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SACRIFICE IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

NOWHERE in the New Testament is there such close and sustained reference to the Old Testament ceremonial preparation as in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The writer's interest in the subject was no doubt due to the situation demanding such a message as the Epistle contained, and the advisability of meeting it in the particular way in which the author does. While to St. Paul the term "Law" connoted its moral aspect, in this Epistle the emphasis is upon the ritual meaning, though not exclusively (cf. ix. 19), and both writers looked upon the "Law", each from his own point of view, as being especially a preparation for the Gospel. The ritual Law here has the relation to the Gospel of a *συνία* to an *εἰκὼν*, a shadow or silhouette that indicated the presence of a solid reality, to come into view in its due time. Such an outline, therefore, may be valued as illustrating and adumbrating the now observed reality; the details may be compared, both to illuminate the significance of the new reality from the familiar lineaments of the outline and also the more strongly to teach that, as we now have the reality, the use of the shadow outline is finished, except to illustrate afresh and renew understanding of the reality. This relationship of *συνία* and *εἰκὼν*, though no doubt having a similar use in Alexandrine allegorisings, notably in those of Philo, is used in a very different fashion in this Epistle. Here we find typical, not allegorical, interpretation. The method indicated by these terms refers to the correspondence of historical events and situations, linked in the dynamic sequence which we have come to know as "progressive revelation". There is none of the arbitrary selection of special points of history and their reference to ideas in an entirely different realm chosen by the fancy of the author and resting entirely on his imagination. Here the writer elucidates underlying principles of spiritual relationships in Covenant, remission of sins, mediation and fellowship, which have had two historical expressions, both linked in closest association. He therefore does not tie himself to an outworn exegesis, but rather exhibits the way in which the Church must always understand and interpret the relation between the two Covenants, so long as the sacrificial

worship of the Old is not rejected as representing a fundamentally unhealthy accretion to the upsurge of higher religious development.

Before studying more carefully the main passages dealing with our subject, it may be as well to remember their context, the drift of the Epistle as a whole. The writer directs his treatise to those, probably Jewish, Christians whose faith and hope were evidently wilting under the sense of inferiority before the elaborate and seemingly immovable religious and ecclesiastical system of Jerusalem, with its temple, as well as all Jewry beyond. They no doubt felt estranged from all that was so deeply rooted in their nature and attitude as the divinely appointed way of salvation, for the sake of membership in this new, obscure and persecuted sect, without tradition, dignity, institution or security. It was the writer's task to meet their need of tradition by providing them with the essence of what they believed lost, to give to them a sense of the dignity of the new and living way into the presence of God, to portray the heavenly institutions into which they had the privilege of entering and to give them security in the sense that their great forefathers had it, though in this case with all the greater assurance through the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

Accordingly, he sets before them the divinity of Christ, verified from the O.T., a mediator of revelation greater than the prophets, angels, Moses and Joshua; One, moreover, Who was at once the Divine Son and yet made like unto His brother man, so that in suffering He might become the author of man's salvation and a mediator, a High Priest Godward, in perfect sympathy with His sinful people (ch. i-iv). In this position, the High Priesthood of Aaron was superseded by a greater dignity, that of Melchizedek, whose greatness and superiority, even over Abraham, was acknowledged by the patriarch receiving priestly blessing from him and by giving him tithes. Thus, the Aaronic priesthood, descended from Abraham, might be said to have acknowledged Melchizedek's superiority in their forefather. So also they showed themselves inferior to the One who was priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. The fact that such a new priesthood was expected (cf. Ps. cx) involved a change of ritual approach as well; this fact the Divine oath confirmed and Jesus Christ was its fulfilment (ch. v-vii). He ministered a sacrifice once for all, not frequently, and His eternal ministry

makes Him the mediator of that new Covenant to which the O.T. looks forward. As, under the first Covenant, there was a form of sacrificial approach to God, on the Day of Atonement particularly, when the High Priest went with blood into the Holy of Holies ; and that approach was manifestly imperfect, inasmuch as the High Priest needed pardon and also the annual repetition of the ritual showed its inherent weakness ; so, under the New Covenant, in the heavenly sanctuary, Christ has entered as High Priest, but once for all, in the power of His sacrificial offering, an offering of a sinless substitute that binds through His shed blood all who are sprinkled and cleansed with it into the fellowship of that Covenant. In that heavenly sanctuary, Christ appears for His people after having been manifested to make the sacrifice of Himself (ch. viii-ix).

This, then, is the answer to the fruitless sacrifices of the Old Covenant ; their abrogation is implied in the provision of a better and in the promise of Ps. xl. The fact that all further sacrifice for sin has been annulled, after the comprehensive sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, is proved by the fact that the priest needs no longer to minister the sacrifice, but sits at God's right hand. This is sufficient to inspire the most wavering to be bold to approach God and thankfully to receive this cleansing from sin, rather than to forsake God's Son, Who so endured for us, and to despise His sacrifice. Though the day of His return tarried and trials beset them, let all waverers remember the Old Testament worthies, with less light and dimmer vision, who yet endured. Indeed, let them remember again Jesus Christ Himself and His sufferings. Let them regard trial as a loving chastisement to approve them as sons of God ; let them realise to what a glorious company of the heavenly host they had been introduced even now, while awaiting the final revelation of God. Let them be prepared to suffer with their eternal Saviour, with praises and well-doing as their continual offering.

This short résumé necessarily involves a good deal of assumed exegesis, which must be dealt with more in detail, especially as it is upon the anvil of exegesis of certain passages that quite different doctrinal viewpoints are to be hammered out. In the many sacrificial references there are a few which refer to sacrifices involving communion and fellowship (iii. 14, *μέτοχοι γὰρ τοῦ χριστοῦ γεγόναμεν*, v. 1, *δῶρα καὶ θυσίας*, and xiii. 10, which, after referring to *βρώματα* [v. 9], continues: *ἐχομεν θυσιαστήριον, ἐξ οὗ*

φαγεῖν οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἐξουσίαν οἱ τῇ σκητῇ λατρεύοντες. But in the main the writer focuses upon the Day of Atonement ritual as the zenith of the reconciling, atoning, sin-cleansing ministry of the blood-sacrifices daily in use, with the added exposition of the sacrifice of covenant-making, in order to bring out all that he wants to do in the work of Christ. It is noteworthy of his style, that the author fills out one pictorial idea from another. In vi. 19 it is a permissible interpretation to read of hope as an anchor of the soul, yet entering into the veil of the tabernacle, though the R.V. has it otherwise. Yet certainly in v. 20 Christ is both High Priest within the veil but also a *προδρομος*, to bring out the thought, otherwise not implied, that His people will follow Him thither. Yet in this method of filling out one thought from another, the writer is quite clear as to his references to the Old Covenant.

Before dealing with the use of the Day of Atonement ritual in the Epistle, reference must be made to an important discussion, namely: "When does the Epistle represent Our Lord as beginning His High Priestly work?" Westcott represents the Melchizedek High Priesthood as having begun at the Ascension, emphasising *ἑδόξασεν . . . γενηθῆναι ἀρχιερέα* (v. 5), and alleges that He had a High Priesthood before, but a quasi-Aaronic one. A. B. Bruce concurs in this. But others (e.g. Gayford in the *New Commentary*, p. 599; F. C. N. Hicks, *Fullness of Sacrifice*, p. 240) can point to such a passage as vii. 11 f. as greatly undermining such a contention and therefore, in the interests of confining Christ's High Priestly work to after the Resurrection, deny that in the days of His flesh, and in particular in the Cross, there was any Priestly action at all. The writer's references to the Cross or to the death of Christ will, of course, reflect on this question, as will his interpretation of it in the light of the Day of Atonement ritual. But the examination of the textual references presumed to support the view that Our Lord became a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek subsequent to His work on the Cross produces strikingly little convincing evidence. In the first place, the opening chapters of the Epistle refer to the Lord's identity with humanity, though Son of God, as a preparation, fitting Him to be a High Priest. Then in ch. v, in a context that speaks of the necessity of a Divine call to the Priesthood, Ps. ii. 7 is quoted. This Psalm had two evident applications in the thought of the Early Church. St.

Paul in Acts xiii. 33 relates it to the Resurrection. St. Mark i. 11 relates it to the Baptism. There was thus a freedom of application to the events of Christ's life, and of the two the humanism of the Epistle might argue a closer link with St. Mark. Moreover, the passage refers back to the first use in the Epistle in i. 5, where it appears in a catena of passages that are used for their doctrinal import rather than for any application to any special event in the Gospel story. Hence any obvious application of the quotation in ch. v to the Resurrection seems entirely lacking; and much more so is the following quotation from Ps. cx not obviously applied to something successive to the Resurrection, simply because it follows the quotation from Ps. ii in the chapter, even were the Resurrection reference in that quotation obvious. The whole passage containing the quotations emphasises that, as a High Priest receives a call, so the One Whom God called a Son, He also called a Priest. The *occasion* seems to be not even considered. Hence also the force of the phrase *οὐχ ἑαυτὸν ἐδόξασε*, which appears thus voided of any Ascension reference altogether; there is not even an obvious allusion. No more is there in the verb *προσαγορευθείς* (v. 10), which Gayford (*op. cit.*), translating as "proclaimed", uses to support his view. But the above interpretation of the whole passage would seem to show that this "proclaiming" or "designating" (cf. Moffatt) was a timeless decree, expressed in Ps. cx with no reference to such a proclamation at or after the Resurrection. Westcott further argues from vi. 20, *Ἰησοῦς, κατὰ τὴν τάξιν Μελχισεδὲκ ἀρχιερεὺς γενόμενος εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*, that "it is clear that the eternal High Priesthood of the Lord . . . followed on His exaltation to the throne of God in His glorified humanity" although this does not exclude a priestly action on the Cross (cf. vii. 27). Referring to the coupling of *Ἰησοῦς*, placed emphatically at the end of the sentence, with the High Priestly reference, he says that it is in order "to connect it definitely with the fulfilment of His work on earth whereupon He *became* a High Priest for ever". This, however, reads into the participle *γενόμενος* what is not necessarily implied at all—indeed it seems rather that the tense is antecedent to *εἰσῆλθεν*. Furthermore, the parallel reference vii. 27 f. confirms our view that the Son as High Priest offered Himself once for all and that office was by divine appointment according to Ps. cx. Of course it is plain in the Epistle that Christ now ministers a High Priesthood in the Heavenly

Sanctuary. Important aspects of it, in the nature of the case, were begun after the Ascension. But that that High Priesthood did not begin till after the Ascension is nowhere plainly taught in the Epistle and is greatly undermined as a theory by the close application of the type of the Day of Atonement to Christ's ministry, which thus embraces the Cross as an integral part. It was this point that so impressed Westcott and led to the untenable view of a quasi-Aaronic priestly work in the Cross. The answer to the untenable nature of this theory is not to reject any priestly work in the Cross (as do Gayford, Hicks and others) but to realise that the Melchizedek Priesthood began before the Ascension.

To come to the heart of this subject and to see the scope of the sacrificial Priesthood of Christ it is necessary to note carefully the implications of the Day of Atonement ritual as applied to the Cross and the present heavenly ministry. Early references occur in ii. 7, where Christ is spoken of as a High Priest in things pertaining to God *εἰς τὸ ἰλάσκεσθαι τὰς ἀμαρτίας τοῦ λαοῦ*; in iv. 16 the readers are exhorted *προσερχώμεθα οὖν*, implying the idea of ritual approach *τῷ θρόνῳ τῆς χάριτος* (i.e. to the mercy-seat). But the main passage dealing with the subject is vii. 26–viii. 3; ix. 11–x. 22, the two parts of which are divided by a digression in two parts. This digression deals first of all with the shadowy nature of the Old Covenant ritual and the promise of a better, i.e. a New Covenant, from Jer. xxxi. There then follows a general reminder of the details of O.T. ritual and its temporary and imperfect nature, which was yet a *παραβολή* of the reality now revealed in Christ (viii. 4–ix. 10). Coming to the main passage for study, vii. 26 begins with a backward look at the preceding argument (*τοιούτους*) referring both to Christ's identification with His people and His glorious exaltation, and further develops the thought (*ὅς οὐκ ἔχει . . .* v. 27), suggested in vv. 23 f. but not there worked out, that Christ's sacrificial work needed no repetition. This abrogation of repeated sacrifice was due to Christ's comprehensive offering of Himself, the Son of God, Who was thus perfected. "And," the writer continues in ch. viii, "the chief point of what we are saying is that this High Priest is such a one as to sit down on the right hand of God" (taking *τοιούτων . . . ὅς* as Westcott and Alford), and to be the minister of the heavenly sanctuary. Now in this context it is important to note the following verses.

A general statement of fact is asserted, *πᾶς γὰρ ἀρχιερέως εἰς τὸ προσφέρειν δῶρά τε καὶ θυσίας καθίσταται*, and then follows *ὅθεν ἀναγκαῖον ἔχειν τι καὶ τοῦτον ὃ προσενέγκῃ*. The context to this passage would seem decisive for its translation. As Westcott agrees, "it has been debated whether *ἦν* or *ἔστι* should be supplied with *ἀναγκαῖον*. If the reference is the offering of the Cross, as seems to be required by the type and the context, then *ἦν* must be supplied", and further, "He must . . . have an offering that in virtue of the blood He might find entrance to the Presence of God"; and again, "This offering is described as made once for all (*προσενέγκῃ* contrasted with *προσφέρειν*)." No wonder Alford, to whom the question of the auxiliary with *ἀναγκαῖον* does not seem to occur, finds the author here supposedly referring to a *present* offering, in flat contradiction with his words in x. 11 f. Nor can Gayford's plea (*op. cit.*, p. 600) that *v.* 4 implies a present offering be sustained, for that verse opens up a further point (the *μὲν οὖν* resumes with a fresh argument) that has its obvious fulfilment in *v.* 6. Thus the translation might go (*v.* 3): "For every High Priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; hence it was necessary that this one should have something that He should offer once for all." And there the point begun at vii. 26 finishes, with this conclusion pointing back to vii. 27b. Ch. viii. 4 resumes: "So then . . ." and takes the readers to a further reason for contemplating not an earthly ministry of continual offering but a heavenly ministry of realities (*v.* 6). It would therefore appear that to point to this passage as supporting a doctrine of continual heavenly sacrifice is open to serious objection.

Continuing to the next part of the passage that expounds the sacrificial and priestly work of Christ in the light of the Day of Atonement ritual (ix. 11 ff.), it is necessary to discuss some of the important aspects of that ritual as it affects the ensuing argument. In the interests of doctrine that concentrates solely on a supposed heavenly sacrifice, the Cross is voided of all sacrificial significance. Bishop Hicks (*Fullness of Sacrifice*, pp. 241 f.) speaks of the "fatal association of sacrifice with death" and claims this author and other N.T. writers as unable to conceive such an error. His argument from the text of the Epistle is hardly an example of careful exegesis, when he proceeds from a statement that there is no full treatment of sacrifice in the Epistle (p. 237) and goes on to plead that the language

must be taken "as a whole" (p. 238) and so to dismiss a plain statement that refers to Christ's death as a sacrifice (x. 12), quite apart from others such as ix. 26-8 (note the phrases) *εἰς ἀθέτησιν τῆς ἁμαρτίας διὰ τῆς θυσίας αὐτοῦ . . . ἅπαξ ἀποθανεῖν . . . οὕτως ὁ χριστὸς ἅπαξ προσενεχθεὶς εἰς τὸ πολλῶν ἀνενεγκεῖν ἁμαρτίας.*

In the exposition of those who maintain this view of sacrifice, the slaughter of the sacrificial beasts by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement has small importance, being regarded as not the work of a priest *qua* priest, but only as an offering on behalf of the people of whom he is one. It is but representative; the really "priestly" work begins after the slaughter in the manipulation of the blood. But here again there is considerable confusion of thought in the mind of Bishop Hicks and careless use of terms. When it is remembered that all Israel (as indeed also the Christian Church) were called by God to be unto Him a kingdom of priests (Exod. xix. 6) it is plain that *any* action (so-called "truly priestly") by the priesthood was representative, and no difference therefore can be established between acts that were done by the priesthood, but not truly priestly acts, and those that were both. Normally it was the duty of the offerer to slaughter the beast as his part of the priestly service. The fact that on the Day of Atonement the slaughter is also the responsibility of the High Priest, far from being discounted, is a special injunction of considerable significance. His priestly (i.e. representative) work, extending to the slaughter of the sacrificial beasts as well as the special ritual with the blood, is consistently applied, in the phraseology, as well as the plain statements of the Epistle, to the Cross and heavenly work of Our Lord.

Here arises the question of the significance of the term "blood" which is freely used in this as in other N.T. literature and is to be understood according to its meaning under the Old Covenant. We may remember that all sacrifice was involved in the Covenant in Israel. The sin-offerings and, above all, the Day of Atonement were instituted to restore the Covenant after violation, and therefore reconciliation was the supreme objective. But that is only part of the whole conception; the *method* of reconciliation and its meaning in actual terms of relationship between God and man must be included, not as a separate "theory", but part of the complete picture. The main parts of the ritual that concern this Epistle are the slaughtering and

the manipulation of the blood. On the Day of Atonement the bullock was slaughtered and also the goat, and the blood sprinkled on the mercy-seat and altars ; then the goat "for Azazel" bore all the confessed sins of Israel into the desert (Lev. xvi. 21 f.). Whatever other sacrifices may mean, it is quite clear from the text that transference of guilt is here implied ; and in the laying-on-of-hands on the slaughtered sin-offering the implication to a mind whose moral law was mainly the Lex Talionis could surely only be, that in its death was meant the death that he deserved to die (so W. Milligan, *Resurrection of Our Lord*, p. 277). This thought would seem to be consistent with the whole tenor of covenant in the O.T., to which indeed the Epistle refers in ix. 16 f. Here we follow the exegesis of Westcott and W. F. Moulton in the face of a large body of scholarship, that interprets the passage from the analogy of Gentile will-making. But Westcott and Moulton seem to justify the retention of Biblical imagery, translating, "For where there is a covenant, there must needs be presented the death of him that made the covenant. For a covenant is of force over the dead (or, 'where there hath been death'), for hath it any force while he that made it liveth?" This takes the conclusion as a query though the sense is not altered if it is a statement. G. B. Stevens'¹ attempt to dismiss this translation is based on interpreting *ἐπὶ νεκροῖς* as "men" with the A.V. and relating *ἰσχύει* to *διαθέμενος*, which is hardly an evident rendering. In interpreting the covenant action, the Epistle seems to refer to the sacrificial animal as the covenant-maker, presumably because the contracting parties found union through its death. The meaning of that death has been variously interpreted—the unchangeableness it implies, the death to past enmity, etc. Many see in it the implied death of the contracting parties, where each man imprecated death upon himself, if he broke the Covenant. In Gen. xv the early covenant between God and Abraham shows the Divine Covenanter following the ritual of the usual desert custom. But the growth of covenant relationship with God in the life of the Israelite nation necessarily led to the covenant victim representing far more the deserts of failing *μαρ* in breaking covenant ; and later (Exod. xxiv, to which the Epistle refers in ix. 18–22) the ritual of sprinkling implied an atonement for sin in the very approach to God in covenant,

¹ *Theology of the New Testament*, p. 511.

which had a similar ritual in the annual restoration of the Covenant, violated by the people's sins, on the Day of Atonement. On each occasion the same penal view of the death of the victim and the cleansing power of the blood seems evident. The laying-on-of-hands on the victim in the Day of Atonement ritual is more than simple identification with it as being the offerer's own gift (cf. V. Taylor, *Jesus and His Sacrifice*, p. 50). It is indeed an identification, but in a substitutionary capacity, not just in a representative one. The relationship is one of penal position and this view is not negated by the fact that the offering is still regarded as holy, for that term refers to a being "set apart" for a particular ritual use which is, here, to be solemnly killed.

Detailed reference to O. T. theology of sacrifice is not possible, but it may be simply stated that the idea that sacrifice represents only devotion to God, the self-oblation of the worshipper, and that the blood-presentation represents the offering of the essence of the sacrifice—the worshipper's whole life—hardly seems borne out by the phrases and words used. Although some such idea can show popularity with a considerable body of scholarship, the work of Kurtz and Oehler may show strong support for the view that the slaughter was an expiatory sacrifice; it was performed to release the blood (*αἷματεκχυσία*) by which alone (says the Epistle) there is remission of sins (ix. 22). The sprinkling of the blood was not the sacrifice, offering of life, or oblation; for although "the blood is the life" (Lev. xvii. 14), it was the life poured out or shed in death—a death for sin. Shed blood "speaks" (Heb. xii. 24, cf. Gen. iv. 10), that is, it *means* a good deal; with Abel it meant murder and called for vengeance. Jesus' blood (according to the same passage) "speaks" of (i.e. means) death with a different implication, namely, as with all sin-offering, pardon and reconciliation. Milligan puts it well: "It was not merely blood [i.e. of O. T. sacrifices], but blood bearing with it . . . an acknowledgment by the offerer of his free acceptance of death as a penalty due to him on account of his sin" (*op. cit.*, p. 277). It is strange that later he refers to the blood when sprinkled as the presentation of the offerer's life (*op. cit.*, p. 279). For the blood was sprinkled, not only on the mercy-seat, but also on the altars, including the golden altar of incense (Exod. xxx. 10) upon which no offering except of incense was to be made. The blood therefore is not to be

thought of as offered on the golden altar, rather the altar is purged by the blood of the sin-offering for atonement, offered *before*. In a parallel fashion in the Holy of Holies (cf. Lev. xvi. 16), the blood of the offered sacrifice conveys propitiatory cleansing and purging. Cremer (*Lex.*, p. 71) puts it "αἷμα is the designation of the accomplished and offered sacrifice". It is a metonymy for death, i.e. of the victim, through whose death the conditions of entry into the Holy of Holies were fulfilled. The blood-sprinkling consummates the sacrifice not as a crowning act of oblation, but as the efficacious application for the purging of sin. This implies that Heb. *kipper* (LXX ἐξιλάσκομαι) must include not only the thought of sacrificial offering for expiation, but also the application : cf. the use of *kipper* in Exod. xxx. 10 and xxix. 37 of cleansing (where LXX has καθαρίζω), also Ezek. xliii. 22 and xlv. 18, where LXX, ἐξιλάσκομαι = Heb. *חִיטֵּה* = Lat. *purgo*. This differentiation in the one O.T. term is more clearly distinguished in the N.T. Thus the Day of Atonement was not only expressive of sin-bearing but also of sin-purging. As to whether expiation or propitiation is the main idea in the ritual, Westcott may be quoted, that the essential idea of *ιλάσκομαι* is that of altering "that in the character of an object which necessarily excludes the action of the grace of God, so that God, being what He is, cannot (so to speak) look on it with favour. The propitiation acts on that which alienates God and not on God whose love is unchanged throughout". The question as to why the application of the blood of sprinkling of the sin-offering is to sacred places and not to persons (to whom it may be regarded as the *imputatio justitiae Christi et applicatio meritorum ejus*) may be answered by the suggestion that it is an application, not so much to the ideal persons of the sacrifices, but rather to their sins, ideally on the altars, polluting the Holy Place (cf. "your sins have come between you and your God"), and these were thus cleansed.

With this brief discussion in mind the important passage in Heb. ix may be studied. The first ten verses speak of the ritual entry into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement as an imperfect bridge between God and the alienated and guilty conscience of the worshipper. In applying type to antitype, vv. 7 and 12 are related to prove the doctrine of a heavenly pleading of the precious blood of Christ by our High Priest Who offers it there as His eternal sacrifice. The above discussion will involve

the lack of support from the type of this idea of " offering " of blood. The present tense of *προσφέρει* may be repetitive (cf. *καθ' ἡμέραν*, vii. 27) of the year-by-year action on the Day, and refer to the slaughter and blood-shedding. Moreover, in Lev. xvi. 2 (the chapter on the Day of Atonement) Aaron is told to come into the Holy Place (*τὸ ἅγιον*) with a young bullock for a sin-offering (*ἐν μόσχῳ ἐκ βοῶν περὶ ἁμαρτίας*). But this he did not literally fulfil; he went in with its blood, i.e. the efficacy of the offering (cf. LXX "in the bullock"); the offering was past when he entered the Holy of Holies, but he entered in its power (i.e. with the blood that applied the offering) into the Sanctuary. So also, the parallel verse in the Epistle (v. 12) says Christ entered the Heavenly Sanctuary *διὰ δὲ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος*, where *διὰ* unquestionably means "in virtue of" instead of *μετά* and contrasts with *οὐ χωρὶς* in v. 7, where the priest literally took the blood that was the condition of his entrance and of the acceptance of the people. But Christ enters *διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος*, referring thus to a work done, i.e. "having obtained eternal redemption for us". The verb *εὐράμενος* takes its tense—"therein obtaining" (present) or "having obtained" (past)—from the context and from the meaning of *λύτρωσις* in the light of the general theology of salvation. *Λύτρωσις* has all the meaning of *λυτροῦσθαι* (Heb. *gā'al* or *pādāh*), i.e. deliverance and bringing back what has been alienated. To go no further than this Epistle, ii. 14 f. associates redemption with the death of Christ (at least, in one of its meanings) and ix. 15 relates the cognate *ἀπολύτρωσις* to the death of Christ and not to His ascended work. In the light of our past discussion we may feel confident in translating *εὐράμενος* as past. In vv. 13 f. the cleansing and sanctifying power of the "blood" of Christ, the efficacy of His sacrifice, is contrasted with the old type. From what has been said above, the significance of the phrase "the blood of Christ" as distinct from His having offered Himself "through His own eternal Divine Personality" will be manifest.

After the passage dealing with covenant-making over the death of a victim and the fellowship found through the application of its death to those entering the bond, the writer speaks of the purging of the Holy places, not for their own defilement, but (as has already been pointed out) because of the uncleanness of those who drew nigh. The antitypical meaning is further borne out in vv. 25 f.; it is pointed out that a continual offering would

mean a repeated sacrifice. But this sacrifice occurred once, when Christ died (v. 27), offering Himself as a sacrifice to put away (*ἀθέτησιν*) sin by bearing it Himself. An obvious reference is here made to Isa. liii. 6, LXX, and the use of *φέρω* here, says Westcott, has the thought of carrying the sins up to the altar of the Cross (cf. xiii. 10). Thus sin in the Epistle is a defilement from which we are cleansed (*καθαρίζειν*, i. 3), a separating force which is covered (*ἐλάσκεισθαι*, ii. 17), a burden lifted (*ἀφαιρεῖν*, x. 4) and a robe of custom stripped off (*περιελεῖν*, x. 11), and all through the sacrifice of Christ once for all. In ix. 24 Christ is the true *ἰλασμός*, in God's presence *ἐμφανισθῆναι*; the aorist according to Westcott involves the fulfilment, without succession, in His work of presenting and representing His people in Himself, i.e. in the fullness of His being our sacrifice and our Saviour. His work and His merits are shown in Him; there is no thought of "pleading a sacrifice". It is eternally accepted and believers are made nigh through the blood of Christ, "accepted in the beloved", "being justified through His blood". In these Pauline phrases, again, the two-way reference of the application of the sacrifice through the blood is expressed, in sprinkling and cleansing the Holy Place and the people.

In the concluding verses of this major passage on sacrifice (ch. x) the impotency of the O.T. system for moral and spiritual experience is again made the foil for showing forth the perfect work of Christ. Again the contrast is drawn between imperfection implied in repeated and continual sacrifices and the perfect, once-for-all (*ἐφάπαξ*) sacrifice of Christ prophesied in the Psalms (xl) as the fulfilment of God's will to redeem and sanctify us. Verses 11-14 express, without any possibility of contradiction, that the contrasted sacrifices are not the O.T. ones and a perpetual heavenly offering, but one that takes place once for all and before He ascended to the right hand of the Father—the Cross. This passage adds its weight to the previous exegesis and knits the teaching of the Epistle into a consistent unity. The range of the Cross stands out in all its completeness in v. 14. Salvation in all its aspects is an enduring reality to those whose moral and spiritual experience is still progressing to its full realisation (*ἀγιαζόμενος*, cf. Old Lat., *nos sanctificans*).

The sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, then, may be seen as a deliverance from sin and Satan (ii. 14) and the fear of death (ii. 15), cancelling the obligations of past transgressions (ix. 15),

cleansing, relieving, forgiving sin's results, reconciling the sinner. It hallows and sanctifies the freed and cleansed conscience (ix. 14) to a life of developing holiness unto perfection, potentially gained in all completeness at the Cross. Christ's High Priestly work, supreme and eternal as Melchizedek foreshadowed, is now exercised at the right hand of God. His offering, once for all and never to be repeated, cannot permit, as Gayford pleads (*op. cit.*, p. 600), a dual thought of being both seated on the throne and also pleading the offering of His life, quite apart from the misinterpretation of sacrificial concepts. Christ, sitting in the place of power, is Himself in the position of prevailing intercession as He presents and represents His people in conjunction with an accepted offering, eternally applied by His presence there. To say that a priesthood without an offering has lost its *raison d'être* is to forget that His Priesthood involves the mediatorship of the New Covenant and the work on behalf of His people, the constant Godward and manward ministry on the basis of His completed sacrifice as we have here understood it. Indeed, to make such a complaint is to ignore the whole teaching of the Epistle which repeatedly asserts that continual sacrifice is self-confessedly ineffective and merely points to the blessings it cannot provide. The sacrifice of the altar of the Cross (xiii. 10) has another O.T. type to express a further aspect of Christian experience. The sin-offering and guilt-offering for one of the people was eaten by the priests in the Holy Place. So also we have an altar, not in heaven (as Gayford argues, contrary to all O.T. analogy from the Holy of Holies), but where our one offering was made—the Cross. Here the implied application is of the fellowship, union, and communion that the sacrificial meal foreshadows between the worshipper and his God in the victim (cf. *βρώμασιν*, v. 9). But fellowship involves responsibility ; as the Day of Atonement concluded with the burning of the carcasses outside the camp, which Jesus fulfilled in His death, so union and communion with Him involves partnership in His rejection. Not, however, in a spirit of sorrow ; thank-offerings (*θυσίαν αἰνέσεως*), which are the fruit of the lips which make confession of His name (cf. Hos. xiv. 2 ; Isa. lvii. 19), are ours to give, while all good doing and ministration of goods is a perpetual offering that, as indicating a surrendered life, is acceptable with God.

It may be, as Stevens suggests (*op. cit.*, p. 513), that the author

gives no elements of a philosophy of atonement. It may be questioned whether that was what the "Hebrews" needed, any more than many others at other times. Their need seems rather to have been to see Christ crucified as at once the power of God and the wisdom of God. This the author may be said to have achieved, by pointing out the integration of Christ's person and work to the revelation of God in Israel's history as a gem in its setting, and at the same time testifying to the Christian experience that He who had alone satisfied the fundamental question of reconciliation, also alone satisfies the deep needs of the sin-stricken consciousness of all mankind, the spiritual quest to which the Old Covenant witnessed, but to which it could provide no effective answer.

G. J. C. MARCHANT.

Cambridge.