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SACRIFICES IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

SACRIFICES IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

THEIR ORIGIN, PURPOSES AND
DEVELOPMENT

BY

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Men and Women, of King's College,
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PREFATORY NOTE

THIS volume is an elaboration and expansion of lectures delivered before the theological students at King's College, University of London. The interest evinced in the subject emboldened the writer to put the lectures into book form, and thereby to present them to a larger public. There are many, and their number seems to be increasing, who are attracted to the Old Testament on account of its many-sided interests – religion, history, mythology, archæology, folklore, philology ; to such it may be useful to have a general picture of what was the most important part of Israelite religion, namely sacrificial worship, touching as it does, in one way or another, all the subjects just mentioned. That the writer is indebted to many scholars in attempting to grapple with the complicated subject of the origin and development of sacrificial ideas will be seen by the numerous quotations from, or references to, their works. A number of controversial topics necessarily arise in connexion with this difficult subject, but to set forth the arguments for and against any particular matter dealt with would have taken up far too much space ; the writer is, however, none the less grateful to those from whom he has learned much, but with whose views he is at times unable to agree.

The theory put forth in the following pages is, briefly, this : All types of sacrifices were originally based on one or other of three fundamental ideas and purposes, whatever subsidiary elements may have entered in ; those purposes were to offer gifts, to effect communion, and to liberate and give life. Eternal truths were enshrined in the crude forms of sacrifice offered for these purposes, and ultimately these truths received their fulness of expression and realisation in the Person of Jesus Christ. That, in barest

outline, is the theory which the writer attempts to establish in what follows.

The writer desires to express his warmest thanks to Miss Hippisley, S.Th., and to the Rev. Dr. H. H. Rowley for most kindly reading through the manuscript. To Miss Hippisley he is also greatly indebted for having prepared the index of biblical and post-biblical passages.

An apology is offered for the want of consistency in the transliteration of Hebrew and Arabic letters ; difference of usage by writers and in quotations from books must be pleaded in excuse.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY: THEORIES OF SACRIFICE

OUR main object in the following pages is to show that the sacrifices of which we read in the Old Testament were offered for three main purposes : as gifts to the Deity, as a means of union with Him, and as a means of liberating life.

But, in order to do this, some preliminary investigation is demanded as to the purposes of sacrifices among the Semites in general ; and, even prior to this, some consideration, cursory though it be, must be given to the ideas and customs of uncultured peoples, so far as sacrifices are concerned. Inasmuch as the institution of sacrifices seems to witness to the existence of some basic needs and aspirations inherent in human nature, its earliest and simplest forms, so far as these can be ascertained, may be supposed to throw some light upon what the Old Testament records have to say about it. Among the Israelites there are to be discerned, side by side, developed ideas in regard to sacrifice together with the lingering on of more primitive conceptions ; so that, when investigating the real meaning and purposes of sacrifices among them, the earlier stages of growth cannot be ignored, otherwise the significance of many rites and customs will be lost. Moreover, the world-wide offering of sacrifices in the past witnesses to the existence of a universal belief in supernatural powers ; so that the relationship indicated thereby between the offerers and the recipients of their offerings is of importance in studying the relations between the Israelites and their God, as indicated by their sacrifices. The original institution of sacrifice was based

upon the conception that the supernatural and powerful beings, upon whom men were dependent, were in their nature similar to human beings, and therefore had the same needs. Like men, too, they were of variable temperament, angry and vindictive if annoyed, but kindly disposed if approached in the right spirit, and treated as superior beings should be by their inferiors. This, too, must be borne in mind when studying the institution among the Israelites.

The term "sacrifice" is somewhat misleading when used in reference to the offerings of uncultured peoples; being derived from the Latin *sacer*, "holy," and *facere*, "to make," it connotes, in its modern use, something made holy, i.e. something forfeited or destroyed, and by that act dedicated to the Deity. But to early man an offering did not partake of a holy character, at any rate not in the modern sense. His offerings were largely of a utilitarian character; he gave in order to receive, for the most part; and, even in the case of an offering for the purposes of union with the supernatural power, egotism entered in to a large extent. Hence the word "offering" would be more appropriate when the sacrifices of primitive¹ peoples are spoken of. We have, however, become so accustomed to use the term "sacrifice" in a non-etymological sense, that there is no objection in our using it in reference to the offerings of savages.

It is natural enough that, in the study of such a highly complicated subject as that of the purposes of sacrifice, scholars should have propounded a variety of theories. The immense mass of *data* which are available are often susceptible of different interpretations, while the difficulty of entering into the mentality and outlook of early man is admittedly great.

We shall begin with a brief examination of the theories of various authorities; for this will, on the one hand, show the complexity of the subject, and at the same time give some insight into the many possible objects for which

¹ We are not, of course, using the term in its literal sense.

sacrifices may have been offered. We cannot claim that our examination will be exhaustive, but we hope to be able to indicate, at any rate, most of the really important theories which specialists in the subject have held in the past, or champion at the present day.

Roughly speaking, two stages are to be discerned in the history of the study of our subject: the earlier was that during which it was held that all sacrifices had in origin a single purpose; the second was, and is, that wherein it is realised that the origin and purposes of sacrifices cannot be explained on the theory of any one single underlying principle. According to almost all later theories, there was more than one object in offering sacrifices.

We may begin with a reference to Lasaulx's theory that sacrifices were originally all offered with the one purpose of effecting a reconciliation with the god; they were, that is to say, in the nature of an atonement, i.e. expiatory in character.¹ It is not our present purpose to discuss or criticise the various theories held, in any detail, but merely to record them. Clearly, however, Lasaulx was over-influenced in his ideas by beliefs of far later date occurring in the Old Testament writings of post-exilic times.

The first to enter upon this difficult subject in a really scientific manner was E. B. Tylor. He maintained that sacrifice was in its origin a gift offered to supernatural beings either to secure their favour or to avert their wrath. It was analogous to the present which might be offered to a tribal chieftain. "The gift-theory," he says, "as standing on its own independent basis, properly takes the first place. That most childlike kind of offering, the giving of a gift with, as yet, no definite thought how the receiver can take or use it, may be the most primitive, as it is the most rudimentary, sacrifice."²

This was also Réville's view; he says: "There can be no doubt that they [i.e. sacrifices] were originally suggested

¹ *Classische Studien*, pp. 233 ff. (1854).

² *Primitive Culture*, ii. 375 ff. (5th ed., 1913).

by the idea that the divine being, whatever it may have been – whether a natural object, an animal, or a creature analogous to man – liked what we liked, was pleased with what pleases us, and had the same tastes and the same proclivities as ours. This was the fundamental idea that urged the polytheistic peoples along the path of religious anthropomorphism.”¹ Elsewhere he says : “ Under all its forms, sacrifice is the offering to the divinity of that which is considered likely to dispose him favourably towards the offerer . . . in primitive times, especially, man, judging his divinities by himself, considered that words alone did not merit a good gift from them. Thence, and very naturally, he determined to make them presents.”²

In effect, though writing at a later time, Curtiss holds a similar theory to this : After prolonged observation in Syria, Palestine, and the Sinaitic Peninsula, as it is called, he came to the conclusion that “ sacrifice may be regarded as a gift on the part of a suppliant, which is designed favourably to dispose some (supernatural) being, who is a god to him, in some undertaking he is about to enter, or to remove his anger. . . .” After laying particular stress on the fact that the “ shedding of blood,” the “ bursting forth of blood,” is the essential element in sacrifice, he adds : “ It is clear that the necessity of shedding blood does not exclude the character of sacrifice as a gift.”³ Most interesting as Curtiss’s book is, and important from the point of view of Semitic belief, it deals only with modern conditions ; and although many old-world conceptions persist among the Arabs and others in the regions dealt with, many have long since died out. They have, for example, no idea of the original meaning of the sacrificial feast, although it is religiously kept up. The gift-idea, upon which Curtiss lays so much stress, is, of course, primitive ; but there was much more than this in the purposes of sacrifice.

¹ *The Origin and Growth of Religion*, p. 86 (1895).

² *Prolegomena of the History of Religions*, pp. 128 f. (1884).

³ *Primitive Semitic Religion To-day*, pp. 221 f. (1902).

This is brought out by Buchanan Gray, whose most important book, of later date, may be mentioned at this point. While he upholds very strongly the gift-idea of sacrifice, he fully recognises other elements. For example, after a reference to the sacrifices, respectively, of Cain and Abel, he continues: "But there are other stories of sacrifice, and there is one species of sacrifice defined in the laws, that would immediately challenge any theory that attempted to represent all sacrifices as having been regarded, or perhaps it would be safer to say, as having been treated, even in historical times, as gifts to God, and nothing more. When a man slays an animal, gives *small* portions to Yahweh, but, together with his friends, eats the *larger* part himself, the whole proceeding is obviously something more than, or rather other than, the simple presentation of a gift to God. I refer to this matter, though only quite summarily, here in order to preclude the supposition that I am arguing that all sacrifices ever were, or came to be treated as, nothing but gifts."¹

Similar to this view is that of Eichrodt, who holds that the most important of the fundamental objects of sacrifice were: the gift for the purpose of giving nourishment to the supernatural powers, and sacramental communion; to these, however, he adds the idea of reconciliation. He says, further: "The most primitive conception is probably that sacrifice was offered to the deity as a nourishment for the purpose of giving him strength."²

Herbert Spencer's view likewise partakes of the gift-theory, but he connects it in origin with offerings to the departed: "the origin of sacrifice is to be found in the custom of leaving food and drink at the graves of the dead, and as the ancestral spirits rose to divine rank the refreshment for the dead developed into sacrifices."³

So much for the gift-theory, though, for convenience' sake

¹ *Sacrifice in the Old Testament*, p. 3 (1925).

² *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, i. 65 (1933).

³ *Principles of Sociology*, i. 277 ff. (1885).

we have referred to the view of some who, while laying the main stress on gifts, recognise other elements in the earliest purposes of sacrifices.

A new era in the study of the whole subject was inaugurated by Robertson Smith ; he maintained that the object of sacrifice was " to provide the material for an act of sacrificial communion with the god . . . animal sacrifices are essentially acts of communion between the god and his worshippers."¹ An animal sacrifice, that is to say, in its primitive form, was, according to Robertson Smith, a sacramental ritual act, by means of which the worshippers became united to the god. The deity was immanent in what they partook of ; by eating the victim, therefore, they received the god into themselves, and thus became united with him. Robertson Smith's theory involved the further contention that sacrifice, in its origin, was connected with totemism. This term, which belongs originally to some of the North American Indian tribes, denotes a form of society in which the members of a clan believe themselves to be united by kinship to some animal from which the clan is descended. So that, in partaking of the totem animal, which on special and solemn occasions was sacrificed, the worshippers were really partaking of their god ; for, according to very ancient ideas of kinship, every animal of its own kind was indissolubly connected by a tie of kin. It must be added, however, that Robertson Smith did not maintain that all gods were of totemistic origin ; in his own words : " We are not to suppose that every local deity will have had totem associations, for new gods as well as new sanctuaries might doubtless spring up at a later stage of human progress than that of which totemism is characteristic."² His theory deals with what he held to be the original purpose of sacrifice, not with its later developments.

Among the scholars who have followed in the steps of

¹ *The Religion of the Semites*, pp. 245 f. (3rd ed., 1927 ; the first edition was published in 1889).

² *Op. cit.*, p. 138.

Robertson Smith, one of the most eminent is Jevons ; he says, for example : “ The sacrificial and sacramental meal, which from the beginning has been the centre of all religion, has from the beginning also always been a moment in which the consciousness has been present to man of communion with the god of his prayers – without that consciousness man had no motive to continue the practice of the rite. In the beginning, again, the sacramental meal required, for the annual renewal of the blood-covenant, that the worshipper should partake of the body and blood of the victim ; this participation was the condition and cause of the communication of spiritual and supernatural protection to the worshipper against the supernatural dangers by which primitive man was surrounded.”¹ As to the idea that sacrifices were in their origin gifts to a supernatural being, Jevons says : “ The gift-theory has in modern times contributed to a fundamentally erroneous conception of the history of religion. It has been supposed that all offerings were from the very beginning gifts, whereas in truth the earlier ‘ offerings ’ were but means for placing the worshipper in physical contact and permanent communion with his god.”²

Against this we have, for example, Baumgartner’s contention that the simplest and original idea of sacrifice is that of a gift offered with the object of obtaining the favour of the supernatural power, and to be assured of a *quid pro quo*. He says, further, that “ offering and prayer are the two main elements in the cultus ; they are closely associated ; originally, sacrifice is nothing else than a prayer accompanied by gifts, a request with a necessary gift, brought with the purpose of supporting the request by showing the recognition of the fact that the gaining of divine favour must cost something. Sacrifice has, thus, the purpose of showing the condition of dependence on the deity and of influencing him favourably.” Other elements come in : the honouring of the deity by recognising his power and the justice of his

¹ *An Introduction to the History of Religion*, p. 285 (1904).

² *Op. cit.*, p. 225.

claims ; to avert his wrath ; to please him by giving him something he enjoys.¹

Next we may mention the view of Hubert and Mauss ; they maintain that, taking the many forms of sacrifice into consideration, it is impossible to believe that any one single principle underlies them. They agree with Robertson Smith in so far that one of the main purposes of sacrifice was to effect a union with the god ; but they hold, further, that the chief object of sacrifice was by means of it to establish a connexion between the world of unseen, holy powers and this world. By the act of the consecration of the victim the divine principle is infused into it ; the victim then being slain, this divine principle is released ; but in consuming part of the victim the offerer receives within himself something of the divine, whereby he is made a different man ; in this way he is brought into touch with the spiritual world.²

Durkheim agrees with the theory just mentioned, but believes that it was preceded by something more primitive, which is to be discerned in the *Intichiuma* rites of the Arunta tribe of Central Australia. The first of these is an act of oblation undertaken to increase the totem species ; in this Durkheim discerns the idea of sacrifice : " The purpose of the ceremony at the present day, so say the natives, is, by means of pouring out the blood of kangaroo men upon the rock, to drive out in all directions the spirits of the kangaroo animals, and so to increase the number of the animals." The other rite is the ceremonial eating of the totem animal by the chief ; herein Durkheim sees the idea of communion with the god. So that here there is the two-fold object of sacrifice : to increase life, and to become united with the god.³

According to Lagrange's view, part of a sacrificial victim was given to the spirit, or later to a god, in order that the

¹ In *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, iv. 956 (1913).

² " Essai sur la nature et la fonction du sacrifice," in *L'Année sociologique*, ii. 133 (1899).

³ *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, English trans. by J. W. Swain, p. 331 (undated) ; for full details see pp. 327 ff. of his book.

offerer might enjoy the remainder ; for inasmuch as the victim had been consecrated, and was therefore sacrosanct, it could not be partaken of until a gift of part of it had been offered to the god. But the idea of a gift is not the only purpose of the sacrifice ; Lagrange believes that in the partaking of part of the victim the offerer unites himself to the god ; the illustrations adduced show that this must have been the case.¹

Similarly the German scholar, Heiler, while holding that sacrifice was originally a gift to a supernatural being, maintains that the idea of the communion meal arose out of this, and that both principles must be postulated ;² but he clearly holds that gift-sacrifices were the original form.

Westermarck believes that gifts had something to do with the original object of sacrifice, but that it was not the main purpose. Sacrificial gifts were offered because of the belief that "supernatural beings have human appetites and human wants," but if these wants are not supplied by their worshippers all kinds of evil may befall them ; so that "in early religion the most common motive [of sacrifices] is undoubtedly a desire to avert evils."³

Very interesting is the theory of Dussaud ; and here we come to a new and important idea. He, too, believes that sacrifices were gifts, but that their place was quite secondary. The real object of sacrifice, he maintains, was to possess oneself of the principle of life. By the pouring out of the blood the life of the sacrificial victim is set free, and, by the previous laying of his hands upon the victim, the offerer identifies himself with it. The outpoured blood is received by the god, the flesh is eaten by the offerer ; and thus, as both participate, a union is effected between the offerer and his god. In addition, according to Dussaud, the liberated life of the victim takes away sin – of course we are not to understand sin in our sense of the word ; in these early

¹ *Études sur les religions sémitiques*, pp. 247 ff. (1905).

² *Das Gebet*, pp. 72 ff. (1923).

³ *Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, ii. 611 ff. (1908).

times sin has no ethical connotation ; it means an offence, conscious or unconscious, against the god.¹ This theory, then, is a somewhat complicated one : sacrifice is a gift to the god, though this is of quite secondary importance ; sacrifice enables the offerer to prolong his life through possessing himself of the life of the slain victim ; sacrifice is a means of communion with the god ; and the life of the victim, liberated by the shedding of its blood, obliterates any offence that the offerer may have committed against his god. So that, according to Dussaud, sacrifice had a fourfold purpose ; not that all the ideas arose at once ; millenniums of development must be presupposed ; but Dussaud is dealing with the Canaanite origins of sacrifices in Israel more especially. Particularly important, however, is the idea that sacrifice had for its object the setting free of life ; and it is one that evidently goes back to a remote antiquity.

This last is a subject that has been fully dealt with by E. O. James. He says in regard to sacrifice, that "the fundamental principle throughout is the same ; the giving of life to promote or preserve life, death being merely a means of liberating vitality. . . . In all the manifold variations of the ritual the underlying significance consists in the setting free of life for one or more of the following reasons : (a) to augment the power of the god or spirit approached to enable him to perform his beneficent functions on earth ; (b) to meet the forces of death and destruction by a fresh outpouring of vital potency, and so to strengthen the worshipper against malign influences, and to 'cover' or 'wipe out' the transgression ; (c) to establish or re-establish a bond of union or covenant with the benevolent powers in order to maintain a vital relationship between the worshipper and the object of worship, and so to gain free communication between the natural and the supernatural order."²

James thus sees a variety of objects in sacrifice, but makes

¹ *Les Origines canaanéennes du sacrifice israélite*, p. 27 (1921).

² *Origins of Sacrifice*, pp. 256 f. (1933).

them all depend upon a single fundamental principle, so that he occupies an intermediate position between those who trace the origin of sacrifice to one underlying purpose, and those who see a variety of purposes in sacrifice.

A very different idea is put forth by Wundt. He connects *magic* with the original purpose of sacrifice, holding that sacrifice was a magical act whereby it was possible to compel, as it were, the spirit or god to grant the things sought for. While he does not seem to regard the setting free of life as an essential element in sacrifice, he does take into consideration the two other objects which have come so prominently before us. The gift-theory, he agrees, is one of the most important things about sacrifice, but he believes that this purpose arose later in the course of the development of sacrificial motives. As to the communion meal, he holds that this constituted a means whereby the worshippers took their individual part in the magical act.¹

Hölscher, in discussing the origins of sacrifice, says : " Sacrifice is a development of the magic-cult ; its actual constitution belongs to the developed cult of gods, while its origins reach far back into the domain of the belief in magic and demons. The conception of sacrifice arose from a variety of motives. Certain preliminary rites point to this : the offering of various things for the purpose of compelling the demons (magic), especially such things as were thought to contain ' soul-stuff ' (blood, kidneys, hair, etc.) ; and secondly, the food, clothing, or weapons, placed on graves for the benefit of the departed." In addition to these motives in which the gift-theory comes to the fore, Hölscher goes on to say that, where the real conception of sacrifice developed, a third motive appeared, that of expiation for the offences which had been committed. Of these three which were intermingled in the ideas of sacrifice, magic is " not only the oldest, but also that which was active and prominent in every form of sacrifice ; though, in course of development, it was driven into the background by the motives

¹ *Völkerpsychologie*, vi. 463 ff. (1915).

of gift and expiation, the latter of which became foremost in the higher religions.”¹

A notable contribution to the whole subject is that offered by Loisy, who differs from some of the views mentioned in maintaining that sacrifices do not belong to the earliest ideas about religion at all, agreeing herein with Wundt and Hölscher. In examining the rites of savages in the lowest scale of civilisation known, the aborigines of Australia, he comes to the conclusion that they have no sacrifices ; what seems to approximate to sacrificial rites are in reality only gifts of food to the dead, or else magical acts such as the pouring out of blood and the devouring of a living victim, the former undertaken with the object of endowing invisible powers with vigour, so that they can carry out their functions for man's benefit. This kind of procedure, Loisy holds, was in existence before the idea of sacrifices arose ; sacrifice developed from these ideas, and acts, and rites, at a much later stage. So that, in its essence, according to Loisy, sacrifice was originally related to magic, on the one hand ; and, on the other, it contained the gift-idea, derived from the food-gifts to the dead. When sacrifices, as such, developed, therefore, among semi-civilised and civilised races, these two elements, magic and the gift-idea, were always present. In course of further development of religious thought, these ideas became spiritualised.²

The opinions of other scholars could be adduced, but these must suffice, for they represent all the views concerning the objects of sacrifice which are of real importance. Their multiplicity is somewhat bewildering ; and yet, after a prolonged study of the subject, we cannot but feel that every one of the views we have recorded contains an element of truth. Obviously, all these scholars base their contentions on a mass of authentic *data* ; but it is only natural that the interpretation of these *data* should differ among experts on the subject. That, however, is not our concern. It is not

¹ *Geschichte der israelitischen und jüdischen Religion*, p. 28 (1922).

² *Essai historique sur le sacrifice*, especially pp. 11 ff. (1920).

our intention, as we have said, to criticise the opinions recorded, with some of which we must disagree ; but even when disagreeing with a point of view, it will often happen that one may discern some elements of truth in it. However that may be, our purpose has been to put forth the views of many who are in the forefront of scholarship on the subject ; and this, we trust, will be not without interest to our readers.

Now, in considering these various views, there are three which stand out most prominently : the Gift-theory, the Communion-theory, and the Life-theory. These together we believe to be the really fundamental ideas about sacrifice ; and it is on these three that we wish to concentrate in the pages that follow. We shall, of course, not ignore other elements, though, as we hold them to be subsidiary, we do not propose to devote much space to them. But, in the conviction that the three purposes of sacrifice mentioned were basic, whether in the primitive stages or in the most developed and spiritual, we shall seek to follow them out through the periods of uncultured humanity, of general Semitic belief, and more especially Hebrew belief, and into Christian times.

It must, however, be insisted on that these three purposes of sacrifice cannot by any means always be divided off, as though types of sacrifices represented each respectively. It is true that in the following chapter we devote a separate section to each of these purposes of sacrifice as though there were three categories of sacrifice representing the three purposes. We grant that this is unscientific ; but it is done in order to make clear to the general reader the fact of the existence of the three purposes. But, in truth, there is often more than a single purpose in any given sacrifice. Gift-sacrifices, of very varied character, are undoubtedly the most frequent ; and even in communion-sacrifices and life-giving sacrifices there must be a preliminary "gift"-offering ; but it would be a mistake for this reason to place them in the category of gift-sacrifices, for the "gift" idea is wholly subsidiary, and not the purpose of such sacrifices.

In dealing with sacrifices among primitive peoples we have to express our indebtedness to a number of experts in this field. That many quotations from their works are given is inevitable, for the area of investigation is very wide, and not being expert in anthropological studies we have had perforce to rely on the work of others so far as this part of our subject is concerned.

But our main purpose, as we have said, is to try to follow out the three purposes of sacrifice as these occur in the Old Testament ; it is there that the process of the development of ideas of sacrifice can be most clearly discerned ; and it is from the most developed forms of sacrifice observable in the Old Testament that we are led on to their final consummation.

CHAPTER II

SACRIFICES AMONG UNCULTURED PEOPLES

I. SACRIFICES AS GIFTS TO SUPERNATURAL POWERS

OF the three fundamental purposes of offering sacrifices, with which we are specially concerned, that of making a present to a supernatural power is the commonest. While it is true that sacrifice as a means of union between man and an unseen spirit, or a god, is almost universal among uncultured peoples, such sacrifices were not offered with the same frequency as those which had as their object the giving of a gift. Of course, every sacrifice offered as a gift effected a relationship between the worshipper and the object of his worship, and thus, in a sense, brought about a union between them; but that is a very different thing from the type of sacrifice in which by partaking, as was believed, of the spirit, or god, inherent in the sacrificial victim, the worshipper became united, was made one, with his god.

In those sacrifices which were intended to be a present to a supernatural power the gift was made for a variety of purposes. Undoubtedly the most primitive of these was that which was intended to dispose the god favourably towards the giver. Early man thought of the supernatural power in terms of himself; and as, in primitive life, the main object was to have something to eat, whereby life could be sustained, so men offered food as gifts to the supernatural powers. The primary purpose of such gifts was purely egotistical; on the principle of *do ut des* the worshipper offered his gift in order to get something in return. Believing in the superior power of the spirit to whom his

offering was made, the worshipper expected to receive more than he had given. Then, again, gifts were made in order to avert the wrath of the supernatural power, which might be aroused for various reasons; like men, the spirits, or gods, were thought of as wayward, capricious, jealous, and easily offended; but their anger could be assuaged by gifts. Further, before entering upon some enterprise, such as hunting, or war, it was felt wise to propitiate the god in order to secure his assistance; here, again, a gift was offered. It is, however, certain that the purely egotistical motive was not always predominant; the sense of gratitude is innate in man, and after having received some signal mark of favour the impulse to recognise this was exhibited by a gift of thanksgiving. In course of time the feeling of affection for the god would be manifested by offering him gifts for the purpose of nourishing him, making him stronger, or with the simple desire of honouring him. Arising out of this, the beginnings of the idea of self-dedication to the deity may well have been present. These, and many others, were the reasons for which gifts were offered. Some illustrations may now be offered.

In writing about the religion of the Torres Straits islanders, Haddon says that "on one of the Murray islands is a small, practically formless, stone which represents a man and is called Waipem. In January the sacred men of this particular shrine made an offering of fruit, and 'man think inside himself' (as the natives expressed it in jargon English), 'If we give you plenty fruit, I think you give us plenty turtle.' They then went to the two points of the islet to look out for the turtles which would be sure to come."¹ In the Papuan island of Tanna, when the first-fruits have been offered, the chief who acts as high priest, addressing the god (in this case the spirit of a departed ancestor) says: "Compassionate father! Here is some food for you; eat it; be kind to us on account of it."² In the Samoan Islands, again,

¹ *Anthropological Essays presented to Edward Burnett Tylor*, p. 176 (1907).

² Turner, *Polynesia*, p. 88 (1861).

a libation of ava is offered to the gods with the words : " Here is ava for you, O gods ! Look kindly towards this family ; let it prosper and increase ; and let us all be kept in health. Let our plantations be productive ; let food grow ; and may there be abundance of food for us, your creatures. Here is ava for you, our war gods ! Let there be a strong and numerous people for you in this land. . . ."¹ Among the Zulus, black cattle are sacrificed to induce the god to give rain. One ox of the herd is chosen and sacrificed, the rest are merely mentioned ; the flesh of the sacrifice is eaten in the house in perfect silence, and the bones are burnt outside the village ; after the feast a chant, without words, is hummed.² Among the Peruvians, when the Inca or some great lord fell ill, he would offer one of his sons to the god, imploring him to take this victim in his stead.³ Here, it is true, we come upon the idea of vicarious sacrifice, but the primary idea is the offering of a gift to obtain something. Once more, the Fijians think that their islands rest on a god, who causes earthquakes by turning over in his sleep. So they sacrifice to him things of great value in order that he may turn as gently as possible.⁴

Next, a few illustrations may be given of sacrifices offered to avert, or to appease, the wrath of spirits or gods, i.e. propitiatory sacrifices.

" In the East Indian island of Siaco or Siau, one of the Sangi group, a child, stolen from a neighbouring island, used to be sacrificed every year to the spirit of a volcano in order that there might be no eruption."⁵ Again, the sacrifice to water is exemplified by Indians, caught in a storm on the North American lakes, who would " appease the angry tempest-raising deity by tying the feet of a dog and throwing it overboard."⁶ In south-eastern Australia, when a man of

¹ Ibid., p. 200.

² Callaway, *The Religious System of the Amazulu*, p. 59 (1870).

³ Rivero and Tschudi, *Peruvian Antiquities*, p. 196 (1853).

⁴ Frazer, *The Golden Bough : Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, i. 201 (1927).

⁵ *The Golden Bough : The Dying God*, p. 218 (1911).

⁶ Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, ii. 377.

another clan entered a certain tract of country, he had to make offerings to the local spirits.¹ This was done in order to avert the wrath of the spirits who would be offended at a stranger entering their domains. "The Dorasques," says Frazer, "an Indian tribe of Panama, believed that the volcano of Chiriqui was inhabited by a powerful spirit, who, in his anger, caused an earthquake. At such times the Indians shot volleys of arrows in the direction of the volcano to terrify him and make him desist." In this case the appeasing of the spirit's wrath takes, it is true, a different form.

On the other hand, "some of the Peruvian Indians regarded an earthquake as a sign that the gods were thirsty, so they poured water on the ground."² Here the purpose clearly is to give the gods something to drink lest in their wrath at not getting what they want they should bring about another earthquake. Once more, that the spirits of the departed must likewise be appeased is what we should expect. Endless instances of this are recorded; one will suffice: "Among the Suk of British East Africa it seems to be generally believed that a man's spirit passes into a snake at death. If a snake enters a house, the spirit of the dead man is believed to be very hungry. Milk is poured on to its tracks, and a little meat and tobacco are placed on the ground for it to eat. It is believed that if no food is given to the snake one and all of the members of the household will die."³

In many other cases the gift seems to be offered to the supernatural power out of pure friendliness and good-fellowship. Thus, the Red Indian, before setting out for the chase or for war, lights his pipe, and blows his first whiffs towards heaven, because, being a great lover of tobacco, he believes that he is making himself agreeable to the Great Spirit by allowing him to inhale its vapours.⁴ Here the seeking of

¹ Howitt, *The Native Tribes of South-East Australia*, p. 403 (1904).

² *The Golden Bough: Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, i. 201.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

⁴ Réville, *Prolegomena of the History of Religions*, p. 129 (1884).

help in the chase or war seems to be combined with the desire of making oneself agreeable. Similarly among the North American Indians the main idea of sacrifice, according to Waitz, seems to have been to give the gods what they required or what they liked; they were believed to inhale the tobacco smoke puffed at them, and to partake of food set apart for them.¹ Here, again, there enters in the twofold object of being on good terms and showing friendliness. So, again, among the Sioux, they would look towards the sun, the Great Spirit, when they smoked, and when the calumet was lighted they presented it to him, saying: "Smoke, Sun."² And, once more, the negroes of Sierra Leone sacrifice an ox "to make God glad very much, and do Kroomen good";³ again a twofold object.

As instances of pure homage we may note "the Guinea negro passing in silence by the sacred tree or cavern, and dropping a leaf or a sea-shell as an offering to the local spirit; the Talein of Birma holding up the dish at his meal to offer it to the nat, before the company fall to; the Hindu, holding up a little of his rice in his fingers to the height of his forehead, and offering it in thought to Siva, or Vishnu, before he eats it."⁴

Self-dedication to the deity, in which the sacrifice, not consummated in death, has taken on various forms, from self-mutilation to sacred prostitution, must also be mentioned. Inexpressibly repulsive as this latter is, it must in fairness be recognised that it was believed to be a religious act pleasing to the deity.⁵ When, in later days, the idea of self-dedication – the gift of self – to the deity was shorn of all revolting elements, its nature became very different.

These instances will suffice, then, as illustrations of the gift-theory of sacrifice among uncultured peoples.

¹ *Anthropologie der Naturvölker*, iii. 207 (1862).

² Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, iii. 383; on sun-myths, see i. 288 f.

³ *Ibid.*, ii. 394.

⁴ *Ibid.*, iii. 394 f.

⁵ See Frazer, *Golden Bough: Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, i. 57 ff., 265 ff. (1927).

II. SACRIFICES AS A MEANS OF COMMUNION

In seeking illustrations to show that one of the main purposes of sacrifice was to effect union with a supernatural being, we cannot do better than by beginning with a reference to the Central Australian *Intichiuma* ceremony, for it is here that we get the germs of future developments. It is true that the communion idea plays here a much smaller part than that of giving life (see below) ; but, at any rate, it seems to be present in germ in the act of eating the flesh of a kangaroo sacramentally ; this is done by the Arunta, but among other clans the totem is also eaten sacramentally.¹

One of the most instructive illustrations of sacrifice being the means of communion with a supernatural power is afforded by the belief and practice of the Ainus, an aboriginal race of Japan, who may be looked upon as "the very last remnant of a great pre-historic race." With regard to their religion, Batchelor says : "The Ainu religion is the same to-day in all essentials as it was in pre-historic times." This is to be inferred from "the inherent genius of the language, as well as gathered, by way of auxiliary, from the customs of the people, and their present-day practices of rites and ceremonies." He continues : "The very essence of Ainu religion consists in communion with the greater powers, and the people imagine that the most complete communion they can possibly hold with some of their gods – animals and birds, to wit – is by a visible and carnal partaking of their very flesh and substance in sacrifice. At the time of offering, the living victim is said to be sent to his ancestors in another place." This is exemplified by the Bear festival, the highest expression of Ainu religion. Into all the details of this festival we need not go ; but the essential points in the sacrifice must be quoted. When all the preparations have been made, a bear is brought into the midst of those who have come to celebrate the festival, and one chosen from

¹ Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, pp. 202–6 (1899) ; see also Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, who points out that the rite partakes of the nature of a worshipper's communion with his god, p. 342.

among them offers a prayer to the victim as follows : " O thou divine one, thou wast sent into the world for us to hunt, O thou precious little divinity, we worship thee ; pray hear our prayer. We have nourished thee and brought thee up with a deal of pains and trouble, all because we love thee so. Now, as thou hast grown big, we are about to send thee to thy father and mother. When thou comest to them, please speak well of us, and tell them how kind we have been ; please come to us again, and we will once more sacrifice thee." The bear having been killed after the prescribed ritual, and various other rites having been performed with the purpose of providing the victim with food, the man who presides at the feast says : " The little divinity has now finished eating ; come, ye friends, let us worship." Thereupon " he takes the cup, salutes it, and divides the contents (i.e. of strong drink) - to every guest a very small portion - for it seems to be absolutely essential that each person should take a little. Other parts of the beast are stewed and eaten while the entrails are cut up fine, sprinkled with salt, and eaten raw. This, like the drinking of the blood, is said to be for the purpose of obtaining the prowess and other virtues of the bear. . . . The feast lasts several days as a rule ; indeed, it is not quite over till the whole of the cub has been devoured and all the strong drink swallowed."¹ To this striking illustration of the purpose of sacrifice as being a means of becoming united with a supernatural being, we may add another custom of the Ainus, who pray to and worship the first-fruits of the millet. They call it " the divine cereal," " the cereal deity," and before they eat the cakes made from the new millet they pray to it and worship it. Frazer is doubtless right in saying that " we may not improperly describe the eating of the new fruits as a sacrament or communion with a deity, or at all events with a powerful spirit."² Of the various illustrations given by Frazer of the eating of the god, whereby communion with

¹ Batchelor, in Hastings, *Encycl. of Religion and Ethics*, i. 249 f. (1908).

² *The Golden Bough : Spirits of the Corn and the Wild*, ii. 83 (1912).

him is effected, none is more convincing than that of the sacramental eating of the great Mexican god of the Aztecs, Huitzilopochtli or Vitzilipuztli, whose image on the two festivals of the year, in May and December, was constructed of dough and eaten sacramentally by his worshippers. A long account of the festival is given from the historian Acosta ;¹ part of this, containing the central rite, may be quoted here on account of its interest. After the forming of the procession and various preparatory rites have been described, Acosta continues : " All the city came to this goodly spectacle, and there was a commandment very strictly observed throughout all the land, that on the day of the feast of the idol of Vitzilipuztli they should eat no other meat but this paste, with honey, whereof the idol was made. And this should be eaten at the point of day, and they should drink no water nor any other thing till after noon ; they held it for an ill sign, yea, for sacrilege, to do the contrary ; but after the ceremonies ended, it was lawful for them to eat anything. During the time of this ceremony they hid the water from their little children, admonishing all such as had the use of reason not to drink any water, which, if they did, the anger of God would come down upon them, and they should die ; which they did observe very carefully and strictly. The ceremonies, dancing and sacrifice ended, they went to unclothe themselves, and the priests and superiors of the temple took the idol of paste, which they spoiled of all the ornaments it had, and made many pieces, as well of the idol itself, as of the truncheons which they consecrated ; and then they gave them to the people in manner of a communion, beginning with the greater, and continuing unto the rest, both men, women and little children, who received it with tears, fear and reverence, as it was an admirable thing, saying that they did eat the flesh and bones of God, wherewith they were grieved. Such as had any sick folks demanded thereof for them, and carried it

¹ *Natural and Moral History of the Indies*, bk. v., ch. 24 ; vol. ii., pp. 356-60 (Hakluyt Society, 1880).

with great reverence and veneration.”¹ Quite extraordinary as this crass procedure must seem to us, there is something very touching in the ardent desire for union with the god ; and what is so remarkable is the fact that the same desire, and more or less the same means of satisfying it, is practically world-wide among uncultured peoples. In an entirely different part of the globe, the Malas, a caste of pariahs in Southern India, adopt a somewhat similar procedure in seeking communion with their goddess, Sun-kamma. We are again indebted to Frazer ; he says : “ An image of the goddess, in the form of a truncated cone, is made out of rice and green grain cooked together, and it is decorated with a nose-jewel, garlands and other religious symbols. Offerings of rice, frankincense, camphor, and a coco-nut are then made to the image, and a ram or he-goat is sacrificed. After the sacrifice has been presented, all the persons assembled prostrate themselves in silence before the image ; then they break it in pieces, and, distributing the pieces among themselves, they swallow them. In this way they are, no doubt, believed to absorb the divine essence of the goddess whose broken body has just passed into their stomachs.”²

Here again, illustrations could be greatly multiplied, but the general principle has been sufficiently shown forth. There can be no shadow of doubt that one of the fundamental and original purposes of sacrifice was to become united with the supernatural power, a union which was believed to be brought about, in its earliest form, by eating the god or the spirit, incarnate in some living being, or else in the fruits of the earth, with the purpose of assimilating his qualities.

III. SACRIFICES AS A MEANS OF GIVING LIFE

The earliest beginnings of the idea that the purpose of sacrifice was to give life may be discerned in the *Intichiuma*

¹ Quoted by Frazer, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

² *Op. cit.*, pp. 93 f., from Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*, iv. 357 ff. (1909).

rites of the aborigines of Central Australia, referred to above. "These rites," says Durkheim, "are certainly among the most primitive that have ever been observed. No determined mythical personality appears in them; there is no question of gods or spirits that are properly so called; it is only vaguely anonymous and impersonal forces which they put into action." The oblations, however, which are part of these rites do not differ in nature, as Durkheim points out, from those which were made later in the rites properly called sacrifices. "If the sacrificer immolates an animal, it is in order that the living principle within it may be disengaged from the organism and go to nourish the divinity. Likewise, the grains of dust which the Australian détaches from the sacred rock are so many sacred principles which he scatters into space, so that they may go to animate the totemic species and assure its renewal."¹ We have here the earliest beginnings of one of the fundamental purposes of sacrifice: the releasing of life for someone's benefit. Here it is in order that the divinity may benefit therefrom; and this idea became widely prevalent. But, as we shall see, the released life was used for benefiting men, too, in various ways; but that seems to come later.

An illustration of this principle, of a most instructive character, is contained in the myth of the creation of the sun and the moon among the Aztecs. It is recorded by Sahagun,² and runs as follows: When, as yet, day did not exist, the gods assembled at a place called Teotihuacan, and took counsel as to who should undertake the task of lighting the world. Two luminaries were required; the god Tecuciztecatl offered his services; but as nobody else came forward, the gods invited one of inferior grade among their number, named Nanauatzin, who was so called because he was covered with pimples, to be the second; he was a humble, retiring god, who had not ventured to offer himself, but gladly undertook the task. These two, then, in order

¹ *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, pp. 341 f.

² *Histoire générale des choses de la Nouvelle-Espagne*, pp. 478 ff. (1880).

to prepare themselves for the rite of sacrifice which was to initiate them into the duty that lay before them, underwent four days of penitence. On the fifth night the gods ranged themselves in two rows on either side of the fire before which the two chosen ones stood, for they were the two victims destined for the sacrifice. Thereupon the gods bade Tecuciztecatl to cast himself first into the fire ; four times he assayed to do so, but each time the heat of the glowing fires caused him to draw back. The gods, therefore, commanded Nanauatzin to do his duty ; he, closing his eyes, plunged into the blaze, and presently there could be heard the crackling as of roasting flesh. Enheartened by this example, Tecuciztecatl then leapt into the flames. After some time Nanauatzin appeared as the sun, in the east, of deep red, and remained on the horizon. Then Tecuciztecatl appeared too, shining as brilliantly as the other ; seeing this, one of the gods, in order to diminish his brightness, flung a rabbit into his midst, which is still to be discerned in the moon. In the meantime the two luminaries remained motionless ; this disconcerted the gods greatly, for they feared that if there were to be perpetual day, they would have to dwell among mortals (the reason of this presumably is that, being stars, the gods thought there would be no place for them in the illuminated skies). Therefore the gods all determined to die in order that the sun and the moon might, by receiving life, move on their respective courses. The gods then all submitted to death at the hands of the wind, Quetzalcoatl ; and the sun proceeded on his course, followed a little later by the moon ; hence it is that the sun and the moon do not run their course together, but that the sun gives his light by day, the moon by night. But if Tecuciztecatl had been the first to cast himself into the flames, he would have been the sun.

As Loisy, who also quotes this myth, says, it is a myth concerning sacrifice ; but its value centres in the main idea contained in it ; the divine victim dies, but he dies only that he may be raised. To die is but to live again ; life issues

from death, and death is the condition and means of life. "To destroy in order to create, to liberate, through death, the power that lies latent in a living being";¹ that is the central idea of this old-world yet instructive myth of sacrifice; and here it is well to recognise the truth of Malinowski's words that "myth is not symbolic, but the direct expression of its subject-matter; it is not an explanation in satisfaction of a scientific interest, but a narrative resurrection of a primeval reality, told in satisfaction of deep religious wants, moral cravings, social submissions, even practical requirements."²

In the very early history of man, to touch upon another matter connected with the life-giving idea, blood was held to be identical with life, since when blood left the body the life went with it. This mysterious power in blood was believed to be potent whether within the body or without. To come into contact with it was, on the one hand, dangerous, for one could never know how its mysterious potency would work; but, on the other hand, just because of the power residing in it, it could, if properly used, be efficacious in various directions. Thus, among the Central Australians the blood of young men was given to old men with a view to strengthening the latter; the infusion of fresh blood gives renewed life.³

The people of Celebes drink the blood of animals to make themselves strong.⁴ Among some primitive peoples, the blood of relatives is allowed to fall on a corpse; it is supposed that this will revive or give new life to the dead person.⁵ Similarly "members of the tribe (in Australia) stand or kneel over the body in turns, and with a large boomerang they strike each other on the head till a quantity of blood flows over the body."⁶ In Central Australia, "they beat their heads until the blood flows, and weep bitterly,

¹ Loisy, *op. cit.*, p. 22. ² *Myth in Primitive Psychology*, p. 23 (1926).

³ Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, p. 461 (1899).

⁴ Crawley, *The Mystic Rose*, p. 102 (1902).

⁵ Howitt, *Native Tribes of S.E. Australia*, p. 451 (1904).

⁶ *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxiv. 187.

if a near relation.¹ In the Northern Territory of South Australia "the women score their heads and thighs till the blood flows freely . . . the men score their thighs only."² Elsewhere in South Australia, "besides weeping and howling, the female relatives make numerous superficial incisions upon the thigh from six to twelve inches long."³ In the New World, at a funeral, the Dacotahs "gash their legs and arms,"⁴ and as for the Crows, "blood was streaming from every conceivable part of the bodies of all."⁵ In the semi-civilisation of South America, the Aztecs "mangled their flesh as if it had been insensible, and let their blood run in profusion."⁶ In South America, too, Brazilian aborigines cut off fingers, and the same mutilation appears in Fiji: "his little finger had been cut off in token of affection for his deceased father."⁷ In the New Hebrides, "they scratched their faces till they streamed with blood."⁸ Jevons, who gives these illustrations, says that "to interpret this ceremony as due to fear, and as an indication that the spirit of the deceased is regarded as an evil spirit, would be unreasonable on two accounts. First the ceremony is always associated with demonstrations of grief. . . . Next, death is not the only occasion on which the blood of the tribe is applied to the body of the clansman. . . . I would suggest, therefore, that originally the blood-letting rite at the grave was one of the various devices for retaining or recalling the life which was on the point of leaving, or had left, perhaps not beyond recall, its earthly tenement. . . ."⁹

After giving a number of highly interesting illustrations of the life-giving power of blood, James remarks: "In this cycle of primitive ideas and practices it is possible to detect the beginnings of a method of approach to magico-religious phenomena which, in due course, found its ultimate expression in the sacrificial system. In the ritual shedding of

¹ Ibid., 183.

² Ibid., 178.

³ Ibid., 185.

⁴ Dorman, *Primitive Superstitions*, p. 217 (1881).

⁵ Ibid., 217.

⁶ Ibid., 218.

⁷ Williams, *Fiji and the Fijians*, i. 177 (1860); see also Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, ii. 400 ff.

⁸ Turner, *Samoa, A Hundred Years Ago, and Long Before*, p. 335 (1884).

⁹ *Introduction to the History of Religion*, p. 192 (1904).

blood it is not the *taking* of life, but the *giving* of life which is really fundamental, for blood is not death, but life. The outpouring of the vital fluid in actuality, or by substitute, is the sacred act whereby life is given to promote and preserve life, and to establish thereby a bond of union with the supernatural order. This seems to have been the primitive conception out of which an elaboration of ritual and belief has emerged, involving notions of the re-animation of human gods by the immolation of animal and human quasi-divine victims, and vegetation offerings, on the one hand ; and on the other hand, lofty ethical ideals of surrender, renunciation and self-sacrifice.”¹

But in innumerable instances the flowing of blood for the purpose of giving life was deemed insufficient ; and just as, in the Aztec myth, the gods laid down their lives in order to gain life, so, among men, human sacrifices were offered for the same purpose.

The laying down of life in order to give life may be illustrated by the numerous instances all the world over of sacrifices, both human and other, offered for the purpose of ensuring good crops. Of the large number of instances given by Frazer we may cite the following : “ The best known case of human sacrifices, systematically offered to ensure good crops, is supplied by the Khonds or Kandhs, another Dravidian race in Bengal. . . . The sacrifices were offered to the Earth Goddess, Tari Pennu, or Bera Pennu, and were believed to ensure good crops and immunity from all disease and accidents. In particular, they were considered necessary in the cultivation of turmeric,² the Khonds arguing that the turmeric could not have a deep red colour without the shedding of blood. The victim, or Meriah as he was called, was acceptable to the goddess only if he had been purchased, or had been born a victim – that is, the son of a victim father, or had been devoted as a child by his father

¹ *Origins of Sacrifice*, p. 33 (1933).

² The root of the plant *Curcuma longa* : the powder made from this is the chief ingredient in curry powder.

or guardian. . . . The mode of performing these tribal sacrifices was as follows. Ten or twelve days before the sacrifice the victim was devoted by cutting off his hair, which, until then, had been kept unshorn. Crowds of men and women assembled to witness the sacrifice ; none might be excluded, since the sacrifice was declared to be for all mankind. It was preceded by several days of wild revelry and gross debauchery. On the day before the sacrifice, the victim, dressed in a new garment, was led forth from the village in solemn procession, with music and dancing, to the Meriah grove, a clump of high forest trees standing a little way from the village, and untouched by the axe. There they tied him to a post, which was sometimes placed between two plants of sankissar shrub. He was then anointed with oil, ghee, and turmeric, and adorned with flowers ; and a species of reverence, which it is not easy to distinguish from adoration, was paid to him throughout the day. A great struggle now arose to obtain the smallest relic from his person ; a particle of the turmeric paste with which he was smeared, or a drop of his spittle, was esteemed of sovereign virtue, especially by the women. The crowd danced round the post to music, and, addressing the earth, said, ' O God, we offer this sacrifice to you ; give us good crops, seasons, and health ' ; then, speaking to the victim, they said, ' We bought you with a price, and did not seize you ; now we sacrifice you according to custom, and no sin rests with us.' . . . The victim was again anointed with oil, and each person touched the anointed part, and wiped the oil on his own head. . . . The mode of putting him to death varied in different places. One of the commonest modes seems to have been strangulation, or squeezing to death. The branch of a green tree was cleft several feet down the middle ; the victim's neck (in other places his chest) was inserted in the cleft, which the priest, aided by his assistants, strove with all his force to close. Then he wounded the victim slightly with his axe, whereupon the crowd rushed at the wretch and hewed the flesh from his bones, leaving

the head and bowels untouched. Sometimes he was cut up alive. . . . The flesh cut from the victim was instantly taken home by the persons who had been deputed by each village to bring it. . . . The bearer deposited it in the place of public assembly, where it was received by the priest and the heads of families. The priest divided it into portions, one of which he offered to the Earth Goddess by burying it in a hole in the ground with his back turned, and without looking. Then each man added a little earth to bury it, and the priest poured water on the spot from a hill gourd. The other portion of flesh he divided into as many shares as there were heads of houses present. Each head of a house rolled his shred of flesh in leaves, and buried it in his favourite field, placing it in the earth behind his back without looking. . . .”¹ Whatever other purposes this sacrifice may have had, it is clear that the life of the victim residing in the bits of flesh buried in the ground was believed to fructify the crops ; that is the central idea of the rite.

Here lay, again, one of the fundamental and original purposes of sacrifice, the means of giving life, exhibited in multifarious form. Though perhaps somewhat overstated, there is much truth in the words of James, when he says : “ Always and everywhere the primary purpose of sacrifice has been the bestowal of life.”² See further, Chapter XI.

We have given a few illustrations of what were the three fundamental and original purposes of sacrifice. It is certain that, in the long course of their history, sacrifices were offered with some further objects in view ; but, if so, they were subsidiary, and would come under the head of one or other of those dealt with. It can, of course, be argued that both the communion-sacrifice and the life-giving sacrifice come under the general head of gift-sacrifice since in each case an offering is made ; but to this it can be replied that, in the case of these other two, the offering was not, properly

¹ *The Golden Bough : Spirits of the Corn and the Wild*, i. 245 ff. (1912). See further, Waitz, *Anthropologie*, ii. 140 ; iii. 208 ff. (1839).

² *Origins of Sacrifice*, p. 178 (1933).

speaking, in the nature of a gift, but merely a means of fulfilling the real purpose of the sacrifice.

IV. HUMAN SACRIFICE

Some further consideration of this subject, distasteful as it is, must be entered upon because of the important place it occupies in the history of sacrifice, and as it further illustrates the three purposes of sacrifice with which we are especially concerned. Opinions differ as to whether human sacrifice preceded animal sacrifice or *vice versa*.¹ The question is a difficult one, for the evidence is confusing. Among some peoples the former, among other peoples the latter, seems to have taken precedence; according to the evidence. But, in actual fact, the probability is that neither the one nor the other can be said to have been the original form; both human and animal sacrifice co-existed from the beginning, and both fulfilled similar purposes; the one, no doubt, predominated over the other, according to the conditions of life under which different peoples lived. There is every reason to believe that among primitive peoples there was not that differentiation between men and animals that later generations recognised. We are told, for example, that among the Indians of Guiana there was not "any sharp line of distinction, such as we see, between man and other animals, between one kind of animal and another – man included – and inanimate objects. On the contrary, to the Indian all objects, animate and inanimate, seem exactly of the same nature, except that they differ in the accident of bodily form. Every object in the whole world is a being, consisting of a body and spirit, and differs from every other object in no respect except that of bodily form, and in the greater or less degree of brute power and brute cunning consequent on the difference of bodily form and bodily habits."² Then again, the numberless instances in which men believed that they were descended from some animal

¹ See further, p. 51.

² E. F. im Thurn, *Among the Indians of Guiana*, p. 350 (1883).

(totemism), and regarded every individual of the species as of kin, shows that no distinction was made between men and animals. Primitive men not only fail to recognise any essential difference between human and animal life, but can even aver a substantial identity between themselves and their totem.¹ The further fact that many peoples believe that animals understand human speech² is another illustration of the failure to distinguish between men and animals. If, therefore, there was no distinction between animals and men there was no reason to suppose that the sacrifice of the one preceded that of the other. Whether the one predominated over the other would depend upon conditions of life. Loisy gives a good illustration of this in the case of the Mexicans, among whom human sacrifices were exceedingly prevalent. They had no domestic animals, and they could easily obtain prisoners of war whom they could offer in sacrifice ; the number of human victims would have been considerably less if the Mexicans had had to take them from among themselves, or if they had possessed in abundance animals suitable for sacrifice. "As far as one can judge," he says, "human sacrifice, though not practised so widely nor continued for so long as animal and vegetable oblations, is not likely to have been much less universal originally, and may even have been linked to ritual cannibalism, which, indeed, disappeared sooner than human sacrifice among peoples tending towards civilisation."³

First, then, human sacrifices as gifts to the deity. Frazer says : "Ferocious and inveterate cannibals themselves, the Fijians naturally assumed that their gods were so too ; hence human flesh was a common offering, indeed the most valued of all. Formal human sacrifices were frequent. The victims were usually taken from a distant tribe, and when war and violence failed to supply the demand, recourse was sometimes had to negotiation.

¹ Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy*, i. 119 (1910).

² Frazer, *Golden Bough : Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 399 ff. (1911).

³ *Essai historique sur le sacrifice*, p. 110 (1920).

However obtained, the victims destined for sacrifice were often kept for a time and fattened to make them better eating. Then, tightly bound in a sitting posture, they were placed on hot stones in one of the usual ovens, and being covered over with leaves and earth were roasted alive, while the spectators roared with laughter at the writhings and contortions of the victims in their agony. When their struggles ceased, and the bodies were judged to be done to a nicety, they were raked out of the oven, their faces painted black, and so carried to the temple, where they were presented to the gods, only, however, to be afterwards removed, cut up, and devoured by the people."¹

Among the Mexicans children were sacrificed at the beginning of the year to the rain-gods ; in return for this gift it was expected that the gods would send the rain required for the new crops.² The ordinary form of sacrifice, says James, in reference to the same people, " consisted in stripping the victim of his ornaments, stretching him over the convex sacrificial stones, and while five priests held his arms, legs and head, the high priest, or sacrificer, cut open his breast with a flint or obsidian knife, and tore out the heart. This was held up to the sun to provide it with nourishment, before it was cast into a basin of copal placed in a position to enable the blood and incense to ascend to the gods. . . . Some of the blood was carried to certain temples and smeared on the hips of the images of the gods."³

Human sacrifices were offered also for the purpose of union with the god. For example, the Aztecs believed that the victim who was to be sacrificed to the god became, by being consecrated, an integral part of the god even before the sacrifice whereby he would be co-substantial with him ; so that the worshippers, by eating the victim's flesh, became united in substance with the divine being.⁴ Similarly the

¹ *The Belief in Immortality*, i. 446 (1913), quoting Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition*, iii. 97 (1851).

² Sahagun, *Histoire générale*, p. 57 (1880).

³ *Origins of Sacrifice*, pp. 85 f. (1933).

⁴ Réville, *Origin and Growth*, p. 89 (1884).

Nicaraguans, by eating the destined victim, became united to their god.¹

Finally, human sacrifices were offered for the purpose of giving life ; a number of illustrations are given by James. He concludes : " Taking the evidence collectively it would seem that, however much human sacrifice may have been mitigated by the Inca Empire, the welfare of the ruler and of the community was believed to be dependent in some measure on sanguinary rites having for their purpose the renewal of the supernatural energy of the representative of the sun and the natural processes he controlled. Moreover, not only were such sacrifices required at the death and accession of the Inca, but also in order to maintain the sun and the other gods in health and strength. Thus, children were offered to certain sacred stones ' that the sun might not lose its power,' and when the grains were removed from the maize-cobs similar sacrifices were made to the maize-images on a hill called Mantocalla, where the sun was supposed to descend to sleep. How deeply ingrained was this practice may be gathered from the statement that the native tribes in Ecuador were in the habit of sacrificing a hundred children annually at the harvest,² and therefore, however anxious the Incas may have been to suppress it, it still survived after the Spanish occupation. Without such offerings the maize-crops would fail, the sun would be unable to continue its vitalising functions, and mother earth would cease to bring forth abundantly."³

More will have to be said about human sacrifice later, see Chapter VII. The illustrations of the three fundamental purposes of sacrifice among uncultured peoples which have been given are a mere fraction of those available ; but it would be needless to multiply their number as this would merely illustrate further what has already been said.

¹ Loisy, *Essai historique*, p. 112 (1920).

² Cieza de Leon, *Travels*, English trans. by C. R. Markham, p. 203 (1864).

³ *Origins*, pp. 95 f.

CHAPTER III

SACRIFICES AMONG THE SEMITES

I. SACRIFICES AMONG THE ANCIENT ARABS

IN writing about the ancient Arabs, Nielsen says that, as among the Semites generally, religion played a far greater part in their lives than is found among any other peoples ; from the cradle to the grave, as the Semitic inscriptions show, religion guided them in all things, laws, social conditions, customs and usages, literature and art, are all equally impressed with the religious hall-mark. Among the peoples of southern Arabia, not only holy objects, but such things as fortresses, palaces, houses, soil, men and animals, were all placed under divine protection, or else directly dedicated to the gods. And this intense religious feeling touches not only the life of the individual, but permeates that of the people as a whole. In the ancient Arab inscriptions the idea of theocracy is perhaps more emphatically pronounced than anywhere else among the ancient Semites.¹ This being the place of religion among the more cultured of the pre-Islamite Arabs, it is likely to have been at least as prominent, though of a more primitive type, among the nomadic Arabs. In spite of the fact that “scholars now give more prominence to the abundant evidence for the antiquity and richness of the civilisation of the old Mesopotamian lands ” as the starting-point for the study of Semitic religion, we confess to more sympathy with Robertson Smith, who, after emphasising the great importance of the monumental *data* of Babylonia for this study, insists that “the right point of departure for a general study of Semitic religion must be

¹ *Die altarabische Kultur*, p. 235 (1927).

sought in regions where, though our knowledge begins at a later date, it refers to a simpler state of society, and where accordingly the religious phenomena revealed to us are of an origin less doubtful and a character less complicated. In many respects the religion of heathen Arabia, though we have little information concerning it that is not of post-Christian date, displays an extremely primitive type, corresponding to the primitive and unchanging character of nomadic life."¹ As S. A. Cook writes, in support of Robertson Smith's contention: "Much of what Robertson Smith wrote is not only untouched, but can actually be supplemented by the Babylonian material. Moreover, even as regards Arabia itself, he was fully aware of the higher culture in early Arabia to which the Minæan and Sabæan inscriptions testify, and he did not fail to point out that the Arabia of the old poets, the Arabia of the generations immediately preceding the rise of Islam, was one where the old religion was breaking up, an age of extreme decadence and disintegration."²

It is to this old religion of the Arabs, then, to which we must first have recourse as a further preliminary to the study of the meaning and purposes of the sacrifices in ancient Israel, though, as we shall see, there is also much information to be gathered on the subject from other groups of Semites.

Arabia was, according to the opinions of most authorities, the original home of the Semites. Owing to its dry and desert character it was never able to harbour large masses of population; only here and there, where a constant supply of water could be relied upon, could permanent settlements be found. It resulted that from this country there poured forth periodic waves of humanity, which overflowed northwards and flooded the lands of a higher culture. "From the beginning of the second millennium B.C. the Assyrians from northern Arabia press into Mesopotamia, and it was

¹ *The Religion of the Semites*, p. 14 (3rd ed., 1927); see also Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentums*, pp. 208 ff. (1897); Lagrange, *Études sur les religions sémitiques*, pp. 52 ff. (1905).

² See Notes to *The Religion of the Semites*, pp. 497 f.

not long before hordes of Aramaic nomads began to pour into the more civilised Babylonian-Assyrian lands and, through repeated inroads, to cause unrest there. The Minæans wandered out from the south, Phœnicians and Hebrews gradually moved forward to the east coast of the Mediterranean, and soon, too, the Chaldæans made their presence felt in South Babylonia."¹ Even if, according to some authorities, "the beginnings of the fundamental Semitic institutions had their birth in North Africa, they were brought to their perfection through long residence in Arabia,"² though the "long residence," as we have just seen, could apply only to a limited portion of the race.

The sanctuary of the ancient Arabs was usually situated on a mountain or a hill ; this was probably not, at any rate in the earliest times, because the height was nearer to the skies, the abode of the gods, but rather because the mountain was believed to be the dwelling-place of a spirit or, later, of a god. In its most primitive form this was, no doubt, a development of animism which sees in any strange-looking rock or stone the dwelling-place of a spirit. Upon some such exalted spot, then, the holy place stood. The actual sanctuary was a rock or stone-block, which was the abode of the god as well as an altar upon which the blood of the sacrificed victim was smeared. This holy stone, called *nuzb*, or *nuzub* (that which is set up), or *ghari* (blood-smeared) as it is also called, was encircled by other upright rock-pillars, all of which partook of a sacred character. The place thus enclosed was consecrated ground, called *Charam*, or *Chima*. The *nuzb* was not any specific deity, it might represent any god or goddess, though, as a rule, this central rock or stone was worshipped as a single deity.³

Here it is necessary to point out that a distinction must be made between a natural rock, or stone, of strange shape, and that set up by the hands of man ; the latter being a later

¹ O. Weber, "Arabien vor dem Islam," in *Der alte Orient*, p. 4 (1901).

² Barton, *The Religion of Israel*, p. 13 (1918).

³ Wellhausen, *Reste*, p. 101.

development of the former. The natural curiously shaped rock would strike the very early childlike mind as in itself a deity ; but it was a different thing when a pillar-shaped piece of rock was set up, no doubt in imitation of the former, as a ready-made abode for the use of the god. The stone block or pillar was, as already pointed out, both the god's dwelling-place and his altar ; but in course of time the two were either separated or else an upright pillar at the back and an altar in front was constructed out of one piece. Of this latter, Nielsen gives an interesting illustration ; the original was discovered in Marib (Saba) in southern Arabia.¹ In either case, however, the holy place, or *Charam*, was not a covered-in structure, but an open space encircled by a ring of standing stones. What actual occurrence may originally have induced the belief that a particular rock or spot was holy is, of course, impossible to say ; to uncultured man all kinds of happenings would suggest the presence of a spirit or a god. The point to emphasise is that sites were not holy because they were selected by worshippers as sanctuaries, but because a deity had in some way manifested his presence there ; as Lods rightly says (he is referring especially to the Israelites, but it applies generally) : " In most of the stories which have come down to us concerning the founding of sanctuaries, it is not man who chooses the site of the future holy place, but the deity who indicates it, usually by manifesting himself there ; that is to say, for this is doubtless the earliest conception, he reveals the fact that he inhabits the spot by appearing there."²

Into the holy place, then, the worshippers enter to offer their sacrifices ; not, however, that the offering of sacrifices was confined to the holy places, at any rate in early times, for temporary altars were also erected on any spot when special circumstances demanded the offering of a sacrifice.

We will give, first, a few illustrations of sacrifices as gifts to the god among the ancient Arabs. First and foremost

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 170.

² *Israel* (English trans. by S. H. Hooke), p. 266 (1932).

here is the offering of blood as a gift to the god. This, when offered on the altar, was conceived of as being imbibed by the god ; it might also flow into a pit (*ghabghab*) which was dug close to the altar, when it was likewise thought that the god drank it. (On the further significance of this, see below.) A form of special gift-sacrifice which finds frequent mention is that of a number of victims being slain and cast upon the sacred stones over which their blood flowed and entered, similarly, into the *ghabghab* for the benefit of the god.¹ "Water and milk offerings also played a part in ancient Arab ritual. In the more primitive forms of Semitic religion the difficulty of conceiving that the gods actually partake of food is got over by a predominant use of liquid oblations ; for the fluid substances, which sink in and disappear, are more easily believed to be consumed by the deity than obstinate masses of solid matter."²

Another form of gift-sacrifice was the meal-offering to the god Ocaizir ; on this occasion the meal was "cast by handfuls at the foot of the idol mingled with the hair of the worshipper, and milk was poured over the sacred stones" ;³ this latter was done partly as an offering and partly to wash the meal into the crevices of the rock.

A gift-offering, in the shape of a sheep, was made at the ceremony of the first cutting of an infant's hair ; the hair itself was also an offering, and "was designed to avert evil from the child, and was evidently an act of dedication by which the infant was brought under the protection of the god of the community."⁴

Dedication of another kind, which partakes, however, of the nature of a gift-offering, is illustrated by the inscription on a bronze tablet from Sabwat, the ancient capital of Hadramaut (the land in the extreme south of Arabia), on which a father dedicates to the god Sin not only gold and

¹ Wellhausen, *op. cit.*, p. 121. For the further significance of offering blood, see below.

² Robertson Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 229 ; Wellhausen, *op. cit.*, pp. 111 f.

³ Wellhausen, *op. cit.*, p. 121 ; Robertson Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 462 ff.

⁴ Robertson Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 328.

incense, but also his "soul, and mind, his children, his possessions, the light of his eyes, and the thoughts of his heart."¹

A gift of thanksgiving took the form of offering to the god the best of the booty taken in battle. Nilus, in speaking of the worship of the planet Venus among the Saracens, says : "They know no god, whether spirit or made with hands, but they worship the morning star, and at its rising they sacrifice to it the best of the booty" ;² this is clearly an echo of earlier practice. Again, on a South Arabian inscription there is recorded the sacrifice of a kid as a thank-offering for protection afforded by the deity 'Amm-anas, a South Arabian god.³ On another inscription a gift-offering is mentioned, not an animal sacrifice, as having been made to Al-'Uzza, a goddess (conceived also as a youth) worshipped in northern Arabia.⁴

Under gift-sacrifices must be included human sacrifices, which find frequent mention as prevalent among the ancient Arabs ; these were, however, largely offered as part of the booty taken in battle, and thus also were a gift of thanksgiving. For example, Nilus relates the following about his son Theodulus, who was captured in war, and was destined to be sacrificed to the morning star : the place of sacrifice was made ready the evening before, and the captive waited in fear and trembling for the morrow ; but at morn the morning star rose while his captors still slept, and not until sunrise did they awake ; it was then too late to offer the sacrifice as the morning star had disappeared ; the life of Theodulus was thus saved.⁵ But the incident points, none the less, to the practice of offering a human being as a gift to the deity. This is definitely stated to have been the case by Porphyry, who says that in his day a boy was sacrificed in Duma annually, and buried by the side of the altar.⁶ Like Nilus, Porphyry lived in much later days than those of which we are thinking, but there can be no doubt that what they

¹ Nielsen, op. cit., p. 235.

² Ibid., p. 203.

³ Lidzbarski, *Emphemeris für semitische Epigraphik*, ii., Erstes Heft, p. 107 (1903).

⁴ Ibid., ii., Drittes Heft, p. 379 (1908).

⁵ Nielsen, op. cit., p. 203. •

⁶ *De abstinentia*, ii. 56.

relate represented the continuance of ancient custom. Nilus records further that young and beautiful boys were sacrificed at dawn to the morning star. Among the ancient Arabs Al-'Uzza (the morning star) was conceived of as a beautiful youth, and they liked to offer to their deities victims similar to the god : " We offer thee an offering like thee," it was said ; hence the sacrifice of beautiful boys. In the same way, in Har-ran, the Moon, being white in colour, was thought of as an old man, therefore an old man with white hair was sacrificed to him ; the planet which we know as Mars was red in colour, therefore to it was offered a man with rosy cheeks.¹

As to the priority, or otherwise, of human sacrifices, Robertson Smith says : " In the ages of antiquity there was a very general belief that in strictness the oldest rituals demanded a human victim, and that animal sacrifices were substitutes for the life of a man. But in the oldest times there could be no reason for thinking a man's life better than that of a camel or a sheep as a vehicle of sacramental communion . . . I apprehend, therefore, that human sacrifice is not more ancient than the sacrifice of sacred animals, and that the prevalent belief of ancient heathenism, that animal victims are an imperfect substitute for a human life, arose by a false inference from traditional forms of ritual that had ceased to be understood."²

Gift-sacrifices among the ancient Arabs were thus offered to the deity to do him homage, and so to gain his favour ; that they also served the purpose of averting his wrath, which may inadvertently have been aroused, follows in the natural course.

The quotation from Robertson Smith just given leads us on to the subject of communion-sacrifices among the ancient Arabs. We draw attention, first, to the annual sacrifices offered during the sacrificial month *Rajab* :³ " In

¹ Nielsen, *Die altarabische Mondreligion*, pp. 105, 113 (1904) ; see also Wellhausen, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

² *Op. cit.*, pp. 361-5 ; see also, Chwolson, *Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus*, ii. 397 (1856).

³ For its antiquity, see Robertson Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 407-65 ; see also Wellhausen, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

pastoral Arabia domestic cattle habitually yearn in the brief season of the spring pasture, and this would serve to fix an annual season of sacrifice. Camels calve in February and early March." The sacrifices offered at this season would be, therefore, sacrifices of firstlings. These are not gift-sacrifices in the strict sense of the term, as Robertson Smith has conclusively shown ; objections to his contention do not hold good.¹ The passage in question has been frequently quoted by writers, but its importance permits of our quoting it here : " In the oldest known form of Arabian sacrifice as described by Nilus, the camel chosen as the victim is bound upon a rude altar of stones piled together, and when the leader of the band has thrice led the worshippers round the altar in a solemn procession accompanied with chants, he inflicts the first wound, while the last words of the hymn are still upon the lips of the congregation, and in all haste drinks of the blood that gushes forth. Forthwith the whole company fall on the victim with their swords, hacking off pieces of the quivering flesh and devouring them raw with such wild haste that in the short interval between the rise of the day star which marked the hour for the service to begin, and the disappearance of its rays before the rising sun, the entire camel, body and bones, skin, blood and entrails, is wholly devoured.² The plain meaning of this is that the victim was devoured before its life had left the still warm blood and flesh – raw flesh is called ' living flesh ' in Hebrew and Syriac – and that thus in the most literal way all those who shared in the ceremony absorbed part of the victim's life into themselves. One sees how much more forcibly than any ordinary meal such a rite expresses the establishment or confirmation of a bond of common life between the worshippers, and also, since the blood was shed upon the altar itself, between the worshippers and their god."³

¹ See, e.g., Lagrange, *Études*, p. 272.

² This must not be regarded as incredible. According to Artemidorus, *ap. Strabo* xvi. 4, 17, the Troglodytes ate the bones and skin, as well as the flesh, of cattle.

³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 338 f. ; the Greek text of Nilus' account is given in Wellhausen, *op. cit.*, pp. 119 f.

Here it is, therefore, clear that the idea of a gift to the deity does not enter in. The blood shed upon the altar meant that the god partook of the life of the victim, and, as all the worshippers had likewise been partakers of the life of the same victim, a bond of union was effected between the god and the worshippers, and between the worshippers themselves. The sacrifice was thus an act of sacrificial communion. It is also to be noted that it is a public congregational sacrifice, as distinct from sacrifices of families and individuals. It has been objected that this illustration taken from Nilus is an isolated case, and that one cannot found a theory of sacrifice on a piece of isolated evidence such as this ;¹ but Robertson Smith had already anticipated this objection, for, after giving a great deal of subsidiary evidence in the shape of parallels to every element in the rite described by Nilus, he justly adds : " From all this it is apparent that the ritual described by Nilus is by no means an isolated invention of the religious fancy, in one of the most barbarous corners of the Semitic world, but a very typical embodiment of the main ideas that underlie the sacrifices of the Semites generally. Even in its details it probably comes nearer to the primitive form of Semitic worship than any other sacrifice of which we have a description."² As S. A. Cook truly remarks : " A more careful reading of *The Religion of the Semites* should have shown opponents that the communion-theory is not based upon and does not start from Nilus ; it has a much profounder inception. The unprejudiced reader will discover for himself that it is part of a network of ideas which are common to mankind, even as every religion can be viewed as a particular structure of the numerous beliefs and practices which make up the world of religion."³

There are one or two further considerations to which attention may be drawn in connexion with communion-sacrifices among the ancient Arabs. The blood covenant

¹ e.g. Lagrange, op. cit., p. 258.

² Op. cit., p. 345.

³ Introduction to the third edition of *The Religion of the Semites*, p. lvii.

between men¹ suggests that the partaking of blood by the worshippers and the god effects a union between them; among the ancient Arabs it was customary during the sacrifice to stand for a moment in silence around the altar, thus recognising the divine presence.² Again, just as the offering of hair, of both men and women, to the dead, by laying it on the grave, was believed to keep up the relationship with the departed, so hair-offerings to the deity were the means of coming into touch with him.³ Doubtless this partook of the nature of a gift-offering, but there was a deeper and more mysterious purpose in the offering. This applies, too, to the offering of part of one's clothing and the like to the deity; "closely allied to the practice of leaving part of oneself – whether blood or hair – in contact with the god at the sanctuary, are offerings of part of one's clothes, or other things that one has worn, such as ornaments or weapons. . . . The clothes are so far part of a man that they can serve as a vehicle of personal connection. Hence the religious significance of suspending on an idol or *Dhat Anwat*, not only weapons, ornaments and complete garments, but mere shreds from one's raiment. These rag-offerings are still to be seen hanging on the sacred trees of Syria, and on the tombs of Mohammedan saints; they are not gifts in the ordinary sense, but pledges of attachment."⁴ At the same time, it may be added, just as the partaking of the deity at the sacrificial communion-meal effects union with him, so, though not, of course, in the same fulness, by leaving part of oneself with the deity there was a real feeling of union with him.

Not without reason has it been said that contact and unity with the deity was the primary purpose of all offerings among the ancient Arabs.⁵

¹ See Robertson Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, pp. 56 ff. (1903).

² Cp. Smend, *Lehrbuch der alttestamentlichen Religionsgeschichte*, p. 124 (1899).

³ Cp. Frankenber, "Israelitische und altarabische Trauergebräuche," in *Palästina Jahrbuch*, ii. 64 ff. (1906).

⁴ Robertson Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 335; for modern practice, see Curtiss, *Primitive Semitic Religion To-day*, pp. 91 f. (1902).

⁵ Wellhausen, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

Regarding the life-giving purpose of sacrifice, though illustrations of this among the ancient Arabs do not present themselves with the same clearness that we have seen to be the case elsewhere, it must be pointed out that this purpose must to some extent, at any rate, underlie both the other types of sacrifice with which we are particularly concerned. The offering of blood implies something more than a gift; blood was synonymous with life, so that when blood was offered to the deity he was thought to receive the life-principle within himself. Similarly, when the worshippers drank the sacrificial blood, they absorbed the vital principle within themselves. Thus the life released by the sacrifice of the victim was the means of giving life to others. Somewhat analogous to this is the custom among modern Arabs – a custom which is, however, likely to have a long history behind it – of offering a sacrifice for a child, especially a boy, who is thought to be in danger of dying;¹ clearly the purpose here is that the life released from the victim may vitalise the sick child, even though it may at the same time be a gift to the deity to induce him to look favourably on the child.

Again, in the case of the communion-sacrifice, union with the deity must impart divine life to the worshippers; so that here again, although the communion was the primary purpose of the sacrifice, the life released by the sacrifice of the victim benefited both the god and his worshippers.

II. SACRIFICES AMONG THE BABYLONIANS AND ASSYRIANS

It may be pointed out, first, that among the Babylonians and Assyrians all sacrifices were fire-offerings. The god of fire, *par excellence*, was Girru-Nusku, clothed in brightness, whose light was inextinguishable. As fire was necessary for every sacrifice the presence of this god in the temple was indispensable; to whatever deity sacrifice was offered

¹ Curtiss, *Primitive Religion*, p. 177.

Girru-Nusku had to be there ; even Shamash, the personification of fire, acknowledged his power in submitting to his presence when sacrifice was offered to him (Shamash). So that it may be said that, in a sense, every sacrifice was an act of homage to Girru-Nusku. Such offerings come under the general head of gift-sacrifices.¹

More specific, however, were sacrifices of homage which were naturally offered on the occasion of the dedication of a temple : thus, when the Assyrian king, Ashurnasirpal, built the great temple in honour of the god Ninib in Calah, he offered on its completion sacrifices in honour of this god, accompanied by prayers.² Again, both before and after a battle, sacrifices were offered ; in the former case to secure the god's help, in the latter, if a victory, to express thanksgiving. As a rule, victory was ascribed to the help of Ashur, but Adad,³ the war-god, was also honoured with prayers and sacrifices immediately before a battle, and after it had been won. Again, we read of how Shalmanezer II, after a successful campaign, entered the great temple of Marduk, E-sagila, in Babylon, and offered prayers and sacrifices ; among the latter, special mention is made of the offering of a lamb.⁴ Belonging to gift-sacrifices were those which were offered to the god to avert his wrath.⁵ A different kind of gift-offering was the libation poured out by Ashurbanipal in honour of his gods Ninurta and Nergal after a successful lion-hunt.⁶ Gift-sacrifices of various kinds could be indefin-

¹ Jastrow, *Die Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens*, i. 297 f. (1905-12).

² *Ibid.*, i. 225. A parallel of great interest occurs on one of the Ras Shamra tablets, which describes a dedicatory ritual on the occasion of the building of a temple ; it contains various parallels with the account of the dedication of Solomon's temple (1 Kings vi.-viii.). See Hooke's forthcoming *Schweich Lectures* (Lect. ii.).

³ Adad was especially the storm-god ; but as one who had rule over the warring elements it was natural, as Jastrow says, that he should also have been a god of battles among a people whose main ambition centred in conquering (*op. cit.*, i. 150).

⁴ Jastrow, *op. cit.*, i. 234 ; this is described in an inscription on the bronze gates of Balawat, south-east of Nineveh ; see Jeremias, *Das alte Testament im Lichte des alten Orients*, p. 185 (1930).

⁵ Jastrow, *op. cit.*, i. 515.

⁶ Gressmann, *Altorientalische Bilder zum alten Testament*, p. 155 (1927) ; cp. Jastrow, *op. cit.*, i. 431, ii. 489 ; Weber, *Die Literatur der Babylonier und Assyrier*, p. 22 (1906) ; Langdon, *Die neubabylonischen Königsinschriften*, p. 91 (1912). •

itely illustrated ; they form the commonest type among the Babylonians and Assyrians, who believed that the gods took pleasure in them. The accompaniment of music during the offering of sacrifices was usual, at any rate in the later periods.¹ In origin, the gift aspect of sacrifice among the Babylonians comes, according to Professor S. H. Hooke, from the conception that the god, or the king as his representative, owns the land ; and offerings of food and farm-produce recognise his claims.²

As to communion-sacrifices among the Babylonians and Assyrians, it must be confessed that definite *data* are wanting ; this is not a matter of surprise, for, as Zimmern points out, " it is very difficult to form a just estimate of the value and relative standing of Babylonian religious thought. This is due to the fact that we are, for the most part, dependent on official documents, such as royal inscriptions, liturgical collections, etc. ; we have very few documents of a private and individual nature which would give us actual insight into the religious ideas which the people connected with the external and traditional forms and doctrines. . . . Again, it is difficult to judge whether, and to what extent, there existed a simple unquestioning piety among the people, alongside the learning and partially conscious deception of the priestly speculations. The presence among the Babylonians of this simple piety, a childlike trust in the divine help in all situations of life, is proved – and that even in the earliest period – by many deeply religious passages in the hymns and prayers, as well as by other indications, e.g. the religious ideas which find expression in the formation of Babylonian proper names."³

So that it is permissible to believe, on the analogy of the beliefs of other Semites, that, when sacrifices partook of the nature of a feast offered to the deity, the idea of communion on the part of the worshippers can hardly have been absent. It is true that the texts nowhere directly say that the

¹ Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, i. 332 (1920).

² In a private communication.

³ In Hastings, *Encycl. of Rel. and Ethics*, ii. 319a.

worshippers partook of such a feast. There is simply the description of the many offerings displayed before the deity ; but it is impossible to believe that a large variety of food-stuffs was merely placed before the deity and left there. Possibly the priests enjoyed the dainties after the worshippers had gone ; but, if so, that would merely have been a degradation of earlier practice ; and even in that case, if the priests partook, the idea of communion can hardly have been absent. Further, it will not be inappropriate to point to the practice of the mourning feast. When the burial ceremony was concluded, a feast was held on what remained over from the victim sacrificed on such occasions ; this is said to have been partaken of both by the mourners and by the Anunnaki (gods of the underworld) and whatever gods might be in the tomb.¹ That is a clear case of a communion-meal with gods, and, as among other Semites, may well be regarded as analogous to the communion-sacrifices of which we are more directly thinking.

It should be added that the offering of sacrifices was not confined to the priests. It is especially laid down that when a layman offers sacrifice he must wash his hands first in ordinary water, whereas priests, at any rate during the great feasts, had to wash in running water, which was believed to have a specially purifying effect, before officiating.² The ordinary layman might be expected to cling more persistently to the traditional idea of the communion-sacrifice than the more sophisticated Babylonian priest.

For the reason given above, *data* regarding the life-giving type of sacrifice among the Babylonians and Assyrians are, again, sparse. The belief that the gods, like men, died,³ and that, therefore, like men, they needed nourishment to keep them living, points to sacrifices of the life-giving type. In animal-sacrifices certain vital parts were reserved for the god, though the offering of the blood of the sacrificial victim does not play the part in Babylonian or Assyrian rituals that

¹ Meissner, *op. cit.*, i. 428.

² *Ibid.*, 412.

³ King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, p. 8 (1899).

it does among other Semites. In a hymn to Marduk mention is made of the nourishment for the gods which sacrifices provide.¹ On another text it is said: "O my god, who art forgiving, turn again unto me with whom thou art wrath, and let thy face look upon the pure 'heavenly food' which has been presented to thee";² the "heavenly food" ascends by means of the smoke of the fire-offering to the heavens. The primary purpose of the sacrifice here referred to is to appease the wrath of the god; but the food is intended to nourish him, and in so far witnesses to the laying-down of the life of the sacrificial victim for life-preserving purposes. It is also permissible to point to the analogy of food and drink offered to the departed.³

As illustrative of sacrifices being offered to preserve human life, mention may be made of the numerous magical texts in which reference is made to this; the fact that we are here in the domain of magic does not the less point to the life of the sacrificial victim being laid down for the purpose of giving life. Thus, one such text runs: "The lamb as substitute for the man, the lamb has given its life for him; the head of the lamb is given for the head of the man, the throat of the lamb is given for the throat of the man, the breast of the lamb is given for the breast of the man."⁴ There are other texts, especially exorcism texts, to the same effect. Comparatively few, then, as the indications of this type of sacrifice are, they are sufficient to show that the idea was not wanting.

III. SACRIFICES AMONG THE SYRIANS AND CANAANITES

Apart from sacrifices among the Hebrews, which in many respects reflect Canaanite usage, the literary evidence is of

¹ Jastrow, *op. cit.*, i. 511.

² *Ibid.*, ii. 93. For reconciliation-sacrifices, see further, ii. 52, etc.

³ See, e.g., Seeger, *Die Triebkräfte des religiösen Lebens in Israel und Babylonien*, p. 69 (1923); *Mitteilungen und Nachrichten des deutschen Palästina-Vereins*, p. 53 (1904), p. 54 (1906).

⁴ Jastrow, *op. cit.*, i. 351.

late date ; the archæological evidence, on the other hand, is very impressive. But the fact must be recognised that for our special purpose, that of illustrating the gift, communion, and life-giving types, neither the literary nor the archæological evidence is as definite as in the case of ancient Arab and Babylonian sacrifices. For the *fact* of sacrificial worship the evidence is abundant ; but the nature of the evidence makes it difficult to decide, in many cases, whether the *purpose*, in any given instance, comes under the head of the types of those sacrifices with which we are particularly concerned. For example, in the Gezer excavations there were found, under the temple, a large number of infants deposited in large jars ; two of the bodies had been burned, but no sign of fire was observed in the case of the others ; the infants were all newly born.¹ What was the purpose of these sacrifices ? Various theories have been propounded. They may have been gifts to the deity, for the purpose either of gaining his favour, or of averting his wrath ; they may have been intended as a means of communion with the deity ; they may have been for the purpose of liberating life for the benefit of others. Or again, in the more recently discovered Ras Shamra inscriptions, there are numerous references to different kinds of sacrifice ; one, for example, records the sacrifices offered to the gods on each day of the month ;² but the purpose of these sacrifices is a matter of conjecture. We may well believe that they were gifts to the gods in, perhaps, the majority of cases ; but that there may have been other purposes, too, can hardly be doubted.³ At any rate, the indications of purpose are not as clear as is often the case with the descriptions of sacrifice already dealt with. It is true that, in the light of much that we read in the Old Testament, the purposes of Syrian and Canaanite sacrifices may probably be explained ; to this we shall come later.

¹ *Palestine Exploration Fund, Quarterly Statement*, 1903, pp. 32 ff.

² Dhorme, "Première traduction des textes phéniciens de Ras Shamra," in the *Revue Biblique* for January 1931, pp. 40 f.

³ See further, below, pp. 75 ff.

We shall now give a few illustrations of Syrian and Canaanite sacrifices gathered from various sources. Very instructive is Lucian's description of the spring festival at Hierapolis, in the extreme north of Syria ; he says : " The greatest of the festivals is that which they celebrated at the opening of spring ; some call this the Pyre, others the Lamp. On this occasion the sacrifice is performed in this way : they cut down tall trees, and set them up in the court ; then they bring goats and sheep and cattle, and hang them living to the trees ; they add to these birds and garments, and gold and silver work. After all is finished, they carry the gods around the trees, and set fire under ; in a moment all is in a blaze. To this solemn rite a great multitude flocks from Syria and all the regions round about. Each brings his own god and the statues which each has of his own gods."¹ Hierapolis was the great centre of the worship of Astarte, and this festival, in one form or another, reaches back into the dim past. The main purpose of the sacrifice was to ensure good crops for the coming year ; it was, therefore, a gift-offering to the goddess in order to gain her favour to this end. The procession of the gods – probably local fertility deities – suggests that a share of the gift was intended for them. While the sacrifice of animals wholly to the goddess marks the gift-offering, it is just possible that the garments and ornaments were intended as pledges of attachment, and not gifts in the ordinary sense. With this may be compared the garments and ornaments and even rags, hung on to the *Dhat Anwat*, mentioned above. In that case, the idea of union with the deity comes in. This may be further illustrated by hair-offerings whereby it was believed that union with the god was effected ; the antiquity of the custom is well known. Lucian, in speaking of the custom at Hierapolis, says : " The young men dedicate the first growth on their chin, then they let down the locks of the maidens, which have been sacred from their birth ; they then cut these off in the temple, and place them in vessels,

¹ *De Dea Syria*, xlix. (Garstang's trans., *The Syrian Goddess*, pp. 83 f. [1913]).

some in silver vessels, some in gold, and, after placing these in the temple and inscribing the name on the vessel, they depart."¹ The custom is also referred to on a Phœnician² inscription, where mention is made of the barbers attached to the temple who assisted in these hair-offerings.³ More striking is the inscription of king Panammu on the statue of Hadad, from North Syria. Here the dead king expresses the wish that his successor should "sacrifice to Hadad, and make mention of the name of Hadad, and shall say, May the soul of Panammu eat with thee, and may the soul of Panammu drink with thee; he shall, moreover, remember the soul of Panammu with Hadad . . . this his sacrifice . . . may he look favourably upon him."⁴ In this case the communion-meal is partaken of by a departed spirit; but there are plenty of illustrations of this on the part of the living; as S. A. Cook says: "For illustrations we have once more to look to North Syria (Carchemish, Mar'ash, etc.) of the period round about 1000 B.C. Here are found a series of so-called 'communion scenes,' though, to be sure, it is not certain that they all have a religious significance, and that the meal is invariably shared with the deity. On North Syrian seals a man sometimes sits and drinks before an altar upon which stands a bull; or two seated figures are in the presence of a bull upon which stands an undraped goddess. On one from Memphis, North Syrian in type, a figure is seated before a well-laden table; facing him is a figure with uplifted hands, while, behind, another (? a priest) cuts up the body of a stag which lies upon a similar sort of table (? altar)."⁵

As to the life-giving sacrifices, in the sense of the sacrificial victim being slain in order that its life, let loose, can be utilised for someone else, we are unable to give illustrations, for those that might be offered are in their meaning too

¹ Op. cit., lx.; cp. also vi., lv.

² The Phœnicians called themselves Canaanites.

³ G. A. Cooke, *North Semitic Inscriptions*, pp 65 ff. (1903).

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 159 ff.

⁵ *The Religion of Ancient Palestine in the Light of Archaeology*, pp. 39 f. (1930).

uncertain. But not far removed from this purpose are those offerings made to the deity in order that the life of the offerer may be preserved, or prolonged. For example, on a Phœnician inscription from Byblus (this is the Greek name for the Phœnician name Gebal), the king, Yehaw-milk, says : " I make for my lady, mistress of Gebal [this is doubtless Astarte], this altar of bronze which is in this court . . . [various other things are mentioned], I, Yehaw-milk, king of Gebal, make to my lady, mistress of Gebal ; inasmuch as I invoked my lady, mistress of Gebal, she has heard my voice and done kindness to me. May the mistress of Gebal bless Yehaw-milk, king of Gebal, and grant him life, and prolong his days, and his years over Gebal, for he is a righteous king ! " ¹ The votive offering here made is expressive of gratitude, but on the strength of it the king asks for prolonged life ; so that, in some sense, the offering – it is not in this case an animal sacrifice – can be regarded as intended to procure life. It is a very elaborate offering, and must have cost the king a great deal ; so that it was a sacrifice on his part in the sense of self-denial. Another, short, inscription from Tema, in Aramaic, runs : " The seat which Ma'nān, son of 'Imran, offered to the god Šalm, for the life of his soul " ; ² this god, according to G. A. Cooke, appears to have been an Aramaic, or North Semitic, deity and not native to Arabia. An offering with a similar purpose is recorded on a *stèle* found in Beth-Shan ; the inscription runs : " Made for the builder Amen-en-Apt, true of word, by his son, Pa-Ra-en-Heb " ; and, below, it speaks of " the offering made by the king on behalf of the man's *ka* to Mekal the great god, that he may give life, health, etc. " ³

It will thus be seen that, so far as the Syrians and Canaanites are concerned, the material illustrative of the purposes of sacrifice with which we are especially concerned leaves something to be desired ; however, the far fuller details, to which we have pointed among the ancient Arabs, make

¹ G. A. Cooke, *op. cit.*, pp. 18 ff.

² *Ibid.*, p. 199.

³ S. A. Cook, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

up for this, since it cannot be doubted that the more primitive forms of sacrifice afforded the patterns for later generations of Semites. "It is very likely" remarks Lods, "that, as Dussaud holds, various sacrificial rituals, especially those corresponding to the three ideas of communion, propitiation, and gift, may have been practised by the Canaanites before the tenth century on the general ground that they exist in a rudimentary form even among the most backward of the Semites, such as the pagan Arabs, and were certainly practised by the Hebrews before their entry into Canaan."¹ Hooke, on the other hand, while allowing for gifts their due place, contends that the main ideas of sacrifice are placation, the removal of guilt, and of substitution.² With these purposes of sacrifice we shall be concerned when dealing with the post-exilic period; not that we mean to imply that these ideas did not exist among the Hebrews in earlier periods; they undoubtedly did, though, as we believe, rightly or wrongly, in a crude form, which did not receive the ethical ideal needed, until a fuller sense of sin had been developed through the experiences of the Exile. Nevertheless, Hooke's theory of the fundamental purposes of sacrifice is of profound importance, for, whether we agree with it or not in detail, there is one point on which he puts his finger with which everyone must agree, and that is, the recognition on the part of men of their unworthiness in the sight of their god, and therefore the need of putting themselves right with him. There we have, no matter how primitive the form, a principle, a truth, which is capable of infinite development.

¹ Op. cit., p. 98.

² In the *Schweich Lectures*, Lect. iii. (1937).

CHAPTER IV

RITUAL AND SACRIFICE

IT is not our intention to deal here with the general subject of ritual in its relation to worship ; our purpose is merely to emphasise the importance of ritual, and its indispensable performance in connexion with the offering of sacrifices. Tylor says : “ It is generally easier to obtain accurate accounts of ceremonies by eye-witnesses, than anything like trustworthy and intelligible statements of doctrine ; so that very much of our knowledge of religion in the savage and barbaric world consists in acquaintance with its ceremonies. It is also true that some religious ceremonies are marvels of permanence, holding substantially the same form and meaning through age after age, and far beyond the range of historic record.”¹ This is very true ; it is only necessary to emphasise that it is just in the ceremonies, or ritual acts, that the doctrine is often to be discerned. For instance, an apparently meaningless ritual dance may in reality imply the belief in the presence of the deity. Thus, regarding Polynesian dancing, we are told by an eye-witness that “ it is wholly occupied in posturing, waving the arms and bending the body, as if before a shrine. It is the upper part of the body that is chiefly engaged. Where the feet come in it is only to effect the occasional advances and retreats, as if to and fro, from the altar. . . .”² Here we have clearly a ritual act which in its origin witnessed to the belief in the presence of the deity, in whose honour the ritual “ dance ” was performed ; that its significance is now lost bears out

¹ Op. cit., ii. 363.

² Macmillan Brown, *Maoris and Polynesians, their Origin, History and Culture*, p. 203 (1907).

what Tylor says of the " marvels of permanence " of some religious ceremonies. In this case the original meaning of the rite is, to us, fairly obvious ; but there are many other ritual acts of different kinds, the significance of which it is difficult for us to grasp, and the performers themselves have certainly lost all knowledge of their meaning, although continuing to perform them.

As the offering of sacrifice was an act of peculiar importance, it required persons specially qualified to undertake its performance. Thus, among the Arunta of Australia, it is the chief of the clan who occupies, as it were, the office of priest ; he, at any rate, carries out the totemic rites.¹ In later times, and among more civilised peoples, a priestly caste arises, and the king, too, offers sacrifice. Among the ancient Arabs, however, the sacrifices were not necessarily offered by a priest, and the same is true of the Hebrews in the earliest times. The priest's main duty was to be the guardian of the sanctuary, and to give oracles ; hence the name *kahin* (=the Hebrew *cohen*), which means " diviner " ; it was the *sadim* of the Arabs who was the real equivalent of the Hebrew " priest."² Both priest and worshippers had to undergo purification before entering the sanctuary to offer sacrifice, and they had to change their garments ; this, too, applies both to Arabs and to Hebrews.³ The idea behind these various ritual acts was, as Lods points out, " the conception, so common among primitive peoples, that clothing is particularly liable to be impregnated by the spiritual influences with which it may be surrounded. Hence there is always the danger that it may either bring hostile influences into the sacred precincts, or, an equally dreaded possibility, that it may carry a portion of the sacred fluid into profane surroundings."⁴

Some ritual acts are mentioned as necessary on entering

¹ Spencer and Gillen, *Native Tribes of Central Australia*, pp. 23 ff. (1899).

² Wellhausen, *op. cit.*, pp. 130 ff. For the consecration of the priest among the Hebrews, see Exod. xxix. 1-37, Lev. viii. 1-36.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 55-122 ; Robertson Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 451 f. ; Nowack, *Hebräische Archäologie*, ii. 287 ff. (1894).

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 271.

the sanctuary. Robertson Smith refers to the custom of the Phœnicians, described by Herodian (v. 6, 10), of taking off their linen stockings on entering sacred ground.¹ This can also be observed, for example, on a Babylonian cylinder seal from Ur, where a worshipper is led bare-footed into the presence of the Moon-god;² and on the seal of the Patesi Gudea of Lagash, whereon is depicted the bare-footed worshipper entering the sanctuary.³ We are reminded of the words in Exod. iii. 5 : " Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Wellhausen quotes an ancient Arabic poem which says of one who enters the sanctuary that " he goes slowly with bowed head " ;⁴ this seems similarly to be the case among the Babylonians, judging from the many cult-scenes represented on cylinder seals. On one of these the two worshippers have their heads enveloped in a kind of veil.⁵ Here again similar ritual acts are mentioned in the Old Testament ; thus in Exod. xix. 24 we read : " And Yahweh said unto him, Go, get thee down ; and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee ; but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto Yahweh " ; the meaning is that they are not to enter the sanctuary hurriedly. In Exod. iii. 6, where it tells of Moses by the burning bush, it is said : " And Moses hid his face ; for he was afraid to look upon God." On many of the Babylonian cult-scenes already mentioned the worshipper enters the divine presence with upraised arm, sometimes one, at others both.⁶ The meaning of this is not quite certain, but it recalls the words in Ps. lxxiii. 4 (5 in Heb.) : " So will I bless thee while I live ; I will lift up my hands in thy name " (see also Pss. xxviii. 2, cxxxiv. 2).

¹ Op. cit., p. 453.

² Gressmann, *Altorientalische Bilder zum Alten Testament*, p. 93, plate 323 (1927).

³ O. Weber, " Altorientalische Siegelbilder," plate 432, in *Der alte Orient* xvii. (1919), where many other illustrations will be found.

⁴ Op. cit., p. 55.

⁵ O. Weber, op. cit., plate 430.

⁶ An interesting example is seen on plate 442a in O. Weber, op. cit.

Another ritual act among the ancient Arabs, referred to by Wellhausen, was that of stroking the god. In the quotation which he gives it is said "women were not permitted to draw near to the gods of the Arabs and stroke them,"¹ but for men it was a frequent ritual act performed in order to feel close to the god and show him affection. The god was not necessarily a carved idol; a standing stone, which was often also the altar, was identified with the god and caressed. In the temple discovered during the excavations at Gezer, there is a megalithic structure consisting of a row of seven monoliths, with an eighth standing apart; in reference to this last, Macalister says: "The upper end has been worked to a sharp point. By polished surfaces it shows plain evidence, lacking in all the other stones, of having been kissed, anointed, rubbed, or otherwise handled on the top by the worshippers."² The kissing of the holy stone here mentioned was also customary among the Arabs, though less frequent.³ On an Assyrian cylinder seal depicting a cult-scene, the worshipper stands by the sacred stone, and has raised his arm to stroke it.⁴ Among the Israelites similar ritual acts are mentioned; in Gen. xxviii. 22, it is said that "Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it." In Hos. xiii. 2, the kissing of idols is spoken of: "Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves."

The ceremonial presentation of the offering is graphically represented on some of the cylinder seals; on one of these the offerer is seen before the god with what looks like a kid in his arms.⁵ With regard to the Hebrew ritual in early times, Lods says: "It is true that the pre-exilic Hebrew texts only mention two categories of bloody sacrifices, the *zebach shelamin*, or peace-offering, also called *zebach* or *shelem*, in which the greater part of the flesh of the victim

¹ Op. cit., p. 56.

² P.E.F.Q.S., 1903, p. 28.

³ Wellhausen, op. cit., p. 109.

⁴ O. Weber, op. cit., plate 461.

⁵ Ibid., plate 431.

was eaten by the worshippers in a sacred meal, and the 'olah, or whole burnt-offering, also called *kalil*, or total (gift), where the whole animal was given to the deity. Hence many of the historians of the religion of Israel have been inclined to depict the sacrificial ritual of pre-exilic times as of an extreme simplicity. But, as a fact, when we look at the matter more closely, we see that the Israelites of that period, like other ancient peoples, and savages to-day, practised the ritual slaughter of living beings with very various objects, by reason of very diverse mental processes, and hence also with very different rites. . . ."¹ These he then proceeds to enumerate. This is an important point, to which we shall return later ; and the references he gives describe the various ritual acts. To quote these passages in full would take up too much space, so we will merely indicate the references : Exod. xxiv, 6, 8 ; Gen. xv. 9-12, 17, 18 ; Jer. xxxiv. 18 ; cp. 1 Sam. xi. 7 ; Num. xxiii. 1-6, 14, 15, 29, 30 ; cp. Ezek. xxi. 26 ; Lev. xiv. 4, 5, 49, 50 ; cp. xvi. 20-22 ; Exod. xii. 13, 21-23 ; and these by no means exhaust all the relevant passages.

Various terms are used in the Old Testament to describe the form of the ritual act whereby an offering is presented to Yahweh ; in these cases the act is no doubt earlier than the term employed. The very frequently used term *zebach*, "to sacrifice," must have denoted the way in which, for example, an animal for sacrifice was killed ; this we are not told. It is said that the victim must be "without blemish," and must be brought to the place where alone it was lawful to sacrifice, i.e. "before Yahweh" ; in later days this was the court of the Temple where the altar stood (Lev. iv. 4, etc.). Elsewhere it is said that, after the victim has been killed, it is to be flayed and cut in pieces preparatory to being placed on the altar (Lev. i. 6) ; but the mode of killing is not mentioned ; yet this must have been a ritual act of much importance because of the sanctity of the blood. Another technical term is 'arak, "to set in order" ; this is

¹ Op. cit., p. 277.

used both in reference to the wood for the altar fire (Gen. xxii. 9; Lev. i. 7; 1 Kings xviii. 33), and to the "pieces" of the sacrificed victim (Lev. i. 8, vi. 12 [5 in Heb.]); cp. also Exod. xl. 4, 23 in reference to the shew-bread. Then we have the ritual act of laying the hand, *samak*, on the head of the sacrificial victim, whereby it is dedicated to God (Exod. xxix. 10, etc.); in Lev. iv. 16, xxiv. 29, however, this act denotes the transference of sin from the worshipper to the victim. The two terms *shaphak* and *nasak*, both of which mean "to pour out," are used of libations, whether of water (1 Sam. vii. 6; 2 Sam. xxiii. 16) or of wine (Lev. xxiii. 13; Num. xxviii. 7).¹

The Ras Shamra texts give some interesting information here; on one of these a piece of ritual is described in which "priests go to the sea and pour ladlefuls of water into basins; these are then borne into the temple by El, probably impersonated by the king or the high priest. El sends down the early rain, that is the autumn rain, the Hebrew *yoreh*."² This is strongly reminiscent of the water-drawing ceremony during the Feast of Tabernacles which is described in the Mishnah,³ evidently a piece of ritual of high antiquity, though never mentioned in the Old Testament. The priests went to the pool of Siloam from which they fetched water in a golden pitcher; this was then brought to the Temple, and together with a wine oblation was solemnly poured out by the priest beside the altar in the presence of the congregation.

In the minute regulations, again, during the "Ritual of *Kalu*" it is said in one place that "beer of the finest quality, wine, milk, shalt thou spread out; and thou shalt place before these [gods] water."⁴

Then, once more, there is the ritual term, *heniph*, "to wave," used in reference to the presentation of the first-fruits; this is described in Lev. xxiii. 10 ff., where it is

¹ For fuller details regarding these, and other sacrificial terms, see Chapter V.

² In a private communication from Professor S. H. Hooke.

³ *Sukkah* iv. 9, 10.

⁴ Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels Accadiens*, p. 13 (1921).

commanded that the sheaf of the first-fruits of the harvest is to be brought to the priest ; he takes the sheaf and waves it before Yahweh, i.e. before the altar ; a graphic ritual action indicative both of a solemn offering to Him, and of the conviction of His acceptance of it, assuring the people thereby of His blessing on the crops. The act of waving is called *Tenuphah* (Num. xviii. 11 and elsewhere) ; in connexion with this should be mentioned the ritual term *Terumah*, lit. a "lifting up," and used also in reference to offerings presented before the altar (Lev. xxii. 12, Num. v. 9, and elsewhere). In the Mishnah (*Menachoth* v. 6.) the difference between the two is explained by saying that in the case of *Tenuphah* the waving was horizontal, from left to right or *vice versa*, while in that of *Terumah* the offering was waved perpendicularly, up and down, or down and up. The ritual, described in Leviticus, of the offering of the sheaf is evidently incomplete, judging from the large number of details given in the Mishnah (*Menachoth* x) ; and it will not be doubted that many of these have been handed down from times immemorial ; but the "waving" was the central act. A similar rite is prescribed in the case of certain other kinds of offerings (e.g. Exod. xxix. 24 ; Num. v. 25, vi. 20, and elsewhere) ; but into the descriptions of these it is not necessary to go.

A word may be said regarding the attitude in offering prayer, for this, too, was in accordance with prescribed ritual, and prayer was closely associated with the offering of sacrifices ; though, of course, not necessarily so. The ordinary attitude in praying was either that of kneeling (e.g. 1 Kings viii. 54 ; Isa. xlv. 23) or standing (e.g. 1 Sam. i. 26 ; 1 Kings viii. 22) ; not infrequently mention is made of bowing oneself down to the earth (Gen. xxiv. 52 ; 1 Sam. i. 19). For some special purpose one lay at full length in prayer, thus in 1 Kings xvii. 21 we read of Elijah stretching himself upon the sick child and calling upon God to recall it to life (cp. 2 Kings iv. 34). A special attitude, no doubt expressive of intensity of feeling, is mentioned in 1 Kings

xviii. 42, where it is said that Elijah "bowed himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees." Mention is also made of the position of the arms during prayer; in Exod. ix. 29, e.g., it is said: "I will spread abroad my hands unto Yahweh"; cp. Isa. i. 15; 1 Kings. viii. 22; and elsewhere we read of uplifted hands in prayer (Pss. xxviii. 2, cxxxiv. 2, cxli. 2).¹

Another piece of ritual in connexion with sacrifices was the "shout" (*teru'ah*), an exclamation of praise; that this was of some special character is seen by the words in Ps. lxxxix. 15 (16 in Heb.): "Blessed are the people that know the shout"; cp. Pss. xxxiii. 3, xlvii. 1, 5 (2, 6 in Heb.). Among the ancient Arabs it was obligatory when entering the sanctuary.²

Finally, attention must be drawn to what was one of the most important parts of the ritual in connexion with worship generally, and therefore with sacrifices, viz. the ritual procession. Among the ancient Arabs the procession round the sanctuary constituted the central part of their worship; men and women took part in it. The name for "feast," both in Arabic and Hebrew, viz. *chag*, is so called from the procession, or sacred dance.³ "In later Arabia," says Robertson Smith, "the *tawāf*, or act of circling the sacred stone, was still a principal part of religion. . . . The festal song of praise properly goes with the dance round the altar, for in primitive times song and dance are inseparable."⁴ Among the Babylonians the procession played a great part in worship; during the great New Year festival, for example, an important ceremony in the celebration was the procession, in which Marduk was carried from his temple, E-sagila, to the house of the New Year festival, and back again.⁵ Among the Assyrians we have a monument on

¹ For similar rites among the Babylonians, see Meissner, *op. cit.*, ii. 80 f. (1925); see also Gressmann, *op. cit.*, plate 527.

² Wellhausen, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 109 f., 119.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 340.

⁵ On the New Year Festival among the Hebrews, see S. H. Hooke's *Schweich Lectures*, Lect. iii. (1937).

which such a religious procession is graphically depicted.¹ It is led by men playing harps ; the foremost among these, each of whom has one of his legs raised, shows that the procession takes the form of a dance ; the men are followed by women with arms uplifted, and also by children clapping their hands in rhythmical time with the dancers. Among the Israelites, the ritual procession played an important part, as the numerous references in the Old Testament testify ; a few of these may be mentioned. In 1 Sam. xvi. 11 we read : " And Samuel said . . . we will not go round [i.e. the altar] till he come." The Revised Version follows the Septuagint and the Vulgate in rendering the passage : " We will not sit down [i.e. to the sacrificial feast] till he come " ; but this use of the Hebrew word is otherwise unknown in the Old Testament. Taking it in its natural sense the word refers to the ceremonial encircling of the altar with its offering which is mentioned elsewhere in the Old Testament. Thus, in Ps. xxvi. 6, it is said : " I will wash mine hands in innocency and will go round thine altar, Yahweh." A procession is also referred to, evidently on a larger scale, in Ps. xlviii. 12 (13 in Heb.) : " Encompass ye Zion, yea, go round about her " ; the context points to an act of ritual worship. Of special interest is Ps. cxviii. 27 ; the Revised Version reads : " Bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar " ; but to bind the sacrificial victim in this way would be quite against law and usage, the word should have its usual meaning of " join " (see 1 Kings xx. 14, 2 Chron. xiii. 3, and elsewhere). And *chag* does not mean " sacrifice," it means " feast," but its original signification is " dance," or " processional dance," as we have seen. Further, the word translated " cords " or " ropes " would be used quite appropriately in connexion with a procession ; it is the same idea as that connected with *chebel* (" chain " or " band "), used of prophets going about in single file (1 Sam. x. 5 ff.). In Hosea xi. 4, the two words are parallel. The passage should therefore be

¹ An illustration is given in Gressmann, *op. cit.*, plate 152.

translated : " Form the procession in rows, right up to the horns of the altar " ; the reference is to the encirclement of the altar by the worshippers. This is described in full detail in the Mishnah (*Sukkah* iv. 1-6) ; during the Feast of Tabernacles, after the sacrifices had been offered, the procession was formed by the priests carrying willow-branches ; they encircled the altar singing : " Save now, we beseech Thee, Yahweh ; Yahweh, we beseech Thee, send us now prosperity." This was part of the ritual on each of the seven days of the feast ; on the seventh day a sevenfold circuit was made round the altar. Although this evidence belongs to later times, it is extremely probable that it echoes traditional usage, for the persistence in the observance of ritual in worship is well known.

There are many other matters of ritual in connexion with sacrifices among the Israelites, and they increase in number and detail and in minute observances in post-exilic times. We do not, however, propose to describe all these, for that would be wearisome and foreign to the purpose in hand. Some references, nevertheless, to these will have to be made later, notably to the ritual during the Day of Atonement ; and they will come appropriately in the discussions of particular types of sacrifices. A great deal of valuable material will be found in the third lecture of Professor S. H. Hooke's *Schweich Lectures*.

CHAPTER V

SACRIFICES AMONG THE ISRAELITES: TECHNICAL TERMS

BEFORE we come to consider the main purposes of sacrifices among the Israelites, it will be well to enumerate the technical terms applied to them, and some others used in connexion with sacrifices and oblations. For the present we are not concerned either with the chronological order, nor with the development of ideas, regarding sacrifices; with this we shall deal later. We shall merely give, for purposes of reference, the names whereby the different kinds of offerings and sacrifices were known among the Israelites during the various periods of their history, and various other sacrificial terms, with a few words in explanation of each. The order in which they are given is alphabetical, according to their Hebrew form.

'Asham. This is rendered in the Revised Version as "guilt-offering"; but it is used in more senses than one. Thus, in Gen. xxvi. 10, it means simply "offence" or "guilt"; and so often elsewhere. In 1 Sam. vi. 3 ff. the term is used of a compensation given to Yahweh by the Philistines for having captured the Ark and kept it from its proper place; but this compensation takes the form of five golden "tumours" and five golden mice; there is no question of sacrifice. Once more, in 2 Kings xii. 16 (17 in Heb.), the word is used of a money payment given to the sanctuary for the benefit of the priests. As a guilt-offering in the sense of a sacrifice, it is mentioned for the first time in Ezekiel (xl. 39, etc.), and in the later literature. It consisted

ordinarily of a ram, together with restitution and a penalty of a fifth of its value. The trespass-offerings of the leper and the Nazirite were he-lambs (Lev. xiv. ; Num. vi. 12) ; if the person who suffered wrong, or his kinsman, were not living, the fine went to the priests. The victims were offered, the blood and fat pieces going to the altar, the skin and flesh to the priests. There seems to have been no application of the blood to the horns of the altar (the chief ceremony of the sin-offering) because the guilt was not expiated at the altar, but by compensation to the wronged person, or his representative. Nowack lays stress on the fact that while expiatory sacrifices belong to post-exilic times, and are mentioned first by Ezekiel,¹ that does not mean to say that the *idea* of expiation was foreign to pre-exilic Israel ; such terms as "holy" and "unclean," occurring in prophetic times, show that the thought of the obliteration of what separates from God and makes a man unfit to take part in worship must have been familiar in those times.² It is of great interest to note that this term 'Asham occurs in the Ras Shamra tablets (*circa* 1400 B.C.) in reference to offences against the deity, as well as against man, that could be covered by compensation ; Jack thinks that the ritual was similar to that mentioned in the Old Testament ; this is doubtful. "We read in more than one tablet of such an offering being for Gad. The 'Asham was thus of early origin, though at first it was probably not of the developed nature found in Ezekiel and P, but corresponded rather to what we find in 1 Samuel vi. 3, 4, 8, 17 ; 2 Kings xii. 16 (17 in Heb.), Isa. liii. 10."³ The "offering made for Gad" is particularly interesting as we read that the Jews in post-exilic times prepared "a table for

¹ It should, however, be pointed out that Ezek. xl.-xlviii., the only part of the book in which expiatory sacrifices are mentioned, are regarded by some modern scholars as post-exilic, and not an original part of the book, see e.g. Hertrich, *Ezechielprobleme*, pp. 119 ff. (1932).

² *Hebräische Archäologie*, ii. 225 (1894).

³ Jack, *The Ras Shamra Tablets : their Bearing on the Old Testament*, p. 30 (1935). The occurrence of the term 'Asham in Isa. liii. 10 is almost certainly a textual corruption.

Gad," the god of fortune (Isa. lxx. 11). Gad was also worshipped among the Babylonians.¹

As illustrative of both the meaning and purpose of 'Asham in post-exilic times, we may quote the following from Lev. v. 1-9: "And if anyone sin . . . or if anyone touch any unclean thing . . . or if he touch the uncleanness of man . . . or if anyone swear rashly with his lips to do evil, or to do good . . . and it shall be when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that wherein he hath sinned; and he shall bring his guilt-offering ['Asham] unto Yahweh for his sin which he hath sinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a goat, for a sin-offering [Chattath]; and the priest shall make atonement for him as concerning his sin . . . and he shall sprinkle the blood of the sin-offering [Chattath] upon the side of the altar; and the rest of the blood shall be drained out at the base of the altar; it is a sin-offering [Chattath]."

It is to be noticed that 'Asham and Chattath ("sin-offering") seem to be used here as synonymous terms; but that this cannot have been the case originally is seen by the fact that they are differentiated on the Ras Shamra tablets (see further under *Chattath*).

'Azkarah ("Memorial"). In Lev. xxiv. 7 it is said: "And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row [or 'pile,' i.e. of cakes], that it may be to the bread for a memorial ['Azkarah], even an offering made by fire unto Yahweh." The term occurs only in the Priestly Code, and is used in reference to frankincense burned for the shew-bread; it is always connected with 'Issheh, i.e. "an offering made by fire" (see below), with the exception of the two passages Lev. vi. 8, Num. v. 26. There are various theories as to what is meant by the "memorial," and to what it refers; but, as Stade says, "the meaning of this word is wholly dark."² The offering plays an important part in the sacrificial ritual.

Bekor (plural *Bekoroth*). The word means "firstling"

¹ Zimmern, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament*, pp. 479 f. (1903). See further, Baethgen, *Beiträge zur semitischen Religionsgeschichte*, pp. 77 f. (1888).

² *Biblische Theologie des Alten Testaments*, i. 168 (1905).

or "first-born," whether of animals or men. In Exod. xiii. 2 the command is given : "Sanctify unto me all the first-born, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast, it is mine." In Exod. xiii. 13 the command is more drastically expressed : "And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb [or 'kid'] ; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break its neck ; and all the first-born of man among thy sons thou shalt redeem" (=xxxiv. 20) ;¹ see also Exod. xxii. 29 (28 in Heb.). That there was a special sanctity about the first-born, particularly the male, was a conviction common to all the Semites ; and the same applies to first-fruits ; but this latter belongs to the agricultural stage, whereas the former belongs to the nomadic stage. When the Hebrews settled down to agricultural pursuits they brought the usages of the earlier, nomadic, stage with them ; hence it followed that customs regarding firstlings became mixed up with those concerning first-fruits. "The consecration of the first-born male children," says Robertson Smith in reference to the passage just quoted, "has always created a difficulty. The legal usage was to redeem the human firstlings, and in Numbers iii. this redemption is further connected in a very complicated way with the consecration of the tribe of Levi. It appears, however, that in the period immediately before the Exile, when sacrifices of first-born children became common, these grisly offerings were supposed to fall under the law of firstlings (Jer. vii. 31, xix. 5 ; Ezek. xx. 26). To conclude from this that at one time the Hebrews actually sacrificed all their first-born sons is absurd ; but, on the other hand, there must have been some point of attachment in ancient custom for the belief that the deity asked for such a sacrifice. In point of fact, even in old times, when exceptional circumstances called for a human victim, it was a child, and by preference a first-born or only child, that was selected by the peoples in and around Palestine

¹ On the significance of the mention of the ass here, see Robertson Smith op. cit., pp. 468 f.

(cp. 2 Kings iii. 27). This is commonly explained as the most costly offering a man can make ; but it is rather to be regarded as the choice, for a special purpose, of the most sacred kind of victim. I apprehend that all the prerogatives of the first-born among Semitic peoples are originally prerogatives of sanctity ; the sacred blood of the kin flows purest and strongest in him (Gen. xlix. 3 ; Deut. xxi. 17)."¹ We deal further with this subject below (pp. 117 ff.).

Bikkurim ("First-fruits"). These, like the firstlings of flocks and herds, belonged to Yahweh : "The first [i.e. the best] of the first-fruits of thy ground thou shalt bring unto the house of Yahweh thy God" (Exod. xxiii. 19, xxxiv. 26). In Num. xviii. 12 the details wherein they consisted are given : "All the best [lit. 'fat'] of the oil, and all the best of the vintage, and of the corn, the first-fruits of them which they give unto Yahweh . . ." They are given, according to this passage, to the priests, after having been formally presented to Yahweh ; see also Deut. xviii. 4 ; this latter is probably later usage, for it speaks of the *Reshith*, "the first" of thy corn, etc., by which must be meant the foremost, or best, of the first-fruits of which the offering consisted (cp. Deut. xxvi. 10). The *Reshith* is called *Terumah* in Num. xviii. 27, i.e. the "heave-offering," so called from the ritual action by which it was offered (see above, pp. 70 f.). What exactly the *Bikkurim* consisted of cannot be said with certainty, possibly the first ripened ears of corn, grape, and olive. Nor is it clear what, in the early times, was the difference between *Bikkurim* and *Reshith*. In post-exilic times, however, they are clearly differentiated ; the *Reshith* is brought to the Temple, to "the chambers of the house of our God," while the *Bikkurim* was carried in solemn procession to the Temple (see Deut. xxvi. 2 ff., cp. xii. 14 ; 2 Chron. xxxi. 5, 12). A slight difference between the two appears in a comparison of Lev. ii. 12 with 2 Chron. xxxi. 4 f., from which it can be seen that the *Reshith* included honey in addition to the other materials mentioned. The offering

¹ Op. cit., pp. 464 f.

of first-fruits is mentioned on the Ras Shamra tablets ; it consisted of the first, or foremost, i.e. best, of grain and fruit that ripened, and was gathered and offered to the gods. They are also mentioned on Phœnician inscriptions.¹

Challah (plural *Challoth*, " Cake "). This is mentioned as an oblation in Exod. xxix. 2, Lev. ii. 4 ; Num. xv. 20 ; Lev. xxiv. 5, 6, and elsewhere. See under *Lechem ha-panim*. It is a general term used in connection with various oblations.

Chattath (" Sin-offering "). Something has already been said on this under ' *Asham* ; but a few further remarks are called for. As in the case of the term ' *Asham*, *Chattath* is also used of a money-payment made to the priests (2 Kings xii. 16 [17 in Heb.]), where it occurs for the first time in the Old Testament. But, like ' *Asham*, this is not the original usage of the term, for it occurs in a list of a number of sacrifices (a word corresponding to the Hebrew *Zebach* ; see below) on one of the Ras Shamra tablets.² Here it is clearly used of a sacrifice, not of a money-payment ; though not of expiatory sacrifice in the sense in which it is used in post-exilic times.

Apart from the sin-offering sacrificed for consecration to the priesthood (Exod. xxix. 9-34 ; Lev. viii. 10-14), certain sins are specified for which a sin-offering is to be made : the refusal to bear witness, the touching of an unclean thing, rash swearing (Lev. v. 1-13). Though this occurs in the later legislation, it may well reflect earlier usage.

Like the ' *Asham*, the *Chattath* is spoken of as " very holy " ; indeed, as Moore points out, it is of a more intense holiness, " everything which comes in contact with the flesh becomes ' sacred ' " (cp. Hag. ii. 12, a fact which suggests that the *idea* is pre-exilic, for the re-inauguration of sacrifices had not yet taken place when this was uttered, soon after the Return). The holiness is seen in that " an earthen pot in which the flesh is boiled must be broken, a metal one scoured and rinsed ; a garment upon which the blood has accidentally

¹ Jack, op. cit., p. 30.

² Ibid. ; Virolleaud, " Un Nouveau Chant," in *Syria*, xiii. 2, p. 113.

spirted must be washed in a 'holy' place (Lev. vi. 27-29, [20-22 in Heb.]). The piacular character of the sacrifice accounts for this higher degree of holiness."¹

'*Issheh* (an "offering made by fire"). This is a general term used of all sacrifices consumed by fire. Buchanan Gray pointedly remarks that "if by sacrifice is to be understood that of which the whole or a part is consumed on the altar, the English 'sacrifice' and the Hebrew '*Issheh* are almost exactly co-extensive."² The earliest use of the term is in Deut. xviii. 1 : ". . . they shall eat the offerings of Yahweh made by fire" (cp. Joshua xiii. 14; 1 Sam. ii. 28), and in the Priestly Code it appears often. "In view of this usage," says Buchanan Gray, "'*Issheh* may very well be a somewhat later creation, though the possibility that it is very much older than its first occurrence in extant literature cannot be excluded."³ This possibility is now seen to be a certainty, inasmuch as the term occurs on one of the Ras Shamra tablets - "The word '*est* (*'eseth*) seems to be employed exactly as the Hebrew '*Issheh*, to denote an 'offering by fire.'"⁴

Kalil ("Whole burnt-offering," or "holocaust"). In 1 Sam. vii. 9 it is said : "And Samuel took a sucking-lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt-offering unto Yahweh," lit. "and offered it for a '*Olah*'" (see below), a *Kalil* ; so that here *Kalil* seems to be in apposition to '*Olah*' ; and so elsewhere. It is also used as descriptive of '*Olah*. Originally there must have been some distinction between the two terms ; possibly '*Olah* meant all that part of the sacrifice which was burned on the altar, while *Kalil* meant that the *whole* of the victim was burned.⁵ This, however, is not the Old Testament meaning now attaching to '*Olah*, which is used of a sacrifice of which no part was used for food, the flesh as well as the specially holy parts of the victim - the fat and the inwards - were burned. On the Ras Shamra

¹ In *Encycl. Bibl.*, iv. 4204.

² *Sacrifice in the Old Testament*, p. 9 (1925).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴ Jack, *op. cit.*, p. 31; Virolleaud, "Un Nouveau Chant," in *Syria*, xiii. 2, p. 113.

⁵ Cp. Nowack, *op. cit.*, ii. 215.

tablets the holocaust appears under two forms, one of which is equivalent to the Hebrew *Kalil*, while the other means a "burning," *srp*, of which the Hebrew equivalent is *serephah*; in this connexion we may quote Deut. xiii. 16 (17 in Heb.): ". . . and thou shalt burn [*saraph*] with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof as a whole burnt-offering [*Kalil*] unto Yahweh." *Serephah* is used in a sacrificial sense in Num. xix. 5, 6, where the burning of the heifer is entire. "In the form of *Kalil*," says Jack, the holocaust "seems to be used, in one place at least, in the sense of expiation, for Mot, just before dying, is represented as saying, 'I am the lamb that one gives as an expiatory sacrifice with pure wheat.'"¹

Lechem ha-panim ("Shew-bread," lit. "Bread of the face"). The earliest mention of this is in 1 Sam. xxi. 6 (7 in Heb.), cp. 1 Kings vii. 48; but it is certainly among the earliest of the oblations. According to Lev. xxiv. 5, 6, this consisted of twelve cakes (*Challoth*) of fine flour. They were set in two rows (or "piles"), six in a row, "upon a pure table before Yahweh"; hence the term "the row of bread" applied to the shew-bread (1 Chron. ix. 32, xxiii. 29). In Lev. xxi. 22 it is called "the bread of God," cp. Lev. iii. 11: "the bread of the offering made by fire unto Yahweh." It is also called "holy bread" (1 Sam. xxi. 4 [5 in Heb.]). Clearly, therefore, it was an offering of sustenance to Yahweh, which He was believed, in some unexplained way, to consume; the expressions "table of the presence" (Num. iv. 7), "table of Yahweh" (Mal. i. 7), show this. The antiquity of this oblation, which, so far as the Hebrews are concerned, must be dated from the beginnings of their settlement in Canaan, is seen from the fact that mention of bread as an offering to the gods is mentioned in the Ras Shamra tablets. A "table of gold" in the sanctuary is also mentioned.²

Ma'aser (plural *Ma'aseroth*, "Tithe"). As a payment to

¹ Op. cit., p. 30; Virolleaud, "Un Poème phénicien," in *Syria*, xii. 3, p. 205.

² Jack, op. cit., p. 31.

the sanctuary this is first mentioned in Amos iv. 4. Originally this term, as Nowack shows,¹ was identical with *Bikkurim* and *Reshith* (Deut. xxvi. 2), for which reason none of the older laws mention *Ma'aser*. The tithe was thus paid on first-fruits (see Lev. xxvii. 30) ; it was an innovation due to the growing claims of the priests, when, according to Lev. xxvii. 32, 33, "all the tithe of the herd or the flock . . . shall be holy to Yahweh. . . ."

Tithes are mentioned in Gen. xiv. 20 in reference to booty taken in battle ; but here it is not a case of tithes being paid to Yahweh.

According to 1 Sam. viii. 15, the tithe on seed and vineyard was paid to the king ; among the Babylonians also the king received tithes. As to tithes being paid to Semitic gods outside of Israel, "it is attested by Diodorus, xx. 14, that the Carthaginians as a Tyrian colony paid tithes to the Tyrian sun-god Melkarth or Herakles, the divine king of the city" ;² as Robertson Smith says elsewhere : "This is the earliest example of a Semitic sacred tithe of which we have any exact account, and it is to be noted that it is as much a political as a religious tribute ; for the temple of Melkarth was the state treasury of Tyre. . . ."³

Mention should be also made of the third-year tithe. In Deut. xiv. 28, 29 it is commanded : "At the end of every three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase in the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates ; and the Levite, because he hath no portion nor inheritance with thee, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied ; that Yahweh thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest" ; see also Deut. xxvi. 12-15, where a special prayer, to be used in connexion with the giving of this tithe, is prescribed. This third-year tithe, we must suppose, took the place of the

¹ Op. cit., ii. 257.

² Robertson Smith, *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 383 (1897).

³ *Religion of the Semites*, p. 246.

ordinary tithe for that year, for it is unlikely that two tithes would have been paid in the same year.

Mattanah ("Gift"). Though a general term for "gift," this is often used in reference to sacrificial gifts, e.g. in Exod. xxviii. 38, and elsewhere. The term occurs on the Ras Shamra tablets as a tribute-offering.¹

Minchah ("Gift"). In early times this term was used as a general one of any kind of offering to Yahweh, whether of animals or cereal gifts (see e.g. Gen. iv. 3-5 ; 1 Sam. ii. 29) ; but in post-exilic times it became restricted to oblations of flour and oil, or of cakes made from these ; this is an interesting illustration of the way in which the connotation of an ancient term sometimes undergoes modification. The word is often used in the sense of an ordinary gift given to men, so, e.g., of Jacob's gift to Esau (Gen. xxxii. 13, 14 [14, 15 in Heb.], xxiii. 10 ; cp. xliii. 11, etc.). Lagrange holds, on the evidence of Sabæan inscriptions, that it comes from an Arabic root meaning to "offer sacrifice" ;² but in the references just given it clearly means a "gift" in a non-religious sense. Buchanan Gray³ argues convincingly in favour of the meaning "gift." Its use in sacrificial nomenclature is, therefore, important as showing that the gift to God was one of the fundamental purposes of sacrifice. According to 2 Kings xvi. 15, the *Minchah* was offered every evening.

Nedabah ("Freewill-offering"). This term, which comes under the more general term *Shelamim* (see below), is used of a sacrifice which is not necessitated by a vow or any other obligation, but simply out of the desire to do honour to Yahweh. It is used not only of sacrifices, but also of gifts to the sanctuary. Thus, in Exod. xxxv. 27-29, we read of men and women bringing freewill-offerings, precious stones, spice, and oil, for use in the tabernacle ; on a larger scale they are given for the Temple, requiring a special official to take charge of them (2 Chron. xxxi. 14). Similarly in the case of the second Temple : "and the silver and gold are

¹ Jack, *op. cit.*, p. 30. ² *Op. cit.*, pp. 250n., 256n. ³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 13-17.

a freewill-offering unto Yahweh" (Ezra viii. 28; cp. i. 6). Usually, however, it is a sacrifice (*Zebach*, see below) for festival meals at the great feasts (Deut. xvi. 10; 2 Chron. xxxv. 8; Ezra iii. 5). There was a difference between the *Nedabah* and the *Neder* (see below) offering; which shows that the former was regarded as of a lesser order, for in Lev. xxii. 23 it is said: "Either a bullock or a lamb that hath anything superfluous or lacking in his parts, that mayest thou offer for a freewill-offering [*Nedabah*]; but for a vow [*Neder*] it shall not be accepted."

Neder ("Vow"). This was an offering vowed in recognition of some petition having been granted. Like *Nedabah* it comes under the general term *Shelamim* (see below). That it was looked upon as more important than the *Nedabah*-offering was natural enough, as it was of obligation. Both belong to the post-exilic sacrificial system.

Olah ("Whole burnt-offering"; see also *Kalil*). This is the most common designation for a burnt-offering, burnt on the altar in its entirety. The word comes from the root meaning to "go up," in reference either to that which goes up on the altar, or to the smoke of the sacrifice which ascends; the former is the more likely explanation. According to 1 Kings xviii. 23, 33, the carcass of the victim was cut up before being placed on the altar. The whole victim was laid on the altar with the exception of the hide and such parts as could not be washed clean. In Lev. i. 3, 10, xxii. 18, 19, it is commanded that if the victim is a beast of the herd or flock, whether sheep or goat, it must be without blemish (see under *Tamim*): "but whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer; for it shall not be acceptable for you" (xxii. 20). The offering might, however, for the benefit of the poor, take the form of a turtle-dove or a young pigeon (Lev. i. 14); the latter was the usual offering by the poor (Lev. v. 7, etc.). This is also mentioned on the Ras Shamra tablets, showing that it was of high antiquity.¹ The *Olah* is mostly mentioned

¹ Jack, op. cit., p. 30.

in connexion with *Zebachim* or *Shelamim* (on these see below) ; but in a few passages it occurs alone (Gen. viii. 20, xxii. 8, 13 ; Num. xxiii. 1 ff. ; Judges vi. 20, 26, xiii. 16, 23 ; 1 Sam. vii. 9 f. ; 1 Kings iii. 4, xviii. 33, 38). As this type of sacrifice was wholly burned on the altar, there was obviously no sacrificial meal in connexion with it. According to 2 Kings xvi. 15, the '*Olah* was offered every morning.

'Orlah. This is a figurative expression (the word means lit. "foreskin") applied to fruit-trees. In Lev. xix. 23-25 it is said : "And when ye shall come into the land, and shall have planted all manner of trees for food, then shall ye count the fruit thereof as their uncircumcision ; three years shall they be as uncircumcised unto you ; it shall not be eaten. But in the fourth year all the fruit thereof shall be holy, for giving praise unto Yahweh. And in the fifth year shall ye eat of the fruit thereof, that it may yield unto you the increase thereof ; I am Yahweh your God." The passage means that for the first three years the fruit of the fruit-trees must be left untouched, in the fourth year it was to be dedicated to Yahweh in the character of first-fruits ; after that the yield could be enjoyed by the owners. The fourth year's crop, being consecrated to Yahweh, was called *Chillulim*, "consecrated."

Pe'ah ("Corner"). A humanitarian law in Lev. xix. 9 commands that, "when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleaning of thy harvest." The same is commanded regarding the gleaning of the vineyard, and other fallen fruit ; this is all to be left "for the poor and for the stranger." This, too, was, in a certain sense, an oblation, as is suggested by the closing words of these commands : "I am Yahweh your God."

Pesach. This is the name of the Passover festival ; but the term is also used in reference to the animal victims sacrificed at the feast. Thus, in Exod. xii. 31, it is said : "Go forth and take you lambs [or 'kids'] according to

your families, and kill the passover ” ; similarly in 2 Chron. xxx. 15 : “ Then they killed the passover . . .”, and elsewhere.

Qodashim (“ Sacred things ”). This includes both animal sacrifices and oblations of all kinds. It is a very comprehensive term, therefore. In Num. xviii. 8 ff., this is brought out very clearly ; here the “ hallowed things ” (*Qodashim*) are enumerated, and they include all the various kinds of sacrifice and oblations.

Qorban (“ Gift ”). This is a general term for gifts of all kinds offered to Yahweh, whether animals, vegetables, or articles of value ; for these latter, see especially Num. xxxi. 50. In Neh. x. 35, xiii. 31, a similar term, *Qurban*, is used of wood-offerings for the sanctuary. *Qorban* occurs first in the book of Ezekiel, and often in the Priestly Code. It is, therefore, a late term. Unlike *Minchah* it is used exclusively in reference to sacred gifts in the Old Testament ; though elsewhere it is used more loosely.

Raqiq (plural *Reqiqim*). A thin round cake, always made of unleavened bread, mixed with oil (Exod. xxix. 23 = Lev. viii. 26 ; Num. vi. 19).

Reshith (see under *Bikkurim*).

Shelem (plural *Shelamim*, “ Peace-offering ”). One of the most common kind of sacrifice. As to the original signification of this term there is some difference of opinion. The usual explanation is that it is from the root meaning “ to be complete,” or “ to be sound ” ; but one form of this root means “ to make good,” or “ to recompense,” hence the term would refer to an offering whereby peace was made between God and the worshipper, recompense being made for some offence or else payment for benefit received, right relations being thus restored. But whether the idea is that of complete, that is peaceful, relations with God, or whether it is that of a payment being made to the same end, the final result is the same—peace with God. The term is used mostly in the plural, and in this form it occurs on the Ras Shamra tablets, where, according to Jack, it has the sense

of a "sacrifice for friendship,"¹ thus entirely corresponding with the Hebrew meaning. Both the term and the type of sacrifice is, therefore, one of the most ancient. As the expression *Zibche shelamim* (see further under *Zebachim*), "sacrifices of peace-offerings," is often used, it is probable that when *Shelamim* occurs alone it is an abbreviation of this. It was, further, the type of sacrifice which was offered on specially solemn occasions, when it was, as a rule, accompanied by a whole burnt-offering (*'Olah*) ; so, for example, at the setting up of the golden calf (Exod. xxxii. 6 [8 in Heb.]) ; when Saul was chosen as king (1 Sam. xi. 15) ; on the occasion of the Ark being brought to Jerusalem (2 Sam. vi. 17, 18) ; or as a royal offering (2 Kings xvi. 13). The sanctity of this *Shelem* type of sacrifice is illustrated by the fact that the flesh had to be consumed either on the day on which it was offered or on the following day. If after that any of the flesh remained over it had to be burned ; and "if it be eaten at all on the third day it is an abomination ; it shall not be accepted ; but everyone that eateth it shall bear his iniquity, because he hath profaned the holy thing of Yahweh ; and that soul shall be cut off from his people" (Lev. xix. 5-8). The point of this ordinance is that the flesh shall be entirely consumed before it becomes putrid, which in itself would be a profanation ; in the East, putrefaction soon sets in. Finally, and this is the most significant part of this type of sacrifice, only a certain part of the victim came upon the altar, i.e. the fat (1 Sam. ii. 15, 16), and, of course, the blood ; the rest was eaten by the worshippers at the sacrificial meal. This sacrifice, therefore, was a communion-sacrifice.

Soleth ("Fine flour"). This term is not used exclusively of oblations in Gen. xviii. 6, e.g. "fine flour" is reserved for honoured guests, and in 1 Kings iv. 22 (v. 2 in Heb.) it is used in the royal household. It was thus a luxury. But, as a rule, it is used as a sacrificial term. The main passage is Lev. xxiv. 5-9, where we read of the shew-bread being

¹ Op. cit., p. 29.

made of "fine flour" (see further under *Lechem ha-panim*). It is, however, also used of ordinary oblations as freewill-offerings; in Lev. ii. 1 it is said: "And when anyone offereth an oblation of a meal-offering unto Yahweh, his oblation shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon." In the older times the quality of the fine flour offered was left to the individual; later the quantity was fixed.

Tamid ("Continuity"). This term is used mostly with a preceding noun, e.g. in Exod. xxix. 42: "It shall be a continual burnt-offering throughout your generations . . ."; it is but rarely that such a phrase as "the meal-offering of continuity" (Num. iv. 16) occurs. The term "the *Tamid*," by which is meant the daily, morning and evening, burnt-offering, belongs to late times (Dan. viii. 11, 12, 13; xi. 31; xii. 11).

Tamim. This term, meaning "complete," or "unimpaired," is a quite general one used in many connexions, but it also has a technical meaning as applied to sacrifices, viz. "unblemished," in reference to the victim; thus, in Exod. xii. 5, it is said: "Your lamb shall be without blemish [*tamim*]," see also Ezek. xliii. 22 in reference to a he-goat; what constituted blemishes is fully pointed out in Lev. xxii. 17-25. Interesting is the fact that this term, in reference to sacrifices, occurs on the Ras Shamra tablets.¹

Tenuphah (see above, p. 71). This term, too, occurs on the Ras Shamra tablets.² It is used in reference to the "waving" of the burnt-offering before the altar.

Terumah (see above, p. 71).

Todah ("Thank-offering"). This is one of the three kinds of *Zebach*-sacrifices (see below) mentioned in Lev. vii. 15 ff., and it seems to have been of special sanctity since it had to be consumed on the day it was offered. None of the flesh was permitted to be kept till the following day: "And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace-offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten on the day of his oblation;

¹ Jack, op. cit., p. 29.

² *Ibid.*, p. 30.

he shall not leave any of it until the morning." From Amos iv. 5 it would seem that the flesh of this sacrifice was brought to the altar on unleavened bread, from which it was taken and placed on the altar. Very striking is the way in which the psalmist (Ps. l. 14, 23) uses this sacrificial term in a spiritual sense ; the context shows that he is not thinking of a material sacrifice.

Zebach (plural *Zebachim*). This is the commonest and most ancient term for "sacrifice" ; the verb means "to slaughter (for sacrifice)," and the Hebrew word for "altar" (*Mizbeach*) comes from the same root. The rite centred in the eating of the flesh of the victim at a feast in which the deity shared by receiving the blood and the fat pieces. *Zebach* and 'Olah are the two main classes into which animal sacrifices are divided. In the older literature *Zebach* is distinguished from both 'Olah and *Minchah*, and in the later literature from *Chattath* and 'Asham. *Zebach* was in origin essentially a communion-meal.

In addition to these terms there are also some verbs used in a technical sense in connexion with sacrifices ; in a number of cases they indicate a ritual act. These must, therefore, also be briefly considered.

'*Arak* (To "set in order"). This is used in reference to the wood for the sacrificial fire (e.g. Gen. xxii. 9 ; 1 Kings xviii. 33), and to offerings (e.g. Lev. i. 8, 12) ; it is also used of setting the shew-bread in order (Exod. xl. 4, 23 ; Lev. xxiv. 8).

'*Asa*. This ordinary verb to "do," or "make," is used fairly frequently for offering sacrifice ; it is almost always followed by the object, e.g. to make, or offer, a 'Olah (Judges xiii. 16 ; Lev. xvi. 24), or a *Chattath* (Lev. xiv. 19), or an 'Isshah (Num. xv. 3, 14) ; see also 1 Kings viii. 64 ; Lev. ix. 22. More rarely it is used absolutely "to offer sacrifice" (Exod. x. 25).

Bisshel (To "boil"). This term is used of boiling the victim for sacrifice, but not always with the object following, e.g. Exod. xxiii. 19 ; Deut. xiv. 21. According to 1 Sam.

ii. 13, this was an ancient practice, but in later times it was forbidden, see Exod. xii. 9 : "Eat not of it raw, nor boiled at all with water."

Haqtir. This causative form of the verb, together with the intensive form (*qitter*) – the active form does not occur – means to "make sacrifices to smoke" in reference to their being burned (1 Kings xii. 33, xiii. 1). The intensive form is used in pre-exilic times especially of burning the fat on the altar, e.g. 1 Sam. ii. 15 ; in post-exilic times the causative form is used in reference to the burning of incense, e.g. 2 Chron. ii. 6, xxvi. 18, 19, etc.

Hebi'. The causative form of the verb to "come," thus, to "bring," used of bringing gifts to God (Exod. xxxv. 21 ff.), also of bringing sacrifice to Him (Num. xv. 25 and elsewhere), thus witnessing to His presence in the sanctuary.

He'elah. The causative form of the verb to "go up," thus, to "bring up." This is frequently used in connexion with sacrifices in the sense of to "offer," usually in reference to 'Olah, from the same root (Exod. xxiv. 5, xxxii. 6 ; Lev. xvii. 8 ; Deut. xii. 13, 14, and often elsewhere). The idea is that of "bringing up" on the altar.

Herim. This causative form of the verb meaning to be "high" or "exalted," is used as a sacrificial term in the sense of "lifting up" or "presenting" an offering to Yahweh ; this use is mostly late (e.g. Num. xv. 19 ; Ezek. xlv. 1). It is the root from which *Terumah* comes (see above, p. 71).

Heniph. This is the verb from the root of which the term *Tenuphah* comes (see above) ; it means to "wave," and describes the ritual act of the priest who waved the offering to and fro before the altar. There is clearly some confusion in our sources between *Tenuphah* and the *Terumah* (see above, p. 71), and Lev. xiv. 12, 24, where *Tenuphah* is used in a different sense.

Higgish. The causative form of the verb to "draw near," therefore to "bring near," or "approach," e.g. Lev. xxi. 17 : ". . . let him not approach to offer the bread of

his God." Here again the term implies the divine presence, especially as in the context it is forbidden for any man who has a blemish to "approach"; i.e. no man might enter the divine presence who had any defect about him; cp. Lev. x. 3, xxi. 18. In connexion with the "bringing near" to God of sacrifices, the term occurs, e.g. in Amos v. 25, Mal. ii. 12, iii. 3.

Hiqrib. The causative form of the verb to "come near," and thus to "bring" or "present," when used in reference to sacrifices (e.g. Exod. xxix. 10; Lev. i. 15, etc.). Twice only it is used absolutely, to "make an offering" (Num. vii. 2, 18; cp. Mal. i. 8). The active form of the verb (*qareb*), to "approach," is used in 2 Kings xvi. 12 of approaching the altar; also of coming near to Yahweh, especially of the priests (Lev. xvi. 1, xxi. 17, 21; Num. xvi. 5).

Hobil. A passive form to "be led," only rarely used in reference to sacrifice. In Jer. xi. 19 the prophet says: "But I was like a gentle lamb that is led to the slaughter," so Isa. liii. 7. Cp. Isa. xviii. 7 of the offering of a gift.

le-Kapper. This is the intensive infinitive form of the verb (*le* means "to"), meaning "to cover over," and also "to make propitiation" (the active form of the verb is not used). On this difficult term we cannot do better than quote Robertson Smith's words: "The question as to the etymological meaning of the Hebrew root *kpr*, from the second stem of which the technical terms connected with atonement are derived, is obscure. The root idea is commonly taken to be to 'cover' (after the Arabic); but in the Syriac the sense of the simple stem is to 'wipe off,' or 'wipe clean' (so, too, the Assyrian *kapparu*, to 'blot out'); this sense appears in Hebrew (in the second stem) if the text of Isa. xxviii. 18 (R.V. : 'And your covenant with death shall be *disannulled*') is sound, which, however, is very doubtful. . . . There are Semitic analogies for regarding the forgiveness of sin either as 'covering' or as 'wiping out,' and the phrase to 'cover the face,' to 'appease,' is not decisive, though on the whole it seems easiest to take this to mean to

' wipe clean the face ' blackened by displeasure, as the Arabs say, ' whiten the face.' The most important point is that except in the Priests' Code it is God, not the priest, who (on the one etymology) wipes out sin, or (on the other) regards it as covered."¹ The term *le-kapper*, then, whether meaning originally to " wipe " the face, i.e. the angered face of God, or to " cover " His face so that He does not look upon the sin, or to " cover " the sin so that God does not see it, comes to have the meaning of to " appease," " propitiate," or to " make atonement " ; and normally this is effected by a sacrifice, though, especially in the older literature, other means are mentioned (see e.g. 2 Sam. xxi. 3 ; Exod. xxxii. 30 JE). From this root come also the terms *kopher*, " ransom " (e.g. Exod. xxi. 30), and *Kippurim*, " atonement " (e.g. Exod. xxx. 10, etc.), a late term. On *Yom Kippur*, " the Day of Atonement," see below, pp. 226 ff.

Nasa'. This very common verb meaning to " carry " or " lift up " is sometimes used in the later literature of " bringing," in reference to a sacrifice, e.g. " Give unto Yahweh the glory due unto his name, bring an offering, and come before him " (1 Chron. xvi. 29, xxi. 24 ; cp. Ps. xcvi. 8), and the word is also used in Ezek. xx. 31 : " And when ye offer your gifts . . ." It occurs also as a sacrificial term on Punic inscriptions.²

Nasak. To " pour out " in reference to oblations (see above, p. 70).

Samak. To " lay " ; as a sacrificial term it is used of laying the hand on the sacrificial victim ; its usage in this sense is late (see further above, p. 70).

Saraph. To " burn " (see above, p. 82).

Shaphak. To " pour out," also used in reference to oblations (see above, p. 70).

Shereth. This intensive form of the root meaning to " serve," or to " minister," is used especially in reference to the priests serving in the sacrificial worship (e.g. Exod.

¹ *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, p. 381 (1895).

² Lidzbarski, *Handbuch der nordsemitischen Epigraphik*, p. 432, bk. 2 (1898).

xxviii. 35, 43, xxix. 30, and often elsewhere), though sometimes more generally of the congregation (Num. xvi. 9), or in reference to the service of praise (1 Chron. vi. 31; Ps. ci. 6).

Zaraq. Rendered in the Revised Version to "sprinkle," in reference to the sacrificial blood, on the altar. But the term in Hebrew denotes more than merely sprinkling, it suggests "bespatter."

CHAPTER VI

SACRIFICES AMONG THE ISRAELITES: THE NOMADIC PERIOD

WE have seen in our bird's-eye view of the institution of sacrifice among various peoples that their purposes and motives all the world over were of a varied character. We come now to consider sacrifices among the Hebrews in some detail; and here, too, naturally enough, it will be seen that there were a number of purposes for which sacrifices were offered. In the *earliest* stage of Israel's religious history, after their emergence as a nation, the only essential difference between their sacrifices and those of other Semitic peoples was that, while these latter sacrificed to many gods and goddesses, the Israelites offered their sacrifices to Yahweh alone; otherwise their sacrifices were in origin, purpose, and character, as well as in the materials offered, identical with those of the rest of the Semites. In agreement with the majority of modern investigators Stade says: "The sacrificial cult of ancient Israel was a very complicated one; having grown out of varied ideas and customs, it presents a phenomenon which is far from having been derived from any single conception."¹ It may be remarked here, and the truth will have to be emphasised later, that in those types of sacrifice which belong to the later stages of Israelite religious history, even in the post-exilic period, ancient ideas were taken over. It does not follow, for example, that because the name of some type of sacrifice occurs for the first time in the later literature that it is, either in its designation or in its underlying principle, new; there

¹ *Biblische Theologie des Alten Testaments*, i. 156 (1905).

may be some developed idea which later became attached to it, but in essence it had a long history behind it. No more striking illustration of this could be offered than that of the guilt-offering ('*Asham*), mentioned above (pp. 75 f.) ; this, in the Old Testament, is not mentioned in the older literature, but is prominent in the Priestly Code, yet the term occurs in the sense of a sin-offering on the Ras Shamra tablets (*circa* 1400 B.C.).

As pointed out above, our main concern is to examine and discuss Israelite sacrifices from three points of view, viz. as gift-sacrifices, as the means of union with the deity, and as the means of liberating life in order to give life. There may have been other purposes for which sacrifices were offered, but, if so, it is certain that, with the one exception of atonement-sacrifices in the post-exilic period, they were never comparable in importance with these three purposes.

There is no question that, so far as Israelite sacrifices are concerned – though the same applies elsewhere – gift-sacrifices are by far the commonest type ; but, as has been already pointed out, a gift-sacrifice often implies something more than making a present to the deity. This fact will come before us again and again, and will necessarily involve here and there a little repetition ; this cannot, however, well be avoided.

There are three periods in Israelite religious history of which we shall have to take account : the nomadic, the agricultural, and the post-exilic. Our method of procedure will be to take each period in turn ; to decide, so far as we are able, what sacrifices may be assigned as belonging specifically to that age ; and to discern, so far as may be, the three great types of sacrifice indicated.

Obviously, the immense difference in every department of life brought about by the change from the nomadic to the agricultural stage, i.e. from the wilderness into the settled life of Canaan, would have greatly affected the religious outlook of the Israelites ; and new ideas, at any rate modifications of older ones, regarding the purposes and also

the ritual of sacrificial worship, necessarily arose. Similarly, after the experiences of the Exile, religious conceptions underwent a change ; so that, when sacrificial worship was re-inaugurated, developed ideas regarding sacrifices arose ; the accustomed rites – the memory of which would have been preserved by the priesthood and handed down to their successors, in addition to the records contained in the Scriptures – the accustomed rites received a new significance. The old types of sacrifice continued, but they were now thought of as expressing ideas which had never previously been associated with them. For the nomadic period, it is true, the evidence of the Old Testament is but scanty ; nevertheless, as our knowledge, already indicated, concerning sacrifices among other branches of the Semitic race is considerable, we are able to supplement from this the exiguous *data* of the Old Testament.

I. THE NOMADIC PERIOD : GIFT-SACRIFICES

For nomads the prime requisite was to possess flocks and herds ; but to the fertility-deity was due a tribute in order that he might grant fecundity to them, and therefore increase of numbers. Hence the sacrifice of the first-born (*Bekor*, *Bekoroth*, see above, pp. 77 f.). Other purposes were undoubtedly included in the sacrifice of the first-born of the flocks and herds (see below) ; but they were, in the first instance, gifts to the deity.

As to the sacrifice of the first-born of men, there is no sufficient evidence to show that this was practised by the Israelites in the nomadic period ; it is more likely that they adopted it after their settlement in Canaan. This subject will, therefore, be dealt with later (see pp. 117 ff.).

It is highly probable that in nomadic times the worship of the Moon-god, Sin, involved sacrifices to him ; but here again direct evidence is sparse. That this worship was in vogue among the nomadic Arabs is well known ;¹ but

¹ Nielsen, *Die altarabische Mondreligion*, p. 68, and elsewhere (1904).

details of sacrificial worship are wanting. "The moon and certain stars seem at all times to have played an important part in the religion and in the magical beliefs of the nomad Semites, which perhaps accounts in part for the fact that, in the desert, journeys are undertaken by preference before sunrise, under the protection of the stars of the night."¹ The indications of Moon-worship in the Old Testament, of which more will be said later, offer indirect evidence of this worship, which obviously involved sacrifice, during the nomadic period. The frequent mention of New-moon festivals, and the different words for "moon," point to popular worship of a traditional type. The name Sinai (cp. also the wilderness of Sin, mentioned in Exod. xvi. 1 and elsewhere) bears that of the Babylonian Moon-god, Sin; in Exod. iii. 1, Sinai (Horeb) is called "the mountain of Elohim," which suggests that it had long been a sacred spot, the Babylonian Sin, having been assimilated to a native lunar deity. The extraordinary tenacity of Moon-worship among the Israelites – it continued to a late period – points to its having been deeply ingrained among the people; this suggests great antiquity. Thus it can scarcely be doubted that the Hebrews of nomadic times offered sacrifices in honour of the Moon-god; and these would have been of the type of gift-sacrifice.

Sacrifices on special occasions, such as initiation-ceremonies, making covenants, on the eve of the battle, thanksgiving after battle, etc., are hardly likely to have been wanting in the nomadic period, all of which would have been offered to gain the goodwill and help of the deity in question, and would, therefore, come under the category of gift-sacrifices.

The flesh of animals was, no doubt, the earliest of food-offerings; but it is probable that offerings of figs and dates, corresponding to the first-fruit offerings of later times, were made during the nomadic period; no mention occurs of

¹ Lods, *Israel*, p. 237 (1932); Lagrange, *Études sur les religions sémitiques*, pp. 133 f. (1903); Weilhausen, *Reste*, pp. 31 ff.

these, it is true, in the Old Testament. Of libations there were, without doubt, water-offerings, but of these more below. Milk-libations, which were used both by the ancient Arabs and by the Phœnicians in their ritual, can hardly fail to have been prevalent in nomadic times among the Israelites ; as food for men it would also have been regarded as acceptable to gods. But by far the most important was the libation of blood. As we have seen, the ancient Arabs poured the blood of the sacrificial victim on the altar, or beside the altar, as a gift to the god. "The libation," says Robertson Smith, "which holds quite a secondary place in the more advanced Semitic rituals, and is generally a mere accessory to a fire-offering, has great prominence among the Arabs, to whom sacrifices by fire were practically unknown. . . . Its typical form is the libation of blood, the subtle vehicle of the life of the sacrifice."¹

Corresponding to the later use of oil for anointing a sacred stone indwelt by the deity (cp. Gen. xxviii. 18, xxxv. 14) – this was not, however, a libation – we may surmise that an ointment made of the fat of animals was used for smearing on such sacred stones in the earliest times. Being done in honour of the god, this offering may be regarded in some sense as a gift ; but it had a further purpose with which we shall deal later (see p. 163).

All these, then, must be included under the head of gift-sacrifices, or gift-offerings, belonging to the nomadic period.

II. THE NOMADIC PERIOD : COMMUNION-SACRIFICES

Our first concern is with the Passover (*Pesach*). Some detailed discussion on this may be permitted here on account of the important place it occupied in the later religious history of the Israelites. That this feast belonged, in its origin, to the nomadic period is suggested, to begin with, by the fact that while the ordinances in connexion with the other two great annual festivals (*Shabu'oth*, "Weeks," and *Sukkoth*, "Tabernacles") clearly presuppose the agricultural

¹ *Rel. Sem.*, p. 229.

life, the Passover festival ordinances presuppose only cattle-breeding, i.e. the pastoral life. Moreover, the earliest references to this festival (Exod. iv. 23, xii. 31, 32) speak of it as having been celebrated before the settlement in Canaan.

The various accounts of this festival which appear in the Old Testament have been so overlaid with later ideas that it is not easy to decide what its original elements were, and what its original purpose was. Nevertheless, these accounts contain echoes of the primitive practice which enable us to form some ideas of what obtained. Needless to say that the association of the feast of *Mazzoth*, "Unleavened Bread," which presupposes agricultural conditions, was in no way connected with the Passover originally; their association in later days was due simply to the fact that the time of their celebration happened to coincide.

The mention of the connexion of the death of the first-born sons in Egypt with the Passover, together with the first-born of the cattle (Exod. xii. 29; cp. Num. viii. 17, xxxiii. 4), has been used as an argument in favour of the theory that the victims of the Passover-sacrifice were the firstlings of sheep and goats, substituted for a yet earlier sacrifice of the first-born children of the year. The latter part of this theory is of doubtful validity since, as already pointed out, there is no evidence of the existence during the nomadic period of this practice; it appears rather to have been adopted from the Canaanites after the settlement. On the other hand, that the Passover-rite was probably the sacrifice of the firstlings we shall see presently. Again, it is exceedingly unlikely that the blood-smearing on "the lintel and the two door-posts" had anything to do with the original form of the rite. In Exod. v. 1 it is said: "Thus saith Yahweh, the God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness"; and again in Exod. x. 9: "And Moses said, we will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go, for we must

hold a feast unto Yahweh." Now, if the blood-smearing rite on "the lintel and the two side-posts" had anything to do with the feast which was to be held "in the wilderness" the blood would have had to be smeared on the tent-posts, for houses were not built in the wilderness. But, according to Exod. xii. 11 ff., the feast is held before the Israelites went into the wilderness, and the blood-smearing is on the houses in the land of Egypt: "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are . . ."; similarly in Exod. xii. 23; and in both these passages the blood-smearing has nothing to do with the feast. Then we have a further inconsistency: in Exod. xii. 13 it is said: "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and there shall no plague be upon you to harm you when I smite the land of Egypt"; more clearly in verse 23 it is said that "Yahweh will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come into your houses to smite you." Clearly Yahweh and "the destroyer" are not the same; yet in Exod. xii. 27 and xi. 4 they are one and the same. These inconsistencies are merely pointed out in order to show that whether the compiler or compilers of the records knew, or did not know, the meaning of the blood-smearing rite, they can hardly have connected it with the feast (in spite of verse 22)¹ for the simple reason that the blood of the sacrifice was poured out upon the altar prior to the feast; to have used it for any other purpose would have been an insult to the god. Curtiss,² in discussing the custom of blood-sprinkling on door-posts and lintels among Arabs of the present day, says that some people "may be tempted to conclude that in this custom we have an imitation of the Passover festival, when the destroying angel passed by the houses of the Israelites. At first blush, this would seem probable. But I am confident that a close view of the subject,

¹ This verse reads very curiously; in the preceding verse it is said: "Proceed forth . . ."; so that if the people had come out of their houses, what could be the object of the blood-smearing?

² *Primitive Semitic Religion To-day*, pp. 226 ff. (1902).

a more careful weighing of the facts, will show that in the institution of blood-sprinkling we have a primitive Semitic custom which long antedates the Passover festival." As to this last we are not sure ; but Curtiss is undoubtedly right in thinking that the blood-sprinkling rite has nothing to do with the feast, either in its origin or subsequently. It is a rite of great antiquity which has its counterpart at the present day among orthodox Jews in the shape of the door-post symbol called the *Mezuzah*, i.e. a small tube, two or three inches in length, made of wood, metal, or glass ; this is fixed on the side of doors, and the devout Jew, on entering the room, will stroke it with his hand, which he will then kiss. Within the *Mezuzah* there is a rolled-up piece of parchment containing the *Shema'* ("Hear, O Israel . . ." Deut. vi. 4-9 and xi. 13-21). The custom is, at any rate, pre-Christian ; it is referred to by Josephus (*Antiq.* iv. 213). The Rabbis, in somewhat later times, attributed to it a protective power against demons, and this, doubtless, was the original purpose of it. The Mohammedans have a similar custom of inscribing verses from the Qoran on their doors and at the entrances of their houses, with a like object. In the *Mezuzah*, then, we may discern the descendant of the blood-smearing on the door-post, and, in earlier times, on the tent-posts of nomads. As will be pointed out, the Passover festival was celebrated at night-time ; not only were the hours of darkness always believed to have been the time when evil spirits were especially active, but on this special occasion there were reasons for more pronounced virulence than usual on their part.¹ With this view Buchanan Gray agrees ; he says : "The apotropaic function of the Paschal blood ritual is clear. . . . What the ancient Hebrews endeavoured to repel from their houses were spirits, demons of plague or sickness, or the like, much as the modern Bedawy or Syrian peasant" ;² only he was mistaken, we

¹ See Frazer, *The Golden Bough : The Scape-goat*, especially chaps. ii., iv. (1913), and *The Dying God*, pp. 246-271 (1911).

² *Op. cit.*, p. 364.

venture to believe, in his view that the "Paschal blood" had anything to do with this. So much, then, for the blood-smearing ritual.

As to the victim sacrificed at this feast, the ambiguities of our records, both early and late, have been well set forth by Buchanan Gray. The difficulties centre on two main matters : first, as to whether it was a sheep or a goat ; and, second, as to its age. " Even when the Paschal victim was chosen, as it most frequently was, from the sheep, was it a lamb, or an older sheep ? On this point the law is explicit ; but in terms which have been differently interpreted. The term *Sh*, used in Exod. xii. 3 ff. of the Paschal victim, is quite indefinite in respect of age ; it means simply any single animal of the flock, whatever its age, or to whichever of the two species, sheep or goats, it belonged. It is rendered ' lamb ' in the English Version, but as the English Version itself shows that this lamb may be a goat, it will not be very surprising if the lamb, even when it was chosen from the sheep, had attained an age which would be considered excessive in an animal sold to be consumed as lamb." He then goes on to show the ambiguity of the term *ben shanah*, " son of a year," used in Exod. xii. 5, an ambiguity which occurs elsewhere too ; and he comes to the conclusion that " the Paschal victim, according to the original intention of the law, even when not a goat, was not a lamb, but an older sheep." And, we may add, the original intention of the law was based on the custom of immemorial antiquity. Finally, " one other condition required in the Paschal victim coincides with the conditions of a burnt-offering ; like *all* burnt-offerings (Lev. i. 3, etc., xxii. 18 f.) it must be a male ; whereas the victim for peace-offerings and also for sin-offerings (Lev. iv. f.) could be either male or female (Lev. iii. 1). And yet, in being eaten as a sacrificial meal, the Paschal victim differed entirely from the burnt-offering, and resembled the peace-offering. It thus occupies a place of its own among the sacrificial victims of the Jewish ritual ; and in this it resembles the entire ritual, which has certain

marked peculiarities corresponding to peculiarities of original purpose or subsequently developed ideas."¹

The significance of the male may well have lain in the simple fact that the females were required for breeding purposes, for which only a few males would be needed ; but it is also probable that the superior strength of the male had much to do with its choice.

We turn next to the time at which the Paschal festival was celebrated ; and this has an important bearing on the original meaning and purpose of the festival. In Exod. xii. 6 we have the ambiguous expression " between the two evenings " as the time at which the sacrifice was to take place ; more definite is Deut. xvi. 6 : " Thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun." As in the East darkness supervenes immediately after sunset, the feast was clearly a *night* ceremony. The Hebrew months are lunar months, and began when the new moon first became visible ; therefore the full moon fell on the fourteenth or fifteenth day of the month. In Lev. xxiii. 5 it is said : " In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, between the two evenings, is Yahweh's passover." The first month was Nisan (April), and the fourteenth day was the day of the full moon ; thus the Passover was a *night* festival, and a *spring* festival, and a *full moon* festival. The evidence on these points, though occurring in the later literature, is shown by various other considerations to be entirely reliable.² The Passover festival was thus, in its origin, held in honour of the Moon-god, in order to ensure the increase of the flocks and herds.³ The significance of the ceremony taking place at night thus becomes clear. When, further, it is said in Deut. xvi. 4, " Neither shall any of the flesh, which thou sacrificest the first day at even, remain all night until the

¹ Op. cit., pp. 344 ff.

² e.g. the Samaritan Passover ; on this see Thomson, *The Samaritans ; their Testimony to the Religion of Israel*, pp. 123 ff. (1919) ; Montgomery, *The Samaritans*, p. 38 (1907) ; Joachim Jeremias, *Die Passahfeier der Samaritaner*, pp. 78 ff. (1932) ; see also Buchanan Gray, op. cit., pp. 337 ff.

³ For the moon as a fertility-god, see Nielsen, *Handbuch der altarabischen Altertumskunde*, i. 213 ff. (1927).

morning," the point is that the feast takes place in the presence of the deity, and must be concluded before he withdraws. The fourteenth day of the month, i.e. full-moon day, was naturally chosen because the god then appeared in the fulness of his glory.

There are, further, some details regarding the sacrificial meal which demand notice. The prohibition in Exod. xii. 8, 9 that the flesh of the victim was not to be eaten raw is evidence that the flesh *was* originally eaten raw, otherwise the prohibition would be meaningless. The significance of eating the flesh raw is well illustrated by Nilus' description of the oldest known form of ancient Arab sacrifice, quoted above (p. 52). On this, Robertson Smith's words, quoted above, deserve repetition: "The plain meaning of this is that the victim was devoured before its life had left the still warm blood and flesh – raw flesh is called 'living flesh' in Hebrew and Syriac – and that thus, in the most literal way, all those who shared in the ceremony absorbed part of the victim's life into themselves. One sees how much more forcibly than any ordinary meal such a rite expresses the establishment or confirmation of a bond of common life between the worshippers, and also, since the blood is shed upon the altar itself, between the worshippers and their god." What he says as to the significant factors of this sacrifice applies also to the Passover sacrifice; they are: "the conveyance of the living blood to the godhead, and the absorption of the living flesh and blood into the flesh and blood of the worshippers."¹ It will have been noticed that nowhere in our records is there any mention of the Passover sacrificial victim having been offered up in the sanctuary. This accords with the ancient Arab practice, when, in the case of a special sacrifice such as that referred to, a rude altar of stones could be piled up anywhere; the sacrifice was, thus, not offered in the sanctuary. In Exod. xii. 46 it is said in reference to the Passover victim: "Neither shall ye break a bone thereof." The significance of this

¹ *Rel. Sem.*, p. 339.

prohibition is doubtless the same for which the aforementioned one regarding the eating of the raw flesh was made; in the earlier times the bones were consumed with the rest of the victim and in order to do so the bones had to be broken up. Both practices were in later times regarded as heathenish, hence the prohibition. "The original reason," says Lods, "why it was forbidden to break the bones of the Paschal lamb was perhaps the belief that, if this were done, the cattle or one of the guests would break a limb during the year. In the East to-day the same sacrificial rule is observed, and when the sacrifice is made on behalf of a new-born child the reason alleged for the custom is that otherwise the bones of the child will be broken."¹ Beer,² on present-day analogy, thinks that the prohibition reflects a kind of magical prophylactic whereby the rest of the flock, or the worshippers – perhaps both – were secured against broken bones during the coming year. The real reason we believe to be quite different; bones contained the life-principle which would be dispersed if they were broken. Into the details of this we cannot go here (see Isa. lxvi. 14; Ecclus. xlvi. 11, 12, xlix. 10).

From what has been said one fact emerges which, from the present point of view, is of main importance, viz. that the sacrificial meal at the Passover was a communion-sacrifice, the purpose of which was to become united with the deity. It is true that in one or two rare instances, e.g. Num. ix. 13, the Passover sacrifice is spoken of as a gift-offering (*Qorban*); but that is quite exceptional, and is owing simply to the fact that the true nature of the sacrifice was not apprehended. Both in origin and in later times, the Passover was a communion-sacrifice. Loisy, while agreeing that it was a communion-sacrifice, maintains that it was such for the worshippers, but not communion with a deity, since the blood was not offered to the god, but was, "at least in part," used as a rite of protection for the

¹ Op. cit., pp. 215 f.

² *Pesachim; Text, Übersetzung, und Erklärung*, p. 16 (1912).

dwelling-place and those who dwelt there.¹ But what, we may ask, about the rest of the blood? It cannot be denied that the blood was, in the first instance, poured out at, or on, the altar as the deity's share. But apart from that, if we are right in holding that the blood-smearing rite, which plays no part in the subsequent celebration, had nothing to do with the sacrifice, then Loisy's contention falls to the ground.

III. THE NOMADIC PERIOD : SACRIFICES AS A MEANS OF LIBERATING LIFE

All animal sacrifices in which the life of the victim is laid down, and in which the blood is believed to be consumed by the deity, must be regarded as having the purpose – whatever other purpose may be included – of liberating life for the benefit of the deity, inasmuch as he imbibes the blood which contains the life.

In reference to the Passover meal this element is well emphasised by Beer : “The Paschal meal,” he says, “secures to the clansmen the protection of their god of the herds. It unites them closely to him. The original meaning is, however, even more realistic. The animal slain and eaten is itself the god offered and enjoyed. The prohibition (Exod. xii. 9) not to devour the Passover raw is directed against a very ancient custom, occasionally revived in civilised life, in accordance with which the Passover was originally eaten raw. In the body and quivering flesh the elixir of life is contained. The blood itself is the god, the possessor of the life-magic.”²

In the case of the sacrifice of the first-born of the flocks and herds (*Bekoroth*) there is likewise the life-giving element. It was due to the power of the god that the fertility of flocks and herds existed ; the god was thought of in terms of human life and experience, so that in order that his power might be

¹ *Essai historique sur le sacrifice*, p. 229 (1920).

² *Pesachim*, p. 15.

preserved and continued in him, renewed energy, periodically supplied, was necessary. The firstlings of flocks and herds contained fresh life in a sense different from that of ordinary offspring. By sacrificing the firstlings, life was released and consecrated to the god whose power of fructifying was thereby renewed, since in drinking their blood he absorbed new life. Moreover, in partaking of the sacrifice of the first-born, the worshippers likewise received within themselves renewed life. It is the same principle as that of drinking the blood of a warrior slain in battle, which was the means of appropriating his strength and other qualities.

We may also regard water-libations as, in a modified sense, life-giving, as all bodily refreshment is animating. Just as water poured on the graves of the departed was believed to refresh them, so the god was thought to look upon water as an acceptable offering. It will be remembered that running water was spoken of as "living water"; clearly the thought of the vital essence in the water from rivers and streams was present; stagnant water is not likely to have been offered to the deity.

The offering of sacrifices during the nomadic period, then, was prompted by three motives; it is likely that other motives entered in, but it may be claimed that they were subsidiary. These three were the desire to give gifts to the god; the purposes of such gifts were many; but it is not until we come to somewhat later times that these purposes become clear; they may have been present in nomadic times, but *data* are wanting, whereas, when agricultural conditions arise, the various purposes of gift-sacrifices and gift-offerings come out clearly, as the Old Testament shows. With this we shall deal later. There is no sort of doubt that the gift-idea is the most prominent during the nomadic period, and that is natural enough, for man looks at things from his own point of view primarily. By offering gifts to his god he expects a return, of equivalent value at the least, but generally more than an equivalent; if he refrains from offering a gift, the consequences may be disagreeable.

So that, in either case, the gift-idea, at any rate during the earliest times, was, in the first instance, one of self-advantage. The communion-idea played, undoubtedly, an extremely important *rôle*. If we have devoted most space to this, the reason is that the Passover-rite is the most impressive illustration of it, and one cannot discuss the intricate question of the original form and purpose of the Passover without being led into by-paths. But apart from that, the communion-idea is of profound significance even in its primitive phases. All kinds of advantages would suggest themselves to the mind of uncultured man by effecting such a union. One has but to think of what it must have meant to man in a semi-cultured stage to be convinced that by such a union he would participate in the material power of the god with all that this implied in his present life, one has but to think of what it must have meant to be convinced that union with the god guaranteed participation in life with him after death, to realise the overwhelming importance of the communion-sacrifice to the early Semite.

There is, of course, a close connexion, in some directions, between the communion-sacrifice idea and that of the life-giving sacrifice. With regard to this latter, it must, further, be recognised that there is something profoundly significant, even as envisaged by the mind of the man of lower culture, in the conception of the indestructibility of the principle of life, whether as existing in the lower creation or in higher beings. Whatever materialistic *traits* may have gathered round the conception in those early days, there was, all unconscious, something of eternal truth enshrined within. We shall have occasion to return to the subject later.

CHAPTER VII

SACRIFICES AMONG THE ISRAELITES: THE AGRICULTURAL PERIOD (I)

BEFORE we come to consider in some detail the purposes of sacrifices during the agricultural period – we are concerned at present with pre-exilic times¹ – there are some preliminary matters which demand attention.

The literature of the pre-exilic period gives us many details regarding sacrifices and their ritual, many of which belong, doubtless, to nomadic times, while many others arose owing to the changed conditions of life. Frequently it is possible to indicate whether a rite or custom belonged to one or other of the periods, but in some cases there is uncertainty.

We will begin with the subject of *Moon-festivals*. That these existed during the nomadic period is certain, as we have seen ; and among these there is reason to believe that the Passover festival was of the greatest importance. With the exception of a few passages in Exod. xii. and Deut. xvi. (the former belongs, in the main, to the Priestly Code), the Passover is nowhere spoken of as a Moon-festival ; and, in the passages referred to, it is only by implication that this is to be inferred, viz. Exod. xii. 6, 8, 10, 12, 22, Deut. xvi. 1, 6 ; see further Lev. xxiii. 5, Num. ix. 5, also belonging to the Priestly Code. In the E document the Passover festival is never mentioned. It is emphasised that the festival is held as a memorial of the deliverance from Egypt : “ Observe the month of Abib, and keep the Passover unto Yahweh thy God ; for in the month of Abib

¹ Some references to the Priestly Code will also be made, for, in spite of its late date, it contains some ancient material.

Yahweh thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night" (Deut. xvi. 1; see also Exod. xii. 14, 26, 27).

To the Passover festival is now joined that of Unleavened Bread (*Mazzoth*), an agricultural feast; see e.g. Exod. xii. 17, and often elsewhere. In both the J document and in Deuteronomy the feast of *Mazzoth* takes a more important place than Passover; but in the Priestly Code this is reversed. In this latter, too, there is the law of the second Passover (Num. ix. 6-12), which, as Hirsch rightly remarks, "reflects the unsettled relations which the pastoral *Pesach* originally bore to the agricultural harvest festival, the two, apparently, not being at first simultaneous."¹

The part that Moon-festivals played (in connexion with which sacrifices were of course offered) during this period was of such importance that some little special attention may be devoted to them. We may note, first, the different names of the moon, for this witnesses to the important place it must have occupied in the minds of the Israelites.

In the list of cities in the Judæan lowland given in Joshua xv. 37, there is one called Hadashah. This means "the new," and some understand the name as in reference to the new city; this is highly improbable; far more likely is the opinion of others that the name was given in honour of the new moon, which played a great part in the religion of the ancient Arabs and Babylonians.² There was, therefore, in all probability, a moon sanctuary in this city. In this connexion it is interesting to note that the new moon was a favoured time for feasts; thus David says to Jonathan: "Behold, to-morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit³ with the king at meat" (1 Sam. xx. 5); it is, however, likely that the reference is to a New-moon feast, and not merely to a royal banquet. At any rate, the passage witnesses to the importance of the New-moon festivals. This is further borne out by Amos. viii. 5, from which it is

¹ In the *Jewish Encycl.*, ix. 554b.

² Nielsen, *Die altarabische Mondreligion*, pp. 49 ff. (1904).

³ It is better to read with the Septuagint, "and I shall not be sitting"; see verse 18.

seen that at the New-moon festivals, as on the Sabbath, work was not permitted ; see also Hos. ii. 11 (13 in Heb.) and Isa. i. 13, where these feasts are condemned, doubtless owing to practices which the prophets considered incompatible with the worship of Yahweh.

The name *Chodesh* is significant ; it means both "New-moon" and "month." The ancient Hebrew year was a "moon-year," which, judging from the names that have survived,¹ was taken over from the Canaanites. The word comes from the root meaning to "renew," and its use is late ; but evidently its application to "month" is derived from the "new" moon, thus witnessing to the great importance attached to the monthly appearance of the new moon.

A somewhat similar usage attaches to another word for "moon," viz. *Yareach* ; while the closely connected word *Yerach* means "month." The root meaning is uncertain, possibly the idea of "wandering" underlies it ; the Egyptian for "moon," *Hunsu*, means the "wanderer."² The moon is also known by the name of *Kese'*, "Full-moon" (Ps. lxxxii. 3 [4 in Heb.], Prov. vii. 20) ; the derivation is uncertain. Finally, there is the name *Lebanah* (Isa. xxiv. 23, xxx. 26 ; Cant. vi. 10), "white," in reference to the silvery appearance of the moon ; possibly the place-names *Libnah* (Joshua x. 29, etc.) and *Lebonah* (Judges xxi. 19) are connected with this. There is also the mention of "little moons" or "crescents" (*saharonim*), ornaments on the camels of the Midianites (Judges viii. 21, 26), and also worn by women (Isa. iii. 18) ; in both cases, no doubt, magical charms.

In connexion with Moon-festivals it is necessary that something should be said about the Sabbaths. The origin of the observance of the Sabbath is a controversial matter. The Sabbath as a holy day is almost invariably coupled with the New-moon festival in the older literature of the

¹ Viz. *'Abib*, the first month (Exod. xiii. 4), about April ; *Ziv*, the second month (1 Kings vi. 1), about May ; *Ethanim*, the seventh month (1 Kings viii. 2), about October ; *Bul*, the eighth month (1 Kings vi. 38), about November. The Babylonian-Assyrian names were adopted later.

² A. C. Paterson, in *Encycl. Bibl.*, iii. 3196.

Bible, which points to its having originally been a moon-festival (2 Kings iv. 23 ; Isa. i. 13 ; Hos. ii. 11 [13 in Heb.] ; Amos viii. 5). As the monthly first appearance of the Moon-god was a holy day, it may well have been the case that the different phases of the moon were also celebrated as holy days. That this month-division of time originated among the ancient Arabs is highly probable, since they based their time-reckoning on the moon, and not, like the Babylonians, on the sun. Now the month-division is the basis of the four sub-divisions ; the main sub-division would obviously be the full-moon. That was the time when the god was thought of as coming to a temporary halt during his course ; hence it was the *Sabbath*, the "sitting" or "resting" ; the word coming not from the Babylonian, but, as Nielsen shows, from an Arabic root. The further sub-division of the lunar month, based on the four moon-phases, into weeks, is explained by Nielsen ; the discussion would involve too much space here.¹ The application of the term "Sabbath" to the first day of each week may have been borrowed from the day of the full-moon.

These details, then, illustrate the important place which the Moon-festivals had during the agricultural period. The Moon-worship of nomadic times is thus reflected during the later times, with the difference that the worship previously offered to the Moon-deity is now transferred to Yahweh.

To indicate precisely what sacrifices were offered at the great festivals, as well as on other occasions, during the pre-exilic period, is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for our sources have been so largely influenced and worked over in the interests of the later developed sacrificial system. To give such details, however, is unnecessary for present purposes. Our concern is mainly with the objects for which sacrifices were offered, and with these we shall deal in the chapters which follow.

¹ *Die altarabische Mondreligion und die mosaische Überlieferung*, pp. 49-96 (1904) ; and see also Meinhold, *Sabbat und Woche* (1905).

In connexion with pre-exilic sacrifices, however, something needs to be said about the sacrifice of the first-born of men, and human sacrifices generally among the Israelites. That this was taken over from the Canaanites, and was not practised by the Israelites during the nomadic period, has been pointed out (see above, pp. 97, 100). We must begin with extra-biblical evidence as this reflects practices in Canaan before the Israelite settlement ; and here the archæological discoveries are of supreme importance.

The results of the excavations at Gezer by Macalister are pretty well known, but some mention of the particular subject under consideration is demanded here. "The stratum of earth underlying the floor of the temple area proved to be a cemetery of infants deposited in large jars. . . . The body was usually put in head first, and generally there were two or three smaller vessels – usually a jug and a bowl – deposited either inside the jar between the body and the mouth of the vessel, or else outside in the neighbourhood." The jars were all filled with earth, and among the large number of the sacrifices two only had been burned. All the infants were newly born. "The special circumstances which led to the selection of these infants must have been something in the victims themselves, which devoted them to sacrifice from the moment of their birth. Among various races various circumstances are regarded as sufficient reasons for infanticide – deformity, the birth of twins, etc. – but among the Semites the one cause most likely to have been effective was the sacrosanct character attributed to primogeniture ; and it is, therefore, most probable that the infants found buried in jars in the temple of Gezer were sacrificed first-born children."¹ Similar sacrifices were found in Tell-el-Hesi² and in Taanach.³ A human sacrifice of a different character, and of which at present parallels do not seem to be forthcoming, at any rate in Palestine, is that of a fourteen-year-old girl found in another burial cave in

¹ *P.E.F.Q.S.*, pp. 32 f. (1903). ² Flinders Petrie, *Tell-el-Hesi*, p. 32 (1891).

³ Sellin, *Tell Ta'annek*, p. 51 (1904).

Gezer. In this cistern-like cave there were, apart from that mentioned, the remains of fourteen individuals, all males of various ages, together with a number of bronze weapons. The bodies had all been placed in position round the circular cave, most of them in the contracted attitude so often found in the case of other interments. That all had been deposited on a single occasion seems evident from the way in which they are placed, for if it had been an ordinary burial cave the bodies would have been cast in without care, especially as the cave is difficult to enter, the entrance being merely a circular hole about three feet in diameter cut in the roof. But the point of chief interest is that the body of the single female had been cut in two just below the ribs, and only the upper part was left. When it is added that a large quantity of charcoal was found in the cave it becomes clear that a sacrifice must have been offered, followed by a sacrificial feast, at which part of the human victim was consumed. "If the fourteen persons in this cave perished, as we have just suggested," says Macalister, "by some extraordinary calamity, it is quite conceivable that the survivors may have thought it necessary to make propitiation by an extraordinary sacrifice, extraordinary as well in the age — perhaps also in the sex — of the victim as in the barbarous method of slaughtering that was adopted."¹ In some degree analogous to this was a sepulchre unearthed in Megiddo.² Here were the remains of nine men, and of one young woman, but the latter was intact; while some remnants of cinders were found, these were, according to Vincent, insufficient to attest that an offering or a sacrifice had taken place at the time of the burial.³ Nevertheless, on the analogy of the Gezer burial cave, and from the fact that the remnants of cinders were found in the Megiddo sepulchre, it seems probable that in this latter case, too, a sacrifice was offered; the victim might have been differently treated.

¹ *P.E.F.Q.S.*, pp. 12 ff. (1903).

² Schumacher, *Mittheilungen und Nachrichten des Deutschen Palästina Vereins*, pp. 52 ff. (1904).

³ *Canaan d'après l'exploration récente*, p. 233 (1907).

Macalister dates the Gezer burial cave before 1400 B.C. ; the Megiddo sepulchre Schumacher dates about the ninth century.

Foundation sacrifices in which human beings were the victims seem to have been common. A striking illustration was found at Gezer, though pre-Semitic, according to Macalister. This had been the sacrifice of a woman of advanced age ; the corpse was deposited in the hollow under the corner of a house : " the body was lying on its back, the legs being bent up (but not doubled) ; at the head was a small bowl and between the *femora* and *tibiæ* a large two-handled jar, no doubt food-vessels."¹ In Megiddo, again, there was found on the foundation of a fortress the remains of a young girl of fifteen years ; she had been attached to the foundation stones by a layer of cement.² In another case, also in Megiddo, an infant in a jar had been deposited in the middle of a wall.³ Of quite similar character was the burial of an infant in a wall, in Gezer,⁴ and again in Jericho.⁵ It is unnecessary to give further illustrations ; that human sacrifices among the Semites often took place is amply proved. We turn now to the Old Testament.

In Judges xi. 30-40 we have the account of the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter to Yahweh as a burnt-offering ('*Olah*). The only point about this much discussed episode which here concerns us is that a human sacrifice was vowed to Yahweh,⁶ in order to secure His help in the coming battle ; and that the vow was kept, and the sacrifice offered. Human sacrifice is thus thought of as acceptable to Yahweh. In this connexion we have the case of the king of Moab, who, on seeing that the battle was going against him, " took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered

¹ *P.E.F.Q.S.*, p. 16 (1904).

² Schumacher, *Mittheilungen*, p. 11 (1905).

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 9 (1906).

⁴ *P.E.F.Q.S.*, p. 64 (1906).

⁵ Vincent, in *Revue biblique*, p. 275 (1909).

⁶ In verse 31 we must obviously read : " Whosoever cometh forth . . . ", not " whatsoever " ; animals were not expected to come out of the doors of houses.

him for a burnt-offering upon the wall" (2 Kings iii. 27) ; this, too, was thus a propitiatory sacrifice to his god Chemosh. It is the first-born who is sacrificed, but this comes under a different category from that of the first-born referred to below. Next we have the passage 1 Sam. xv. 32, 33 : " Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag, the king of the Amalekites. . . . And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before Yahweh in Gilgal." To slay "before Yahweh," i.e. in His presence, must mean on His altar. The only question is whether we have an instance of the frequent practice of offering the spoils of battle, or whether this is in fulfilment of the *cherem*, according to which *everything* taken in battle was "devoted" to Yahweh (verse 2 : "Now go and smite Amalek and utterly destroy, i.e. devote, all that they have, and spare them not ; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass"). The latter is probably to be understood ; in any case, it is a human sacrifice offered to Yahweh. With this we may compare the capture of Nebo by Mesha, king of Moab, and his treatment of the inhabitants as recorded on the Moabite Stone : "And I took it, and slew the whole of it, seven thousand men and male strangers, and women and . . . and female slaves ; for I had devoted it to 'Ashtor-Chemosh.'" The general idea of human sacrifice was thus familiar among the Israelites.

Coming now to the sacrifice of the first-born, we read in Exod. xiii. 2 (P) : "Sanctify unto me all the first-born, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast ; it is mine" ; similarly in Exod. xxii. 29, 30 (28, 29 in Heb. [E]) : "The first-born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me. Likewise shalt thou do with thine oxen, and with thy sheep ; seven days shall it be with its dam ; on the eighth day thou shalt give it to me." These read like independent laws, for it is not until further on in the first passage that there is a modification in

the sense that they are to be redeemed (Exod. xiii. 12, 13 [J]), though there is no modification in the case of the second passage. The modification of the original law occurs also in Exod. xxxiv. 20;¹ in Num. iii. 11-13, 40-45 (P), where it is said that the Levites are taken instead of all the first-born; and in Num. xviii. 15-18 (P); Lev. xviii. 21, xx. 1-5 (H). In Deuteronomy there is no command about the first-born of men. The story of the intended sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. xxii. 1-14) is evidently intended to teach that the sacrifice of the first-born was unacceptable to Yahweh; but it witnesses both to the fact that such sacrifices were in vogue, and that they were believed to be acceptable to Yahweh (see verse 2). "The story tells of how the deity demanded the sacrifice of the first-born son at this sacred site, but that a ram was accepted in lieu of the child. So that it assumes that the present custom was to offer a ram at this sanctuary (Jeruel); but it also indicates that, properly speaking, it ought to have been the child; we may conclude, therefore, that originally it really was a child who was sacrificed."² These references to the sacrifice of the first-born, together with what looks like a modification of an earlier practice, taken together with what the excavations have revealed, give, at first sight, the impression that at one time every first-born son was sacrificed. Yet it is difficult to believe that this can actually have been the case; for, apart from anything else, it would have raised the problem of an insufficient increase in population; the death of the first-born of every family, together with the inevitable loss through infant mortality which would occur in any case, would have been too serious a matter for any community to acquiesce in. Even granting that in those days the dangers of child-birth were less than among more highly civilised peoples in later times, there were famines and wars which carried off children as well as adults. Whatever,

¹ This seems to be from the hand of the Redactor of the combination of the J and E documents.

² Gunkel, *Genesis*, p. 220 (1901).

therefore, may have been regarded as an ideal duty to the deity, it is impossible to believe that the sacrifice of the first-born, as a rule for all, could have been enforced. It may also be added that if, as is usually held, the jar-burials of infants indicate the sacrifice of the first-born, their number would be infinitely greater if the custom had been observed generally. The probability seems to be that at one time the sacrifice of first-born children was frequent, but not universal.

But with regard to another type of child-sacrifice the evidence is ominously convincing. We may begin with the prohibitions belonging to the latest years of our period, which witness to the practice. In Deut. xii. 31 we read in reference to the nations among whom the Israelites lived : "Thou shalt not do so unto Yahweh thy God ; for every abomination to Yahweh which he hateth have they done unto their gods ; for even their sons and their daughters do they burn in the fire to their gods" ; and again in xviii. 10 : "There shall not be found with thee anyone that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire." That the prohibition was needed is seen from the following passages : 2 Kings xvi. 3 reads as though the practice condemned had been usual among the kings of the northern kingdom ; in speaking of the Judæan king, Ahaz, it is said : "But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the heathen" (cp. xvii. 17). Similarly of king Manasseh, in 2 Kings xxi. 6. From the account of Josiah's reformation (2 Kings xxii., xxiii.) it is seen that the centre of this cult was Jerusalem : "And he defiled Topheth, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech" (xxiii. 10). Hitherto, therefore, this worship had been carried on at Topheth, which probably means "fire-place" (*Tapheth*),¹ in the valley of Hinnom,

¹ *Tapheth*, as it is spelt in the Septuagint, is an Aramaic word, "the framework set on the fire to support the victim" (Robertson Smith, *Rel. Sem.*, p. 377n.).

south of the city. Molech means "King" (*Melek*), the two vowels, as in the case of Topheth, being adapted from the word *Bosheth*, "shame."¹ That the king was Yahweh is seen not only from the fact that the title is often applied to Him (e.g. Isa. vi. 5, xlv. 6 ; Jer. xlvi. 18, xlviii. 15), but from what is said in reference to this worship by Jeremiah and Ezekiel ; thus in Jer. vii. 31 these words are put into the mouth of Yahweh : "And they have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire ; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind." These last words would be pointless unless they implied that the worshippers *did* believe that the practice was commanded by Yahweh ; the sacrifices were, therefore, made to Him. A very similar passage occurs again in Jer. xxxii. 35 ; but here we have the addition : "And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons . . ." (cp. xix. 5). That Yahweh was identified with Baal as the lord of the land, in the popular conception, is sufficiently well known not to need further words. That it was to Yahweh that these sacrifices were offered is, however, stated quite definitely in Ezek. xxiii. 37-39 ; after a reference to those who caused their sons to pass through the fire, it is said : "Moreover this have they done unto me, they have defiled my sanctuary. . . ." Still more convincing is Ezek. xx. 25, 26 ; after stress has been laid on the good laws which Yahweh had given His people, but which they had disobeyed (verses 18-24), it continues : "Therefore also I gave them statutes that were not good, and ordinances whereby they should not live ; and I polluted them in their own gifts in that they caused to pass through the fire all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am Yahweh." In this passage the prophet identifies the

¹ For a different view, see Eissfeldt, *Molk als Opferbegriff* (1935) ; he regards *molek* as originally a term for a special type of child-sacrifice ; this term was, later, used as a divine name. The name of the sacrifice, that is, became applied to him to whom the sacrifice was offered.

offerings in Topheth with that of the first-born ; this can, however, hardly have been the case, for in all the passages which speak of the burning of sons and daughters there is never any mention of first-born children.¹

There is in the Old Testament but one instance of a foundation-sacrifice recorded, viz. 1 Kings xvi. 34 : " In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho ; he laid the foundation thereof with the loss of Abiram his first-born, and set up the gates thereof with the loss of his youngest son Segub."² Robertson Smith refers to the Syrian traditions of human sacrifice at the foundation of cities : " In Arabia the local jinn or earth-demons are still propitiated by sprinkling the blood of a sacrifice when new land is broken up, a new house built, or a new well opened " ; but in these cases it is not a human sacrifice that is offered. On the other hand, " Malalas tells us that the 22nd of May was kept as the anniversary of a virgin sacrificed at the foundation of Antioch, at sunrise. . . ."³ Curtiss quotes a Babylonian tablet on which it is said : " Thou shalt place three altars for the house god, the house goddess, and the house demon, three sacrifices of lambs shalt thou sacrifice."⁴ Though not a parallel to the foundation sacrifice, the description is not without interest in this connexion. Cheyne refers to the fact that during the excavation of the *Zikkurrat* of the temple of Bel at Nippur many skulls were found to have been built in with the bricks.⁵

With regard to sacrifices in connexion with the dead, we

¹ The passage in Hos. xiii. 2 is often understood as a reference to human sacrifice : " They say of them, let the sacrificers of men kiss the calves " ; but the prophet is not likely to have made such a passing reference to this practice in a denunciation against the making of images. The construction of the Hebrew has various parallels, e.g. Prov. xv. 20, lit. " a fool of a man," i.e. a foolish man ; so here " sacrificers of men " means " sacrificing men," i.e. men who sacrifice ; see, for other illustrations, Cowley's *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, § 128 1 (1910). Hos. xiii. 2 therefore does not come into consideration here.

² The possibility must, however, be recognised that this was not really a foundation-sacrifice ; it may have been that Hiel lost both children at this time through sickness, and that in the popular imagination this was a fulfilment of the curse pronounced in Joshua vi. 26.

³ *Rel. Sem.*, pp. 159, 376. ⁴ *Prim. Sem. Rel.*, p. 54. ⁵ *Enycl. Bibl.*, ii. 2063.

read in Ps. cvi. 28 : " They joined themselves unto Baal-peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead." In Num. xxv. 2, 3, from which this reference to Baal-peor,¹ or rather Baal of Peor, comes, the sacrifices are made to gods, and there is no mention of the dead. In 1 Sam. xxviii. 13, however, the spirit of Samuel is called a " god." It is probable that the psalmist wished to present the cult of this Baal in the worst light, and therefore imputed to it a form of cult which, in his day, was regarded with abhorrence. At the same time, it must be recognised that sacrifices to, or on behalf of, the dead, which are here referred to, do witness to the existence of a cult which, at any rate in earlier times, was in vogue in Palestine ; the Gezer excavations give evidence of this. The Old Testament, however, gives no hint of human sacrifice in this connexion.

As to human sacrifices, then, the sacrifice of the first-born of men was certainly prevalent, at any rate to some extent, among the Israelites ; and, like the first-born of the flocks and herds, they were sacrificed to Yahweh. The burnings of children, male and female, in the valley of Hinnom, were likewise sacrifices to Yahweh. On the other hand, foundation-sacrifices, not necessarily human, and sacrifices connected with the dead, had nothing to do with Yahweh-worship. With the objects for which human sacrifices were made to Yahweh we shall deal later (see pp. 187 ff.). That child-sacrifices are not referred to by the eighth-century prophets is a notable fact ; the case of King Ahaz (2 Kings xvi. 3) may have been due to some special occurrence, as in the case of the king of Moab (2 Kings iii. 27) ; but otherwise there is no mention of the practice until the late pre-exilic period.²

¹ The name of a god, as it would seem ; so, too, in Num. xxv. 3, 5, 18, xxxi. 16 ; Deut. iv. 3 ; cp. Joshua xxii. 17 ; but in Hos. ix. 10 Baal-peor reads like a place-name, which it clearly was according to Num. xxiii. 28 : " the top of Peor, that looketh down upon the desert " ; it was evidently a mountain. The truth, therefore, seems to be that Peor was a place which had its local Baal.

² Mic. vi. 7, " Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul ? " is regarded by most authorities as belonging

The offering of sacrifices on various occasions, mostly of a private character, during the pre-exilic period must be considered next. In Lev. xii. 6, 7, which may reflect ancient custom, a sacrifice is offered by the woman after childbirth, "when the days of her purifying are fulfilled"; the offering consists of a "lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtle-dove, for a sin-offering." Again, after the child had been weaned, a bullock was offered, according to 1 Sam. i. 24; and the "great feast" which Abraham made when Isaac was weaned (Gen. xxi. 8) certainly implies a sacrifice. The offerings in connexion with the making and fulfilling of vows played a great part in ancient Israel; some of the passages in question have already been quoted (Gen. xxviii. 20-22; Judges xi. 30 ff.). The law with regard to vows is given in Deut. xxiii. 21-23: "When thou shalt vow a vow unto Yahweh thy God, thou shalt not be slack to pay it. . . . That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt observe and do; according as thou hast vowed to Yahweh thy God, a freewill-offering, which thou hast promised with thy mouth." Again, in covenants between man and man we read not infrequently of a sacrifice being offered to confirm it; thus, Isaac makes a covenant with Abimelech and his followers, after which "he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink"; a sacrifice is here implied (Gen. xxvi. 26-30; see also Gen. xxxi. 46-54; 1 Sam. xi. 15). The technical phrase is "to cut a covenant," e.g. Gen. xv. 18. This phrase is often understood to be a reference to the cutting up of the flesh of the sacrificial victim when the covenant was made (cp. e.g. Gen. xv. 10; Jer. xxxiv. 18); Nowack questions the correctness of this view, and points to Hag. ii. 5 ("the word that I covenanted with you"), where the word means simply to "establish."¹ The root from which

to the reign of Manasseh; had the practice been in vogue during the eighth century the silence of the prophets would be quite incomprehensible.

¹ *Heb. Archäologie*, ii. 358. On the other hand, see Frazer, *Folklore in the Old Testament*, pp. 408, 418, 422 ff. (1918); and S. A. Cook, in Robertson Smith's *Rel. Sem.*, pp. 691 f.

the word for "covenant" (*berith*) comes means in its origin to "fetter." In Judges viii. 33, ix. 4, mention is made of Baal-berith; he is called El-berith in Judges ix. 46; the name indicates that he is the local god (of Shechem) who protects covenants. Of a public character were the sacrifices offered at the king's accession, e.g. 1 Sam. xi. 15: "And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before Yahweh in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace-offerings before Yahweh," cp. x. 8; so, too, in the case of Solomon (1 Kings iii. 4). That this is not mentioned in the case of any of the other kings, either of Israel or Judah, is probably due simply to the fact that it is taken for granted. Sacrifices were offered, again, before a battle, e.g. 1 Sam. vii. 9, already quoted; see, too, 1 Sam. xiii. 9. Sometimes we read of sacrifices being offered to stay a plague, as David did, for example, on Araunah's threshing-floor (2 Sam. xxiv. 21-25; see also Num. xvi. 46-48; 1 Chron. xxi. 22).

Finally, there were the libations of blood, water, milk, and wine, to which reference has already been made.

The reforms of Josiah, with the centralisation of worship at Jerusalem, made a great change in the offerings so far as private sacrifices were concerned. "By the centralisation of worship," says Moore, "its natural connexion with the common life of men was much loosened. The Israelite could visit the holy place to offer his sacrifices at most but thrice a year (i.e. at the great festivals), more commonly, perhaps, but once or twice. At other times he knows that stated sacrifices are offered in the temple daily, and with greater pomp at all the festivals. The possibility of a cultus carried on for the benefit of those who are not present, of a sacerdotal religion done for the people by the priests, and operative, if correctly performed, is thus prepared. These consequences were not perceived, much less realised, in the few remaining years of Josiah's reign, nor, in their full effect, for many generations afterwards."¹ It is, however, very questionable

¹ In *Encycl. Bibl.*, iv. 4197.

whether Josiah's reforms were permanently effective ; they were certainly all swept away during the reign of Manasseh, who re-established the local sanctuaries ; and there is evidence of the existence of these in late post-exilic times. With Ezek. xl.-xlviii. we are not at present concerned, as there is good reason to suppose that they do not belong to the original form of the book, but to post-exilic times.

CHAPTER VIII

SACRIFICES AMONG THE ISRAELITES: THE AGRICULTURAL PERIOD (2)

GIFT-SACRIFICES (1)

THE commonest kind of sacrifices and oblations in the Old Testament were of the gift-type offered to Yahweh. But the motives for which these gifts were offered varied with changing circumstances, and these motives will have to be distinguished as they point to different stages of religious ideas.

When the Israelites had finally entered Canaan and it had become their permanent abode, they brought with them the sacrificial uses which, as nomads, they had hitherto practised. But the change from the nomadic to the agricultural mode of life carried with it some differences in religious outlook. However much the religious leaders in the following of Moses may have urged on their people loyalty to Yahweh-worship, it was inevitable that the local agricultural gods of the Canaanites should have been recognised by the Israelites as holding sway in their own domain. In the religious stage in which the Israelites were at that time it was but natural that they should have felt it necessary to honour these local gods. Not that they intended any disloyalty thereby to the Deity whom they acknowledged as their national God ; they worshipped Him too ; but He was a desert Deity. The local Baals, on the other hand, were the owners of agricultural land, and the dispensers of the fruits of the field ; so that the Israelites, as we may well surmise, argued : “ How will the crops grow, which give us

sustenance, unless we are on good terms with the lords of the soil?" So they worshipped both the local gods and Yahweh. The consequence was that there arose a syncretistic form of worship, a mixing up of Baalism and Yahwism; the sacrifices which the Canaanites had been in the habit of offering were taken over by the Israelites, and thus this hybrid form of Yahweh-worship came into being.

Before we proceed, let us enumerate once more the sacrifices which we have seen reason for believing were in vogue during the nomadic period. Oblations are, of course, included, such as they were. Of great importance was the sacrifice of the *firstlings*, since the very existence of nomads depended on the fertility of their flocks and herds. But not less important was the great *Passover Moon-festival*, upon which depended, perhaps in an even greater degree, the fertility of the flocks and herds for the coming year. Then there were the *New-moon festivals*, when sacrifices were offered in honour of the monthly reappearance of the god in the sky. Sacrifices at the making of covenants, as part of initiation-ceremonies, on the eve of battle, and for thanksgiving after a victory, were also mentioned above as having been offered during the nomadic period, on the analogy of such customs among other Semites. Then, as to oblations, these can have played but an insignificant part, so far as crops were concerned, in nomadic times. It was suggested that figs and dates may have been offered, though evidence for this is entirely wanting; nevertheless, this was worth mention in view of the great importance of the offering of first-fruits later. Since all growth in Nature was assigned to the power of supernatural agencies, the first-fruits of even wild-growing food would have been considered due to the fertilising god. Finally, there were the libations; by far the most important of these, the blood-libation, on account of its great significance, was part of the sacrificial rite. Of much less importance, yet not without significance, was the water-libation. Then there was the milk-libation. The smearing of the sacred stone with fat, with which the later

anointing with oil corresponds, cannot be reckoned as a libation.

These, then, were the nomadic offerings ; we turn now to observe their place during the agricultural, pre-exilic period.

A preliminary remark is here necessary ; a good deal of evidence as to the details and purposes of sacrifices is to be obtained from the pre-exilic literature of the Old Testament ; but *Deuteronomy* and the *Priestly Code*, late as they are, cannot be ignored in the discussion, for they often retain details of far more ancient traditional thought and practice. Doubtless, we are sometimes on uncertain ground here ; but we must be guided partly by analogies and partly by the probabilities of the case.

Our task, then, is to examine Israelite sacrifices and oblations as these were practised during the agricultural, pre-exilic period, and as based upon and developed from those of nomadic times. But our main object here will be to follow out the three chief and fundamental purposes of sacrifice : Gift-sacrifices, Communion-sacrifices, and Life-giving-sacrifices. Other elements and other purposes will be manifest, and they will not be ignored ; but the three purposes mentioned will be our chief concern.

SACRIFICES AND OBLATIONS AS GIFTS TO YAHWEH

It will be worth while, before coming to details, to take a glance at Lev. i.-vii., which " may be regarded as a guide to the presents that men were allowed or required to give to Yahweh, and the manner of their presentation."¹ These chapters must be supplemented by Num. vii., xviii. 8-32, xxxi. This all belongs to the late Priestly Code with its strongly expressed expiatory elements (note especially Lev. i. 4 : " And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering ; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him ") ; but this must not blind us to the

¹ Buchanan Gray, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

fact that, with all its later ideas about sacrifice, it contains a considerable amount of ancient material. This applies to much that is said about gifts to Yahweh. In Lev. i. 2 we read: "When any man of you offereth a gift (*Qorban*) to Yahweh, ye shall offer your gift of the cattle, even of the herd and of the flock"; and in i. 14: "And if his gift [*Qorban*] to Yahweh be a burnt-offering of fowls, then he shall offer his gift of turtle-doves or of young pigeons." The various types of sacrifice which are offered are thus: the burnt-offering ('*Olah*, i. 3), peace-offerings (*Zebach shelamim*, iii. 1), sin-offerings (*Chattath*, iv. 23 f., 28 f.), and guilt-offerings ('*Asham*, Num. xviii. 9). Cereal offerings were of bread, unleavened if burnt on the altar, in some circumstances it might be leavened, but it was then merely presented at, not burnt on, the altar (Lev. ii. 12, xxiii. 17); parched grain is also mentioned in Lev. ii. 14-16. The burnt-offering is the most important, and the most frequently offered, twice daily; to this a necessary accompaniment is the meal-offering (*Soleth*, Lev. ii. 1). In Deuteronomy the peace-offering occupies the most important place in the sacrificial worship. This significant change will be referred to again later. Then, further, gifts of another kind are spoken of in Num. vii.; they consist of silver dishes and bowls, in addition to cereal and animal-offerings, presented by the tribal princes; and, again, in Num. xxxi. 50 we read: "And we have brought Yahweh's gift [*Qorban*], what every man hath gotten, of jewels of gold, ankle chains, and bracelets, signet-rings, ear-rings, and necklaces, to make atonement for our souls before Yahweh." In addition to these there were the very important gifts of the first-born of the herds and flocks (the first-born of men will also have to be considered), and the gifts of first-fruits.

These, then, were the various gifts made to Yahweh; we must consider next the different motives for which these gifts were made.

In the large variety of gift-offerings brought by the Israelite worshippers to Yahweh there lay, in origin, the

thought of getting something in return. In the earliest times, as we have before remarked, man bases his conceptions of the relationship between himself and a supernatural being, or, in later times, his god, on those which exist between himself and his fellow-creatures. He knows by experience that a request stands a better chance of being granted if accompanied by a gift ; and, again on the analogy of man's point of view, the gift takes the form of his primary need — food. " Gifts, believe me, captivate both men and gods ; Jupiter himself is placated by sacrifices."¹ In its earliest form, and doubtless in its later forms too, the gift-offering was largely, if not wholly, in the nature of a bribe. Request and gift go hand in hand. Together with this idea another enters in when the agricultural life takes the place of that of the nomad : the Israelites, in settling down in Canaan, took over from the Canaanites their belief of gods being the possessors of the land, a conception which, according to some, must originally have been derived from the presence of human landed-proprietors, so far as the land, apart from that which grew on it, was concerned. But now Baals were the lords of the land, so the Israelites, like the Canaanites, recognised that just as under human conditions the land-owner demanded dues from those living on his land, so the god-possessors of the land expected tribute from those who settled upon it. Thus the gift to the god, which had at one time the single purpose of inducing him to grant a request, now became also a tribute due to him. It may, however, be stated with certainty that these two ideas were far from being always clearly differentiated. When it is remembered that the fertility of the soil was believed to be due to the energising power of the god, it is evident that the worshipper must often have viewed his gift in the light of an inducement ; the idea of a tribute might in such cases easily be swallowed up in that of doing the god a good turn. At any rate, there can be no doubt that these two ideas lie at the base of the Israelite conception of religious gifts to Yahweh. The two

¹ Ovid, quoted by Heiler, *Das Gebet*, p. 71 (1923).

ideas could not be better illustrated than by the two following passages: in Gen. xxviii. 20-22 (from the E document) we read how "Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall Yahweh be my God, and this stone, which I have set up for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." This last reference to the tithe is, of course, a later addition: the gift centres in the setting-up of a god-house (Bethel), and the vow is made that, on condition of something being granted, a return will be made. In principle this is the idea of a gift being made in return for something. The other passage is Deut. xvi. 16, where, after it is commanded that "three times in a year shall all thy males appear before Yahweh thy God," it is added, "and they shall not appear before Yahweh empty," i.e. they must bring their sacrificial gifts. The passage reflects what had been long in vogue (see Exod. xxxiv. 20, 23, J). With the entry of the Israelites into the land promised to them by Yahweh, that land becomes Yahweh's land. As the prophets taught, it was not the Baals who fructified the soil and gave it produce, but Yahweh: "For she did not know that I gave her the corn, and the wine, and the oil . . ." (Hos. ii. 8 [10 in Heb.]). The passage witnesses to the syncretistic worship which is so often met with during this period; nevertheless, though the existence of Baals was acknowledged, there is abundant evidence to show that, in spite of this, the worship of the national God was predominant. Thus, in Judges vi. 18, 19, Gideon says to Yahweh: "Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present [*Minchah*], and lay it before thee. . . . And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of meal; the flesh he put in a basket . . . and presented it." As in the case of Jacob's promise, this is the spontaneous offering of an individual; but such offerings on behalf of others also occur. In Judges

xi. 30, 31, for example, we read : " And Jephthah vowed a vow unto Yahweh, and said, If thou wilt indeed deliver the children of Moab¹ into mine hand, then it shall be that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the children of Moab, it shall be Yahweh's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering [*'Olah*]." Jephthah represents his people, so that his offering on behalf of them is of a public character. Similarly Samuel acts in the name of the people, when, in face of the imminent Philistine attack, he " took a sucking-lamb, and offered it for a whole burnt-offering [*'Olah Kalil*] unto Yahweh ; and Samuel cried unto Yahweh for Israel " (1 Sam. vii. 9). And once more, a public gift-offering is presented by Solomon on becoming king, though here we have another instance of syncretistic worship : " And Solomon loved Yahweh, walking in the statutes of David his father ; only he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places.² And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there ; for that was the great high place, a thousand burnt-offerings [*'Olah*] did Solomon offer upon that altar " (1 Kings iii. 3). We recall also the episode recorded in 1 Kings xviii. 29-36, where it is told of how Elijah offered a bullock after his prayer that Yahweh would manifest His power in vindication of His servant ; the offering is a *Minchah*.

In all cases of giving presents to Yahweh, as these illustrations show, something was expected in return ; and it can hardly be doubted, though the texts do not mention it, that prayer accompanied the offering. While fully convinced that such offerings were pleasing to Yahweh, that was not the main motive ; and prayer alone would have been deemed sufficient ; for the formal expression of a desire is too ingrained in human nature not to have been uttered on such occasions. Heiler says : " Prayer was a grand thing [*Grösse*], self-contained and originally quite

¹ The Hebrew has " Ammon," but this is evidently a mistake for " Moab," as can be seen from verses 17, 18.

² This may well be a Deuteronomic insertion ; nevertheless, as we know from other passages, it describes the conditions of the time.

independent of sacrifice, and continues to be so when, in a moment of overwhelming spiritual excitement, a cry for help or gratitude rises up to God. But when the sensation of distress or fear takes the place of fervent wish and the ardour of hope, then there arises in the mind of man the thought that the supernatural power, who thinks and feels like man himself, may be won over by a gift."¹ The first sentence here contains a fine thought, and doubtless envisages correctly the mind of man even in his primitive consciousness, much more, then, the early Israelite who had advanced at least some way in the path of spiritual religion. We may, therefore, feel sure that, together with the utilitarian purpose of the gift-offering, some higher aspiration glowed in the heart of Yahweh's devotees.

We have seen that among the gifts just considered, there were promised gifts, i.e. such as would be presented when the request which had been made was granted. These come very close to *thank-offerings*. There are various illustrations in which the idea of gratitude comes clearly to the fore. Thus, in Gen. xlvi. 1, we read of Jacob offering sacrifices as a thanksgiving for having been brought safely on his journey as far as Beersheba. The term used is the general one (*Zebach*), without further comment; but the thought of thanksgiving is evidently implied. Then we have the case of the safe arrival of the ark in Beth-shemesh, whereupon "they clave the wood of the cart, and offered up the kine for a burnt-offering [*Olah*] unto Yahweh" (1 Sam. vi. 14). Again, Elisha, in thanksgiving for having been called to the prophetic office, "took the yoke of oxen, and slew them, and roasted their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat" (1 Kings xix. 21); that was clearly a thank-offering, though the term for sacrifice is not used. In truth, the term for a thank-offering rarely occurs in pre-exilic literature, but it would be a mistake to infer from this that gifts of gratitude were not frequent. In the illustrations given, the thank-offering seems

¹ Op. cit., p. 71.

to have been one of purely disinterested gratitude ; and the reason why such thank-offerings do not find more frequent mention is easily accounted for by the fact that they would mostly have been offerings by individuals, which would not be recorded. In later times, however, the thank-offerings occupy an important place, and, to a large extent, they are obligatory (see above, Chapter V, under *Nedabah, Neder, Todah*).

Offerings as *acts of homage* to Yahweh go back, in origin, to very early times. It is probable that they originated in the very natural custom of offering gifts to men in high positions, such as existed in quite primitive forms of society. Not to offer a gift to one in high position betokens a lack of respect. Pointedly does Lagrange remark, though he is referring to later times, "in the West it is the rich who give to the poor ; in the East it is the poor who give to the rich."¹ In Israel sacrifices and other offerings as tokens expressive of homage are marks of humble subjection to Yahweh, and recognition of His power. There would not necessarily be any particular occasions on which these acts of homage would be rendered ; just as the realisation of divine power and mercy would call forth words of praise and thanksgiving quite apart from any special manifestation of these, so the devout worshipper of Yahweh would feel impelled to show forth his feelings by concrete expression from time to time, for he believed in Yahweh's unceasing care and guardianship.

An interesting point about this kind of gift-offering is that it played a part in later eschatology. Although this belongs to subsequent times, a passing reference to it may be made here. Thus, in Isa. xviii. 7, the prophet, looking forward to the latter days when all the nations will bow down before the God of Israel, says : "In that time shall a present [*Shai*]² be brought unto Yahweh of hosts by a people tall and smooth, and from the people terrible from their beginning

¹ Op. cit., p. 274.

² A late term occurring elsewhere only in Ps. lxxviii. 29 (30 in Heb.) and lxxvi. 11 (12 in Heb.) ; it is not a sacrificial term.

onward . . ."; the reference is to the Ethiopians. Similarly in Zeph. iii. 10, where the prophet, speaking in the name of God, of "that day," a regular eschatological term, says: "From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia . . . they shall bring mine offering [*Minchah*]." ¹

But that by the way. The offerings of homage were, as we should expect, purely voluntary gifts, hence the term *Nedabah*, "Freewill-offering," which is applied to them. In an important respect, therefore, they differed from the many types of sacrifice and oblation which were obligatory. They took various forms, both sacrifices in the ordinary way and presents, such as gifts for the tabernacle furniture (Exod. xxxv. 29, xxxvi. 3) and for the Temple (2 Chron. xxxi. 14; Ezra i. 6, viii. 28). In later days we read of freewill-offerings in a purely spiritual sense; e.g. Ps. cxix. 108: "Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill-offerings [*Nedabah*] of my mouth, Yahweh."

We come next to consider sacrifices as gifts to Yahweh for the purpose of being reconciled with him. ² In view of post-exilic sacrificial ideas this is a very important subject. Like some other types of sacrifice, those which were the means of reconciliation with an offended deity have a long history behind them, and a few words about the antecedents must be permitted. The steps in the development from very early times are complicated, but we offer here only an outline.

The Polynesian term *Taboo* or *Tabu*, which has been adopted by anthropologists, was, as is well known, an institution, or state of society, in which, for a variety of reasons, contact with certain things and persons is avoided because they are believed to be charged with some supernatural influence. When anyone recognises that a person or a thing is taboo he is filled with fear in regard to the subject, and keeps out of its way because of this uncanny, intangible

¹ Wendel, *Das Opfer in der altisraelitischen Religion*, p. 168 (1927).

² Cp. Wendel, *op. cit.*, pp. 56 ff., to whom we express our indebtedness for much in the following paragraphs.

essence about it which can work all manner of harm if he comes in contact with it ; this intangible essence, or " spiritual electricity " as it has been called, is infectious, and works automatically. To us, naturally enough, the whole thing sounds fantastic and unreasonable ; but, as Marett says, *Taboo* " belongs to what may be termed the perceptual stage of religion, when values are massively apprehended without analysis of their grounds."¹ " The field covered by taboos," to quote Robertson Smith, " among savage and half-savage races is very wide, for there is no part of life in which the savage does not feel himself to be surrounded by mysterious agencies and recognise the need of walking warily."²

Now, if a man did happen to come in contact, consciously or unconsciously, with something that was taboo – and of this there was an ever-present danger owing to the ubiquity of such things – if a man did happen to come in contact with this, and therefore become infected, it was absolutely necessary to employ some counter-magic to get rid of the infection, otherwise there was no knowing what evils might not ensue. There were various means whereby one might obliterate the infection : one could rub oneself with salt ; or one could undergo a ritual lustration in water ; or one could smear oneself with blood – a powerful antidote ; or one could become disinfected by burning incense ; or one could – and this is full of significance in view of what will be said later – one could, by laying one's hands on an animal, transfer the infection to it, and then, by sacrificing the animal, the infection was obliterated.

In the first instance, this taboo, or infectious essence, was conceived of as an impersonal, supernatural power. In course of time it became concentrated in supernatural *personalities* ; and then arose the belief in *daimons* – we use this form of the word in preference to " demon," because a somewhat different connotation has become attached to the

¹ Hastings, *E.R.E.*, xii. 183a.

² *Rel. Sem.*, p. 152.

latter word. The *daimons* were almost invariably looked upon as harmful and inimical to human beings, but their mischief could be counteracted by magical means. But just as prevention is better than cure, so if one used the proper means, one could ward off the mischief before it came. Now, for reasons into which we cannot go now, one of the most efficacious means of warding off demoniacal attacks was the use of blood ; blood was the prophylactic *par excellence*.

The Old Testament gives us an instructive illustration of this. One of the elements attached in later times to the Passover ritual was the smearing of blood on the doorposts, or entrances of the tents ; this, as we have seen, was done to keep off evil spirits. The Priestly Code has adapted this to Yahweh-worship, when it says : " And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are ; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and there shall be no plague upon you . . ." (Exod. xii. 13).¹

Now, running parallel with the idea of warding off the machinations of evil spirits, there was that of " making friends " with them. By a process of reasoning which is not really so illogical as it may at first appear, it was argued : if blood, e.g. has the effect of keeping off the evil spirit, why not make him a present of blood, and thus incline him favourably ? And so, in course of time, arose the custom of offering the blood of a sacrificed victim to a god with the object of placating him. Among the Israelites a similar type of sacrifice arose : if, for any reason, Yahweh had been offended, a sacrifice would be offered for the purpose of being reconciled with Him. The offence would not, at first, have been a moral one ; there were all kinds of ways in which a deity might be offended, especially in the matter of ritual mistakes or shortcomings. But with the growth of religious ideas the sense of sin gradually arose ; and then this type of sacrifice was offered for the purpose of being reconciled to Yahweh who had been offended by some

¹ See further, Oesterley and Robinson, *Hebrew Religion*, p. 132 (1937).

moral sin against Him. The technical term which came to be used in connexion with sacrifices of reconciliation (*le-Kapper*) will be examined later ; this, however, is anticipating. During the earlier stage, with which we are at present concerned, the conceptions regarding Yahweh were still of a somewhat "primitive" character, and we cannot blind ourselves to the fact that in the Old Testament we sometimes come across passages in which the irresponsible and capricious, sometimes even mischievous, behaviour of the *daimon* of earlier times is ascribed to Yahweh. For instance, in Judges ix. 23 it is said : " And God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem ; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech." In 1 Sam. xxvi. 19, David suggests the possibility that Saul's bitterness against him is prompted by Yahweh, but that a sacrifice to Him may induce Him to change. In 1 Sam. xviii. 10 there is again the idea of an evil spirit being sent by Yahweh ; in 1 Kings xxii. 21 ff. it is said that Yahweh put a lying spirit into the mouth of the prophets ; in 2 Sam. xxiv. 1 it is said that because Yahweh was angry He induced David to commit a sinful act. All these things show that the earlier ideas about *daimons* were transferred to Yahweh. And, just as in their case, so with Yahweh, the offering of blood was believed to appease Him when angry. And if, as the passages just quoted show, Yahweh might at times be angry without adequate cause, much more would His wrath be aroused if an *offence* against Him was committed ; then, indeed, He would take vengeance ; as an instance, He turns Lot's wife into a pillar of salt because she turned round to watch His destructive work. Very instructive is Joshua vii. 1, which tells of Yahweh's anger with and His punishment of the Israelites because one of their number, Achan, touched something that was taboo.

We can easily understand, then, the intense need that must have been felt for averting the wrath of Yahweh by offering reconciliation-sacrifices.

These sacrifices took different forms. The earliest was

the actual putting to death of one who had offended Yahweh by touching anything that was taboo. It is necessary to emphasise the fact that the "punishment" inflicted in such cases was a *sacrifice*, not a punishment, of the offender. At first this may sound improbable. Let us explain it a little further : A man appropriates, or even merely touches, something that is taboo, for example, something devoted to Yahweh ; this arouses Yahweh's anger because it belongs to Him ; it is, as it were, enveloped by and permeated with His spiritual essence, and to come in contact with it is an outrage on His "holiness." Unless Yahweh's wrath is appeased, some dire calamity from Him will fall upon the whole people – note the *whole people*, because of the solidarity of the tribe or race. Therefore the offender is put to death, not because he is an individual sinner, but because, being an unclean thing in the midst of the people with whom he is identified, all are infected ; in order that Yahweh's wrath may be averted and that reconciliation may be made with Him, the unclean thing must be taken out of the midst of the people, and sacrificed to Yahweh. The act is thus, on the one hand, a purification ceremony, on the other, a compensation rendered to Yahweh. So, as already said, the putting to death of the offender is not a punishment, but a sacrifice. And if it be objected that a sacrifice must be offered on the altar, which is *not* done in this case, the answer is that this could not be done because the offender, being an "unclean" thing, would pollute the altar if he were laid upon it.

Let us illustrate this further from the Old Testament. First, as to the fact that the offence of one man touching a tabooed thing infects the whole people : in Joshua vi. 17–19 it is said, in reference to the capture of Jericho, that "the city shall be devoted, even it and all that is therein, to Yahweh. . . . And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the devoted thing [= *taboo*], lest when you have devoted it, ye take of the devoted thing ; so that ye make the camp of Israel devoted, and trouble it." This means that, if any one

man takes anything for himself in the city after it has been devoted to Yahweh, he himself will become infected through coming into contact with the tabooed thing ; and not only so, but he will infect the camp of Israel by his presence in its midst. Then, secondly, an illustration of the result of Yahweh's wrath, and of how it can be averted and reconciliation made : in Num. xxv. 6 ff. we read of an Israelite who brought a Midianite woman into the camp ; to the Israelites she was an unclean woman, and the man who touched her therefore became unclean too. The offence in this case was not that the man had taken something devoted to Yahweh, but that he had come in contact with an unclean, that is a taboo, woman ; and this was equally offensive to Yahweh. Therefore His wrath is vented, but not merely on the offender ; race-solidarity makes all the people guilty as long as he is among them, and a terrible plague, which claims twenty-four thousand victims, falls upon the people. But as soon as the offender is slain, the plague ceases. True, there is no hint here that the offender was sacrificed to Yahweh, but this episode, doubtless based on historical fact, comes to us through the Priestly Code, so that some of the grosser details are modified. We shall see presently that there is every reason to believe that the offender in such cases was actually sacrificed to Yahweh as a means of reconciliation ; but he was not sacrificed on the altar for the reason already mentioned. Before we come to that, however, let us have one more instance of a passage where it is said, almost in so many words, that the offender was sacrificed to Yahweh. This occurs in Joshua vii. 2-15, which deals with an abortive attempt to capture the city of Ai. The Israelites suffer a defeat, in consequence of which Joshua pours out his sorrow before Yahweh. In reply it is said to him (the speaker is supposed to be Yahweh) : " Israel hath sinned ; yea, they have even transgressed my covenant which I commanded them ; yea, *they have even taken of the devoted thing . . .* and they have even put it among their stuff. Therefore the children of Israel cannot stand before

their enemies, they turn their backs before their enemies, because they have become 'devoted' [= *taboo*]; I will not be with you any more, except ye destroy the devoted thing from among you . . . There is a devoted thing in the midst of thee, O Israel; thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the devoted thing from among you." So far we have a state of affairs similar to the preceding illustration; someone among the Israelites has taken something which had been devoted to Yahweh from some conquered city (the narrative is clearly incomplete, as no account is given of this), hence the punishment of defeat before their enemies. But the offender is still among his people, and, until Yahweh's wrath has been appeased, i.e. until the offender has been offered to Him as an atonement, and reconciliation has been made, there is no chance of victory. Then the text goes on (verse 14): "In the morning therefore ye shall be brought near by your tribes; and it shall be that the tribe which Yahweh taketh shall come near by families; and the family which Yahweh shall take shall come near by households; and the household which Yahweh shall take shall come near him man by man. And it shall be that he that is taken with the devoted thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath; because he hath transgressed the covenant of Yahweh, and because he hath wrought folly in Israel." Here we have an account of the procedure whereby the criminal is discovered (something similar is recounted in 1 Sam. xiv. 40 ff.). By a process of elimination the offender is discovered; but in each case, whether tribe, family, household, or ultimately the man himself, it is always Yahweh who indicates which is to be taken. He is the one who has been offended, and He is the one who has to be recompensed; so that when the offender is finally discovered and burned he is sacrificed to Yahweh; and he is not sacrificed upon the altar because the altar must not be polluted by being touched by something "devoted," i.e. by a *taboo*. In all cases of this kind there is a logical sequence: the offence of the individual,

the punishment of the whole people, the sacrifice of the offender, the withdrawal of the punishment, and the reconciliation with Yahweh.

Now we come to a second stage in the history of these reconciliation-sacrifices, viz. the transference-rite. This is a mitigation of the earlier practice ; here the offence is not obliterated by the sacrifice of the offender, but it is transferred to an animal which is sacrificed, and with the death of the victim the offence is done away with, and reconciliation with Yahweh is brought about. The transference is accomplished by laying both hands upon the head of the victim, and at the same time confessing the sin. But here, again, the sacrifice is not carried out on the altar because the victim is "sin"-laden and would therefore pollute the altar, which is a holy thing. Nevertheless, it is a sacrifice offered to Yahweh as a means of reconciliation. It was for this reason that in later days the sin-offering was not sacrificed on the altar, but was burned in its skin outside the camp (see Lev. xvi. 27). Since in this mitigation of the earlier practice the victim is sacrificed to Yahweh, it is clear that in the original form of the rite the victim, namely a man, was also sacrificed to Yahweh. In the illustrations of the earlier practice which were given, it happened that the offence was perpetrated by the taking of the "devoted" thing from an enemy ; but obviously there were many other ways whereby the offence of touching a tabooed thing could be committed.

For the transference-rite the outstanding illustration is the account of the sacrifice for Azazel in Lev. xvi. (the Day of Atonement) ; although this occurs in the Priestly Code, it reflects ancient usage. Something will be said about it later, together with the sprinkling of blood, which played an important part in the rite.

It will have been seen that reconciliation-sacrifices come under the head of sacrifices as gifts, though other ideas are involved.

CHAPTER IX

SACRIFICES AMONG THE ISRAELITES: THE AGRICULTURAL PERIOD (3)

GIFT-SACRIFICES (2)

IT has been remarked more than once, but the point needs emphasis, that in the case of almost every kind of sacrifice more than one purpose prompts the offering of it. Practically every sacrifice can, in some sense, come under the gift-category, inasmuch as the initial presentation of it constitutes a gift. On the other hand, a gift can be offered with a large variety of purposes. Among these there is that in which the excellence of the motive in giving is enhanced by the desire that it shall cost the giver something ; the value of the gift will, in the eyes of the recipient, be increased in proportion to the demands made upon the giver. Every gift is, in a greater or less degree, a deprivation of something of which the giver himself might have enjoyed the benefit. There is a feeling, and it is one of which no man need be ashamed, of satisfaction in the knowledge that by depriving himself of something he has benefited another. The greater the deprivation, the greater is the sense of satisfaction for having denied oneself for the sake of someone else. In a beautiful passage in one of his essays Emerson says : " Our tokens of compliment and love are for the most part barbarous. Rings and other jewels are not gifts, but apologies for gifts. The only gift is a portion of thyself. Thou must bleed for me. Therefore the poet brings his poem ; the shepherd his lamb ; the farmer, corn ; the miner a gem ; the sailor, coral and shells ; the painter, his

picture ; the girl the handkerchief of her own sewing."¹ Herein lies the true ideal of a gift : "Thou must bleed for me." And it is not necessary to suppose that such an ideal is the monopoly of men in any single period of human history ; deep down in the best part of human nature there is an instinctive conviction that it is a noble thing to suffer for others. Often it may not come to fruition, but it is there ; and it is enshrined in the hearts of men of all ages.

These considerations have been concerned with one of the more edifying relationships between man and man. But wherever the religious instinct has play, man has similar motives and aspirations in his relationship with God. The Israelites, like all those in a relatively undeveloped stage of culture, think of the deity in terms of themselves. What has been said, therefore, applies to the Israelites and Yahweh. This brings us to the subject of *sacrifices as acts of self-denial*. They, too, came under the gift-type of sacrifice. In a certain sense it could, no doubt, be said that every gift-offering is an act of self-denial, inasmuch as everyone who makes such an offering gives something that he might have enjoyed himself ; on the other hand, it might be urged that the ancient Israelite, since, for the most part, he reckoned on getting some equivalent for his offering, could hardly regard it as an act of self-denial. Nevertheless, it would be strange indeed if we did not get *some* indications among a people possessing the religious instinct, as the Israelites did, of gifts being offered with the set purpose of denying oneself something, gifts for which no equivalent was looked for. An instance of this kind occurs, for example, in 2 Sam. xxiv. 24, where, in reply to Araunah's offer to give his threshing-floor to David, the latter replies : "Nay ; but I will verily buy it of thee at a price ; neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto Yahweh my God which cost me nothing." David insists that his offering shall involve a definite loss to himself which he will feel. In the same way, when the ark had been

¹ Essay on *Gifts*.

brought safely to Beth-shemesh, and a sacrifice of thanksgiving offered, the wood of the cart on which the ark was brought is used for kindling the sacrificial fire ; a direct loss was thus involved willingly for the honour of God. Even when something may be expected by way of reward the loss may sometimes be very real. So in the case of Hannah who gives Samuel to Yahweh ; even before he is born she dedicates him to God (1 Sam. i. 11) ; for the mother that giving up of her child almost in infancy must have been an act of almost cruel self-denial. Still more pointed is the underlying intention of both the intended sacrifice of Isaac and that of the actual sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter.¹ The element of self-denial arises also in the terrible practice of the *Cherem* – i.e. that wholesale destruction and devotion to Yahweh ; for example, when Samuel says to Saul : “ Now go and smite Amalek, and ‘ devote ’ [i.e. utterly destroy] all that they have, and spare them not ; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass ” (1 Sam. xv. 3). In thus “ devoting ” everything to God instead of treating all as the spoils of war, there is clearly a large element of self-denial. The custom is revolting in the extreme, but that it was thought to be pleasing to Yahweh to offer Him all these things comes out clearly when we read of how Samuel slew Agag, who had been spared, “ before Yahweh ” – the Hebrew expression “ in the presence of Yahweh ” is significant, as we have already seen.

A different illustration (already referred to in another connexion) of an offering of self-denial is recorded in 2 Sam. xxiii. 15 : after a victory over the Philistines David is suffering from thirst ; but the place where any water was to be obtained was from the well in Bethlehem which was still in possession of the Philistines. David says : “ Oh that one would give me water to drink of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate.” Thereupon three men broke into the Philistine stronghold and managed to get some water. When

¹ Cp. the king of Moab's sacrifice of his son, though from a different motive (2 Kings iii. 26, 27).

it was brought to David he refused to touch it, but "poured it out unto Yahweh"; in other words, he offered it as a drink-offering: "Far be it from me," he says, "Yahweh, that I should do this; shall I drink the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?" There we have a pure act of self-denial, taking the form of an offering to Yahweh. It is a sacrifice in the wider sense of the term, and it is entirely disinterested.

Belonging to the same kind of sacrifice, though with an ulterior motive, is *fasting*. In its origin, fasting was a magical act. In the first instance, fasting was enforced by periods of drought or difficulty in obtaining food, which were put down to the action of some malignant *daimon*; then by an act of voluntary fasting the *daimon* was taught that two could play at that game, and therefore the *daimon's* action was countered; thus, by doing what the *daimon* had done (two negatives make an affirmative), fasting became a magical act which could be used for purposes of controlling the *daimon*. In course of time, fasting was undertaken for a variety of purposes. But it is in the higher stages of culture that fasting becomes a strictly ascetic practice of self-mortification and discipline, or of propitiation, or as a means of bringing pressure to bear on the deity, by exciting his pity.¹

Among the Israelites we have a good instance of the purpose of fasting in 1 Sam. xiv. 24; the followers of Saul are "distressed" in the battle with the Philistines, so Saul says: "Cursed be the man that eateth any food until the evening, that I be avenged of mine enemies." A collective act of fasting, or self-sacrifice, is believed to appeal to Yahweh who will, in response, bring about victory for His people. Another pointed illustration is David's fasting while his child was ill, but on its death he washed and anointed himself, and ate; on being asked for an explanation he replies: "While the child was yet alive I fasted and wept;

¹ The technical term in Hebrew is to "afflict the soul" (*'innah nephesh*), in, e.g., Lev. xvi. 29, 31, xxiii. 27, 32, Num. xxix. 7, Ps. xxxv. 13, Isa. lviii. 3, 5, it is used in reference to fasting.

for I said, Who knoweth whether Yahweh will not be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now that he is dead, wherefore should I fast?" (2 Sam. xii. 21-23). Clearly enough, the idea is that, by fasting, David may prevail upon Yahweh to permit the child to live. But perhaps the most striking instance is that given in 1 Kings xxi. 27-29; here, after Elijah's terrible prophecy about Ahab, it is said: "And it came to pass, when Ahab heard these words, that he rent his clothes and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth and went softly. And the word of Yahweh came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? Because he humbleth himself before me I will not bring the evil in his days. . . ." The main thing here is the humbling of himself by fasting, this acts as a means of inducing Yahweh to show him mercy. It is very instructive, however, to note that the idea of fasting as being pleasing to Yahweh, or as affecting Him, is at times vehemently combated. The following somewhat lengthy quotation must, on account of its importance, be quoted in full; it is in Isa. lviii. 1-8, a late, post-exilic passage, it is true, but nevertheless appropriate here, because it reflects earlier prophetic protests against religious insincerity. "Cry aloud," Yahweh is made to say to His prophet, "spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and declare unto my people their transgression, and to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek me daily and delight to know my ways; as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God, they ask of me righteous ordinances, they delight to draw near unto God"; the whole of this last part is sarcasm because of the outward religious show of the people. Now comes the indictment: "Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye seek your own advantage, and oppress all your labours" - meaning that while on a fast-day everyone ought to cease from work, they make their labourers continue working,

while they themselves, by fasting, think that they are making profit, though of another kind. Then it continues, showing to what depths of profanity their worship had sunk : “ Behold, ye fast for strife and contention, and to smite with the fist of wickedness ” (there is a very sarcastic word-play in Hebrew in the words “ ye fast [for strife] and contention . . . ” ; but it is lost in English) ; “ ye fast not this day so as to make your voice to be heard on high. Is such the fast that I have chosen ? the day for a man to afflict his soul ? Is it to bow down his head as a rush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him ? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to Yahweh ? Is not this the fast that I have chosen – to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke ? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house ? When thou seest the naked that thou cover him ? and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh ? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy healing shall spring forth speedily ; and thy righteousness shall go before thee ; and the glory of Yahweh shall be thy rearward. . . . ” The magnificent passage continues to the end of the chapter ; but this will be enough to show, on the one hand, that fasting was in the nature of a sacrifice – self-sacrifice – offered to God with a view to gaining His favour, and, on the other, to show the prophetic contempt for anything offered to God which was not accompanied by sincerity of purpose.

Of course, fasting had various other purposes, but with these we are not concerned here. Our present object is to recognise that both fasting and other acts of self-denial were in the nature of “ sacrifices ” which were believed to be pleasing to Yahweh. The idea is, to be sure, a quaint one ; but it must be remembered that every act of man’s relationship to God develops from humble beginnings. Although this fasting, like many other acts among the ancient Hebrews, was intended to excite divine compassion, it came in later

days to have a more ethical colouring, and was the outward expression of real inward penitence. But this does not, of course, belong to the times with which we are at present concerned.

Belonging similarly to the nature of sacrifice for the purpose of either pleasing Yahweh or of inducing Him to give something in return must be reckoned self-mutilation ; but this, too, comes under the head of self-denial, though in an exaggerated form. Among the Canaanites we have the well-known example of the priests of Baal, who, in order to induce their god to hear their prayer and to send down fire from heaven, "cut themselves after their manner with knives and lances, till the blood gushed out on them" (1 Kings xviii. 28). But that a similar custom was not unknown among the Israelites is seen from Hos. vii. 14, where, in time of dearth, it is said that "they cut themselves for corn and wine, they rebel against me." In the Hebrew there is here a textual error ; it reads "they assemble themselves for corn and wine," which, in this context, is meaningless ; a number of Hebrew MSS., as well as the Septuagint, have preserved the correct reading, "They cut themselves" ; the great similarity of the two Hebrew words easily accounts for the mistake.

A passing reference must be made here to Deut. xxiii. 1 ; it is a prohibition against self-mutilation, which shows that such practices were not unknown among the Israelites. Its prevalence, which dates from earlier times, is mentioned by Lucian in connexion with the Syrian goddess.¹

Notable among acts of self-denial is that of the self-dedication of the Nazirite to Yahweh (the root-meaning, like that of the cognate Arabic root, is to "consecrate"), an institution of Israelite origin. The Nazirite law is given in Num. vi. 2-12 : "When either man or woman shall make a special vow, the vow of a Nazirite, to consecrate himself unto Yahweh, he shall separate himself from wine

¹ *De Dea Syria*, li. ; see further, Farnell, *Greece and Babylon*, pp. 256 f. (1911) ; Frazer, *The Golden Bough : The Magic Art*, ii. 144 f. (1911).

and strong drink ; he shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat fresh grapes, or dried. All the days of his consecration shall he eat nothing that is made of the grapevine, from the kernels even to the husk." Further, "no razor shall come upon his head . . . he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow long" (verse 5) ; he may not touch the dead body of even his nearest relations (verses 6, 7) ; in the event of his touching a corpse inadvertently he has to offer sacrifices in compensation (verses 9-12). This is evidently a developed form of the original institution. The earliest mention of it is the case of Samson (Judges xiii. 2-14). Here the abstention from wine and the prohibition of touching anything unclean applies only to the mother of Samson during the time of her pregnancy ; the actual mark of the Nazirite being merely that his head may not be shorn and that his dedication to Yahweh is life-long (verse 7), not, as in Numbers, for a limited period. This is probably the original characteristic of the Nazirite ; the unshorn hair is the sign of his dedication to God, it is to remain as God created it ; the hair being, moreover, thought of as a centre of vitality. From our present point of view the main thing is the life-dedication to God.

The order of the Rechabites was in some sense analogous to that of the Nazirites in its developed form;¹ with them, it is true, there was no vow of dedication to Yahweh as in the case of the Nazirites, but, in their protest against the demoralisation from Canaanite culture and religion, they offered a living example of self-denial in the service of Yahweh. According to Jer. xxxv. 6, 7, they drank no wine, they did not dwell in houses, but only in tents, and they neither sowed seeds nor planted vineyards. For them the wilderness period was the ideal.

We have thus, in very varied form, acts of self-denial undertaken for the purpose of showing devotion to Yahweh. They are not, it is true, sacrifices in the ordinary sense of

¹ See Budde, *Die Religion des Volkes Israel bis zur Verbannung*, pp. 15 ff. (1900).

the term ; but they witness to a *motive* which played a great part in the whole institution of sacrifice ; for that reason these acts of self-denial called for some mention here. Self-dedication to Yahweh assumed these varying forms ; and doubtless the thought and expectation of receiving something in return was often present. But it will not be denied that a higher motive often underlay these acts : the motive, namely, of evincing loyalty to Yahweh by suffering in His honour. However crude these acts may have been, they contained the germ of something that could become great. In its highest form in the Old Testament it appears in such a saying as : “ Though he slay me, yet will I wait for him ” (Job xiii. 15),¹ i.e. though life itself be demanded, faithfulness to God shall not fail. But it is seen, above all, in Isa. liii. ; the Suffering Servant lays down his life, it is true, for his fellow-men ; but it is for the glory of God (on this, see further below, p. 283).

¹ Some commentators, e.g. Budde, Duhm, Driver, and Gray, translate this differently ; but Ball shows that there is justification for this rendering (*The Book of Job*, p. 224 [1922]).

CHAPTER X

SACRIFICES AMONG THE ISRAELITES: THE AGRICULTURAL PERIOD (4)

COMMUNION-SACRIFICES

IT will be necessary to begin here with a few remarks on the subject of Totemism. In its earliest form, totemism was closely connected with the social structure of the tribe or clan. Each individual tribe or clan constituted a self-contained unity; and each family within a clan had a natural tie of blood-relationship. But each family of the clan or tribe recognised a common ancestor in some divine animal, or animal-god; and every real animal of the kind was looked upon as a representative of the animal-god, and therefore holy. Not only so, but such actual animals were regarded as being akin to every human member of the clan or tribe, or group, not necessarily localised. Thus, there was the animal-god, the members of the clan, and the animals of the same kind as the animal-god; and between all these there existed a bond of kinship. On rare and solemn occasions one of the sacred animals was sacrificed and eaten sacramentally in order that the members of the clan might assimilate the strength or other qualities of their animal-god, and, at the same time, that the unity of the tribe might be renewed and strengthened. The idea of this sacramental communion thus centred in the partaking of a holy meal, whereby the members of the clan and their animal-god became united. At the same time, through partaking of the totem-animal, the bond of kinship between all the members became cemented. A sense of unity between

animal-god, clan-members, and animals of the same kind, brought about by the sacrificial meal at which the latter was eaten, was thus engendered ; in the holy animal the worshippers ate their god. In its fullest development, totemism is found in Australia, and among the North American Indians, though it exists in some form or another in different parts of Africa, in Melanesia, and also in India. "In strict acceptation of the term, totemism is not a religion . . . the relation of the clan to its totem assumes a mystical aspect and generates an intense feeling of kinship. This is frequently expressed in the belief that they are descended from the totem species. . . . Although regarded with reverence and looked to for help, the totem is never, where totemism is not decadent, prayed to as a god or a person with powers which we call supernatural. In fact, in that stage of culture, totemism usually co-exists with the cult of the dead and often with the worship of other spirits and gods accurately so called."¹ What Hartland here calls "decadent" may perhaps more truly be called "developing," for it is certain that with the development of religious conceptions the animal-god becomes a god in human form, and the totem-animal has no more, in the earlier sense, the tie of kinship with him, but becomes a "holy" animal, and is merely symbolic of him. In place of the crass idea that the members of the clan eat their god, there is the belief that the god is present during the sacramental meal, and himself partakes of the "holy" animal ; the god and his worshippers eat together ; they each partake of the same body, whereby a union is effected. The manner of development would seem to be this : the first stage was the eating of the totem-animal whose kinship with the totem-god meant that the worshippers partook of their god - we use the term "god" for convenience' sake, in this earliest stage - thereby assimilating his properties, and became united with him. The second stage was when the totem-god developed into a god in human form ; then the totem-animal, now a

¹ Hartland, in *E.R.E.*, xii. 407a.

“ holy ” animal, was eaten by the god and his worshippers at a sacramental meal which likewise had the effect of uniting them together. The “ primitiveness ” and crass materialism of these conceptions, strange as they are to modern modes of thought, must not blind us to the fact that they really existed, and played a very serious part in the religious life, as we may call it, of men in many parts of the world. Though totemism was not universal among men in a very early stage of culture, its existence among the Semites has been amply proved by Robertson Smith ; with the one proviso that totemism was not universal among “ primitive ” races, everyone will agree with the following important statements : “ If my analysis of the nature of the *jinn* is correct, the conclusion that the Semites did pass through the totem stage can be avoided only by supposing them to be an exception to the universal rule, that even the most primitive savages have not only enemies, but permanent allies (which at so early a stage in society necessarily means kinsfolk) among the non-human or superhuman animate kinds by which the universe is peopled. And this supposition is so extravagant that no one is likely to adopt it. On the other hand, it may be argued with more plausibility that totemism, if it ever did exist, disappeared when the Semites emerged from savagery, and that the religion of the race, in its higher stages, may have rested on altogether independent bases. Whether this hypothesis is or is not admissible must be determined by an actual examination of the higher heathenism. If its rites, usages, and beliefs really are independent of savage ideas, and of the purely savage conception of nature of which totemism is only one aspect, the hypothesis is legitimate ; but it is not legitimate if the higher heathenism itself is permeated in all its parts by savage ideas, and if its ritual and institutions are throughout in the closest contact with savage ritual and institutions of totem type. That the latter is the true state of the case will, I believe, become overwhelmingly clear as we proceed with our survey of the phenomena of Semitic religion ;

and a very substantial step towards the proof that it is so has already been taken, when we have found that the sanctuaries of the Semitic world are identical in physical character with the haunts of the *jinn*, so that as regards their local associations the gods must be viewed as simply replacing the plant and animal demons. If this is so we can hardly avoid the conclusion that some of the Semitic gods are of totem origin, and we may expect to find the most distinct traces of this origin at the oldest sanctuaries. But we are not to suppose that every local deity will have totem associations, for new gods as well as new sanctuaries might doubtless spring up at a later stage of human progress than that of which totemism is characteristic."¹

We have permitted ourselves to give this long quotation in full because it forms the basis of much that is to follow.

Now running parallel, in some sort, with the totem communion-meal there is a meal of another kind which demands notice here, viz. a meal which took place in connexion with the upkeep of relationships with the departed. A brief reference to this has been made in an earlier chapter, but something further must be added here. Among many primitive peoples there was the custom of holding a funeral-feast shortly prior to the burial; at this feast the mourners ate, as they believed, in company with the spirit of the departed. It was a widespread belief that for a certain time after death, but before burial, the spirit of the departed remained in closer proximity to the body than later. Therefore, to remain in touch with the departed, this meal was partaken of. Further, according to another widely prevalent belief, there were certain days in the year on which the spirits of the departed were specially approachable; it was, therefore, the custom at such times for the relatives of the deceased to assemble at the grave-side, or near the tomb, and to eat and drink, and to pour out water for the benefit of the departed. Thus, on the sacred spot a feast took place at which the spirit of the departed was believed

¹ *Rel. Sem.*, pp. 137 f.

to be invisibly present. In this way a bond of union with the departed was kept up. It need hardly be said that this funeral-feast was an entirely different thing from that of placing food and drink in the tomb for the benefit of the departed in their new life. The motive for this was undoubtedly due in many cases to affection for the deceased ; but the object was also, and perhaps primarily, that of propitiation, for the spirits of the dead were believed to have needs similar to those which they had during their earthly life ; and if these were not supplied the consequences might be dangerous to the living. That on rare and special occasions a human victim was sacrificed, part being consumed, and part being left for the departed, is shown by the Gezer burial cave (see above, pp. 114 f.).

This partaking of food with a spirit-guest, though the guest be invisible, is, therefore, of the nature of a communion-meal, and may well have played a part in contributing something to the later idea of the sacramental-meal shared with the deity.

In the Old Testament we obviously do not expect to find anything corresponding to the actual eating of the god, but there are some references to funeral-feasts, showing that they were in vogue among the Israelites. Thus, in connexion with the command about supporting the Levites, the loyal observer who has not withheld any of the dues says, among other things : " I have not transgressed any of thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them ; I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I put away thereof, being unclean, nor given thereof for the dead " (Deut. xxvi. 13, 14). That this is not merely a reference to placing food and drink on graves may be seen from the following striking words in Jer. xvi. 5-9 : " For thus saith Yahweh, Enter not into the house of mourning, neither go to lament, neither bemoan them ; for I have taken away my peace from this people, saith Yahweh, even loving-kindness and tender mercies. Both great and small shall die in this land ; they shall not be buried, neither shall men

lament for them, nor cut themselves, nor make themselves bald for them ; neither shall men break bread for them in mourning, to comfort them for the dead ; neither shall men give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or for their mother. And thou shalt not go into the house of feasting to sit with them, to eat and to drink." The breaking of bread in mourning occurs on a Babylonian inscription, quoted by Langdon, which gives " direct evidence for a communion-meal, ' breaking of bread,' for the souls of the dead, permanently adopted by the Semites at a very early period." Among the Babylonians, he says further, " each family seems to have made monthly offerings to the shades of its ancestors, which consisted in a communion-meal at which images of the departed were present." This mention of the images of the departed set up during the communion-meal is very interesting, since it certified their actual presence to the mourners. The family meeting may have a counterpart in " the annual sacrifice for the whole family," spoken of by David in 1 Sam. xx. 5, 6 ; an annual gathering such as this might well have included departed members of the family as well as the living.

These two well authenticated customs, then, the sacramental feast at which the totem-animal was partaken of, and the funeral feast at which the departed were thought to be present, lie behind the idea of the communion-sacrifice.

Before we come to consider certain passages in the Old Testament in which the idea of a communion-sacrifice is to be discerned, the significant phrase, " before Yahweh," or " in the presence of Yahweh," or " in front of Yahweh," and similar expressions, must be discussed.

The expressions *pene*, *liphne* (" before "), *panim* (" faces "), from the root meaning both to " turn " and to " look," are extremely common in Hebrew. We are concerned only with their use in reference to God ; but their indiscriminate use in reference both to God and man must be borne in mind, for they are not used in any special sense in the former case. The reason for drawing attention to these expressions is that

they help towards realising the intensity of the belief among the Israelites of the nearness of the divine presence. Doubtless, this conception was often, especially in earlier times, of a somewhat materialistic character ; but this is of small moment if one recognises that all steps towards the more spiritual apprehension of God must inevitably be gradual. Man is primarily, to himself, a material being ; his higher, spiritual, nature is conceived of only by degrees ; and we are dealing with what is, after all, but an early stage in the development of religious ideas.

In our sources, even among the later ones, traditions have been preserved which go back to a great antiquity ; the retention of some of these is to be explained only on account of the veneration accorded to ancient tradition. Among these are those which tell of the actual, material appearance of God among men. In Gen. xxxii. 30 (31 in Heb.), for example, it is recorded of the patriarch Jacob that he saw God "face to face" ; similarly in Exod. xxiv. 9-11 (J) it is said of Moses and Aaron and others that "they saw the God of Israel," and "they beheld God and did eat and drink." Again, in Deut. v. 4 it is said that "Yahweh spake with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire" (see also Exod. xxxiii. 11 [E] ; Num. xiv. 14 [EJ] ; Deut. xxxiv. 10). Such passages record, or echo, old-world sayings which had been handed down for ages. In later times it was taught that no man could see God and live : "Thou canst not see my face," it is said to Moses, "for man shall not see me and live" (Exod. xxxiii. 20 ; Judges vi. 22, 23, xiii. 22). The ancient records about seeing God face to face were, however, modified by later teachers in various ways. Thus "the angel of Yahweh" is substituted for Yahweh Himself, though the inconsistency which sometimes appears reveals the old idea still showing through : in Gen. xvi. 7 ff., for example, it is the angel of Yahweh who speaks to Hagar, but in verse 13 it is said : "And she called the name of Yahweh that spake unto her. . . ." Again, in Judges vi. 12-24 the angel of Yahweh and Yahweh Himself alternate ;

while in Exod. xxiii. 20-32 they are identified (cp. Exod. iii. 2-4, Gen. xlviii. 15, 16). But in other passages the angel definitely takes the place of Yahweh, e.g. Judges ii. 1-5, and often elsewhere.

The actual appearance of Yahweh, again, is toned down by speaking of His "presence" (*panim*): "My presence shall go with thee," it is said in Exod. xxxiii. 14, and in Deut. iv. 37: "Because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out with his presence. . . ." Doubtless for the similar reason of reverence Yahweh's appearance is represented as a pillar of cloud and fire, indicative of His presence. In Exod. xiii. 21, 22, we read: "And Yahweh went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light, that they might go by day and by night; the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, departed not from before the people." In the account of the exodus and of the wanderings in the wilderness there is constant reference to this. Distinct from this, yet somewhat similar, is the "Glory" (*Kabod*) in which, apparently, Yahweh is thought of as enveloping Himself so as not to be seen by men. In Exod. xxxiii. 18, Moses says: "Show me, I pray thee, thy glory," and in verses 22, 23, Yahweh speaks: "And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand until I have passed by; and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back; but my face shall not be seen." In Ezekiel and the Priestly Code this is the usual term applied to theophanies. The "Glory" is identified with the "Cloud" (*Anan*) which covered Mount Sinai, and veiled Yahweh from being seen: "And Moses went up into the mount, and the cloud [*Anan*] covered the mount. And the glory [*Kabod*] of Yahweh abode upon mount Sinai and the cloud covered it six days; and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud" (Exod. xxiv. 15, 16 [P]; see also Deut. v. 22 ff. [19 ff. in Heb.]).

Another way whereby the presence of Yahweh was thought to be indicated was in connexion with the Ark (*'Aron*). With the different names given to the Ark, and their significance, we are not here concerned ; its importance from the present point of view is that it witnesses to the belief of God's presence among His people. That the Ark was thought of as a place wherein Yahweh took up His abode may be seen from Num. x. 33-36 : " And they set forward from the mount of Yahweh three days' journey ; and the ark of the covenant of Yahweh went before them three days' journey to seek out a resting place for them. . . . And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, Moses said, Arise, Yahweh, and let thine enemies be scattered. . . . And when it rested he said, Return, Yahweh, unto the ten thousands of Israel." Again, when the Israelites were about to take the Ark into battle against the Philistines, we read that " the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp . . . woe unto us, who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty gods ? These are the gods that smote the Egyptians with all manner of plagues in the wilderness " (1 Sam. iv. 7, 8) ; so, too, in 1 Sam. vi. 20, where, in reference to the Ark, " the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who is able to stand before Yahweh, this holy God ? " This, then, is another way, of a more material nature, in which the Israelites conceived of the divine presence among them.

We come next to consider a few passages, out of a large number, in which acts are spoken of as being performed " before Yahweh," i.e. in His presence ; the question as to how this presence was conceived of will come before us later. In 1 Sam. vii. 6, it is said that the people " poured out water before Yahweh " ; if, as was undoubtedly the case, it was thought that Yahweh benefited by this libation, a local presence, though undefined, must be postulated. In 1 Sam. xv. 33 we read that " Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before Yahweh " ; there would be no point in " before Yahweh " unless He were present, somehow, to witness the act done in His honour. Again, in a number of passages mention is

made of eating in Yahweh's presence; thus in Exod. xviii. 12 it is said: "And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God; and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God." The words "before God" do not mean in the sanctuary; from verse 7 it would seem that the sacrificial meal took place in the tent of Moses. No doubt that in such a passage as Exod. xxiii. 17 (=xxxiv. 23; cp. Deut. xvi. 16), where it is said: "Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before Yahweh," the sanctuary is meant, but that is not so according to earlier ideas, even though occurring in late books. Once more, in Deut. xii. 7: "There shall ye eat before Yahweh your God"; and so frequently (Deut. xii. 18, xiv. 23, 26, xv. 20, and elsewhere). The mention of the altar in Lev. i. 11 may have some significance: "And he shall kill it [i.e. the victim for the burnt-offering] on the side of the altar northward before Yahweh." Ritual among the Israelites was never, in origin, without meaning, though the meaning in some cases had been forgotten. It was not, therefore, without some reason that the north side of the altar was here stressed, "northward before Yahweh." The suggestion may be hazarded that the idea was to face Yahweh; although, as we shall see, the localised presence of Yahweh, however conceived, in the sanctuary was by far the most prevalent, it is just possible that some old-world ideas may sometimes have come to the fore. In Isa. xiv. 13, 14, in the denunciation against Babylon, it is said: "And thou saidst in thy heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; and I will abide on the mount of assembly [i.e. of the gods] in the uttermost parts of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." Here we have an ancient belief¹ – adopted and adapted – that Yahweh's dwelling-place is in the north, high up, but nevertheless accessible.

¹ From Babylon, see Jeremias, *Handbuch der orientalischen Geisteskultur*, pp. 130 ff. (1929).

This is again referred to in Ezek. xxviii. 1-19, in the prophecy against Tyre, which, in its insenate pride, stood on "the holy mountain of God ; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire" (verse 14) ; from Ezek. i. 4 it is seen that this mountain of God was in the "north." Again, in Job xxxvii. 22 : "And out of the north a brightness cometh, upon God there is terrifying splendour" (cp. xxvi. 7 ; see also Ezek. viii. 5, 14 for references to the north). Evidently, therefore, there was a tradition about the dwelling-place of God being in the "north," and it may be that the offering on the north side of the altar "before Yahweh" implied that He looked upon it from His dwelling-place. If so, however, this was not in accordance with the ordinary belief that Yahweh's presence was in the sanctuary ; and it may have been simply a piece of antique ritual which had lost its meaning.

One other technical term may be mentioned, viz. to "stand before Yahweh," meaning to present oneself before Him in the sanctuary (Deut. i. 38, xix. 17 ; Jer. vii. 10, and elsewhere) ; this clearly witnesses to the belief that Yahweh was actually present in the sanctuary.

These considerations make it abundantly clear that the conception of God's presence, above all in the sanctuary when sacrifices were offered to Him, was very real ; and this has a direct bearing on the subject of communion-sacrifice. Before coming to deal, however, with the indications occurring in the Old Testament which bear upon this, it is necessary to say something of the way in which this presence was conceived of. And here, as in the case of all religious conceptions, we must be prepared to find stages of development from material to spiritual ideas.

In the earliest stage it is clear that the partakers of a totem-animal believed that by so doing they were strengthening the tie of kinship with their totem-ancestor ; his identity, in some sort, with the totem-victim must, therefore, be postulated ; hence also his presence among them. In the later stage, when the totem-ancestor had become a god, the

sacred victim symbolised, if nothing more, the presence of the god. Ultimately, though this can hardly be called the totem-stage, the god was conceived of as partaking with the worshippers of the sacred victim (and therefore present among them), whereby a union between them and their god was effected. And it is in this stage that the question arises as to how the presence of the god was manifested. Here we can deal more directly with the religion of Israel.

The presence of the deity in a standing stone is amply borne out by the Bethel episode in Gen. xxviii. 18, 19 ; that, in addition to the anointing of the sacred pillar (*Mazzebah*) indwelt by the god, blood was poured out at its base for his benefit is amply attested ;¹ so that, when the altar, the pillar laid lengthwise, came into use for the greater convenience of laying the sacrificial victim upon it, the altar must similarly have been thought of as being indwelt by the deity. Ancient usage, it is true, retained the pillar by the side of the altar, so that the presence of the deity was made doubly sure. The further addition by the side of the altar of the *Asherah*, or wooden pole, is subsequent, and represents the sacred tree, the female element ; with this we are not here concerned. The significant point is that the deity was conceived of as present, first in the sacred pillar, then, probably, indifferently in the altar and in the sacred pillar, and then, as originally, in the latter alone. As Robertson Smith says, the fact that libations of the same kind were applied to both the sacred pillar and the altar makes it clear that "the altar is a differentiated form of the primitive rude stone pillar." In course of time "the pillar as a visible symbol or embodiment of the presence of the deity comes to be fashioned and carved in various ways, till ultimately it becomes a statue or anthropomorphic idol of stone, just as the sacred tree or post was ultimately developed into an image of wood."² When, therefore, the worshippers brought their sacrifices they offered them before, or in the presence of, the deity, conceived of as actually present in his image.

¹ Cp. Robertson Smith, *Rel. Sem.*, p. 203.

² Op. cit., p. 204.

To quote Robertson Smith again, "the original significance of the patriarchal symbols cannot be concluded from the sense put on them by writers who lived many centuries after those ancient sanctuaries were first founded; and at the time when the oldest of the pentateuchal narratives were written, the Canaanites and the great mass of the Hebrews certainly treated the *Mazzebah* as a sort of idol or embodiment of the divine presence."¹ Thus, during the pre-exilic period Yahweh was conceived of as present in the sanctuary in His image; and a proof that this was the case is seen in the prohibition of later times: "Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image" (Deut. v. 8; see also iv. 16, 25, xxvii. 15; Exod. xx. 4; Lev. xxvi. 1). That actual images of Yahweh were made is stated almost in so many words in Judges xvii. 3; cp. Hos. iii. 4. The parallel case of Dagon in 1 Sam. v. is instructive. "It was apparently the universal practice" (i.e. before the eighth century),² says McNeile, "to employ images in the worship of Yahweh. The *pesilim* ('graven images') at Gilgal (Judges iii. 19, R.V. 'quarries') were probably sacred stone images used in worship. The Danites (Judges xviii. 30 f.) set up Micah's *pesel*, or 'graven image,' at Dan, and it was served by a line of priests originating with the Levite Jonathan, whose ancestry was traced to Moses. It is clear that the *pesel* was an image used both by Micah and the Danites for Yahweh-worship (cp. xvii. 13); and in chaps. xvii, xviii, there is not the slightest blame attached to its use; in Micah's case the making of an image was a religious act on the part of his mother."³ It is difficult to imagine what image in these cases, other than that representing Yahweh, can have been used. Eichrodt,⁴ following many other scholars, is doubtless right in maintaining that in the large number of passages where the Hebrew text has the phrase "to appear before Yahweh"

¹ Op. cit.

² Hosea, in the latter part of the eighth century regards the absence of images as a punishment; see Hos. iii. 4, 5.

³ *The Book of Exodus*, p. lx. (1908).

⁴ *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, ii. 12 (1935).

(a passive form of the verb to "see," i.e. to be seen, or appear), the original form of the text was in the active, "to see Yahweh." The alteration of the text was due to later editors when a more spiritual belief in the presence of Yahweh had superseded the earlier belief in His presence in an image. A few illustrations may be offered. The present Hebrew text, which is quite ungrammatical, of Exod. xxiii. 15 reads literally: "They shall not be seen my face empty"; the impossible Hebrew is paraphrased in the Revised Version: "None shall appear before me empty"; and this is, no doubt, what the Massorettes intended, i.e. the seeing is done by Yahweh. What the original text read was: "They shall not see my face, empty," i.e. the worshippers were not to look at the face of Yahweh empty-handed, without offerings. The reason for altering the text is obvious; it was to bring it into line with the other later idea, referred to above, that no man could see God and live. There was also the wish to obliterate the belief that Yahweh could be seen in His image. See also Exod. xxiii. 17, xxxiv. 20, 23, 24; Deut. xvi. 16, xxxi. 11. In Ps. xlii. 2 (3 in Heb.) the psalmist says, according to the present text: "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God [we should probably read "the God of my life"], when shall I come and appear before God?" In these last words the Hebrew construction is impossible; it should be: "When shall I see the face of God?" A few Hebrew manuscripts have the original form of the text. Once more, in Isa. i. 12 the Hebrew has: "When ye come to appear before me . . ."; one Hebrew manuscript reads: "When ye come to see my face . . ."; in this case the Revised Version gives the correct reading in the margin.

This, then, is the earliest stage, during the pre-exilic period, of the conception of God's presence. That it is of a materialistic character makes the belief in that presence none the less real, rather the contrary; and this has a direct bearing on the subject of communion-sacrifices. It is possible that a second stage may be discerned, though here

we speak with hesitation. The supposition is this : when with the developing conception of the divine personality the repudiation of the idea of Yahweh's presence in His image arose, His permanent dwelling-place was thought of as in heaven, whence He looked down upon the doings of men. Doubtless there were varying conceptions of heaven, or of God's dwelling-place, such as the mountain of God referred to above. At any rate, it was above the earth, high up, and from it God looked down on the earth and dealt with men. There are many passages in which this thought occurs ; in Deut. iv. 36, for example, we read : " Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee " ; or again in Deut. xxvi. 15 : " Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel . . . " ; " Look down from heaven, and behold the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory " (Isa. lxiii. 15), and often in the Psalms (e.g. xi. 4, xiv. 2, xx. 6 [7 in Heb.]). In this way the belief may have arisen that God looked down upon His people when they worshipped Him in the sanctuary ; and possibly the idea may have been that when the offering was made on the north side of the altar, as referred to above, it was offered in the direction in which God's dwelling-place was thought to be. But this is all mere supposition. What is certain is that, with the still further development of the conception of the divine personality, a purely spiritual presence in the sanctuary was taught. A doctrine of divine omnipotence was not formulated, but among some of the deeper religious thinkers it found expression : " Whither shall I go from thy spirit ? Or whither shall I flee from the presence ? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there : if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me . . . " (Ps. cxxxix. 7-12). This belongs, to be sure, to post-exilic times ; but this final development of the conception of the divine presence may be referred to here for completeness' sake.

In a number of psalms the same thought finds expression, but it is not always possible to be quite certain whether a local or a spiritual presence is in the mind of the writer. The psalm in which the presence is spoken of may be pre-exilic, or it may be post-exilic; the nature of the presence conceived of will differ accordingly; for it may be held with some confidence that the experience of the Exile constituted the great dividing line here. The exiles had no sanctuary in which Yahweh dwelt. In Ps. xcv. 2 we read: "Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving"; the words of verse 3, "For Yahweh is a great God, and a great King above all gods," suggest a pre-exilic date, since they express an idea incompatible with monotheistic belief. If, then, the psalm is pre-exilic, the presence will be a local one in reference to Yahweh's image in the sanctuary, indwelt by Him. On the other hand, in such a demonstrably post-exilic¹ psalm as li., the words of verse 11 (13 in Heb.), "Cast me not away from thy presence," must be understood in a spiritual sense.

That such spiritually-minded men, though exceptional, sought to exercise their influence is thus proved. But upon the bulk of their fellow-creatures there is but too much reason to fear that it did not prevail. In spite of their efforts, and in spite of legal prohibitions, it is by no means certain that, even in late post-exilic times, the presence of Yahweh in the sanctuary was not made realistic by representations of Him. This may sound surprising, but not more so than the presence of all kinds of figures in the remains of ancient synagogues, not only of the Dispersion, but in Palestine itself. The command, "Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor the likeness of any form that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (Exod. xx. 4; cp. Deut. iv. 15-19, 23; Lev. xxvi. 1), seems to have had little weight. For example, in the

¹ On account of its greatly developed sense of sin (verses 1-10 [3-12 in Heb.]), and of its spiritual conception of sacrifice (verses 16, 17 [18, 19 in Heb.]).

remains of the synagogue of 'Ain Duk (the biblical Na'aran, near Jericho) belonging to the fourth or fifth century A.D., a panel was discovered containing the cycle of the Zodiac ; "in the centre of the cycle is a figure driving a quadriga, representing the sun, and round about it are the twelve signs of the Zodiac with their Hebrew names."¹ Illustrations of a similar character were found elsewhere. In 2 Kings xxiii. 5 we read of the *Mazzaloth*, the twelve signs of the Zodiac, the worship of which was put down by Josiah.

This somewhat lengthy preliminary discussion has been necessary because, in dealing with the subject of communion-sacrifices, the belief in the actual local presence of Yahweh in the sanctuary had first to be established.

The Old Testament gives a number of illustrations showing that the rite of eating together establishes a union among men ; this is especially the case in making covenants, which are sealed by eating together. "The ethical significance of the common meal," says Robertson Smith,² "can be most adequately illustrated from Arabian usage, but it was not confined to the Arabs. The Old Testament records many cases where a covenant is sealed by the parties eating and drinking together. In most of these, indeed, the meal is sacrificial, so that it is not at once clear that two men are bound to each other merely by partaking of the same dish, unless the deity is taken in as a third party to the covenant. The value of the Arabian evidence is that it supplies proof that the bond of food is valid of itself, that religion may be called in to confirm and strengthen it, but the essence of the thing lies in the physical act of eating together." In illustration of this we have in Joshua ix. 14-19, the case of the covenant between Joshua and the Gibeonites. Here a meal is partaken of, without the presence of the deity, in consequence of which the lives of the latter are sacred : "And the men took of their provision, and asked not counsel at the mouth of Yahweh. And Joshua made peace with them,

¹ Sukenik, *Ancient Synagogues in Palestine and Greece*, p. 29 (1934).

² *Rel. Sem.*, p. 271.

and made a covenant with them, to let them live. . . .” Again, in Gen. xxvi. 28–30 we read of a covenant made between Abimelech and Isaac which is sealed by their eating together ; Abimelech says : “ Let there now be an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee ; that thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace ; thou art now the blessed of Yahweh. And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink.” And once more in 2 Sam. iii. 20, 21, we read how a covenant was made between David and Abner and his retinue : “ And David made Abner and the men that were with him a feast. . . .” In a large number of other instances in which covenants are made there is no mention of the feast, but that is simply because the feast is taken for granted ; it was the necessary sealing of the covenant which constituted the union between the two parties. Another way in which such a union between men was effected was by their drinking each other’s blood, a ceremony known in so many parts of the world, “ in which the contracting parties became one by actually drinking or tasting one another’s blood.”¹ Robertson Smith points out that “ this form of covenant is still known in the Lebanon and in some parts of Arabia. In ancient Arabic literature there are many references to the blood-covenant, but instead of human blood that of a victim slain at the sanctuary is employed. The ritual in this case is that all who share in the compact must dip their hands into the gore, which at the same time is applied to the sacred stone that symbolises the deity, or is poured forth at its base. The dipping of the hands into the dish implies communion in an act of eating, and so the members of the bond are called ‘ blood-lickers.’ ”²

That this custom was prevalent among the Israelites is highly probable, and it is possible that it is referred to in

¹ Robertson Smith, *Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia*, p. 59 (1903).

² *Rel. Sem.*, p. 314.

such a passage as Deut. xvii. 8-13 : " If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgement, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates . . ." ; it then goes on to say that such disputed matters are to be brought before the priests and Levites, and that their decision shall be final. The words between " blood and blood " are usually taken to refer to murder ; but this is unlikely, for the whole passage is dealing simply with individual disputes on matters which might frequently occur ; " between stroke and stroke " refers to maltreatment in general ; " between plea and plea " refers to questions of ownership. In such a connexion murder would be quite out of place ; whereas, if it is a question of an agreement or covenant sealed by blood in the usual way about which a dispute should arise, there is no difficulty. This is further borne out by a somewhat similar passage in 2 Chron. xix. 10 : " And whensoever any controversy shall come to you from your brethren that dwell in their cities, between blood and blood, between law and commandment, statutes and judgements, ye shall warn them . . ." ; if it were a question of murder something more than a warning would be given. Moreover, when murder is spoken of the expressions are different - to " shed blood," to " slay," to " kill," and so on ; and then it is not a question of " blood and blood," i.e. the blood of two people, but of one only. There is, thus, some justification for the view that in these passages the reference is to a blood-covenant, about which some dispute may arise.

Just as there was the institution of the blood-covenant between men, so, according to Exod. xxiv. 4-8 (E), there was a blood-covenant between men and God. In this important passage we read of Moses building an altar, and of burnt-offerings and peace-offerings being sacrificed ; then it continues : " And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons ; and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in

the audience of the people ; and they said, All that Yahweh hath spoken will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold, the blood of the covenant which Yahweh hath made with you concerning all these words." Thus, both Yahweh and the people partake of the blood, since the sprinkling of the blood on the altar means that Yahweh partook of it, just as men partook of blood in making a covenant. In this case the blood is that of the sacrificial victim; but it is, none the less, a blood-covenant.

We have seen that when a covenant was made between two men, one of them prepared a feast to seal it. We have no precise parallel to this recorded in the Old Testament ; but echoes of Yahweh preparing His feast, though under very different conditions, are to be discerned. Thus, in a late, eschatological passage it is said : " And in this mountain shall Yahweh 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," meaning a feast of the best things ; the fat in sacrifice was reserved for the deity ; wines on the lees are old wines, matured upon the sediment from which it was separated through a sieve before being drunk. The feast in this case is prepared for the Gentiles, a universalistic note, but God's people are also included, " the reproach of his people shall he take away from off all the earth " (Isa. xxv. 6-8). Similarly in Zeph. i. 7 in reference to the Day of Yahweh it is said : " For Yahweh hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath sanctified his guests." Such passages echo the older belief that at the sacrificial meal the worshippers were the guests of Yahweh.

It will be granted that what has so far been said contains much which leads up to the subject of communion-sacrifice. The idea of the funeral-feast at which the relatives believed in the presence of the departed spirit ; the presence of Yahweh in the sanctuary during the sacrificial meal ; the fact that eating together effected a union between man and man,

and that a similar union took place by the act of tasting one another's blood ; the blood-covenant between Yahweh and His worshippers ; and the indications of Yahweh presiding at the sacrificial feast, – all these things contribute in one way or another to the final conclusion that among the Israelites the conviction obtained that by means of the sacrificial feast a union was effected between Yahweh and His worshippers.

We have now to see what evidence the Old Testament affords in justification of this conclusion. It is hardly to be expected that we should find any definite statement to the effect that a sacrifice brought about a union ; made the worshippers, that is, one with Yahweh ; nor is such a statement to be found ; but there are certain considerations which point indubitably to the belief in such a union.

We must begin by emphasising once more the special purpose and significance not only of the presence of Yahweh in the sanctuary, but of His presence at the sacrificial meal, as conceived of by His worshippers. There were plenty of occasions on which Yahweh was believed to be present in the sanctuary when no sacrificial feast was in question. Offerings of all kinds in no way connected with a feast were brought at different times to the Temple, and yet Yahweh was believed to be present in order to receive and accept the gift ; or else worshippers would repair to the sanctuary without any offering and pour out their heart in communion with God, as in the case of Hannah (1 Sam. i. 10, 11). Yahweh's presence in the sanctuary, therefore, however it may have been envisaged, was a familiar experience. But here, in the case of the sacrificial meal, a presence was vouchsafed for a very different purpose than that of merely being present ; and the difference centred in the partaking of food by Yahweh and His worshippers. The analogy of what obtained among men cannot fail to have been decisive here. Just as the very fact of friends eating together effected a union between them, so Yahweh, by coming into the sanctuary and joining with His worshippers in the sacrificial

feast¹ made them one with Himself. The nature of this union was no more envisaged or defined than in the case of the union between men ; but its reality was not for that reason doubted. If the purpose of eating together with Yahweh was not to effect a union with Him, what was the point of it ? As we have just seen, there were many other occasions on which Yahweh's presence was to be enjoyed. The significance of passages in which "eating before Yahweh" is spoken of thus becomes apparent ; "eating before Yahweh" implies eating with Him, for it is not to be supposed that the intention was to eat in His presence merely to be watched by Him ! In a passage already quoted in part we read : "And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand ; and they beheld God, and did eat and drink" (Exod. xxiv. 11) ; when it is said "he laid not his hand" upon, the meaning is, as in Exod. xxxiii. 22, 23, that God did not prevent them from seeing Him ; and the words, "they beheld God, and did eat and drink," can be equally well rendered, "and they beheld God, and they (i.e. God and the men) did eat and drink." Where we have this very antique idea of actually seeing God, that of eating with Him is entirely *à propos* (seeing God and eating with Him occurs also in Gen. xviii. 1-14) ; the passage belongs to the J document. To give but one other illustration ; in Exod. xviii. 12 (E document) we read : ". . . and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God" (see also Deut. xii. 7, xiv. 26 ; 1 Chron. xxix. 22). In all such passages the question presses itself : What is the point of "eating before, or in the presence of, God ?" There can be only one answer, as already indicated.

Our next consideration centres in the idea that both Yahweh and His worshippers partake of the same sacrificial victim. And here it is important to remember the initial act of the type of sacrifice in question : the dedication of the victim, making it sacred by the solemn laying of hands

¹ Cp. "my feast" (Exod. xxiii. 18).

upon it, or by some other rite. This act meant that the victim had been made over to Yahweh, it belonged to Him. It is extremely unlikely that among the Israelites within historical times the idea of the totem-victim persisted ; but from it there may well have arisen the thought that what belonged to Yahweh was, in some sense, part of Him. There is an element of real truth in the *dictum* that to take of mine is to partake of me ; and the uncultured mind would understand this in a material sense. When, therefore, the worshipper partook of the victim which had been made over to Yahweh, there may well have been a vague, undefined consciousness that, inasmuch as he was absorbing Yahweh's property, he was receiving Yahweh into himself. There may be something in this theory, or there may not be ; but it is, at any rate, well to remember that the mind of man in an undeveloped stage of culture does not work on the lines of modern thought.

Our next consideration is that of the immensely important place of blood in sacrifice. Its importance lies in the fact that it is the deity's share of the sacrificial feast. In the earliest phase the blood was poured out at the foot of the sacred stone, believed to be indwelt by the god ; later, when the altar proper had come into use, this was sprinkled with blood. The meaning of this is closely connected with what has already been said about the participation in the same victim by Yahweh and His worshippers ; only here the subject is approached from a somewhat different, but perhaps even more convincing, point of view. In a number of passages in the Old Testament the prohibition is made that men should not partake of blood ; in a few cases the reason is given, viz. that it contains the life. Thus, in Lev. xvii. 10, 11 it is said : " And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel . . . that eateth any manner of blood, I will set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people ; for the life of the flesh is in the blood." " For as to the life of all flesh, the blood thereof is all one with the life thereof" (verse 14, and

elsewhere). In 1 Sam. xiv. 34, 35, Saul commands as follows : “. . . Bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay them here and eat ; and sin not against Yahweh in eating with the blood. And all the people brought every man his ox with him that night and slew them there. And Saul built an altar unto Yahweh. . . .” The reason given in the passages quoted why blood should not be consumed is, in truth, no reason ; nor is it explained in this last passage why to do so is a sin against Yahweh. But the reason is indicated in various passages in which the command is given to pour out the blood at the base of the altar, according to the earlier method, or to sprinkle it on the altar, according to the later usage, or both. In Exod. xxix. 12, for example, it is said : “. . . And thou shalt pour out the blood at the base of the altar ” ; see also Lev. viii. 15, ix. 9 ; and in Exod. xxix. 16, Lev. i. 5, it is to be sprinkled on the altar ; in some of these passages both usages are enjoined. The blood was thus Yahweh’s share ; and men were prohibited from consuming the blood, not, in this case (see the next chapter), because it contained the life, but because it belonged to Yahweh ; the share of the worshippers was the flesh.

But though Yahweh partook of the special “ life ” portion, that life-principle had also permeated the rest of the victim, so that one and the same principle of life circulated in Yahweh and His worshippers ; and that partaking of the identical life effected the union. This is further brought out by the fact that there were certain other portions of the victim which were also believed to contain the life-principle, and which were therefore reserved for Yahweh. Thus, in Exod. xxix. 13 it is said : “ And thou shalt take all the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul upon the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and burn them upon the altar ” ; hence the prohibition in Lev. iii. 17 : “ It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings, that ye shall eat neither fat nor blood ” (cp. 1 Sam. ii. 16).

We conclude with the following words of Robertson Smith after his exhaustive investigation into the whole subject : " We may now take it as made out that, throughout the Semitic field, the fundamental idea of sacrifice is not that of a sacred tribute,¹ but of communion between the god and his worshippers by joint participation in the living flesh and blood of a sacred victim. We see, however, that in the more advanced forms of ritual this idea became attenuated and tends to disappear, at least in the commoner kinds of sacrifice. When men cease to eat raw or living flesh the blood, to the exclusion of the solid parts of the body, comes to be regarded as the vehicle of life and the true *res sacramenti*. And the nature of the sacrifice as a sacramental act is still further disguised when . . . the sacramental blood is no longer drunk by the worshippers, but only sprinkled on their persons, or finally finds no manward application at all, but is wholly poured out at the altar, so that it becomes the proper share of the deity, while the flesh is left to be eaten by man. This is the common form of Arabian sacrifice, and among the Hebrews the same form is attested by 1 Sam. xiv. 34."²

¹ As we have maintained in the preceding chapter, we hold that the gift-sacrifice is also one of the fundamental ideas of sacrifice.

² *Rel. Sem.*, pp. 345 f.

CHAPTER XI

SACRIFICES AMONG THE ISRAELITES: THE AGRICULTURAL PERIOD (5)

SACRIFICES AS THE MEANS OF LIBERATING LIFE

WE have seen that all sacrifices partake in a greater or less degree of the nature of a gift to the deity. We have also seen that in certain types of sacrifice the idea of union with the deity underlies the offering. In each case there has been reason to believe that among the Israelites both these purposes of sacrifice existed. It is not as though these purposes are explicitly enunciated ; that is not to be expected ; for in cases like this what is innate does not require expression ; acts speak for themselves. When, for example, a worshipper brings his offering, there could be no point in the priest saying to him : “ What you are now bringing and presenting to Yahweh is a gift to Him ” ; for that was self-evident. In the same way, when the worshippers were partaking of a sacrificial feast, there was no need to say to them : “ Now you are effecting union with Yahweh ” ; for Yahweh was present, partaking of the same victim as they were. And it was axiomatic that when men ate together, a bond of union was formed ; above all, when, as in this case, the covenant-idea was present. Therefore it would be futile to look for any dogmatic or explanatory statements regarding the underlying purposes of sacrifice in the Old Testament. The sacrifices themselves explain their purposes.

In coming to consider now the subject of sacrifices as a means of liberating life, it would, again, be pointless for the

priest to explain to the worshippers that by slaughtering a victim a life was liberated, for to the Israelite that was self-evident ; since the life was in the poured-out blood, it had clearly been liberated from the body of the victim, no matter what happened to the body. The use made of the liberated life was equally self-evident, since, by being poured out at the altar, or sprinkled upon it, Yahweh received it. So that here, again, we do not look for any explicit statement of the fact that life was liberated and that Yahweh absorbed it, because to the Israelites the acts explained themselves.

Illustrations from the Old Testament of sacrifices being the means of liberating life must be our next concern. We must begin, for reasons which will become clear as we proceed, by drawing attention to a subject which has already been referred to. According to ancient Israelite belief, the spirit of the departed continues to abide, for a certain period, either in or near the body, which has been, hitherto, its place of abode. Indeed, according to quite a number of North-Semitic inscriptions, the tomb is called "the eternal home" of the departed.¹ Now, Israelite belief concerning the departed – and the Israelites were not singular in this – regarded their lot, when compared with the pleasant side of the world, as dreary, uninteresting, and especially as unsatisfactory owing to the want of food and drink. Hence the duty incumbent upon the living of providing their departed relatives with something to eat and drink in their new and not very happy life. For this reason, food was placed in tombs. The proof of this is seen by the numberless vessels, both for food and drink, found in tombs in Palestine. But besides solicitude for the departed, there was another reason why they were provided with substance ; and that was fear lest, if they went hungry and thirsty, they should vent their anger on the living. The spirits of the departed were believed to be powerful, and it was thought that their power was manifested by harming the living if for any reason they were put out. They could also bestow

¹ Lidzbarski, *Handbuch der nordsemitischen Epigraphik*, i. 146 (1898).

benefits ; but the fear of them was much greater than the hope of gaining anything from them.

It will thus be seen that the practice of offering food affected both the departed and the living : the former received sustenance and were able to retain their vigour ; the latter shielded themselves from harm, and also received benefits. A remarkable thing is that this very old-world practice of bringing offerings to the departed should have persisted among the Israelites¹ so long. As late as the seventh century B.C., among the marks of a true Yahweh-worshipper is that of giving a tithe in the third year of all produce – but more, a truly good man must be able to say : “ I have not eaten thereof [i.e. of the tithe] in my mourning, neither have I put away thereof, being unclean, neither given thereof for the dead ” (Deut. xxvi. 14). This means that he had not touched the tithe when he was in mourning (because, being unclean through proximity to a corpse, he would have made the tithe unclean too if he had touched it) ; nor had he, being unclean from any other cause, touched the tithe while in that state ; nor had he offered any of the tithe to the departed. The last point is, of course, the one that concerns us ; if a man could boast of not having offered food to the departed, it is an obvious inference that others did do so, otherwise there would be no point in mentioning it ; so that we find the practice still in vogue, though of course forbidden, as late as the end of the seventh century B.C. And still more remarkable is the fact that it is practised in Palestine at the present day.²

We have seen that the departed were believed to be powerful ; no more striking illustration of this could be offered than the fact that they were sometimes called “ gods.” Thus, at the sight of the shade of Samuel the witch of Endor says she sees “ a god coming up out of the earth ” (1 Sam. xxviii. 13). True, this is exceptional ; it

¹ It has persisted till to-day in China, in spite of the long civilisation.

² Curtiss, *Primitive Semitic Religion To-day*, pp. 178 f. (1902).

is the only example in the Old Testament of a departed spirit being actually called a "god"; but that the spirits of ancestors were looked upon as gods is amply proved by the references to ancestor-worship in the Old Testament. With that subject we cannot deal now.¹ That tribal heroes and the like developed into gods is abundantly illustrated over the whole Semitic area. Therefore offerings to the departed tended, in the course of time, to become sacrifices; and the objects for which offerings were made to the spirits of the departed were also the objects for which sacrifices were offered to a god. This does not, of course, refer to all types of sacrifice.

Before we come to the next step let us repeat the purposes for which offerings to the dead were made: they were offered, in the shape of food and drink, in order that the departed might retain their vigour; they were also offered in order to avert the possible wrath of the departed against the living; and, in close connexion with this latter, they were offered in order to dispose the departed kindly towards the living. It is only with the first of these that we are here concerned; and it will be seen that, for the reasons given, sacrifices were offered to Yahweh for the similar purposes of affording Him refreshment and vitality.

Here we must once again draw attention to the significance of blood. From very remote times it appears to have been thought by man that in the blood was the life of man and beast alike; consequently, if the blood flows out of the body death ensues. Blood, therefore, contained what has been well expressed by the term "soul-substance." But though blood was the main seat of this life-essence or "soul-substance," there were other parts of the body in which it was held that this resided, viz. the liver, the intestines, and the fat which covered these parts. This applied both to man and beasts. But, as James remarks, "the possession of a common vitality establishes a mystic vital bond between all who share the same life-essence, and since this potency

¹ See the present writer's *Immortality and the Unseen World*, pp. 95-109 (1921).

is capable of transmission from one person or object to another, renewed health and strength can be secured by a ritual transference of soul-substance."¹ Of this strengthening potency of blood, which could be utilised quite apart from sacrifice, we have a very curious illustration in the Old Testament. We read in 1 Kings xxii. 38 that the harlots washed themselves in the pool into which the blood of Ahab had flowed. This is the obvious meaning of the Hebrew ;² and the object was to gain strength from contact with the royal blood. Of the actual partaking of blood by men, which, as we have seen,³ was common among the Semites, there are but rare instances mentioned in the Old Testament. The numerous prohibitions (e.g. Gen. ix. 4 ; Deut. xii. 16, 23, xv. 23 ; 1 Sam. xiv. 34) may have accounted for this ; but that it occurred is seen, for example, from Ezek. xxxiii. 25 : " Ye eat with the blood, and lift up your eyes unto your idols " ; and again in Zech. ix. 7 : " And I will take away his blood out of his mouth, and his abominations from between his teeth " ; this, it is true, is in reference to the Philistines, but it witnesses to the custom. The purpose of drinking blood here can have been only the desire to absorb the life inherent in it, or to appropriate some quality proper to the victim. Though otherwise but little is said in the Old Testament of men drinking blood, its wide prevalence among the Semites generally⁴ makes it highly probable that, in spite of the prohibitions, the Israelites practised it.

Inasmuch as the Israelites, like other peoples, conceived of the spirit-world on anthropomorphic lines, it was believed that just as men absorbed life from blood, so the element of

¹ *Origins of Sacrifice*, p. 33 (1933).

² The Revised Version has in the margin " and they washed the armour " for the Hebrew " now the harlots washed themselves." This is quite unwarrantable ; it should have been stated that this marginal rendering, or rather mis-rendering, was taken from the Vulgate and the Syriac (it occurs also in the Targum) ; doubtless these Versions reflect the desire to avoid what was of an objectionable nature.

³ See above, p. 169.

⁴ See Robertson Smith, *Rel. Sem.*, pp. 313 ff. ; Wellhausen, *Reste*, pp. 112 ff.

life could be offered to Yahweh by giving Him the blood of sacrificial victims ; hence the frequent mention of blood being poured out at the foot of the altar, or being sprinkled upon it. Thus, in Exod. xxix. 12 it is commanded : “ Thou shalt pour out all the blood at the base of the altar ” ; and in Lev. iv. 18 : “ And all the blood shall he pour out at the base of the altar of burnt-offering.” In other passages the sprinkling of the altar with blood is mentioned : “ Then thou shalt kill the ram . . . and sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about ” (Exod. xxix. 20, and often elsewhere ; again in 2 Kings xvi. 13 we read of king Ahaz that “ he burnt his burnt-offering and his meal-offering, and poured his drink-offering, and sprinkled the blood of his peace-offerings upon the altar.” In every such case the blood is poured out for Yahweh to drink in order that He may absorb the life inherent in the blood. Especially instructive is Ps. l. 13 : “ Would I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats ? ” The psalmist implicitly repudiates the idea of Yahweh drinking blood, but had the idea not been held there would have been no point in his repudiation. In Ps. xvi. 4 it is said : “ Their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer.” It is clear, then, that the sacrificial victim was slain in order to liberate life by the out-pouring of its blood for the benefit of Yahweh.

The offering of blood as the main seat of life was first and foremost. “ From first to last the utmost importance attaches to the disposition of the victim’s blood,” as Moore rightly remarks ;¹ “ indeed, it may be said that this is one universal and indispensable constituent of sacrifice.” But, though of minor importance, certain other parts of the victim, as mentioned above, were also believed to contain the element of life ; hence their dedication to Yahweh. Thus, in Lev. iii. 17 it is said : “ It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings, that ye shall eat neither fat nor blood ” ; the lateness of this passage only shows how usages persisted. Similarly in

¹ *En cycl. Bibl.*, iv. 4217.

Exod. xxix. 13 : "And thou shalt take all the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul upon the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and burn them upon the altar." That the custom was old is seen, for example, in 1 Sam. ii. 15, where it is told of how "before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came. . . ." As illustrative of the belief that the life resided in the fat as well as in the blood, we find the two used as parallels, though in this case of men, in 2 Sam. i. 22 : "From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty . . ." (see also Isa. i. 11, xxxiv. 6). Like the offering of blood, therefore, the burning of the fat, etc., on the altar was designed to give nourishment and renewed life to Yahweh. The grossness of the idea must not blind us to the sincerity of intention.

Of less importance, but still with the idea of strengthening Yahweh by giving Him refreshment, was the water-libation. Here, again, the idea originated in the custom of placing vessels full of water in the sepulchres of departed friends, or of pouring water on graves, in order to slake the thirst of the spirits. Just as the spirits of ordinary men required water to drink in the other world, so, too, did deified ancestors, and, later, gods ; and so, later still, Yahweh. Hence, in 1 Sam. vii. 5, 6 we read : "And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray for you unto Yahweh. And they gathered together to Mizpah, and drew water, and poured it out before Yahweh. . . ." That the primitive purpose here is to incline Yahweh favourably to the petitioners in order that their prayers may be accepted does not detract from the further purpose that the gift is designed to offer Him refreshment. This is another of the innumerable instances which show that sacrifices had more than one purpose. Of interest, too, as an instance of self-denial for the sake of Yahweh, is David's refusal to drink of the water, parched as he was, which had been procured by his three mighty men at the risk of their lives. We read : "And David longed, and said, O that one would give me water to drink of the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate !

And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David ; but he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto Yahweh . . ." (2 Sam. xxiii. 15-17) ; to " pour out unto " is, as we have seen, a technical ritual term.

But if water-libations, dating from nomadic times, were held to be acceptable as a means of nourishment and vigour to Yahweh, much more would this have been the case when, with the cultivation of the vine after the settlement in Canaan, wine-libations could be offered. That in some sense life was believed to inhere in wine is seen by the use of the expression " the blood of grapes " ; in Gen. xlix. 11, for example, it is said of Judah : " He hath washed his garments in wine, and his vesture in the blood of grapes." So, too, in Deut. xxxii. 14 : " Of the blood of the grape thou drankest wine," in reference to the lot of Jacob's inheritance. These passages are poetical, it is true ; but the phrase occurs also in quite late literature (Ecclus. xxxix. 26, l. 15 ; in this last passage it is in reference to the wine-libation " poured out at the foot of the altar "), and can hardly have been wholly figurative. At any rate, it became a regular offering. Thus, in Num. xxviii. 7 it is commanded : ". . . In the holy place shalt thou pour out a drink-offering of strong drink unto Yahweh " ; and a wine-oblation was poured out as an accompaniment to the daily holocaust (Exod. xxix. 40 ; Num. xxviii. 7 ; both P), and at the burnt-offerings on sabbaths, new moons, and festivals, as well as on several other occasions (Num. xv. 24, xxviii. 9, 14, xxix. 18 f., 33, 39 ; Lev. xxiii. 13, 18, 37 ; all P). Now, while all the references to wine-oblations among the Israelites occur only in post-exilic literature, there can be no doubt that they were offered ever since the settlement in Canaan, and that the rite was taken over from the Canaanites. We have in Judges ix. 27 a reference to the Canaanite vintage-festival at Shechem during which, it stands to reason, wine-offerings were made to their god. It says in that passage that the

men of Shechem "went out into the field, and gathered their vineyards, and trode (the grapes) and held festival, and went into the house of their god. . . ."

Here it is worth while drawing attention to a piece of extra-biblical evidence. Sozomen, the Church historian (fourth or fifth century, not certain), describes a festival celebrated by the inhabitants who dwelt in the neighbourhood of the celebrated oak of Mamre ("Abraham's oak," properly terebinth); he says that in his day these people were joined by others from a distance, Palestinians, Phœnicians, and Arabs, in celebrating this great annual festival. They came in great numbers for the twofold purposes of trading and worshipping. Many were heathen people who came to the festival to worship angels, to pour out to them wine-libations, to offer incense, and to sacrifice an ox, or a kid, or a sheep, or a hen. "The site," says Sozomen, "lies in the open, in a field where there are no buildings, and includes the space around the oak which in ancient time belonged to Abraham, close to which is the well. Around this well, according to heathen usage, they placed burning lamps, others poured wine into it and threw in cakes, coins, myrrh and other sweet-smelling herbs; so that the water has become undrinkable owing to the various things thrown into it." He also mentions the presence of an altar, and wooden carved images (*Hist. Eccl.* ii. 4).

That is an interesting piece of evidence showing, among other things, that as late as the fourth or fifth centuries A.D. wine-libations were poured out to a god by the inhabitants of Palestine. But this by the way. Wine-libations, therefore, were offered as a further means of nourishing Yahweh.

All that has so far been said goes to show that, whatever subsidiary motives may have prompted these libations, the fundamental idea was that of giving sustenance to Yahweh; but above all, by the offering of blood, the principle of life was imparted to Him. In other words, by the sacrifice of the victim its life was liberated, and the liberated life

inherent in the blood was absorbed by Yahweh, whose own life was strengthened and replenished thereby.

Subsidiary to this, but nevertheless contributing to the vigour of the Deity, and therefore indirectly supplying Him with the life-principle, were food-offerings. However much these may have been offered from the gift- or tribute-motives, the very fact of their being food, i.e. life-sustenance, shows that the purpose of imparting nourishment to Yahweh cannot have been absent.

First among these offerings to be mentioned is the "shew-bread." To this, reference has already been made, but something further must be said about it here. This was probably the earliest offering of the "fruit of the ground." That it was called "God's bread" (Lev. xxi. 6, 8, 17, 22), and that the table upon which it was placed was called "Yahweh's table" (Mal. i. 7, 12) – the lateness of the passages in which these expressions occur is immaterial – makes it clear that the "shew-bread" was intended for Yahweh's consumption, whatever other purpose the offering may have had. It had to be unleavened bread (Lev. ii. 11, vi. 17). Originally all bread offered to the Deity was of the simple, unleavened, kind, and the traditional use was kept up in later times. Moreover, leaven in bread causes fermentation; in ancient times it was always believed that this fermentation caused putrefaction in the dough (1 Cor. v. 6, 7), so that leaven represented a process of corruption.¹ To offer that to the Deity would have been an outrage.

But the "shew-bread" was far from being the only cereal offering brought for Yahweh's consumption; we read in Judges vi. 19 of unleavened cakes being offered (cp. 1 Sam. i. 24; 1 Kings xviii. 29, 36; Isa. xix. 21; Jer. xiv. 12, xvii. 26, xxxiii. 18, xli. 5, and elsewhere). Into these it will be unnecessary to go further. From what has been said it is evident that all these food-offerings were presented to

¹ Plutarch (born about A.D. 50) says in his *Questiones Romanae* 109: "Leaven also is itself begotten [$\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\omicron\nu\epsilon\nu$] of corruption and corrupts the lump of dough with which it is mixed" (cp. Gal. v. 7-9).

Yahweh for His benefit. They were tributes undoubtedly, in many cases ; but the idea of His consuming them shows that they were intended as nourishment, and therefore as contributing to the sustaining of life they are appropriately mentioned here.

Reference was made above to David's act of self-denial in refusing to drink the water obtained at the risk of the life of others ; and, inasmuch as he poured out the water to Yahweh, his act of self-denial was in honour of God. This instance is probably the only one of its kind recorded in the Old Testament, for it is a pure act of unselfishness without any *arrière pensée* of personal advantage. We have thus what may be called the ascetic act for the sake of Yahweh at its best. As a rule, other motives enter in ; but there is always a God-ward thought in such acts, and it is this which at present concerns us ; personal detriment for the sake of Yahweh. Illustrations have been given in Chapter IX, and need not be repeated. Here it is only necessary to say that in so far as these acts are a giving-out of oneself they are a bestowal, in a degree however small, of the life-principle.

In its most exaggerated form the imparting to the deity of the life-principle, or "soul-substance," took the form of human sacrifice. The gift-idea, of course, enters in here too, as well as that of propitiation, but, whatever other motives prompted these sacrifices, the gift was "soul-substance."

It is necessary, however, to discuss the purposes of human sacrifice a little further. It is well to note at the outset that, as Westermarck says : "The practice of human sacrifice cannot be regarded as a characteristic of savage races. On the contrary, it is found much more frequently among barbarians and semi-civilised peoples than among genuine savages ; and at the lowest stages of culture known to us it is hardly heard of."¹ This must mean, at any rate in part, that such peoples had not yet arrived at that stage of religion in which gods were conceived of on anthropomorphic

¹ *Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, i. 436 (1906-8).

lines. When this stage had been attained, a variety of purposes for which human sacrifices were offered arose. Among these, one of particular importance was when human beings were sacrificed for the sake of the community. For whatever reason, the wrath of the god has been aroused against the community, and to avert this wrath human sacrifices, as being of special efficacy, were offered. To quote Westermarck again : " When men offer the lives of their fellows in sacrifice to their gods, they do so, as a rule, in the hopes of thereby saving their own. Human sacrifice is essentially a method of life insurance – absurd, no doubt, according to our ideas, but not an act of wanton cruelty. . . . The custom of human sacrifice admits that the life of one is taken to save the lives of many, or that an inferior individual is put to death for the purpose of preventing the death of someone who has a higher right to live."¹ An instructive illustration of this occurs in the narratives of Korah and of Dathan and Abiram in Num. xvi. 1–40. These " sons of Reuben " (verse 1), " sons of Levi " (verse 7), claimed privileges to which they had no right ; " shall one man sin," it is asked, " and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation ? " Then it is said : " And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods . . ." (Num. xvi. 1–35).² True, this is not a human sacrifice in the ordinary sense of the word, but the principle is much the same, excepting that the sentence is carried out by the Deity Himself. More immediately to the point is the story of Achan, doubtless based on some historical fact, in which it is told how Achan, because he had appropriated some part of what had been devoted to Yahweh, was stoned to death, and both he and what he had taken were burned : " And all Israel stoned him with stones ; and they burned them with fire, and stoned them with stones . . . and Yahweh turned from the fierceness of his anger " (Joshua vii. 25, 26).

¹ *Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, i. 466.

² The argument is not affected by the fact that Num. xvi. is composite.

The mention of the burning may suggest the idea of sacrifice. In this case the purpose of death was to appease the wrath of Yahweh because Achan had "stolen" from Him part of the spoil of Jericho which had been "devoted" to Him, and the life which was laid down is in His honour. Similarly in the case of Agag, whom Samuel slew "before Yahweh" (1 Sam. xv. 32, 33). It is worth noting that the Deuteronomist used the term *kalil*, "holocaust," a sacrificial term, to describe the destruction of a rebel city (Deut. xiii. 16 [17 in Heb.]).

A different purpose underlay the sacrifices of new-born children. That such sacrifices were offered by the Israelites after their settlement in Canaan we have seen every reason to believe. It is, indeed, proved not only by the discoveries of the skeletons of children during the excavations on the sites of Megiddo and Gezer belonging to the Israelite age (see above, pp. 114 ff.), but also by the foundation-sacrifices offered by Hiel who rebuilt Jericho (1 Kings xvi. 34; cp. Joshua vi. 26). We have also the directions and ordinances in such passages as Exod. xiii. 13; Num. xviii. 15, etc. Just as in the cases of first-fruits, and firstlings of the flocks and herds, so at one time the first-born of men were sacrificed, though, as we have pointed out above, this can hardly have continued for long. In any case, the idea of the first-born being sacrificed to Yahweh was due to the belief in the potency of new life which was imparted to Him by such sacrifices. The purpose of causing sons and daughters to "pass through the fire" was different (see Deut. xviii. 10; Lev. xviii. 21, xx. 2; Mic. i. 6); but in these propitiatory offerings, too, the life liberated was for Yahweh's benefit. The idea of blood giving life is not inconsistent with that of its being the means of union.

In the case, then, of all human sacrifices – with the exception of foundation-sacrifices, which were not offered to Yahweh – there is to be discerned this purpose of a life being laid down in order to give life. This is proved, apart from other indications, by the analogy existing among

men. The extraordinary persistence of the belief that by sacrificing life, whether of man or beast, the life of another can be prolonged is well illustrated by what Herodotus (vii. 114) tells us about Amestris, the wife of Xerxes. When she was growing old, she sacrificed twice seven noble children to the earth-god by burning them alive ; Herodotus says that she did this out of gratitude to the god, but does not mention for what reason she was grateful : the reason was that she believed that her span of life would be prolonged by the sacrifice. Or again, the Egyptian kings Amenophis II and Rameses II put prisoners of war to death in order that their name and person " might live for ever."¹

The purpose, then, of the various sacrifices to which we have here referred was to release life in order that it might be of benefit to Yahweh, the death of the victim being merely a means of liberating vitality ; consequently, as James rightly says, " the destruction of the victim, to which many writers have given a central position in the rite, assumes a position of secondary importance in comparison with the transmission of the soul-substance to the supernatural being to whom it is offered."² What James says in reference to sacrifices all the world over is applicable to the special case of the Israelites in their worship of Yahweh.

¹ S. A. Cook, *The Religion of Ancient Palestine in the Second Millennium B.C.*, p. 44 (1908).

² *Origins of Sacrifice*, p. 256 (1933).

CHAPTER XII

THE ATTITUDE OF THE PROPHETS TOWARDS SACRIFICES (PRE-EXILIC)

SOME discussion on this subject is called for, since, in dealing with the general subject of the development of sacrificial ideas, the teaching and practice of the prophets cannot be ignored. Isolated passages from some of the prophetic books are often quoted as evidence of hostility to the sacrificial cult in general on the part of the prophets. If these passages expressed everything that all the prophets at all times thought about sacrifices, there could be but one opinion on the subject, viz. that the prophets advocated the entire abrogation of sacrifices. We have the writings of eighteen prophets ;¹ in four² of these there are a few isolated passages in which sacrifices are denounced, and in each case there are special reasons for the denunciations ; and in two of them, at any rate, the denunciation is, in part, due to misapprehension. We would not for a moment deny that, in three or four cases, prophets, in moments of high spiritual exaltation, did envisage the idea of a purely non-material mode of worship ; but that either the prophets as a whole or those just referred to³ contemplated the entire and permanent abolition of sacrifice, we find it difficult to believe. That stage was yet to come. In theory, even in pre-exilic times, it was possible to some of the most spiritually minded ; but that in practice, as possible among the masses,

¹ Viz. Amos, Isaiah, Hosea, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Haggai, Zechariah i.-viii., Malachi, Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, Deutero-Isaiah, Trito-Isaiah, Zechariah ix.-xiv.

² Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah ; Mic. vi. 6-8 does not belong to the original form of the book.

³ With the possible exception of Jeremiah.

it was ever really contemplated in those early times, we cannot believe. But let us examine the words of these passages, and that, not as detached sayings, but in their context; and weighing, moreover, other factors, which should be taken into consideration. We will discuss them in their chronological order.

Amos iv. 4, 5 : "Come to Bethel and transgress, to Gilgal and multiply transgression; and in the morning bring your sacrifices [*zebachim*], and on the third day your tithes; and offer by burning the thanksgiving-offering [*todah*] of leaven, and proclaim freewill-offerings, yea, publish them abroad, for so ye love it, O ye children of Israel, saith Yahweh." These words of the prophet are an ironical exhortation to the people to continue their present mode of worship, while at the same time they sound the warning note that the people transgress by so doing. The people believed that, the greater the number of offerings they brought, the more certainly they could count on Yahweh's favour. But the prophet's words imply that the more numerous their offerings the greater was the wrath of Yahweh, because, as the context shows, they ignored His demands of righteousness and moral virtue. The transgression of the people does not refer to their coming to Bethel¹ and Gilgal, as though the prophet regarded these as Canaanite sanctuaries, for there was no thought as yet of any centralisation of worship, the local sanctuaries were the recognised centres of worship; the transgression consisted in the divorce between religion and ethics, ceremonial without religious morality. There is no denunciation here of sacrifices as such; it is the non-apprehension of the ethical righteousness of Yahweh that is the prophet's real concern. It was this last that made the worship of the people a mockery. Had their mode of living been different from what it was, there is not the slightest reason for supposing that the prophet would have denounced

¹ The words of iii. 14 are out of harmony with the context, and must be regarded as a later insertion by a scribe who wanted to bring in Bethel, of evil repute, so that it might be included in the prophecy of punishment.

their mode of worship. He says : " Seek good and not evil, that ye may live ; and so Yahweh the God of hosts shall be with you, as ye say " (v. 14). This is brought out again in v. 4-6 : " . . . Seek ye me, and ye shall live ; but seek not Bethel, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not over to Beersheba ; for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall become a vain thing. Seek Yahweh, and ye shall live. . . ." Here again the prophet denounces these centres of worship, because people, in their worship, do not seek the God of righteousness ; all worship that does not centre in a true apprehension of the nature of God is useless. But that does not mean that the worship would be futile if belief and mode of life were right. It is just because this is not the case that Amos says elsewhere : " I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight [lit. ' I will not smell ' ; see Lev. xxvi. 31] in your solemn assemblies. And though ye offer me your burnt-offerings . . .¹ and your meal-offerings I will not accept them neither will I regard the thank-offerings of your fatted calves. Take away from me the noise of thy songs, for I will not hear the melody of thy viols " (v. 21-23). Taken by itself this passage certainly reads as though the prophet contemplated the entire abrogation of sacrifice ; and so, no doubt, he did, so far as the sinners among the people whom he was addressing were concerned. It is not fanciful to observe the emphasis which the prophet lays on the possessive pronoun : " your feasts," " your solemn assemblies," " your burnt-offerings," " your meal-offerings," " your fatted calves." It was the sacrifices as offered by these people, not sacrifices in themselves, that Amos was here condemning. Even their songs and instrumental music,² harmless enough in themselves, from such worshippers was hateful. Then it is also worth pointing out

¹ The syntax of the Hebrew shows that something has fallen out of the text here, unless with Duhm and Marti we regard " though ye offer me your burnt-offerings and " as a later insertion.

² For music during the offering of sacrifices, see Exod. xxxii. 6, 17-19 ; or it may refer to the music during the sacrificial feast following the actual offering-up.

that the context speaks of the people being led away captive beyond Damascus (verse 27) ; obviously all sacrifices would cease then. But perhaps the strongest argument against the contention that in this passage Amos was condemning sacrifices *per se*, and was, therefore, contemplating their entire abrogation, is the question as to what alternative form of worship he would have proposed ? Even had Amos himself envisaged a purely spiritual form of worship, which for one living in the eighth century B.C. is highly improbable, could he have supposed that this would be possible for the ignorant masses ? The prophets were practical men, they understood those with whom they had to deal ; with their deep religious zeal the sight of worshippers steeped in sin was hateful beyond words ; but it was the worshippers, not the worship, that filled them with horror. The worship was needed, provided that it *was* worship ; and, if offered in the right spirit, the sacrificial form of worship was, in the circumstances, not merely the best in that age, but the only one that could be offered. If ever there was an occasion on which Amos would have denounced sacrificial worship as such, had this been his intention, it would have been when standing in the royal temple at Bethel, the prime centre of insincere worship. He pronounces a prophecy of woe against priest and people on account of their wickedness, but against sacrificial worship, as such, he says nothing. By all means let the centre of worship, where no true worship was offered, crash to the ground (see ix. 1, where Bethel must be meant), and let every one of the worshippers fall by the sword ; but against sacrificial worship, again, if sincere, there is no condemnation.

There is one other utterance of this prophet to be considered : v. 25. This is a difficult passage ; it begins with a question to which a negative answer seems to be implied : " Did ye bring unto me sacrifices and offerings [*Minchah*] in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel ? " From what has just preceded in verses 21, 22, about the non-acceptance of sacrifices by Yahweh, these words apparently mean :

Your sacrifices are quite unnecessary ; for you, i.e. your forefathers, did not offer them during the forty years' wanderings in the wilderness ; why should they be required now ? That is to say that, although Amos knew about the forty years' wanderings, he did not believe that any sacrifices were offered during that period. Is this possible ? It is not as though the Mosaic legislation, and the various injunctions about sacrifices, were confined to the Priestly Code, so that at the time of Amos nothing was known about Moses and his ordinances ; a great deal is said about these in the earlier J and E documents.¹ If Amos knew about the forty years' wanderings, he must have known, quite apart from any literature, that sacrifices *were* offered during those years of the nomadic period. It would seem, therefore, to be more likely that in the verse before us (25) it is not a negative answer that is implied, but an affirmative one, and that the meaning is this : Did not your forefathers offer me sacrifices which were acceptable because they were offered in faithfulness and sincerity ? The implication being : Why, then, do you offer sacrifices which, on account of your sins and on account of your false ideas about your God Yahweh, are worthless and unacceptable.²

The verse which follows, with its mention of the Assyro-Babylonian astral god (Saccuth and Kewan are two names of the same god), does not concern us, as it is an addition by a later scribe who assumed that the Israelites in Amos' day practised the Assyrian astral worship which he saw in vogue in his own time (see 2 Kings xxiii. 11, 12).

The next prophet with whom we are concerned is Isaiah. In i. 11-15 this prophet says (the importance of the passage demands its quotation in full) : " To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me ? saith Yahweh. I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts ;

¹ e.g. Exod. x. 9, xii. 21, xiii. 11, 12, xxxiv. 25, 26 (J), v. 1 (E). Cp. also the many references to sacrifices in early pre-exilic literature.

² The Hebrew interrogative particle with which verse 25 begins permits of either a negative or an affirmative answer. See Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar* (Cowley), § 150d.

and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When ye come to appear before my face, who hath required this at your hand – treading of my courts? Do it no more. The bringing of oblations, vain incense-offerings – it is an abomination to me; new-moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies – I cannot away with iniquity and solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a cumbrance unto me; I am weary with bearing them.” These are strong words, and perhaps we can hardly be surprised that they should have been interpreted as meaning that Isaiah wished by them to indicate that the entire offering of sacrifices should be done away with. This view we believe to be erroneous, and due to insufficient attention to the context. Of the deeply religious spirit of Isaiah there can be no two opinions; his loyalty to God, his constant insistence on the need of observing the divine ordinances, his yearning to draw the people nearer to God, these all proclaim a soul wholly given over to the service of God. Such a one could not be blind to the needs of his people; the sacrifices were the external means of their worship of God, of showing loyalty to Him, since they were of His ordaining, according to what both prophet and people believed; they were the means, too, of keeping up the relationship between worshippers and their God. How could the prophet have wished to do away with sacrificial worship? The context shows clearly enough why the people’s worship was unacceptable: “Ah, sinful nation,” cries the prophet, “a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that deal corruptly; they have forsaken Yahweh, they have despised the Holy One of Israel. Why will ye be still stricken, that ye revolt more and more? the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint . . .” (i. 4-6). We have only to ask ourselves: Supposing this had not been the moral condition of the people, would the prophet have condemned their sacrificial worship? It was the inconsistency between a wicked course of life and their appearance in the sanctuary

as though to serve God that the prophet denounced, not sacrifices in themselves when offered in the right spirit.

Then there is a further consideration : in the same chapter in which the prophet speaks of the sacrifices in the previously quoted passage, he continues : " And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you ; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear " (i. 15). Prayer is here directly joined on to sacrifice ; so that what is intended in regard to the offering of sacrifice must apply equally to the offering of prayer. If it is maintained that Isaiah was urging the abolition of sacrifice, the same must logically apply to prayer ; the two cannot be separated in this passage. Is it, then, to be supposed that the prophet desired the abolition of prayer ? That is, of course, inconceivable ; and it therefore necessarily follows from this passage that Isaiah could not have contemplated the abolition of sacrifice as such. Sacrifices, like prayer, if offered in the right spirit, were acceptable ; if not, one was as useless as the other. Isaiah was a far-seeing, wise man, with an intimate knowledge of human nature ; he knew, if anyone did, the limited, the undeveloped, religious sense of his people ; he knew how incapable they were of a purely spiritual form of worship. If then, as some hold, Isaiah contemplated the entire abrogation of the offering of sacrifice, what form of worship did he suppose would take its place ?

In earlier days, during his wonderful vision, when the call came to him from God, Isaiah had seen in the heavenly temple the altar from which the angel took a live coal, where-with he touched his lips, and made him clean ; was he likely to forget the picture of that altar, the heavenly counterpart of the earthly altar in the Jerusalem temple upon which the sacrifices were offered ? The altar belonged to the paraphernalia of worship. It is true, Isaiah very rarely refers to the Temple-worship ; but the reason for that is obvious : the Temple-worship was the business of the priests ; the prophet's activities were exercised in other directions. That Isaiah, however, took for granted the offering of the regular

sacrifices can be seen from such a passage as xxix. 1, where he says : " Ho, hearth of God, hearth of God [' Ariel ' = ' hearth of God,' the place of the altar where the sacrifices were offered], the city where David encamped ! add ye year by year ; let the feasts come round." The passage means that for a few years yet the feasts will be kept ; but that then the siege of the city will take place, as the context goes on to show. But the significance of the passage, from the present point of view, is that Isaiah takes for granted that, for the present, the feasts, of which the sacrifices formed the central part of the celebration, would continue. In other words, the passage proves conclusively that Isaiah took the continuance of sacrifices for granted ; and he cannot, therefore, have contemplated their abolition. In xxx. 29, again, we read : " Ye shall have a song as in the night when a holy feast is kept ; and gladness of heart as when one goeth with a pipe into the mountain of Yahweh, unto the Rock of Israel." Here the prophet speaks of the time of happiness to come when the Assyrian foe shall " be broken in pieces" (verse 31), and he refers to the Feast of Tabernacles ; so that again he takes the continuance of sacrifices for granted (see also xxxiii. 20, where there is again a reference to the feasts, but verses 20-24, and perhaps the whole chapter, are probably not part of Isaiah's writings).¹ Finally, Isaiah's belief in the inviolability of the Temple is well known (xxviii. 16, xxx. 19-21, xxxvii. 21-35), but for what purpose did the Temple exist if not for the offering of sacrifices ?

There are, therefore, good grounds for maintaining that Isaiah never contemplated the abolition of sacrificial worship. In the long passage first quoted, in which the prophet speaks against sacrifices and prayers, he is not inveighing against sacrifices and prayers, as such, but against their uselessness and inefficacy when offered by those whose godlessness and evil lives made them comparable to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. At the end of the passage the prophet sums up their wickedness in the words " Your

¹ Isa. xix. 19-22 is certainly of post-exilic date.

hands are full of blood” ; no service, whether of sacrifice or prayer, could be acceptable from such worshippers.

We turn now to the prophet Hosea. The well-known words of vi. 6 may be translated : “ For love I delight in, and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God rather than burnt-offerings.” To take these words, as is sometimes done, in the sense that the prophet was advocating the abolition of sacrifice, is simply to ignore the context. Undoubtedly the bulk of the Israelite people had mixed up Baal-worship with the worship of Yahweh, so that their sacrifices were unacceptable ; the prophet deals with that, but not in this passage. Undoubtedly, again, the Israelites attached an efficacy to the mere act of offering sacrifice which was wholly unwarranted ; the prophet deals with that too, but not in this passage. The context speaks of those who work iniquity and are stained with blood, of troops of robbers, of murderous priests, of licentious men. It is in contrast to this that Hosea teaches that what God demands is love – love to one’s fellow-creatures ; in comparison with this mere sacrifice is as nothing. As God had shown love to His people, so He demanded love between them, man to man ; but their lack of this showed that they had not the knowledge of God, to possess which was of greater value than burnt-offerings. What this great prophet taught in this passage was something, no doubt, beyond the comprehension of the bulk of his people ; but it came, later, to be a permanent law in Israel : “ Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself ” (Lev. xix. 18). That this is the true interpretation of the passage is proved by the fact that Christ understood it in this sense, as is abundantly clear from His quotation of it in Matt. ix. 13, xii. 7 ; see also Mark xii. 33. To hold, therefore, that this passage implies the prophet’s condemnation of all sacrifice is to miss entirely its real import.

Another passage in this prophet’s writing demands consideration ; in viii. 11–13 we read :¹ “ For Ephraim hath

¹ In this passage there are some corruptions in the Hebrew text ; the translation here given is based on some emendations of the text.

multiplied altars ; the altars have been unto him (an occasion) for sinning. Though I write for him a multitude of my laws, they are accounted as (from) a stranger. They love to offer sacrifices (because) they eat the flesh – Yahweh hath no pleasure in them. Now will he remember their iniquity, and visit their sins ; they shall return to Egypt.” The altars which had been multiplied refer to the Baal-polluted worship of the bulk of the people ; the worship they had brought with them from the nomadic period had been contaminated by the Canaanite mode of worship. The allusion to the writing of a multitude of laws is an important indication that already in the time of Hosea written laws existed. The words taken with their immediate context, “they love to offer sacrifices,” must refer to directions concerning the cultus, though doubtless other precepts were included. Contrary to the real purpose of the sacrifices, they were now misused as occasions for mere feasting ; under such conditions Yahweh could have no pleasure in them. In connexion with this passage we must read xi. 1–3. Here again the Hebrew text is corrupt, but the Septuagint has preserved the correct text : “When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called his children out of Egypt. Though I called them, they departed from me ; they sacrificed unto the Baals, and burned incense to graven images ; yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk, and took them in my arms. . . .” These words bring out clearly why the sacrifices were unacceptable to Yahweh ; they were offered to the Baals, and not to Him. Once more, in iii. 4, 5, we read : “For the children of Israel shall abide many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without pillar [*mazzebah*], and without ephod or teraphim ; afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek Yahweh their God . . .” ; here the prophet regards the deprivation of kingly rule and sacrificial worship as a punishment (see further below).

The passages from the book of Hosea which we have considered cannot, then, be interpreted in the sense that

the prophet desired the abrogation of sacrifices as such ; what he denounced was the prostitution of sacrifices. They were put to a wrong use ; not only were the worshippers wholly unfit to offer worship, but what they worshipped was an insult to God. In Hosea's metaphorical language, Israel, as Yahweh's spouse, was an adulteress (iv. 10-12), because she was unfaithful to her husband.

Finally, that Hosea never contemplated the abolition of sacrifice is made clear by the fact that he regards the people's inability to offer them as a punishment. As retribution for their unfaithfulness, the following words are put into the mouth of Yahweh : " Therefore will I take back my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will pluck away my wool and my flax which should have covered her nakedness. . . . I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feasts, her new moons, and her sabbaths and all her solemn assemblies " (ii. 9-11 [11-13 in Heb.]). It was during the feasts, etc., that the sacrifices were offered ; part of their punishment consists, therefore, in their not being able to take part in them any more. Again, in v. 6, as punishment for sin it is said : " They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek Yahweh ; but they shall not find him ; he hath withdrawn himself from them." The privilege of worshipping Yahweh by offering the best of the herds and flocks is withdrawn, because the people were unworthy to do so on account of their sins.

If to the prophet, therefore, the inability to offer sacrifices was a retributive deprivation, he cannot have regarded them with disfavour. Like other divine benefits this could be reserved only for the worthy ; but, if abused, then indeed they must be withdrawn.

We conclude, therefore, that to Hosea, it was the abuse of sacrifices, not their legitimate use, that was to be abolished.

We come now to the prophet Jeremiah. Reference has been made above to Isaiah's belief in the inviolability of the Temple, a belief which was, however, conditioned by

a recognition, on the part of the people, of what was expected of them if they would be true and sincere worshippers. But in this they failed wholly, as Isaiah shows only too clearly; and among later generations it was the same. "As has often happened in the history of religion," says Skinner, "that which was begun in the spirit was perfected in this flesh. The high ideal cherished by the best minds of the prophetic party, of a holy and righteous community living in moral fellowship with Yahweh and assured of His protection, degenerated into an empty formalism which substituted a superstitious reverence for the Temple for love to God and obedience to His will. The Temple became, even more than the Law-book, the talisman of the spurious piety that sprang up in the latter half of Josiah's reign."¹ This fact lies at the back of Jeremiah's attitude towards sacrificial worship.

The first passage to be considered is xi. 15-17; unfortunately, the Hebrew text of verse 15 is so hopelessly corrupt as to defy emendation, and verse 16 is also, in part, corrupt. The Septuagint, however, gives the general sense, and with this we must be satisfied: the people are bidden to keep away from God's house, and not to make vows, and to offer holy food, because of their wickedness. Yahweh had given to His people the name of "green olive-tree," beautiful in form, but it was blasted by the wind, and destroyed. Verse 17 then continues: "For Yahweh of hosts, that planted thee, hath pronounced evil against thee, because of the evil of the house of Judah,² which they have wrought for themselves in provoking me to anger by offering incense unto Baal." Here, it will be noted, the reason why the people's worship was rejected was because they had polluted the Temple by the worship of Baal. It is again the question of mixing up Canaanite religion with the traditional worship of Yahweh. This comes out again in the instructive passage vi. 16-20, of which the salient words are: "Thus saith

¹ *Prophecy and Religion: Studies in the life of Jeremiah*, p. 165 (1922).

² The words "of the house of Israel and" are probably a later addition.

Yahweh, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls ; but they said, We will not walk therein. . . . Hear, O earth ; behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words ; and as for my law, they have rejected it. To what purpose cometh there to me frankincense of Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country ? Your burnt-offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices pleasing unto me." The important point here is as to what is meant by the " old paths." Skinner says : " The ' old paths ' are the genuine ethical principles of the Mosaic revelation embodied in the traditional *Tora* or teaching of Yahweh (verse 19). These are contrasted with new-fangled costly refinements in cultus - ' frankincense that comes from Sheba,' and ' fine calamus from a far-off land ' (verse 20) - through which their new spiritual guides held out the delusive promise of peace of mind."¹ So far as it goes, this is, no doubt, true ; but in that traditional *Tora* were there no directions about the offering of sacrifices ? The contrast between the " new-fangled refinements " and the old traditional sacrifices is a more natural and logical one than that suggested by Skinner. At whatever period of his life the prophet Jeremiah may have written those words, they hardly suggest the abolition of all sacrifices ; the new-fangled ones and the Baal offerings by all means ; but not those offered in sincerity to Yahweh, offered as of old.

In xiv. 10 ff. we read that because of the unfaithfulness of the people who " loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet," Yahweh will not accept them. The passage continues, " And Yahweh said unto me, Pray not for this people for their good. When they fast, I will not hear their cry, and when they offer me burnt-offering and meal-offering, I will not accept them ; but I will consume them. . . ." Here, again, the prophet says nothing against sacrificial

¹ Op. cit., p. 118.

worship ; the people's sacrifices are not accepted, because they are unfaithful ; there is not a hint that had the people been faithful their sacrifices would have been refused. This comes out again in xvii. 19-27. Here the main theme, it is true, is the observance of the Sabbath ; this had been desecrated ; but the prophet says that, if it is properly hallowed, all will be well, and " this city shall be inhabited for ever. And they shall come from the cities of Judah . . . and from the south, bringing burnt-offerings, and sacrifices, and meal-offerings, and frankincense, and they shall bring thank-offerings, unto the house of Yahweh " (verse 26). Some commentators, it is only right to add, regard this verse as a later addition (Skinner does not refer to it), so that we cannot press it ; but it is, at any rate, better attested than xxxiii. 17, 18, which belong to the section xxxiii. 14-26, a section which does not figure in the Septuagint, and certainly does not belong to the original form of the book.

But the most important passages which deal with Jeremiah's attitude towards sacrificial worship are contained in what is known as his Temple Oration. This occurs in two forms in the book ; one of these (xxvi. 4-6) merely says that if the people will not walk in Yahweh's law, nor hearken unto the words of the prophets, then the Temple will share the fate of Shiloh, and Jerusalem will be a curse to all the nations of the earth. From the present point of view, all that is necessary to remark is that with the destruction of the Temple the whole sacrificial worship would come to an end - that is assuming that the Deuteronomic law of the centralisation of worship was ever really effective, which is much to be doubted.

The other account of the Temple Oration (vii. 1-14) is much fuller, and demands more careful consideration. It consists of two distinct portions, verses 1-7 and 8-14. The former passage, of which verses 1, 2 do not figure in the Septuagint, combats the popular delusion regarding the Temple, and warns the people against the " lying words " of those, namely the priests, who teach that all that is

required of them is centred in the Temple, i.e. in the worship in the Temple. The passage goes on to say that if only the people will do what is right in the sight of God they will dwell securely in their land. It must be noted that there is here no threat of the destruction of the Temple ; all will be well if only the people will live rightly. Undoubtedly the worship in the Temple is implicitly condemned ; but, if we are to be guided by other passages, that is because of the false worship offered there (e.g. vii. 18, xi. 17, xix. 13, and in verse 6 of the passage before us : " neither walk after other gods to your own hurt ").

The second portion (verses 8-14) is of a very different character, and its importance demands that it should be quoted in full : " Behold, ye place your trust in lying words that in no way profit. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye have not known, and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered ; and we will commit all these abominations [again] ? Is my house, which is called by my name, become a den of thieves in your eyes ?¹ Yea, I, too, look upon it [as such], saith Yahweh. But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I caused my name to dwell at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. And now, because ye have done all these deeds, and I spake unto you, and ye heard not,² and I called you, and ye answered not ; therefore will I do unto the house which is called by my name and in which ye trust, and unto the place which I gave unto you and unto your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh."³

It is clear from this passage that, owing to the wickedness of the people, to their false trust in the inviolability of the Temple, and in the idolatrous worship conducted there, together with a misplaced reliance on this, Jeremiah

¹ The Septuagint reading.

² The words " rising up early and speaking " are omitted in the Septuagint.

³ Verse 15 is omitted in the Septuagint.

predicted the destruction of the Temple ; and with that the entire abrogation of sacrificial worship as practised in the Temple. From this, however, it does not necessarily follow that, had the sacrifices been offered as of old, and had the lives of the people been different from what they were, Jeremiah would have condemned sacrificial worship.¹ But there is another passage to be considered. In vii. 21-23 we read : " Thus saith Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel : Add your burnt-offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat ye flesh. For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings and sacrifices ; but this thing I commanded them, saying, Hearken unto my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people ; and walk ye in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you." In this passage Jeremiah mockingly bids the people go on offering their sacrifices, and to eat flesh (the reference is to the sacrificial feast), the application being, of course, that those sacrifices should cease. That attitude we can well understand, considering the insincerity of the worshippers and the syncretistic nature of the worship. But the prophet then goes on to make the astounding statement that no directions were given concerning burnt-offerings and sacrifices when the people were brought out of Egypt ! This is a direct denial of what is said in such passages as Deut. xv. 19-23, xvi. 1 ff., to mention no others ; and if it be urged that Jeremiah had his own reasons for regarding the book of Deuteronomy with suspicion, there is the older Book of the Covenant,² wherein it is commanded, for example : " An altar of earth shalt thou make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings, and thy peace-offerings, thy sheep and thine oxen ; in every place where I cause my name to be remembered I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee " (Exod. xx. 24 ; see also verses 28-31, xxiii. 18, 19). As one belonging to a priestly family (Jer. i. 1)

¹ Moreover, the destruction of Shiloh did not involve the abolition of sacrifices.

² Exod. xx. 22-xxiii. 33.

Jeremiah must have been familiar with these laws, given, as it is said, by God through Moses ; indeed, his reference to the "old paths," in vi. 16, implies as much. It is, therefore, difficult to get away from the impression that Jeremiah knew his statement was not in accordance with the facts, unless we are to believe that to him the laws about sacrifice "were unauthorised additions to the covenant made with the fathers" ;¹ in that case he was a higher critic with a vengeance ! The fact seems to be that Jeremiah knew perfectly well that his statement was in direct contradiction to what was written in the Book of the Covenant. It is not necessary to suppose that he regarded Moses as a myth ; he simply ignored him.

Consumed with an overpowering thirst for righteousness, horrified at the gross sinfulness of those he saw about him, aghast at the idea widely held that immorality of life was consistent with sacrificial worship, and being himself of a somewhat impetuous and fanatical nature, Jeremiah gave way to the utterance of unbalanced words, which, in calmer moments, he would have repudiated. Such a true and sincere man would have been the last to claim impeccability.

It cannot be denied that Jeremiah did envisage and advocate the entire abolition of sacrifice ; but he was the one and only prophet of which this can be truthfully said.

We have sought, without preconceived ideas, to weigh the sayings of the prophets on this subject, and to take these sayings, not in isolation, but in their context. The sayings themselves are extraordinarily few in number when compared with the prophetic writings as a whole. If the prophets had thought to uproot the one thing which, in the undeveloped religious conceptions of their people, was essential to belief, because of its innate evil, their writings would have abounded in condemnation of it. With great truth Skinner says : "To the people sacrifice was the vital part of religion, not only on the human side, but also on the divine. Yahweh was as dependent on their service as they

¹ Skinner, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

were on His succour ; if sacrifice were abolished the relation between them and their God would indeed be dissolved ; but as an unworshipped deity Yahweh would no longer have a *raison d'être*.”¹ To abolish sacrifices, thus, would have meant taking from the people their religion ; to impute that to the prophets would be to do them an injustice. Their purpose was to purify, not to abolish, the offering of sacrifices ; to purify them from the contamination which their admixture with foreign cults had brought about. The time was to come when this would be accomplished ; but that time had not come yet.

So far, then, we have examined the writings of four pre-exilic prophets in order to see what the prophetic attitude towards sacrifices was, viz. those of Amos, Isaiah, Hosea, and Jeremiah. But we have yet the writings of five other pre-exilic prophets, viz. Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Ezekiel ; these too must be considered. It is, however, necessary to point out here that in the case of each of these books most modern commentators have, with every justification, assigned certain parts to post-exilic times, viz. Mic. iv.-vii. ; Nah. i. ; Hab. iii. ; Zeph. iii. 14-20 ; Ezek. xl.-xlviii. With regard to the last, agreement has not yet been reached ; but Hertrich's arguments in favour of a post-exilic date for these chapters appear to us so convincing that we feel impelled to agree with him.²

These portions will be considered later when we deal with the attitude of the post-exilic prophets towards sacrifices.

In the book of Micah there are no references either to the sanctuary or to sacrifices. In i. 2, “Yahweh in his holy temple,” the reference is not to the Temple in Jerusalem, but, as the following verse shows (cp. Isa. xviii. 4), to the heavenly temple. In iii. 12 it is said that, owing to the wickedness of priests and prophets, Zion shall “be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house [i.e. the Temple mount] as the high places of a forest.” This destruction of the Temple must

¹ Op. cit., pp. 180 f.

² *Ezechielprobleme*, pp. 119 ff. (1932).

involve the cessation of sacrificial worship ; but as it is retribution for evil-doing that is spoken of, the loss of offering such worship comes as a punishment ; there is no condemnation of sacrifices as such. That is all that is to be gathered from this book.

In the two chapters of which the book of Nahum consists, in its original form, there would naturally be no reference to sacrifices, as these chapters deal exclusively with the fall of Nineveh.

The subject-matter of the book of Habakkuk, again, which is largely concerned with the Chaldæan menace, gives small scope for the mention of sacrifices. The lawlessness of the people is dealt with (i. 2-4), but there are no references to the sanctuary or to the cultus.

In the book of Zephaniah (i. 4-6) vengeance is prophesied against Judah on account of the worship of false gods, and against them " that are turned back from following Yahweh, and those that have not sought Yahweh, nor inquired after Him." Then it is said that " the day of Yahweh is at hand ; for Yahweh hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath sanctified his guests. And it shall come to pass in the day of Yahweh's sacrifice that I will punish the princes and the king's sons, and all such as are clothed with foreign apparel." Here the day of judgement is pictured as a sacrifice of which the victims will be those who have been faithless to Yahweh. The representation is all taken from the procedure at the ordinary sacrificial worship - sacrifice, sanctification of worshippers, and victims (cp. verse 17), and Yahweh Himself is conceived of as the priest ! The prophet can hardly have uttered words like these had his attitude towards sacrificial worship been of a hostile character. And this applies with special force to iii. 4, where, if anywhere, words of condemnation might have been expected if, in the prophet's mind, sacrificial worship was to be abolished : " Her prophets are light and treacherous persons ; her priests have profaned the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law " (cp. Ezek. xxii. 26, on which see below).

Or

Finally, we come to the book of Ezekiel. Though living and writing in exile, the probability is that Ezekiel had worked in his native land before being carried away into exile. His intimate knowledge of the religious and moral condition of the people in the homeland; the detailed description of the worship there both in the Temple and in other places; above all, his attitude towards sacrificial worship—give to his utterances a special importance in the present connexion.

The terrible depravity among the people finds constant expression: blood-guiltiness and violence (vii. 23, xi. 6, xxii. 2-4); adultery and incest (xxii. 10, 11); usury, oppression, dishonest gain (xxii. 12, 13), to mention only a few passages; yet these people come to offer worship. The type of that worship is described again and again. Referring to this in general, it is said, for example, in xx. 28: "For when I had brought them into the land . . . then they looked for every high hill, and every thick tree, and they offered there their sacrifices, and there they presented the provocation of their offering, there also they made their sweet savour, and they poured out there their drink-offerings" (cp. vi. 3-6, and so elsewhere). But the worst offending in this respect is what the prophet witnesses in the Temple itself; viii. 5-18 gives such an insight into what had taken the place of the traditional sacrificial worship that some quotations from it are called for: ". . . So I lifted up mine eyes the way toward the north, and behold, northward of the gate of the altar this image of jealousy¹ in the entry . . . And he brought me to the door of the court, and I looked, and behold, a hole in the wall. . . . So I went in and saw; and behold, every form of creeping thing and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel pourtrayed upon the wall round about. And there stood before them seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan,

¹ The rare word for "image" used here (*semel*) occurs also in Deut. iv. 16, "the image of male or female"; it is probably in reference to a female deity.

with every man his censer in his hand ; and the odour of the cloud of incense went up. Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in his chamber of imagery ? For they say, Yahweh seeth us not ; Yahweh hath forsaken the land. . . . Then he brought me to the door of the north gate of Yahweh's house ; and behold, there sat the women weeping for Tammuz. . . . And he brought me into the inner court of Yahweh's house, and behold, at the door of the temple of Yahweh, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of Yahweh, and their faces toward the east ; and they worshipped the sun toward the east. Then he said unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man ? Is it a light thing to the house of Judah that they commit the abominations which they commit here ? for they have filled the land with violence, and have turned again to provoke me to anger ; and lo, they are a stench in my nostrils.¹ Therefore will I also deal in fury. . . ."

This is a fearful indictment, and we can fully understand the prophet's frequent declarations that punishment must follow : " Wherefore, as I live, saith Yahweh, surely because thou hast defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, I will hew thee down² and mine eye shall not spare thee, and I will have no pity . . ." (v. 11 ff.) ; " I will stretch out my hand upon them, and make the land desolate and waste . . ." (vi. 14, and so frequently). At the same time, it is well to note that Ezekiel shows by his denunciations of both prophets and priests that he largely blames *them* for the depravity and false worship of the people. For example, in xiii. 8 ff. he says : " Therefore thus saith Yahweh, Because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies, therefore, behold, I am against you, saith Yahweh. And mine hand shall be against the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies. . . . Because,

¹ So, emending the present meaningless Hebrew text, we should probably read.

² This is the reading of a number of manuscripts.

even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace, and there is no peace . . .” ; see also xiii. 1-7, xiv. 7-11, and elsewhere. So, too, with regard to the priests : “ Her priests have done violence to my law, and they have profaned mine holy things ; they have put no difference between the holy and the common, neither have they caused men to discern between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them ” (xxii. 26).

In view of the profanation of the sanctuary and the false worship of both priests and people, it might well have been expected that Ezekiel would have had something to say in condemnation of sacrificial worship. So far from this being the case, however, he declares that, while the idolaters are rejected, the faithful and the repentant shall serve God on the holy mountain : “ There will I accept them, and there will I require your offerings [*Terumah*] and the first-fruits, with all your holy gifts ” (xx. 40). And he continues : “ And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye polluted yourselves ; and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for all your evils which ye have committed. And ye shall know that I am Yahweh, when I have wrought with you for my name’s sake . . . ” (xx. 43, 44). Elsewhere he says : “ Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them ; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them,¹ and I will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the nations shall know that I, Yahweh, am sanctifying Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for ever ” (xxxvii. 26-28).

Ezekiel’s attitude towards sacrificial worship is thus clear. While he utterly condemns the sacrifices offered to false gods, he looks forward to the time when the people will repent of their unfaithfulness to their God ; then their

¹ The words, “ and I will place them, and multiply them,” are omitted in the Septuagint.

sacrifices will be accepted, and the sanctuary wherein the sacrificial worship was celebrated will stand for evermore.

We have now discussed, or referred to, all the passages in the writings of the pre-exilic prophets in which sacrificial worship is mentioned. As a result, we find it difficult to agree with the widely prevalent view that the prophets regarded sacrifices, not only as unnecessary, but as actually harmful, and that they, therefore, advocated the entire abolition of sacrificial worship. Jeremiah, it is granted, is an exception ; but in this case, we feel convinced that he is the exception which proves the rule.

There is one other matter which demands consideration. In the preceding chapters we have been at pains to show that the fundamental purposes of sacrifices were : the offering of gifts to God, the means of union with Him, and the setting free of life in His honour and for His benefit. It will naturally be asked : Are there any signs that the prophets showed any knowledge or appreciation of these purposes ? Had they any meaning for the prophets ? Here we can only repeat what was said in the preceding chapter ; these purposes of sacrifice were self-evident, and it would, therefore, be unreasonable to look for direct statements upon the subject ; we do not expect to find reasons given why prayer was offered, and the same applies to the purposes of sacrifice. It is impossible to believe that the prophets were unaware of these purposes ; for if they had not existed the whole institution of sacrifice could never have come into being. It would be against common sense to believe that anyone would offer a sacrifice without some intention. The prophets were full of deep religious feelings ; sacrifices in themselves were the outcome of similar feelings ; how could the prophets not have known why sacrifices were offered ? If the prophets thought the ideas of sacrifice were wrong, they would assuredly have given some indications of this. But there is no hint to this effect ; a fact which supports the contention that it was not sacrificial worship in itself that they condemned, but only its misuse in wrong directions.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM DURING THE POST-EXILIC PERIOD

THE great sin of Israel as a nation had lain in unfaithfulness to Yahweh in their worship. We have endeavoured to show that the denunciations of the prophets against the cultus were directed, not against sacrificial worship as such, but against sacrifices offered to other deities, or to Yahweh, when He was treated merely as one of the Baals of the land. Moreover, according to the ethical standards of the prophets, even when sacrifices were ostensibly offered to Yahweh, it was an outrage on His honour that worshippers steeped in sin should appear in His presence, with the thought that the mere fact of offering sacrifices fulfilled all His requirements. Had sacrifices been offered to Yahweh alone, had they been offered in purity of spirit, the prophets' denunciations would not have found utterance. At the stage of religion as it was then, sacrificial worship was a necessity.

That this was the true attitude of the prophets towards sacrificial worship, with all the motives involved, is fully borne out by the religious leaders and teachers during and after the Exile.

In one respect, it is true, there was a profound difference of outlook between the pre-exilic prophets and the religious teachers of post-exilic times : the ever reiterated burden of the former was the irretrievable downfall of the nation, while the latter looked forward to the resuscitation of the nation. In general, it may be said that the expectations of either regarding the people of Israel centred, respectively,

in two words : Despair and Hope. The form of worship which expressed the relationship between the people and their God largely conditioned the outlook in either case. In the former it was false, impure, hollow, and therefore hateful to God ; the inevitable result, as the pre-exilic prophets proclaimed, must be that God would cast off His people. Faithful, purified, and sincere, it would be acceptable to God ; and the future would be bright. To worship was added in the post-exilic times, it is true, veneration for the Law ; but sacrificial worship, the means of approach to God, constituted, after all, the central and most important element of the Law.

That among those who were led into exile there were many priests goes without saying (cp. Ezra i. 5, ii. 36-39, etc.). The Temple worship, the conduct of which had been their main occupation, had ceased for them, so that their activities had now to be exercised in other directions. That these activities were largely concentrated on the study of whatever scriptures they had brought with them – and probably also in making copies of them – is shown by the subsequent history to have been the case. The words “ the priest, the scribe,” which we find connected with the name of Ezra (vii. 11 ; Neh. viii. 9, xii. 26), indicates co-operation between the two in this matter. What these scriptures consisted of, copies of which, to judge from later usage, had previously been kept in the Temple archives, it is not difficult to surmise : the historical records of the nation, collections of prophetic utterances, psalms sung in the Temple worship, and documents containing laws concerning the religious and social life of the people. Among the laws were, obviously, directions concerning worship, which belonged to various periods ; they were contained in a few passages in the “ Book of the Covenant ” (Exod. xx. 22-xxiii. 33), viz. Exod. xx. 24-26, xxii. 20, 29-31, xxiii. 14-19, 32, 33 ; in certain parts of the J and E documents ; in the so-called “ Code of Holiness ” (Lev. xvii.-xxvi.), viz. xvii., xix. 5-8, 20-22, 30, xx. 1-5, xxi. 6, 16-24, xxii., xxiii.,

xxiv. 1-9, xxv. 9, xxvi. 30, 31 ; and, above all, in the book of Deuteronomy. In addition to this it is evident that the teaching of Ezekiel made itself felt.

The sacrificial laws contained in these documents were the basis upon which, in course of time, the full development of the sacrificial system, as presented in the Priestly Code, was founded. It will be unnecessary for our present purpose to discuss all the details of this developed system. We are chiefly concerned with the purposes of and the development of ideas concerning sacrifice ; but in so far as these laws and ritual throw light on the purpose and meaning of sacrifice they must be discussed.

The first point upon which stress must be laid is the effect which the Exile had upon the religious outlook of the leaders and teachers, and, through them, on the Jewish community. It was in effect the nation of Judah as a whole that had been carried into captivity. That this had happened by the will of their God could not admit of doubt. Of the reason of the divine act there could, likewise, be no shadow of doubt ; for why should God have done this except as a mark of His disfavour with His people ? And the cause of His disfavour could be traced back to one thing only : " Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you " (Isa. lix. 2). Those words, on whatever occasion they may have been uttered, expressed the conviction of all the best elements among the exiles. It was the realisation of this truth that engendered a sense of sin such as had never before been experienced. And, naturally, this had more to do with the subsequent developments of the sacrificial system than anything else. Not that other reasons for this were wanting. A fuller apprehension of the Personality and Nature of God, as taught by Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah, necessarily generated in His worshippers the recognition of their utter insignificance and unworthiness in His sight : " And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire within it round about, from the appearance of his

loins and upward ; and from the appearance of his loins and downward I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness round about him. As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Yahweh. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face . . ." (Ezek. i. 27, 28). Thus does the prophet, in halting and wholly inadequate language, seek to express the inexpressible majesty of God, as seen in his vision. But it sufficed to bring home to the people their pitiable littleness in the sight of Him who dwelt in the heavens, an insignificance to be compared with that of the very insects, as that other prophet felt when he thought of Him "that abideth over the circle of the earth and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers" (Isa. xl. 22). "Who," he asks, "hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out the heavens with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?" (xl. 12). This teaching of the divine transcendence could not fail to create a sense of deep humility in the minds of those who acknowledged Yahweh as their God. What could they do to honour Him, to evince their feeling of dependence on Him, to show their recognition of their sinfulness in His sight? Little enough, in truth ; but they did their best, according to their lights, in the shape of more intensive worship.

This deepened sense of sin which a fuller apprehension of the divine nature could but increase was, then, the first and most far-reaching effect which the Exile had on the people through their teachers.

The second thing to be noted is that, as a result of this, sacrificial worship developed into a system with certain characteristics such as had not previously existed. It became, to begin with, a public institution based on the developed conception of the Law. Herein lay a great difference from earlier conditions, under which sacrificial worship was not

a State institution ; there was no organised system regulated by the ruling caste. The offering of sacrifice, at any rate prior to the centralisation of worship in the reign of Josiah, was the practical religious expression of the individual who was bound only by traditional usage ; it entered into everyday life according to the wants which arose and which affected private individuals. On certain special occasions, such as the annual feasts, the offering of sacrifice had assumed a more official character. But these were exceptions ; as a general rule, apart from the Temple worship, the local sanctuaries were for the benefit of individuals rather than centres of organised official worship. After the Exile it became very different. The sacrificial system assumed the character of a national expression of the desire for a state of rectitude in accordance with divine law. Sacrifices were offered in order to do the will of God as ordained in His law.

Here it must be remarked, in passing, what the abolition of the earlier vogue of individual initiative involved. With all its dangers, there was a very solid advantage when men could feel that their relationship to their God might be expressed by an offering in accordance with the feelings of their own wants, and at such times as these wants arose. That, in itself, was good. The tragedy was that, as we have seen, the purity of Yahweh-worship became all too soon contaminated with that of the Baals. Not that, necessarily, there were none that remained true to the national God ; even in Elijah's day there were some who had not bowed the knee to Baal ; and it would be difficult to believe that the teaching and example of the prophets was wholly without effect.¹ Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that the bulk of the people were led astray ; and therein lay the danger of the earlier, more unregulated, sacrificial worship. In the post-exilic period this danger, at any rate, was once for all eliminated, though at the expense, to some extent, of private worship. For now sacrificial worship

¹ See e.g. Isa. viii. 16-18.

became a State affair ; and while private offerings continued they occupied a position of far less importance.

Owing to the deeper sense of sin referred to, the sacrificial system assumed a somewhat different aspect ; and some new ideas arose, though developed from those of earlier times. The purposes of sacrifices also underwent change. It is not, however, as though the types of sacrifice of the older times were discarded ; all the traditional types of sacrifice continued in use ; but, in addition, other forms were introduced.

The outstanding characteristic of post-exilic sacrifices was their purpose of atonement, and, thus, reconciliation with God ; this was, of course, the outcome of the developed sense of sin, of which we have spoken. To effect reconciliation with God and to establish normal relations with Him could be brought about only by national and individual sins being atoned for. Hence this insistent idea of atonement. It is, however, well to point out here, in passing, that long before the Exile the feeling of the need of being reconciled to God again, after some offence against Him had been committed, often appears. This may be seen from the use of the expression "unclean" (*tamē*), indicating a state of unfitness in the sight of God, for one reason or another ; on the other hand, there is the term "holy" (*qadosh*), which expresses a state of right relationship between man and Yahweh. The existence of such terms witnesses, on the one hand, to a sense of estrangement from God, and, on the other hand, to the conviction of nearness to God ; the act whereby the state of uncleanness is done away with, and that of holiness attained, is a means of reconciliation, i.e. an act of atonement. Thus, the existence of these two terms, and what they signify, points to the beginnings, at least, of the feeling of the need of atonement. Moreover, as will have been gathered from what has been said in previous chapters, gift-sacrifices had the purpose often enough of effecting reconciliation ; but this was not their primary purpose. As Buchanan Gray says, "the *character* no less than the *number* of the references to sacrifice of different types and with

different objects indicates that, while propitiation and expiation as the end of sacrifice were in the earlier periods of the history of Israel anything but unknown or even exceptional, it was also far from being constant or even relatively frequent. Sacrifice was more often eucharistic than propitiatory, and it was more often offered with feelings of joy and security than in fear or contrition."¹

What, then, in pre-exilic times was secondary, subsidiary, intermittent, becomes, after the Exile, central and all-important. This we now proceed to illustrate,

One of the reasons which has led some authorities to contend for a post-exilic date of Ezek. xl.-xlviii. is just this atoning purpose of sacrifice which appears prominently in them. The first thing to be noticed here is that these chapters deal almost exclusively with sacrifices of a public character. Their cost is defrayed by "the prince"; in xlv. 17 it is said: "And it shall be the prince's part to give the burnt-offerings, and the meal-offerings, and the drink-offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all the appointed feasts of the house of Israel; he shall prepare the sin-offering, and the meal-offering, and the burnt-offering, and the peace-offerings, to make atonement for the house of Israel." In the preceding verse it is commanded that, in order to enable the prince to pay for all this, an "oblation," *Terumah*, is laid upon "all the people of the land." In xlv. 30, on the other hand, this "oblation" is given direct to the priests. Especially noteworthy in these chapters is the mention of the "guilt-offering," *Asham*, and the "sin-offering," *Chattath* (xl. 39, xlii. 13, xlv. 29, xlvi. 20); they occur, too, in other post-exilic writings, and emphasise the need felt for atonement.² Whatever earlier ideas may have been attached to these two terms they now become expiatory offerings.

It is significant, once more, that in Ezek. xlv. 18, 20, two new feasts, hitherto unknown, are to be celebrated on the

¹ Op. cit., p. 95.

² On these two offerings, see further above, pp. 75 ff., 80.

first day of the first month, and on the first day of the seventh month ;¹ but it is the purpose of these new feasts that is important : they are for the cleansing of the sanctuary, and to "make atonement for the house" (cp. xliii. 20). These are, in effect, two days of atonement ; they are not mentioned elsewhere ; in the later Priestly Code the great Day of Atonement was celebrated on the tenth day of the seventh month (Lev. xvi. 29).²

It would be wearisome, even if it were possible, to enumerate the various additions to, and ritual ordinances regarding, the ancient sacrifices which were made in post-exilic usages in order to emphasise their atoning character. One or two illustrations may, however, be offered.

The burnt-offering, '*Olah*, although often of a private character, rose to increased importance after the Exile. This may be seen from the fact that the expression "the altar of burnt-offering" became attached to the altar, indicating that this sacrifice was now regarded as of prime importance. Significant, too, is the further fact that the '*Olah* was, in post-exilic times, offered every morning and every evening (the *Tamid*), instead of, as previously, in the morning only (see Exod. xxix. 38 ff. ; Lev. vi. 8 ff. [1 ff. in Heb.] ; Num. xxviii. 3 ff.). And, once more, a new regulation is now added in regard to it, to the effect that the victim might be a turtle-dove or a pigeon instead of a lamb of two years old, as hitherto. The reason for this was that the poor might now be able to make this offering ; its importance, even its indispensability, was such that everyone, the poorest as well as those better off, might be able to offer it. The purpose of this sacrifice was to make atonement, to become reconciled with God ; the gift-idea is clearly present here too. While the purpose of atonement attached to all post-exilic sacrifices, the '*Olah* was the atoning sacrifice *par excellence*. Important here are the words of Lev. i. 3, 4, written in reference to it : ". . . He shall offer it at the door

¹ This is the, obviously correct, reading of the Septuagint.

² On this, see further below, pp. 226 ff.

of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before Yahweh. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering : and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him ” (see also Lev. xiv. 20, xvi. 24 ; Exod. xxix. 15, 33). The difference between the ‘*Olah* and other sacrifices of atonement was that it was of a widely embracing, general character, whereas the others atoned for or expiated specific sins. From Lev. i. 1 ff. it is seen that the victim was slain by the offerer ; but, according to Ezek. xlv. 11, this was to be done by the Levites. All the evidence points, however, to the former having been the practice so far as the ‘*Olah* was concerned. As a private offering this is what would naturally be expected. When on certain occasions, such as the daily morning and evening ‘*Olah*, this offering was of a public character (see Exod. xxix. 38-44 ; Num. xxviii. 1-8), then it would appear that all action was carried out by the priests (“ ministering to me in the priest’s office,” verse 44).

With regard to the “ Code of Holiness ” (Lev. xvii.-xxvi.) there is much that stands in close relationship to Ezek. xl.-xlviii. But in some things there are important differences : the editors, says Lods, “ seem to be of a more conservative spirit than those of the legislation of Ezekiel, being concerned to note the usages of the ancient Temple, without venturing, however, to alter them as radically as their own system would logically demand. They do not mention the distinction between priests and Levites ; they retain the wine-libations which the legislation of Ezekiel had abolished on account of the ancient prejudice against this gift of the Baals which had encroached upon pure Yahwism. They permit the layman to slaughter his own victim (Lev. xviii. 5, 8, 9). In the classification of sacrifices they retain the old nomenclature (Lev. xvii. 8, xxii. 14, 18, 21). The specially expiatory sacrifices, ‘*Asham* and ‘*Chattath*, figure only in later additions (Lev. xix. 21, 22, xxiii. 19). In the ritual of the festivals the Code of Holiness retains very ancient details which still show clearly the agrarian character of the

ceremonies ; at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for example, a sheaf of corn has to be offered to Yahweh, and at the Feast of Weeks, two leavened loaves (Lev. xxiii. 9-17)."¹

Next, something must be said about the peace-offerings, *Shelamim*, or *Zibche shelamim*. In pre-exilic times these were the commonest of all offerings. In post-exilic times they are reckoned among private sacrifices, and are divided into three categories : the "votive offering," *Neder* ; the "freewill-offering," *Nedabah* ; and the "thank-offering," *Todah* ; this last is added in Lev. vii. 11 ff. ; cp. xxii. 29, 30. We have here a considerable development ; but these sacrifices had this in common with the *Shelamim* of pre-exilic times in that there was a meal in connexion with each, and they thus partook of the nature of communion-sacrifices. Of peace-offerings in general, without specifying the three special kinds just mentioned, we have the most detailed account. One has but to compare this with the mention of peace-offerings in pre-exilic times (e.g. 1 Sam. xi. 15 ; 2 Sam. vi. 17, 18, etc.) to see what an immense development must have taken place. The regulations in Lev. iii. are most minute, and these new ordinances have the purpose of emphasising the atoning character of these sacrifices. This is especially brought out by the instructions given as to the application of the blood. Of this more will be said presently.

Of particular importance in post-exilic times is the use of the term *le-Kapper*, "to make atonement for," or "to atone" (see further above, pp. 92 f.), e.g. Lev. xvi. 32 : "And the priest . . . shall make the atonement," and so often. It is used in Ezek. xlv. 15-17, where it is coupled with peace-offerings and meal-offerings. In Lev. i. 3, 4, it is said that the burnt-offering is accepted before Yahweh from him who offers it for the purpose of making expiation (cp. also Lev. xiv. 20, xvi. 24). In Exod. xxix. 33 (P) it is said in reference to what is evidently a peace-offering, though not actually mentioned : "And they shall eat those things

¹ *Les Prophètes d'Israël et les débuts du Judaïsme*, p. 298 (1935).

wherewith atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them" (cp. Lev. x. 14). Lev. xvii. 11, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls," clearly indicates that all sacrificial blood is of atoning efficacy. This central idea of blood being the means whereby sacrifice effects atonement must be examined a little further. Its far-reaching importance is brought out by the minute regulations concerning the application of blood, given in a number of passages. In Lev. iii., already referred to, it is commanded, in reference to the peace-offering: "the priests shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about" (verse 2); this is in the event of the victim being taken from the herd. The same regulation applies if it is taken from the flock (verse 7), and if it be a goat (verse 13); the same is commanded in reference to the burnt-offering (Lev. i. 5, 11). If the victim is a bird "the blood thereof shall be drained out on the side of the altar" (verse 15). Of the guilt-offering, again, a similar sprinkling upon the altar round about has to be made (Lev. vii. 1, 2); what is said of the guilt-offering applies also to the sin-offering (verse 7). Greater detail is given in Lev. viii.; here, in reference to the "bullock of the sin-offering," the blood is put upon the "horns of the altar round about," whereby the altar is purified; the rest of the blood is poured out "at the base of the altar," whereby it is sanctified, "to make atonement for it" (verses 14, 15). Then, as to "the ram of the burnt-offering," the ritual is less detailed, it is simply said that the blood is sprinkled "upon the altar round about" (verse 19). The ritual regulations are again repeated with slight variations in Lev. ix. 2-4, 8, 9, 12, 16, 18; cp. Exod. xxix. 16, 20; Num. xviii. 17. It should be added that the rendering "sprinkle" does not properly express the Hebrew term, which is a stronger word, meaning rather to "splash," or "bespatter," see p. 94.

From what has been said, then, it is clear that the teaching is that atonement for, or covering of, sin is effected by

blood ; but this does not explain how or why the outpouring of blood should have taken away sin. No explanation is given ; but it is, perhaps, suggested by what is said in Lev. xvii. 11. This must be quoted again : " For the life of the flesh is in the blood ; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls ; for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life," i.e. that is in it. This must mean that the life of the victim, which is in the blood, is liberated in order to save the life of the sinner ; it will be remembered how often it is said of the sinner : " that soul shall be cut off " ; in the passage quoted it is the people collectively which is spoken of. A life is substituted for theirs. This idea is very crude ; it does not seem to have belonged exclusively to post-exilic times ; but it lies at the base of the Jewish doctrine of atonement. An even cruder form of the idea is contained in the scape-goat ceremony, to be noticed presently. We should like to add here another theory of atonement by sacrifice contained in the Levitical ceremony of blood-sprinkling. This has been admirably stated by Lods, whose words we quote : " The act which this ritual, the most sacred, and which was evidently the culminating point in the sacred drama, was the sprinkling of the blood. . . . It was a rite deliberately adopted, and not simply inherited, by the priests of the fifth century. The blood of the victims, being something very holy, had the effect of conferring holiness on the objects or beings which it touched, or of restoring this, if they had lost it ; that is to say, of consecrating them, or of making an atonement for them. If that was the guiding principle, it explains why atoning sacrifices always consisted of one victim only, and why everything centred, almost exclusively, in the blood ; for the one purpose of the slaying was to provide the blood needed to give strength to sacred things and persons, particularly to the sanctuary, which is defiled by all the impurity of the people, in whose midst it stands, and is thus deprived of its sanctifying power."¹

¹ *Les Prophètes*, p. 334.

Here we observe the recurrence of the ancient life-liberating idea. This, taken with the other idea mentioned above, also ancient, shows how different ideas come to be attached to one and the same rite ; in this case, namely, the substitutive and the life-giving ideas. That these are not explicitly expressed is quite comprehensible ; they are traditional, inherent in the rite. The one idea that is new is the *atonement efficacy* of blood.

No discussion on the post-exilic sacrificial ideas can be undertaken without some reference to the ritual of the Day of Atonement (Lev. xvi.). We must, therefore, devote some attention to this. That as a special celebration, apart from the ritual details, the Day of Atonement is post-exilic does not admit of doubt. There is never any hint of its existence in pre-exilic times. The earliest mention of any idea of a general atonement for the Temple occurs in Ezek. xlv. 18-20, where, as we have already seen, it is said that twice a year, on the first day of the first month, and on the first day of the seventh month, "thou shalt cleanse the sanctuary." The institution of the Day of Atonement must be subsequent to this, because it was celebrated only once a year, on "the tenth day of the seventh month" (Lev. xvi. 29) ; and the atoning ceremonies are for the benefit of the people as well as for the cleansing of the sanctuary. Nor can the fast-day mentioned in Neh. ix. 1, 2, have had any connexion with the Day of Atonement, for this was held on the twenty-fourth day of the seventh month ; and the specific name *Yom-ha-Kippurim* ("Day of Atonement," Lev. xxiii. 27, xxv. 9) is not yet known. Therefore the institution of this Day must have taken place after the time of Ezra,¹ certainly after the middle of the fourth century B.C., and even so, it is quite evident that the account of this Day given in Lev. xvi. is composite, some parts being later than others.²

¹ Neh. ix. belongs to the "Ezra Memoirs" ; Ezra began his work in 397 B.C.

² Still later is, in all probability, Num. xxix. 7-11, where fuller details of the offering are given.

To get a clear idea of the ritual procedure of the Day of Atonement it is absolutely necessary to indicate the different elements of which Lev. xvi. is composed. We give the now generally accepted views of scholars. The original form was comprised in verses 3, 5-10 : The priest takes a bullock for a sin-offering to make atonement for himself and "for his house," i.e. the priesthood ; he takes also two he-goats for a sin-offering, and this is accompanied by a burnt-offering, the victim being a ram. First, the bullock is sacrificed, whereby the priestly offerer is put right in the sight of God. A second preliminary is the sacrifice of the ram ; of this nothing further is said, probably it is to emphasise the importance of the central part of the rite, now to follow. The two goats are "set before Yahweh," a very important part of the ritual, implying that Yahweh's approval of what is about to be done is sought and obtained. Then lots are cast upon the two goats, a very antique procedure, to determine which goat is to be sacrificed as a sin-offering to Yahweh, and which is to be presented to 'Azazel. This imaginary being was, in popular superstition, a demon of the waste, probably degraded, in course of time, from divine rank - the form of the name implies this.¹ It may be that, as early as the fourth century B.C., he was beginning to assume the character assigned to him in the book of Enoch, where he is described as "he who hath taught all unrighteousness on earth." In any case, the mention of the name of this supposed being without any explanation shows that it was familiar. The ritual then continues : after the lots have been cast, Yahweh's goat is sacrificed to Him as a sin-offering, while 'Azazel's goat is "set alive before Yahweh," in order that atonement may be made over it (or, in regard to it), and that it be sent into the wilderness. That concludes the original form of the account ; somewhat incomprehensible, it must be granted. The other

¹ Its present form, *Aza-zel*, would mean "complete removal," a very unusual form ; originally it was, no doubt, 'Azaz-el, "'El strengthens" (so Cheyne).

account (verses 11-28) is much fuller. It begins, like the first account, by saying that a bullock is offered as a sin-offering for the priest to "make atonement for himself"; then follow some minute details about the offering of incense (verses 12, 13); after that, the priest takes the blood of the bullock which he sprinkles on the mercy-seat "on the east," and also before the mercy-seat seven times (verse 14). Nothing is said about casting lots upon the goats. Then, in verses 15-19, the first goat is mentioned, "the goat of the sin-offering," that is for the people; its blood is sprinkled in the same way as that of the bullock; the purpose of this is to "make atonement for the holy place, and because of the uncleannesses of the children of Israel." When, after this, the priest issues from the holy place, he goes to the altar, upon which he sprinkles the blood of the bullock and of the goat. Not until after this is there any mention of the other goat, the "live goat" (verse 20). What follows in verses 21, 22 must be quoted in full: "And Aaron (i.e. the priest) shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, even all their sins; and he shall put them upon the head of the goat, and shall send it away by the hand of the man that is appointed into the wilderness; and the goat shall bear upon it all their iniquities unto a solitary land; and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness." It is not until after this that the bullock and the goat, whose blood had been sprinkled, are offered up as sin-offerings (verse 27), but after having been carried forth without the camp, "and they shall burn in the fire their skins, and their flesh, and their dung." Verses 29-34 are a later portion emphasising the atonement made on this Day for the holy sanctuary, for the tent of meeting, for the altar, for the priests, and for the people; it concludes: "And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make atonement for the children of Israel because of all their sins, once in the year." In this later portion two new elements appear: on the Day of Atonement, it is said, "ye

shall afflict your souls, and shall do no manner of work," meaning that it is to be a fast-day, and observed as a sabbath (verses 29, 31, and cp. Lev. xxiii. 27-32).

Most of the ideas, as well as the rites, in connexion with the Day of Atonement go back to pre-exilic times : thus, the idea of propitiation, expiation, substitution, and transference of evil, are all ancient ; similarly with regard to the burnt-offering, the blood-sprinkling rite, fasting, and the observance of the sabbath. The elements in the Day of Atonement which are especially characteristic of post-exilic times are : the purification of the Temple, priests, and people ; the sin-offering (*Chattath*), though not confined to this Day ; confession of sins ; the evidences of a deepened sense of sin ; and the great emphasis laid on atonement. The characteristic ideas are all, in themselves, of a high order ; but connected with them are rites of a most crude kind. That is inevitable in the development of ideas. We shall do well, however, to recognise the emergence here of ideas tending towards spiritual religion, even though enveloped in unattractive husks. With the shedding of these, and the retaining of the kernels within, there arose among the Jews, in the early Christian centuries, a type of service for this Day which is characteristic of the religious genius of the people. It will, we feel, be appropriate if we quote here one of the prayers of the present Jewish Liturgy, from the service of the Day of Atonement, which demonstrably contains elements of extreme antiquity : " Our God and God of our fathers, pardon our iniquities on this Day of Atonement ; blot out our transgressions and our sins, and make them pass away from before thine eyes ; as it is said, I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and I will not remember thy sins (Isa. xliii. 25). And it is said, I have blotted out, as a cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a mist, thy sins ; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee (Isa. xliv. 22). And it is said, For on this day shall atonement be made for you, to cleanse you ; from all your sins shall ye be clean before the Lord (Lev. xvi. 30). Sanctify

us by thy commandments, and grant our portion in thy Law ; satisfy us with thy goodness, and gladden us with thy salvation ; and purify our hearts to serve thee in truth, for thou art the forgiver of Israel, and the pardoner of the tribes of Jeshurun (cp. Isa. xlv. 2) in every generation, and beside thee we have no king who pardoneth and forgiveth. Blessed art thou, O Lord, thou King, who pardonest and forgivest our iniquities and the iniquities of thy people, the house of Israel ; who makest our trespasses to pass away year by year, King over all the earth, who sanctifiest Israel and the day of Atonement.”¹

The last clause, beginning, “Blessed art thou,” is mentioned in *Sopherim* xix. 8, one of the smaller treatises of the Talmud, which incorporates a great deal of very ancient material concerning the Jewish Liturgy.

There is another subject in connexion with the Day of Atonement concerning which, it may be thought, more should be said, namely, the loading of the sins of the people upon the goat, and sending it away into the wilderness. This is a large subject which, with all its ramifications, has been fully dealt with by Frazer.² But we refrain from entering into this with any detail, for it is only subordinately connected with our main subject. We will content ourselves with quoting some appropriate remarks of Buchanan Gray : “We must distinguish between the fundamental ritual element and the particular associations with which it [i.e. the scapegoat] appears. The one is certainly ancient enough, not to say primitive ; the other of less certain age and, probably enough, late. The general principle of transferring sins physically to some animal or other medium, and, by then dismissing the medium, getting rid for good of the sins, is now recognised as a widespread practice associated with a stage of belief far nearer the primitive than the religion either of Ezra or Moses.”³ There can be

¹ *Annotated Edition of the Authorised Daily Prayer Book*, pp. 257 f. (1914).

² *The Golden Bough : The Scapegoat* (1913).

³ *Sacrifice*, p. 315.

no doubt that an extremely ancient rite has here been adapted to the worship of Yahweh. But that the idea was familiar to the Jews may be seen from the somewhat similar case of the two birds used in the cleansing of a leper; one of the birds is killed, no doubt as an offering to the Deity; the blood of this bird is put on the living one, and also sprinkled seven times on the leper, who is then pronounced clean, his disease having been transferred to this living bird, which then flies away with the disease into the "open field" (Lev. xiv. 2-7). Another instructive illustration occurs in one of Zechariah's visions: the prophet sees an ephod (a large dry-measure) in which is seated a woman named *Rish'ah* (i.e. "Wickedness") in whom the wickedness of the land of Judah is concentrated. Two flying women carry this ephod containing "Wickedness" into the land of Shinar (i.e. Babylon) and set it down there. The vision means that the sins of the people are transferred to the woman; the land is thus cleansed of wickedness (Zech. v. 5-11). This idea of the transference of sin is also to be discerned in Isa. liii. 6: "Yahweh hath caused to light on him the iniquity of us all"; so, too, in verse 11: "He shall bear their iniquities," and in verse 12: "Yet he bear the sin of many" (cp. Lev. x. 17, of the sin-offering [*Chattath*], "to bear the iniquity of the congregation").

It remains to point out how in post-exilic times the three outstanding purposes of sacrifice, to which attention has been constantly drawn, persisted. We recall, first of all, how in the post-exilic system all the earlier types of sacrifice were embodied. It is not to be supposed that the ideas and purposes of these were discarded, and only their form retained. Other ideas, no doubt, arose in post-exilic times in addition to those hitherto held; but that was no reason for the earlier ideas to lose their force. We may maintain, therefore, on *a priori* grounds, that these three main purposes continued. This can, however, be further substantiated and illustrated.

First, we have the gift-idea: that this played an important

part in post-exilic sacrificial thought is shown clearly by the use of the term *Qorban*, "gift," in references to sacrifices. These gifts, as in pre-exilic times, take various forms; thus, in Num. vii. 12-17 under *Qorban* (the Revised Version renders it here "oblation") are included a silver charger, a silver bowl "of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary," the meal-offering, a golden spoonful of incense, a young bullock, a ram, a he-lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering, a sin-offering, and "the sacrifice of peace-offerings." All these come under the collective term *Qorban*, showing how strongly the gift-idea was held in post-exilic times; and this term is used exclusively of sacred gifts; it never occurs, like *Minchah*, in reference to ordinary gifts among men. The use of *Minchah*, however, further illustrates the gift-idea in post-exilic times, though it is now used exclusively of cereal offerings,¹ e.g. Lev. vi. 20 (13 in Heb.), where it comes, however, under the general term *Qorban*. In post-exilic times, therefore, it was still held that gifts were acceptable to Yahweh, whether intended to propitiate Him, or to avert His wrath, or as a thank-offering. Here must be mentioned, though more will have to be said about it under another type of sacrifice, the highest conception of the gift-idea, namely the gift of self. In his loyalty to God, and his pity for his sinful fellow-creatures, the "Servant of Yahweh" gives himself as an offering to God. The text of Isa. liii. 10² is very uncertain, and the words, "when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin" (*'Asham*) (R.V. margin, "a guilt-offering"), are so out of harmony with the context that the text must be corrupt; but this does not affect the purpose of the passage as a whole, viz. the gift of a life, offered for the glory of God and for the benefit of fellow-men. It is unique in the Old Testament, not only as an act of self-sacrifice,

¹ In Num. xvi. 15 it is used in reference to an incense-offering, but this belongs to the J document.

² Whether the four "Servant of Yahweh" songs (Isa. xlii. 1-4, 5-7, xlix. 1-6, l. 4-9, lii. 13-14, l. 1-12) are exilic or post-exilic is immaterial from the present point of view.

but as a gift of life which is the means of taking away the sins of men. While there is no disguising the fact that the old-world idea of the transference of evil obtrudes itself here, the conception is none the less a sublime one. In depicting one suffering both physical and spiritual evil for the benefit of others the picture presents us with the highest imaginable conception of the gift-idea. And yet the materialistic thoughts in the first part of verse 12 reflect a still very undeveloped apprehension of the nature of God. How true it is, and yet how natural, that even in the most superb flights of man's imagination a darkening cloud will cast its shadow. It is only in the unclouded sunshine of fuller divine self-revelation that truth in its amplitude sheds forth its glorious rays. But we must not anticipate.

Then, as to the communion-idea. Here we must again emphasise the fact that all the pre-exilic types of sacrifice figure among those of post-exilic times ; as we have already insisted, it cannot be supposed that types of sacrifice should have continued without due appreciation of their purposes. The *Shelamim* ("peace-offerings"), the communion-sacrifices *par excellence*, of which the sacrificial meal was an indispensable part, were prominent in post-exilic times ; they are mentioned again and again. It is true, they do not partake of the joyous element characteristic of them in pre-exilic days (cp. e.g. Amos v. 22, 23 ; Deut. xxvii. 7) ; but that is due to the more sombre note of all post-exilic sacrifices, for reasons already pointed out. The essence of the *Shelamim* was not affected by this. The communion-meal and what it implies is just as prevalent in these later days as previously. Yahweh is present, and partakes of His share together with His worshippers ; in reference to the peace-offerings it is said in Lev. iii. 11 : "And the priest shall burn it upon the altar ; it is the food of the offering made by fire unto Yahweh" (cp. Lev. xxi. 6, 8, xxii. 15 ; Num. xxviii. 2). The significance, too, of "the salt of the covenant" which is to be offered "with all thine

oblations" will be noted (Lev. ii. 13) ; and in Mal. i. 7, 12, the altar is spoken of as " the table of Yahweh." The desire of union with God was ingrained, and would be strengthened by the conviction that atoning sacrifices had the effect of making the worshippers more fit to enter the divine presence and partake of food with God. Finally, as Lods points out, the rite of the sinner laying his hands upon the head of the sacrificial victim (e.g. Lev. iv. 4) might well have been regarded as a means of establishing communion between the worshipper and his God by the mediation of the victim.¹

Then, lastly, we come to the life-giving idea. To begin with, we have the offering of food as sustenance to the Deity ; though this comes under the gift-idea category, it must be mentioned here since food sustains life. More important, however, is the blood-sprinkling rite which finds such frequent mention in the post-exilic literature. The significance of this has been amply shown above ; the blood, containing the life, is sprinkled on and around the altar, and thus appropriated by the Deity, who absorbs the life. This is further emphasised by the addition of the fat, also conceived of as containing the life-principle, being offered on the altar (Lev. iii. 2, 3, and frequently). The purificatory effect of blood, so characteristic of post-exilic thought, in no way detracts from the original life-giving purpose of the blood-offering.

Every victim killed was a life liberated for the benefit of others ; this too has been discussed above, and there is no need to deal further with the subject here. The idea finds its highest expression in the life laid down by the Servant of Yahweh. Whatever else Isa. liii. teaches, we have here the picture of one who dies, and by his death gives a new life to his fellow-men by taking away their sins. With this we shall deal further in Chapter XVII.

¹ *Les Prophètes*, p. 335.

CHAPTER XIV

THE ATTITUDE OF THE PROPHETS TOWARDS SACRIFICES (EXILIC AND POST-EXILIC)

THE complicated question as to whether Ezek. xl.-xlviii. belongs to the original form of the book or not, need not be entered upon here, since these chapters may, in any case, be regarded as exilic. The prophet, in these chapters, looks to the future and envisages the establishment of a reconstituted State in which the central feature is the Temple-worship. The minute directions given about the offering of sacrifices show that the prophet intended these to be the dominant element in the religious life of the restored people. It will not be necessary to go into all the details, but merely to point out the greater elaborateness in the sacrificial worship prescribed, as compared with earlier usage. Thus, in xl. 39 the prophet gives this picture : " And in the porch of the gate were two tables on this side, and two tables on that side to slay thereon¹ the sin-offering and the guilt-offering." In verse 42 it is said : " And there were four tables for the burnt-offering, of hewn stone, a cubit and a half long, and a cubit and a half broad, and one cubit high ; whereupon they laid the instruments wherewith they slew the burnt-offering and the sacrifice " ; there is clearly something wrong with the text in the latter part of this verse, for " the instruments " cannot have been laid on the altar with the burnt-offering. The " separateness " of the priesthood must be noted, as expressed in xlii. 13 :

¹ The words, " the burnt-offering and," are omitted by the Septuagint, rightly, for the burnt-offering is dealt with in verse 42.

“The north chambers and the south chambers, which are before the separate place, they be holy chambers, where the priests that are near unto Yahweh shall eat the most holy things ; there shall they lay the most holy things, and the meal-offering, and the sin-offering, and the guilt-offering ; for the place is holy.” The complementary ideas of separateness and holiness are clearly expressed here. But the fullest “ordinances of the altar” are given in xliii. 18-27, xliv. 15 ff., xlv. 13-25, xlvi. 1-15. They show the immense importance which this priestly legislator attached to the sacrificial system, and its atoning efficacy (xliii. 20). The belief in Yahweh’s presence in the Temple is expressed in xliii. 4-7: “And the glory of Yahweh came into the house. . . . And the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court ; and, behold, the glory of Yahweh filled the house. . . . And he said unto me, Son of man, this is the place of my throne,¹ and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever. . . .” Finally, it is worth noting how this prophet, like the pre-exilic prophets, gives the reason for the denunciation of sacrificial worship, namely, its abuse by offering worship to false gods. When once this is done away with, sacrificial worship will be accepted ; he says : “And if they be ashamed of all that they have done, make known unto them the form of the house . . . and all the ordinances thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the laws thereof, and write it in their sight ; that they may keep the whole form thereof, and all the ordinances thereof, and do them” (xliii. 11).

It must be recognised that there is something strange in a prophet of the Exile putting forth all these details about sacrifices at a time when experience was teaching that God could be worshipped without them. We shall see that Deutero-Isaiah, at the end of the Exile, has extremely little to say about them, although he incessantly speaks about the Return. We are, therefore, led to the belief that this priest-prophet, who was greatly influenced by Ezekiel, must have

¹ The Septuagint reads : “Hast thou seen the place of . . . ?”

lived also at the end of the Exile and was able to look forward to the near resuscitation of sacrificial worship in the homeland. With Ezekiel himself it was rather different ; he had lived before the Exile and at its commencement, and had been familiar with sacrificial worship most of his life ; and he had not had the experience of many years of non-sacrificial worship. But, however this may be, there is one matter here of great importance. We have, on the one hand, a priestly legislator who was an ardent advocate of sacrificial worship. On the other hand, we have the great figure of Deutero-Isaiah, whose conception of God was the highest ever attained up to that time, and in whose thought the idea of sacrifice hardly ever arises in spite of his certitude of the approaching Return and of the re-building of the Temple. We must see here, then, in the thought of the latter, the beginnings of a movement in the direction of purely spiritual worship, which could contemplate the entire abrogation of sacrifices. It was not destined to succeed until the final destruction of the Temple ; but individual voices were raised and their echoes have come down to us, which witness to the existence of the idea of spiritual religion vastly in advance of contemporary belief.

We turn next, then, to Deutero-Isaiah. In Isa. xl. 16 we read : " And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering." The words mean that Yahweh's greatness was such that, even if all the wood of the trees of Lebanon were used for the sacrificial fire, and if all the wild beasts of its forests were the sacrificial victims, the sacrifice would be quite inadequate. This might be thought of as a disparagement of sacrifice ; but it is not that ; it is a symbolic expression of the impossibility of rendering God adequate service, and the assertion, therefore, that, at their best, sacrifices are a wholly imperfect means of worshipping God. Among the few places in which there is mention of sacrifice in Deutero-Isaiah, we have liii. 10, where the present text reads : " Wilt thou make his soul a guilt-offering [*'Asham*] ? " In its context this is

meaningless. As we have already pointed out (p. 232), the text is wholly corrupt (the Versions, too, show this), and it cannot be taken into consideration in the present connexion. In xliv. 28 mention is made of the foundation of the Temple ; but, as this is in reference to the edict of Cyrus (see Ezra i. 1, 2), it hardly comes into consideration here. Again, in lii. 11, "the vessels of Yahweh" must point to the vessels used in the Temple for the sacrificial worship ; but here, too, there may be merely a reference to Cyrus' action, recorded in Ezra i. 7. In neither of these passages can it be necessarily inferred that the prophet was himself indirectly referring to sacrificial worship.

We have next a very important passage, the significance of which demands that it should be quoted in full : "And thou didst not call upon me, O Jacob ; but thou wast weary of me, O Israel. Thou didst not bring me the lamb of thy burnt-offerings, neither didst thou honour me with thy sacrifices. I did not cause thee to serve me with an offering [*Minchah*],¹ nor cause thee to be wearied with [offering me] frankincense. Thou didst not buy me sweet cane with money, thou didst not cause me to be satiated with the fat of thy sacrifices ; only with thy sins didst thou cause me to be served, and didst weary me with thine iniquities" (xliii. 22-24). This emphasis on the fact that during the Exile no sacrifices were offered to Yahweh, and that even during this time the people sinned against their God, is the prelude to the climax which follows in verses 25, 26 : "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own sake ; and I will not remember thy sins. Put me in remembrance ; let us plead together ; record, that thou mayest be justified" (see also xliv. 22). Paraphrased, the passage may be thus expressed : You did not call upon me – an act of worship quite distinct from sacrifice – you became tired of doing so and gave it up ; in place of sacrifices your

¹ Used here in the pre-exilic general sense, not of a meal-offering, as the Revised Version margin erroneously renders it ; the term is here parallel to burnt-offering.

“service” was to sin against me. But, in any case, those sacrifices would not have been needed for taking away your sins, because I, even I, will blot them out for my own sake, i.e. not because you deserve forgiveness. We have thus, in effect, the prophet’s declaration that sacrifices are not the means of obliterating sins and of reconciliation with God, but that it is only by His mercy and love that they are blotted out. Here, therefore, we have the direct expression of the beginning of the teaching that sacrifices are not wanted. The love of God dispenses with them. The one thing needed on man’s part is to cease from sin and turn unto God : “ Seek ye Yahweh while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near ; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts ; and let him return unto Yahweh, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon ” (lv. 6, 7). This is all entirely in accord with Deutero-Isaiah’s exalted conception of God, which runs through all his teaching.

We turn now to the post-exilic prophets. In neither Haggai nor Zechariah can we expect to find much on the subject of sacrifice, because their books were written before the re-building of the Temple. But that they were both ardent upholders of the sacrificial system is clear enough on account of their efforts, ultimately crowned with success, to induce the people to undertake the task of re-building. That eighteen years should have elapsed before the Temple was completed was, doubtless, in part due to the attitude of enemies ; but this was by no means the only cause, for the returned exiles showed but little zeal for the undertaking (Hag. i. 2-4). But that sacrifices were offered before the re-building of the Temple, probably on an altar erected on the site of the ancient altar in the dilapidated former Temple (see Jer. xli. 4, 5), is clear from what is said in Hag. ii. 14 : “ So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith Yahweh, and so is every work of their hands ; and that which they offer there is unclean.” How ardently Haggai looked for the full re-inauguration of sacrificial

worship is seen by his words in ii. 9 : " The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former." Zechariah, too, makes various references to the new Temple which is to arise, and therefore, indirectly, to the worship to be offered in it : " Therefore, thus saith Yahweh : I am returned to Jerusalem with mercies ; my house shall be built in it " (i. 16, see also iii. 7, 9, vi. 12, 13, viii. 9). Like Haggai, he also makes it clear that, although the Temple was not yet re-built, sacrifices were offered. In vii. 1-7 we read of certain people coming to seek advice from " the priests of the house of Yahweh of hosts " (verse 3) ; this obviously shows that worship was carried on, doubtless in the dilapidated Temple. When it is said, further (in the preceding verse), that these people had come " to entreat the favour of Yahweh," it is clear that sacrificial worship, in some way, was celebrated. It was always necessary to appear before Him with a gift (see Deut. xvi. 16).

After the re-building of the Temple, there is ample evidence to show what the attitude of the prophets was towards sacrificial worship. To begin with, the prophet who goes under the name of Malachi (" My messenger ") inveighs against the careless and irreverent way in which the priests carried out their duties ; their lack of respect for the altar (" Ye say, The table of Yahweh is contemptible " ; cp. i. 12, 13) pollutes everything that comes upon it : " Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar." The offerings brought, instead of being the best of the flocks, are the worst : " And when ye offer the blind for sacrifice, it is not wickedness [in your eyes], and when ye offer the lame and the sick, it is not wickedness [in your eyes] ! " Such service were better not offered at all : " Would that someone among you would close the doors [of the sanctuary], and that ye would not light up mine altar to no purpose ! I have no pleasure in you, saith Yahweh of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand " (i. 6-10). In verse 11 there are some corruptions in the text ; as emended, it should be read : " For from the rising of the sun even unto

the going down thereof [i.e. from east to west] my name is great among the Gentiles ; and in every place there is offered up [lit. ' the smoke of sacrifice is made ']¹ to my name a pure offering." The words must be taken in a literal sense, and they show in what a high estimation sacrificial worship was held by the prophet. At the time this prophet wrote (*circa* 450 B.C.) a tendency towards monotheistic belief was beginning to arise in the Gentile world ; to the prophet this naturally meant that " the highest God," worshipped among the nations under various forms, was, in reality, none other than Yahweh, the God of Israel. Sacrifices were offered all the world over, and these were therefore offered, according to the prophet, to Yahweh. This universalistic tendency among the Jews, originating with thoughts as expressed, e.g. in Isa. xlix. 6 (" . . . I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that my salvation may be unto the end of the earth "), was opposed to the narrower nationalistic outlook of the bulk of the people. It is most graphically illustrated by the book of Jonah. In later days, too, we find Ben-Sira saying that : " For every nation He appointed a ruler " (Ecclus. xvii. 17), and we recall also the words of St. Paul to the Athenians in Acts xvii. 23. But this by the way. The passage before us is thus a good illustration of the prophet's attitude towards sacrifice. Another passage from this prophet may be briefly considered, for it places in contrast the prophet's insistence on the need of moral living if sacrifices were to avail anything, and the ancient popular idea that the whole of religion centred in the offering of sacrifice, irrespective of anything else. Though they " deal treacherously every man against his brother," they continue their sacrifices, expecting that all will go well ; and, finding that this is not so, they raise complaint and lamentation in the sanctuary. So the prophet addresses them in these words : " Ye cover the altar of Yahweh with tears, a weeping and

¹ There is no mention of " incense " here (see the Revised Version) ; the error may have arisen through the Septuagint rendering, where the meaning of the Hebrew verb (it is not a noun) was misunderstood.

a sighing, because he no more accepteth the offering, nor receiveth a gift from your hand" (ii. 13). The remedy is clear: "Therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously" (ii. 16). Finally, as showing the importance and permanence which the prophet attaches to sacrifice, we have the picture of Yahweh's advent to His Temple: in that time "they shall offer unto Yahweh an offering in righteousness. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto Yahweh, as in the days of old, and as in ancient years" (iii. 3, 4).

A passage which has been inserted in the book of Jeremiah, and which is certainly of post-exilic date, may be noticed next. It is xxxiii. 17, 18: "For thus saith Yahweh, There shall not be cut off from David a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt-offerings, and to burn meal-offerings, and to do sacrifice continually." That this passage was written before the Priestly Code (in its present form) is clear, because in that code the Levites are excluded from all priestly functions. The writer looks forward to the resuscitation of the Davidic monarchy, and clearly has the highest veneration for the sacrificial worship which will be re-inaugurated as of old.

Here may be added three late passages from the book of Isaiah, as they came appropriately after Malachi's universalistic outlook. The first is Isa. xix. 21, where the prophet envisages the world-wide worship of Yahweh: "And Yahweh shall make himself known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know Yahweh in that day; yea, they shall worship with sacrifice and oblation, and shall vow a vow unto Yahweh; and he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them." Similarly, in xxv. 6: "And in this mountain shall Yahweh 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." On this passage, see above, p. 171. In the day of Yahweh, it is said in Isa. xxvii. 13, all the Jews

scattered among the nations "shall worship Yahweh in the holy mountain at Jerusalem."

This brings us to Trito-Isaiah (lvi.-lxvi.), where, in lvi. 6-8, it is told how all, both Jews and Gentiles, will be gathered together to worship Yahweh: "... Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar. . . ." The same note is struck in lx. 6, 7. In lxiv. 8-12 the prophet tells of the great grief that has come upon all because the sanctuary has been burned, and with it, of course, the opportunities for worship are gone: "Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burned with fire; and all our pleasant things are laid waste. Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, Yahweh? Wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?" In lxvi. 6 Yahweh's voice comes from the Temple to scatter the enemies of the Jews; we note, therefore, again, the expression of the belief in the divine presence in the sanctuary. And, once more, a universalistic note is struck together with the thought of sacrificial worship in lxvi. 19, 20: "... And they shall bring all your brethren out of all the nations for an offering unto Yahweh . . . to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith Yahweh, as the children of Israel bring their offerings in a clean vessel into the house of Yahweh."

As to the prophet Joel, the content of his book does not lend itself to references to the subject of sacrifice; but that this prophet was an ardent believer in sacrificial worship comes out in his calling upon the people to lament because the enemy's advent has caused this to cease. In i. 8, 9, he cries out to the people: "Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth. The meal-offering and the drink-offering is cut off from the house of Yahweh; the priests, Yahweh's ministers, mourn." Again, in i. 13, he says: "Gird yourselves with sackcloth, and lament, ye priests; howl, ye ministers of the altar; come, lie all night

in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God ; for the meal-offering and the drink-offering is withheld from the house of your God." The mention of the meal-offering and the drink-offering necessarily implies also the burnt-offering, as they accompanied this latter morning and evening (Exod. xxix. 38-42 ; Num. xxviii. 4-8) ; if this was not offered it meant that the entire sacrificial worship was, for the time being, lacking. Then, again, we have some very significant words in ii. 12-14 : " Yet, even now, saith Yahweh, turn ye unto me with all your heart . . . rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto Yahweh your God, for he is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger, and plentiful in mercy, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth whether he will not turn and repent, and leave a blessing behind him, even a meal-offering and a drink-offering unto Yahweh your God?" These last words mean, Who knows whether Yahweh will not cause the land to bring forth again, and so make it possible once more to bring offerings ? They witness to the grievous loss felt by the inability to offer sacrifice.

In the book of Jonah there is one passage which reflects the universalistic attitude, while at the same time upholding sacrificial worship. After the sailors (clearly non-Jews ; see i. 6-9), who, at Jonah's command, had thrown him overboard, it is said, in i. 16 : " Then the men feared Yahweh exceedingly ; and they offered a sacrifice unto Yahweh, and made vows." The only other passage referring to sacrifices (ii. 7-9 [8-10 in Heb.]) is in the psalm added later ; this presents a similar point of view : " When my soul fainted within me, I remembered Yahweh, and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. They that regard lying vanities [i.e. they who worship idols] forsake their own mercy ['Mercy' is a synonym for God]. But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving ; I will pay that which I have vowed ; salvation is with Yahweh." The passage, like certain others, shows that sacrifices were accompanied by prayer.

In Deutero-Zechariah (Zech. ix.-xiv.)¹ there are several passages which come into consideration. Chap. ix. is a prophecy of the coming of the Messianic era, at the inauguration of which the Gentile nations will either be destroyed or converted. Verses 6, 7 refer to the conversion of the Philistines (cp. 1 Macc. xi. 60-62, xii. 33, 34), and the prophet's thoughts centre on the purification of their worship. Hitherto, in offering their sacrifices, they had partaken of the blood, a custom, as we know, abhorred by the Jews; the eating of unclean food was also common among them. But the prophet says that when the Philistines are converted to Judaism these horrors will be no more perpetrated, so that their worship will be pure: "And I will take away his blood out of his mouth, and his abominations from between his teeth; and he also shall be a remnant for our God; and he shall be as a chieftain in Judah, and Ekron as a Jebusite." This last is an archaism for "Jerusalemite." This passage shows that the prophet envisages sacrificial worship in the Messianic times.

In ix. 15, where the victory of the Jews over the Gentiles is described, it is said: "And they shall be filled like bowls, like the corners of the altar," meaning that their lust for blood-shedding will be reminiscent of the basins containing the blood of the sacrifices, and of the corners of the altar all splashed over with blood. The verse is a distasteful one, but it expresses the feelings of bitterness and desire of revenge of the oppressed and cruelly treated people. The verse is, however, appropriately quoted in the present connexion because it shows the prophet's familiarity with the sacrificial rites.

Chap. xiv. is eschatological. A common theme of the eschatological drama was the Gentile onslaught against the Jews, and the defeat of the former; this is referred to in verse 16: "And it shall come to pass, that everyone that is

¹ To give all the reasons for the now generally accepted view that these chapters are of much later date than chaps. i.-viii. would be out of place here. They consist of about a dozen fragments, the historical background of which proves them to have been written during the second century B.C.

left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, Yahweh of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles." Here we have again the mention of the conversion of the Gentiles and their adoption of Jewish worship. The Feast of Tabernacles was the most important of all the festivals, hence its special mention here ; for the sacrifices offered during this feast, see Lev. xxiii. 33-38, Num. xxix. 12-38. The exaggerated ideas of the prophet regarding the celebration of this feast are graphically set forth in verses 20, 21 : " In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, ' Holy unto Yahweh ' " - i.e. the horses, hitherto primarily used in war-time, are now all devoted to Yahweh's service - " and the pots in Yahweh's house " - i.e. used at the sacrificial feast - " shall be like the bowls before the altar," i.e. so great will be the number of worshippers, through the influx of the Gentiles, that the ordinary drinking-vessels will be quite insufficient - they will be enlarged so as to supply the crowd of worshippers. And the prophet concludes : " Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holy unto Yahweh of hosts ; and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them and seethe therein. . . ." Hitherto every earthen vessel in which sacrificial flesh had been sodden had to be broken (Lev. vi. 28 [21 in Heb.]) because it had come in contact with what was holy ; in the Messianic times this would not be necessary, because every vessel throughout the land would be sanctified for holy use. The whole picture is, of course, hyperbolic, but it shows the immense veneration which the prophet had for sacrificial worship. That is our main point.

We have now dealt with one side of the post-exilic prophets' attitude towards sacrificial worship, and doubtless this was the dominant one ; but there are marked indications of the existence of a somewhat different attitude. This must next be examined. It is not always possible to feel certainty as to the dates of the few passages now to be considered ; but this is not of great moment ; that they are

post-exilic¹ will be generally acknowledged. We will take them in the order of the biblical books in which they occur, irrespective of what their actual dates may be.

There is, first, the well-known passage Mic. vi. 6, 7 : "Wherewith shall I come before Yahweh, and bow myself before the God of the height? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will Yahweh be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, and the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" It must be recognised that some authorities hold this passage to be pre-exilic; others maintain that the general point of view, and the vocabulary, point to a post-exilic date.² However this may be, it is one of the most remarkable passages in the Old Testament as showing that sacrifices are not what God requires. The antithesis in the verse which follows is very striking: "It hath been told thee,³ O man, what is good; and what doth Yahweh require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" We have, thus, a speaking witness to the existence of an attitude towards sacrifice, heralded by Deutero-Isaiah, which, though entirely in opposition to the dominant thought and practice, persisted through the ages, as we shall see (Chapter XV). In the same book we have another passage, in Mic. vii. 18, 19 (of much later date), which teaches that the forgiveness of sins is the act of a merciful God; there is no mention of sacrifice, a silence which is very eloquent: "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by transgression?"⁴ Thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."

These are but few passages, it is true, in which non-sacrificial worship is championed; they do not, however,

¹ Opinions differ, however, regarding Mic. vi. 6, 7.

² Marti, for example, argues strongly for a post-exilic date; *Das Dodekapropheten*, p. 292 (1904).

³ This is the Septuagint reading.

⁴ The remainder of this verse and the first part of verse 19 seem to be an addition, because in those parts God is not directly addressed, as in the first part of verse 18, and the last sentence of verse 19.

exhaust the evidence. We must add to them the voice of some of the psalmists from psalms belonging to post-exilic times. These passages, likewise, are not many in number, but when it is remembered how antagonistic to the prevalent mode of worship these utterances were, the wonder is that any at all should have found a place (and have been permitted to remain) in the pages of the sacred scriptures controlled by the religious leaders. Such an attitude was a deliberate flouting of untold centuries of traditional usage. And not only so ; it meant also opposition to the official priesthood, to the religious rulers of the nation, during a period in which the importance, indeed the indispensability, of sacrifice was insisted upon with at least as much zeal as ever before.

The passages in question are as follows :

Ps. xl. 6 (7 in Heb.) : " Hadst thou desired sacrifice and meal-offering, I would not have closed my ears [i.e. to thy desire]. Burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required."¹ In the verses which follow, the psalmist goes on to declare what God really requires ; he has seen it written in the roll of the law, namely, the doing of the will of God, which he (the psalmist) delights to obey. This centres in the practice of righteousness, which the psalmist has both treasured in his heart and proclaimed aloud in the congregation, and also in the telling forth of God's " faithfulness, salvation, and loving-kindness." In the whole passage, then (verses 6-10 [7-11 in Heb.]), the psalmist places in anti-thesis the offering of sacrifices and the fulfilling of the will of God as declared in His law.

Even more striking are the words, put into the mouth of God, in Ps. l. 8-14 ; the people are addressed corporately : " I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices, thy burnt-offerings are continually before me," i.e. sacrificial worship has been fully attended to ; so far as that is concerned there is nothing to find fault with ; but, as a matter of fact, God

¹ The rendering of this verse is based on one or two fairly obvious emendations of the Hebrew text.

has no need of them : " I will take no bullock out of thine house, nor he-goats out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon the hills of God.¹ I know all the fowls on the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee, for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. Would I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High ; and call upon me in the day of trouble ; I will deliver thee, and honour thee."² The writer of these words had clearly a higher conception of God than most of his contemporaries. The final words teach that in the time of trouble it is not sacrifices whereby God is induced to help, but solely His goodness and mercy that do this.

The next passage is Ps. li. 16, 17 (18, 19 in Heb.) : " For thou delightest not in sacrifice ; and if I brought thee a burnt-offering, it would not please thee. My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit ; a broken heart thou wilt not despise."³

And, finally, an exalted and spiritual view is expressed in Ps. lxxix. 30, 31 (31, 32 in Heb.) : " I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving ; and it will please Yahweh more than an ox, or a bullock that hath horns and hoofs."

These four passages⁴ are the only ones in the whole of the Psalter in which a spiritual view of worship, in opposition to sacrificial worship, is expressed. Again and again in the rest of the Psalms, the ordinary idea of sacrifice appears ; it is taken for granted that the proper way to worship God is to offer Him sacrifices.

During the post-exilic period, then, the evidence, as is to be expected, shows that, in general, the prophets regarded

¹ Emended text, the Hebrew is corrupt.

² This is more in accordance with Hebrew usage (see Ps. xci. 15) than " thou shalt honour me."

³ The words, " and a contrite heart," and the repetition of " O God," break the rhythm in Hebrew and are probably later additions.

⁴ They are all from psalms which most modern commentators regard as post-exilic.

sacrificial worship as acceptable to God. Those who advocated a more spiritual form of worship and who regarded sacrifice as unnecessary were, so far as we know, few in number. In this there is no cause for surprise ; the great bulk of the people were unlearned, simple-minded men to whom the sacrificial system was the proper way of worshipping God. What is surprising is to find that there were some, few in number, whose earnest spirituality impelled them to hold a view opposed to the teaching and practice of the religious leaders, and to the traditional mode of worship of the nation.

That there is so little to be gathered, in this period, about the three fundamental purposes of sacrifice, which we have so often insisted upon, is not to be wondered at. Apart from what has been said in the previous chapter (XIII), however, there are a few things that deserve mention. It is not fanciful to discern, in some real sense, developments, in a spiritual direction, of the three ideas in question. If these find expression among the psalmists rather than among the prophets of this period, that is what would be expected. For however we may account for the fact, the truth is that the psalmists, in spite of a general acceptance of the sacrificial system, were the living exponents of spiritual religion in a far fuller sense than the prophets ; it is the psalmists, with their exalted doctrine of God, who are the true spiritual descendants of Deutero-Isaiah.

As to the gift-idea, while material sacrifices continued to be offered as gifts to God, it is clear from the utterances of some of the more enlightened thinkers that sacrifices of a very different nature were held to be more truly acceptable to Him. This is illustrated by such phrases as the " sacrifice of praise " (cp. Ps. lxix. 30 [31 in Heb.]), the " sacrifice of thanksgiving " (Ps. l. 14, cxvi. 17), " sacrifices of righteousness " (Ps. iv. 5 [6 in Heb.]), " sacrifices of joy " (Ps. xxvii. 6), where the ancient word for sacrifice (*Zebach*) is used in a wholly different, spiritual sense. This is true, too, of the touching words : " My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit."

Then, as to communion-sacrifices, while it cannot be doubted that the time-honoured belief with regard to the *Shelamim* ("peace-offerings") was held, new and beautifully spiritual ideas as to the nature of union with God were arising. This is suggested by passages in which the nearness of God is apprehended by His faithful worshippers; in Ps. cxxxix. 7-10, for example, the psalmist cries: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend into heaven thou art there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." This sublime conviction of the nearness of God to His own is extremely edifying; it is not quite the same thing as actual union with Him - "by" or "with" is different from "in" - but it is a great step towards the apprehension of the divine indwelling mediated by the communion-sacrifice in its later spiritual development. Other passages to the same effect, as is well known, occur in the Psalms, but it will not be necessary to give further quotations.

Finally, as to life-giving sacrifices. Here, again, it may be taken for granted that the traditional conception persisted; and, as we have seen, it reaches its highest development in the voluntary laying down of a life for the sake of others in the person of the Servant of Yahweh. Not quite of the same nature as this, but still an act of noble self-sacrifice, is the story of Jonah who is willing to die lest his fellow-passengers should be overwhelmed by the tempest: "Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you; for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you" (Jon. i. 12).

The post-exilic ideas about sacrifice would not be complete without some consideration of the subject set forth in post-biblical, pre-Christian literature. To this we shall have to devote a separate chapter.

CHAPTER XV

SACRIFICES IN POST-EXILIC TIMES: POST-BIBLICAL, PRE-CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

IN considering the attitude towards sacrificial worship during the post-exilic period we have, so far, confined ourselves to the canonical writings of the Hebrew Scriptures. But there is a large amount of other Jewish literature, belonging approximately to the last two pre-Christian centuries, which must also be examined. This literature is, for the most part, post-biblical, though some of the writings belonging to it are of earlier date than some portions of the Old Testament. The literature in question is comprised in two collections of writings which are known by the names of the Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha. The great majority of these are of pre-Christian date ; but even in the case of such comparatively late books as the Apocalypse of Baruch and the Ezra Apocalypse¹ (2 Esdras in the Apocrypha) so much earlier thought is reflected that they cannot be left out of consideration ; this applies, too, to some of the Mishnah tractates in which the subject of sacrifices is referred to, and also to the writings of Philo and Josephus.

The sacrificial system of the Jews seems, be the reasons what they may, to have attracted the notice of some notable non-Jewish personalities during the later centuries of the post-exilic period. As a matter of interest, it is worth drawing attention to what these writers have to say on the subject ; they witness to the importance attached by the Jews to their

¹ Both belong, approximately, to the end of the first century A.D.

sacrificial system, though some quaintly erroneous ideas seem to have been entertained by those who knew of it only by hearsay. The earliest of these writers was the peripatetic philosopher, Theophrastus, who died in 287 B.C. A fragment of his writings is contained in Eusebius' *Præpar. Evangel.*, ix. 2¹; he says: "Among the Syrians, the Jews still sacrifice animals according to their primitive custom. They wish to impose upon us a similar mode of sacrifice, which we repudiate. They do not eat the flesh of the victims; but they cast the animal entire into a fire at eve after having anointed it with honey and wine, and they complete the sacrifice quickly in order that he who sees all things [i.e. the sun] should not witness the horrible act [ἵνα τοῦ δεινοῦ μὴ ὁ πανόπτης γένοιτο θεατῆς]."

Again, Hecataeus of Abdera, who lived early in the third century B.C., writing about the laws given by Moses to the Israelites, says: "The sacrifices and customs which he instituted are quite different from those of other nations. . . . He chose the most accomplished and capable men to guide the whole nation, and invested them with the priesthood. He assigned to them the service of the temple, and of the holy worship, and the offering of sacrifices." Elsewhere he says that the priests received special revenues "in order that they might, without other pre-occupations, devote themselves wholly to divine worship."²

These are interesting notices, showing that non-Jewish writers had some knowledge of the Jewish sacrificial system.

It need hardly be said that, in the main, the sacrificial system, as performed during these two centuries, was that enjoined in the Priestly Code as finally redacted.³ The central act of worship, it may be here repeated, was the daily "continual burnt-offering," the *Tamid*, offered on behalf of the whole people on "the altar of the burnt

¹ Quoted by Reinach, *Textes d'auteurs grecs et romains relatifs au Judaïsme*, pp. 7 ff. (1895).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 16 ff.

³ See e.g. Josephus (born A.D. 37), *Antiq.*, xii. 140, for the time of Antiochus the Great (223-187 B.C.).

offering.”¹ It was offered twice daily in the Temple, in the morning and afternoon. On the sabbaths, new-moons, and feast-days it was, in addition, offered at mid-day, hence its name *Musaph* (“additional”), while both the other offerings were called *Tamid*. Noteworthy is the stress laid on the frequent utterances of “blessings” by the priests during the offering, mentioned in the tractate *Tamid*; they were uttered for the benefit of the congregation. This is a usage subsequent to the Priestly Code, and is not without significance, suggesting as it does that the mere act of sacrifice needed supplementing. The offering of the *Tamid* continued until the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. In the Mishnah tractate *Taanith* iv. 6 it is said: “On the 17 of Tammuz [July] . . . the *Tamid* ceased.” Although the *Tamid* occupied by far the most important position in the sacrificial system, it by no means stood alone. Public and private sacrifices were offered as heretofore. It may also be added that sacrifices were regularly offered on behalf of the Roman emperors, while in the synagogues prayers were offered for them.²

In most of the books of the Apocrypha the offering of sacrifices is taken for granted, as being the traditional and accepted way in which God should be worshipped; but here and there signs are to be discerned which suggest that the idea of spiritual worship was not absent, and that there were things more acceptable to the Almighty than sacrifices. The same is to be said of the Pseudepigrapha; though, since these are for the most part apocalyptic writings, the subject of sacrifices is necessarily not often touched upon. The question of dates is unimportant from the present point of view, for, with but few exceptions, all these writings belong, approximately, to the period from 200 B.C. to the eve of Christianity. As these writings are, generally speaking, not so well known, we shall give quotations in full.

¹ Mishnah, *Tamid* vi. 1. The Mishnah was finally redacted by the Rabbi Judah the Patriarch, or the Prince (*ha-Nasi*), towards the end of the second century A.D.

² See 1 Macc. vii. 33; Philo (about 20 B.C.—A.D. 40), *Legat. ad Cajum*, ii. 565, 569 (ed. Mangey); Josephus, *Bell. Jud.*, ii. 409, 410; cp. Baruch i. 11.

We may begin with some passages which show that sacrificial worship is taken for granted as the only way of approach to God.

Since 1 Esdras deals with the early period after the return from the Captivity, references to sacrifices are to be expected. At the dedication of the Temple, for example, it is said that "they offered a hundred bullocks; two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; also twelve he-goats for the sin of all Israel" (vii. 7, 8); similarly in various other passages (i. 1 ff., v. 47 ff., viii. 65, 66, ix. 4, and elsewhere). The whole sacrificial system is thus regarded as an integral part of the Jewish religion. This is seen again in Judith¹ iv. 14, where it is said that "they offered the continual burnt-offering, and the vows and the free gifts of the people" (see also xi. 1, xvi. 16). In Baruch² i. 10 mention is made of burnt-offerings, sin-offerings, and incense, "and prepare an oblation, and offer upon the altar of the Lord our God." But it is in the books of Ecclesiasticus³ and 1 and 2 Maccabees⁴ that we have the most important *data*. In the panegyric on Simon the High-priest, Ben-Sira says: "When he put on his glorious robes, and clothed himself in full splendour, when he went up to the altar of majesty, and made glorious the court of the sanctuary; when he took the portions from the hands of his brethren, and he standing by the prepared wood, around him was the garland of his sons, like young cedar-trees in Lebanon, like willows by the brook did they surround him; all the sons of Aaron in their glory, and the fire-offering of Yahweh in their hand, in the presence of all the congregations of Israel; until he had finished the service of the altar; and setting in order the rows of wood for the Most High, he stretched his hand to the cup, and poured out the blood of the grape, yea, he poured it out at the foot of the altar,

¹ Middle of the second century B.C.

² Towards the end of the first century A.D., but containing ancient material.

³ About 190 B.C.

⁴ 1 Macc., early in the first century B.C.; 2 Macc., latter part of the same century.

a sweet-smelling savour to the Most High, the King of all " (l. 11-15).¹ The whole picture presented in chapter 1. is very impressive, and must have greatly affected the assembled congregation. Ben-Sira himself was clearly deeply impressed, and it shows his veneration for this sacrificial worship. Again, in vii. 31 he says : "Glorify God and honour his priests, and give them their portion as thou art commanded, the food of the trespass-offering, and the heave-offering of the hand, the sacrifices of righteousness, and the offerings of holy things" (Hebrew). But while Ben-Sira has full respect for the offering of material sacrifices, he not only insists on the right attitude of the offerer, but also recognises the efficacy of spiritual sacrifices. He says in xxxiv. 18, 19 (21-23 in Greek, the Heb. is not extant) : "The sacrifice of an unrighteous man is a mocking sacrifice, and the oblations [so the Syriac] of the wicked are not acceptable. The Most High hath no pleasure in the offerings of the ungodly, neither is he pacified for sins by the multitude of sacrifices." Similarly in xxxv. 12 (14, 15 in Heb.) : "Bribe him [i.e. God] not, for he will not accept [them], and trust not in a sacrifice of extortion ; for a God of justice is he, and with him is no partiality." But the most important passage as showing Ben-Sira's appreciation of spiritual sacrifices is xxxv. 1-3 (1-5 in Greek) :² "He that keepeth the law multiplieth offerings, and he that giveth heed to the commandments sacrificeth a peace-offering. He that rendereth kindness offereth fine flour, and he that giveth alms sacrificeth a thank-offering." These are instructive passages, for they give an insight into Ben-Sira's mind. A deeply religious man, as the whole of his book amply shows, he could not but regard with reverence the time-honoured mode of worship of his people ; yet, as he had an enlightened mind, doubts evidently arose as to whether sacrificial worship was really the most acceptable way of serving God.

¹ With the exception of the passage "he stretched forth his hand . . ." this is translated from the Hebrew, and therefore differs somewhat from the Revised Version, which is translated from the Greek.

² Not extant in Hebrew.

On the other hand, with his practical sense, and his knowledge of human nature, he must have realised that without this form of worship the ordinary people of his day would have been lost, religiously speaking. Something of the same kind of attitude towards sacrifices may be discerned in the writer of the prayer of Azarias¹ in the Song of the Three Holy Children, verses 15-18 (38-41 in Greek): "Neither is there at this time prince or prophet, or leader, or burnt-offering, or sacrifice, or oblation, or incense, or place to offer before thee, and to find mercy. Nevertheless, in a contrite heart and a humble spirit let us be accepted; like as in the burnt-offerings of rams and bullocks, and like as in ten thousands of fat lambs; so let our sacrifice be in thy sight this day, and grant that we may wholly go after thee, for they shall not be ashamed that put their trust in thee. And now we follow thee with all our heart, we fear thee, and seek thy face."

In the books of the Maccabees, however, the attitude towards the sacrificial system is the traditional orthodox one. We may first draw attention to the causes which induced the Maccabæan leaders to rise up; these are graphically described in the rescript of Antiochus iv.,² in which he commands that his whole kingdom (Judæa was a Syrian province and therefore part of his kingdom) "should be one people, and that each should forsake his own laws." Many in Israel, it is said, obeyed, and "consented to his worship, and sacrificed to the idols, and profaned the sabbath." The rescript says, further, that the king's emissaries are to "forbid whole burnt-offerings and sacrifice and drink-offerings in the sanctuary; and should profane the sabbaths and feasts, and pollute the sanctuary and them that were holy; that they should build altars, and temples, and shrines for idols, and should sacrifice swine's flesh and unclean beasts . . ." (1 Macc. i. 41-50). From this it is seen clearly that the sacrificial system was regarded as the core

¹ About the middle of the second century B.C.

² He reigned 175-163 B.C.

of the Jewish religion ; the replacing of the Jewish sacrifices by heathen ones was, therefore, held to be the most efficacious way of stamping out Judaism. The destruction of the books of the law is mentioned only incidentally later (verses 56, 57), but not in the rescript. Again, after the victory of Judas Maccabæus over the Syrians, when he was able to re-dedicate the Temple after its pollution, we read that the "blameless priests" built a new altar similar to the one which had been defiled, and that "they built the holy place . . . and they made the holy vessels new, and they brought the candlestick, and the altar of burnt-offerings and of incense, and the table into the temple. And they burned incense upon the altar, and they lighted the lamps that were upon the candlestick, and they gave light in the temple. And they set the loaves upon the table, and spread out the veils, and finished all the works which they made . . ." (iv. 47-53). All these details show the great importance that was attached to the sacrificial worship. Similarly in 2 Macc. stress is laid on the offering of sacrifices : "And we besought the Lord, and were heard ; and we offered sacrifice and meal offering, and we lighted the lamps, and we set forth the shewbread" (i. 8 ; cp. verses 18, 26, x. 3-7, xiii. 23, xiv. 31).

It will thus have been seen that in most of the books of the Apocrypha the sacrificial system is taken for granted and venerated ; 2 Esdras (the Ezra Apocalypse) belongs properly to the apocalyptic literature, and will be referred to later. The signs of appreciation of a more spiritual form of worship are not many, but they are there. In considering the larger body of literature, known as the Pseudepigrapha, we shall see that a similar attitude prevails ; in general, the sacrificial system is accepted and approved of, but in a few cases there are notable indications of an appreciation of a more spiritual form of worship.

In the book of Enoch, lxxxix. 50,¹ in one of his visions the seer, in allegorical form, tells of a "house" which he saw,

¹ From the portion of the book called "The Dream Visions," about 160 B.C.

saying: "And that house [i.e. Jerusalem] became great and broad, and it was built for those sheep [i.e. the Israelites]; and a tower lofty and great [i.e. the Temple] was built on the house for the Lord of the sheep, and that house was low, but the tower was elevated and lofty, and the Lord of the sheep stood on that tower, and they offered a full table [i.e. offerings and sacrifices] before him." Here, in cryptic form, the seer describes Jerusalem, the Temple, and the sacrificial worship offered therein; he, therefore, fully recognises with approval the sacrificial system. Further on, in verse 73, reference is made to the second Temple; but here, following Mal. i. 7 ("Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar"), it is said: "But all the bread on it [i.e. the table, or altar] was polluted and not pure." The denunciation is thus the same as that of Malachi, who, as we have seen, was far from desiring, on that account, the abolition of sacrifices; it was for their purification that both contended.

In the book of Jubilees,¹ xxxiv. 18, 19, we have one of the few references in post-biblical Jewish literature (apart from the Mishnah) to the Day of Atonement; but the reason given for its observance is very curious, and peculiar to this book, namely, in memory of the death of Joseph. "For this reason," it is said, "it is ordained for the children of Israel that they should afflict themselves [i.e. fast] on the tenth day of the seventh month – on the day that the news which made him weep for Joseph came to Jacob his father – that they should make atonement for themselves thereon with a young goat on the tenth day of the seventh month, once a year, for their sins; for they had grieved the affection of their father regarding Joseph his son. And this day hath been ordained that they should grieve thereon for their sins, and for all their transgressions, and for all their errors, so that they might cleanse themselves on that day once a year."

Coming now to the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs,² we have in the testament of Levi, iii. 5, 6, the extraordinary idea that sacrifice, of course of a bloodless character, is

¹ About the middle of the second century B.C.

² About 100 B.C.

offered in heaven. While in deep sleep Levi sees the heavens opened (ii. 5, 6) ; in the description of what he saw he says among other things : “ In the heaven next to it [i.e. the sixth heaven, next to the highest, where God dwells] are the archangels, who minister and make propitiation to the Lord for all the sins of ignorance of the righteous, offering to the Lord a sweet-smelling savour, a reasonable and bloodless offering ” (iii. 5, 6). Commenting on this passage, Charles says : “ Since, according to Exod. xxv. 9, 40, Num. viii. 4, the earthly altar and tabernacle were made after the likeness of the heavenly patterns or originals – a view which recurs in Heb. viii. 5, ix. 23 – the idea of a sacrificial service in heaven must have been familiar to Judaism long before the composition of the Testaments. . . . Michael, in especial, prays for Israel in Enoch lxxxix. 76, and he is undoubtedly one of the archangels who offers sacrifice on behalf of man. . . . Since ministering is here coupled with making propitiation, it is used in a sacrificial sense, as in Neh. x. 39, Eccclus. vii. 30 ; cp. Heb. i. 14 (‘ ministering spirits ’).”¹ Referring to the ordinary sacrifices, Levi tells of how his father taught him “ the law of the priesthood, of sacrifices, whole burnt-offerings, first-fruits, freewill-offerings, peace-offerings ” (ix. 7). These are more fully described in Jub. xxi. 7-9 : “ And if thou dost slay a victim as an acceptable peace-offering, slay ye it, and pour out its blood upon the altar, and all the fat of the offering offer on the altar with fine flour (and the meat-offering), mingled with oil, with its drink-offering ; offer them all together on the altar of burnt-offering ; it is a sweet savour before the Lord . . . ” ; so, too, with regard to the thank-offerings with their accompanying sacrifices and oblations. In Levi xvi. 1 there is, as we have found elsewhere, again a reference to the pollution of sacrifices.

Belonging to about the same period (*circa* 100 B.C.), the Letter of Aristeas (84-87) gives a description of the Temple, showing that the sacrificial system was taken for granted ;

¹ *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, pp. 33 f. (1908).

the writer says : " The altar was built of a size in keeping with the place and with the sacrifices which were consumed by fire, and the ascent to it was on a like scale. The place was approached by a gradual slope from a proper regard for decency, and the ministering priests were clad in ' coats of fine linen ' reaching to the ankles " (cp. Exod. xx. 26, xxxvi. 35). A little further on he speaks of the " numerous outlets at the base of the altar, which are invisible to all except the actual ministrants, so that all the vast accumulation of sacrificial blood is swept away in the twinkling of an eye " (90). In this book, however, as we shall see later, there are some interesting signs that the writer had more spiritual ideas of worship. Passing reference is made to the sacrifices of the Temple in 3 Macc., belonging also to about 100 B.C., and here, again, the sacrificial system is taken for granted (e.g. v. 43). In the Psalms of Solomon (about the middle of the first century B.C.) the righteous, or " pious," are contrasted with the unrighteous and sinners in Israel ; of the latter it is said : " They trod the altar of the Lord, coming straight from all uncleanness . . . they defiled the sacrifices, as though these were common flesh " (viii. 13) ; " They defiled Jerusalem and the things that had been hallowed to the name of God " (viii. 26). Although in this book there is no actual mention of the offering of sacrifices, these two passages show that the faithful in the land had them in veneration. But in this book, too, there are signs of reliance on spiritual worship ; to this reference will be made presently.

Coming to slightly later times, we have in the *Secrets of Enoch*, about the middle of the first century A.D., in lix. 2, 3, a very definite belief expressed in the efficacy of sacrifices : " For a man offers clean animals, and makes his sacrifice that he may preserve his soul. And if he offer as a sacrifice clean beasts and birds, he preserves his soul ; everything that is given you for food, bind by the four feet ; that is an atonement ; he who acts righteously therein preserves his soul."

Similarly in lxii. 1 : "Blessed is the man who in patience shall bring his gifts before the face of the Lord, for he shall avert the recompense of his sin." But stress is laid on the need of offering sacrifice in the right spirit ; lxi. 4 evidently means this, though the wording is a little obscure : "When a man conceives a good thought in his heart and brings gifts before the Lord of his labours [it is well] ; but if his hands have not wrought them, then the Lord turns away his face from the labour of his hands. . . ." The meaning presumably is that, if a man by his own labour purchases a sacrificial victim, the offering is acceptable to God ; but if he brings a victim which has been purchased by another man's labour, then his sacrifice is unacceptable. So in lxvi. 2 it is said : "Pay attention to his command, and bring every just offering before the face of the Lord ; for the Lord hateth that which is unrighteous."

In the Assumption of Moses, belonging to the same period, there is an implied general reference to sacrifices when it is said that Moses appointed Joshua to be "the minister of the people and of the tabernacle of the testimony with all its holy things" (i. 7). The inadequacy of the offerings as now offered (i.e. at the period when the book was written) is lamented "because they will not be able to offer sacrifices to the Lord of their fathers" (iv. 8), the reason being that under the Roman yoke they had not full freedom of action.

It is instructive to note what is said about sacrifices in some more or less orthodox writings belonging to the decades following the final destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70. The earliest of these is probably the Apocalypse of Abraham ;¹ here the writer consoles himself with the thought that when "the Age of the righteous" shall have come the traditional worship will be re-instituted : "And they shall live and be established through sacrifices and gifts of righteousness and truth in the Age of the righteous, and shall rejoice in me continually" (xxix.). A similar restoration is looked forward to in the Apocalypse of Baruch :

¹ Early second century A.D.

“ And I saw him [i.e. one of the ‘ four angels ’] descend into the Holy of Holies, and take from thence the veil, and the holy ephod, and the mercy-seat, and the two tables, and the holy raiment of the priests, and the altar of incense, and the forty-eight precious stones, wherewith the priest was adorned, and all the holy vessels of the tabernacle. And he spake to the earth with a loud voice : ‘ Earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the mighty God, and receive what I commit unto thee, and guard them until the last times, so that, when thou art ordered, thou mayst restore them so that strangers may not get possession of them. For the times come when Jerusalem also will be delivered up for a time, until it is said that it is again restored for ever. And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up ” (vi. 7-10; cp. lxxx. 2). Again, in lxviii. 5 it is said : “ And at that time after a little interval Zion will again be builded, and its offerings will again be restored, and the priests will return to their ministry, and again the Gentiles will come to glorify it.” In the Ezra Apocalypse, iii. 23 ff., the seer, who holds that the purpose of building Jerusalem was in order that sacrifices might be offered there, deploras its destruction ; but he says nothing about the restoration of the sacrifices. On the other hand, we have, in one of the earliest elements in the Jewish Liturgy, belonging evidently to a time soon after the destruction of Jerusalem, the following : “ Accept, O Lord our God, Thy people Israel and their prayer, and restore the service to the oracle [*debir*] of Thy House. And the fire-offerings of Israel, and their prayer, and their service, do Thou speedily accept in love with favour ; and may the service of Thy people Israel be ever acceptable ; and may our eyes behold Thy return to Zion in mercy, as of yore.”¹

Reference has been made in earlier chapters to the laying down of life for the sake of others, as in the instances of the Servant of Yahweh and Jonah. *Vicarious suffering* receives

¹ The seventeenth Benediction of the prayer called *Shemoneh 'Esreh* (“ Eighteen Benedictions ”), or the *'Amidah* (“ Standing ”),

prominent mention in 4 Macc., belonging to the beginning of the Christian era ; such suffering is briefly mentioned in 2 Macc. vii. 33, 37, but it is in the book before us that great emphasis is laid on it in connexion with the death of the martyrs. In i. 11 it is said that through their death their country was purified ; here the deliverance brought by the martyrs might seem to be understood in a merely natural sense, as simply implying that their steadfastness was the means of ridding the land of the oppressor ; but as we read on it becomes clear that the martyrs' sufferings are thought of as appeasing the righteous wrath of God, and bringing about the purification of the whole people. The death of the martyrs is, in effect, a propitiatory sacrifice ; they die in order that others may live. One of the martyrs says, for example : " Thou knowest, O God, that though I might have saved myself, I die in fiery torments for thy Law's sake. Be merciful to the people, and be content with our punishment on their behalf. Make my blood a purification for them, and take my life for a ransom for their life " (vi. 27-29) ; and, again, in xvii. 22 : " They became, as it were, a ransom for our nation's sin, and, through the blood of these righteous ones and their propitiating death, the divine Providence preserved Israel which before was evil entreated " (cp. also ix. 23-25, xii. 18, xviii. 3, 4). This is an important element in the history of sacrificial ideas.

So far we have been mainly concerned with the orthodox and normal attitude towards sacrificial worship during these, approximately, last two pre-Christian centuries. We have now to show, however, that this attitude was not universal. Ben-Sira, as already noted, in spite of his high veneration for the traditional mode of worship, gave distinct indications towards a tendency which envisaged the higher efficacy of spiritual worship. Striking here, as representing a like attitude, are some passages in the Letter of Aristeas. In one passage, while accepting the sacrificial system as right and fitting, he closes with some words which are very significant and certainly did not represent the general conception. In

quoting Eleazar's "Apology for the Jewish Law," he says : "He added, moreover, with regard to the calves and rams and he-goats that are offered, that men must take these from the herds and flocks, and sacrifice tame animals and nothing that is wild,¹ that so the offerers of the sacrifices, bearing in mind the symbolic meaning of the legislator, may have no arrogant thoughts upon their conscience. For he that presents the sacrifice makes an offering of his own soul and all its affections" (170). But more striking is the answer given to the question : "What is the highest form of glory?" The answer runs : "To honour God, and that not with gifts or sacrifices, but with purity of soul and devout conviction that all things are fashioned and directed by God in accordance with his will" (234). Again, in the Secrets of Enoch, xlv. 3, 4, it is said : "God does not require bread, nor a light, nor an animal, nor any other sacrifice, for it is as nothing. But God requires a pure heart. . . ." The same spirit is to be discerned in the Psalms of Solomon, xv. 5, 6 : "A new psalm with song in gladness of heart, the fruits of the lips with the well-tuned instrument of the tongue, the first-fruits of the lips from a pious and righteous heart - he that offereth these things shall never be shaken by evil."

Philo's attitude is interesting : while recognising the place of sacrifices in worship, he teaches that the unblemished victim demanded is a figure of what the purity of him who offers it must be : "God designed to teach the Jews by these figures, whenever they went up to the altars, whether to pray or to give thanks, never to bring with them any weakness or evil passion in their soul, but to endeavour to make it wholly and entirely bright and clean, without any blemish, so that God might not turn away with aversion from the sight of it."² In the Book of Wisdom, xii. 19 (belonging to the middle of the first century A.D.), the means of reconciliation

¹ Wild animals were, in any case, God's property (Ps. l. 11 : "All the wild beasts of the forest are mine"); one could not offer what already belonged to Him; domestic animals, on the other hand, were bred by man, and therefore conceived of as his own; these could be appropriately offered.

² *De Animal. Sacrif. Idon.*, § 2.

with God, it is taught, is repentance without any reference to sacrifices : " But thou didst teach thy people by such works as these, how that the righteous must be a lover of men ; and thou didst make thy sons to be of good hope, because thou givest repentance when men have sinned."

These will suffice, though other passages could be quoted. But a word must be said about the Jewish sect of the Essenes. They were people of holy lives, avoiding cities on account of the sinfulness prevalent there. Philo says of them : " These men live in villages, avoiding the towns on account of the sinfulness that reigns in them ; for they know that just as disease arises through unwholesome air, so, too, incurable infection to the soul through intercourse."¹ Josephus speaks of them thus : " It also deserves our admiration, how beyond all other men they addict themselves to virtue."² Now the Essenes entirely repudiated the sacrificial system ; they had offerings of their own, but would have nothing to do with animal sacrifices. " When they send what they have dedicated to God into the Temple," says Josephus, " they offer their oblations under the special conditions of purity that they observe ; on which account they are excluded [or, possibly, ' they exclude themselves '] from the common court of the Temple, but offer their oblations themselves ; yet is their course of life better than that of other men."³ There could not be a more telling illustration of the attitude of many towards the sacrificial system during the period under consideration. " It is beyond doubt," remarks Harnack, " that within Judaism itself, especially throughout the Diaspora, tendencies were already abroad by which the temple-cultus, and primarily its element of bloody sacrifices, was regarded as unessential, and even of doubtful validity."⁴

Our cursory review, then, of the post-biblical literature

¹ *Quod omn. prob.*, ii. 457.

² *Antiq.*, xviii. 20 ; cp. *Bell. Jud.*, iv. 122, 124 ff.

³ *Antiq.*, xviii. 19.

⁴ *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, English trans. by James Moffatt, i. 50 (1908).

has shown that the traditional mode of sacrificial worship was, in the main, fully recognised as that which was acceptable to God ; but that, in certain circles, more spiritual ideas were taking shape and receiving expression. One cannot help being struck by the fact that in these writings the idea that sacrifice is a means of atonement has receded into the background. One reason for this may well have been the place which the Law and its observances were taking ; the merit of fulfilling legal ordinances justified men in the sight of God ; reconciliation was thus made by human efforts. Another reason was the atoning efficacy attached to the offering of prayer, almsgiving, and fasting, suffering of any kind, and, above all, death. These are all subjects of which a great deal could be said. But we need not go into them here. It is sufficient to note that they largely explain why the atonement-idea of sacrifice was less prominent during the period of which we have been thinking.

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We have sought to follow out the various ideas in connexion with sacrifices through the ages, concentrating mainly, and for obvious reasons, upon those of the Israelites. Through the maze of thought and practice our endeavour has been, in accordance with the theory advocated, to set forth the truth that, in the origin and development of sacrificial ideas, three outstanding purposes are to be discerned throughout, viz. the Gift-idea, the Communion-idea, and the Life-giving idea. These were the really fundamental purposes for which sacrifices were offered. In these ideas, held for millenniums among the most diverse races of mankind, we believe we can discern the adumbration of profound spiritual truths. The final development of these ideas must, we contend, be sought in the Person, the work, and the suffering of Jesus Christ. We now turn, therefore, to the Gospels.

CHAPTER XVI

THE JEWISH SACRIFICIAL SYSTEM AND THE TEACHING OF JESUS CHRIST

LONG before the beginning of the Christian era, as we have seen, the Jewish sacrificial system – for it had become what previously it had not been, a system in the literal sense of the word – had reached its full development. Let us recall, very briefly, the outstanding ideas and purposes of sacrifices as these had been handed down through the ages, and which, as we may believe, existed at the beginning of the Christian era :

Gift-sacrifices had been offered for a variety of purposes ; they were, for the most part, offerings for which something was expected in return. Prominent among these were *propitiatory sacrifices*, whereby the favour of the deity was believed to be secured. *Thank-offerings*, too, must be numbered among these ; and doubtless gifts were also offered as pledges of affection for the Deity. In course of time, with the rise of an elementary sense of sin, these offerings assumed the nature of *reconciliation-sacrifices* ; they atoned for offences committed against the Deity. In the most developed form of these sacrifices the gift became the token and earnest of the *dedication of the worshipper* to the service of the Deity, culminating even in the laying down of life.

Of great antiquity, in like manner, were *communion-sacrifices* whereby union between the god and his worshippers was effected. Among the Israelites in historical times echoes only of this type of sacrifice survived ; but these echoes were sufficient to show their original nature. At any rate, the presence of Yahweh at the sacrificial meal was taken for

granted ; a material presence at first, but one which, with the development of the conception of the divine personality, tended to become more spiritual.

Yet another purpose of sacrifice was the *liberation of the life* of the sacrificial victim. The life thus liberated was believed originally to be of benefit to the god ; but with the development of the sense of sin, when it was taught that " the soul that sinneth, it shall die," the life of the sacrificial victim was substituted for that of the sinner whose sin was thereby taken away. *It became an atoning sacrifice* in a fuller sense ; death was the means of life.

In the ritual of the Day of Atonement there appears the rite of the transference of sin by the imposition of hands on the head of the victim with confession of sin pronounced over it. Though occurring only in post-exilic literature, the idea and the rite must have had a long history behind them.

Finally, it must be pointed out that all through the history of sacrifices among the Israelites there appears very prominently the supreme importance of the shedding of blood ; the pouring out of blood in the gift-sacrifices, blood, as Yahweh's portion at the communion-feast ; blood, life-containing blood, shed for the purpose of liberating life ; blood as the atoning element for the forgiveness of sins.

Everything appertaining to the sacrifices can ultimately be summed up in the words : Sin, Reconciliation, Forgiveness, Communion, Life through death ; they express the principles of sacrifice. What profound meaning these words have come to have for us we need not emphasise ; but what must be emphasised is that the eternal truths conveyed by them were *adumbrated* in the thought and by the practice of men in the childhood of the human race, and later by the Israelites. What does that mean ? It means what was expressed by the grand old prophet in the words : " Art not thou from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One " (Hab. i. 12). Before man had emerged from whatever his antecedent state may have been, and had become a sentient being, the God of all eternity, so the prophet teaches, had pre-planned

his nature, in which self-determination was to have scope even to the extent of thwarting the divine will – otherwise man might as well have been an automaton. And with the first dawn of man's understanding came also the beginning of divine revelation vouchsafed to him. One of his earliest intuitions centred in the recognition of the numinous – we call it the supernatural ; very childlike, very crass, very barbarous were his ideas about this ; how could it be otherwise at the birth of thought ? It was the best man could give in his first response to the beckoning of God ; and God, in His lovingkindness, accepted it. And so it was through untold millenniums, always an irresistible urge onwards and upwards, prompted by the divine mercy, in spite of constant and inevitable falling back ; God yet never leaving Himself without witness. And then, in the course of the ages arose this yearning after closer contact with the divine, shown forth by offerings to the higher power : gifts offered from many quaint motives, yet always recognising the higher power ; barbarous rites performed in order to secure union with the higher power ; the extraction of life from a victim for the benefit of the higher power. All incredibly barbarous, as it seems to us ; but terribly serious to uncultured man, and all containing the germs of living truths, as the sequel has shown. And if there was in it all even a scintilla of truth, whence should it have come but from Him who is the source of all truth ? In His mercy God asked no more of men than what they were capable of giving ; He revealed Himself “ in divers portions and in divers manners ” in accordance with man's capacity of apprehension.

That is how we are to understand the meaning and purposes of sacrifices in their primitive forms ; that is how we are to understand the early forms of sacrifices among the Hebrews ; that is how we are to understand their final forms in the sacrificial system of the Jews.

Now, if there are *elements of truth* in the ideas which received concrete form in the sacrifices, these elements of

truth will endure, though the form of their expression will differ. And where shall we look, in the first instance, for the evidence of this but in the New Testament ?

No Christian Old Testament scholar believes that he can study the Old Testament without studying the New. Would that it were equally true of all New Testament scholars with regard to the Old ; unfortunately, that is not always the case. You can have a foundation without a superstructure, incomplete and unsatisfying as that is, but you cannot have a superstructure without a foundation ; yet that is the attitude taken up only too often by people nowadays who maintain that the Old Testament is out of date, and may be left out of consideration. The earliest Christian scholars knew better, though it is not denied that they were not always sane in their estimate of the function of the foundation. However, it is the superstructure in which we live, while recognising the indispensability of the foundation. Let us come, then, to the superstructure. In other words, how is the sacrificial system of the Jews estimated in the New Testament ? For reasons which will become apparent as we proceed, we shall restrict ourselves to what is the core of the New Testament, namely the Gospels. What is of prime importance is to see what Christ's attitude to the sacrificial system was, and how in Him are summed up and centred in their highest spiritual development all the truths inadequately expressed in the various types of sacrifice in that system. We leave aside the Fourth Gospel because, as everyone knows, this stands in a somewhat different category from that of the first three.

This is not the place to enter upon a discussion of the reliability of the record contained in the first three Gospels. Their general trustworthiness is recognised by most modern New Testament scholars ;¹ so that we may take this for granted. But while it is whole-heartedly held that the

¹ See e.g., among recent works, Easton, *Christ in the Gospels*, p. 41 (1930) ; Vincent Taylor, *Formation of the Gospel Tradition*, pp. 94, 95 (1933) ; Barton, *The Apostolic Age*, pp. 33 ff. (1936).

Synoptic Gospels present us with an authentic picture of the personality and teaching of our Lord, it must be remembered that Christ's teaching was not, in its original form, written down. In other words, the written Synoptic Gospels contain the life and teaching of our Lord as given by the primitive Church ; nobody would dispute that. It follows therefore, that we must distinguish, so far as is possible, between what is original in the record and what may have been added by, or what may have been an interpretation of, the primitive Church, which was dominated by Old Testament ideas on many points. Furthermore, we are bound to take into consideration the fairly unanimous opinion of modern scholarship as to the sources which lie behind the first three Gospels. This can be stated in very few words.

The four documents which lie behind the Synoptic Gospels are: (1) the original Mark, more or less as we have it now ; (2) Q, the source of the material, other than Mark, common to Matthew and Luke ; (3) the special source utilised by St. Luke, often indicated by L ; and (4) the special source of St. Matthew, often indicated by M. This "Four-Document Hypothesis" of Streeter's,¹ though not held by all authorities, is very convincing. It is important to add that there are strong reasons for the belief that this last source reflects the mind of the primitive Palestinian community, and therefore it is sometimes a question as to how far it really interprets the mind of our Lord. For this reason, it is held, this source must be used with caution when appealed to in support of what may have been the actual words or teaching of Christ.

It is necessary that some reference should be made here to what is called the "Form-criticism" (*Formgeschichte*) of the Gospels, i.e. the attempt to penetrate into the obscure period between the life of Christ and the first literary record thereof.

¹ *The Four Gospels, a Study of Origins*, pp. 223 ff. (1924). On the "Two-source theory," see e.g. Dibelius, *From Tradition to Gospel* (English trans. by Lee Woolf), p. 233 (1934).

In the words of Dibelius, in his book on the subject (see footnote), the history of form-criticism "seeks to make clear the intention and real interest of the earliest tradition. We must show with what objective the first churches recounted stories about Jesus, passed them from mouth to mouth as independent narratives, or copied them from papyrus to papyrus. In the same manner, we must examine the sayings of Jesus, and ask with what intention the churches collected them, learnt them by heart, and wrote them down. The present-day reader should learn to read the individual passages of the early tradition in the way they were meant, before the time when, more or less edited, they were included in the Gospels."¹ The importance of this method of approach to the study of the Gospels will not be denied; but it has its dangers, not the least of which is the scope it gives to subjectivity. Barton remarks: "The sceptical, and in my judgement imperfect, reasoning of critics like Dibelius and Bultmann has so impressed Robert Henry Lightfoot,² the Bampton Lecturer for 1934, that he concludes that the Gospels afford us little more than a whisper of the voice of Jesus. This sceptical use of form-criticism is an abuse of it. Rightly employed, it is a most valuable instrument. In the hands of less sceptical and more reasonable critics, such as Burton Scott Easton³ and Vincent Taylor,⁴ it has yielded most substantial and useful results. It is, however, a tool which is mainly useful, when studying the Gospels, in helping us to understand the conditions which led to the recalling of a saying of Jesus or an incident in His life, its preservation, or the epoch during which it was embodied in a document or in one of our present Gospels. It is seldom adequate to prove that the Christian community had the genius to invent the incidents outright which they

¹ Op. cit., pp. 6f. On the whole subject, see also Dibelius, *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums* (1919), and Bultmann, *Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* (1931).

² *History and Interpretation of the Gospels* (1934).

³ *The Gospel before the Gospels* (1928); *Christ in the Gospels* (1930).

⁴ *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition* (1933).

record. To such incidents they doubtless at times gave their own colouring or added their own explanations."¹ Interesting and much to the point also are the words of Bertram Clogg : " Form-criticism is a valuable method of classifying the material, but in itself it does not enable us to determine the origin of the tradition, or to pass judgement upon its value to the historian. It does, however, help us to see the pre-literary stages out of which the written Gospels have emerged ; and it makes more vivid those incidents in the life of Jesus and His disciples which were first told from mouth to mouth and later repeated whenever the Christians gathered to ' break bread ' and pray together, long years before they were written in even the earliest of the documents which underlie the Gospels as we know them."²

This, however, by the way ; but we have thought well to mention the subject as it has a bearing on some things which will be said later.

As already remarked, the whole of the Jewish sacrificial system was in full vogue in the time of our Lord, and continued so for something like forty years after He rose from the dead. He was familiar with it from boyhood. We have now to see from the Synoptic Gospels what His attitude was towards the sacrificial system.

The first thing to be noted is that there are one or two passages in which the sacrificial system is simply taken for granted without any indication of either approval or disapproval ; thus, in Matt. xii. 4, Mark ii. 26, Luke vi. 4, there is the reference to David eating the shewbread on the Sabbath. Our Lord is speaking of the past, but that the shewbread was offered in His day is certain ; Josephus describes the offering in detail (*Antiq.*, iii. 255-257). This is, therefore, an incidental reference to one item of the sacrificial system in general.

Again, in Mark xii. 41, Luke xxi. 1, it is told how our Lord watched the people placing their gifts in the treasury ; the

¹ *The Apostolic Age and the New Testament*, pp. 5 f. (1936).

² *An Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 202 f. (1937).

“treasury” in our Lord’s time consisted of thirteen chests placed round the walls of the second court of the Temple ; on account of their trumpet-shape they were called *hashopharim*, the trumpets ; into these, people placed their gifts which were devoted to the upkeep of the Temple cultus. Here, again, therefore, we have an implied reference to the sacrificial system.¹

And, once more, in the parable of the Good Samaritan the mention of the priest passing by on the other side (Luke x. 31) implies the existence of the sacrificial system.

These three passages, then – we do not think there are any others of the kind – refer directly or indirectly to the sacrificial system without any comment on the part of our Lord so far as this system is concerned. He takes it for granted.

We come next to a few passages in which our Lord accepts the sacrificial system without disapproval. In all three Gospels (Matt. viii. 4, Mark i. 44, Luke v. 14) our Lord says to the cleansed leper : “ Shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing the things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them ” (Mark i. 44). This is in accordance with the law given in Lev. xiv. 2–7. The words, “ for a testimony unto them,” i.e. the priesthood, mean that our Lord wished it to be indicated to the priests that He was not hostile to the law of sacrifice when an offering was the outward expression of genuine gratitude ; when observance of the ceremonial law did not conflict with higher principles He was prepared to acquiesce in the system.

In Luke xvii. 14 there is another incident of the cleansing of a leper, with a similar command to him to show himself to the priests, and to make the legal offerings. This is quite a different episode from that just spoken of.

It may be added, in passing, that one passage (Matt. xxiii. 2, 3) might seem, at first sight, to need mention here ; it runs : “ The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat ; all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe ; but do not after their works ; for they say, and do

¹ The treasury is referred to by Josephus (*Antiq.*, xix. 294).

not" ; but this does not, as a matter of fact, belong here ; because it is not the sacrificial system which is referred to, but, as the context shows, the oral tradition.

Most people would hold, presumably, that the strongest argument in favour of our Lord's approval of the sacrificial system is to be found in the passages, occurring in all three Gospels, which tell of His partaking of the Passover feast (Matt. xxvi. 17, Mark xiv. 12 ff., Luke xxii. 8 ff.), when the previously sacrificed Passover lamb was eaten. But here we enter upon extremely controversial ground ; it is far too intricate a subject to deal with in this place.¹ We will only say that there are strong reasons, which have never been refuted, for believing that the Fourth Gospel is right in making the Crucifixion take place when the Passover lambs were being killed. In that case our Lord did not eat the Passover before He suffered, and the Last Supper was not a Passover meal. "Details of the Last Supper make its identity with the Passover very doubtful."² We shall carefully examine these passages later.

We cannot, therefore, take the passages mentioned as evidence of our Lord's approval or disapproval of the sacrificial system, they are indefinite. On the other hand, it must be pointed out that it is impossible not to believe that our Lord observed the three great annual festivals, with all their sacrifices ; in one instance His presence at the Passover feast is definitely mentioned (Luke ii. 41, 42), when He was taken up to Jerusalem by His parents, being twelve years old. But, apart from that passage, the Synoptic Gospels do not give us any information on the point until the end of His life (Matt. xxvi. 1, 2 ; Mark xiv. 1, 2 ; Luke xxii. 1, 2).

So far, then, it will be seen that there is very little indeed to show that our Lord approved of the sacrificial system. Presumably He acquiesced in it.

Next we will mention two passages in which the great

¹ For full details, see the present writer's *The Jewish Background of the Christian Liturgy*, pp. 156 ff. (1925).

² McNeile, *The Gospel according to St. Matthew*, p. 379 (1915).

principle is uttered : " Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets ; I came not to destroy, but to fulfil " (Matt. v. 17).¹ To this we shall refer again later. By the word " to fulfil " we must understand " to make perfect," " to complete." In Matt. v. 23, 24, we read : " 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." What must at once strike us here is the *unacceptability* of a gift as long as there is anything morally wrong about the offerer ; according to the law, in its Jewish acceptance, provided the offerer conformed to the prescribed external requirements, all was well. Not so our Lord ; an offering, a sacrifice, of itself is valueless ; the fitness of the offerer is the essential thing – " first be reconciled with thy brother."

The other passage is Matt. xxiii. 18, 19, where our Lord exposes the casuistry of the scribes and Pharisees : " Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing ; but whosoever shall swear by the gift that is on it, he is a debtor. Ye blind ; for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift ? " Here our Lord, in order to show the hollowness of Pharisaic casuistry, adopts for the moment their own principle that sacredness is a quality which can be imparted by contact – the old taboo idea which has been previously dealt with.

But the whole thing is wrong, as our Lord teaches in another passage : " Swear not at all, neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God. . . . But let your speech be, Yea, yea ; Nay, nay ; for whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one " (Matt. v. 33-37). The passage in question is not, it is true, a condemnation of the sacrificial system as such, but it shows up an evil derived from an abuse connected with that system. And this leads us to the last set of passages, in which, it is no exaggeration to say, our Lord envisages the entire abrogation of the sacrificial system.

¹ According to Streeter, Matt. v. 17-20 " does not come in that part of the Sermon on the Mount which we have referred to Q " (p. 257).

It can hardly be denied that this is the purport of our Lord's saying in Matt. xxii. 37-40 : "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets" (cp. Luke x. 27, 28). This clearly does away with the need of sacrifices; and it becomes even more pointed when in Mark xii. 32-34 our Lord approves the scribe's addition, that to do this "is much more than whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices." Even more convincing is our Lord's appropriation of the prophet Hosea's words (Hos. vi. 6) : "But go ye and learn what this meaneth, I desire mercy and not sacrifice" (Matt. ix. 13, xii. 7). It is true, that in both these passages the Hosea quotation is not altogether appropriate, and doubtless it stood originally in some other context;¹ but that does not affect the purport of the words; and, as in Hosea they are followed by "and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings," it is obvious that the prophet was insisting on the uselessness of sacrifices when offered in the wrong spirit. Our Lord must, therefore, have been using the words in the prophetic sense. Besides this, it is well worth noting that in the context of Matt. xii. 7 our Lord has been speaking about the Temple being profaned on the Sabbath by the priests, who are nevertheless guiltless; and He says : "But I say unto you that one greater than the Temple is here." That shows, at any rate, the relative unimportance of the Temple and its services in the eyes of our Lord, as compared with Himself.

Next, in Mark vii. 10-13 we have : "For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother . . . but ye say, If a man shall say to his father or his mother, That wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is Corban, that is to

¹ It is, unlike most Old Testament quotations in the New Testament, from the Hebrew, though Codd. AQ of the Septuagint agree with the Hebrew; other Septuagint MSS. are slightly different.

say, Given to God ; ye no longer suffer him to do aught for his father or his mother, making void the word of God by your tradition." "Corban" means a gift to the sacred treasury, i.e. for the upkeep of the Temple cultus, so that there is here an indirect, but none the less emphatic, condemnation of the sacrificial system, because it has in one direction been made the cause of breaking a higher precept of the Law. We come, lastly, to the passages which deal with the cleansing of the Temple (Matt. xxi. 12, 13 ; Mark xi. 15 ff. ; Luke xix. 45). Opinions differ as to the significance of this act of our Lord ; but when it is realised that this involved, at the least, a very drastic interference with the whole sacrificial system ; when we remember our Lord's insistence that "My house shall be called a house of prayer" ; and when it is, further, remembered that very shortly after this our Lord foretold the destruction of the Temple (Mark xiii. 12 ; Matt. xxiv. 2 ; Luke xxi. 5, 6), the exclusive place where sacrifices were offered – when these points are considered, it will be seen that there is some justification for the contention that by the act of the cleansing of the Temple our Lord contemplated the entire abrogation of the sacrificial system. It is symbolic of making the place of "worship" a house of prayer.

Summing up, then, our Lord's attitude towards the sacrificial system, we may say : (1) He bears with it inasmuch as it is the traditional mode of worship of His people. (2) He bears with it in so far as a right spirit is manifested in offering a sacrifice, e.g. when the offering is the visible sign of true inward gratitude ; the material gift symbolising the spiritual gift to God of a grateful heart is accepted. (3) But as time goes on He sees that the sacrificial system is incompatible with spiritual religion ; He therefore recognises the need of its entire abrogation.¹

Now this represents what one may call the more objective,

¹ This is borne out by the fact that the early Church never contemplated the re-institution of sacrifices ; the Jewish Church *did*. All other religions recognised sacrifices.

the more direct and obvious attitude of our Lord to the sacrificial system. But there is something else, something more important and altogether more fundamental. And now we must quote a very familiar passage (already referred to) which, perhaps, is not usually quoted in connexion with the sacrificial system ; and it must be quoted in full, otherwise its far-reaching significance cannot be grasped. It is Matt. v. 17-20 : " Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets ; I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law [cp. Luke xvi. 17] till all things be accomplished. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven ; but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." There is a comprehensiveness in these words which must not be missed ; for by " the law and the prophets " is included the entire content of the religion of the Jews - devotional, doctrinal, practical. Though at first sight there does not appear to be any allusion to the sacrificial system in this passage, there cannot be any doubt that, whatever else may have been in our Lord's mind when uttering it, He was also thinking of this. For the sacrifices were of the essence of the Jewish religion ; the daily sacrificial services of the Temple were held to be indispensable. The synagogue was quite subsidiary, a place for teaching, not worship. The sacrifices invited the divine presence ; they were the chief medium of man's relationship to God ; by them sins were obliterated ; they constituted the means of becoming reconciled with God. They meant everything to the Jews ; even to-day, as we have seen, a prayer is daily offered up in the synagogue for the restoration of the sacrificial services ! Can it be doubted that our Lord was thinking of the sacrifices, as well as of the oral law, when He

spoke those words? "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfil." "Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished." We must realise the significance of this passage for, and its bearing on, the sacrificial system – how, in other words, our Lord "fulfilled" in His teaching and in Himself the purpose and meaning of sacrifices.

In the Synoptic records there stand out, apart from much else, four subjects of fundamental importance which are directly concerned with our present investigation (i.e. the fulfilling of the law, and the sacrificial system); these are:

(1) *The recognition of the existence of sin, and its remedy.* It does not need many words to illustrate the truth of this statement. "Forgive us our trespasses"; "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"; "Ye cannot serve God and mammon"; "Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many be they that enter in thereby"; "The evil man out of his evil treasure bringeth forth evil things"; "If thy brother sin against thee . . ." and so on; it is not necessary to give further quotations showing that the existence of sin is recognised on all hands – not only by our Lord, though His conception of the nature of sin was far more intense than was possible with ordinary men, but also by every right-thinking Jew. Then, also, our Lord teaches what is the remedy. John the Baptist had said, "Repent ye," but that was a *condition* of forgiveness, not the remedy; for that we have to turn to our Lord: "The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins"; "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest; take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." The latter is a contrast between the "yoke of the law" (a Rabbinical expression) and the yoke of Christ; nevertheless the purpose of the law, however inadequate, was to keep a man from sin by serving God; but our Lord teaches a better way, *His* yoke is the true remedy for sin. Again, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." "Wherefore I say unto thee,

Her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much" (Luke vii. 47, 48). The remedy for sin is Christ's forgiveness, and it is for all who come unto Him in penitence. That is the first thing of fundamental importance : the existence of sin, and its remedy. The second is :

(2) *The call to dedication of life to God's service.* "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." "And straightway they left their nets, and followed him." "Follow me ; and leave the dead to bury their own dead." ". . . Whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." There is no need to illustrate this further ; our Lord teaches that self-dedication, *the gift of self to Him*, is all-important, indispensable. That is the second thing of fundamental importance in the Synoptic record. The third is :

(3) *Union with Christ, and, through Him, with the Father.* This subject, of deepest import, appears in various forms, until finally it is set forth in all its fulness. We can begin with its foreshadowing in such words as : "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me" (Matt. x. 40). This claim of our Lord of being one with the Father shows that union with Him is union with God. The same truth is implicit in the words : "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father ; and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father ; neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him" (Matt. xi. 27 ; Luke x. 22) ; and similarly in the words : "Whosoever shall receive one of such little children in my name, receiveth me, and whosoever receiveth me receiveth not me, but him that sent me" (Mark ix. 37). In all such passages there is the clear call to men to be spiritually united with Christ ; and this receives its fullest expression in the words at the institution of the Eucharist : "And he took bread, and when he had given

thanks, he brake it, and gave it to them, saying, This is my body which is given for you ; this do in remembrance of me. And the cup in like manner after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you ” (Luke xxii. 19, 20). That is from the third Gospel ; but the variations between the three Gospel records do not affect the main truth that in partaking of the spiritual body and blood of Christ the disciples were united with Him, and through Him with the Father, in a way no less unique than real. It was the consummation of all that He had previously taught about His Oneness with the Father and the union between Him and those who truly received Him. We are not here concerned with the various interpretations to which our Lord’s words have been subjected ; the central truth alone is our present concern : *union with Christ, and, through Him, with God*. Then we come to the fourth and, in the present connexion, the last of the great subjects contained in the Synoptic record :

(4) *The surrender of life in order to give life*. Here we may note, first, the principle expressed by our Lord that the laying down of life is the means of finding life (Matt. x. 39). “ He that findeth his life shall lose it ; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it ” ; the saying occurs several times in slightly different form, and its reiteration shows its importance. In another Matthæan passage it runs : “ Whosoever would save his life shall lose it ; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it ” (Matt. xvi. 25 ; Mark viii. 35 ; Luke ix. 24) ; while in one of the Lucan forms it is : “ Whosoever shall seek to gain his life shall lose it, but whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it alive ” (Luke xvii. 33). In all these passages it is not simply the teaching that self-sacrifice is the only true life ; of course that is meant too. But the saying means more than that ; it means that death for Christ’s sake is the means of life. The idea of laying down a life for others was not new to the Jews ; but our Lord’s application of it was new. And this truth received its highest fulfilment in Him. That is what was so

difficult for the disciples to understand ; hence His frequent reference to it : “ From that time began Jesus to shew unto his disciples how that he must go to Jerusalem . . . and be killed, and the third day be raised up ” (Matt. xvi. 21, similarly in xvii. 23, xx. 19 ; Mark viii. 31, ix. 31, x. 34 ; Luke ix. 22, xviii. 33). It was natural enough for St. Peter to say : “ Far be it from thee, Lord ; this shall never be unto thee ” (Matt. xvi. 21), and natural enough that the disciples were unable to understand the saying (Mark ix. 32) ; for this was a “ fulfilling ” of a rite in the sacrificial system which needed a good deal of discerning. But, after all was over, the meaning of it became clear enough. That brings us to the consummation – we need give no quotations here – Christ died upon the Cross, and rose from the dead. There the blood of the Victim poured out in death brought life as never before understood, life eternal. And in another direction His death brought life : all who believed in Him, all who do believe in Him, have, through His death, new life in a sense never before realised.

Thus, the original purposes of the sacrificial system were fulfilled in Christ. The recognition of sin – not in our sense in early days, but at any rate an offence against God – demanded reparation, which took the form of a gift-sacrifice ; and in its higher form it consisted in the dedication of the worshipper to the service of God. A further purpose of sacrifice from the earliest days was to effect a union with God. And the third fundamental purpose of sacrifice was that, by the laying down of the life of the sacrificial victim, its released life might benefit others.

In Christ the true meaning of sacrifices was at last revealed.

CHAPTER XVII

THE ATONEMENT

WE have seen what the attitude of our Lord was towards the sacrificial system, and in what manner He "fulfilled" it, namely, how He accepted the kernel of underlying truths, but rejected the husk, thereby showing the entire uselessness of the sacrificial system. But there was one important element in this system with which we have not yet dealt: How were *atonement, expiatory, propitiatory sacrifices* "fulfilled" by our Lord? It will have been noticed that in dealing with our Lord's attitude towards the sacrificial system no reference was made to some crucial passages. The examination of these must be our next task.

We must deal first with those passages in which our Lord identifies Himself with the *Servant of the Lord* (Isa. liii.); this is important because in later theories of the Atonement Isa. liii. figures prominently.

There are five passages which come into consideration here:

Matt. viii. 17: ". . . that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, 'Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases'" (Isa. liii. 4). This passage does not, however, properly come into consideration, for it expresses *the evangelist's thought*, not the words of our Lord — that is a very important point.

Mark ix. 12: "How is it written of the Son of Man, that he should suffer many things and be set at nought?" That is an obvious reference to Isa. liii. 2, 3: "He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised, and we esteemed him not." In this connexion

we may also recall Matt. xxvi. 24 : "The Son of Man goeth forth as it is written of him . . ." ; this recalls Isa. liii. 7 : "As a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, yea, he opened not his mouth."

Luke xxii. 37 : "For I say unto you that this which is written must be fulfilled in me, 'And he was reckoned with the transgressors'; for that which concerneth me hath fulfilment." These words purport to have been uttered by our Lord Himself ; but in Mark xv. 28, in a somewhat shortened form, they are the comment of the evangelist : "And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, 'And he was reckoned with the transgressors.'" The Marcan passage is, however, omitted in the Revised Version, and with good reason, for the documentary evidence shows that it does not belong to the original Gospel.¹

What must strike one about these five passages – and they are, we believe, the only ones in the Synoptic Gospels which reflect Isa. liii. – is that *not one of them makes any reference to what, from the point of view of the Atonement, are the crucial passages of Isa. liii., viz :*

"And Yahweh hath made to light on him the iniquity of us all" (verse 6).

"For the transgression of my people was he stricken" (verse 8).

"He shall bear their iniquities" (verse 11).

"He bare the sin of many" (verse 12).

Our Lord makes no use of these, in spite of His use of other parts of Isa. liii.

We have purposely omitted verses 10, 11 (excepting the last clause) because the Hebrew text is so corrupt that it does not give sense. The R.V. renders : "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him ; he hath put him to grief ; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days ; and the pleasure of the Lord

¹ See Westcott and Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek*, ii., Appendix, pp. 27 f. (1882) ; Huck, *Synopse der drei ersten Evangelien*, p. 210 (1910).

shall prosper in his hand." We cannot here go into the difficulties and impossibilities of this rendering. Gathering together the suggested emendations of the best modern scholarship,¹ we may, at least tentatively, offer the following translation :

But it pleased Yahweh to purify him,	To renew his old age ;
Joy of soul (i.e. offspring) shall he see,	(viz.) A seed, and length of days ;
And the purpose of Yahweh is in his hand,	He will deliver his soul from harm ;
He will show him light and make him satisfied,	He will pronounce him guiltless regarding his suffering ;
Righteous shall be my servant to (in the eyes of) many,	And their iniquities he will bear.

These passages are not used by our Lord : why not – when He uses other passages ?

When it is a question of *suffering because of the sins of men*, then Isa. liii. is referred to, but not when it is a question of *bearing their sins*, or atoning for their sins. That is very significant. However the early Church, from St. Paul onwards, may have interpreted the sufferings and death of our Lord, He Himself never speaks of His death as being a propitiation, or satisfaction for sin.

There are still, however, a few more passages to be considered. The word "ransom," whether as a noun or as a verb, occurs three times only in the Synoptic Gospels. In Luke xxiv. 21 the verb is used (λυτροῦσθαι) ; the disciples on the way to Emmaus say : " But we hoped that it was he which should redeem Israel." But this passage does not come into consideration here, for the words were not spoken by our Lord, and it is of His teaching that we are thinking.²

¹ Especially Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaia*, pp. 373 ff. (1914).

² Moreover, the disciples were probably referring to material redemption from the Romans.

The noun (λύτρον) occurs in Mark x. 45 and the parallel passage Matt. xx. 28, so that it can be said to occur once only in the Synoptic Gospels. To grasp the meaning of the word in this passage it is necessary to quote the context. Our Lord's words are called forth by the request of the two sons of Zebedee to sit on his right hand and on His left hand in His glory ; the passage then continues : " And Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them ; and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you ; but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister, and whosoever would be first among you shall be servant of all. For verily the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many " (Mark). It is noteworthy that in the parallel passage in Luke (xxii. 27) these last words, " For verily the Son of man came not to be ministered unto . . ." do not occur ; it is simply : " For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth ? Is it not he that sitteth at meat ? But I am in the midst of you as one that serveth." That, however, by the way. Let us take the passage as it occurs in the first two Gospels. The crucial sentence is : " the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." These words have been used over and over again as a proof-text to support the doctrine that our Lord gave His life as an *expiatory sacrifice* for the sins of the whole world, and that through His death forgiveness of sins was granted to men. But to do this is to wrest the words from their context, and to put a meaning on them which they cannot bear, at any rate so far as the context is concerned. For the context shows that by these words our Lord was setting His disciples an example ; thus : just as He came to serve to the extent even of laying down His life for others, so must they also be ready to do ; and *this* they could do ;¹ but how could they

¹ See Mark viii. 35 : " . . . and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's shall save it."

possibly offer their lives as an expiatory sacrifice for the sins of the whole world? Our Lord's words must be taken in the sense required by the context. The context centres in the demand to sit on His right hand and on His left hand in His kingdom, so that life as a "ransom," or price, here must mean that our Lord's life, lived and laid down, was to be the means of attaining that kingdom, a price paid for men to secure life in that kingdom. It is not a question of taking away sin, but of enabling men through Christ's service unto death so to live in the sight of God that He can forgive them their sins just because, following Christ's example, they forsake sin. The teaching and example of our Lord in His life, culminating on the Cross, were the means whereby men were able to forsake sin. That does not involve a price or ransom being paid to anyone. But that is a very different thing from saying that the death of our Lord was an expiatory sacrifice whereby sins are forgiven. We are not dealing yet with the doctrine of the Atonement; we have been merely trying to show that this text cannot be used to support that doctrine, in the sense traditionally handed down.

We come to the last passage, or rather set of parallel passages, in the Synoptic Gospels, the Last Supper. They are: Matt. xxvi. 26-29; Mark xiv. 22-25; and Luke xxii. 15-22. To these must be added, of course, St. Paul's account of the Last Supper, since he claims that he had received this of the Lord (1 Cor. xi. 23-25); and this is earlier than the Gospels. There are considerable differences in these accounts, but it is not necessary to go into the details of the textual variations,¹ though some points must be mentioned. Of the account of the giving of the bread it need only be said that Luke alone has the words, "which is given for you, this do in remembrance of me," though they are omitted by some ancient authorities. The crucial part, from our present point of view, comes in the giving of the cup; the words, according to the three Gospels, respectively, are as follows:

¹ They are dealt with exhaustively in Huck, *op. cit.*, pp. 192 f.

Matt. xxvi. 28 : “. . . this is my blood of the covenant [some MSS. read, ‘ the new covenant ’] which is shed for many unto remission of sins ” (εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν).

Mark xiv. 24 : “. . . this is my blood of the covenant [some MSS. read, ‘ the new covenant ’] which is shed for many.” In Mark the words, “ which is shed for many unto remission of sins,” do not occur in any of the MSS.

Luke xxii. 20 : “. . . this cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you ” ; but the whole of this is omitted by the best MSS.

1 Cor. xi. 25 : “. . . this cup is the new covenant in my blood. . . .”

It comes, therefore, to this : the words, “ unto [or for] remission of sins,” occur in Matthew only ; so that, of the four accounts, there is in Matthew’s alone any mention of forgiveness of sins by the shedding of blood. But this is one of the passages, if not the main passage, in the Synoptic Gospels on which the traditional doctrine of the Atonement is based.

We have already noted that there are strong reasons for the belief, shared by most modern New Testament scholars, that the first Gospel reflects the mind of the primitive Palestinian community, and that therefore it is a question as to how far it really interprets the mind of our Lord, for which reason it must be used with caution when appealed to in support of our Lord’s teaching. What are we to say when we find that the idea of remission of sins through the shedding of blood, in this account of the institution of the Eucharist, occurs only in the latest of the Synoptic Gospels, and in opposition to St. Mark, St. Luke, and St. Paul ? Does it not suggest that St. Matthew’s Gospel reflects in this, as in so many other particulars, the mind of the primitive Palestinian community – a community of Jewish-Christians still very strongly influenced by the traditional Jewish ideas of sacrifice ?

And then there is another important consideration : If the doctrine of the Atonement, in the sense that the shedding

of our Lord's blood on the Cross was an expiatory sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, a propitiation, and the means of obtaining forgiveness, if this, a central doctrine of the Christian religion, really was of such paramount importance, in effect, the salvation of the human race, would it not have found definite, emphatic, and reiterated utterance in the teaching of our Lord? We have been searching the Gospels; and everybody must admit that there are, at most, only the faintest traces of this doctrine to be found in His teaching; to be quite candid, it would be truer to say – not the faintest trace! On the contrary, there are endless indications showing that our Lord taught quite a different doctrine of Atonement.

Now, as a matter of fact, it is granted by practically all of those who hold the traditional doctrine of the Atonement that this doctrine is not actually found in the teaching of our Lord in so many words; but, they maintain, the doctrine, as taught by the great mass of Church teachers, is the legitimate *development* of the teaching and life of our Lord. Nobody would be so foolish and so ignorant as to deny that development in doctrine must take place. "The legitimacy and the necessity of development in Christian doctrine," says Rashdall, "are as indisputable as its actual occurrence. Many things may be true about Christ which Christ Himself never taught. Many things may legitimately be inferred or deduced from Christ's teaching which He never deduced from it Himself. Many things may even be added to it which cannot even be said to be logically deducible from it. Many things which Christ never Himself taught may nevertheless be true, may even be so far absorbed into the teaching of the Christian Church as to become in some sense a permanent and indispensable part of Christianity; for the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and His presence in the Church which Christ founded is as important an element in Christianity as the belief in a supreme revelation of God through the historical Christ." "But," he concludes, "some continuity, some consistency, some congruity there must needs

be between the development and the germ from which the development has sprung, if the religion which has grown out of Christ's teaching is to claim any identity with the religion which was preached by its Founder."¹ We shall all, probably, agree with that.

But then the great question arises : Is the traditional Church teaching on the Atonement the legitimate development of Christ's teaching ? And it must be said at once that if the teaching of the former had been consistent, if great teachers had not contradicted one another, if there had not been a large number of incompatible theories, and if there had been a definite doctrine of the Atonement put forth by the Church – then it would indeed be a very grave thing to question the truth of that which has been handed down by so many great Church teachers in the past.

To state exactly what the doctrine of the Atonement is, as handed down through the ages, is almost impossible because of the different theories held about it, and because of the many attempts made to explain away unacceptable elements which had clustered around it. As we have said, everyone knows that from the earliest ages it has been very largely the interpretation of Isa. liii. which has laid the foundation of the "orthodox" doctrine of the Atonement ; it is, therefore, we trust, not an unfair statement if, as ordinarily understood, the doctrine of the Atonement is expressed in this way : The Atonement means that :

Christ died on the Cross for the sins of mankind ;

He was wounded for our transgressions : he was bruised for our iniquities ; that he suffered the punishment due to mankind ; a substitutionary act ; for the transgression of my people was he stricken ;

that the shedding of His blood was the washing away of sin ; *with his stripes we are healed ;*

that His death was an expiatory sacrifice offered for sinners ; a ransom paid to redeem men ; that the sins of men were transferred to Him ; *he poured out his soul unto*

¹ *The Idea of Atonement in Christian Theology*, pp. 47 f. (1919).

death, and was numbered with the transgressors, yet he bare the sin of many ;

that His death was a propitiation whereby men are reconciled to God ; *the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all ; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many.*

Let it be noted again that our Lord never makes use of any of these passages in applying Isa. liii. to Himself. That this can be substantiated by many passages from the New Testament, apart from the Synoptic Gospels, is clear :

He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. See Rom. iv. 25 : “. . . who was delivered up for our trespasses.”

For the transgression of my people was he stricken. See Gal. i. 4 : “. . . who gave himself for our sins. . . .”

With his stripes we are healed. See Rev. vii. 14 : “These are they which . . . washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” See also Ephes. i. 7 : “In whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses. . . .”

He poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors, yet he bare the sin of many. See 1 Pet. ii. 24 : “. . . who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree. . . .”

The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all ; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many. See Rom. v. 9 : “Much more then, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from the wrath [of God] through him.”

Such passages could, of course, be greatly multiplied.

The traditional doctrine of the Atonement has, thus, strong support from the New Testament ; and, while it cannot claim the support of our Lord's teaching, it is maintained, as we have seen, that it is a legitimate development of this.

Why, then, has there been, in the past, objection raised against this form of the doctrine of the Atonement ? And

why is there in these days a constantly increasing feeling and conviction among thinking people that it is unacceptable? And why, it must also be asked, is there the frequent tendency, among those who, more or less, uphold the traditional views, to explain away its fundamental points?¹

The first reason is that it is becoming more and more realised that the traditional doctrine of the Atonement is *not* a legitimate development of the teaching of our Lord, and that it cannot be deduced from His teaching. And here there is a closely connected matter which demands a word or two. The traditional doctrine is held to be developed from the teaching of our Lord, in the first instance, because there are one or two passages in the Synoptic Gospels which seem to support it, and because it is clearly expressed in the Old Testament and in a number of New Testament passages, apart from the Synoptic Gospels. But it must be remembered that in days gone by, when a belief in verbal inspiration was almost universally held, every word of the Bible, Old Testament and New Testament, was regarded as equally inspired, and therefore as equally authoritative; a view held sometimes even to-day; so that when, not only in the Old Testament, but also in many parts of the New Testament, it was definitely stated or implied that an expiatory sacrifice took away sin, we can hardly be surprised that this became an accepted belief in the Church. In these days most people cannot possibly regard the whole of the Bible as equally authoritative. So much of the teaching of the Old Testament is undeveloped; we cannot blind ourselves to that; and, as to the New Testament, we are bound to regard our Lord's teaching as more authoritative than the Apostolic; *to Him the final appeal must be made*. Nor can we ignore the results of textual criticism, the material for which is so vastly greater to-day

¹ For illustrations of this, see e.g. Mozley, *The Doctrine of the Atonement*, pp. 141 ff. (1918); Rashdall, *op. cit.*, pp. 493 ff.; Franks, *The Atonement*, pp. 174 ff., 184 ff. (1934). Also in various places in Dale, *The Atonement* (1892); Moberly, *Atonement and Personality* (1901); Hicks, *The Fullness of Sacrifice* (1930).

than even fifty years ago. The evidence of the earliest MSS. cannot be ignored.

That, however, by the way. As we have just said, the changing attitude towards the traditional doctrine of the Atonement is due to the fact that the latter is not a legitimate or logical development of our Lord's teaching. The traditional doctrine is, as we have seen, that the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God is brought about by Christ's death on the Cross because it was an *expiatory sacrifice*; a ransom paid to cancel sin; a bearing of the sins of others, i.e. substitutionary; a propitiation whereby sinners are reconciled with God. But there is nothing in the teaching of Christ Himself which even suggests the ideas of His death being an expiation, or a ransom, or a substitution, or a propitiation; there is, in other words, no real point of attachment between what Christ teaches and what is supposed to be a development of this. The early Church interpreted the death of our Lord on the Cross in the light of the Old Testament sacrificial ideas, especially in the light of what is said about the suffering servant in Isa. liii. Why we cannot do that should now be clear enough.

A second reason why there is a revulsion from the traditional doctrine of the Atonement is because it involves a doctrine of God which is difficult, nay impossible, to accept. If Christ's death was an expiatory sacrifice, a ransom, a propitiation – to whom was satisfaction made, to whom was the price paid, who was propitiated? The idea of the Devil may be left aside, few even of the most extreme upholders of the traditional doctrine maintain that;¹ so it is to God to whom satisfaction has to be made, and the price paid. God has been offended by the sins of men, and before He can forgive He must be bought off, and this is done by the sacrifice of the Cross! That is putting it rather baldly, but ultimately that is what it comes to. Now, is it possible for us to conceive of a kind of transaction taking place between our Lord and the Father whereby, a price having

¹ e.g. Aulén, *Christus Victor*, referred to by Franks, op. cit., p. 177.

been paid, forgiveness is granted? Or, as though our Lord could offer, and the Father receive, such a sacrifice? Or, as though the Father could impose, and the Son endure, a punishment for an offence or offences which He had never committed?¹ We are not denying the principle of vicarious suffering, but only the indefensible contention that God *demand*s vicarious suffering before He can forgive sin.

This is what is involved in the traditional doctrine of the Atonement; and it is small wonder that its advocates try hard to tone it down; it *can* only be made compatible with a fitting doctrine of God by explaining its fundamental points away altogether.

What, then, it will be asked, is meant by the doctrine of the Atonement? Put very shortly, and omitting many things which are closely connected with it, the central fact can be expressed in this simple way:

The Atonement means the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God. Christ's atoning work is to reconcile sinners with God. How is this effected? It is effected through the teaching, the example, the life, the death and resurrection of Christ, by means of which men are enabled to fight against sin and to overcome sin. That Christ-power working in us procures for us forgiveness from God, and therefore reconciliation with God. The Atonement is not a single act performed once for all in the death on the Cross, but the natural outworking and consummation of the meaning and purpose of our Lord's entire life. His death on the Cross was an incident, though the supreme and culminating incident of His life; *and it must not be separated from the life of which it was the crowning act.* That *whole* life was "a sacrifice which takes away sin in the only way in which sin can really be taken away, and that is by making the sinner better."²

The saving efficacy of our Lord's work in His life and death lies in the fact that "it makes known God's nature and His

¹ Cp. Rashdall, *op. cit.*, p. 445.

² Rashdall, *op. cit.*, p. 454. Bearing in mind His unity with the Father, we recall St. Paul's words when he says that it is the goodness of God that leads to repentance (Rom. ii. 4).

will ; it instructs men in the way of salvation, and excites in them that love which inspires sorrow for past sin and gives power to avoid sin in the future.”¹ Only by repentance and forsaking sin can sin be forgiven, and Christ’s life, culminating in the Cross, and crowned by His resurrection, is both that which shows the way and enables men to walk in it. God forgives sin because Christ in us overcomes sin.

Now, it must be recognised that this explanation of what the Atonement means runs counter to the more or less official teaching of the Church, Catholic and Protestant, from apostolic times onwards until the present day. By the official teaching of the Church we mean that which is set forth in authoritative writings of all ages. What has been said is not heretical, because it does not question or deny anything in the Creeds of Christendom ; but it does challenge what has been the mind of the Church ; and that is a very serious thing. Nevertheless, many teachers in all ages have protested against what must still be described as the dominant teaching of the Church on the subject ; they have protested in vain so far as the official formularies of the Church, apart from the Creeds, are concerned, and so far as the great mass of Church-people are concerned.

It is fully realised that to deal with the doctrine of the Atonement adequately one has to take into consideration the doctrine of God, the doctrine of the Incarnation, and the doctrine of Sin. Our concern has been mainly with one element of the subject, but it is the central element, that, namely, which is based upon, and is the outcome of, the Jewish conceptions of sacrifice and our Lord’s fulfilment of all the truths adumbrated in those conceptions. That was doubtless the intended method of the early Church teachers in framing a doctrine of the Atonement. But, according to the conviction of an increasing number of thinkers, following therein some notable Church teachers of bygone ages, the early Church was unduly influenced by Old Testament conceptions on the subject.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 443.

We contend that, whatever ideas people may entertain on this subject of the Atonement, they should be based primarily on the teaching of our Lord. He saw the fallacies and inconsistencies of Judaism far more clearly than did the teachers of the early Church, not excluding St. Paul himself. He realised the crude doctrine of God involved in the Jewish conception of atonement in His day. He understood Isa. liiii. better than His followers, and He knew what therein was to be applied to Himself, and what was not to be so applied. For a doctrine of the Atonement His teaching, as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels, is a better guide than the rest of the New Testament.

It might be argued that, according to the theory of the Atonement here put forward, the Atonement could have been achieved without the sacrifice of the Cross, since the theory maintains that our Lord's whole life of self-sacrifice and His teaching are the means of reconciliation with God. Theoretically there may possibly be something in that argument, though we do not agree with it. It must be remembered that it was the life and teaching of our Lord that involved His death; *the two cannot be separated*. If His life and teaching had not been what they were He would not have suffered death. The Crucifixion was in process of taking place from the beginning of our Lord's ministry; that is why He so often referred to His death. When He bade others take up their Cross daily if they would be His followers, *He* was obviously the prototype of this. So that it is true to say that the Crucifixion was in process of taking place from the beginning of our Lord's ministry. The actual Cross was the inevitable culmination of the whole process. Therefore, to restrict Christ's willing self-sacrifice to the Cross, as such, must be wrong because it does not take into account that which occasioned the Cross, viz. the "daily cross." That willing self-sacrifice which was the means of man's reconciliation with God went on all through His life. Yet the Cross was vital to the work of His life; since, if sin had not crucified Him, we had not known its true nature;

while, had He not loved to the point of the sacrifice of His life, we had not known the greatness of God's love. It is just because sin treated that love so, that we know it for what it is, and are filled with horror at its hold upon us. But it was not as an atonement, not as a payment, not as a penalty, that He lived that life, and gave that teaching and example ; it was all the act of love for man. Therefore it follows, too, that the Cross, the culmination of it all, was not an atonement, not a payment, not a penalty, but the crowning act of love. "Not as a penalty," it has been beautifully said, "not as a penalty did Jesus undergo the suffering of the Cross ; it was rather as the shepherd endures hardship, exposure, danger, and even death, for the sheep. The sheep enjoy their safety because of what the shepherd has endured."¹

It is true, is it not, that our supreme aim must ever be to be right so far as we possibly can in the sight of God ; this can be effected only by righteousness of life, by fighting against sin ; and the only way of fighting against sin is to follow the teaching and example of Christ. He has shown us the way ; He, One with the Father, through His Holy Spirit, gives us strength to combat sin in its multifarious forms. If it were not for His teaching and example how could we form an adequate idea of righteousness ? He has shown the way, whereby we can, at any rate, do our best to be accepted by God — *therein lies the essence of what we call the Atonement.*

It is often urged in support of the traditional doctrine of the Atonement that "the justice of God must be satisfied," which can be done only by the perfectly Righteous One suffering for the guilty ! That reflects to some extent what *was* a Jewish doctrine in past ages ; but it is a principle which the Jews have repudiated long since. It is not Christian teaching. One cannot find anything of that kind in the teaching of Christ ; according to Him, divine love is all-absorbing, as He shows clearly, e.g. in the parable of

¹ Franks, *The Atonement*, p. 188 (1934).

the Prodigal Son. It is through the *divine initiative* that the prodigal came to himself and said : “ I will arise and go to my father ” ; that is to say, it is the goodness of God that leads to repentance, and which is the condition of forgiveness, and it is by forgiveness that we are put into a right relationship with God. The love of God, revealed in Jesus Christ – that is the height and depth, and length and breadth, of Christ’s teaching. The problem of the Atonement is just that of bringing the sinner truly to acknowledge and confess his sin, and to turn in trustful obedience to the Father. That is what Christ does, manifesting the love of God in the Cross as the culmination of His life and teaching.

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