was to go out deliberately to meet him. It is conceivable that he might have intended to include his domestic animals under such a description, but it is altogether unlikely.

Then, too, the occasion and the position of Jephthah were not likely to call forth a vow to offer a sheep or an ox as a burnt offering. The expression of such a resolve on the lips of a great leader who was covenanting for the deliverance of his kingdom, would appear almost grotesque. It would have been altogether unworthy of the man and the hour. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Jephthah's vow had in view some member of his household, and the recent tendency of exposition is decidedly in that direction. It is distinctly stated that Jephthah performed his vow (v. 39). It is vain to say that the maiden was dedicated to serve the Lord at His sanctuary. Virgins consecrated to the service of the deity in his temple, were as much a heathen institution as human sacrifice, and had not at this early date gained a

footing in Israel. Jephthah's agonizing sorrow when he saw that the choice fell upon his daughter, shows that her death was intended (v. 35). The yearly memorial that was instituted in her honor can suggest nothing else.

It may be urged against this conclusion that human sacrifice was never sanctioned by the religion of Israel, and could not have been resorted to by a chosen leader of the people. The objection would be well taken, but it fails to give due value to the fact that a leader appointed for an important military exploit or political reform, might not be a true exponent of the nation's religious institutions. At a later time Jehu was by divine appointment given the task of outrooting heathen Baal worship from the kingdom of the ten tribes (2 Kings 10: 30-31), and yet he always continued a devotee to the idolatry practised at Dan and Bethel. Similarly it might have been with Jephthah; though chosen by God to deliver the eastern tribes from the burdensome supremacy of the Ammonites, he might have been so ignorant of the religious traditions and institutions of his people, and so indifferent to their spirit that his conduct might be an entire misrepresentation of both.

This is the circumstance that affords the key to the significance of the whole occurrence. That Jephthah offered his daughter to Jehovah in sacrifice can hardly be disputed at this late day, but that he did so in opposition to the laws and traditions of his nation is even more certain. That God had wrought mightily through him in the deliverance of His people

cannot be gainsaid, but to think that that gave him an insight into what constituted true worship, or made his actions an expression of the religion of Israel would be entirely unwarranted. Jephthah had up to this time lived the life of a freebooter (v. 3). In his early days he had fled, because of abuse at home into a remote province (vs. 2, 3), where heathen superstition and idolatry were, perhaps, almost supreme. While there he began to cast aside every restraint in thought and practice, until at last one religion appeared to him as worthy as another, the religion of Chemosh as worthy as that of Jehovah (v. 24).

Nothing can be more likely than that he grew into sympathy with human sacrifice as with other heathen abominations, and that he would be ready when the occasion offered to put into practice what he felt. It is true enough that when he undertook the work of delivering Israel, he proceeded at once to commend himself in his own way to Jehovah (v. 11, etc.), but that would not enlighten his superstition in a few days, or prevent him offering the Lord such marks of devotion as his heathen neighbors were accustomed to offer their gods. Nothing would be more absurd than to take the doings of such a man as an indication of what Hebrew religion involved in his day. As well take Jethro, priest of Midian, as an exponent of what the religious condition of Israel was in the days of Moses, and Cyrus an exponent of what it was during the exile, for both did much to advance the cause of God's people, each in his own day and in

his own way. That Jephthah sacrificed his daughter to Jehovah has been made exceedingly probable, but to infer from his doing so that the Jehovah worship of that day recognized human sacrifice is an argument scarcely worth refutation.

Others have regarded the execution of Zebah and Zalmunna (Judges 8 : 21) as sacrifices to the Lord (Smend, Nowack, etc.), and even the execution of Oreb and Zeeb (Judges 7 : 25), but that either differed from the execution of other military leaders captured in war cannot be maintained (Judges 1 : 7 ; Josh. 10 : 27, etc.). The strongest evidence that has been offered in support of the opinion that the Hebrew religion countenanced human sacrifice, is found in two instances where inspired teachers are thought to have countenanced the practice. The most perplexing is that of Ezekiel 20 : 25, 26, where the prophet is supposed to teach that human sacrifice is a divinely given institution. The passage is confessedly a difficult one, but that it was not intended to countenance human sacrifice is probable, is indeed almost certain, because the prophet elsewhere denounces that abomination (16 : 20, 21 ; 23 : 37). The prophet cannot have contradicted himself in such an important matter, and in these other passages he explicitly condemns human sacrifice.

It is to be noticed, moreover, that when the prophet made use of the words recorded, chapter 20 : 25, 26, he was speaking of the Lord's judgments against Israel because of their sins. If he meant, therefore, to say that God gave Israel the ordinance of human

sacrifice, his understanding must have been that He gave it to them in His wrath as a punishment for their sins. The other statutes and judgments He gave them out of His good-will, but if He gave this ordinance He must have done so in His anger because of their sin. When, however, God is said in Scripture to give a people up in His wrath to evil practices, the meaning is that He permits them to pursue such courses of evil. When, according to Romans 1:24, He gave the nations up to work abominations, the meaning is that He allowed them to fall away into such indescribable evils as a punishment for not living up to the light that He had given them (*cf.* Hos. 1:17; Isa. 6:9, 10; Ezek. 7:3; Rom. 11:8). The same would be the meaning if He was said to give the Israelites the ordinance of human sacrifices, He would have permitted them to adopt this heathen practice as a punishment for their sins. That this is really the thought of the passage is indicated by the clause that follows: "That I might make them desolate to the end that they might know that I am the Lord." That is to say, the Lord permitted them to take the abominable way of the heathen, in order that through the very wretchedness of their wanderings they might be brought to a knowledge of Himself.

Nor is it an objection to this interpretation that it makes the prophet speak of human sacrifice as "statutes" and "judgments" (v. 25). Micah calls the worship of the calves at Bethel and Dan the "statutes of Omri" (6:16), and so Ezekiel might have spoken of the institution of human sacrifice by a similar name.

Others render the prophet's words somewhat differently. They understand the "statutes" and "judgments" (v. 25) to mean the law requiring that the first-born should be the Lord's (Ex. 13 : 12), and they take the meaning of the prophet's statement to be, that the Lord, in punishment for their sins, allowed them to misuse that law by sacrificing their firstborn instead of dedicating them to Himself. Thus Kalisch says : "It can only mean that the 'statutes' given to the Israelites did not prove or turn out to be good or beneficial to them since they became occasions of transgression and disobedience ; and the judgments enjoined by the law called forth death and destruction since the firstborn children were offered and burnt to idols." Whichever interpretation one adopts, it is manifest that the prophet's words do not countenance human sacrifice, and when his severe strictures upon the evil practice, passed on other occasions, is taken into consideration, that conclusion becomes inevitable.

The other passage upon which much reliance has been placed by the advocates of the opinion that human sacrifice was a factor in Hebrew worship, is 2 Kings 3 : 27 : "Then he (the king of Moab) took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great wrath against Israel, and they departed from him and returned to their own land." The kings of Judah, Israel and Edom had waged successful war against Moab. When in spite of every effort the capital was about to fall, the king took his firstborn son and sacrificed him on the city wall in



sight of the allied armies. The result was that the siege was raised and the invaders returned each to his own country. The inference drawn from the narrative is that the inspired historian attributed the retirement of the allies to the sacrifice that had been offered, and must, therefore, have had faith in such sacrifices.

The argument has several weaknesses which render it absolutely worthless for the purpose to which it is put. In the first place, there is no probability that the offering was made to Jehovah. The king of Moab was not a worshipper of Jehovah but of Chemosh, and would have made his sacrifice to the latter rather than to the God of Israel. Consequently, even if the inspired writer did here give his sanction to human sacrifice, it was to such sacrifice offered to heathen gods and not as one of the institutions of Hebrew worship.

The statement which he made, does not, however, express an opinion on the part of the writer, but simply records the fact that because of the king's sacrifice the war was brought to an end. The awful tragedy enacted in their presence aroused great anger among the allied forces, with the result that they retired to their homes. The word translated "wrath" often means "dissension," "strife" (Esth. 1 : 18 ; Ecc. 5 : 17). It generally designates the divine "anger," but often means disorder in human affairs, and that is probably its meaning here. The horrible deed of the distracted king struck confusion into the ranks of the besiegers, and caused them to raise their investment. The Edomites had full faith in the efficacy of human

sacrifices; many of the Israelites present, and perhaps some from Judah as well, would have a measurable conviction that such offerings had some effect; even those whose religion was strong and intelligent, would be overtaken with mingled feelings of pity and dismay at the spectacle of the agonized father killing his fairest son. The result, therefore, naturally was that the allied forces broke up their encampment and departed to their homes. The words do not mean that the abominable sacrifice aroused the wrath of Jehovah against the investing armies, but that it struck disorder into the allied ranks. At any rate the conviction to which the author elsewhere gives expression (2 Kings 16: 3; 17: 17; 21: 6), shows that he had no faith in such an ordinance and could not have approved the conduct of the unhappy king.

Other statements and incidents have been drawn into this discussion by one advocate and another, but these all have much less evidential value than those already examined. There may be less hesitation than ever in expressing the conviction that at no time did the Hebrew religion lend its approval to the offering of human sacrifice. Prophets and teachers and the nation's men of religious worth were in every age strenuous in their opposition and fearless in their denunciation. The stream of truth that broke into history in the sacrifice of Isaac continued ever after to flow clear and unpolluted, like the water of life that issues from the throne of God and of the Lamb. An unprejudiced examination leaves the religion of Israel the unique distinction of having never adopted the

heathen custom of sacrificing human life, however hard at times it may have been pressed by the inroads of heathen religious thought.

Human sacrifices as practised by the nations were of two sorts: the sacrifice of children, preferably the firstborn, and the sacrifice of adults, especially prisoners of war. It was the former of these in particular that the Israelites had adopted from their heathen neighbors. Ahaz and Manasseh caused their children to pass through the fire (2 Kings 16: 3; 21: 6), and many of their people did the same (2 Kings 23: 10). It was his own son the king of Moab sacrificed when in danger of losing his capital fortress (2 Kings 3: 27). The Phœnicians and all those who adopted their religious doctrines and rites, burnt their children to Moloch, a custom that prevailed to an almost incredible extent (Kalisch). There was not a race among the ancients, the Jews alone excepted, that had not as an acknowledged religious institution such a sacrifice, and the length to which the practice has been carried in modern barbarous nations, is only too sadly known.

The sacrifice of prisoners of war was not less universal. It is said that the ancient Babylonians sacrificed one in ten of all their captives, and the ancient Egyptians are believed to have offered a similar proportion (Maspero). Herodotus records that the Scythians sacrificed to Mars one in every hundred of their captured enemies (4: 62). The Greeks also sometimes offered a tenth of their war prisoners. The Romans and other western nations

were frequent with such sacrifices, but probably did not adhere to any definite proportion. The offering of other adults than prisoners was, it need not be said, common among all these peoples, but victims taken by the sword were apparently preferred.

Instead of these bloody sacrifices the Israelites offered their children to the Lord in living sacrifice. All their firstborn were His (Ex. 13 : 2) because of the redemption of the firstborn in Egypt, and all others were dedicated to Him in their circumcision. The Hebrew parents no less than their heathen neighbors gave their children in sacrifice to their God, but their sacrifice was spiritual. They devoted them to Him for service in life and not in death, and trained and cultivated their powers to make that service as effective as possible. The sacrifice of Isaac taught the Hebrews for all time to come that the sacrifice which the Lord demanded of parents, and in which alone He took delight, was the dedication of their children to a life spent in His service. In such a manner they were to offer not only their firstborn but all their sons and daughters. And if the Israelites went forth to war, they knew a better way than slaughtering their captives at the sacred altar. If justice required that any should die, they suffered at the edge of the sword ; as for the others, they were either left behind to till the ancestral fields or taken away with the returning hosts to become servants among the multitudes of the theocracy. The Hebrew manner of sacrificing human life was certainly saner than that of the heathen.

Of the motives that actuated such sacrifices, two were outstanding. In seasons of distress and danger human lives were offered to appease the deity and make him auspicious. The severity of the infliction endured or feared was attributed to an angry god, and the most costly sacrifice was presented to win his good-will. It was thus that the king of Moab reasoned when he offered his firstborn son. His threatened ruin was an evidence that his god, Chemosh, was angry, and his favor was worth more than even the life of his heir. Ahaz and Manasseh were probably moved by a similar consideration. The unceasing bitterness of their cup because of foreign encroachments caused them to despair in the help of Jehovah. The gods of their enemies were evidently more mighty than He, and the dearest possession of their heart was not too great a price to pay for such irresistible aid. In the Greek legend, it was to appease an angry goddess who thwarted the Greeks in their proposed Trojan war, that Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia. When the Carthaginians sacrificed in one offering two hundred of their noblest children, it was to avert a like displeasure.

This was doubtless the most dominant motive in the offering of human sacrifice. Gratitude also was occasionally the actuating consideration. Prisoners of war were usually offered as an expression of praise because of victory. Jephthah's tragic sacrifice was vowed to the Lord in view of a hoped-for victory. Children also were offered from the same motive.

The religion of Israel needed no such sacrifice for

either purpose. The Lord had appointed a sacrifice for sin, which with a penitent spirit never failed to secure peace and pardon. Under cover of its atoning blood the contrite offerer had nothing to fear. And as an expression of thanksgiving the Israelite had the peace offering which he might freely use. Or if he desired beyond this to offer a more eloquent sacrifice of praise, he might offer his children in a spiritual sacrifice of special devotion to God. Hannah's heart was so big with gratitude that she offered her long hoped-for son to the service of the Lord at the tabernacle (1 Sam. 1 : 28), and the offering was accepted. Manoah was gladly willing that Samson should be a Nazarite from his birth (Jud. 13 : 8-13). He was overwhelmed with gladness because the Lord had taken compassion upon his desolation, and out of a full heart he devoted the joy of his life to an unceasing service for Jehovah. The Hebrew religion placed as little restraint upon the expression of gratitude as did that of the nations, but it required that the medium of expression should be such as would prove conducive to moral and spiritual edification. The sacrifice that Abraham made of his son, was as complete as if his blood had been shed on the altar, but it was a sacrifice that began a training and education on the part of Abraham that would make Isaac a well-equipped workman in the service of Jehovah.

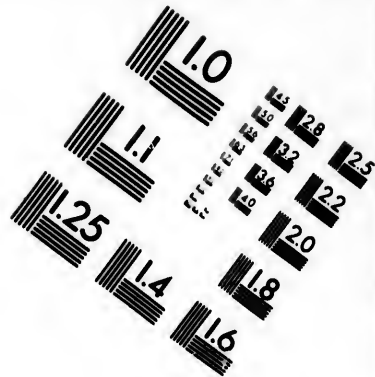
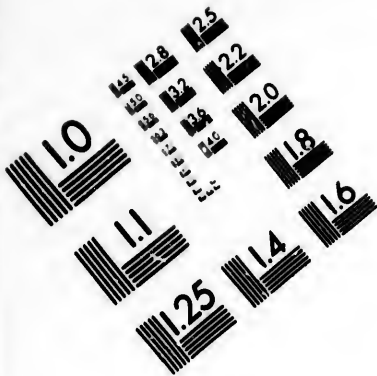
Gratitude was very probably the soil out which sprang the thoughts and emotions which conditioned the divine call requiring Abraham to make his great

sacrifice. His heart was, during these latter years, full of thanksgiving and praise. He had been greatly blessed. His substance had been much increased. His household had multiplied into a tribe. He had also received much spiritual illumination, had been given a revelation of God such as none other had before him received, and was made the recipient of redemption promises surpassing anything in the past. And as if to crown all, his son and heir was growing up by his side, who was at once the guarantee that the promises given should be fulfilled and as well the condition of their fulfilment. If any man of his day had cause for gratitude, Abraham was the man, and the intense spiritual activity of his life, consequent on the many revelations which he had received, would make him peculiarly sensitive to that and every other duty. What was more likely than that his feelings often suggested the necessity of making some mighty sacrifice that would relieve the tumult of his swelling heart! In his youthful days he had often seen his father's friends and acquaintances offer their deity their dearest children. During his wanderings in other lands, and now in the land which was his by promise, he had seen similar sacrifices on every hand. It may be that his passing acquaintances often spoke to him in the matter, and reminded him of what they and their fellow-worshippers were willing to do for their gods. It may be that he had even endured many a taunt because of his lack of devotion, and had the finger pointed to him as a man who cared more for himself and his household than for his God.

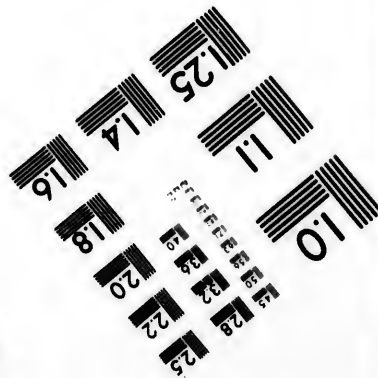
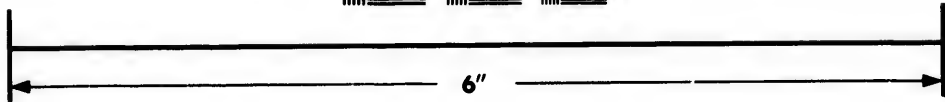
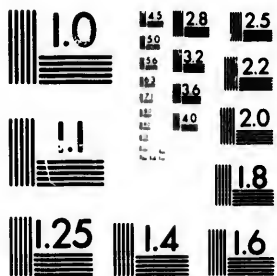
When Abraham's environment and condition are considered, it will not seem wonderful if often during these years the suggestion came to him that it was his duty to make the Lord an offering from his household. And especially since Isaac was growing up to manhood, and the father's heart was being bound to him by many a tie of affection and interest, would the thought prove ever more insinuating and urgent that the sacrifice of such a son would be an offering worthy of his God, an eloquent expression of his own religious emotions. The urging voice became now so loud and frequent that there was indeed danger lest Abraham should obey. Then it was that his gracious Lord took His servant in hand, and taught him once for all how children were to be sacrificed to the Lord, and what sort of victims were to be slain on His altar. In a vision of the night He commanded Abraham to make the sacrifice which he had been so often prompted to offer, the sacrifice of his only son, the son of his love, Isaac, and then by restraining at the last moment the patriarch's uplifted hand, taught him that all his past suggestions towards this sacrifice were misguided, that the Lord would not allow such offerings to be made on His altar, that the sacrifice which He required was the dedication of his child to a life of divine service.

The reason why God adopted this method of revealing His will may never be a matter of human knowledge. Two reasons, however, suggest themselves. One is, that Abraham would be more thoroughly convinced in this way than in any other.





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The incident was so intense, and so dramatic, and so much along the line of what he had often thought, and almost decided to follow, and in its issue so directly opposed, that he could never forget it nor mistake its significance. Had he heard a voice in the midst of his reasonings, and enticements, and conflicts of thought and emotions, informing him that his suggestions to sacrifice his son were not of God, he could easily, on subsequent occasions of similar conflict, have forgotten that such words had been ever addressed to him, or if he remembered them could easily have been tempted to suspect their source ; but when God restrained his uplifted hand just as he was about to perform what he had felt himself so often impeiled to do, there was left no room to doubt that all such thoughts and suggestions and inclinations were condemned of heaven, nor could he ever forget the lesson taught in such dramatic fashion. One of the most effective methods of teaching men the error of a course which they may be tempted to pursue, and about which they have their doubts, is to allow them to reach the verge of its adoption, then it may be that, as by a flash of lightning in the dark, the precipice over which it leads will be discovered to the sight, and all thought of its pursuit for ever banished from the life. That method God adopted in teaching Abraham the truth about human sacrifice, and in his case, at any rate, it proved most effective.

A second reason for adopting such a method in revealing God's will is, that it provided for the trial of Abraham's faith. The severest test to which the

patriarch's allegiance to Jehovah could be put, was to command him to give up Isaac for His sake, and the way that was taken to make known the truth about human sacrifice, applied that test. This twofold result, the proof to which it put the patriarch's faith, and the occasion that it afforded for throwing light upon such sacrifices, constituted the rationale of the command that Isaac should be offered in sacrifice. By it "God intended what actually happened, that Abraham's sacrifice should be complete, and that human sacrifice should receive a fatal blow" (Dods). "On the one hand, the great principles were proclaimed that mercy is better than sacrifice, and that the sacrifice of self is the highest and holiest offering that God can receive. On the other hand, the inhuman superstitions towards which the ancient ceremonial of sacrifice was perpetually tending, were condemned and cast out of the Church for ever" (Stanley).

It remains to ask why the revelation of this truth was made at this time. The answer is, that it was so vital that its knowledge among God's people could no longer be safely delayed. The horrible practice was becoming so general, and the silent, if not expressed advocacy of its numerous votaries so persuasive, that it was necessary at once to have the faithful entrenched against its inroads. If its black waters were not to submerge the whole race in their defiling flood, steps must needs be forthwith taken to prevent their farther rise. Human sacrifice is not one of the most primitive religious institutions. It represents the distortion

of a somewhat advanced stage in the development of religious thought. There was, therefore, probably no need in the earliest times of any divine instruction forbidding its practice. By Abraham's day the custom had become so universal that this was no longer the case. Moreover, God was with Abraham, beginning to prepare for Himself a people to be distinguished no less by their devotion than by the purity of their worship and life. To preserve this select community in its integrity, it was necessary from the very first to instruct them against this and all other enticing heathen abominations. At the right moment in the life of Abraham and the Church, God expressed His condemnation of human sacrifice.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### *NOAH'S SACRIFICE.*

(Gen. 8 : 20, 21.)

THIS is the only sacrifice recorded during the period of time between the sacrifice of Cain and Abel (Gen. 4 : 3, 4), and that offered by Abraham on his first arrival at Shechem (Gen. 12 : 7). Almost at the beginning, the sacrifice of Adam's two sons is met ; then, after a silence of long centuries the sacrifice of Noah is mentioned ; again, another long silence and Abraham's first recorded sacrifice appears. There will always be an uncertainty about dates, and a difficulty in computing time at such an early age in the world's history, but certainly not less than fifteen hundred years separated the sacrifice of Noah from that of Cain and Abel, and not much less than five hundred years the sacrifice of Abraham from that of Noah. In the prolonged period between Abel and Abraham, covering a length of time greater than that of the Christian era, the inspired record makes mention of only one sacrifice.

It would be a bold assumption to suppose from this, that after the Lord had indicated His acceptance of Abel and his offering, He was never again approached in a similar way until Noah had descended from the

ark, and that after that, for another four hundred years, no offering had been raised in His name. It is altogether incredible that such a condition of worship and religion would have continued for so long a period of time. Indeed, the probability rather is that throughout all these generations the smoke of sacrifice was continually ascending. It is not venturing much to think that after Abel had met such a gracious reception with his first sacrifice, he took advantage of every opportunity offered him to draw near to God by the same way, and that for the next two thousand years every devout patriarch, and many who were not devout, continued to pursue a like practice. In chapter 4:26 occur these words: "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord." The clause occurs so often in Genesis in connection with sacrificial worship (Gen. 13:4; 26:25; 35:7; 12:8; 21:33) that its presence here may be taken to indicate the prevalence of sacrifice in the antediluvian era. The earliest archæological remains always discover the offering of sacrifice in worship, and all that is known of primitive peoples justifies the opinion that the custom was almost as common during the centuries between Abel and Abraham as at any subsequent time. Noah's sacrifice could only have been one among unnumbered myriads that had been offered during these twenty centuries.

Here, then, is an arresting fact, that this sacrifice had been selected from among countless thousands and given a place in the inspired record which would retain its knowledge until the world's end. All the

other sacrifices of those two long millenniums were rejected, and only that of Noah deemed worthy a place on the sacred page. It is almost as arresting to know that the memory of the same service has been preserved by a tradition independent of Scripture. All the races of antiquity succeeded in retaining some memory of the flood, but the Chaldaean tradition has even preserved a somewhat full account of the sacrifice offered by Noah when he left the ark. The record reads: "Then I sent forth (the living creatures in the ark) to the four points of the compass; I offered sacrifices, I built an altar on the summit of the mountain. I set libation-vases seven by seven; beneath them I piled up reeds, cedarwood, and herbs. The gods smelt the savor, the gods smelt the sweet savor."

The offering had evidently made such a deep impression on its own day that the knowledge of it continued to live among the descendants of the rescued in the plains of Babylonia until it had been inscribed by one of their poets in the literature of the nation. If the inspired historian thought this sacrifice worthy a place in imperishable records, so evidently did also the profane poet-historians of Babylonia. The ordinance was evidently so impressive and so exceedingly important that it could not be ignored. The ten thousand other sacrifices that had been offered in the same generation could be forgotten without loss, but to overlook that of Noah, and to forget its significance, would be to make the world poorer for all time to come. There are incidents and events so



fruitful, so abounding in results, so big with destiny in the incoming years, that they cannot be allowed to pass from the memory without a consequent irreparable loss. To such a category belonged Noah's sacrifice, which historians, sacred and profane, have preserved for the common good.

What gave this memorable sacrifice so much importance was its significance for religion. It marked a distinct stage in the development of sacrifice, and was one of the strong forces that went to decide the issue of the religious crisis with which it was inseparably associated. It has thus permanently gathered about itself the interest of what gives insight into the growth of religious thought and institutions, and has afforded for all time an illustration of God's watchful care according to which He comes to the help of His people in the hour of their perplexity and doubt. Had unnumbered volumes been written in description of the other multitudinous sacrifices that had been offered between the days of Abel and Noah, human thought would not have been enriched by a single religious conception not otherwise possessed, nor would the way of God with men have any additional light thrown upon it. One observance would prove so much like another that their description would be but a wearisome, unprofitable monotony. Very probably there was some progress in the ritual observed during the period and some expansion in its religious thought, but everything of permanent value in the development became embodied in Noah's sacrifice, which marked the conclusion of the old

order and the opening of the new. Given the sacrifice of Cain and Abel at the beginning of the period, and that of Noah at its close, and all that was of importance in the sacrificial ordinances of all these centuries is known as well as if a library had been written and preserved containing descriptions of the ten thousand other occasions in which victims had been offered during the same time. The method of inspiration in the compilation of Scripture has been to record nothing that does not increase knowledge of God's dealings with men, that does not throw additional light on the working out in history of God's purpose in redemption. Noah's sacrifice met this condition, it did illustrate God's ways with men, did show an advance towards the realization of God's redemptive purpose, did have in it something new of deep religious significance, and was accordingly given a place in the inspired volume. Other sacrifices served well the men who offered them and met the need of their own time, but they had no light for other peoples and other days, and were consequently allowed to disappear.

One thing that appears for the first time in Scripture with Noah's sacrifice, is the altar on which the offering was presented. It would not be safe to infer from the silence of the preceding narrative that an altar had never before been erected for the purpose of sacrifice. It is quite possible that some of the antediluvian patriarchs had adopted such an expedient to increase the interest and convenience of their sacrificial services (Gen. 4: 26). Cain and Abel did

not do so in connection with their offerings, at least it is not said that they did (Gen. 4 : 4-6), but with the growing enterprise of succeeding generations some may have chanced on such an addition to the impressiveness of their worship. In any case, its erection was not at first regarded as indispensable. It was only with Noah's sacrifice that the Lord added His sanction and appropriated the altar for all time as a necessary condition of His sacrificial worship. If in earlier days men threw up their pile of earth and stone as a sacred elevation upon which they could offer their gifts to advantage, they must have done so without the happy consciousness that their God had so decreed. It may be very possible to receive benefit from a religious accessory that has been adopted on one's own initiative, but it greatly increases the comfort and profit in its use if an explicit divine sanction has been received. Faithful men who raised their altar after Noah's sacrifice had been offered, would do so with much more advantage and enjoyment than could those who may have done so in previous generations. Abraham and Isaac and Jacob could have the serene confidence, as they prepared for their sacrifice at their successive encampments, that they were proceeding in God's worship in a way that He had approved ; and how exhilarating that confidence would be, every devout soul can understand.

The intention of the altar was the same as that of the "high place." It was a sacred elevation upon which the offerer could raise his offering nearer God

and heaven. According to Hebrew thought, God dwelt on high. He inhabits "The high and holy place" (Isa. 57 : 15), He "Sitteth in the heavens" (Ps. 2 : 4), "His glory is above the heavens" (Ps. 113 : 4), and He is the "God of heaven" (Neh. 1 : 4 ; 2 : 4). If He condescends to visit the earth He makes Himself known on its lofty mountains, on Sinai (Ex. 19 : 20 ; Neh. 9 : 13 ; Judges 5 : 5), and on Zion (Ps. 2 : 6 ; 132 : 13 ; Isa. 24 : 23). Even the heathen neighbors of Israel had learned of the exalted position in which the Lord was thought to dwell, but they foolishly inferred from this that His power would not be elsewhere felt (1 Kings 20 : 23). Because God had thus fixed His throne in the heavens, the devout Hebrew, longing to make the closest possible approach and present his gifts in the sacred presence, raised his altars and ascended his high places.

This interpretation finds confirmation and illustration in the religious customs of other peoples who were wont to direct their sacrifice towards the supposed dwelling place of their deity. In offering to their River the Trojans "Among his eddies threw whole-hoofed horses down alive" (Homer II., 21), and the Egyptians cast into its stream their victims offered to the Nile. "The Greeks and Romans offered to the upper gods on high, to the terrestrial gods on low altars, and to the infernal deities on grates or in pits" (Kalisch). The huge altar mounds of Babylonia were intended for the gods that dwelt in the heavens. One of these was Bel, the sun-god, who was worshipped at Borsippa on an altar six hundred feet

high, and at Babylon proper on an altar that is still represented by a vast mound rising one hundred and forty feet above the plain. Such huge structures were nothing more than a provision made to ascend towards the dwelling-place of the gods. The tower of Babel mentioned in Genesis 11 : 9, probably represents a misguided effort of this sort.

Of like import is the fact that with the crudest forms of natural religion, altars were quite rare. The ancient Scythians had an altar for Mars, but for none of their other deities (Her. 4 : 59), and the condition was not very different among other primitive peoples. The conception prevailed that the gods had their dwelling in groves, and stones, and fountains, and other natural objects, and would consequently be best served by placing the sacrifices intended for them, not on some altar or high place, but on a convenient lower level. Indeed, it may be said that primitive religious thought everywhere illustrates and confirms the opinion expressed at the head of this paragraph, that the Hebrews sacrificed on altars and high places because it was believed that God transcended the earth, and had fixed His throne in the heavens. With a still further growth in religious thought, the altar became only a sacred place where God met His people and accepted their sacrifice, but originally the elevation was the chief consideration.

The opinion has been quite freely expressed that the altar is first mentioned in connection with Noah's sacrifice, because it was considered that before the devastation of the flood, God dwelt on earth in the

paradise of Eden. It is claimed that "The sons of Adam had built no altar for their offerings, because God was still present on the earth in paradise, so that they could turn their offerings and hearts towards that abode. But with the flood God had swept paradise away, withdrawn the place of His presence, and set up His throne in heaven, from which He would henceforth reveal Himself unto man" (Delitzsch). "The Lord is now on high, having swept away the garden and withdrawn His visible presence at the same time from the earth. The altar is, therefore, erected to point towards His dwelling-place on high" (Murphy). Be this view true or false, there can be no doubt that the presence of the altar represented an advance in religious ideas. In the Christian dispensation, when the reverence for places and times have given place to a condition in which the true worshipper can offer his spiritual sacrifices everywhere and anywhere, the only altar that is needed is seclusion from the maddening din of life that makes it easier to lift heart and mind into the sphere of communion with God. In the youth of the race, when the sensibilities dominated life, it was otherwise; then symbols were necessary, and the use of the altar was an indication that the age when God was thought as dwelling upon earth had been outgrown.

Another new feature in this sacrifice was the discrimination between the ceremonially clean and unclean observed in selecting victims for the altar. The distinction itself was not a new one. Men were wont to observe it in their estimate of animal life

before the waters of the flood swept over the world (7 : 2, 8). Indeed, considering what the underlying principle of classification was, a beginning must have been made almost at the first in the process of listing life under these two categories. It is even very probable that the distinction was instinctively made at a very early period in connection with sacrifice. Some have seen such an intention in the number of clean animals brought into the ark, the seventh of each kind, so it was supposed, having been intended for sacrifice, but the fact that the original has seven pairs instead of the simple seven, makes it necessary to reject such an interpretation. In Abel's sacrifice the distinction was observed, though probably more from instinct and convenience than from deliberate and intelligent choice. His flock represented the only possession which he had at hand; besides, he must have felt that there was a fitness in offering victims of that sort almost more than any other. In the sacrifice of Noah the instinct became embodied in a deliberate and purposeful choice. He offered clean victims, and only clean, because he had the conviction that so the divine will disposed. The cordial reception given the sacrifice attached the divine sanction to his decision as well as to every other important advance made in his sacrifice.

This addition also to the law of sacrifice indicated an advance in religious thought. It manifested an appreciation of the divine excellency that deemed it fitting to select the most attractive victims for His sacrifice. A low conception of God would prompt an

offering of what first came to hand, without considering whether it was congruous to the object in view. A deliberate selection, on the other hand, only of offerings with which could be associated the worshipper's most refined and elevated thought, manifested a growing apprehension of the divine worthiness. Victims characterized by what was repellent, could not evoke what was best in the thought and desire of those who offered them, and their offering would indicate the absence of the high conception which associates with God only what is highest in man. When, therefore, Noah came to the deliberate decision that only victims ceremonially clean should be laid upon the altar, he manifested a very decided consciousness of the divine excellency. One may go further and say that his deliberate judgment in the case manifested an apprehension of God's moral excellency. A reverence such as Noah's conduct in this regard made to appear, can only be permanently evoked by moral characteristics. For whatever temporary impression other attributes may make, only moral qualities can continue to command the reverence that seeks to render acceptable service.

It is certainly true that with God every one of His creatures is good and that nothing is despised. His animals, clean and unclean, are alike dear. It is equally true that a right conception of God will recognize His essential indifference to the distinctions which men make, and the preferences which they show in reference to His lower animate nature. While acknowledging all this, it must nevertheless be recog-



nized that there are forms of life that do not gather about them man's most sensitive and attractive thought and emotions, and consequently are unfit to become a medium of divine worship. The Divine Spirit recognized this when He sanctioned the distinction made between "clean" and "unclean," and excluded the latter from acceptable victims. To sacrifice animals that were repellent and loathsome, would be to confess that the worship of God did not engage what was most pure and most attractive in man's complex nature, and such a confession would imply a low idea of God.

The well-known term, burnt offering, appears here for the first time. Noah's sacrifice is the first burnt offering mentioned in Scripture. This would not justify the inference that that best known of Old Testament ordinances was instituted at this time as something entirely new. The distinctive feature of the burnt offering was the consumption in fire of the entire victim offered, and it is extremely improbable that sacrifices had been offered for nearly twenty centuries without the practice of burning, which afterwards became so common, having been to some extent adopted. It is occasionally met among the sacrificial rites of very primitive peoples, and it would be thoroughly unwarranted to assume that it was an unknown practice in the ages before the flood. What we have in Noah's burnt offering is an explicit discrimination made between this and all other sacrifices, and a designating name coined or appropriated by which it was to be known in all time to come. There

is, moreover, attached the seal of divine approval which went to distinguish the burnt offering from that time forward as one of the sacrifices acceptable to God.

It was fitting that the altar and the burnt offering should have been introduced simultaneously into the sacred narrative. They belonged to the same order of religious ideas, would probably have originated about the same time, and consequently would be very fittingly made to appear for the first time in Scripture in connection with the same sacrifice. In its original significance the burnt offering, like the altar, intimated that God was thought of as having made the heavens the place of His abode. The sacrificial victim was by the burning transformed into an ethereal, immaterial condition in which it could ascend heavenwards, and this was accomplished because the deity was supposed to have there taken up His abode. While He was still regarded as dwelling on earth, there would have been no advantage in causing the sacrifice to ascend in the pillar of flame and smoke, but once He was conceived as dwelling on high, such a course would appear desirable.

Then, too, the burnt offering, like the altar, indicated that God was no longer regarded as physical, but as spiritual. Dwelling far above the earth in the immaterial regions beyond, as both the altar and the burnt offering implied, He must be henceforth regarded as an immaterial power. Moreover, in another direction, the burnt offering intimated that God was not a physical being. While religious thought was in its crudest form, the deity was supposed to enjoy the

offering in a literal sense. He was supposed to be physical like his worshippers, and like them to have partaken of the sacrifice. As soon, however, as he began to be thought an immaterial power, even though not yet regarded as altogether transcendent and spiritual, it was deemed desirable for his enjoyment to convert his portion of the offering by fire into a less tangible condition than would be adapted to meet the needs of physical beings. Hence, the burnt offering in its very earliest stages indicated a growing consciousness of the divine spirituality and transcendency.

It is not likely that the Hebrews ever passed through this course of religious development; certainly the best of them did not. There were always among them, from the very beginning, those who apprehended that their God was spiritual and supernatural. But that the burnt offering in such ways marked a more advanced stage in religious thought, and that its presence in Noah's sacrifice indicated such a stage, cannot be denied.

The burnt offering, as was stated in dealing with that ordinance, has been called the sacrifice of worship. Noah's burnt offering, almost more than any other, might well be so designated. It had nothing of the specific purpose and symbolism to which that offering became confined in the Mosaic law. It afforded, and was intended to afford, expression to all the religious thoughts and emotions to which the occasion gave rise. In it the redeemed company worshipped their God and Saviour. A mighty deliverance had been

wrought, and for this mercy vouchsafed the sacrifice offered would be an expression of thanks.

The ark, and its large and costly freight, had been safely guided through the tumult of great waters, and once more all were in the enjoyment of liberty and security under the blue of heaven. God had caused the winds and the waves to obey His will, and Noah and his household had been saved. Through many long days and nights of weariness and doubt, when all nature, earth and sky seemed bent on their destruction, they had all been preserved by His good providence. Never was gratitude more in keeping than on the slopes of Ararat, when happy life in the open was again resumed ; and when Noah built his altar and slaughtered his victims, gratitude was one of the impelling motives.

Nor can it be supposed that the confession of sin and the desire for atonement were absent. Noah had been given an object lesson on the evil of sin, such as no other man in his day had received. He knew the meaning of the flood, and he had seen a civilization, the growth of centuries, brought to nought, because of wrong-doing. He could now, as never before, realize what the infliction was, as from his elevated position he looked upon the devastation that had been wrought. On every hand he could see tokens that destruction and death had made havoc in the world's life and comeliness. Where once were fertile fields and plains, and the happy hum of myriad forms of life, there were now but shapeless heaps and undisturbed desolation. The plunder of field and forest, village and farmstead,

town and country, were strewn about a world which had been forced to reverse its progress and retire towards its original chaos. The forms of warlike men and comely matrons, of stalwart youth and decrepid age, added their horror to the scene, or were mercifully buried from sight under the accumulated deposit of the retreating waters. Never was human heart saddened by a sorer vision. Well might Noah pray to be delivered from the sin that caused such ruin. And conscious as he must have been, that his own life was not spotless, an awakened conscience might demand that his burnt offering be presented no less a covering from guilt than an expression of thanksgiving. If praise for so merciful a deliverance had fittingly the chiefest place, confession of unworthiness made all the more manifest in the light of so signal a favor could not wisely have been excluded. The condition of Noah's household required a sacrifice that would atone, as well as convey thanksgiving.

Perhaps almost more than anything else was Noah's burnt offering a medium of supplication. This was to a large extent true of all the patriarchal sacrifices. The frequency with which the phrase, "called upon the name of the Lord," is associated with the altar, is evidence of this. When Abraham and Isaac are said to have built an altar, and to have called upon the name of the Lord (Gen. 12 : 7 ; 13 : 4 ; 26 : 25), it is implied that the burnt offerings which they sacrificed, were a medium of supplication as well as of other religious activities. Likewise, it may be inferred that when Noah offered his burnt offering,

the ordinance proved itself to be a means of supplication no less than of praise and confession.

Nor was the occasion for supplication wanting. The rescued patriarch, however much moved to thanksgiving because of God's mercy he would have been, must have felt himself very helpless and alone, and as dependent as ever on his divine Saviour. The scene that broke upon his view as he stepped down from the ark, could not have failed to cause a feeling of infinite sadness and hesitancy, and an irresistible longing to throw himself upon the inexhaustible resourcefulness of his Lord. He saw so much of greatness cast down, and so much of animation made desolate, that he must have felt impelled to seek the help and the fellowship that never failed. When he went into the ark he left behind him a busy world, bent on its own interests and pleasures, children playing in the streets, men and women hastily pursuing their own ends; when once more he made his way into the open there was not a sign of life to be seen, not a face or voice to greet him. The great busy world had been converted into an awful desolation. The Babylonian tradition has preserved some record of Noah's feelings when, through the window of the ark, he looked out upon the overwhelming waters. It puts these words upon his lips: "I beheld the deep and uttered a cry, for the whole of mankind was turned to clay; like the trunk of trees did the bodies float. I opened the window and the light fell upon my face; I stooped and sat down weeping; over my face ran my tears." That this is a true description of

life in the ark one instinctively feels, but that the grief was in any measure relieved when the ark was for ever left behind, one can hardly suppose. The sight of the great wide world, one awful lifeless ruin, must have made Noah feel sadder, and weaker, and more solitary than ever. What could he do in such circumstances but call upon the name of the Lord! What would the law of self-preservation suggest than throw himself into the arms of divine mercy! One household in all the lonely earth could do little else than supplicate the omnipotent and omnipresent Father of all. Noah's condition would cause him to make his sacrifice a medium of supplication.

All true worship involves consecration. The essence of worship is communion, and one side of communion is consecration. Noah's offering, therefore, without doubt signified something of that which the burnt offering was afterwards intended to symbolize and secure. In it he and his household consecrated themselves unto God. Their solitary, helpless condition would constrain them to such a step, and so would their knowledge of the past. Noah, a preacher of righteousness as he was (2 Pet. 2 : 5), knew that the fault of his contemporaries had been their independence upon God. They had shaped their life and conduct as if the supreme authority had been in their own hands; they had followed the imaginations of their own hearts and pursued their own lawless desires as if there was no other standard of action given among men. God was not in all their thoughts. They tried to live as if He were not.

The flood discovered the madness of such a purpose. Noah saw with his own eyes the awful ruin that overwhelms such a course, and he was determined to escape it. At the beginning of his new life he did what his contemporaries had failed to do: he consecrated himself and his household to God. In the first sacrifice which he offered after the revelation made by the flood, he gave himself up a living sacrifice to the service of God. He and his had been mercifully preserved, and now they would live for Him who had done so much for them. So the first-mentioned burnt offering was in part a prophecy of what all burnt offerings were afterwards to become.

“And the Lord smelled the sweet savor; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake, for that the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease” (Gen. 8: 21, 22. By this intimation Noah was reassured. The Lord had accepted his dedication, had listened to his supplication, had “covered” his sin, and had responded to his thanksgiving. He had accepted Noah's sacrifice and himself and household therewith. There was now no reason to fear. The earth would not again be overtaken by a flood. Nature would pursue her easy course of summer and winter, day and night, rain and sunshine. Noah and his family might resume their old routine of labor and repose



without doubt or hesitation. Such an assurance must have been great relief. The awful calamity must have made the survivors timid in the extreme. Their fear would see a flood in every thundercloud and some new dread at every turn of the road. They were like strangers in a strange land, who knew the laws of neither earth nor sky, and suspected that every force was ruled by cruel caprice. They could be sure of nothing, could trust nothing. The flood breaking from the earth beneath and pouring down from every cloud, had put their faith to confusion in all that lay below and all that rose above. God's intimation restored the old faith and put their timid fears to flight. Again they could rest like men who believed in Nature's law rather than in her wild caprice. The goodness of God would continue to rule, and they would be preserved from harm.

The acceptance of the sacrifice did more than confound these physical fears. It laid again a sure foundation for worship, and revealed anew the way of access to God. It showed that He could be still approached in sacrifice as in former days. By the response given to Noah's sacrifice the old gospel was reaffirmed, that those who came to God with their devoutly offered gifts, would be received and blessed. The way of salvation, and reconciliation, and pardon, and peace, and help, and care, was to be the same in the future as in the past. The awful outbreak of judgment was only for a moment. God continued to maintain His gracious attitude towards man, and His means of grace were still the same. The flood must

have thrown Noah's religious ideas into utter disorder. He had seen mankind destroyed at a stroke and only his own household spared. He knew that sin had been the cause, but that did not make clear what the future would be. The question still remained unanswered as to God's purpose with himself. Was he to have free access to the Most High, or was he to be cut adrift and allowed to battle with the storms of life dependent on his own resources? Or if he was to live in the fellowship of God, how was that fellowship to be preserved? The former way of approach was by sacrifice, but worship by sacrifice seemed to have proved a failure. For generations he had seen the smoke and flame ascend from altar and high place; century after century he had seen victims slain without number, and men depart rejoicing because of faith in the offering which they had made. But the flood would appear to discredit all such worship; it did not avail in the hour of need. What, then, would be God's way of approach in the future. If not sacrifice, what else? The effect of Noah's sacrifice was to settle all such doubts, and to answer all such questionings. God had accepted the offering made, and thus revealed that He was still waiting to be gracious, and would impart His grace to those who devoutly brought Him their victims slain. The Gospel of the grace of God which was first proclaimed at the gate of the lost paradise, was again proclaimed at the doors of the ark. The ordinance of sacrifice had not proved a failure. The former civilization had perished, not because of inherent defects in the institutions that

God had appointed as the accessories of His worship, but because men did not observe the spirit in which they were to be employed. God had ordained sacrifice as a way of access at the first, and He would continue its use in the future. This the response to Noah's sacrifice revealed.

And this, one ventures to think, was by far the most important feature of the offering. To register the changes in the ritual of sacrifice, showing its course of development, was important. It was also important to reassure Noah and his household in their new and trying physical circumstances, but infinitely more important it was to know that God was to continue His gracious attitude towards men, and that He was to be found of those that sought Him by means of the ordinance which He had originally sanctioned. Humanity was again launched upon life, it was again starting out on its career, it was anew beginning to shape its destiny. By the response to Noah's sacrifice it was made known that God was with them and could be met in sacrifice. The revelation was indeed a great and timely gospel. Noah may be thought to have offered his sacrifice as a sort of experiment, not knowing what the result would be. In any case the issue must have surpassed his highest expectation.

The first recorded burnt offering was unique in the diversity of its victims, having included all animals and birds ceremonially clean. By the Mosaic law worshippers were limited for their sacrifices to victims selected from among domestic animals ceremonially clean and from pigeons and doves among birds, but

Noah's sacrifice included victims from all animals and birds ceremonially clean. He laid upon the altar not only cattle, and sheep, and goats, but also harts, and antelopes, and wild goats, and chamois, and other such victims of the chase, and not only pigeons and doves, but numerous other clean birds and fowls (Deut. 14: 15). In the days of the kingdom there were sacrifices in which the victims were more numerous (2 Chron. 29: 21), but never was there a sacrifice in which their variety was so great. Noah's sacrifice was as large as the circumstances allowed him to make it. If he could, he would have offered more numerous victims. This spoke the intensity of his emotion, as the largeness of a spontaneous sacrifice always did. He was determined that if the number of the slain would give him power with God, he would offer as many as were at his disposal. If he failed in breaking the silence, it would be only after he had put forth his utmost effort. Noah's intensity was that of an earnest soul in a great crisis, and he had the reward that is never by heaven refused to such.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### *THE SACRIFICE OF CAIN AND ABEL.*

(Gen. 4 : 4-6).

THE description of this sacrifice is remarkable for its omissions. It makes mention of neither altar, nor spiral column of flame and smoke diffusing its "sweet savor," nor principle according to which victims were selected and rejected.

The reason for these silences may have been that all these usual accompaniments of sacrifice were absent. The offerers may have never seen an altar, and might not have been able to discover any advantage in its erection were one suggested. There may have been no fire made use of to consume the victim or any portion of it, and in such a case there could have been no diffused "sweet savor." A principle of selection and rejection was not required, for each offerer brought of what constituted his wealth, and what they had would have been accepted in its own place. And the reason why no mention is made of the shedding of blood may have been that the slaying was effected in some other way. What was recorded by the inspired narrator may have been a full account of the ritual observed on the occasion. There may

have been present neither altar nor fire, nor the shedding of blood.

In such a case the offering would belong to what is known from other sources to have been the most primitive form of sacrifice. All peoples of antiquity had their sacrificial institutions, and there is not lacking evidence that at first the associated observances were of the simplest kind. Even where ultimately an elaborate ritual had been developed, traces remain that show the later form to have grown from very rude beginnings.

At first the *altar* was dispensed with, and the offering simply deposited at a place supposed to be convenient to the deity. When an offering was made to the household gods, the material was placed upon the hearth or at the threshold, where the presiding spirits of the home were thought to dwell. A sacrifice intended for a deity inhabiting a fountain or a river was usually left at the brink or cast into the waters. In case a stone or a rock was supposed to be the dwelling-place, the blood was often poured out upon it and the other portions of the offering left hard by. An offering for the "shades" of the lower world was placed in caves and other openings in the earth supposed to lead to their habitation. When the Romans offered sacrifice to protect their children from the evil spirits of the night, they cast beyond the threshold the divided carcase of the victim (Ovid, *Fasti*, 6). When Numa offered sheep to the spirits of a certain fountain, he presumably left the carcasses at the water's brink, and the wine of the accompanying drink offering he

poured into goblets standing by (*id.*). In early days human sacrifices were offered the Tiber, and these were cast into the river (*id.* 5). At the founding of Rome a pit was dug, into which were thrown offerings for the spirits of the lower world, and over this was built an altar for the deities above (*id.*). The Egyptians had a tradition, "That they were the first to assign altars, images and temples to the gods" (Her. 2 : 4), and such a tradition implied an age when neither temple, nor image, nor altar was made use of. In ancient Arabia, "The gift of the worshipper or the blood of the sacrifice was simply poured out at a sacred place or smeared on a sacred stone" (Robertson Smith). Neither the Persians (Her. 1 : 32) nor the Scythians (Her. 4 : 59) erected altars to their gods.

In many instances *fire* was not made use of to consume the carcase or any portion of it. This was true in all the instances of Roman sacrifices just referred to. Paul indicates that the Greeks were wont to sell the flesh of their offerings (I Cor. 10 : 25-28). The Egyptians also did so in some cases, and when this was not possible, cast the carcase into the river (Her. 2 : 39). There was only one instance in which the Scythians burnt the flesh of their sacrifices (Her. 4 : 62), and the Persians never did so (Her. 1 . 32).

Instead of *bleeding* the victim to death as was ordinarily done, it was sometimes strangled (Her. 4 : 60) and sometimes cast alive into the fire. "The Syrians in Hierapolis threw the wreathed victim over the terrace in the court of the temple and killed it by the fall, while on some occasions . . . it was

suspended on trees within the precincts of the temple and burnt alive. Similarly at Patræ in Achia . . . pigs, stags and roes, wolves and bears, young and old, and every kind of eatable birds were cast alive into the flame" (Kalisch).

All this goes to show that neither altar, nor fire, nor the shedding of the blood, was inseparable from the idea of sacrifice in the earliest ages. Perhaps the following quotation will give a sufficiently clear conception of one of these primitive services: "When any one wishes to offer sacrifice to any one of these deities, he leads the victim to a clean spot and invokes the gods. . . . When he has cut the victim into small pieces, he strews under it a bed of trefoil, and then lays all the flesh upon it. . . . After having waited a short time, he that has sacrificed carries away the flesh and disposes of it as he sees fit" (Her. 1: 32). No altar, no fire, no shedding of blood mentioned.

It is evident that the sacrifice of Cain and Abel might be placed side by side with these primitive sacrifices and no marked difference be noticed, except, of course, in the deity to whom the offering was made. This is a fact of very considerable importance. For one thing it goes to defend the authenticity of early scripture narrative, and to show that it could not have been an ideal production of a late age. It derives the later elaborate sacrificial service from a rude and simple ordinance which could only meet the needs of its own primitive offerers. This, however, is not the origin that one would anticipate in the



description, were the narrative an ideal production, as is so frequently claimed.

The usual theory of those who dispute the historical character of Genesis and declare it an imaginative composition, is that it is the work of an author or authors who read the conditions and institutions of their own time into the distant past. Pretending or attempting to write a history of the beginning of things, they wrote instead what was virtually a history of their own time. According to this view, what one would discover in these earlier sections would be a record of the conditions in later times rather than a narrative giving the life's story of newly created man. Such a theory leaves no room for growth and development. It can have no place for primitive rites and institutions. When, therefore, the story of Genesis attributes to the men first introduced on the scene the very simplest conditions, and ascribes to them the use of the rudest institutions, it becomes evident that it could not have been produced in the manner just described. The traces of growth and development which the narrative contains, must in some way be explained away before the radical theory of its origin can be accepted. The very simple character of the sacrifices which Cain and Abel offered, and the gradual evolution of later sacrifices, have an unmistakable air of historicity which can be best explained by accepting the essential authenticity of the record. If these two sacrifices are taken just as they are described, without reading into them the ritual of later days, they will be found to bear on their face

the marks of their historicity. They will commend themselves as fact, and not fiction.

The two great classes of sacrifices are represented by these offerings. Cain offered a vegetable sacrifice and Abel an animal sacrifice; the one offered from the fruits of the ground, the other from the firstlings of his flock. This shows that the sacred narrative regards both sorts of offerings as having been presented almost from the beginning. In the line of the Hebrew patriarchs vegetable sacrifices afterwards fell into the background, if their offering was not altogether discontinued, but the record here shows that both kinds of offerings trace their origin back to the dawn of human history.

Here, again, Genesis shows the historical character of its narrative. The records and traditions of other peoples prove that both animal and vegetable sacrifices were offered side by side at the earliest period of which there is any knowledge. The earliest Greek literature, which describes life in the heroic age, discovers stranger and homeborn offering both sorts of sacrifice. Roman tradition has it that the first offerings made were of spelt and salt, and that animal sacrifice began with the offering of swine (Ovid, *Fasti*, I), but, certainly, from the founding of the ancient city the one offering was as frequent as the other. Local conditions might occasionally give one sacrifice priority over the other, but, as a rule, it may be said that among all peoples vegetable sacrifices were at least coeval with animal sacrifice (Kalisch). Such harmony between the narrative of Genesis and

the traditions and records of other peoples in regard to the simultaneous origin of both sorts of sacrifice, affords additional evidence that this story is the account of an actual occurrence rather than an ideal production. This conclusion is strengthened by consideration of the evident preference for animal sacrifice which prevailed among the Hebrews. The estimate of the relative worth of the two sacrifices being what it was, no writer of the theocratic age would give the vegetable offering the honor of an origin as early as that of animal sacrifice, were he not forced to do so by the facts in the case.

It is impossible to say whether the sacrifices of Cain and Abel were the first actually offered, or were only the first that have been recorded. Some have been disposed to regard them as absolutely the first. Delitzsch says: "The sacrifices offered by Adam's sons . . . were the first sacrifice of the human race." Others suppose that Adam offered sacrifice from the beginning, and see evidence of this in the animal skins in which he and Eve were clothed (Gen. 3: 21). The argument is that the animals from whose hide the garments were made, could not have been slain for food, as it is supposed that permission to eat flesh had not as yet been given, and the inference is that they must therefore have been slain in sacrifice. On this latter theory the sacrifices of Cain and Abel would only be two out of many that had been continuously offered from the day that man had been expelled from his paradise home. Either view has considerable to commend it, and probably the

question will ever remain open, and that it will never be possible to say whether these two sacrifices came first in the order of time or were only samples of numerous others that had been continuously offered.

The question is not very important from either a practical or doctrinal point of view. Whichever interpretation is adopted, the fact remains that these first recorded sacrifices mark an era in the history of the ordinance. If sacrifices had been continuously offered from the day that God prepared garments for a covering to the guilty pair, the institution entered upon a new stage with the sacrifice of Cain and Abel. It occupied for ever after a different position from what it previously did. If Adam had offered sacrifice before his sons had offered the sacrifices here described, and continued to do so afterwards, his subsequent offerings would have associated with them new ideas and feelings that would add to their effectiveness in realizing the purpose of such an institution. Whether or not the sacrifices of Cain and Abel were the first ever offered, there can be no doubt they were the first of the order that continued afterwards to be presented. They stood at the beginning of an unbroken series that came to an end only with the overthrow of the Hebrew theocracy. It is this unique position that gave these sacrifices such an important place among all sacrifices.

What distinguished these first recorded sacrifices from all that may have preceded, was the fact that God made known His acceptance of Abel's sacrifice, and of himself in his sacrifice. In some way that

could not be mistaken, which both Cain and Abel readily understood, He intimated His acceptance of Abel and his sacrifice (v. 4). By so doing He gave His sanction to the ordinance as an accessory of worship, and instituted it a medium by which He could be sought and found. A gospel was proclaimed to the effect that any approaching God through the offering of sacrifice, would have access granted them, and be made partakers of divine grace. The presence of the cherubim at the gate of paradise (3 : 24) indicated that notwithstanding the transgression that had been committed, God was still favorable towards man, and had preserved a door of access to Himself. In the reception given Abel's sacrifice it was made known how the access could be made a matter of experience ; the revelation was made that all could come by sacrifice to God and be made partakers of His blessing, be given to enjoy His reconciled favor and all therein involved.

This must have been indeed a gospel to men who had lost the blessedness of their original condition, and were living under distressing sense of alienation from God. It would be to them the beginning of a new life in which peace and joy was ever held within their reach. To have an ordinance appointed by which, notwithstanding the past, access to God could at any time be enjoyed, must have seemed a marvelous act of grace to men not long experienced in His lovingkindness and mercy. If sacrifice had formerly been offered, their power to soothe and bless must have been seriously interfered with by he

consciousness that the divine approval for such a means of worship had not been secured. Henceforward there would be no such disadvantage; every offerer might now be sure that he was making use of a divinely sanctioned ordinance in presenting his sacrifice, as he might also be fully persuaded that approaching God in this way his acceptance and blessing were secure. There was as little reason to doubt the saving power of sacrifice after Abel's experience of its efficacy as there would have been had the institution originated in a divine command.

The acceptance given Abel's sacrifice was the first revelation made on the efficacy of sacrifice. On many a subsequent occasion the ordinance was modified and elaborated in obedience to God's expressed will. The Mosaic law gives abundant illustration of transformation wrought in that way. What is met in Abel's sacrifice is not the modification of a previous institution, but either the establishment of an entirely new ordinance as a way of approach to God, or the appropriation by divine authority to a like use of an ordinance already established. In either case God is seen graciously approaching needy mankind and providing a medium by which He can impart His blessing. It is this fact that gave Abel's sacrifice such outstanding prominence and caused it to be given a place on the sacred page. In appearance it did not differ from sacrifices subsequently and, perhaps, previously offered. Its distinction was that God made use of it to reveal the gracious truth that all men, good or bad, wise or unwise, approaching Him by the offering of sacrifice,

would be cordially received and abundantly blessed. Abel's sacrifice occupied a place somewhat analogous to that afterwards occupied by Noah's burnt offering, only that in the one instance a new revelation was given, while in the other a former revelation was re-affirmed. Each was at the beginning of an era, and each revealed how God was to be approached during the era then begun.

The offering that Cain brought had also its own light to shed, had its own instruction to impart. In a way not indicated in the narrative, nor elsewhere in Scripture, it was intimated that Cain's sacrifice was rejected. As distinctly as it was known that Abel's sacrifice had been accepted, so distinctly was it known that Cain and his sacrifice were rejected. He had drawn near hopefully and confidently, bringing his gifts with him, but he departed disconsolately, knowing that he had not prevailed. By his experience it was made known that not every sacrifice was acceptable with God, but only such as had been offered by Abel. The revelation was made for all time that all who would present offerings such as Abel brought, would be received and blessed, but that those sacrificing as Cain did would find no favor. Cain's sacrifice had thus its own negative revelation to make, only less important than that made by Abel's. By it men everywhere were put on their guard against bringing unacceptable sacrifice, lest they be sorely disappointed in the result.

In comparing these first sacrifices to discover why the one prevailed and the other did not, perhaps the

most arresting, and certainly the most important, difference discovered is in the disposition of the two brothers. Cain, after the reverse that he met, showed a spirit that was in itself sufficient to disqualify his offering. His conduct revealed a most unworthy character. For one thing, he became "very wroth, and his countenance fell" (v. 5). Had he been a devout man he would have concluded from his rejection that there must have been something wrong with himself or his sacrifice, and instead of becoming angry would have humbled himself, and have tried to discover and correct the defect wherever it lay. The right sort of faith would have understood that God was not like man to reject any sacrifice from caprice, without good cause. He does all things wisely and well, and tokens of either His favor or displeasure should be received with meekness and humility. A repulse only causes the childlike spirit to cast itself more passionately on the Father's wisdom and care. Cain's bitter feeling, his wrathful rebellion, in view of the check that his pleasure had received, showed that he exercised but little faith in the purpose and movements of his heavenly Father. One may do well to be angry with his fellows, for there is often cause; but he is at his worst who allows himself to quarrel with the disposals of God, for He is ever loving and just.

A like unworthiness shows itself in Cain's conduct towards the proposals of mercy that were made after his rejection. God did not mean to cast him off entirely when He refused his sacrifice. He only meant



to correct and make a better man of him. The offer of mercy was still extended. God was still waiting to be gracious. In spite of all the evil of his past, in spite of his present resentful mood, Cain was told that all might yet be put right. He was assured that if he did well he would still be accepted (v. 7). If he came to God as he should come, and brought the sacrifice that he should bring, he would be as graciously and beneficently treated as Abel was. God does not cast men off because of one sin, or because of a hundred sins. He continues to offer His grace, however marred and blackened the life may have become. All that He asks is, that men turn to Him from their wicked ways, and they will be received and blessed. Cain saw in the conduct of Abel what was expected of him, and the gracious offer made him was, that if he would do likewise the past would be forgotten and his future would be blessed. The angry man refused the offer, and revealed his character still more in doing so. It was bad enough to be angry because his sacrifice was not accepted; it was still worse to reject this new proposal so graciously made.

Nor was this all. He, in addition, ignored a timely warning as to his danger. He was given to see that if he did not do well, sin would be like a beast of prey (Gen. 49:9), crouching at his doorway eagerly anxious to rend and destroy. and to be kept under subjection only by living a faithful life. Anger would develop into cruel hate, and hate into murder and death. The ravening monster would, with the opportunity, assert its true nature, and tearing with merciless tooth and

claw, make of life an awful havoc. Cain, blind with passion, thinks the crouching creature a harmless companion, but God mercifully laid bare the wolfish heart and the tiger teeth and claws. Cain was faithfully warned, but he heeded not.

Neither the entreaty of beseeching mercy, nor loud voice of timely warning could turn the man from his stubborn life-destroying course. God's address to him "Is fraught with the strongest motives that can bear on the mind of man. It holds out acceptance to the wrong-doer if he will come with a broken heart and a corresponding expression of repentance before God, in the full faith that he can and will secure the ends of justice, so that he can have mercy on the penitent. At the same time, it points out with all clearness and faithfulness to a soul yet unpractised in the depths of iniquity, the insidious nature of sin, the proneness of a selfish heart to sin with a high hand, the tendency of a sinful temper, if persisted in, to engender a growing habit of aggravated crime which ends in the everlasting destruction of the soul. Nothing more than this can be done by argument or reason for the warning of a wrong-doer. From the mouth of the Almighty these words must have come with all the evidence and force they were capable of receiving" (Murphy).

And yet Cain was not moved. He had not the faith to appreciate the force of what God had spoken, and that lack of character and disposition had much to do with the rejection of his sacrifice. Nor will it avail to say that it was only after the marked preference shown his brother that these qualities were

laid bare. What the man was after he made his offering, that he was before. If he had not the disposition to trust God after he had been rejected, it was only because he was not wont previously to exercise obedient, submissive faith. It was otherwise with Abel. He had genuine faith that would subordinate self to God, and because of that faith his sacrifice was accepted (Heb. 11 : 4). As Cain's offering was ignored for want of right disposition towards God, so Abel's was accepted because the required disposition prevailed in his life.

In this it was made manifest that one of the conditions that must be met in acceptable sacrifice is a believing heart on the part of the offerer. In this service, as in every other, it holds true that it is impossible to please God if faith is wanting (Heb. 11 : 6). Sacrifice will not work mechanically for the good of the offerer. To be effective, it requires the co-operation of mind and heart. No means of grace will accomplish its purpose unless it finds intelligent response in those whom it proposes to affect. An offering, whatever its kind, whether it be material or spiritual, an animal offering or the fruit of the lips, is doubly vain unless it carries the inner life with it. It cannot influence for good the character of him who offers it, and it gives no satisfaction to God. It was only of such sacrifices the words were spoken : " I am full of the burnt offering of rams, and the fat of fed beasts ; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats " (Isa. 1 : 11). The Gospel revealed in Abel's sacrifice was not that men approach-

ing God in sacrifice were accepted and blessed, but that men offering their sacrifice with a believing heart were so favored. Faith was as necessary in order to receive benefit from the Old Testament sacrifice as it is to be blessed by the sacrifice of God's Son.

Besides the difference in the accompanying disposition, the sacrifices of Cain and Abel were also distinguished by their material. Cain offered what may be called a meal offering, but Abel an animal offering. This difference had also much to do with the rejection of the one and the acceptance of the other. Animal offerings were always deemed of more value than vegetable offerings. For one thing, let the victim be ever so small, it would cost more than would the little fruit or meal necessary for a sacrifice. The offerer, according to the Mosaic law, who could not secure even two turtledoves or two young pigeons for a sin offering, was expected to be able to provide the necessary meal (Lev. 5 : 11). Whatever the quality of his victims, Abel's offering was doubtless more costly than Cain's. Then, too, that which has life is always considered of greater worth than that which has it not. The life is ever more than meat, and the body than the raiment (Luke 12 : 23). The rudest intelligence even will have an undefined reverence for the animate that it does not feel towards the inanimate, and will be prepared to ascribe to it a value all its own. It may be that the difference cannot always be expressed in terms of the current coinage, but it will, nevertheless, be felt without fail. The living will always be recognized of more value than the dead. For this

reason Abel's sacrifice would have a prevailing virtue that his brother's could not have. On the principle that, other things being equal, the most costly sacrifice will be the most effective the animal sacrifice of the one would have an acceptableness that the vegetable offering of the other could not approach. It will not do to say that Cain offered from that which constituted his substance, as Abel did, and that consequently his offering was as costly to him as Abel's was to Abel. He should have felt the peculiar value of life and its power as a sacrifice, and should have secured victims by which to make his approach to the Lord.

Moreover, an animal sacrifice, apart from its costliness, was always considered more effective than that of grain. It was thought to have a prevailing virtue that the other did not have. Men did not depend on a meal offering in a critical moment. When Noah left the ark (Gen. 8 : 20), when Joshua took formal possession of Canaan (Josh. 8 : 31), when Saul was about being attacked by the Philistines (1 Sam. 13 : 9), when David would avert the Lord's judgment from Jerusalem (2 Sam. 24 : 24), when Solomon was about to assume the government (2 Chron. 1 : 6), it was on the animal offering that dependence was placed, as a means to prevail with God. Whether it was to make atonement for sin or to take advantage of their reconciliation with God, or to give full expression to the many-sided impulse to worship, this was the sacrifice to which resort was made. Men instinctively felt that it had a power with God that other sacrifices did not

have. Perhaps because of its costliness, more probably because of the mysterious worth of life, a peculiar virtue was ascribed to it that was not to any other. That Cain did not come under the power of this instinct, but allowed himself to offer a vegetable offering, indicated that he had not the earnestness to appreciate the seriousness of worship, and the gravity of his own condition. Abel, on the other hand, was sufficiently possessed by the occasion to be convinced that a life must be offered in sacrifice if he was to enjoy the favor of God. No other sacrifice would be of sufficient virtue to meet the needs that were felt to press.

Nor should the quality of the offering in either case be overlooked. Abel sacrificed the best victims that his flock could provide. He offered from its firstlings. It is not stated, on the other hand, that Cain offered the firstfruits of the field. He appears to have made use of what first came to hand, as if deeming anything good enough for the purpose of sacrifice. Abel gave his best to the Lord and was blessed in return. Cain made no selection, but gave what first arrested his attention, and was repulsed. The law of God has ever demanded the best to be had for His service, and the indifference that thinks anything sufficiently good for such a purpose, will ever be, like Cain, disappointed in the result.

The narrative contrasts the quality of the offerings still more. Not only did Abel select his victims from the firstlings, but from even the best of the firstlings. While Cain was ready to offer what came to hand,

Abel sifted even his firstlings and offered only their best. He was determined to make the most valuable sacrifice possible, and his self-denying eagerness met an abundant reward. This interpretation understands "the fatness" of the firstlings as their choicest samples, as the fatness of the wheat means the best quality of wheat (Ps. 81 : 16 ; 147 : 14). Others understand it differently. They take the fat as referring to the fatty portions of the victims which Abel sacrificed (Cave, Lange, Murphy, etc.), and they think of him as especially devoting to the Lord the most costly part of the offering, as the Mosaic law afterwards required. The other rendering is preferable, but the thought in either case is the same. Abel gave the most valuable offering that was at his disposal, and he accordingly prevailed.

Nor was the difference in costliness and quality the only distinction in the material of the two sacrifices that went to make the one so much more effective than the other. A more important distinction lay in the unique atoning virtue that pertains to the sacrifice of life. It became afterwards a law explicitly ordained in Israel, that life alone could atone for sin and secure pardon and reconciliation (Lev. 17 : 11), and this law was foreshadowed by God's attitude towards these first recorded sacrifices. Life had been forfeited because of wrong-doing (Gen. 2 : 17), and only by the sacrifice of a substituted life could redemption be enjoyed. This does not mean merely that only a sacrifice of life could express the deep contrition and penitence without which pardon is never granted ; but

much more, that only such a sacrifice could effect the objective atonement, upon the ground of which alone pardon and reconciliation can be secured. Cain's sacrifice did not fail simply because it did not and could not express his sense of sin and of the hopeless condition into which sin had brought him, but because from its nature as a material offering it could not cover his guilt. If it had been offered in view of sin, it could only assume the form of a compensation or fine, and no compensation or fine could secure absolution when the guilt incurred had forfeited life. Life alone can redeem the life which divine law has condemned to death.

In the response given the sacrifices of Cain and Abel, it may be said that the law and Gospel are seen side by side—the law in the intimation that sin can be atoned for only by the sacrifice of life, and the Gospel in the revelation that God had provided such an atoning sacrifice. Henceforth the conscience-smitten might draw near with their sacrifice of life, confidently believing that He who had accepted and blessed Abel would extend His grace to all who offered a like devout sacrifice. Their sacrifice would prove not only an expression of thanksgiving and prayer, but also, because of its atoning power, a medium of pardon and peace.

It will not do to say that Cain's vegetable sacrifice would have prevailed, had he offered it in faith. It is difficult to see in the narrative sufficient warrant for the statement. Faith prevails only when it rests on a true foundation. Faith in an error corrupts and



confounds, faith in an indefensible position only exposes to ruin, faith in an unworthy cause begets only disappointment and shame. If Cain's sacrifice was not in its nature what the occasion demanded, his offering it in faith would not have necessarily made it effective. The statement may lie nearer the truth, that had he intelligent faith, he would not have offered such a sacrifice. Had he insight into his moral and religious condition, such as clear-eyed faith would have given, he would probably have offered a like sacrifice to that of Abel. Like the others, he was an exile from his Father's home, and must have known something of the divine decree that disobedience would forfeit life. Had he the moral earnestness to consider all this, he would have come to some approximation of the truth that life alone can redeem life, and might have been prevented from offering his vain sacrifice. Abel had no more revelation of God's will in the matter than Cain had. Even those who hold that a divine command had been given requiring sacrifice, do not say that the command was first addressed to Abel. The only light that he had that his brother did not have, was that which is shed by a mind and heart morally in earnest, and anxious to be right in its relation to God, and that light was sufficient to guide him in making an acceptable sacrifice. The fact that Abel was a keeper of sheep doubtless had something to do with the selection of his offering; but it is not going too far to suppose that, even had he been a tiller of the ground as Cain was, the insight of his honest nature would have directed him to offer an animal sacrifice.

Even should the ground be taken that Cain's choice of material for his sacrifice was at the worst but a thoughtless blunder, there was no hardship in making use of his offering as a medium through which to reveal the truth that only the sacrifice of life can atone for sin and secure the enjoyment of peace and pardon. It was not for his inconsiderate sacrifice that he was condemned, but for his subsequent offensive demeanor. Had he been instructed by the cordial reception accorded Abel and his sacrifice, and proceeded forthwith to make a similar offering, he would have been just as abundantly blessed. God did not reject his sacrifice in anger, He rather did so to correct his faulty idea of sacrifice, and through him to teach succeeding generations. Had he the faith that trusts where it cannot understand, he would have so taken the rebuke that had been administered, and would have been for ever after a better and a humbler man. Faith never quarrels with the manifest decisions of God; it learns to discriminate between the judgments of earth and of heaven.

How God expressed His approval of Abel's sacrifice and His disapproval of Cain's is not stated. Some suppose that "There existed still a close intercourse between God and man; they learned the divine will immediately from Him; He spoke to them intelligibly" (Kalisch). The common opinion is that there was sent fire from heaven to consume Abel's sacrifice, while Cain's was ignored. Analogy is in favor of this interpretation. At other critical moments in the history of sacrifice, when a new era was about to open,

the divine sanction was given by a miraculous fire. This happened at the inauguration of sacrificial worship at the tabernacle (Lev. 9 : 24), and afterwards at the temple (2 Chron. 7 : 1), also when judgment was given in favor of Jehovah worship on the brows of Carmel (1 Kings 18 : 38), and on other occasions as well (Judges 6 : 21 ; 1 Chron. 21 : 26). From this it has been inferred, not without reason, that the acceptance of Abel's sacrifice was evidenced in a similar way. The question is not a very important one. The weighty matter is that in some way God did reveal His judgment in the case, and so made known to mankind at large that as many as came to Him through the sacrifice of life, which He had thus ordained, would be made to enjoy His grace. There was an outburst of gospel light on the occasion, clear and convincing, which will preserve in it a living interest until time is no more.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### *SACRIFICE OF CHRIST.*

“Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; wherefore it is necessary that this high priest also have somewhat to offer” (Heb. 8: 3).

CORRESPONDING to the sacrifice of the Old Testament is the sacrificial work of Christ. As there was a diversity of form in the one, so there is a variety of subordinate purpose dominating the other.

The multiplicity in the kind of sacrifice under the Levitical law was not the result of aimless impulses and uncontrolled caprice. Every form that the ordinance assumed, was intended to meet more effectively than otherwise could have been done some feature of the offerer's many-sided spiritual need. There was not a sacrifice in the whole complex system that did not have a corresponding want in human life. Christ's work overtakes completely the task of providing for the necessities that may arise in the consciousness, and in it there will be found something corresponding to every important sacrifice of the preceding dispensation. All the essential symbolism of the one will be realized in the other.

The work of redemption is a complex process.

Human life is the most complex of all known phenomena, and the work of redemption that meets it with help at every point where it moves towards its own fulfilment, cannot be less complex. All the wealth of language may be laid under tribute in the description of life, and much will still remain untold. Far less can the resources of thought and speech exhaust the significance of the salvation that takes hold of life at every side and makes of it the perfection and beauty it was intended to be. The most complete system of theology can at best be an approximation to the reality which it seeks to express by words and definitions. Christ may be described as a prophet, a priest, a king, a captain, a prince, a saviour, a redeemer, the son of God, the son of man, the lamb of God, a passover, an offering and a sacrifice, and still the half will not be told. One of the most serious misconceptions that can be formed, is that because one aspect of truth is known the whole is understood. In expounding the sacrificial work of Christ a satisfactory result can be attained only by interpreting it in terms of every important form of sacrifice. Even when examined with the help of this guiding principle, the conviction grows that an infinitude of significance lies beyond the reach of present comprehension. When thought and emotion have gained the farthest point to which devout effort can lead, there will be still seen an unexplored expanse stretching in advance, whose magnitude overcomes with awe.

Christ is explicitly said to offer Himself a trespass

offering. When in Isaiah He is said to make His soul an offering for sin (Isa. 53: 10), the meaning is that He offers Himself a trespass offering. The word made use of in the original Hebrew is the common designation for the trespass offering. The literal rendering would be: "When thou shalt make his soul a trespass offering, he shall see his seed."

The same is the thought in passages in the Old Testament in which the Saviour is described as a redeemer, and in the New Testament in which His work is spoken of as a redemption, and procuring remission from sin. The expressions: "I know that my redeemer liveth" (Job 19: 25), "A redeemer shall come to Zion" (Isa. 59: 20), "Their redeemer is strong, the Lord of hosts is his name" (Jer. 50: 34), "Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us . . . redemption" (1 Cor. 1: 30), "Until the redemption of the purchased possession" (Eph. 1: 14), "He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9: 12), "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26: 29), "To declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past" (Rom. 3: 25), and many others of the same form have this point of view. Of like significance is the Lord's own statement: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20: 28; Mark 10: 45). All of which goes to show that the conception of Christ offering Himself a trespass offering is quite prominent in both the Old and New Testaments.

The perfect obedience which He rendered in life and in death constituted Christ's trespass offering. From the day that He as a boy testified that He must be about His Father's business (Luke 2: 49), until He fulfilled His commission upon the cross, His life was one of perfect service. He could say in all truth that He did the things that were pleasing to the Father (John 8: 29), and that it was His meat to do the will of Him that sent Him (John 4: 34). He came down from heaven for the purpose of doing God's will (John 6: 38), and He was perfectly loyal to the undertaking. His death, even, was an act of filial obedience. He had received commandment of the Father to lay down His life for the sheep (John 10: 18), and in obedience to that command He died. No man took His life from Him, but He laid it down of Himself. He had power to lay it down and He had power to take it again (John 10: 18). It was absolutely at His own disposal, as it was at His Father's disposal, and in accordance with the Father's will, He laid it down upon the cross. This perfect obedience constituted His trespass offering, and by it He made satisfaction for the debt of sin, and secured absolution for His followers.

Scripture regards sin as a debt due to God. When the Lord put upon the lips of His disciples the prayer: "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Matt. 6: 12), He intimated that He looked upon sin as a debt. In the parable of the unmerciful servant (Matt. 18: 23-35) the same conception is met. That servant had incurred a very heavy indebtedness,

but his compassionate master forgave him (v. 27). Later on, the master rebuked the absolved servant for his heartlessness, and reminded him that he had forgiven "all that debt" (v. 32). He, moreover, commanded that the wretched man should be placed in the hands of the tormentors until the whole debt was paid (v. 34). In all this, sin is portrayed as a debt in which God is the creditor. The parable of the two debtors (Luke 7 : 41, 42) has the same point of view. The gratitude for pardon of one who felt himself a great sinner, is figured in the responding affection of a seriously involved debtor who had received full remission from his creditor. The man's sin is thus represented as a very burdensome debt. In one of his discussions with the Hebraizing Christians, Paul stated that those who were circumcised were "debtors to do the whole law" (Gal. 5 : 3). His reference in the case was to the ceremonial law, but the argument is quite conclusive that if violation of the ceremonial law would constitute an indebtedness for those who were under obligation to observe it, violation of the moral law, which is binding upon all men, may be so regarded in every case. What may be considered the negative side of this conception is found Rom. 8 : 12. There it is stated that men are not debtors to the flesh. If they refuse to obey its behests, their disobedience will not be charged against them. The implication is that all are debtors to the spirit, and will be treated as such if they do not obey its commands.

Man was made to serve and obey God perfectly



and unceasingly. It was intended that he should begin that service with awakening self-consciousness, and continue it to the end. So much is this the case, that when he has done his best it becomes him to say that he is an unprofitable servant, and has only done what it was his duty to do (Luke 17 : 10). With every sin God is disobeyed, and deprived of the service that is due, and so with every sin there is an incurring of debt. Every neglect of duty, every transgression of divine law, every misuse of ability, every sin of omission or commission, is an indebtedness, whatever else it may be. Every wrong that is inscribed in man's memory, appears in God's book of remembrance as a debt which has been incurred. And all this debt Christ, as the provided trespass offering, has paid. The service that man should render He has rendered. The obedience that was required He gave. By His perfect life and voluntary death He did what men were expected to do, and so secured absolution. He lived a perfect life, identified with our humanity; all the perfections of God became embodied in Him and were made a factor in human history. The result must have been of infinite advantage to all who came under His influence and associated themselves with His cause. By His righteousness there was enjoyed a remission of sins that are past (Rom. 3 : 25).

It is a law written large in Scripture and in God's providence over the world, that the righteousness of one goes to neutralize the sin of another, and avert impending judgment. The presence of ten righteous men would have delivered Sodom and Gomorrah from

the doom that pursued them (Gen. 18 : 32), nor could the work of judgment begin until the one righteous citizen was removed from harm's way (Gen. 19 : 22). David's faithful life was a protecting shield over Judah for long years after his death (2 Kings 8 : 19), and his descendants were saved from well-deserved destruction for many generations because of the righteousness that was found in him (1 Kings 11 : 36 ; 15 : 4 ; 2 Chron. 21 : 7). Hezekiah and the religious leaders of Jerusalem by their penitence beat back invading judgment for at least a generation, from the tottering kingdom of Judah (2 Chron. 32 : 26). When the three allied kings with their armies were about to perish in the desert where they had lost their way, deliverance was afforded for the sake of righteous Jehoshaphat. Elisha distinctly stated that were it not for the presence of that faithful man, the Lord would have ignored their distress (2 Kings 3 : 14). It was declared by Jeremiah (5 : 1) that if one man could be discovered in Jerusalem who did justly and sought the truth, the city would be pardoned for his sake. Through Ezekiel the Lord said : " I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it ; but I found none " (Ez. 22 : 30).

There is such a solidarity in families, and peoples, and kingdoms, such a community of life and its obligations, that the well-doing and right-living of one goes to decide the experience and destiny of another. As in the human body the health of some members goes to beat back death and decay after

other members have become disabled by disease, so in organized bodies of men, the moral worth of some delivers all from a judgment that would otherwise befall. With such a law extensively operating in human society, it could not be doubted that the faultless life of Christ would go to fill up the defects in the life of those closely identified with Him, and save them from the evil consequences that could not otherwise be averted. The inworking of the divine life and character into human history through His incarnation and ministry could not fail to pay something of the arrears into which mankind had fallen through the continued faithlessness of the service that had been rendered. It was only a fulfilment of one of the laws according to which God governs among men that the perfect obedience of Christ in His life and, voluntary death should be a trespass offering, making satisfaction for the debt of sin.

Christ offered Himself also as a sin offering. This in the New Testament is by far the most prominent feature of His sacrificial work. John the Baptist had it in view when he pointed to Christ and said: "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). It is met in Peter's epistles where it is written: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24), and, "Christ also suffered for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous" (1 Pet. 3:18). John had the sin offering in view when he said: "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7), and "He is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 2:2).

It is met more frequently in Paul than in any other of the inspired writers, thus: "Christ died for our sins" (1 Cor. 15 : 3), "He made him to be sin for us" (*i.e.*, a sin offering) (2 Cor. 5 : 21), "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin" (*i.e.*, for a sin offering) (Rom. 8 : 3). The Epistle to the Hebrews affords the fullest exposition of the Levitical sacrifice as fulfilled in Christ; there are found such statements as these: "At the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (9 : 26); "So Christ also having been once offered to bear the sins of many" (9 : 28); "When he had offered one sacrifice for sin, for ever sat down on the right hand of God" (10 : 12). Indeed, the New Testament passages are most numerous in which this conception finds expression. Isaiah 53 gives it the greatest prominence in the Old Testament: "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities" (v. 5); "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" (v. 6); He bare the sin of many" (v. 12). More explicitly was Christ a sin offering than He was a trespass offering.

As a sin offering He suffered and died because of sin. The Lord laid upon Him the iniquity of us all, and He agonized under the heavy load. He undertook to bear the consequences of sin, and as a result He died. The penalty that sanctions sin from the beginning is death, and because He incurred the guilt of sin it was necessary that he should die. In the trespass offering His death is regarded as an act of obedience, but in the sin offering as a passive

endurance. According to the trespass offering, He, by an act of will, laid down His life to pay the debt of sin. According to the sin offering, He passively endured the penal consequence of sin to make atonement for its guilt. For if sin was debt demanding satisfaction, it was also guilt demanding atonement.

The guilt of sin is its baneful property, because of which it excites God's anger, provokes His displeasure, incurs His condemnation, and sets in motion His penalty-inflicting justice. This is in Scripture by far its most prominent characteristic, as it is certainly its most alarming. It is sufficiently serious that sin should be a debt, unceasingly making demand for satisfaction, but it is unspeakably more serious that it involves guilt which arouses the divine displeasure and exposes to the penalty which unswerving justice inflicts. Here the graciousness of Christ as sin offering appears. His forfeited life, according to the conception of the Old Testament sacrifice, provides a covering for guilt, so that it can no longer provoke the divine displeasure, or what is the same, covers the penitent believer as far as he is sinful, and thus prevents pursuing justice from inflicting its penalty. A psalmist exultingly cried: "Blessed is the man whose sin is covered" (Ps. 32 : 1). In Christ the sin offering there is provided the needed covering by which the infinitely destructive consequences of sin are graciously turned away. Under its enveloping protection one can joyfully sing: "O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me" (Isa. 12 : 1).

The Old Testament conception of atonement develops itself in the New Testament into three related but distinct conceptions. These are redemption (Luke 2: 38; 21: 28; Rom. 3: 24; Eph. 1: 7; Heb. 9: 12, etc), reconciliation (Rom. 5: 10, 11; 2 Cor. 5: 18, 19; Col. 1: 21 etc.), and propitiation (Rom. 3: 25; Heb. 2: 17; 1 John 2: 2; 4: 10). Redemption means deliverance effected by the payment of a ransom. It regards the redeemed as having become entangled through their moral indebtedness, and as being set free by having the entangling debt paid. Reconciliation interweaves a double conception. On the one hand it describes God's auspicious attitude according to which "He lays aside his holy anger against our sins and receives us into his favor." On the other hand it designates the love and kindred affection awakened by God's grace in the heart, and which out-roots the former hostility entertained against Him (2 Cor. 5: 20). Propitiation exclusively indicates the reconciled attitude which God assumes in Christ. The relation of these three results to Christ's sacrificial work is that He effected redemption as trespass offering, and reconciliation and propitiation as sin offering.

The distinction that is sometimes made between reconciliation, when it refers to God's attitude of grace and propitiation, is that the former describes the gracious attitude as a fact, while the latter implies as well the means by which it was induced. When, for instance, it is said that "We were reconciled to God by the death of his son" (Rom. 5: 10), there is made

a simple statement of fact that Christ's death secured reconciliation, without indicating the way in which it accomplished that result. Again, when the statement is made "That God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses" (2 Cor. 5 : 19), it is not explained, either by the "reconciling" or by the context, how Christ prevents the imputation of sin. The word propitiation, on the other hand, is said to carry with it the idea that the reconciliation was effected by the offering of an appeasing sacrifice. The distinction may have been intelligently drawn, and yet the use of the term "propitiation," in the New Testament, hardly bears it out. In the instances where the term occurs, the context does not indicate how Christ's death wrought reconciliation, and if this is to be gathered from the statements made, the word "propitiation" must itself be supposed to carry that idea with it into the text. In at least one passage (Rom. 3 : 25) Christ is said to make propitiation "by His blood," but it is not explained how His blood brought about the propitiation.

The truth is that the New Testament does not labor at the task of making clear the manner in which Christ as sin offering secures reconciliation with God. It tells again and again and by many a mode of expression, that He has secured reconciliation, and peace, and pardon, but it does not explain so clearly how He did so. It declares with unwearied frequency that He accomplished the result by the shedding of His blood, by His suffering, by His death, but how the blood, and suffering, and death wrought towards

this end is not made so clear. The gospel of salvation is that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ (Rom. 8 : 1), that they have redemption through His blood (Col. 1 : 14), that His blood cleanses them from all sin (1 John 1 : 7), and secures their justification (Rom. 5 : 9), but the rationale of this life-saving, heart-comforting change is not made so plain. As in the Mosaic law the Israelite was assured that in the sin offering he could enjoy atonement and pardon without any serious attempt being made to show how this was to be accomplished, so in the New Testament the assurance is given that at the cross of Christ is found like great blessings without its being made so clear how such results are realized.

It is true enough that what is said in Scripture in regard to this ever-living question is not a bald statement of fact. When it is proclaimed that there is redemption in the blood of Christ, that men are reconciled to God by His death, that He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, that He bare our sins in His own body on the tree, exposition is made to the effect that Christ wrought His work of salvation by taking upon Him man's sin and suffering and dying under its load. To this extent Scripture does explain Christ's sacrificial work, but no further. Inquiring thought seeks beyond this, and asks how His suffering and dying for sin secures reconciliation and pardon, but to this no answer is given. Scripture satisfies itself with the blessed statement and fact, that because He died for sin reconciliation and pardon are found in Him, and to



that statement and fact it would have us cling, whether or not our understanding can carry us to a further explanation.

There are conditions in which the fullest knowledge is necessary for mental peace, and for this and other reasons, theories and philosophies are not to be despised, but the facts alone are indispensable, and it is fruitful mental discipline to learn to distinguish between fact and theory. The fact is that the thought of Christ dying a sacrifice for sin gives peace, and the power of a new life that testifies of pardon, and any difficulty that may be encountered in finding a satisfactory explanation should not be allowed to obscure the life-saving, peace-affording fact.

In seeking further explanation for the reconciling and pardoning virtue of Christ's sacrifice for sin, the most satisfactory beginning can be made from those passages in which He is said to be a sin-bearer, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2 : 24), "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Heb. 9 : 28), and with a different verbal expression and a somewhat different conception, "The Lamb of God which taketh away (margin, beareth) the sin of the world" (John 1 : 29).

To "bear sin" was a well-known Hebrew phrase, and expressed a well-known conception (Lev. 5 : 17 ; 7 : 18 ; Num. 5 : 31). It meant to endure the consequences of sin, or to suffer its penalty. Every Jew, and every reader of the Old Testament, would so understand the expression. When, therefore, Christ is said to bear the sin of others, the meaning can be

none other than that He endured its evil consequences, or suffered its penalty. In the natural order, each would be expected to bear the evil consequences of his own sin, but the gospel declaration of both the Old and New Testament is, that Christ interfered with this natural order, and took upon Himself these consequences. He had no sin of His own ; He was holy, harmless, and undefiled ; but He took upon Him the sin of others in the sense of enduring its penalty or consequence. In Him the innocent suffered for the guilty, and the guilty are set free.

This gospel statement gives expression to a law manifestly operating in human affairs. That the innocent suffer for the guilty is one of the most obvious facts of life. In many a home, and in every community and nation, it finds abundant illustration. Absolute individualism, in which every man bears his own burden, and enjoys all the fruit of his own faithfulness, is as unknown a condition as it would be undesirable. A wilful son wastes his strength and substance in pursuit of fugitive pleasure, and returns to linger until the end comes, in the shelter of the home whose honor he did so much to betray. An improvident citizen misuses his opportunities and misdirects his energies, and is at last cast a burden on the charity of the community. A reckless faction plunges the nation into an unjust and adverse war, but the consequent burden falls upon the whole body of the people. There is in every centre of population an unproductive minority whose labor adds nothing to the common store, and whose subsistence is an unceasing drain upon its resources.

In all such cases the law is exemplified that the innocent suffer for the guilty, and they, whose the sin is, escape what they deserve. Did the wasteful son endure the consequence of his folly, he would have finished his days in nakedness and hunger, and he was delivered from such a penalty only because an affectionate circle took the burden of his waywardness upon itself. The poor-house is not the natural goal to the course of the thriftless, it is rather the provision made by a charity that is willing to burden itself, and to suffer in order to deliver others from the consequences of their misconduct. The war party of the nation escape the result of their calamitous imprudence, only because the whole nation willingly or unwillingly takes the consequences upon itself. The unproductive portion of the population would speedily be cut off by want were it not that the majority willingly, or through necessity, take the burden of their support upon themselves. One of the most patent facts of life is the escape from the evil consequences of wrong-doing, because the innocent suffer for the guilty.

The result of any line of conduct is finite. Human understanding may not be able to give the result its measurement, but it nevertheless has its limits. When, therefore, the innocent are made to suffer for conduct not their own, the inevitable effect is that deliverance is afforded those whose the conduct is. The Christian doctrine of reconciliation and pardon through the sacrifice of Christ is only a wider sweep of this well-known law. When He bore the conse-

quences of sin, the gracious result could not fail to be the deliverance of those against whom the sin was chargeable. It was quite impossible that both He and they should suffer what the sin deserved. The wave that breaks itself upon the rock, cannot harm the ship anchored in the lee ; the blow that spends its force upon a second party, cannot harm the victim at whom it was aimed ; the burden that is shared by another, cannot press with all its weight on him to whom it originally belonged ; neither can the consequence of sin overtake the wrong-doer when Christ has undertaken to bear his sin for him.

Nor will it do to quarrel with this way of reconciliation and pardon, by declaring it unjust that the innocent suffer for the guilty. The principle enters into the natural government of mankind to no small extent. Without it the highest possible well-being of the race could not be secured, and it is vain to contend that it would be unjust to adopt it as a measure for securing redemption. One of the strangest phenomena of theological discussion is the confident repetition, generation after generation, of the statement that guilt cannot be imputed to the innocent, and that responsibility cannot be interchanged, when one of the most patent facts of life is that the innocent continuously do suffer for the guilty, and as a result the guilty find relief. It is vain to quarrel with obvious facts, it is an end to all theology and philosophy to do so, and the solidarity of the race makes it unavoidable that guilt should be imputed to the innocent, and that the transgressor, as a result, should

escape what his misconduct deserved. Substitutionary suffering is a fundamental law in nature, and there is no reason why it should not be a fundamental law in redemption.

It may be argued that the substitution in the one case is not analogous to that in the other, because in the natural sphere the transgressor does not escape all the evil consequences of his wrong-doing. Though the wilful son escapes in the sympathy and abundance of his father's house much of the infliction which his folly deserved, he does not escape all; the home which charity provides for the indigent does not deliver from all the penalty of improvidence; the faction that brings disaster upon the nation must suffer its own share of the loss endured; the non-producers in the community, though escaping want, endure privations that thrift and industry would avoid. The law of substitution in this natural sphere does not deliver from all the ill deserts of wrong-doing. But neither does it in the kingdom of grace. There are consequences of their sin that the most believing and most penitent cannot escape, and which they do not expect or hope to escape. The solemn consequences of which conscience speaks, and which it causes so much terror, are not all that Christ has accomplished, but not many a lesser infliction which must be endured, it may be until the end of the earthly course. The residue of penalty, from which the suffering of the substitute does not deliver in either case, only goes to increase the similarity in the operation of this great law in both the spheres of nature and of grace.

The evil consequences of sin which discover themselves in life, are exceedingly numerous and varied. Much of the sorrow, and suffering, and turmoil, and strife, that prevail on every hand, belong here. In the awful corruption that afflicted the Gentile world at the beginning of our era, Paul saw the punishment of earlier unfaithfulness (Rom. 1: 18), as also in the darkness and ignorance that had enshrouded the understanding (Eph. 4: 18), and the alienation from God that had blighted the life (Col. 1: 21). John regarded the unsusceptibility of the Jews to Christ's teaching as a punishment for their sins (John 12: 40), and, indeed, all the disabilities, religious, moral, and material, which at that time had so impoverished the nation, were only what had been long predicted as the outcome of their unfaithfulness. Like an all-pervading malady, sin has entered into every fibre of man's being, into every side of his nature, into every phase and relationship of life. Nothing in the condition of the individual or of society is in harmony with God's idea of manhood; everything has become dislocated and confused.

The Son of God, identifying Himself with all this disorder, naturally was made to suffer. His soul became burdened and tormented by the sorrow and affliction that poured in upon Him from every side. Any moral being, made a part of that organism called humanity, necessarily would suffer from its disarranged condition; but He, on account of His unique personality, must needs suffer to a unique degree. His all-embracing consciousness, coming into contact

with near and far, gathered upon itself the burden of the world's sin ; reaching back into the past, and forward into the future, and out upon the present, He carried on His heart the guilt and sorrow of all time ; He became the Lamb of God that beareth the sin of the world. It could not have been otherwise. He could not have become identified with humanity without bearing its load. A miracle greater than has been wrought, would be required, were He to pass through life in affluence and ease. To become man meant that He should endure the consequence of human faults and failures. This moral necessity would decree, and this meant relief elsewhere. In Him God took upon Himself the world's burden, and so wrought deliverance.

An expression that is very common in theological and religious productions, is that Christ endured the punishment of sin, was punished for sin. It is frequently met in popular homilies, as in more substantial theological treatises. Latterly its use has been somewhat discontinued, partly because it has been so easily misunderstood ; but in earlier days no phraseology was more freely employed. Rightly interpreted, the meaning simply is that Christ endured the consequence of sin. Every transgression lets loose a multitude of evils that pursue the wrong-doer and all whom he involves. These constitute the punishment of sin. The sorrow, the unrest, the anguish, the inability, the darkness, the alienation which sin causes, are its punishment ; and when Christ is said to endure punishment for sin, the understanding is that He was

affected by such evil consequences. The meaning is not that He was subjected to a positive penalty arbitrarily inflicted in a manner like to that in which human justice sanctions its laws. Nothing can be more foreign to the truth than to suppose that Christ was so punished. It is altogether a misrepresentation to say that God smote Him in His displeasure as an earthly executive smites the guilty. The usual divine punishment of sin arises as the effect does from the cause, and the punishment that Christ endured was the direful effect that issues from the sin of those with whom He was identified. Punishment in this sense of enduring sin's consequence, His incarnation made inevitable, and in this sense alone should the phrase be understood.

Scripture sums up the consequences of sin in the word "death." Such statements as: "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6: 23), "To be carnally minded is death" (Rom. 8: 6), "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2: 17), embrace much more than a physical change; they have in view all the evil consequences that sin, has introduced into life. "Any and every form of evil . . . which is inflicted as the punishment of sin, is comprehended under the word death" (Hodge). When Christ is said to die for our sin, the phrase has the same comprehensive meaning. It includes not only physical death, but all the consequences of sin that He endured in order to accomplish reconciliation. His death upon the cross had an infinitely wider comprehension than the ordinary separation between soul



and body. The heavy shadow that is cast upon His life throughout His ministry, and the horror with which He viewed its near approach as seen in Gethsemane, show that it must have involved some awful additional infliction, must have involved the contact of His soul with the world's sin, which grew ever more acute as the end approached, and as human hostility was discovering itself. It is impossible that the Lord would have been prostrated by the thought of an experience which many of His followers have since endured in perfect calm; an infinitely greater burden must have borne Him down.

Understood in this wide sense, Christ's death was inseparable from His incarnation. Having identified Himself with mankind, the organic unity of the race made it unavoidable that He should be a sharer in that death which is the wages of sin. Absolute individualism was impossible for Him as for others, unless a mighty miracle continuous in its operation had been wrought for such a purpose. Even the physical death that He endured, was the natural result of His being sent in the likeness of sinful flesh (Rom. 8: 3). The darkness, and ignorance, and hostility to God, with which human sinfulness had been punished, would naturally pursue the manifested excellency of the incarnate Son until it accomplished His overthrow. The disorder and strife with which sin filled the world about Him, would not be exhausted until it had wrought its worst against Him. It has been sometimes said that the blessedness experienced on the Mount of Transfiguration was the

natural completion of Christ's earthly life. This were true had the world been what it was intended to be, had human life not been blinded and warped in its judgment by sin; but, the conditions being what they were, the truth rather is that Gethsemane and the cross were its natural completion. The life-destroying consequences of sin would not be exhausted until He died upon the tree.

A phrase which Scripture very frequently employs to describe the consequences of sin, is "the wrath of God." The evils which follow wrong-doing are an expression of divine wrath. Paul regarded the moral and religious corruption with which the Gentile world had been punished, a revelation of God's wrath (Rom. 1 : 18), and he speaks of the evil that is to overtake sin in the future, as "the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1 : 10). The book of Revelation calls the day of judgment upon the ungodly "the great day of his wrath" (Rev. 6 : 17). The hiding of God's face from His people for their sins is said to be in His wrath (Isa. 54 : 8). The death that came in the wilderness on the generation that had been delivered from Egypt was the smiting of God's wrath (Heb. 3 : 11, etc.), so was the bondage in Babylon with which the nation was punished centuries after (Isa. 60 : 10). Many of the lesser judgments that befell Israel were similarly regarded, such as the defeat because of Achan's sin (Josh. 22 : 20), the plague visitations because of rebellion against Moses (Num. 16 : 46), and the lusting for animal food (Num. 11 : 33), and the alliance with Moab (Num. 25 : 3-9).

A psalmist considers the judgments that came upon the Egyptians the fierceness of the Lord's anger, wrath and indignation (78 : 49), and another psalmist defines all the ills of life as God's wrath (90 : 9).

Such being the significance attached to the phrase, there can be no well-grounded exception taken to the usage formerly so common, according to which Christ in His sacrifice was said to endure God's wrath. It is not so put in Scripture; nowhere is it said in the New Testament that Christ endured the divine displeasure because of sin, but the thought which such a statement expresses is manifestly there. When that wrath is made equivalent to the consequences of sin, and Christ is said to bear these consequences, it is quite obvious that the theological usage which speaks of Him enduring God's wrath, is both true to scriptural thought and fact. As the mother whose soul is torn with anguish because of the lawless life of her first-born, may be said to endure the divine displeasure, as she is tormented by the results which universal law has attached to sin, so may the divine displeasure be said to rest upon Christ when He undertakes to suffer for human misdeeds. This, it hardly need be remarked, does not mean that God became angry with His beloved Son when He became associated with the world's guilt. Nothing could be a more complete departure from the truth. The Father loved Him all the more because He laid down His life for the sheep (John 10 : 17). As little does it mean that in some way that finds no analogy in scripture statement or human experience, God poured His wrath

because of sin upon the head of His devoted Son. A divine wrath that is not a consequence of sin, is something totally unknown in nature or in revelation, and can have no place in theology. Only in the sense that wrath is against the mother who bears not only what she must but what she can of her child's guilt, can the divine wrath be said to be against Christ in His offering of Himself as sin offering, and it is vain to deny that He endured the divine anger in that sense. The fact that the expression is so easily misunderstood because of the associations the term anger has gathered about it, demands that it should be carefully made use of, if, indeed, it does not justify its present general discontinuance in popular discourse. At the same time, it should not be overlooked, that as theological terminology it was quite in accord with scripture thought, and had a real content that justified its employment.

Harmonizing with this representation of Christ's sacrificial work is the Biblical expression that He delivers His followers from the divine displeasure: "We shall be saved from wrath through him (Rom. 5 : 9); "His Son . . . Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1 : 10); "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 5 : 9). Christ endured the divine displeasure due our sin, and as a result we are delivered from wrath through Him. This means that He suffered those consequences of sin which gave such alarm, with the result that in Him calm of spirit takes the place of consuming fears, and a state of reconciliation that of condemnation.

The same truth is very generally expressed by saying that Christ as sin offering satisfied divine justice, and so secured deliverance from condemnation and all that condemnation involved. This is not a scripture mode of presentation any more than that discussed in the preceding paragraph. Perhaps nowhere in the New Testament is Christ said to have been sacrificed to satisfy divine justice. There are passages whose thought can be well interpreted by such an expression, but the expression itself is not found. Such statements as "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God" (Heb. 9 : 14), and "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many" (Heb. 9 : 28), may be well paraphrased into saying that Christ offered Himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, but the Scripture itself does not put it in that form.

God's justice in relation to sin shows itself as wrath. The divine wrath is nothing more than the outgoing of justice against sin. When God is said to have revealed His wrath against the Gentiles by giving them up to moral and religious decay (Rom. 1 : 18), and against Israel in the wilderness by causing them to die without entering the promised land (Heb. 3 : 11), the meaning is that His justice inflicted the penalty that their unfaithfulness deserved. Such being the relation of justice and wrath, it is evident that justice is satisfied when wrath has been vented against the guilt that had provoked it, and Christ may be said to have satisfied divine justice when He

endured the divine displeasure that pursues wrongdoing, or in other words, when He suffered the consequence arising from it. As He was receiving into His spirit the sorrow, and anguish, and distress, of which sin under God's government is ever made the cause, He was satisfying divine justice. He had no sin of His own wherewith to be afflicted, but enduring the evil effects arising from the sin of others, suffering the just for the unjust, He did what justice would require in the human relationship which He had assumed. To say that He satisfied justice by fully revealing God's readiness to forgive (Clarke), may be the expression of a truth, but it is certainly not the historic meaning of the phrase, nor does it express the Biblical thought which it was formed to express.

There are those who hesitate to speak of Christ satisfying justice, as they do of His enduring the divine displeasure. The meaning, as properly understood, they on the whole accept, but quarrel with the mode of expression. And yet in an age when the reign of law is so universally acknowledged, there is an advantage in showing that in Christianity mercy is extended in a way consistent with law and order. To make redemption appear in that light gives it an attractiveness for intelligent thought. Nor is it all advantage to abandon the terminology which represents Christ as enduring the divine displeasure and so saving from wrath. The divine wrath is an awful reality to many, and nothing will make the cross more attractive than to show that the dreaded wrath has there spent itself.

The statements, "to bear sin," "to endure the consequence of sin," "to endure the divine displeasure due sin," "to satisfy divine justice," all mean much the same, and give what explanation can be given of the power to secure reconciliation and pardon, which Scripture and experience attribute to Christ's sin offering. A fifth state of similar import represents Him enduring the condemnation of sin and thus effecting deliverance. All these explanations are based on the truth that substitution secures relief to the guilty, a principle that cannot be disputed without quarrelling with some of life's best-known facts. The atonement of Christ is quite a unique phenomenon, but its uniqueness arises from the uniqueness of His personality and not from its fundamental law of substitutionary suffering by whose operation it was effected.

By the suffering of Christ is meant, not the amount of pain that He endured, but His bearing the consequence of sin in His life and death. Pain was doubtless inseparable from His atoning sacrifice, but it was not in the pain as such that the atoning virtue lay, but in His bearing the sin and dying for it. The intermediary who intercepts a stroke aimed at another, does not effect deliverance because his body may have been broken, but because the blow has spent its force in him. So Christ does not effect our deliverance because He endured intense pain, but because He received in Himself the pursuing consequences of misconduct which, left unchecked, would have effected our ruin. In the sense that the deepest

anguish was inseparable from His redemptive work, and in that sense alone is He said to save by the pain that He suffered. The word suffering in this its theological sense continues its original meaning of "bearing," "enduring."

Thus Christ offered Himself a trespass offering to pay the debt of sin, and a sin offering to atone for its guilt. He also offered Himself a burnt offering. It is nowhere explicitly stated that He did so, but there are passages in which it is implied, and the symbolism of the burnt offering is manifestly realized in Him. The author of Hebrews 10: 5-9 sees in His coming the fulfilment of the Levitical offerings, among which he mentions the burnt offering. He must, therefore, have regarded Christ a burnt offering, as he also regarded Him a sin offering. In verse 10, moreover, he speaks of His body having been offered in sacrifice. In this mode of expression there is very probably an allusion to the manner in which the carcase of the burnt offering was disposed of. If so, there is here further evidence that Christ was thought to have offered Himself a burnt offering.

The significance, also, of the burnt offering was realized in Him. He consecrated Himself and all His powers to the service of God. This He meant when He said: "For their sakes I sanctify myself" (John 17: 19). He was always sanctified in the sense of being perfectly holy, and He could have only meant by this statement that He consecrated Himself to a life of divine service for human salvation. Similar was the thought when He said: "I came down from



heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6 : 38); and also, "I seek not mine own will but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5 : 30). Nowhere did this perfect consecration to God and obedience to His will discover itself more completely than in Gethsemane when He said: "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26 : 39). Paul's words, also, are eloquent of consecration to the work of redemption: "Being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (Phil. 2 : 8).

By this complete self-surrender unto God for human salvation, and perfect obedience to His will, Christ offered Himself a burnt offering. He presented His perfect life and service an oblation for the benefit of His followers, to secure for them blessings which only righteousness can control. It were not enough that He offer Himself as a trespass offering and a sin offering. To pay all the debt of sin and cover all its guilt were indeed a favor whose greatness voice cannot utter nor mind comprehend, but it would yield after all only a negative relation, whose chief advantage would be that there was nothing to threaten of which to be afraid.

To complete the condition there was required the righteousness that secures access to God and the positive communication of His grace, and this Christ's burnt offering provided. Because of His perfect life, because, as He said Himself, of His having sanctified

Himself for their sake (John 17 : 19), God deals with His disciples as if they were righteous, receives them into His fellowship, bestows upon them His spirit, grants them every blessing necessary to meet their wants and perfect their life. When Paul said : " Through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous " (Rom. 5 : 19), he did not simply mean that because of what Christ was and did, many would be reconciled and pardoned ; he meant in addition that through the grace that was in Him they would also be sanctified. For His sake God would impart all needed grace that would go to perfect every virtue, would work within them by His spirit to complete what their life required. His thought was much the same when he said : " Through the one act of righteousness the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life " (Rom. 5 : 18). For whatever else the passage may mean, it represents the life of Christ securing for men blessings that will go to enrich their life. It keeps in the forefront the change which His work produces in the relation held towards God, not overlooking, however, the ultimate effect upon life and character. Christ's life, His righteousness, His obedience, is thus to be regarded as a sanctifying agency, and a medium through which God bestows spiritual blessings that go to perfect sanctification. In the trespass offering, also, the efficacy of Christ's obedience was considered, but there it was regarded a satisfaction absolving from the debt of sin, while here it is looked upon as a character-building power.

In Christ's burnt offering there is seen another phase

of the ever-present law of substitution. According to the trespass offering, Christ's righteousness imputed satisfies and absolves the debt of sin. According to the sin offering, His substituted endurance atones for and removes the guilt of sin. According to the burnt offering again, His righteousness provides a remedy against the power and depravity of sin by securing as its reward impartation of those divine graces that go to perfect character.

The third phase of this great law is almost more obvious than either of the others, is certainly one of the most frequently met experiences of life. "This physical, moral and spiritual law runs through the whole scheme and constitution of human life on the earth. National life, social life, family life, are all full of illustrations of this federal principle, and the scriptural and the catechetical doctrines of the oneness of Adam and his children, and of Christ and His people, are but divine revelations of the universality and depth of the federal and solidary law of human life" (A. White). "On every hand and in every hour of the day men are seen reaping positive benefits from the virtues of their fellows. Every page of history, sacred and profane, illustrates the same phenomenon.

Joseph's faithful life proved of rich benefit to his master, Potiphar. "It came to pass from the time that he made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the Lord blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had, in the house and in the field" (Gen. 39: 5). Jacob's industry and general

trustworthiness redounded to Laban's advantage. In spite of all his selfishness he had to confess to Jacob that the Lord had blessed him for his sake (Gen. 30: 27). As late as the days of Hezekiah, David's faithful life was bringing blessings upon Jerusalem. The Lord at that time said: "I will defend this city to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake" (Isa. 37: 35). Alongside may be placed the proverb: "By the blessing of the righteous the city is exalted" (Prov. 11: 11). It was according to the same principle that it was predicted that Israel would bless the world, and that Isaiah more definitely spoke of a day when Egypt and Assyria would be saved because of their relation to God's people (Isa. 19: 24, 25). Christ's words when He spoke of His disciples as the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt. 5: 13-15), may be quoted to like effect. It is because of the same law in the life of the family that it can be said that the seed of the righteous shall be mighty upon the earth (Ps. 112: 2). Nothing is more certain than that the virtues of the parent are usually reproduced in the children, and worthy individuals often decide the character of a community, and a province may shape the destiny of a nation.

The solidarity of the race makes it a blessed reality that the virtues of the faithful enrich the character of all. Their life is like the towering mountain that rises into the clouds and brings down the fertilizing showers upon the wastes beneath. What Hermon is to Galilee, a good man is to the place of his abode.

A rationalizing theology may quarrel with "substitution" and the "imputation of righteousness," but it might as well contend against heredity and the solidarity of mankind. As sure as characteristics are inherited from ancestors, and as sure as the race is an organic unity, so sure are substitution and the impartation of blessings, because of righteousness in another, prominent facts in life.

According to this law, the righteousness of Christ could not fail to prove a blessing to others. He identified Himself with humanity, made Himself a member of that organism, the race, and this would necessarily make His righteousness a force, moulding the life of the world, bringing down upon it the divine blessing that is never refused to obedience. Every good man has his faults, and yet every good man induces blessing into the experience of others, and makes the world better because of his living in it. Christ's life was perfect. He had no defects to counteract the good influence of His righteousness, or prevent its controlling the divine favor. Nor was His life that of a perfect man merely. His was the life of God manifest in the flesh. By His incarnation the divine righteousness was embodied in history, was made a factor in the life of humanity, became its chiefest moulding force. The magnitude of such a unique event staggers the most robust thought, its significance for man passes the limit of finite comprehension, its advantages can no more be measured than can the infinite itself. One easily feels that the inspired logic of the apostle was within the mark

when he said: "Through the obedience of one shall the many be made righteous" (Rom. 5 : 19). If the imperfect life of a good man makes the world a better place for all time, what will be the accruing blessedness from the incarnate righteousness of God! And this not simply because of its inspiration, and revelation of what righteousness means, but especially in its all-prevailing power to secure the inflow of the divine grace into the individual life. Christ as trespass offering paid the debt of sin, as sin offering He made atonement for its guilt, and as burnt offering He delivers from its deformity, depravity and power. For their sakes He sanctified Himself that they also might be sanctified by the truth (John 17 : 19).

Christ also offered Himself a peace offering. This He taught Himself when He spoke of giving His flesh for the life of the world (John 6 : 51). The distinctive feature of the peace offering was, that the flesh of the victim was prepared into a sacrificial meal, and when Christ said, "He that eateth me, he also shall live because of me" (John 6 : 57), He intimated that His sacrifice was to be regarded also a peace offering.

In Heb. 10 : 8 there are mentioned four sacrifices that found their fulfilment in Christ, and so were brought to an end in Him—sacrifice, offering, burnt offering, and sin offering. The "offering" refers very probably to the bloodless sacrifices; accordingly, "sacrifice" may be regarded as referring to the peace offering. Moreover, in the Old Testament the peace offering is frequently designated by a term that might

be rendered, and is sometimes rendered, "slain sacrifice." The same word appears frequently in the New Testament, and in such a passage as "An offering and a sacrifice to God" (Eph. 5 : 2), doubtless included the peace offering. Not only is the significance of the peace offering realized in Christ, its language seems also applied to Him.

As a peace offering, He gives His flesh for the life of the world (John 6 : 51). Sin had alienated man from God in whom alone life can fulfil itself, and directed his desires towards the interests and pleasures of the world in which his needs could not be met. The result was spiritual starvation. Men were gorging themselves upon what earth could offer, but the best bounties to be had were only husks without nutriment. They were like Ephraim feeding on the wind (Hos. 12 : 1), and like the worshippers of idols, upon ashes (Isa. 44 : 20). Christ comes into all this indigence and prepares a table rich with the bounties of His grace. He gives His broken body and shed blood to nourish a sin-sick and famishing world. He not only secures reconciliation and pardon, but makes peace and communion with God a matter of actual enjoyment. As the Hebrew at his sacrificial meal was made to rejoice in the fellowship of God, so the believer appropriating Christ by faith finds in Him a happy realization of divine peace, communion and friendship. His hungry, thirsty soul enjoys there food and refreshment. Eating His flesh and drinking His blood, the famished spirit is nourished into eternal life (John 6 : 54), for His flesh is meat indeed,

and His blood is drink indeed (v. 55). Satisfaction, atonement, sanctification, and life all provided in the sacrifice of Christ. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the godhead bodily, and in him ye are made full" (Col. 2 : 9); "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out!" (Rom. 11 : 33).

There is some evidence, though not conclusive, that the New Testament considers Christ to have offered Himself a meal offering. The word usually rendered "offering," was originally the technical term for bloodless sacrifice. This usage was not strictly observed throughout the New Testament, for there are passages in which it designated the sacrifice of life. This is the case in such phrases as "the offering of the body of Christ" (Heb. 10 : 10), and, "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified (Heb. 10 : 14). There are other passages in which the term appears to be employed in its original sense, as for instance, "an offering and a sacrifice to God" (Eph. 5 : 2), and "sacrifices, and offerings, and whole burnt offerings, and sacrifices for sin" (Heb. 10 : 8). Could this be conclusively established, it would prove that Christ did offer Himself a meal offering. In any case, the fulfilment of the symbolism here, which would be one phase of His perfect obedience, would be included in His trespass and burnt offerings, and consequently there is no part of His sacrificial work overlooked because of the uncertainty that surrounds the question



of His having offered Himself according to the symbolism of this sacrifice.

Christ is explicitly stated to have offered Himself a passover sacrifice (1 Cor. 5 : 7). In expounding this ordinance it was seen that its essential significance lay in its being a sin offering and a peace offering. Any important truth, therefore, that is contained in the statement, that Christ is our passover, has been gathered up in the exposition of His sin and peace offerings, and nothing would be gained by a separate discussion of His sacrificial work as a passover sacrifice.

All the significance of Christ's sacrificial work can be comprehended under the four aspects, trespass, sin, burnt and peace offerings, and it would only lead to confusion to seek for additional points of view. But the danger lies in the other direction. Perhaps the most serious defects in expositions of our Lord's redemptive work which have aimed at being scriptural, have arisen from, consciously or unconsciously, attempting to embrace everything under His sin offering. Such a course must ever yield defective results, and so must any treatment that overlooks either of the four great features which have here been examined.

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