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CHRIST OUR SACRIFICE

“According to the New Testament, primitive Christianity, when it used the words ‘Jesus redeems us by His blood,’ was thinking of the ritual sacrifice, and this conception is diffused throughout the whole New Testament; it is a fundamental idea, universal in primitive Christianity, with respect to the significance of Jesus’ death.” So remarks Paul Fiebig;¹ and W. P. Paterson, summarizing Albrecht Ritschl,² emphasizes the assertion. “The interpretation of Christ’s death as a sacrifice,” says he,³ “is imbedded in every important type of New Testament teaching.” By the limitation implied in the words, “every important type,” he means only to allow for the failure of allusions to this interpretation in the two brief letters, James and Jude, the silence of which, he rightly explains, “raises no presumption against the idea being part of the common stock of Apostolic doctrine.” It was already given expression by Jesus Himself (Matt. xxvi. 28, Mark xiv. 24, 1 Cor. xi. 25, Matt. xx. 28, Mark x. 45),⁴ and it is elaborated by the Apostles in a great variety of obviously spontaneous allusions. They not only expressly state that Christ was offered as a sacrifice.⁵ They work out the correspondence between His death

¹ *Jesu Blut ein Geheimnis?* 1906, p. 27.

² *Die christliche Lehre der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung.*³ 1889, Vol. ii, pp. 161 ff.

³ Hastings’ *Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. IV, 1902, p. 343 b.

⁴ Fiebig, as cited, p. 19, remarks on the connection in the Jewish mind of the idea of purchasing, ransoming, with sacrifice,—referring to F. Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*, etc.² 1897, pp. 313, 324.

⁵ *E.g.*, προσφορά, Eph. v. 2, Heb. x. 10, 14 (for the meaning of προσφορά see Heb. x. 18), θυσία, Eph. v. 2, Heb. ix. 26; cf. Rom. iii. 25, ἱλαστήριον; viii. 3, περὶ ἁμαρτίας.

and the different forms of Old Testament sacrifice.⁶ They show that the different acts of the Old Testament sacrificial ritual were repeated in Christ's experience.⁷ They ascribe the specific effects of sacrifice to his death.⁸ They dwell particularly, in truly sacrificial wise, on the saving efficacy of His out-poured blood.⁹ William Warburton did not speak a bit too strongly when he wrote, more than a hundred and fifty years ago: "One could hardly have thought it possible that any man who had read the Gospels with their best interpreters, the authors of the Epistles, should ever

⁶ Paterson (from whom we are taking this summary), as cited, notes: "esp. the Sin-offering (Rom. viii. 3, Heb. xiii. 11, 1 Pet. iii. 18), the Covenant-sacrifice (Heb. ix. 15-22), the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement (Heb. ii. 17, ix. 12 ff), and of the Passover (1 Cor. v. 7)." Cf. Sanday-Headlam, *Romans*¹ p. 92.

⁷ Paterson enumerates: "the slaying of the immaculate victim (Rev. v. 6, xiii. 8), the sprinkling of the blood both in the sanctuary as in the Sin-offering (Heb. ix. 13 ff), and on the people as in the Covenant-sacrifice (1 Pet. i. 2), and the destruction of the victim, as in the Sin-offering, without the gate (Heb. xiii. 13)"—referring to Ritschl ii. 157 ff; and Sanday-Headlam, *Romans*, p. 91.

⁸ *E.g.*: "Expiation, or pardon of sin," says Paterson. Sanday-Headlam mention as examples of passages in which the death of Christ is directly connected with forgiveness of sin: Matt. xxvi. 28; Acts v. 30 f, apparently; 1 Cor. xv. 3; 2 Cor. v. 21; Eph. i. 7; Col. i. 14 and 20; Tit. ii. 14; Heb. i. 3, ix. 28, x. 12, x. 12, al.; 1 Pet. ii. 24, iii. 18; 1 John ii. 2, iv. 10; Rev. i. 5.

⁹ Paterson: "A saving efficacy is ascribed to the blood of the cross of Christ, and in these cases the thought clearly points to the forms of the altar (Rom. iii. 25, v. 9, 1 Cor. x. 16, Eph. i. 7, ii. 13, Col. i. 20, Heb. ix. 12, 14; 1 Pet. i. 2, 19; 1 John i. 7, v. 6, 8; Rev. i. 5)." Cf. Sanday-Headlam, *Romans*, p. 91 f. The matter is very interestingly presented by Fiebig, as cited, pp. 11-27 under the title: "What, according to the New Testament, did primitive Christianity think in connection with the words, 'Jesus has redeemed us by His blood?'" He takes his start, for the survey of a conception which he says is diffused throughout the whole New Testament, from 1 Pet. i. 17-19, the only key to which he declares to be "sacrifice, and indeed sacrifice as it was known to every Jew (and in a corresponding way to every heathen) from his daily life and from the festivals and duties of his religion, that is ritual sacrifice." From this passage he then proceeds through the New Testament and shows that the blood of Christ is used throughout the volume in a sacrificial sense, so that whenever we meet with an allusion to the blood of Jesus we meet with a reference to His death as a sacrifice.

have entertained a doubt whether the death of Christ was a real sacrifice."¹⁰

It would be strange in these circumstances if, in attempting to determine the Biblical conception of the nature of the work of Christ, appeal were not made to the sacrificial system; and it were not argued that the nature of Christ's work is exhibited in the nature of the sacrificial act. Whatever a sacrifice is, that Christ's work is. It will be obvious, however, that we are liable to fall into a certain confusion here. Jesus Himself and the Apostles speak of Christ's work as sacrificial, and it is clear (as Paterson duly points out¹¹) that this is on their lips no figure of speech or mere

¹⁰ *The Divine Legation of Moses*, Book ix, chapter ii, quoted in a note at the end of his excellent chapter on "The New Testament Description of the Atoning Work of Christ as Sacrificial," by Alfred Cave, *The Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice and Atonement*,² 1890, pp. 274-289. Cave himself says (p. 289): "Not only portions but the whole New Testament—not only the New Testament teaching but any type of that teaching—must be cast aside unless the work of Christ be in some sense or other regarded as a sacrifice."

¹¹ As cited: "Nor for the apostolic age was the description of Christ's death as a sacrifice of the nature of a mere illustration. The apostles held it to be a sacrifice in the most literal sense of the word." Paterson goes on to assign reasons. George F. Moore, *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, Vol. iv. 1903, col. 4232 f. interposes a caveat: "To begin with, it is necessary to say that in describing the death of Christ as a sacrifice the New Testament writers are using figurative language. Some modern theologians, indeed, still affirm that 'the apostles held it to be a sacrifice in the most literal sense of the word'; but such writers do not expect us to take their 'literal' literally. The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, for example, regarded the death of Christ as the true sacrifice, because by it was really effected what the Old Testament sacrifices only prefigured; but he was too good an Alexandrian to identify 'true' with 'literal.'" What Moore maintains is that the death of Christ was not believed to be expiatory because it was known to be a sacrifice, but that it was spoken of as a sacrifice because it was recognized to be expiatory. He does not doubt that the death of Christ was believed actually to have wrought the expiation which the sacrifices were understood to figure. "The association of expiation with sacrifice in the law and in the common ideas of the time leads to the employment of sacrificial figures and terms in speaking of the work of Christ; and even in Hebrews, where the idea of the death of Christ as a sacrifice is most elaborately developed, it is plain that the premise of the whole is that Christ by His death made a real expiation for the

illustration, but is intended to declare the simple fact. It is quite plain, then, that His work was conceived by them to be of precisely that nature which a sacrifice was understood by them to be. But it is by no means so plain that they conceived His work to be of the nature which we may understand a sacrifice to be. Failure to regard this very simple distinction has brought untold confusion into the discussion. If we would comprehend the teaching of the writers of the New Testament when they call Christ a sacrifice, we must, of course, not assume out of hand that their idea of a sacrifice and ours are identical. The investigation of the previous question of the notion they attached to a sacrifice must form our starting-point. So little is this mode of procedure always adopted, however, that it is even customary for writers on the subject to go so far afield at this point as to introduce a discussion not of the idea of sacrifice held by the founders of the Christian religion, or even current in the Judaism of their day, or even embodied in the Levitical system; but of the idea of sacrifice in general, conceived as a world-wide mode of worship. The several theories of the fundamental conception which underlies sacrificial worship in the general sense are set forth; a choice is made among them; and this theory is announced as ruling the usage of the term when applied to Christ. Christ is undoubtedly our sacrifice, it is said: but a sacrifice is a rite by which communion with God is established and maintained, or by which a complete surrender to God is symbolized, or by which recognition is made of the homage we owe to Him as our God, or by which God's suffering love is manifested. As if the question of importance were what we mean by a sacrifice, and not what the New Testament writers mean by it.

It is manifestly of the highest importance, therefore, that we should keep separate three very distinct questions, to each of which a great deal of interest attaches, although they have very different bearings on the determination of sins of men, by which they are redeemed." We take it that it is just this that Peterson means by speaking of Christ's death as a "literal" sacrifice.

the nature of Christ's work. These three questions are: (1) What is the fundamental idea which underlies sacrificial worship as a world-phenomenon? (2) What is the essential implication of sacrifice in the Levitical system? (3) What is the conception of sacrifice which lay in the minds of the writers of the New Testament, when they represented Jesus as a sacrifice and ascribed to His work a sacrificial character, in its mode, its nature and its effects? The distinctness of these questions is strikingly illustrated by the circumstance that not infrequently a different response is given to each of them by the same investigator. It may be said in general that few doubt that the conception of sacrifice at least dominant among the Jews of Christ's time was distinctly peculiar: and, although it is more frequently questioned whether all the writers of the New Testament were in agreement with this conception, it is practically undoubted that some of them were, and generally admitted that all were. The majority of scholars agree also that the peculiar conception informs sacrificial worship in the Levitical system. On the other hand speculation has as yet found no common ground with respect to the fundamental conception which is supposed to underlie sacrificial worship in general, and in this field hypothesis still jostles with hypothesis in what seems an endless controversy.

Question may even very legitimately be raised whether the assumption can be justified which is commonly (but of course not universally) made that a single fundamental idea underlies all sacrificial worship the world over. There seems no reason in the nature of things why a similar mode of worship may not have grown up in various races of men, living in very different circumstances, to express differing conceptions; and it certainly cannot be doubted that very diverse conceptions, in the long practice of the rite by these various races in their constantly changing circumstances, attached themselves, from time to time and from place to place, to the sacrificial mode of worship common to all. The Biblical narrative may lead us to suppose, to be sure,

that sacrificial worship began very early in the history of the human race: it may seem to be carried back, indeed, to the very dawn of history, and to be definitely assigned in its origin to no later period than the second generation of men. But at the same time we seem to be advertized that at the very inception of sacrificial worship different conceptions were embodied in it by its several practitioners. It is difficult to believe at least that we are expected to understand that the whole difference in the acceptability to Jehovah of the two offerings of Cain and Abel hung on the different characters of the two offerers:¹² we are told that Jehovah had respect not merely unto Abel and not unto Cain, but also to Abel's offering and not to Cain's. The different characters of the two men seem rather to be represented as expressing themselves in differing conceptions of man's actual relation to God and of the conditions of approval by Him and the proper means of seeking His favor.

It can scarcely be reading too much between the lines to suppose that the narrative in the fourth chapter of Genesis is intended on the one hand to describe the origin of sacrificial worship, and on the other to distinguish between two conceptions of sacrifice and to indicate the preference of Jehovah for the one rather than the other. These two conceptions are briefly those which have come to be known respectively as the piacular theory and the symbolical, or perhaps we should rather call it the gift, theory. In this view

¹² This nevertheless is the common view. Driver supposes that the different treatment of the sacrifices can hardly have had its ground in "anything except the different spirit and temper actuating the two brothers": but he recognizes (without comment) that there is "another view," namely, "that there underlies the story some early struggle between two theories of sacrifice, which ended by the triumph of the theory that the right offering to be made consisted in the life of an animal." Dillmann says: "The reason must therefore lie in the dispositions presupposed in the offerings"; but quotes Hofmann, *Schriftbeweis*,² i. p. 585 for the view that "Abel had in mind the expiation of sin, while Cain had not"—"of which," says Dillmann, "there is no indication whatever." Similar ground is taken, for example, by Kalisch, Keil, Delitzsch (*New Commentary*), Lange, W. P. Paterson (Articles "Abel" and "Cain" in Hastings' *B.D.*)

we are not to suppose that Cain and Abel simply brought each a gift to the Lord from the increase which had been granted him, to acknowledge thereby the overlordship of Jehovah and to express subjection and obedience to Him: and that it is merely an accident that Cain's offering, as that of a husbandman, was of the fruit of the ground, while Abel's, as that of a shepherd, was of the firstlings of the flock. There is no reason apparent why Jehovah should prefer a lamb to a sheaf of wheat.¹³ The difference surely goes deeper, for it was "by faith" that Abel offered under God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain—which seems to suggest that the supreme excellence of his sacrifice is to be sought not in the mere nature of the thing offered, but in the attitude of the offerer.¹⁴ What seems to be implied is that Cain's offering was an act of mere homage; Abel's em-

¹³ Gunkel thinks there is: Jehovah is the God of nomads. The old narrator, he says, would be surprised that anyone should wonder why Jahve had respect to Abel's offering and not to Cain's: he means just that Jahve loved the shepherd and flesh-offerings but would have nothing to do with the cultivator and fruit-offerings. Similarly Tuch: the story comes from nomads.

¹⁴ The allusion in Heb. xii. 24 is taken by some commentators as a reference to Abel's offering rather than to his death. Bleek (p. 954) says: "It may be mentioned merely in a historical interest that with the Erasmian reading (τὸ Ἄβελ), Hammond, Akersloot, and Gnobel (*Amoenitt. theologiae emblematica et typicae*, p. 109 ff), the blood of Abel is understood of the blood of the sacrificial animal offered by him; and that the first, with the received reading (τὸν Ἄβελ), wishes to refer the τὸν to the ῥαντισμὸν in order to obtain the same sense." This interpretation has had great vogue in America, owing to its advocacy by the popular commentaries of Albert Barnes, 1843, F. S. Sampson, 1856, George Junkin 1873. Its significance for the matter of the nature of Abel's sacrifice may be perceived from the comment of Joseph B. McCaul, 1871, who combines the two views: "Abel, being dead, can speak only figuratively. He does so by his faith, manifested by his bringing a vicarious sacrifice according to the divine will. He therefore speaks, not only by the blood of his martyrdom, but also by the blood of his sacrifice, which latter obtained testimony from God that it was acceptable and accepted. It was *then* that God openly expressed his divine selection of blood, to the exclusion of all other means of ransom, for the redemption of the soul. In the term 'the blood of Abel' may be included therefore the blood of all vicarious victims afterwards offered, in accordance with God's appointment, until the sacrifice of the death of Christ superseded them."

bodied a sense of sin, an act of contrition, a cry for succor, a plea for pardon. In a word, Cain came to the Lord with an offering in his hand and the Homage theory of sacrifice in his mind: Abel with an offering in his hand and the Piacular theory of sacrifice in his heart. And it was therefore, that Jehovah had respect to Abel's offering and not to Cain's. If so, while we may say that sacrifice was invented by man, we must also say that by this act piacular sacrifice was instituted by God.¹⁵ In other modes of conceiving it, sacrifice may represent the reaching out of man towards God: in its piacular conception it represents the stooping down of God to man. The fundamental difference is that in the one case sacrifice rests upon consciousness of sin and has its reference to the restoration of a guilty human being to the favor of a condemning God: in the other it stands outside of all relation to sin and has its reference only to the expression of the proper attitude of deference which a creature should preserve towards his Maker and Ruler.¹⁶

¹⁵ Here perhaps is to be found the reply to the representation made for example by J. K. Mozley, *The Doctrine of the Atonement*, 1916, p. 53, note 2, to the effect that writers of "the school which ignores or rejects modern criticism of the Old Testament"—represented by P. Fairbairn, *Typology of the Scriptures*, W. L. Alexander, *Biblical Theology*, A. Cave, *Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice*—have to explain how it is that the first sacrifices mentioned (those of Cain and Abel) "are not said to have been in any way ordered by God." The question of the origin of sacrifice, human or divine, Mozley says is no longer discussed. For a hint as to its literature see Cave, p. 41, Note 2.

¹⁶ This explanation of the narrative of "the first sacrifices" is not popular with the critical commentators. Skinner (in accordance with the alternative view of the passage mentioned by Driver) thinks that "the whole manner of the narrative" suggests that we here have "the initiation of sacrifice," and that, if this be accepted, it follows "that the narrative proceeds on a *theory* of sacrifice; the idea, viz. that animal sacrifice alone is acceptable to Yahwe." Why this should be so, he does not say. Franz Delitzsch, who in his *New Commentary on Genesis*, will not look further for the reason of the difference in the treatment of the offerings than the different dispositions of the offerers, in his earlier *Commentary on Genesis*, amid much inconsistent matter, has this to say: "The unbloody offering of Cain, as such, was only the expression of a grateful present, or, taken in its deepest significance, a consecrated offering of self: but man needs, before all

The appearance of two such sharply differentiated conceptions side by side in the earliest Hebrew tradition does not encourage us to embark on ambitious speculations which would seek the origin of all sacrificial doctrines in a single primitive idea out of which they have gradually unfolded in the progress of time and through many stages of increasing culture. We have been made familiar with such genetic constructions by the writings especially of E. B. Tyler, W. Robertson Smith, and Smith's follower and improver, J. G.

things, the expiation of his death-deserving sins, and for this, the blood obtained through the slaying of the victim serves as a symbol." J. C. K. Hofmann, *Schriftbeweis*² i. p. 584-5 remarks that the cultivation of the soil and the keeping of beasts were employments alike open to men: but he who adopted the one, dealing with a soil which was *cursed*, had to thank God for the yield it made despite sin, while he who adopted the other, in view of the provision God had made for hiding man's nakedness, had before him God's grace in hiding sin. If, now, Cain was satisfied to bring of the fruit of the earth to God, he was thanking God only for a prolongation of this present life, which he had gained by his own labor: while Abel, bringing the best beasts of his flock, gave Him thanks for the forgiveness of sin, the abiding symbol of which was the clothing given by God. "A grateful attitude such as Abel's had as its presupposition, however, the penitent faith in the word of God which saw in this divine clothing of human nakedness an approach to the forgiveness of sins which rests on the gracious will of God to man." Because Abel's sacrifice embodied this idea, it was acceptable to God and he received the witness that he was righteous. J. J. Murphy comments: "The fruit of the soil offered to God is an acknowledgment that the means of this earthly life are due to Him. This expresses the barren faith of Cain, not the living faith of Abel. The latter had entered deeply into the thought that life itself is forfeited to God by transgression, and that only by an act of mercy can the Author of life restore it to the penitent, trusting, submissive, loving heart." The remarks of "C. H. M." on the passage are very clear and pointed to the same effect. See them cited by A. H. Strong, *Syst. Theol.* ed. 1967, p. 727. J. C. Jones, *Primaeval Revelation*, 1897, p. 313 ff. gives a glowing popular expression to the same view. J. S. Candlish, *The Christian Salvation*, 1899, p. 15 thinks that Abel's sacrifice plainly involves the confession of sin and compares his worship with that of the Publican in the parable, and Cain's to that of the Pharisee. T. J. Crawford, *Doctrine of Holy Scripture Concerning the Atonement*². 1875, p. 259, writes: "Abel's faith may have had respect not to a revelation with regard to sacrificial worship, but with regard to a promised Redeemer; this sacrifice may have expressed that faith. If so, God's acceptance of it gave a divine warrant to future sacrifice."

Frazer.¹⁷ In Tyler's view the beginning of sacrifice is to be found in a gift made by a savage to some superior being from which he hoped to receive a benefit. The gods grew gradually greater and more distant; and the gift was correspondingly spiritualized, until it ended by becoming the gift of the worshipper's self. Thus out of the offer of a bribe there gradually evolved its opposite—an act of self-abnegation and renunciation. The start is taken, according to W. Robertson Smith, rather from a common meal in which the totem animal, which is also the god, is consumed with a view to the assimilation of it by the worshippers and their assimilation to it. When the animal eaten came to be thought of as provided by the worshipper, the idea of gift came in; as all totemistic meals had for their object the maintenance or renewal of the bond between the worshipper and the god, the conception of expiation lay near—for what is expiation but the restitution of a broken bond?¹⁸ H. Hubert and M. Mauss are certainly wise in eschewing this spurious geneticism, and contenting themselves with seeking merely to isolate the common element discoverable in all sacrificial acts. It must be confessed, however, that we are not much advanced even by their less ambitious labors.

¹⁷ We are abstracting in this account the illuminating survey by MM. Hubert and Mauss in the *L'Année Sociologique* II. 1897-9 pp. 29 ff. They tell us, that Robertson Smith has been followed by E. Sidney Hartland, *The Legend of Perseus*, 1894-96, and "with theological exaggeration" by F. B. Jevons, *Introduction to the History of Religion*, 1896.

¹⁸ After threatening to become the dominant theory, this theory has recently lost ground, chiefly on account of the totemistic elements connected with it. See the criticisms by B. Stade, *Biblische Theologie der Alten Testament*. Vol. i, pp. 156-159; and M. J. Lagrange, "*Études sur les religions Sémitiques*", pp. 246 ff. The "gift" theory accordingly holds the field. W. R. Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, 1899, p. 355, appears to prefer to suppose that neither conception is the source of the other: "There have always been two ideas of sacrifice, alike in savage and civilized cults,—the mystical in which it is a *communion*, the victim who is slain and eaten being himself the god, or a symbol of a god; and the *commercial*, in which something valuable is offered to a god in the hope of receiving some benefit in exchange." This is very likely true as a general proposition.

Sacrifices, they tell us, are, broadly, rites designed by the consecration of a victim, to modify the moral state, or, as they elsewhere express it, to affect the religious state, of the offerers.¹⁹ This is assuredly the most formal of formal definitions. All that differentiates sacrifices from other religious acts, so far as appears from it, is that they, as the others do not, seek their common end "by the consecration of a victim." Nor are we carried much further, when, at the end of their essay, we are told²⁰ that what binds together all the divers forms of sacrifice into a unity, is that it is always one process which is employed for their varied ends. "This process," it is then said, "consists in establishing a connection between the sacred world and the profane world by the intervention of a victim, that is to say, by something destroyed in the course of the ceremony." Sacrifice, we thus learn, is just—sacrifice. But what this sacrifice is, in its fundamental meaning, we seem not to be very clearly told. An impression is left on the mind that the word "sacrifice" embraces so great a variety of differing transactions that only a very formal definition can include them all.

Our guides having left us thus in the lurch, perhaps we cannot do better than simply survey the chief theories which have been suggested as to the fundamental idea embodied in sacrificial worship, quite in the flat. In doing so, we may take a hint from the two forms of conception brought before us in the narrative of the sacrifices of Cain and Abel and derive from them our principle of division. The theories part into two broad classes, which look upon sacrifices respectively as designed and adapted to express the religious feelings of man conceived merely as creature, or as intended to meet the needs of man as sinner. The theories of the first class are by far the more numerous, and, nowadays at least, by far the more popular. Perhaps, thinking of sacrifices as a world-wide usage as at this point we are, we may say also that these theories are very likely to em-

¹⁹ As cited, pp. 41 and 89.

²⁰ P. 133.

body the true account of the meaning of much of the sacrificial worship, at least, which has overspread the globe. For man, even in the formation of his religious rites is doubtless no more ready to remember that he is a sinner craving pardon than that he is a creature claiming protection. Deep-rooted as the sense of sin is in every normal human conscience, and sure as it is sporadically to express itself and to color all serious religious observances, the pride of man is no less ready to find manifestation even in his religious practices. Let us look at the chief varieties of these two great classes of theories in a rapid enumeration.

The chief theories of sacrifice which allow no place to sin in its essential implications, may perhaps be collected into three groups to which may be assigned the names of theories of Recognition, of Gift and of Communion.

The theories to which we have given the name of theories of Recognition are also known as Homage or Symbolical theories. Their common characteristic is that they conceive sacrifices to be at bottom symbolical rites by means of which the worshipper gives expression to his religious feelings or aspirations or needs: "acts go before words." At their highest level these theories represent the worshipper as expressing thus his recognition of the deity, his own relation of dependence upon Him and subjection to Him, and his readiness to act in accordance with this relation and to render the homage and obedience due from him. The name of William Warburton is connected with these theories in this general form.²¹ A slightly different turn is given to the general conception by Albrecht Ritschl.²² According to him, even in the case of the later sacrificial system of Israel, the sacrifices express (with no reference whatever to sin in the symbolism) only the awe and religious fear which the creature in his inadequacy feels in the presence of deity: man seeks "to cover" his weakness in the face of the destroying glory of God (Gen. xxxii. 30, Judges vi. 22, 23,

²¹ Cf., *The Divine Legation of Moses*, etc. iv. 4.

²² Cf., *Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*³. ii. 201-203.

xiii. 22). There are others, to be sure, who are not so careful to exclude a reference to sin and, in speaking of the sacrifices of Israel at least, suppose that what is symbolized includes a hatred of sin, as well as self-surrender to God: in their hands the theory passes therefore upward into the other main class. On the other hand, in their lowest forms, theories of this group tend to pass downward into conceptions which look upon sacrifices as merely magical rites. The thing symbolized may be supposed to be not a spiritual attitude at all but a physical need. Primitive worshippers only exhibited before the deity the object they required, and this was supposed to operate upon the deity (something after the fashion of sympathetic magic) as a specimen, securing from Him the thing desired. Theorists of this order do not scruple to point to the "shew-bread" displayed in the temple of Israel and the offering of first-fruits as instances in point.

The theories which look upon sacrifices as essentially gifts, presents, intended to please the deity,²³ and thus to gain favor with Him, part into two divisions according as the gifts are conceived more as bribes or more as fines, that is according as they are conceived as designed more to curry favor with the deity, or more to make amends for faults—or, from the point of view of the deity, as a sort of police regulation, to punish or check wrong-doing. In either case the idea of sin may come into play and the theory pass upward into the other main class. The chief representative of this type of theory among the old writers is J. Spencer, who looks upon it as self-evident that this was the primitive view of sacrifice.²⁴ The anthropologists (E. B. Tylor, Herbert Spencer) have given it great vogue in our day;

²³ J. Jeremias, *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, Vol. iv. col. 4119 says, in a representative assertion: "Sacrifice rests ultimately upon the idea that it gives pleasure to the deity (cf. Dillmann, *Leviticus*, 576)." So A. Dillmann, *Exodus und Leviticus*,³ p. 416: "The characteristic of sacrifice is a gift; that which differentiates it from other gifts is that it is enjoyed by the divinity."

²⁴ J. Spencer, *De Legibus Hebraeorum Ritualibus*, 1727, vol. ii. p. 762.

and it is doubtless the most commonly held theory of the fundamental nature of sacrifice at present (*e.g.*, H. Schultz, B. Stade, A. B. Davidson, G. F. Moore).²⁵ In one of the lower forms of this general theory the gifts are conceived as food supplied to the deity—who is supposed to share in the human need of being fed.²⁶ It is an advance on the crudest form of this conception when it is the savour or odor of the sacrifice which is supposed to be pleasing to the deity, and the food is thought to be conveyed to Him through the medium of burning. When the food is supposed to be shared between the offerer and the deity, an advance is made to the next group of theories.

This group of theories looks upon sacrifices as essentially formal acts of communion with the deity—a common meal, say, partaken of by worshipper and worshipped, the fundamental motive being “to gratify the deity by giving or sharing with Him a meal.”²⁷ This general view is often improved upon by a reference to the custom of establishing covenants by common meals, and becomes thereby a “meal-covenant” or “table-bond” theory. In this form it was already suggested by A. A. Sykes who speaks of sacrifices as joint meals, which are, he says, “acts of engaging in covenants and leagues.”²⁸ It is a further addition to this theory to say that it was conceived that a physical union was induced between the deity and the worshipper, by the medium of the common meal.²⁹ And the notion has reached its

²⁵ Hubert and Mauss, as cited, p. 30, remark that “it is certain that sacrifices were generally in some degree gifts, conferring on the believer rights upon his God.” They add in a note: “See a somewhat superficial brochure by Nietzsche, *Idee und Stufen des Opferkultus*, Kiel, 1889”; and then, that “at bottom” this theory is held by Wilken, *Over eene Nieuwe Theorie des Offers* in *De Gids*, 1891, pp. 35 ff. and by L. Marillier in the *Revue d'Histoire des Religions*, 1897-1898. Marillier connects sacrifices, however, with magical rites by which the deity is bent to the worshipper's will by the liberation of a magical force through the effusion of the victim's blood. The idea of “gift” grew out of this, through the medium of the cult of the dead.

²⁶ E. G. Piepenbring, *Théologie d l'ancien Testament*, p. 56.

²⁷ W. P. Paterson, *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, iv. p. 331 b.

²⁸ A. A. Sykes, *Essay on the Nature etc. of Sacrifices*, 1748, p. 75.

²⁹ J. Wellhausen, *Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*,² 1897; W. R. Smith, *Re-*

height when the meal is thought of as essentially a feeding on the God Himself whether by symbol, or through the medium of a totem animal, or by magical influence.³⁰ H. C. Trumbull actually utilizes this conception to explain the mode of action of the Lord's Supper.³¹

One of the things which strikes us very sharply as we review these three groups of theories is the little place given in them to the slaughter, or more broadly the destruction, of the victim, or, more broadly, the offering. This comes forward in them all as incidental to the rite, rather than as its essence. In the third group the sacrificial feast—which follows on the sacrifice itself—assumes the main place; in the second it is the oblation which is emphasized as of chief importance; even in the first the slaughter is not cardinal,—at the best it is a prerequisite that the blood may be obtained, which is represented as the valuable thing, to present to the deity. This circumstance alone is probably fatal to the validity of these theories as accounts whether of sacrifice in general or sacrifice in Israel; and very certainly as providing an explanation of the meaning of the New Testament writers when they speak of our Lord as a sacrifice. There is reason to believe that the slaughter of the victim or destruction of the offering constitutes the essential act of sacrifice; and certainly in the New Testament it is precisely in the blood of Christ or in His cross, symbols of His death, that the essence of His sacrificial character is found.³²

When we turn to the theories of sacrifice in which a reference to sin is made fundamental, we meet first with that form of the Symbolical theory in which the sacrifice is supposed to be the vehicle for the expression of the worship-

ligion of the Semites,² 1894; as applied to Israel, H. Schultz, *American Journal of Theology*, 1900, p. 269.

³⁰ J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*,² 1900.

³¹ *The Blood Covenant*, 1888, at the end; see also his *The Covenant of Salt*, 1899.

³² Hubert and Mauss, as cited, p. 74. On the usage of the Hebrew word Zebbach as a generic term for sacrifice, see Cave, as cited, pp. 511 ff.

per's "confession, his regret, his petition for forgiveness,"³³—that is to say, in one word, his repentance and his engagement to give back his life to God. Influential advocates of this view are C. W. F. Bähr, G. F. Oehler and F. D. Maurice.³⁴ By its side we meet also that form of the Gift theory in which the sinning worshipper is supposed to approach his judge with (on the lower level) a bribe, or (on the higher level) the fine for his fault in his hand. The former view is appropriate only to lower stages of culture, in which justice is supposed to go by favor. Even in the higher heathen opinion, so to think of the gods was held to be degrading to them: "Even a good man," says Cicero, "will refuse to accept presents from the wicked."³⁵ When the gift is thought of as amends for a fault, however, we have entered upon more distinctly ethical ground. It is, nevertheless, only in the Piacular or Expiatory view that theories of sacrifice reach their ethical culmination. In this view the offerer is supposed to come before God burdened with a sense of sin and seeking to expiate its guilt. The victim which he offers is looked upon as his substitute, to which is transferred the punishment which is his due; and the penalty having been thus vicariously borne, the offerer may receive forgiveness for his sin. Among the older writers W. Outram is usually looked upon as the type of this view: he explains the death of the victim as "some evil inflicted on one party in order to expiate the guilt of another in the sense of delivering the guilty from punishment and procuring the forgiveness of sin."³⁶ The general view has been held not only by such writers as P. Fairbairn, J. H. Kurtz, E. W. Hengstenberg, but also by such others as W. Gesenius, W. M. L. de Wette and even Bruno Bauer. E.

³³ H. Schultz, *American Journal of Theology*, 1900, p. 310.

³⁴ See Paterson (as cited, p. 341 a), who gives this form of the Symbolical Theory the not very satisfactory name of The Prayer Theory.

³⁵ *De Leg.* ii. 16.

³⁶ *De Sacrificiis libri duo*, 1677 (E.T. *Two Dissertations on Sacrifices* . . . 1828) p. 248.

Westermarck himself defines "the original idea of a sacrifice as a *piaculum*, a substitute for the offerer."³⁷

A matter of importance which it may be well to observe in passing is that in no one of these theories are sacrifices supposed to terminate immediately upon the offerer and to have their direct effect upon him. The offerer offers them; but it is to the deity that he offers them; and their direct effect, whatever it may be, is naturally upon the deity. Of course the offerer seeks a benefit for himself by his offerings, and in this sense ultimately they terminate on him; and in some instances their operation upon him is conceived quite mechanically.³⁸ Nevertheless it is always through their effect on the deity that they are supposed to affect men, and their immediate effect is upon the deity himself. The nearest to an exception to this is provided by those theories in which the stress is laid on the sacrificial feast, or

³⁷ J. J. Reeve, in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, p. 2640 quoting from *The Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, 1906. For Westermarck's notions as to expiating sacrifice at large, see vol. I, pp. 61-72.

³⁸ Hubert and Mauss, as cited, p. 41, seeking a comprehensive definition, fix on this: "Sacrifice is a religious act which, by the consecrating of a victim, modifies the state of the moral person who offers it or of certain objects in which that person is interested." The meaning of this is amplified in an earlier passage (p. 37): "In sacrifice on the contrary"—as distinguished, that is, from such acts, as, say, anointing—"the consecration extends beyond the thing consecrated; it extends among others, to the moral person who defrays the cost of the ceremony. The believer who has supplied the victim, the object consecrated, is not at the end of the operation what he was at its beginning. He has acquired a religious character which he did not have, or he is relieved from an unfavorable character by which he was afflicted: he is elevated to a state of grace, or he has issued from a state of sin. In either case he is religiously transformed." In a note on the same page, on the basis of certain Hindu texts, they add: "These *benefits* from the sacrifice are, in our view, necessary reactions (*contre-coups*) of the rite. They are not due to a free divine will which theology interpolates little by little between the religious act and its sequences." On this view sacrifices are assimilated to magical acts, and their effects are conceived somewhat on the analogy of what is known as the reflex action of prayer. But if the deity is thought of merely as the object from which the sacrifices rebound to the offerer, it is on it nevertheless that they must first strike that they may rebound.

rather, among these, by those theories in which the worshipper is supposed to "eat the God" and thereby to become sharer in his divine qualities. Even this notion, however, is an outgrowth of the general conception which rules all sacrificial worship, that the purpose of the sacrifice is so to affect the deity as to secure its favorable regard for the worshipper or its favorable action in his behalf or upon him. This conception is no doubt extended in this special case to a great extreme, in representing the benefit hoped for, sought and obtained, to be the actual transfusion of the deity's powers into the worshipper's person. Even so, however, the fundamental idea of sacrifices is retained—the securing of something from the deity for the worshipper; and this is something very different from a transaction intended directly to call out action on the part of the worshipper himself. It is in effect subversive of the whole principle of sacrificial worship to imagine that sacrifices are offered directly to affect the worshippers and to secure action from them: their purpose is to affect the deity and to secure beneficial action on its part. "The purpose of sacrifice," says J. Jeremias justly,³⁹ "is invariably to influence the deity in favour of the sacrificer." Every time the writers of the New Testament speak of the work of Christ under the rubric of a sacrifice, therefore, they bear witness—under any theory of sacrifice current among scholars—that they conceive of His work as directed Godward and as intended directly to affect God, not man.

It must be borne steadily in mind that the theories of sacrificial worship which we have been enumerating do not necessarily represent the judgment of their adherents on the nature and implications of sacrificial worship in the developed ritual of Israel, and much less in the decadence of Israelitish religion which is thought to have been in progress when the New Testament books were written. These theories are general theories and are put forward as attempts to determine the ideas which gave birth to and in

³⁹ *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 4120.

this sense underlie all sacrificial worship. The adherents of these theories for the most part recognize that in the course of the history of sacrificial worship many changes of conception took place, here, there, and elsewhere; many new ideas were incorporated and many old ones lost. They are quite prepared to look for and to trace out in the history of sacrificial worship, therefore, at least a "development," and this "development" is not thought of as necessarily running on the same lines—certainly not *pari passu*—in every nation. Though these theorists are inclined, therefore, to conceive all sacrificial worship as rooting in one notion, they are ordinarily willing to recognize that the "development" of sacrificial worship may have taken, or actually did take, its own direction in each region of the earth and among each people, as the conditions of its existence and modifying influences may have varied from time to time or from place to place. The history of sacrificial worship in Israel becomes thus a special subject of investigation; and scholars engaged upon it have wrought out their schemes of "development," beginning, each, with his own theory of the origin and essential presuppositions of sacrificial worship, and leading up through the stages recognized by him to the culmination of Israelitish sacrificial worship in the Levitical system. When we say that the sacrificial worship of Israel culminated in the Levitical system, this has a special significance for the investigations in question, seeing that they ordinarily proceed more or less completely on the assumption of the schematization of the development of religion in Israel which has been worked out by the Graf-Wellhausen school. This places the Levitical system at the end of the long development, and looks upon it as the final outcome of the actual religious effort of Israel. From this point of view we are apt to have, therefore, successively, discussions of sacrificial worship in the primitive Semitic ages, in the early Israelitish times, in the prophetic period, and in the prescriptions of the Levitical law. Thus a long course of development is interposed between the origin of sacrifices

and the enactments of the Levitical legislation; and the theorists are free from all embarrassment when they find sacrifices bearing a very different meaning and charged with very different implications in the Levitical system from what they had conceived their fundamental, that is, speaking historically, their primitive meaning and implication to be. It is not surprising, therefore, that in point of fact, the theorizers do ordinarily find the conceptions expressed in the Levitical system different from the fundamental ideas which they suppose to have been originally embodied in sacrificial worship.

It is quite common for them to find this difference precisely in this,—that the Levitical system is the elaborate embodiment of the piacular idea, while in earlier times some one of the other conceptions of sacrifice prevailed. On this view it is customary to say that the idea of expiation is first elaborated in the post-exilic period, in which the sin-offering takes the first place among types of sacrifices, and that special expiatory sacrifices are mentioned first in Ezekiel (xl. 39, xlii. 13, xliii. 19). The assumptions in this construction, to be sure, are challenged on both sides.

It is pointed out, on the one side, that the rise of special expiatory sacrifices is not the same thing as the rise of the conception of expiation in connection with sacrifices. A. Kuenen notes,⁴⁰ for example, that the burnt offering, which is thought the oldest of all sacrifices, was offered in earlier times in those cases for which, in the completed legislation, the expiatory sacrifices proper were required; and indeed it is clear that the whole burnt-offering can still be expiatory in the late document which is isolated as P (Lev. i. 4, xiv. 20, xvi. 24). And Robertson Smith does not hesitate to declare⁴¹ that “the atoning function of sacrifices is not confined to a particular class of oblation, but belongs to all sacrifices.” Of course this declaration is made from his own point of view; but it is not valid merely from his point

⁴⁰ *The Religion of Israel*, ed. iii. p. 263.

⁴¹ *Religion of the Semites*,² p. 237.

of view. For him all sacrifices go back to a primitive form in which the object is to maintain or to reinstate communion with the God. Expiation is in his view only the re-establishment of the broken bond: the original totemistic sacrifice had all the effects of an expiatory rite; and in all the developments which have followed, this element in their significance has never been lost. All trace of totemism is effaced; but the sense of expiation always abides and thus becomes the constant feature of sacrifices. Hubert and Mauss arrive at the same result along another pathway.⁴² In all sacrifices there is a thing offered—the victim, we may call it for brevity's sake. This victim is an intermediary. When we say intermediary, however, we say representative. And when we say representative, we say broadly, substitute. "Here is why the offerer inserts between the religious forces and himself intermediaries, the chief of which is the victim. If he went through this rite to the end himself, he would find in it death and not life. The victim takes his place. It alone enters into the dangerous region of the sacrifice, it succumbs there, and it is there in order to succumb. The offerer remains under cover; the gods take the victim instead of taking him. *It ransoms him.*" "There is no sacrifice," they add emphatically, "in which there does not intervene some idea of ransom." We may take it to be sufficiently clear, then, that, whatever conceptions may have from time to time and from place to place dominated the minds of sacrificial worship, the one constant idea which has always been present in it is precisely that of piacular mediation. And it is very plain indeed that we cannot look upon the Levitical legislation as the introduction of the piacular conception into the sacrificial system of Israel.

The criticism directed from the other side against the assumptions of the theory in question cannot be held to be so successful. The general contention of this criticism is that, while it is to be admitted that the drift in Israel was towards the piacular conception, yet that drift had not reached its

⁴² As cited, p. 134.

goal in the Levitical system, which thus at best marks only a stage in the progress towards it. There are some indeed who will not grant even so much as this. They see very definitely expressed in the Levitical system too some quite different conception of sacrificial worship, the Homage conception, say, or the Communion conception, according to which respectively the sacrifices are thought of as analogous to prayers or to sacraments. Others find it more convenient simply to deny that any definite conception whatever informs the Levitical system. The framers of this legislation were not clear in their own minds what was the real nature of sacrificial worship, but were content to practice it as an ordinance of God and to leave the mode of its operation in that mystery which probably enhanced rather than curtailed its influence upon the awe-stricken consciousness of the worshipper.⁴³ This extreme view has obtained a very considerable vogue, but need scarcely be taken seriously. It is plain enough that the Levitical system is something more than a series of blind rites, the whole value of the performance of which lies in the manifestation of implicit obedience to God. And it is generally allowed that the sacrificial conception of Israel, one stage in the development of which is marked by the Levitical system, was moving towards the idea of expiation to which it ultimately attained. Rudolf Smend, for instance, who supposes that the earliest sacrificial ideas of Israel saw in the sacrifices only acts of homage, yet considers that these ideas were steadily modified in later ages until they had run through all the stages up to that of reparation of sin—although he thinks it

⁴³ R. Smend, *Lehrb. d. A.T. Religionsgeschichte*, p. 324, *cf.*, G. F. Moore, *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 4226. Compare also A. B. Davidson, *Theology of the Old Testament*, pp. 352-4, where he says that the author of Leviticus has contented himself with stating the fact that the offering of a life atones, suggesting no explanation of why or how it atones. But he proceeds to remark that we can scarcely agree with Riehm that the blood atones merely because it is ordained that it shall, but should no doubt assume that there was a reason for the ordination, understood or not by the worshipper but no doubt at least dimly felt.

doubtful if the Israelites ever attained to a truly substitutionary theory.⁴⁴ H. J. Holtzmann, while insisting that the penal interpretation is not that of the law, feels compelled to admit that it was nevertheless the popular doctrine of the Jews and that traces of it found their way into the code itself.⁴⁵ A. B. Davidson, who believes that the earliest idea connected with sacrifice in Israel was that of "a gift to placate God," considers that this idea still underlies the law, and yet "in later times the other side was more prominent, that the death of the creature was of the nature of penalty, by the exaction of which the righteousness of Jehovah was satisfied."⁴⁶ "This idea," he adds, "seems certainly expressed in Is. LIII; at least these two points appear to be stated there, that the sins of the people, *i.e.*, the penalties for them, were laid on the servant and borne by him; and secondly, that thus the people were relieved from the penalty, and their sins being borne were forgiven." That there was a substitution in the law itself is recognized, on the other hand, by A. Dillmann, although he insists that this was not a substitution in kind, but of something not itself sin-bearing.⁴⁷

W. Robertson Smith is well known as the powerful advocate of one of the lowest possible theories of the meaning of the primitive sacrifices of the Semites—that which sees the origin of sacrifice in a meal in which the worshipper was supposed to become physically imbued with the God on whom he fed in symbol. But he did not imagine that the Semitic peoples continued permanently to be sunk in this crass notion. Following Robertson Smith's guidance, W. P. Paterson adopts the common-meal conception of primitive sacrifice—"the fundamental motive was to gratify God by giving or sharing with Him a meal"—but fully recog-

⁴⁴ As cited, p. 128.

⁴⁵ *Lehrbuch der Neutestamentlichen Theologie*,¹ 1897, vol. i, pp. 67-68.

⁴⁶ *Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 355, *cf.* 353. The use made of Davidson by W. L. Walker, *The Gospel of Reconciliation*, 1909, p. 21, seems scarcely justified.

⁴⁷ *O. T. Theologie*, pp. 488-9.

nizes that such changes had taken place in the progress of time that the Levitical system was just an elaborate embodiment of the piacular idea. In his view the whole system—in all its elements, and that not merely of animal but even of vegetable offerings—“contemplated the community as being in a state of guilt, and requiring to be reconciled to God.” In it, in short, sacrifices “have in fact become—not excepting the Peace-offering in its later interpretation—piacular sacrifices which dispose God to mercy, procure the forgiveness of sin and avert punishment.”⁴⁸ Accordingly he expounds the matter thus:⁴⁹ “The expiation of guilt is the leading purpose of the Levitical sacrifices. Their office is to cover or make atonement for sin. The word employed to describe this specific effect is כָּפַר . This efficacy is connected with all four kinds of principle offerings: the objects of the covering are persons and sins; the covering takes place before God, and it stands in a specially close relation to the sprinkling of the blood and the burning of the sacrificial flesh (Lev. i. 4, etc.)” It is not to be doubted, of course, that elements of adoration and of sacramental communion also enter into the sacrificial rites of the Levitical system: nothing could be clearer than that in the several sacrificial ordinances, a variety of religious motives find appropriate expression, and a variety of religious impressions are aimed at and produced. But it would seem quite impossible to erect these motives and impressions into the main, and certainly not into the sole, notion expressed or object sought in these ordinances. It may be confidently contended that, present as they undoubtedly are, they are present as subsidiary and ancillary to the fundamental func-

⁴⁸ Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. iv, p. 338 b: “The Meat-offering also covered from sin and delivered from its consequences.”

⁴⁹ As cited, p. 329 a. Cf. p. 343 a, where he sums up: “More likely is it that the step deemed by Holtzmann inevitable at a later stage was already taken, and that the chaos of confused ideas resulting from the discrediting of old views was averted by the assertion of the substitutionary idea—‘the most external indeed, but also the simplest, the most generally intelligible, and the readiest answer to the question as to the nature of expiation.’”

tion of the sacrifice, which is to propitiate the offended deity in behalf of sinful man. Any unbiased study of the Levitical system must issue, as it seems to us, in the conviction that this system is through and through, in its intention and effect, piacular.

It is, naturally, quite possible to contend that it is not of the first importance for the interpretation of the New Testament writers, when they represent our Lord as a sacrifice, to determine what the conception of sacrifice was which underlay the Levitical legislation. It may be urged that the ideas of the writers of the New Testament were not influenced so much by the Levitical system, as by the notion of sacrifice current in the Jewish thought of their time. As we have seen, however, there are very few who doubt that the Jews in the time when the New Testament was in writing held the doctrine of substitutive expiation in connection with the sacrificial system. George F. Moore is one of these few.⁵⁰ He is quite sure that the idea of *poena vicaria* is a pure importation into the Old Testament, the prevailing conception of sacrifice in which he conceives to be that of "gift." And he seems to imply that the later Jewish doctors were of a quite indefinite mind as to how the sacrifice operated in expiating sin. "The theory that the victim's life is put in place of the sinner's," he remarks, "is nowhere hinted at"; and he adds that this is "perhaps because the Jewish doctors understood better than the theologians what sin-offerings and trespass offerings were, and what they were for." We must leave it to him to make clear to himself—he has not made it clear to us—how such offerings could have been understood to "atone"—to make expiation for sin and to propitiate the offended deity—by the interposition of a slain victim, without any idea of vicarious penalty creeping in.

Even G. B. Stevens will not go the lengths of this. He apparently agrees with Moore, indeed, that the idea of the *poena vicaria* is absent from Old Testament sacrifices.

⁵⁰ *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, vol. 14, coll. 4223-4225.

But he seems to allow it even a determining place in the later Judaism. His prime contention at this point is, indeed, that it was from this later Judaism that Paul, for example, derived this conception. For he admits that in Paul, at least, "we have the idea of satisfaction by substitution"; and the precise thing on which he insists is that "this legalistic scheme Paul wrought out of the materials of current Jewish thought."⁵² He never tires in fact of scoring this teaching of Paul's as a mere remnant of Phariseeism,⁵³ in which, therefore, Christians are not bound to follow him. He is clearly so far right in this that this conception was part of Pharisaic belief. There are two conceptions indeed which beyond question—and probably no one questions it—lay together in the minds of the men of the New Testament times, forming the presuppositions of their thought concerning sin and its forgiveness. The one is that atonement for sin was wrought by the sacrifices; the other that vicarious sufferings availed for atonement. The former conception is crisply expressed by Heinrich Weinel thus: "At that time almost the only thought connected with sacrifice was that of a propitiatory rite, accompanied by the shedding of blood."⁵⁴ With respect to the latter H. H. Wendt points out the currency in the time of Jesus of "the idea of the expiatory significance of sufferings for guilt, and of the substitutionary significance of the excessive sufferings of the righteous for the sins of others."⁵⁵

Needless to say both facts thus expressed are fully recognized even by, say, G. F. Moore. He tells us that in the Palestinian schools of the first and second Christian centuries, "the effect of sacrifice is expressed as in the Pentateuch, by the verb *kipper*, 'make propitiation,' 'expiation,'"

⁵¹ *The Christian Doctrine of Salvation*, p. 62, cf. p. 65.

⁵² As cited, p. 66.

⁵³ As cited, pp. 73-75.

⁵⁴ *Saint Paul*, E. T. p. 302.

⁵⁵ *Teaching of Jesus*, E. T. vol. ii, p. 243. He refers in support to F. Weber, *Jüdische Theologie*² 1897, § 70, p. 326 ff. and to E. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, vol. ii, p. 466 (E. T. Div. vi, vol. ii, p. 1867).

that "the general principle is that all private sacrifices atone, except peace offerings (including thank offerings), with which no confession of sin is made."⁵⁶ And he tells us as explicitly not only that an expiatory character was attributed to suffering, but that "the suffering and death of righteous men" were held "to atone for the sins of others."⁵⁷ It would seem inconceivable that such relatable ideas could be kept apart in the mind which gave harborage to both: it is inhuman for us to imagine that men, merely because they lived a few hundred years ago, were incapable of putting even one and one together. And as we read over, say, the ceremonial for the Day of Atonement in the Mishnah tractate *Yoma* we can scarcely fail to see that this one and one were put together. Paul Fiebig occupies a general position very similar to that of G. F. Moore: he is eager to make it clear that the men of old time in their religious rites troubled themselves very little about ideas, and lived much more in usages and ceremonies carried out with painful exactness. Yet he cannot refuse to add:⁵⁸ "This is not to say that the ritual of the Day of Atonement did not suggest a variety of ideas,—this idea for example: 'You, a sinner, have really deserved death, but this sacrificial animal now bears the punishment of your sin.' Or this: 'The sacrificial animal now bears the sin away into the wilderness; so soon as the goat which is sent to Azazel (*cf.* Lev. lxi.) into the wilderness is gone, the sins have also disappeared.' Ideas of substitution and reparation, of bearing the curse of sin,—and also of a gift by means of which the deity is to be propitiated—are suggested here. The sacrificial animal might also be thought of as a purchase-price, as ransom-money, and the whole sacrifice be placed under the point of view of ransoming. All these ideas were suggested and were simply and easily to be read out of the ritual." We think it necessary to say, not merely that such ideas as these might be suggested by the ceremonial of the Day of Atone-

⁵⁶ As cited, col. 4223.

⁵⁷ As cited, col. 4225, *cf.* col. 4232.

⁵⁸ *Jesu Blut ein Geheimnis?* 1906, p. 53.

ment, and—each in its own measure—by the several varieties of sacrifice which were in use; but that they were inevitably suggested by them and, in point of fact, formed the circle of ideas which make up in their entirety what we may justly think of as the sacrificial conception of the time.⁵⁹

Whether, then, we look to the Levitical system or to the conceptions current at the time when the New Testament was written as determining the sense of the writers of the New Testament when they spoke of Christ as a sacrifice, the most natural meaning that can be attached to the term on their lips is that of an expiatory offering propitiating God's favor and reconciling Him to guilty man. An attempt may be made, to be sure, to break the force of this finding by representing sacrificial worship to have fallen so much into the background in the time of our Lord that it no longer possessed importance for the religious thought of the day. Martin Brückner tells us that there is no exposi-

⁵⁹ It is by a misapprehension that J. K. Mozley, *The Doctrine of Atonement*, 1916, p. 20, supporting himself on G. B. Stevens, seems to deny the sacrificial character of the scape-goat: "As to the ritual of the Day of Atonement, here also the old opinion is not as firmly established as might appear at first sight. The culminating point is the sending away of the goat 'for Azazel,' but we must remember that 'the flesh of this goat was not burned; atonement was not made by the blood: it was not a sacrifice at all.'" The quotation is from Stevens, as cited, p. 11. On the other hand Hugo Gressmann, *Der Ursprung der israelitisch-jüdischen Eschatologie*, 1905, pp. 328-9 sees the sacrificial idea at its height represented in the scape-goat. He is speaking of the Ebed and adverting to the ascription of "a substitutive expiatory character" to his sufferings and death, and remarks: "The sacrificial idea stands in the background. We have materially an exact parallel in the goat of Azazel which was offered as an expiatory sacrifice on the great Day of Atonement. . . . The goat is burdened with the sin of the congregation and offered substitutionally for it. For the expulsion of the goat is only a specific form of sacrifice (Hubert et Mauss, *Essai sur la nature et la fonction du sacrifice* in 'L'Année Sociologique' Second quar. Paris, 1898, p. 75). The expiatory significance which is attached to the death of the Ebed fully corresponds with the expiatory character which is ascribed here to the goat." At the place cited, supplemented at pp. 78 f. and 92, Hubert and Mauss assign the scape-goat to its right category and expound convincingly its character as an expiatory sacrifice, thus supplying a corrective to the exposition of W. R. Smith on which Stevens supports himself.

tion of the Jewish theory of sacrifice given in W. Bousset's book on the *Religion of Judaism* because "there wasn't any."⁶⁰ Supposing, however, the fact to be as stated—that the doctrine of sacrifice played so small a part in the religion of the later Judaism that it may be treated as negligible in a summary of the religious conceptions of the time,—that would only add significance to the employment of it by the New Testament writers as a paradigm into which to run their conception of the work of Christ. The further they must be supposed to have gone afield to find this rubric, the more importance they must be supposed to have attached to it as a vehicle of their doctrine. We are not inquiring into the abstract likelihood of the New Testament writers making use of a rare rubric: their use of it is not in dispute.⁶¹ We are estimating the measure of significance which must be attributed to their use of a rubric which they actually employ. The less a mere matter-of-course their employment of it can be shown to be, the more it must be recognized that they had a distinct purpose in using it and the more weight must be assigned to its implications in their hands. Brückner's remark, therefore, that sacrificial worship had become in the time of Christ "without importance" for Jewish theology reacts injuriously upon his main contention in the passage where it occurs—namely that it was without importance for Paul.

It has become almost a fashion to speak minimizingly of Paul's employment of the category of sacrifice in his explanation of Christ's work, and it is interesting to observe how hard Nemesis treads on the heels of the attempt to do so. Brückner's instance affords a very good example. What he wishes to do is to lower the importance of the conception of sacrifice in Paul's system of thought concern-

⁶⁰ *Die Entstehung des paulinischen Christologie*, 1903, p. 231.

⁶¹ Of course nothing is ever absolutely undisputed. Paterson, as cited, p. 343, b, very properly remarks: "It has been denied that Paul adopts the category (Schmidt, *Die paul. Christologie*, p. 84) but the denial rests on dogmatic rather than exegetical grounds (Ritzsch, ii. p. 164)."

ing the work of Christ. He seeks to do this by suggesting that the sacrificial language served with Paul little further purpose than to express the notion of substitution. "The idea of a sacrifice," he remarks, "came into consideration for Paul only as an illustration of a conception: the thing which he intended lies in the theory of substitution"—a substitution which, he proceeds to show, includes in it the idea of "a substitutive punishment." Paul, in other words, calls Christ a sacrifice only with a view to showing that Christ too offered Himself as a substitutive expiation of our sins. What more could he be supposed to have intended? The contrast between the minimizing tone adopted and the effect of the facts adduced to support it, is perhaps even more striking in the remarks of A. E. J. Rawlinson, writing in the collection of Oxford essays published under the title of *Foundations*.⁶² With Paul, he tells us, Christ is spoken of as a sacrifice only by way of "an occasional illustration or a momentary point of comparison." He refers to Christ as "our Passover, sacrificed for us," as "making peace by his blood," as in some sense a "propitiation." "Apart from the three phrases quoted in the text," he adds in a note, "and the statement in Ephesians v. 2, 'Even as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for an odor of a sweet savor'—where the self-oblation of Christ is compared not to a sin-offering, but to a burnt-offering,—there do not appear to be any passages in St. Paul which interpret the work of Christ in sacrificial terms." Not Gal. iii. 13 (Deut. xxi. 23), since "sacrificial victims were never regarded as 'accursed'." Not in the idea of vicarious suffering—which is not a sacrificial idea—only the scape-goat being a sin-bearer (Lev. xvi.) and the scape-goat not being sacrificed. The reader will scarcely escape the impression that a great deal of unavailing trouble is being expended here in an effort to remove unwelcome facts out of the way. And it will not be strange if he wonders what advantage is supposed to be gained from

⁶² *Foundations*, 1912, p. 193.

insisting that Paul has made little use of the category of sacrifice for expounding his view of the nature of Christ's work, so long as it is recognized that he does employ it, and that therefore it must be understood to be a suitable expression of his view. "St. Paul does not appear to have made great use of Old Testament ideas of sacrifice," remarks J. K. Mozley:⁶³ "Ritschl indeed in the second volume of his great work, lays stress on the importance of the sacrificial system for Paul's doctrine, but we can hardly go beyond the balanced statement of Dr. Stevens (*Christian Doctrine of Salvation*, p. 60): 'While Paul has made a less frequent and explicit use of sacrificial ideas than we should have expected, it is clear that the system supplied one of the forms of thought by which he interpreted Christ's death.'" That allowed, however, and all is allowed: agree that the rubric of sacrifice lent itself naturally to the expression of what Paul would convey concerning the death of Christ,⁶⁴ and we might as well say frankly with Paterson that to Paul, "the sacrifice of Christ has the significance of the death of an innocent victim in the room of the guilty," and add with him, with equal frankness: "It is vain to deny that St. Paul freely employs the category of substitution, involving the conception of the impartation or transference of moral qualities"—although it might perhaps be well to

⁶³ *The Doctrine of the Atonement*, 1916, p. 79, note.

⁶⁴ Is perhaps part of the difficulty which so many writers feel on this matter due to approaching it from a wrong angle, and thinking not so much of Paul's expressing his convictions concerning Christ's death in terms of sacrifice as of his imposing on the death of Christ mechanically ideas derived from the sacrifices? Paul's conviction that Christ had died for our sins, bearing them in His own body on the tree, is the primary thing: the sacrificial language he applies to it is one of his modes of stating this fundamental fact. He begins always with the great fact of the expiatory death of Christ. "Menegoz has admirably remarked," says Orello Cone justly in a parallel matter, "that Paul's faith in the expiatory sacrifice of Christ was not the conclusion of a process of reasoning on the relation between the mercy and justice of God, but, on the contrary, the apostle's ideas on the justice and mercy of God were founded on his faith in the expiatory death of Christ."

use some more exact phraseology in saying it than Paterson has managed to employ.

There is one book of the New Testament of which it has proved impossible for even the hardest to deny that Christ's death is presented in it as a sacrifice. We refer, of course, to the Epistle to the Hebrews. In it not only is Christ's death directly described as a sacrifice, but all the sacrificial language is gathered about it in the repeated allusions which are made to it as such.⁶⁵ Nor is it doubtful that it is distinctly of expiatory sacrifices that the author is thinking when he presents Christ as dying a sacrificial death. He even uses of it "that characteristic term inseparably associated in the Old Testament with these sacrifices" (*ἱλάσκομαι*, ii. 17) the absence of which from the allusion to Christ's sacrifice in other parts of the New Testament has been made a matter of remark—although it is not really absent from them, but is present in its derivatives (*ἱλαστήριον*, Rom. iii. 25; *ἱλασμός*, 1 John ii. 2, iv. 10) justifying fully Paterson's remark⁶⁶ that "the idea of cancelling guilt, in which a vital moment is liability to punishment, is associated with Christ's sacrifice in Heb. ii. 17, 1 John ii. 2 (*ἱλάσκεσθαι* with *ἁμαρτίας* as object, and so 'to expiate')." The Epistle to the Hebrews does not, however, really stand apart from the rest of the New Testament in these things, as, indeed, we have just incidentally pointed out with reference to the

⁶⁵ B. F. Westcott, *Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 297, speaks of Christ's sacrifice as being presented in the Epistle to the Hebrews "in three distinct aspects," "(1) as a Sacrifice of Atonement (ix. 14, 15); (2) as a Covenant Sacrifice (ix. 15-17); and (3) as a Sacrifice which is the ground-work of a Feast (xiii. 10, 11)." This is true; but it is possible to press analysis over-far. The "Sacrifice which is the ground of a Feast" is the sacrifice of which we hear in the institution of the Lord's Supper, and this is distinctly a "Covenant Sacrifice." The "Covenant Sacrifice" (ix. 15, 17) is a sacrifice for sin (ix. 12, 26), and is therefore fundamentally piacular and atoning, as indeed its relation to the passover-lamb sufficiently intimates. In His sacrifice Christ fulfilled all the functions of sacrifice, and thus there are varied aspects in which His sacrifice may be looked upon. But above all else, He made expiation for the sins of His people by immolating Himself on the altar—thus putting away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

⁶⁶ As cited, p. 344 a.

Levitical term for sacrificial expiation, employed as it is by Paul and John as well as by this author. It only has its own points to make and distributes the emphasis to suit them. Even in such a peculiar matter as the ascription to Christ at once of the functions of priest and sacrifice, it may possibly have a parallel in Eph. v. 2.⁶⁷ The fact is, as Paterson broadly asserts in words which were quoted from him at the opening of this discussion, that every important type of New Testament teaching, including the teaching of Christ Himself, concurs in representing Christ as a sacrifice, and in conceiving of the sacrifice which it represents Christ as being, as a substitutive expiation. We say, including Christ Himself; and we may say that with our eye exclusively on the Synoptic Gospels. The language of Matt. xx. 28, Mark x. 45 is sacrificial language; and it is very distinctly substitutive language,—“In the place of many.” That of Matt. xxvi. 28, Mark xiv. 24, Luke xxii. 20 (the critical questions which have been raised about these passages are negligible) is sacrificial language; and it is equally distinctly expiatory language—“Blood shed for many,” “For the remission of sins.”⁶⁸

The possibility of underrating the wealth and importance of the allusions of the writers of the New Testament to the death of Christ as sacrificial, in the sense of expiatory, appears to depend upon a tendency to recognize such allusions only when express references to sacrifices are made in connection with it, if we should not even say only when didactic expositions of it as a sacrifice are developed. Nothing can be more certain, for example, than that the reference to the “blood” of Jesus are one and all ascriptions of a sacrificial character and effect to His death.⁶⁹ Neverthe-

⁶⁷ Cf. J. K. Mozley, *The Doctrine of the Atonement*, 1916, p. 82, note 1: “Eph. 1, 7 also refutes Pfeleiderer’s statement (ii. 175) that in this Epistle Christ is not the expiatory sacrifice, but the sacrificing priest. The latter idea is certainly that of v. 2, but St. Paul may as easily have united the two conceptions as did the writer to the Hebrews.”

⁶⁸ Cf. the discussion of these passages by Mozley, as cited, chapter ii.

⁶⁹ In general these references comprise: (1) certain general passages;

less, we meet with attempts to explain these ascriptions away. Thus, for example, G. F. Moore writes as follows, having more particularly in mind Paul's usage:⁷⁰ "Evidence of a more pervasive association of Christ's death with sacrifice has been sought in the references to the blood as the ground of the benefits conferred by his death (Rom. iii. 25, v. 9): the thought of sacrifice is so constantly associated with his death, it is said, that the one word suffices to suggest it. But in view of the infrequency, to say the least, of sacrificial metaphors in the greater epistles, it is doubtful whether *αἷμα* is not used merely in allusion to Jesus' violent death. Nor is the case clearer in Col. i. 20, Eph. i. 7, ii. 13; the really noteworthy thing is that the context contains no suggestion of sacrifice either in thought or in phrase." Such argumentation seems to us merely perverse. The discovery of allusions to the sacrificial character of Christ's death in the reiterated mention of His blood is not a mere assumption deriving color only from the frequency of other references to His sacrificial death; it has its independent ground in the nature of these allusions themselves. In every instance mentioned, so far from the context containing no suggestion of sacrifice, it is steeped in sacrificial suggestions. Is there no sacrificial suggestion in such language as this: "Whom God set forth as a propitiation, through faith, in His blood"? Or in such language as this: "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us: much more then having been now justified by His blood, we shall be saved by Him from the wrath"? Or as this: "And by Him to reconcile all things unto Him, having made peace through the blood of His cross"? Or as this: "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the for-

Heb. ix. 14, 20, x. 29, xii. 24, 1 Pet. i. 19, 1 John i. 7; (2) certain eucharistic passages, Matt. xxvi. 28, Mark xiv. 24, Luke xxii. 20, 1 Cor. xi. 25; John vi. 53, 54, 55, 56, 1 Cor. x. 16; (3) the formula, *διὰ τῆς αἱματός* (or its equivalent), Acts xx. 28, Eph. i. 7, Col. i. 20, Heb. ix. 12, xiii. 12 (1 John v. 6), Rev. xii. 11; and (4) the formula *ἐν τῇ αἱματι* (or its equivalent) Rom. iii. 25, v. 9, 1 Cor. xi. 25 (27) Eph. ii. 13, Heb. x. 19 (xiii. 25); 1 John v. 63, Rev. i. 5, v. 9, vii. 14.

⁷⁰ *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, col. 4230.

giveness of sins"? Or as this: "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been made nigh in the blood of Christ"? This is the very language of the altar: "propitiation," "reconciliation," "redemption," "forgiveness." It passes all comprehension how it could be suggested that the word "blood" could be employed in such connections "merely in allusion to Jesus' violent death." And that particularly when Jesus' death was not actually an especially bloody death. "Another remarkable thing," says Paul Fiebig,⁷¹ "is this: why is precisely the 'blood' of Jesus so often spoken of? Why is the redemption and the forgiveness of sins so often connected with the 'blood' of Jesus? This is remarkable; for the death on the cross was not so very bloody that it should be precisely the blood of Jesus which so impressed the eye-witnesses and the first Christians. The Evangelists moreover (except John xix. 35 f) say nothing about it. This special emphasis on the blood cannot be explained therefore from the kind of death Jesus died." If we really wish to know what the New Testament writers had in mind when they spoke of the blood of Jesus we have only to permit them to tell us themselves. They always adduce it in the sacrificial sense. In his survey of the passages Fiebig begins⁷² not unnaturally with 1 Pet. i:17-19: "Knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers: but with precious blood as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, Christ." His comment runs thus: "Here the clause 'as of a pure and unspotted lamb' makes quite clear what the popular and at that time wholly clear conception is which provides the key to the problem of the redemptive significance of the blood of Jesus. This conception is the sacrifice; and of course the sacrifice such as every Jew (and in corresponding fashion, every heathen) knew it from his daily life and from the festivals and duties of his religion."

⁷¹ As cited, p. 11.

⁷² P. 13.

This is of course only one passage; but in this case the adage is true, *ab uno disce omnes*,—we may spare ourselves the survey of the whole series.

The theology of the writers of the New Testament is very distinctly a "blood theology." But their reiterated reference of the salvation of men to the blood of Christ is not the only way in which they represent the work of Christ as in its essential character sacrificial. In numerous other forms of allusion they show that they conceived the idea of sacrifice to supply a suitable explanation of its nature and effect. We may avail ourselves of words of James Denney to sum up the matter briefly,—words which are in certain respects over-cautious, but which contain the essence of the matter. "We have every reason to believe," says he,⁷³ "that sacrificial blood universally, and not only in special cases, was associated with propitiatory power. 'The atoning function of sacrifice,' as Robertson Smith puts it, speaking of primitive times, 'is not confined to a particular class of oblation, but belongs to all sacrifices.'⁷⁴ Dr. Driver has expressed the same opinion with regard to the Levitical legislation. . . . Criticizing Ritschl's explanation of sacrifice and its effect, he says,⁷⁵ 'it seems better to suppose that though the burnt-, peace-, and meat-offerings were not offered *expressly*, like the sin- and guilt-offerings, for the forgiveness of sin, they nevertheless (in so far as *kipper* is predicated of them) were regarded as 'covering' or neutralizing, the offerer's unworthiness to appear before God, and so, though in a much less degree than the sin- or guilt-offering, as effectively *Kappara* in the sense ordinarily attached to the word, viz. 'propitiation.' Instead of saying 'in a much less degree' I should prefer to say 'with a less specific reference or application,' but the point is not material. What it concerns us to note is that the New Testament, while it abstains from interpreting Christ's death by any special prescriptions of the Levitical law, constantly uses sacrificial

⁷³ *The Death of Christ*, ed. 1903, pp. 53-4.

⁷⁴ *Religion of the Semites*, p. 219.

⁷⁵ *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*, s.v. "Propitiation," p. 132.

language to describe that death, and in doing so unequivocally recognizes in it a propitiatory character—in other words, a reference to sin and its forgiveness.” What this fundamentally means is that the New Testament writers, in employing this language to describe the death of Christ, intended to represent that death as performing the functions of an expiatory sacrifice; wished to be understood as so representing it; and could not but be so understood by their first readers who were wonted to sacrificial worship. ✓

An interesting proof that they were so understood is supplied by a remarkable fact emphasized in a striking passage by Adolf Harnack.⁷⁶ Wherever the Christian religion went, there blood-sacrifice ceased to be offered—just as the tapers go out when the sun rises. Christ's death was recognized everywhere where it became known as the reality of which they were the shadows. Having offered His own body once for all and by this one offering perfected forever them that are sanctified, it was well understood that there remained no more offering for sin. “The death of Christ,” says Harnack—“of this there can be no doubt—made an end to blood-sacrifices in the history of religion.” “The instinct which led to them found its satisfaction and therefore its end in the death of Christ.” “His death had the value of a sacrificial death; for otherwise it would not have had the power to penetrate into that inner world out of which the blood-sacrifices proceeded,”—and, penetrating into it, to meet, and to satisfy all the needs which blood-sacrifices had been invented to meet and satisfy.

The whole world thus adds its testimony to the sacrificial character of Christ's death as it has received it, and as it rests upon it. As to the world's need of it, and as to the place it takes in the world, we shall let a sentence of C. Bigg's teach us. “The study of the great Greek and Roman moralists of the Empire,” he tells us,⁷⁷ “leaves upon my own

⁷⁶ *Das Wesen des Christentums*, ed. 1900, pp. 98-99: E.T. *What is Christianity?* 1901, pp. 156 ff.

⁷⁷ *The Church's Task under the Roman Empire*, p. x.

mind a strong conviction that the fundamental difference between heathenism of all shades and Christianity is to be discovered in the doctrine of Vicarious Sacrifice, that is to say, the Passion of our Lord." This is as much as to say that not only is the doctrine of the sacrificial death of Christ embodied in Christianity as an essential element of the system, but in a very real sense it constitutes Christianity. It is this which differentiates Christianity from other religions. Christianity did not come into the world to proclaim a new morality and, sweeping away all the supernatural props by which men were wont to support their trembling guilt-stricken souls, to throw them back on their own strong right arms to conquer a standing before God for themselves. It came to proclaim the real sacrifice for sin which God had provided in order to supersede all the poor fumbling efforts which men had made and were making to provide a sacrifice for sin for themselves; and, planting men's feet on this, to bid them go forward. It was in this sign that Christianity conquered, and it is in this sign alone that it continues to conquer. We may think what we will of such a religion. What cannot be denied is that Christianity is such a religion.

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