

ARTICLE VI.

ON CERTAIN ERRONEOUS THEORIES OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SACRIFICE.

AN essential difference must necessarily exist between a religion adapted to a race of moral beings who have never sinned and a religion adapted to a race of beings that have sinned ; and this difference must lie mainly, if not exclusively, in the fact that a religion fitted to meet the wants of a sinful race must include a disclosure of the possibility of reconciliation with the offended power, and of the mode in which that reconciliation can be effected. No religious system meant for a sinful race could be considered as complete which lacked these features. A religion which claimed a divine origin would exhibit, as one of its chief characteristics, a statement of the possibility, and of the method, of such a reconciliation.

Antecedently to any direct revelation from God, thoughtful men would, not unnaturally, indulge in conjectures as to the practicability of any reconciliation with an offended Divinity. Arguing from what nature suggests as to the character of God, from what his providence discloses in regard to his benevolence : in particular, from the way in which they are sometimes inclined to treat those by whom they have been offended ; still more from the method in which they have known that men of superior power, of extraordinary moral worth, and unusual magnanimity have conducted themselves towards such as have acted contrary to their will, — arguing from these premises, thoughtful men, as we may well imagine, might arrive at a presumption that, in some method and for some reasons, God might possibly avert from men the punishment which they were conscious was deserved by them.

All conjectures on the matter would, however, become the

more uncertain and the more unsatisfactory in proportion to the clearness of one's conceptions of the purity of God's character and the absolute perfection of his government. Men would speedily imagine, in the progress of such reflections as we have described, that the law proclaimed by the Almighty for the regulation of human conduct must be, precisely as it is affirmed in the Bible to be, holy and just and good. It prescribes only such conduct as is, even independently of all legal enactments, pure and holy, and proper to be demanded of moral beings such as men. Its requirements correspond with the utmost exactness to the powers of those whose conduct it aims to regulate; a correspondence which would not be any more exact if there were but one moral being to whom the law was addressed. Its penalty, as to its nature and severity, is adjusted with the same exactness to the particular circumstances of every offender. No mitigating considerations can be supposed possible to be urged in regard to any circumstances of any offender that were not present to the mind of God, and that were not allowed their whole legitimate influence in regulating the degree of severity with which that particular transgression should be punished. In short, as it already has been intimated, the divine law suits itself, as a matter of fact, and as, antecedently to all revelation on the subject, it would be supposed that it would suit itself, alike as to its precept and its penalty, to the capacities and the circumstances of every individual among the countless millions whom it controls with the same minute exactness as though literally addressed to a solitary moral being. And the conjectures of a thoughtful mind as to the possibility of pardon in the case of transgressors of such a law would become the more uncertain, the less worthy to be relied upon, very much in proportion, as has already been said, as one's conceptions of the law under which men live harmonize with the statements of the Bible in reference to the matter.

On what grounds, then, it may well be asked, could pardon, on the supposition of the existence of such a law as we have described, be expected to be granted? Not certainly on the

ground that the course of conduct prescribed was impracticable, and that transgressions could not be avoided; not on the ground that the offender was ignorant of the law to which his actions ought to have been conformed; not on the ground that the infliction of the full penalty in an individual case would conflict with some other and remote interest. Every consideration, of such a nature or of any other character, that can be conceived of as at all aptable to the case, or afford a reason for a relaxation of the law, we must suppose to have been in the mind of the Lawgiver in the beginning, and to have been influential in the adjustment of the law relatively to that specific instance of human conduct. Indeed the possibility of pardon, under such a government as that of God, must be admitted to be, prior to any special revelation, very faint.

It should be remembered that in the case of human governments instances of pardon are rare very nearly in precise proportion to the excellence of these governments. Pardon is really, in the majority of cases, a symptom of imperfection. The allegations on the strength of which pardon is wont to be asked indicate this very plainly. The law, which in general is admitted to be a good one, is, as is urged, in this particular case, inordinately strict. Its penalty is disproportionately heavy. There is reasonable doubt as to whether the alleged offender is really the offender. In reality it is not pardon which is asked for on such grounds. It is merely simple justice which it is asked may be exercised, and not mercy. The alleged crime is not really a crime, but a misfortune. Such allegations never could be put forward with any propriety except on the ground of imperfection, either in the law itself or the mode in which it was administered. Under the perfect government of God, pardon never could be anticipated as possible for any such reasons as these. It can, indeed, be looked upon as possible only when some expedient, by means of which the same ends are secured as the infliction of the penalty of the law is intended to promote, shall have become practicable.

We are to remember, now, that the final cause of the precept of the law and of its penalty are identical. This cause is the promotion of righteousness, the prevention of sin. And it is altogether wrong to suppose that the penalty of the law can be relaxed, except in cases in which an expedient can be employed equally adapted with the penalty to secure the proper purposes of the law; to maintain, to the same extent, the authority of the law. The death of Christ is represented in the scriptures as such an expedient. This death can be adequately explained only on the ground of its being such an expedient. It is a satisfactory atonement. It is a full equivalent for the infliction of the penalty. And on account of its serving as such an equivalent, it has been not unfitly denominated a "vicarious punishment." It supports the law not less than does the infliction of punishment. It is an expiatory sacrifice offered, to the Almighty with a view to appease his indignation, and it is indebted for its effectiveness in this direction to its power to accomplish the ends which have been referred to. It may be described as punishment in a modified sense of that term; the essential difference being that punishment, in its true significance, is evil inflicted by the proper authority on the actual offender. Only in a modified sense, therefore, is there any propriety in speaking of the sufferings of Christ as penal.

It is then, as it would appear, not an wholly unfounded presumption, that there would exist in our moral nature what may be called a correspondence to this method of salvation through the death of Christ, sufficiently strong to serve as an argument of some force in favor of the reality of that method. We are justified, we conceive, in supposing, antecedently to a divine revelation, that the gospel would have such characteristics as would cause it to commend itself to our conscience and, with equal force and clearness, to our reason. And we might not unreasonably suppose that this felt harmony between the gospel and our moral nature would betray its existence, in some form or other, at periods when, and among nations where, either no knowledge, or at most a very

imperfect knowledge, of such a gospel was possessed. We might anticipate there would be something in the religious usages of nations, or in the forms of worship which they practised, that would be capable of explanation only on the ground of this previously conscious harmony, and be more or less happily expressive of it. Such a manifestation of this harmony, we believe, may be found in the sacrificial rites which well nigh all nations have agreed in practising.

The proper idea of an expiatory sacrifice is, that it serves as an equivalent for the infliction of a legal penalty. The sufferings of Christ are the only proper and efficacious expiatory sacrifice. All sacrificial rites which men have practised have answered their proper end only to the extent in which they have been symbolical of this great sacrifice.

It is the purpose of the Article which follows to set forth the views of a number of writers on the subject of sacrifices, and the answers which they have given to certain important questions relative to the subject. Our ultimate purpose is to aid in establishing the true doctrine of expiatory sacrifice by exhibiting the falseness of certain antagonistic theories.

We begin by a brief exposition of that theory of sacrifice in which it is considered merely as a federal rite, as an expression of friendship between two parties that have been previously at variance with each other. This theory we have found exhibited with most fulness and particularity in a work by Dr. A. A. Sykes, entitled "An Essay on the Nature, Design, and Origin of Sacrifices." Dr. Sykes was a clergyman of the established church in England. He seems to have been a voluminous author; and some of his works, particularly one on Redemption, are occasionally seen at the present day. His Essay on Sacrifices was given to the world in 1748.

He complains, in the outset, that the question of the cause which has produced the universality of sacrifice has not been so fully considered as it ought to have been; and, after remarking that it may have been supposed to be impossible to find out what the cause is, he goes on to argue

that even if it be impracticable to reach absolute certainty on this subject, one may yet approximate towards a correct and satisfactory solution of the question under consideration.

Sacrifice is defined by Dr. Sykes, not improperly, as anything that is immediately given or offered to the Divinity in a solemn manner, and so as that, either in part or wholly, it is consumed. Sacrifices are carefully to be distinguished from the gifts of gold and silver and the like which were at times offered to Jehovah by the Jews. These offerings cannot be regarded as sacrifices, because they were never meant to be consumed, either wholly or partially.

It is insisted, again, and with much earnestness, that the acceptableness of a sacrifice depended on the mental condition of him by whom it was presented. "Sacrifices," Dr. Sykes affirms, "offered without moral virtues were always looked upon by God as of no worth or value; and all sacrifices were to be accompanied by such rites and ceremonies as properly represented the state of mind of the sacrificer." The priests and all those who took part in the service were required to preserve the utmost purity of person and dress. The sacrificer was in every instance to present his gift at the altar in his own person; and if the sacrificial material was an animal, he was to lay his hand upon its head. There were certain forms of prayer with which it was required to accompany every sacrificial observance. In certain instances parts of the victim were to be waved upward and downward, to the right hand and to the left, as a sort of symbol of the universal presence of God. These various ceremonies were prescribed, as we may suppose, on the ground that they indicated more or less directly the presence in the mind of the sacrificer of those sentiments and convictions on which the acceptableness of the sacrifice so much depended. They were meant, likewise, to keep the worshipper always in remembrance of the important fact, that no sacrifice would be efficacious if these sentiments were absent from the mind.

After these preliminary statements, Dr. Sykes proceeds to state more precisely his theory of the nature of sacrifices.

Sacrifices, he maintains, were federal rites. They implied the commencement of a friendship between two parties; or, if there had existed previously a state of alienation or positive hostility, they implied a restoration of amity—a return, on the part of the sacrificer, to that state of mind from which he had departed. “It was usual,” he says, “when men of old contracted leagues or engaged in friendship, to do it by eating and drinking together.” A familiar illustration of this is seen in the instance of the friendship contracted between Isaac and Abimelech, Jacob and Laban. The violation of a league thus formed was always regarded as a flagrant immorality. For this reason, the offering of a sacrifice, whether to the true God or to an idol, was looked upon as the same thing as entering into a friendship with the being to whom the offering was made. The saints are represented, in the fiftieth Psalm, as those who had entered into a covenant with God by sacrifice. The blood of the paschal lamb sprinkled on the door-post was a symbol of the covenant entered into between the Almighty and the Israelites. Paul, in the Epistle to the Corinthians, explicitly asserts, altogether in harmony (according to Dr. Sykes) with this principle, that men cannot at the same time eat of the Lord’s table and of the table of devils; because to partake of the table of the Lord was an act strikingly significant of friendship with God, while to partake of the table of devils was equally significant of friendship with them; and it was obviously absurd to think of being in friendship at the same moment with beings so wholly unlike each other in character.

The attempt is also made to demonstrate, by a plentiful citation of passages from pagan writers, that the conception of the meaning of sacrifices as mere federal rites was a prevalent one among the pagans. Dr. Sykes is very confident that, in the admitted fact that eating and drinking together were among the ancients well-known and altogether common symbols of friendship, and of reconciliation between persons previously estranged from each other, he has dis-

covered the true origin of the custom of sacrifice. He maintains that this conception is countenanced by the fact that it was by no means a rare thing for heathen writers to represent the gods as eating and drinking along with men ; the gods in this way honoring those men and communities to whom they were willing to be considered as peculiarly friendly. Thus Homer, in a well-known passage, represents Jupiter as participating in a feast with the pious Ethiopians. On the other hand, he gives us distinctly to understand that Jupiter refused to eat of the sacrifice presented by the Trojans on a certain occasion, because he cherished towards them only sentiments of hostility. Citations of this character might be indefinitely multiplied. It is unnecessary, we think, to do this, because we do not suppose that any reader would be likely to question the correctness of Dr. Sykes's statement on this particular point.

This author is of opinion that his theory of the nature of sacrifices derives confirmation, likewise, from those passages in which, as in Lev. xxi. 6, 8, sacrifices are called the bread of God, or the food of the offering made by fire unto the Lord. In conformity with this notion, the temple was denominated the house of the Lord, the altar was spoken of as the table of the Lord, and the priests as his servants ; the idea of a palace as the abode of a sovereign, and of a feast to which many guests were invited, and to which none would come except those whom the sovereign wished to honor with his friendship, and who themselves were anxious to maintain such friendship, being preserved everywhere. Out of this conception of the nature of sacrifices, it is also insisted that the command grew, that no other animals besides those which were counted clean, and were ordinarily used as food, could properly be employed in sacrifice. On the same ground, as has been intimated before, rested the requirement that the utmost purity should characterize the person and apparel of the sacrificer. In the same spirit, salt was directed to be used in nearly all sacrifices, because salt was everywhere regarded as a symbol of friendship. It was so regarded

not by the Jews only, but also by pagans, as is demonstrated very clearly by the frequent allusions to this point in the writings of pagan authors. Other articles ordinarily used at feasts were as commonly used in sacrifices.

On these different grounds, which we imagine we have exhibited with sufficient particularity, Dr. Sykes judges that his theory of sacrifice is sufficiently well established. Sacrifices were festive observances, shared in at once by Jehovah and by men, in token of friendship, either such as had never been broken or such as had been restored after a period of mutual estrangement.

Let us now turn and consider the manner in which Dr. Sykes disposes of the theory that sacrifices were of a strictly expiatory character, designed either to be in themselves of the nature of vicarious punishment, or to be symbolical of a real vicarious atonement. He cheerfully admits that this theory has been very generally accepted. It has been received not only by Jews and Christians, but by pagans. But Dr. Sykes, without hesitation, rejects this theory. He contends that no intimation is anywhere given in the Old Testament that the life of the victim presented in sacrifice was meant to be a substitute for the life of him by whom it was offered. This notion, as he avers, came into vogue at a subsequent period. It has been, it is true, very commonly entertained, but it was entirely unknown to the writers of the Old Testament. The life of the animal was not required by the Almighty, under the notion of its constituting a proper atonement for the sin of the worshipper in every instance of sacrifice; and therefore, it is argued, this ought not to be conceived to be the case in any instance, unless an express declaration to that effect is made. But such an express declaration, Dr. Sykes maintains, can nowhere be found in the Bible; and for this reason, if no other, the orthodox theory of expiatory sacrifice cannot be thought to be countenanced by the scriptures.

It is also argued, that if the life of the sacrificial victim had been meant to be considered as a substitute for that of

the offender, then the act of sacrifice would have been complete as soon as the victim had ceased to live. There could have been no necessity for any of the numerous ceremonies with which all sacrificial observances were required to be attended. There could have been no propriety in any such ceremonies. Why should it have been ordained that the blood of the victim should be sprinkled in so many different places? Why should various parts of the victim have been waved hither and thither? Why should the flesh have been required to be burned, either in whole or in part? If the sacrifice was expiatory, if the life of the victim was a substitute for that of the transgressor, the entire significance, the whole value of the sacrifice, lay in the simple act of putting the victim to death. Nothing beyond this would have been required to be done.

It is not, in the judgment of Dr. Sykes, by any means a satisfactory answer to this last argument, to assert with Grotius and others, that blood is a convertible term for life, that the blood represents the life, and that the various things which were required to be done with the blood were only such as were needful to give complete efficacy to the act of slaying the victim. There were many other ceremonies practised, which cannot be at all satisfactorily explained on the theory of Grotius.

It is to be considered, besides, that nowhere in the scriptures are sacrifices directly defined as substitutes, or equivalents, or compensations. The vicarious import of sacrifice is a point not of positive and explicit affirmation, but altogether a matter of inference. His own theory of sacrifice, as Dr. Sykes conceives, if not directly laid down, is yet very plainly implied in the Bible; and it is not right, he says, to reject his theory, and set up another in its place, in regard to which so complete a silence is observed in the scriptures. The doctrine of expiatory sacrifice is of such a character; there is something in it so repugnant to all our finer instincts, indeed, to our whole moral nature, that it is not to be entertained except on the strength of the most positive arguments in its behalf.

We cannot but think now, in opposition to this reasoning of Dr. Sykes, that instead of there being an antecedent presumption against the theory of vicarious sacrifice on account of an alleged repugnance to our moral nature, the real presumption is altogether in its favor. On the supposition of the soundness of this theory of expiatory sacrifice, of its entire harmony with our finer sensibilities, the alleged absence of any positive inculcation of this doctrine by the sacred writers is precisely what we might have anticipated. The expiatory theory was assumed as true. It is not sufficient to prove that sacrifices are not positively declared in the scriptures to be of an expiatory character. Before this theory can be rejected, it must be positively asserted that sacrifices have not this expiatory nature. The burden of proof rests with the objector to this theory and not with its advocates.

There are, indeed, as is admitted by Dr. Sykes, a number of statements in the Levitical law, which might be supposed to imply the expiatory theory. It is said, for instance, in Deuteronomy xxi. that in the case of a man found slain by some unknown person, the elders of the city, nearest to the spot where the alleged murder was committed, were directed to sacrifice a heifer; and after they had made solemn affirmation over the lifeless body of the victim, that their hands were not stained with the blood of the murdered man, the sin of blood-guiltiness was considered as altogether removed from them and from the people of the city. Dr. Sykes disposes of this case by alleging that, properly speaking, no sacrifice was performed in this case. Though an animal was put to death, the essential feature of sacrifice does not appear. The animal neither in whole nor in part was offered on the altar. Another passage of similar import with the one just spoken of, occurs in the tenth chapter of Leviticus and the seventeenth verse. It is declared in this passage, that the sin-offering was given to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for the congregation before the Lord. The ground taken in respect to this passage is, that the sin-offering here spoken of cannot be proved to be intended as a

substitute for the congregation. The phrase "bearing the iniquity of the congregation" signifies nothing more than removing this iniquity, taking it out of sight; and this is accomplished not by a transfer of the sin from the congregation to the victim, but, on the contrary, it was brought about by the repentance and the reformation of the evil-doer. There is no satisfactory evidence that bearing the sin of another, and taking upon one's self the punishment of the sin of another, can properly be regarded as convertible phrases.

The case of the scape-goat is generally regarded as a good illustration of the doctrine of expiatory sacrifice, and as one of the strongest arguments, perhaps, in its favor derived from the Bible which the advocates of this doctrine are in the habit of bringing forward. The sins of the children of Israel were represented as placed on this goat. It was said to bear all their iniquities to a land not inhabited. Dr. Sykes evades the whole force of this illustrative argument by the assertion that the scape-goat was in no proper sense a sacrifice. It lacked the indispensable feature of a sacrifice. Its life was not taken and its flesh was not consumed upon the altar. The act of bearing away the sins of the congregation was simply a parable acted out before the eye. It was merely the emblematic removal of their sins from sight. It was nothing but a sign that these sins were removed; that is to say, were forgiven. It was not a representation of an act of atonement, and of the pardon of sin on account of such an atonement.

In a word, Dr. Sykes is not willing to concede that any of the passages referring to sacrifice to be found in the Old Testament can properly be interpreted as inculcating the substitution of the sacrificial victim in the place of the offender's literal punishment. "When," he says, "a sacrifice was offered to Jehovah, with the constant attendants, repentance and confession, it did remove the anger or displeasure of God conceived against the sinner." But then, as he argues, it is not affirmed, it is not even implied, that in the case of sacrifice life was given for life, or blood for blood;

nor indeed is any explanation attempted of the method by which God's displeasure was averted from the transgressor. The scriptures content themselves with the mere statement of the fact, that displeasure had in some way been averted.

Still further on in his *Essay*, Dr. Sykes takes occasion again to deny that sacrifices were intended to serve as expiations, or that they were of the nature of equivalents or compensations. He alleges that while the weak or the ignorant might attribute to sacrifices such a nature, — might imagine their significance to be that of a prayer on the part of the offender, that the evil which he had merited might fall upon the head of the victim, — yet no sooner did this idea of the meaning of sacrifice come to prevail among the Jews, than the prophets condemned it in the most earnest and even pungent terms, and most sternly reproached the Jews for entertaining, even for a moment, an idea of the nature of sacrifice at once so unfounded and so pernicious. In cherishing this idea, they, in fact, left wholly out of sight the proper purposes of sacrifice. They attempted to establish a righteousness of their own, and refused to submit to the righteousness of God. They forgot that all sacrifices irrespectively of the moral condition of the worshipper, or when regarded as anything else than expressions of penitence, of humility, of anxiety for the restoration to men of God's favor, were not only altogether inefficacious, but were positively most offensive to the Divinity. It was not, in any instance nor to any extent, the sacrifice in itself which served as the condition of pardon. It was the disposition of the sacrificer alone which had this effect.

It is urged again, in reference to the same point, that sacrifices do not have, and ought not to be expected to have, the effect of changing the mind of God, of appeasing his anger, of rendering him propitious and merciful when before he had been of an opposite temper; such an expectation, it is argued, dishonors Jehovah. It gives a wholly wrong idea of his character. It virtually denies to the Almighty one of the most conspicuous and glorious of his perfections. No

change can occur in the mind of Jehovah. The disposition which he cherishes at one time he cherishes at all times. His readiness to forgive the penitent offender no influence whatever can have the effect of strengthening, and no influence can weaken it. Whenever, therefore, a transgressor penitently acknowledged his sin, he was at once forgiven. He may, indeed, have offered a sacrifice; but the sacrifice was not the ground on which he was forgiven. The sacrifice was merely the expression of his willingness to be forgiven, to be again in friendship with his Maker. It was the feast which he had prepared to be participated in by his Maker and himself as a token of amity once broken, but now restored. The sacrifice had nothing in it of the nature of expiation. It derived its whole virtue from the character of the feeling which it betokened on the part of the worshipper. It did not produce, it was not intended to produce, any change in the mind of God. The only change of which it was even emblematic, was the change which had gone on in the mind of the sinner from a state of hostility to a state of love for his Maker.

The writer of this Article cannot help remarking in respect to this reasoning of Dr. Sykes that both of the erroneous notions which he so earnestly condemns are condemned just as earnestly and decidedly, and, we may add, just as consistently, by the advocates of the doctrine of expiatory sacrifice as they are by himself. No one supposes, not even the most strenuous upholder of the doctrine in question, that such sacrifices are of any efficacy whatever, unless they are accompanied by repentance and by humble confession of sin on the part of the worshipper. The pungent language of condemnation in which sacrifices and burnt-offerings are spoken of in the fiftieth Psalm, in the first chapter of Isaiah, and in other places, are as easy of explanation on the theory of expiatory sacrifice as they are on the opposite theory. They present no difficulty whatever. Sacrifices are not supposed, by any sober-minded theologian, to produce any change in the mind of God. Their only effect is, to render it consistent with

the character of God and the welfare of his government to give outward expression to feelings to which his mind had never, for a moment, been a stranger, to exhibit in act his readiness to forgive a penitent. In fine, we admit with the utmost readiness, that sacrifice unattended by penitence and reformation is altogether useless. We contend, however, with equal earnestness, that repentance and reformation, though complete, are, without expiatory sacrifice, just as worthless.

It is, we may go on to remark, a very obvious defect in this theory of sacrifices as developed by Dr. Sykes, that it fails to give any adequate account of the means by which an offender is reinstated in the favor of God, or of the connection sacrifice has with that reinstatement. Sacrifice is a festival partaken of by both parties in token of renewed friendship; but to the pertinent question of the means by which that friendship had been renewed it affords no answer whatever. Sacrifice, on Dr. Sykes's theory, is apparently a meaningless service. The death of an animal is not a proper method of expressing either repentance or desire for salvation. Indeed, we understand Dr. Sykes to admit that sacrifices, instead of having any true and valuable significance, instead of serving any important purpose, were simply allowed as a part of the Mosaic economy, as an accompaniment of all worship and of all petitions for forgiveness, not because there was any connection between sacrifice and the attainment of these blessings, growing either out of the intrinsic nature of sacrifice or out of that of which sacrifice is symbolical, but merely because sacrificial observances were prevalent throughout the world at the epoch of Moses, and the Israelites were allowed to conform themselves to this wide-spread usage. The doctrine of Dr. Sykes, on this point, seems to be altogether in harmony with that developed by Dr. Spencer in his work, *De Legibus Hebraeorum*, an account of which has been given in a previous number of the *Bibliotheca Sacra*.

In the second place, it is, as it seems to us, a palpable defect in this theory of sacrifice, that it furnishes, neither

directly nor by implication, any satisfactory explanation of the death of Christ. Any theory of sacrifice is radically defective in which is not apparent a distinct reference to the death of Christ. Mosaic sacrifices were typical of that death; and surely no theory of the type can be accepted which fails to account for the antitype. Herein Dr. Sykes's theory is manifestly at fault. It does not explain the great sacrifice of Christ. It scarcely attempts any such explanation; and, indeed, the attempt to explain it could not have succeeded. Dr. Sykes's theory cannot be made to harmonize with the obvious significance of that death. Was the death of Christ a feast? Had it anything of the character of a festive occasion in which two parties, who had before been alienated, met and exchanged tokens of renewed friendship? Such an idea cannot for a moment be entertained.

In fine, the theory which we have now expounded, is, in our judgment, characterized by fatal defects; and, as set forth by Dr. Sykes, has not even the merit of being contended for with any special amount of earnestness or power; and we here dismiss it from our view.

There is still another theory in regard to the significance of sacrifice, which is not underserving of attention. It may not unfitly be denominated the gift-theory. We find it set forth at length in a work published in 1755, and written by a clergyman of the church of England by the name of Portall. The same theory was advocated by Taylor in the somewhat celebrated work entitled "Apology of Ben Mordecai." The theory is stated by Portall in this manner: "It became those" he says, "who, like men, had received many and great benefits at their Creator's hands, to present him back with some of his own gifts. They were thus presented back to him for an external expression of gratitude, acknowledgment of dependence, and with every pious sentiment." Men were led to accompany all their more special addresses to Jehovah, he goes on to remark, with sacrifices; and this, not only in the case of such addresses as required them to approach Jehovah with unusual demonstrations of reverence;

not only in the case of entreaties for special mercy in view of some rare necessity, whether of a secular or a religious nature, but even on all the ordinary occasions on which they had it in mind to worship the Almighty. They would be prompted particularly, to offer sacrifice when they were anxious to secure to themselves the pardon of sin. In view of such a want, they would naturally be solicitous to come before God in the manner most likely to recommend themselves to his favor. They could not address Jehovah for an object of greater moment than the forgiveness of a transgression of his law. And if sacrifices were a fitting accompaniment of their more common acts of worship, they would be especially so in the case of such petitions for pardon. "We are not then," Portall is careful to say, "to look upon the sacrifices on occasion of sin, offered before the law of Moses, as any other than men's pious endeavors, upon proper grounds and by proper means, for reconciling themselves to the offended Deity. Any other notion of these sacrifices, as including an actual atonement or pardon, would have been liable to many great inconveniences and most dangerous mistakes." Men would spontaneously imagine that gifts, offered in so solemn a manner and with such impressive rites as sacrifices were commonly attended by, could not fail to introduce their entreaties for pardon with a singular advantage before God. Their supplications would thus acquire a power with Jehovah of which they would otherwise be destitute.

The advocates of this theory of sacrifice make a very careful discrimination between the gifts which supplicants before God are wont to offer even when they petition for pardon, and anything which can be considered as a fine. It is very evident, they maintain, that the sacrifices offered by Abel and Noah, and which we know were regarded by the Almighty with so much favor, derived all their acceptableness from the singular honor which they were meant to render to Jehovah; from the penitence, the right feeling in general, which they implied as existing in the mind of the worshipper. There is

no intimation that these sacrifices were intended to serve as vicarious punishment, either actual or symbolical; that they were in any sense a penalty, a satisfaction, a compensation. Neither is there any hint afforded by Moses, in regard to the sin-offerings which he prescribed, as if they were intended to serve as a penalty, a satisfaction, a compensation. They are everywhere described merely as expressions of honor and reverence for Jehovah, such as one who pleads for so important a boon as forgiveness of sin would be at special pains to manifest. In the instance of propitiatory sacrifices, God accepted the devotion, the reverential feeling involved in them, as in themselves grateful to his heart, and particularly the humble confession of unworthiness, necessarily going along with all such sacrifices, as an adequate satisfaction for the offence. Such sacrifices were not accepted, they were not presented, under the notion of fines; but, on the contrary, the right feeling implied in them as gifts, was an adequate means of appeasing the wrath and disarming the justice of God; the value of the gift, moreover, being augmented by the moral worth characterizing the mediator or priest by whom the gift was presented.

It is scarcely worth while — such is the opinion of the advocates of the theory — to demonstrate that gifts have been esteemed, at all periods and everywhere, as appropriate expressions of honor. It has been customary, therefore, as every one knows, to honor even sovereigns with such gifts. In this latter case they were intended as tokens of subjection as well as of homage. The ancient Israelites are thus described as bringing gifts to their first king, Saul, and the conduct of a certain part of the people in withholding these gifts was viewed as a symptom of disaffection. Such gifts, to whomsoever made, were meant as signs of respect, as means of securing favor, very frequently as means of averting from the giver the indignation of one whom he had offended. The acceptableness of the gift may be said to arise from the circumstance, that he who received it was relieved thereby from a certain amount of labor, which but for these gifts

would have been necessary; and that, on the other hand, a proportionate amount of labor in the preparation of these gifts was imposed on the maker of them: and the more choice and intrinsically valuable the gift, the greater its effectiveness in gaining the purposes for which it may have been made. Sacrificial gifts, it is argued, were presented even to the Divinity on these grounds. They were tokens of homage, of anxiety for his favor, as means of propitiation. If their reception could not be affirmed to relieve him from toil, their preparation certainly imposed toil on the giver, and thus, in proportion to the toil, were the more effective means of good.

The sacrifices of Cain and Abel are represented, in consistency with Portall's theory, as gifts. The words used by Moses and other sacred writers in designating sacrifices have the significance of gifts. They frequently have this name applied to them in the New Testament and by the Saviour. He gives commands to those who would bring their gifts, their sacrifices, to the altar; and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is said that "every priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices;" and they are spoken of as those who offer gifts according to the law. The acceptableness of these gifts depended, in no slight measure, on the character of him by whom they were made. It was the difference of character, in the instance of Cain and Abel, which gave rise to the very different respect entertained for their sacrifices by Jehovah. We see this strikingly exhibited in the sacrifice required of the three friends of Job. That sacrifice had to be presented by Job instead of themselves; God was willing to hear him, and to accept an offering from him, on account of his moral worth, when he would not receive an offering from his friends because of their unlikeness to him in this respect. So, under the Mosaic law, it was the priest who was to make atonement before God, by means of a sacrificial gift, for the sins of the people. And it was most imperatively required of the priest that he should be pure, holy. Everything about him, even his dress, was to be marked by the utmost purity, so as to be emblematic in the highest degree of inward righteousness.

On no other condition could he act the part of a mediator or intercessor with any hope of success. The sacrifice which he brought was, indeed, a means of rendering him a fit mediator ; but it could not have served this purpose except as his character was adorned by a true righteousness. The only medium through which, alike under the Christian and the Jewish dispensations, valuable blessings were conveyed to men, was the priesthood. And the priests were required to bring sacrificial gifts only as means of enforcing the intercessions which, as mediators, they were expected to make.

Still further, it is urged, that all the language employed in the Bible, when speaking of sacrifice, is entirely consistent with the gift theory. Is it said, for example, that the office of the priest was to make atonement by means of sacrifice ? It should be remembered, in reply to this question, that to make an atonement, and to appease, to reconcile, to be a means of procuring pardon, are convertible phrases. We are not to suppose that atonement can be made in but one way exclusively. Whatever has the required effect, whatever leads the Almighty to refrain from the infliction of punishment, — whether it be prayer, confession of sin, repentance, self-condemnation, or amendment on the part of the evildoer, which prompts God to pardon, — that is atonement. In this manner, the intercession of another, especially if enforced by an appropriate sacrificial gift, becomes a true and proper atonement. Is it said, again, that the life of the flesh is in the blood, and that it is the blood which maketh an atonement for the soul ? We are not required, it is answered to this, to understand the terms of a ceremonial and typical institute, such as the Levitical law, in the most direct and literal sense. There is nothing in the words just cited that points necessarily to a vicarious shedding of blood ; for this shedding of blood was required only for the purpose of removing ceremonial impurity from inanimate objects. No sin, in any other than an altogether figurative significance, could attach to such objects, and consequently no guilt, no liahness to punishment, nothing, in a word, which could

possibly give a reason for an actual, literal atonement. In those sacrifices by which an atonement was said to be effected for a sin that had been committed, this atonement was made by the shedding of blood; not that this shedding of blood, however, represented a vicarious punishment. It atoned for sin on the ground of its being typical of the shedding of Christ's blood on the cross; and it was equally typical of that shedding of blood on whatever principle Christ's death may be thought to operate for the salvation of men. This same effusion of blood was required on the additional ground of its being emblematic of the shedding of the sinner's blood, the loss of life, the destruction which he merited for his transgression. And if the shedding of blood was symbolical of vicarious punishment, and in this way atoned for sin, and was consequently indispensable to that end, how could the bloody atoning sacrifice have been in any case whatever dispensed with, as we know that it was in the case of the poor? The shedding of blood, besides, was only one feature of the sacrifice. The beneficial effect of the sacrifice was not in any instance to be attributed to this feature alone. Such, however, should have been the fact, if the sacrifice was properly expiatory. On the contrary, the value of the sacrifice lay in the circumstance of its being a gift, an expression of right feeling. This value is, indeed, sometimes said to be in the shedding of the blood; but only for the reason that a sacrifice loses its character, as such, unless the blood of the animal is shed; and also for the reason that it was emblematic of Christ's death.

It is said again of the scape-goat, that he bore the sins of the congregation. This, however, as has been stated in another part of this Article, merely signifies the removal of sin from the sight or remembrance of God — its ceasing to be an object of resentment. The goat bore no punishment; nothing was borne by him which even was typical of punishment. In other parts of the Bible the phrase "bearing our sin," means the same as procuring forgiveness. Christ is affirmed to have borne the iniquities of the people, because by

means of his intercession, enforced as that intercession was by his death, he procures the pardon of these iniquities. We may thus see that the idea of sacrifice as being merely a gift, and having the effect of ingratiating a petitioner for any object with the ruler, and thereby rendering his suit successful, is altogether in harmony with the general import of biblical phraseology when alluding to sacrifices. This phraseology does not in any instance, as a matter of necessity, import a vicarious punishment; and such an import ought not to be attached to it unless such a necessity most manifestly exists.¹

We are next to inquire how the nature of the priestly office is to be understood in the light of the theory of sacrifice which we are now examining. Under the patriarchal dispensation the head of the family, as being the owner, strictly speaking, of the property from which the gifts were to be taken, was of course the one by whom they were to be offered in the sacrificial service. The very relation, also, in which he stood to his children and the household made it fitting that he should act as mediator in the presence of Jehovah. The sacrifices presented by these patriarchal priests were, in the strictest sense, their own gifts. Whatever amount of toil or expense or self-denial they involved were all the priest's. Identified, as the head of a family must necessarily be, with the family, its wants, its sufferings, its sins, and the duties consequent upon these, became, in a very important sense, his. In this way, when offering sacrifice in view of a transgression, perpetrated not indeed by himself literally, but by another, the patriarch might still be said to offer the sacrifice for himself, for a sin of his own; and thus the efficacy of the sacrifice in turning away the anger of God might be affirmed with the utmost propriety to be dependent on the state of mind cherished by himself while performing the sacrificial rites. Ordinarily, no sacrifices could be presented which did not involve more or less of

¹ It is hoped no reader will fail to observe that the writer of this Article is stating here the sentiments of another, and not his own.

pecuniary cost, more or less of suffering and self-denial. These were essential elements of a true and effective sacrifice ; but, at the same time, they are not to be regarded as the real condition of its acceptableness. The state of the sacrificer's mind rather served as such a condition.

The priestly office, as it existed under the patriarchal dispensation, may be viewed as the type, the representative, of the priesthood of Christ, rather than of the priestly office under the Levitical dispensation, for the reason that the patriarchal priest was more nearly identified with those in whose behalf he acted. So the priestly office of Christ is represented in the Epistle to the Hebrews. He partook of our flesh and blood, that he might become in a higher and stronger sense our High-Priest.

The nature of the priestly office under the Mosaic dispensation was in some respects different. The office was transferred from the heads of the different households to one high-priest, or to a society of priests, who might be said thus to perform their priestly functions in the name of their head, and to act in his place. Between priests thus situated, and those in whose behalf they acted, there could not, of course, be that identity of interest which existed, as we have seen, under the patriarchal dispensation. The Levitical priests compensated for the lack of this natural qualification for their office, such as belonged to the patriarchal priests, by a variety of what may be spoken of as legal qualifications, which we need not, however, specify particularly in this place. And especially that qualification for the priestly office which grew out of excellence of private character was made to depend, in the case of the Levitical priests, on legal, ceremonial merit, such as might exist independently of private excellence. This merit the priest could always possess ; so that the numerous families and tribes, as the representative of which he served, need sustain no loss on account of defect in his personal character. In short, the priests were the bearers of the sacrificial gifts from the congregation which were designed to enforce such intercessions as they

presented ; and their chief qualification for this work was either their literal or their ceremonial purity.

All sacrifices, it should be carefully noted, are viewed in their proper aspect only when viewed as typical of the sacrifice of Christ. Those who contend that sacrifices are nothing but gifts are obliged to show that, even when thus defined, they are still properly typical of Christ's sacrifice. The advocates of this theory are not disposed to decline this task, however unsuccessful they may be in its execution. They argue, and argue logically enough, that God would devise no scheme for the deliverance of men from the consequences of their transgression that was not wholly in keeping with the reason of things,—that was positively abhorrent to our instinctive convictions as to what was becoming to the divine nature, to our own moral constitution, and our relations to Jehovah. They then affirm, what they think is a necessary inference from all this, that for God to seek any satisfaction for violations of his law in sufferings endured by another, and that other an innocent person, is altogether inconceivable. This is not the place for any argument in reference to the soundness of this reasoning. Our only task is to give a sketch of the arguments of others. We are not to suppose, they go on to argue, that God ordained the sacrifice of Christ as the means of human salvation because sacrifice had been one of the most prominent features of all previously existing forms of religious worship. On the contrary, the method of human salvation through the death of Christ was devised first, and the sacrifices, alike of the patriarchal and Levitical dispensations, were instituted that they might correspond to, and be typical of, that death. This divine method of salvation was devised, it may be added, because of its intrinsic fitness for the end in view, and altogether independently of every human scheme or preconception ; and no features can in any way be supposed to belong to this method, except such as have this intrinsic adaptedness to the proposed purpose.

Hence we are, as it is argued, to regard the idea of the

substitution of the sufferings of Christ in the place of the punishment deserved by the sinner as being wholly out of harmony with what we know of God's character and with our own moral constitution. On the other hand, the conception of the sacrifices as gifts simply, — such as were intended to recommend to the divine favor the man who asks for the pardon of his own iniquities, or intercedes for the forgiveness of others, or such as were meant merely as an appropriate expression of right moral feeling, — this conception is wholly in unison with our moral convictions. All sacrifices, when we estimate their character through the medium of these convictions, are gifts of extraordinary value, acts of self-denial of unusual importance, such as indicate in us a consciousness of a more than ordinary need of the favor petitioned for, a wish for its bestowment more than commonly intense, or a conviction unusually deep of our unworthiness, and of the greatness of that mercy at whose prompting we anticipate that the favor will be given us.

The sacrifice of Christ thus explained, as in fact his mediation on our behalf, enforced, rendered acceptable by his pure character, and especially by his death, the *gift* of his life, is seen to be an altogether reasonable transaction ; it is wholly in accord not only with the character of Jehovah, but with men's instinctive convictions. We do wrong, it is argued, to seek for any better explanation of it, to attempt to force it into harmony with a few evidently figurative expressions in a ceremonial law, or certain barbarous practices of ignorant pagans.

It has already been intimated that the patriarchal sacrifices and priesthood were a more exact image of the sacrifice of Christ than were the Mosaic sacrifices and priesthood. This thought may not improperly be somewhat expanded in this place. The real significance of sacrifice, it is alleged, is seen with more difficulty on account of certain forms of expression which were not known before the time of Moses, but which came into use along with the introduction of his ritual. Among these expressions those relating to the shed-

ding of blood, and making atonement by the means of blood, have been already alluded to. The shedding of blood is essential, indeed, to the performance of the sacrifice, it being, of course, impossible to sacrifice an animal without shedding its blood; but it is not to be considered as really an element of the significance, the effectiveness, of the sacrifice. Its effectiveness resulted exclusively from its nature as a gift. Now, because so much more is said by Moses in regard to the blood than is said about it in accounts of the patriarchal sacrifices, it has come, not unnaturally perhaps, to be felt that the shedding of the blood was the chief element of sacrifice. In this manner very erroneous ideas have been formed in regard to the fundamental idea of sacrifice; and, what is still more unfortunate, our views of the significance of Christ's death have come in many cases to be very erroneous. If the attention had been directed more exclusively to the patriarchal sacrifices, which are more generally represented as gifts, and in the description of which little comparatively is said of the treatment of the blood, these wrong conceptions would perhaps have been avoided, and the true meaning of the death of Christ would have been more clearly perceived. The writer of this Article can but remark here, that it would seem to be much more reasonable to regard the Mosaic ritual as designed to perfect the ritual of sacrifices as it existed in the patriarchal age, to clear up its obscurities and to remove the defects which rendered it ill adapted to an age somewhat more cultivated; and that, consequently, the new phraseology which is found incorporated in it, and the new and more varied rites which it prescribes, are to be regarded as signs of a more perfect religious system, rather than the reverse,—of one which developed more clearly the mind of Jehovah in relation to the methods of human redemption.

It should be particularly remembered, the advocates of the gift theory go on to argue, that the priests in the patriarchal ages offered sacrifices either for themselves individually or for those with whom, by virtue of natural ties, they might be considered as almost identical; while under the Levitical law

they acted in the name of many others, and presented the gifts of many others. This was an invariable feature of the Mosaic dispensation. Properly speaking, the sacrifice is the gift of the priest, offered by him with the view of rendering his mediation more effectual. Now the sacrifice and priesthood of Christ correspond much more nearly to the idea running through the patriarchal than to the idea of the Levitical priesthood. Having assumed our nature, he became, as it were, literally identified with men. He brings as a sacrificial gift that which was most emphatically his own gift; he offers up his own life, that by this means his intercessions may the more certainly prevail with the Almighty.

The advocates of the gift theory are at great pains, also, to show that the chief object of Christ's descent to the earth was not to reveal to men a new and better system of religious truth, nor to place before the mind a better example of moral goodness. There is surely no necessity of expanding the train of argument by which such positions as these are sustained. No controversy exists in regard to them. Orthodox divines are wholly in agreement with their opponents on such points as these. But very soon this agreement ceases to exist. The advocates of the gift theory contend, indeed, and with good reason, that the alleged purposes of Christ's incarnation were only the subordinate ones; that, comparatively speaking, his only errand on the earth was to act as an intercessor for men, or, to state the matter more accurately, to prepare himself thus to act. His death is to be regarded merely as a means to that end. It was the great argument, by means of which he could add effect to his mediation for men. The idea of his death's possessing aught of the nature of an atonement, in the significance ordinarily attached to that word in theological discourse, is considered as at once unscriptural and absurd. No necessity exists, as it is maintained, for anything being done which shall take the place under God's government of the punishment due to an offender. But in all this reasoning of the advocates of the gift theory, it appears to be forgotten that there are certain ends of which

the sinner's punishment is an indispensable condition; and that an injury is done when that punishment is remitted, such as cannot be computed, unless some expedient shall be adopted whose moral effect shall be the same with that designed by the infliction of the penalty. The supposition that, under a literally perfect government, like that of Jehovah, repentance and amendment of life, enforced as they may be by supplications and by mere sacrificial gifts, however costly, are a proper equivalent for punishment, cannot for a moment be entertained.

Certain expressions occur not unfrequently in the Bible which merit a brief consideration on account of their bearing on the theory we are now examining. The sinner is said, for instance, to be redeemed or ransomed. Captives are redeemed from bondage by the payment of a sum of money. The ordinary meaning of this term is, indeed, too plain to be misunderstood by any one. We are said to be redeemed when we are delivered from some great calamity by the means of expense or suffering on the part of another. And, in the instance of an offender against God, the pregnant question is, by what means he can be redeemed from that anger to which he has become obnoxious. Now no one, it is alleged by the favorers of the gift-theory, can redeem a transgressor by enduring the penalty in his stead; no one can give to the violated law a satisfaction in kind. The sinner cannot be reinstated in the divine favor on the ground of justice. It must be, it is argued, simply on the ground of favor. "A proper person, by means of intercession, accompanied with gifts or with proffers of service, must interpose"; and the measures which are thus used, whether they be mere labor or prayer or suffering, for the sinner's deliverance, these are the means of his redemption; they are the sacrifice, the gift, by which that redemption is effected. The death of Christ redeems men from the curse of the law only on the principle that his death adds force to his intercession. That death is a sacrifice only in this way. God is strictly just in redeeming sinners in this method. Men are not ransomed

by the death of Christ directly, but only subordinately ; it being simply a condition of the efficacy of his intercession. In truth, the death of Jesus plays only an inferior part in our salvation.

Another term is very frequently used, if not in the scriptures, at least in theological discussions, in reference to the point now in view. This term is "satisfaction." The proper significance of this term we understand to be this ; those who are placed under a law satisfy that law when they fully comply with its preceptive part, or failing to do this, endure the penalty which it affixes to disobedience. Literal satisfaction cannot be rendered to a law except in one or the other of these forms. An adequate satisfaction is rendered by means of an atonement, of an act performed by another, whose effects shall be identical with the infliction of the penalty. Those who espouse the gift theory, however, maintain that if an offender against good law can avail himself of the intercession of another whose character and services shall be such as to give effect to his interposition, such a procedure satisfies the law. It constitutes a valid atonement. It is a sacrifice for sins in the only sense in which that term can be used properly, — that of giving valid reason for refraining from punishing an evil-doer.

The term "imputation" is explained by the advocates of the gift theory in this manner. Jesus Christ has assumed our nature, and by this means has become in effect one with us, and exhibits in his person a strictly spotless example of moral virtue. In the contemplation of a spectacle so pleasing as the unsullied purity of the man Christ Jesus, the sins of those who are united to Christ are relatively unnoticed. Those who share in the same nature with Christ are supposed to share in the same moral excellence. The righteousness of Christ may thus be said to be imputed to them ; and on this ground it becomes strictly just in God to justify those who believe.

In respect to the affirmations of the Bible, that we are justified by Christ, that we are sprinkled by his blood and

thus washed from our sins, it is maintained that these are merely figurative expressions, or else are based on a theory of vicarious punishment for which no support can be found in the Bible. The actual significance of these various phrases is simply this, that we are saved from the consequences of our sin by the intercession of Christ; and, as the shedding of his blood was what gave special effect to his intercession, we are said to be saved by his blood; and, as the shedding of blood is an essential feature of a sacrifice, we are said to be saved indirectly by the sacrifice of Christ, just as really saved as if we had been always free from sin.

The remark may very fitly be made here, that if this mode of explaining the language of the Bible so as to make it harmonize with the gift theory is justifiable, it must be so on the principle that the orthodox theory is to be assumed as false and absurd, so that it is strictly impossible it should be taught in the scriptures. If the language employed in the scriptures does not teach the latter theory, no language can be found that shall teach it.

We bring this account of the gift theory to a close by simply saying, that our aim has been to exhibit that theory rather than to confute it. We may be thought also, as it is possible, to have gone farther into a discussion of the significance of Christ's death than was proper in an Article devoted to the subject of sacrifices. The very close connection of certain aspects of the gift theory with the mediatorial work of Christ will, perhaps, afford a sufficient excuse for what may seem to be a digression from our main subject. We hold to the canon which we have already laid down, that any true theory of sacrifice must harmonize with the significance of Christ's death. The true theory of the type cannot be in conflict with the true theory of the antitype.

We pass, in the next place, to a brief account of the views advanced by the late Frederic Dennison Maurice in reference to the nature of sacrifice. We must premise, however, that Maurice is one of that class of writers, the readers of whose pages are by no means always certain that they catch his

real meaning. Though possessed of eminent gifts, he seems to have lacked the power of always expressing himself clearly. Should any one, therefore, who reads what we have to say in reference to his theories, imagine that we have done him injustice, that we have imputed to him errors which he never held, we beg that our mistake, instead of being charged to a want of charity in us, may be charged to that peculiarity of Maurice's style to which we have just adverted. The work to which our remarks particularly relate is the one entitled *Sermons on Sacrifice*, published in 1854.

The object which Maurice proposes to himself in these sermons seems to be to trace the gradual development of the nature and significance of sacrifice, as brought out in the scriptures, from the sacrifice offered by Cain and Abel to the completion of the history in the crucifixion of Christ. We shall endeavor to follow him through some portions of this historical sketch that we may bring out to view some of his peculiar and, as we conceive, altogether groundless notions.

He starts, of course, with the sacrifice of Cain and Abel. His denial of the divine origin of sacrifice is very positive. No command to worship God in the use of sacrifice ever came from the lips of Jehovah. The silence of the scriptures as to any such command is an adequate ground for the belief that none was ever uttered. The fact that Cain and Abel were prompted to offer sacrifice is to be ascribed not to their having received any command to that effect, but to a suggestion,—to, what Maurice styles, a revelation in distinction from a decree,—which they in some indefinable manner recognized as divine, and to which, as enjoining what was in itself reasonable and in harmony with their moral sentiments, they were disposed to render prompt obedience. The distinction which Maurice draws between a divine command and a divine suggestion would not seem to be one of any very great importance. If in some intelligible form it was made known to Cain and Abel that they ought to offer sacrifice, then, we conceive, that a sufficient warrant for such a service had been given.

The offering presented by Abel was accepted by Jehovah ; that presented by Cain was not accepted. The ground of this distinction we are not to seek, as Maurice argues, in the circumstance that the material of Abel's sacrifice was such as he had been commanded to use, and the material of Cain's sacrifice was such as he had been commanded not to use. There is no allusion in the narrative to any command on the subject ; and we are not at liberty to assume its existence unless we are in some way assured of its having been uttered. Nor is there any warrant for the supposition, that prior to any explicit information on the subject, — information of which no trace is anywhere discernible, — the fruits of the earth might not have been regarded as equally proper with the flesh of animals to be offered in sacrifice. We cannot suppose that there is anything in the nature of these fruits by which they would be rendered unfit to be used as offerings ; especially as we know, that at a subsequent period, explicit commands were given for such a use of them. The difference in the material of the sacrifice, used respectively by Cain and Abel, is to be ascribed to no other cause than the difference of their occupations. There does not appear to have been any specific intention on the part of Abel to obey a divine command in respect to this, nor the lack of such an intention on the part of Cain.

The unlikeness in the acceptableness of their offerings at the hands of the Almighty we can explain, Maurice asserts, in an entirely different manner. Abel, in compliance with a heavenly suggestion, such as chimed in happily with his natural impulses, brought an offering of the firstlings of his flock. He presented it with a childlike confidence in God, as one who knew the helplessness of the creatures he had made, and who was ready to accept the homage which they rendered to him, whatever might be the outward form in which they were disposed to proffer it, so that it were only honest and sincere. Abel's distinct consciousness, that in all this he was acting an honest part, that he was expressing the grateful reverence of his mind for Jehovah in such a

form as he truly believed to be fitting, that he was trying to secure to himself the divine favor by such means as he had grounds for supposing were appropriate, took away from his mind all doubt in regard to the acceptableness of his sacrifice; and it was nothing but this consciousness which rendered his offering acceptable. This consciousness was his faith; and it was not, as it seems, a faith in God, not a faith in a future Redeemer; it was simply a faith in himself — his distinct recognition of his own inward rectitude.

Cain brought his offering with a very different temper. He brought it at the impulse of slavish fear. He felt that he had, in some way, to gain to himself the favor of God; but he knew not what method to adopt. He would have been glad to be relieved from the necessity of seeking help from any quarter and by any means. He shrank from the humiliating sense of dependence which such an effort implied. He was angry that he could not maintain a proud independence. He does not seem to have honestly believed that any method he could employ for gaining the favor of Jehovah would be really efficacious. He cherished no trust in his Maker. He felt that the mind of Jehovah was as empty of all good-will towards himself as he knew that his mind was empty of all true love and obedient sentiment towards his Maker. In this sullen, distrustful, angry mood, he presented his offering. Is it wonderful that a sacrifice presented in such a manner and in such a spirit should have been rejected? It is not at all surprising that Cain should have felt sure that his sacrifice would be rejected; and that, as the result of this conviction, his countenance fell and he became very wroth the instant that the fact of this rejection was made known to him.

Maurice would have us believe that the case of Cain and Abel is an impressive illustration of the truth that the consciousness of being helpless, the honest wish to render to the Almighty grateful homage, and the confidence one may cherish that his worship will be acceptable, make up all the qualification one needs who would rightfully worship God,

or would successfully ask for any help of which he may feel the want. Any gift presented at the impulse of such a spirit makes up a sacrifice with which God will without doubt be pleased. No other faith than what is implied in such a spirit can be required. It was the humble confession of dependence and trust in the Infinite Being from whom his life came, which, as Maurice insists, made Abel's offering so grateful to his Maker. Cain, on the contrary, was proud. He felt that he had something to give which even God ought to consider as valuable, and for which even God ought to cherish a species of gratitude, and render an adequate return. He regarded Jehovah merely as omnipotent, as having a control over his present condition and his future destiny from which he was vainly, as well as wickedly, anxious to free himself; and the only purpose which he aimed at was the selfish purpose of deriving aid from heaven. His temper, in a word, was wholly selfish and mercenary.

We are not, then, to imagine that the sacrifice of Cain and Abel had about it anything of an expiatory character. It had no particular reference to sin. It was not presented as a means of averting the displeasure of God. It implied no anticipation of the future advent of a Redeemer. There was nothing in it properly to be regarded as emblematic of the sacrifice of Christ. It was only a manifestation of reverence and gratitude, on the part of Abel certainly, to the divine Being, and of a desire to have the favor of that Being.

The sacrifice offered by Noah is to be regarded in no other light than as a manifestation of the very peculiar feelings which the extraordinary scenes through which he had just passed could not but call forth in such a mind as his. He had just witnessed, in the flood which had devastated the earth, a most impressive exhibition of Divine power and justice. These scenes could have had no other influence than greatly to deepen his fear of God, his consciousness of dependence, his wish henceforth to be and to do everything which he could even conjecture would be pleasing to the Divine Being. He must have felt, at this moment, as if he

was summoned with peculiar energy to render homage to Jehovah, and to render it not in his own name only, but in the name of the race to which he belonged. Almost the only survivor of that race, he must have conceived himself now to be emphatically its representative. In the solemn relation in which he was thus standing, he seems to have regarded it as among his chief duties to offer sacrifice. We are to consider the more elaborate preparation which was made for this sacrifice, especially the erection of an altar, as being demanded by the peculiar solemnity of the occasion, the offering of a sacrifice in the name of the entire race by one who now served as its representative. There would seem to have been required of Noah, and along with him of all men who were afterward to live upon the earth, in view of all which God had just done before their eyes, an entire and cordial surrender of themselves to the Almighty; and of such a surrender the sacrifice now offered by Noah was a fitting expression. It was an avowal, also, of his fixed purpose ever to cherish and to act out the reverent and obedient spirit which such a surrender necessarily implied. That the flood which had just devastated the earth was a manifestation of divine anger; that the sin which had led to that manifestation ought to be repented of; that, possibly, even the flood had not exhausted the anger of God towards human iniquities, and that another expression of that anger was to be feared, and should, if possible, be averted; and that this sacrifice of Noah was the best atonement he could present with a view to ward off the divine displeasure,—these were thoughts which, however spontaneously we might suppose they would occur to a devout mind, Maurice does not for a moment seem to have entertained. He intimates, indeed, that the offering of sacrifice was an act, in the general, in concurrence both with a divine suggestion and with the better instincts of our nature. But, it may well be asked, did no other sacrifice, than those simply expressive of reverent homage and cordial self-surrender suit with such a suggestion? No event could take place in the history of a human being

of a more startling character than the commission of sin—none in regard to which a deeper anxiety ought to be felt. It might surely be supposed that to offer sacrifice as an emblematic atonement would have been the first service to which Noah would have turned, and such the present writer believes to have been the fact. The emblematic atonement, presented, as we conceive it to have been, in the same spirit with which the sacrifice of Christ would have been regarded had it then taken place, was accepted by Jehovah. It answered the ends of a real atonement. The faith which was in the mind of the patriarch was equivalent to faith in Christ, and it was imputed to him for righteousness.

We pass next to a consideration of the remarkable sacrifice of Isaac. Its explanation, according to Maurice, is the following: For a very long period Abraham had waited for the birth of a son. That birth had at length taken place. The wish of the aged patriarch, cherished now for so many years, and every year becoming to human view more and more unlikely to be gratified, is at last realized in the birth of Isaac. In what form shall Abraham give vent to the strengthened confidence, to the warmer love, to the more operative sentiment of obligation which this event necessarily awakened in his heart? A divine suggestion came to him to the effect that the only suitable form in which to embody this new order of feelings of which he had become conscious was the sacrificing of that son on the altar. We cannot, of course, appreciate the horror which such a suggestion must have aroused in the patriarch's mind. Yet he did not shrink from compliance with the divine warning. The very trust which he had been wont to cherish with relation to the birth of Isaac irresistibly prompted him now to go forward, to sacrifice his son. He was resolved to see the end; confident that when it came it would be of force to confirm that faith in God with which it seemed to be, at first, in such hopeless conflict. He would learn, through the testimony of his senses, the meaning of Jehovah in the strange command which he had given. Excited at once by a species of doubt,

and at the same time by faith, he went on to make a complete surrender of himself to Jehovah in the act of preparing Isaac for immolation on the altar; and the sacrifice of the ram caught in the thicket was the appropriate symbol of that surrender which would have actually been made had Isaac been put to death. The writer of the present Article is not aware that, in the effort to deduce from the scriptures the doctrine of expiatory sacrifice any particular stress has been wont to be placed on this attempted sacrifice of Isaac; and he has been all the more willing to set forth at some length Maurice's explanation of it, that it might appear that the latter does not always interpret wrongly the sacrifices spoken of in the Bible.

The sacrifice of the passover, or the sacrifice of all males to the Lord, and the redemption of the first-born, which was required of the Israelites, comes next under review. This sacrifice, Maurice maintains, was meant to represent the consecration of the whole Jewish nation to Jehovah; the first-born of each household being very properly conceived to embody in itself the strength, as it were, the whole vitality of the nation, and in this manner to stand as the representative of the nation. He denies that it was the purpose of this sacrifice to turn from the people the indignation of God, or to procure for them any specific benefit. It was simply an act of consecration.

The idea, indeed, everywhere pervades this work of Maurice that sacrifice is never anything but an expression of certain religious feelings; and that it is indebted for its efficacy to the purity of the feeling which it represents, and not to any element of expiation which may be thought to inhere in it. That view of sacrifices which exhibits them as experiments or means, by whose use some benefit may be obtained which the Being to whom they are offered can alone give, or some evil warded off which that Being may bring upon us, is, in Maurice's estimation, a purely pagan conception. The scriptural doctrine of sacrifice, he says, is something wholly different from this. It is, as we have before

stated, a symbolical utterance of right feeling, a dedication of the sacrifice to the Almighty. Neither, again, is it the giving up of something outside of the man. It is rather the consecration of the man himself,—a full and entire surrender of man to God as the source of all life and of all right order. By such a sacrifice man reaches a oneness with God, and in this attainment finds the true end of his being. This is the only good after which men should ever pant; and in affirming that its attainment is the result of sacrifice, Maurice must be understood as saying, that this is its result not as a sacrifice formally considered, but merely of the inward sentiment of which it is the expression. Man's salvation, thus, is exclusively of works.

We think that a tolerably correct idea of the sacrificial theory of Maurice may be gained from what we have now said. We wish, however, to dwell for a moment on his exposition of Christ's sacrifice. Not only the general character of his theory, but its defects particularly, will thus become more manifest. The entire design of the incarnation and death of Christ, that is to say of his sacrifice, was to elevate man to moral purity. And thus, when Christ is said to redeem us from the curse of the law, we are to conceive the redemption, effected in this manner, as consisting alone in the moral influence which his example is fitted to exert upon our hearts. His sacrifice redeems us only as it weakens the power of sin, and so purifies us. In like manner, when Christ is set forth as a propitiation, we are not to suppose that the end sought for is to render God propitious when he was not so before; or, what this statement in reality means, to make it consistent for God to exercise grace towards offenders. God was never otherwise than propitious. At no time was there in God's character, or in the nature of his government, anything which presented an obstacle to such unrestrained manifestation of grace. When Christ is exhibited as a propitiation, nothing is meant but that God declares through Christ that he has made peace with men. Christ's sacrifice is the medium of this announcement; not

the means by which the peace was effected. And this announcement, it should carefully be noted, is not that God can now in harmony with his righteousness pardon the evildoer ; but simply that he is righteous, and that because he is righteous, he can and will forgive. All the redemption which man needs, all he can receive, is simply a redemption from sinful dispositions, a deliverance from moral bondage. This is effected by the assurance given in the death of Christ of God's inclination to pardon. It is also effected by our being made to believe, what as sinners we had almost lost the consciousness of, that, despite our sinfulness, we are still the sons of God. Jesus Christ by his death proved himself to be the brother of the human race, and in this way demonstrated that men, being his brethren, were sons of God. To believe this, is to believe in Christ, and to gain thereby a perfect redemption alike from sin and its consequences. The idea of an expiation, of an atonement, the idea of the necessity of anything being done in order to set aside legal obstacles to our pardon, is, in Maurice's view, entirely foreign to the genius of the gospel. Sacrifice, neither in the Old Testament nor in the New, neither in the form of type and shadow, nor in its perfect realization in the death of Christ, is to be regarded as an atonement.

It cannot be needful to point out the strong contrast between this theory of sacrifice and the one set forth in the Bible. The contrast is too obvious to require anything of this sort. It is conceived that the best refutation of such a theory is a comparatively full statement of it.