

## ARTICLE VI.

ON THE QUESTION OF THE DIVINE INSTITUTION OF  
SACRIFICE.

BY REV. CALVIN B. PARK, WEST BOXFORD, MASS.

[A series of Articles on the subject of sacrifice was commenced in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for January, 1859. The first Article gives the theories contained in the somewhat celebrated work of William Outram, which was written originally in Latin, and was printed at Amsterdam in 1688. This Article contains a brief discussion of the origin of sacrifices *in general*, and favors the theory that they were derived not from an express divine command, but from the operations of our own moral instincts. In regard to the origin of *Jewish* sacrifices in particular, Outram takes the ground that God instituted them with the design of foreshadowing the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The Article then gives Outram's account of the various kinds of sacrifices which were used and their accompanying rites, of the places in which they were to be offered, and of the priesthood to which was specially assigned the duty of presenting them. The idea is then dwelt upon at considerable length, that Mosaic sacrifices were typical of Christ's death, that they had exclusive reference to God; were not designed merely to express the feelings of the worshipper, but to affect the mind of Jehovah — were, indeed, of the nature of vicarious punishments, and intended to accomplish the same purposes that real punishments have in view. Christ's death was a real sacrifice, and was efficacious as a condition of pardon because it was a vicarious punishment.

The second Article appeared in October, 1870. It states the views of Bähr in his *Symbolik*. It first gives an account of the matter of sacrifices, the object which was offered, and of the attendant rites. This is followed by a statement of the purposes which sacrifices were intended to accomplish.

According to Bähr they had as their intended results, the creation, or rather the restoration, of a fellowship between God and man. The blood of the offered animal is its life, and it is offered on the altar in the place of the life of the worshipper. The animal-life of the worshipper, Bähr represents as the root of selfishness, the principle of sin. By sacrificing this, sin is removed and fellowship with God is restored.

The third Article was published in the number for January, 1871. It gives an exposition of the theory advocated by Dr. John Spencer. Sacrifices are not to be traced, he maintains, to a divine command, nor are they to be regarded as positively approved by Jehovah. The origin of them is to be ascribed, rather, to the gross modes of thinking which have always been common among pagan nations. Sacrifices were permitted to be incorporated into the Jewish ritual simply as an act of indulgence on the part of God to the superstitious tendency of the Jewish mind. The third Article gives also an account of Bähr's anthropopathic theory of sacrifice. This theory is in many respects similar to that of Spencer. In discussing the vicarious theory of sacrifice, Bähr attempts to prove that the efficacy of sacrifice is to be traced not to the death of the victim, as if its life was a substitute for the life of the transgressor, but rather to the sprinkling of the blood.

The fourth Article was printed in October, 1874, and contains Bähr's description of the sacrificial usages of various pagan nations, such as the ancient Persians and Egyptians, the Hindoos and Chinese, with a view to the development of the fundamental idea of sacrifice, of the relation of the blood to the efficacy of the sacrifice, of the relation of the sacrifice to the divinity and to the sacrificer himself; and finally, of certain contrasts between pagan and Mosaic sacrifices. The materials for this Article are derived from Bähr's *Symbolik*.

The fifth Article appeared in January, 1875, and exhibits the theory of Dr. Sykes as to the significance of sacrifices. According to this theory, they are to be viewed merely as federal rites, representing either the beginning or the restora-

tion of friendship with God. What has been denominated the gift-theory, as advocated by Portall and the author of the apology of Ben Mordecai is next brought under consideration. The views set forth by Rev. F. D. Maurice are then given, and their unsatisfactory nature attempted to be proved.

The following Article is the sixth in the series, and gives an account of the reasoning of Warburton and Davison and Fales on the question of the divine institution of sacrifices. With this Article, the series is concluded.]

WRITERS on the subject of sacrifice have always been divided on the question whether or not the observance of this rite is to be ascribed to an express divine command. Even those whose views as to the significance of sacrifice we are bound to regard as on the whole correct have by no means been of one mind as to this point. Our particular object in this Article is to give some account of the reasoning of several English writers on this subject.

We shall advert, in the first place, to the method adopted by the once celebrated Warburton to account for the general prevalence of sacrifices, instead of ascribing them to an express divine command. In a manner which would scarcely have suggested itself to a mind differently constituted from his, this author found occasion, in his work on the Divine Legation of Moses, to propound a peculiar theory of the origin of sacrifices. He rejects summarily the idea of any divine command enjoining their observance, on the ground that such a command was wholly unnecessary.

The theory of Warburton as to the origin of sacrifices is founded upon his somewhat peculiar views of language. Language, as he maintains, was in the earliest periods very rude in its structure, narrow in its range, and equivocal in its significance. There would, therefore, as he thinks, be no little embarrassment whenever men attempted to make known to each other any new thought, whenever any unusual event rendered necessary a different form of expression from that which they had been in the habit of using. In

these earlier periods, the various methods to which men at present have recourse in order to enlarge their vocabularies so as to make them correspond to new necessities were wholly unknown. In these circumstances, it would become a matter of unavoidable necessity to supply the deficiencies of spoken language by "apt and significant signs." There would therefore come into use what Warburton chooses to denominate the language of significant action. We are to reject, then, we may remark in passing, what has been with many quite a favorite notion, that significant language — hieroglyphics, picture-language — was invented for the purpose of enabling priests or the learned class to conceal their doctrines from the mass of the people. It was invented for a reason of exactly the opposite character, — that the learned class might be able by the employment of this species of language to set forth their doctrines in a more impressive and effective manner. The invention was an expedient of necessity, not of choice. Illustrations of this kind of language are frequently to be met with in the Bible. The pushing with horns by the false prophets, as mentioned in the first Book of Kings, in order to represent the utter defeat of the Syrian armies, the hiding of the linen girdle in a hole of a rock near the river Euphrates, are examples of this mode of communicating thought by means of significant action.

It is an altogether natural supposition that recourse to this form of language would be had most frequently in attempts to give utterance to the religious sentiment. Nowhere would the poverty of language be likely to be felt sooner than here. Those who have undertaken to translate the scriptures into any of the less cultivated languages of the world have had occasion to feel the truth of this remark. Religious ideas are so widely removed from the range of thought by which the minds of savages and barbarous tribes are wont to be occupied, that the ordinary forms of language are soon found to be an altogether inadequate medium of communication; so that what Warburton styles "the language of significant signs" would as a matter of course have to be employed.

It is by recurrence to this "ancient mode of converse by action in aid of words" that Warburton thinks he is able to find an adequate explanation of the origin of sacrificial rites — an explanation every way preferable to the supposition of a divine command. Sacrifices are merely significant actions, designed to be expressive of certain religious emotions which the language in common use gave no means of uttering. We will unfold, in as succinct a manner as we can, the mode in which Warburton, in accordance with his theory, explains the various kinds of sacrifice.

Sacrifices, he properly enough asserts, are, eucharistical, those which are expressive of gratitude; propitiatory, such as have the nature of entreaty for some special favor; expiatory, or those which are intended to be indicative of repentance for sin, and of entreaty that the punishment due to transgression may be averted. The efficacy of sacrifice, it would seem to follow logically from this statement, does not lie at all in the sacrifice as such, but exclusively in the religious sentiment of the worshipper of which it alone is an adequate expression. Nothing of the nature of atonement, having for its final cause the removal of legal difficulties in the way of forgiveness, can possibly be supposed to belong to it.

Eucharistical sacrifice was designed to express the sentiment of gratitude. No words that could be employed would be a fitting medium for the utterance of this emotion. The grateful worshipper, therefore, if he was a tiller of the soil, would approach the place of prayer bearing in his hands the first and most precious fruits of his labor, and, placing them on the altar, would offer them to the Divinity; thus, in a manner the most impressive, recognizing God as the giver of all good, by presenting to him that which in the estimation of the worshipper was of the highest value.

In the case of propitiatory sacrifice, the offering would be of such a nature, and would be accompanied by such rites, as would make it most significant of the sentiment of penitence and the act of entreaty.

Warburton's theory of the origin of eucharistical and pro-

propitiatory sacrifices might be accepted without any great difficulty, if it were intended to apply to them exclusively. It is when it is employed to explain the third class of sacrifices — the expiatory — that its claims to be accepted as the true theory become liable to very grave objections. In these sacrifices the worshipper, it is asserted, comes into the presence of Jehovah not with the first fruits of the soil as significant of grateful emotions, or with a symbol of entreaty as in the instance of propitiatory sacrifice, but with a chosen animal — an animal fixed upon because of its peculiar value in the eye of the worshipper. He slays the victim on the altar, accompanying the act of putting it to death with words expressive of the deepest contrition and an acknowledgment of desert of a punishment corresponding in severity to the death inflicted on the animal; uttering this last acknowledgment simultaneously with the blow which deprives the animal of life. As already remarked, it does not appear to be anything in the nature of the act of sacrifice which, according to Warburton, gives to it any degree of efficacy. Its whole virtue is derived from the mental condition of the worshipper, which it is designed to represent. Sacrifice is nothing but a peculiar form of language — the language of significant action. Sacrifice never was commanded. It was resorted to simply as a form of expression, for the same reason that any other mode of communication between man and man ever comes to be employed.

This method of accounting for the use of sacrificial rites we are to accept, according to Warburton, principally, not to say solely, because it is in accordance with "all that we know of plain and simple nature." It has already been attempted to show in these Articles, — and with success, as we believe, — that the natural view of the origin of sacrifices is that which assigns to the sacrifice itself a truly expiatory virtue; according to which, it is necessary that all manifestations of penitence and all entreaties for pardon should be attended with a sacrifice, not merely as a suitable form of expression, but as something without which these sentiments and en-

treaties, however sincere and earnest, would be altogether inefficacious.

His theory of sacrifice, Warburton conceives to be corroborated by a reference to various usages existent among the nations of antiquity. When, for instance, two nations would enter into a treaty with each other, they gave the greater solemnity, the stronger sanction, to the transaction by the performance of a sacrifice. The sacrificial victim was put to death with appropriate rites, and a supplication uttered at the same moment, to the effect that whichever party should first violate the treaty might meet with the same destruction that had just been visited on the animal sacrificed. It must be apparent, however, to every one, as we may here take occasion to say, that such a transaction as this bears too little resemblance to an expiatory sacrifice—using that epithet in anything like its proper significance—to give it any force as an illustration of the nature of such a sacrifice.

Warburton proceeds to establish his theory still farther by showing that it renders entirely nugatory the doctrine, both of those who would refer sacrifice to a divine command, and of those who would trace its origin to superstition. He repudiates with scorn the idea of those who, like the once celebrated Shuckford, attribute to sacrifice a divine origin, because the unaided human mind never could imagine a reason for such a rite. Of this supposition, that the unaided human mind never could form to itself a reason for the custom of sacrifice, we think that we have already shown the falseness. Expiatory sacrifice is too much in accordance with the instincts of our nature, as we conceive, to allow us to admit this supposition for a moment. Expiatory sacrifice is neither repugnant to right reason nor is it the growth of superstition; and we believe ourselves correct in the opinion that it is a rite just as agreeable to the mind of God, and its observance just as binding, as though an explicit command in relation to it had come from Jehovah, in a form so positive, and in terms so explicit, that neither its existence nor its import had ever been questioned. Nor can we for an instant

allow that because the notion of Shuckford cannot be entertained, the theory of Warburton must be. There is no such absence of reason for sacrifice as Shuckford imagines; and Warburton's doctrine is wholly unsatisfactory, if we are at liberty to ascribe to sacrifice any virtue as such, to give it any real significance, or conceive it to be anything else than a mere form of language; if, in other words, we are not to take away from it its whole expiatory nature.

Warburton rejects in an equally decisive manner the idea that the very early use of sacrifice makes necessary a recourse to an explicit divine command. He conceives that "natural religion" would in the very earliest ages guide men to the practice of sacrificial rites. We understand him, in all this, merely to argue that natural religion in the very earliest times would suggest the propriety of sacrifice, not because natural religion would suggest the necessity of a proper atonement for transgression, but because it would prompt men to express, if possible, their deepest feelings in the ear of the Divinity; and these feelings have no other proper medium of expression than the significant rite of sacrifice. We need scarcely repeat, however, in reply to all this, that the need of uttering our religious feelings in the ears of the Supreme Being is not one of which men become conscious at an earlier period, or in a form more distinct and lively, than they may very properly be supposed to become aware of the need of a truly expiatory sacrifice. That felt necessity, we think, would co-exist, in a shape more or less precise and definite, with the very beginning of a consciousness of sin in the mind of the first transgressor. And in these views we find an explanation satisfactory to our own mind of the supposed absence of an explicit command enjoining the use of sacrifice.

The fact that such a copious body of rules in relation to sacrifice as we find in the Levitical law was afterwards promulgated, may be accounted for not on the supposition that no command on this subject had ever been promulgated before, but rather on this supposition, that it became necessary to counteract, by means of such precise and definite

regulations, the tendency of the mind to lose sight of the proper import of sacrifice, and, by that means, to relapse into such superstitious notions on the subject as would divest sacrificial rites of all their efficacy — render them, indeed, positively offensive to Jehovah. And especially did such a body of rules become needful, in order to perpetuate that isolation of the Israelites from all surrounding nations which it was designed should be maintained. The true idea of sacrifice was to be preserved among them as an essential feature of the true religion; and the minute and explicit regulations laid down in the Mosaic code were the only means by which, apparently, this end could be accomplished.

We have thus set forth, as we conceive, at sufficient length the main elements of that theory by which Warburton would account for the almost universal prevalence of sacrifice without having recourse to any divine command. Its grand defect seems to be that it loses sight of the distinctive nature of sacrifice. Expiatory sacrifice is a symbolical atonement,—symbolical of the real atonement effected by the death of Christ,—the efficacy of which is due to its nature as sacrifice, and not merely to its capability of serving as a medium for the expression of certain religious feelings. These feelings are, indeed, such as every transgressor of the divine law should possess. Without them as an accompaniment, no sacrifice would be at all effective; and, on the other hand, these sentiments, however sincere, without an expiatory sacrifice, would be equally inefficacious as a means of securing pardon. The principle which we have so often laid down, that the type corresponds in nature to the antitype, should be borne in mind — the latter expresses nothing substantially different from the former. If, then, we are to regard sacrifice in no other aspect than that of a certain form of language, a certain means of uttering religious sentiment, we are obliged to explain the sacrificial death of Christ in an analogous manner. And did Christ endure the death of the cross merely to furnish men with a fitting means of giving utterance to their religious feelings? The supposition

shocks the sensibilities of every right-minded man, and seems also to be in hopeless conflict with any just interpretation of the scriptures.

In considering the question whether or not we should trace the custom of sacrifice to a formal divine command, we must be careful not to suppose that the denial of the existence of such a command is necessarily equivalent to a denial of the propriety, or even the moral obligation of the rite of sacrifice — of expiatory sacrifice especially, considered in its distinctive sense as a rite suited to the wants of a sinful race. Those who question the existence of such a command in relation to sacrifice may, however illogically in the eyes of many, yet really, regard sacrifice as a mode of worship acceptable to God, and typical of the sacrifice of Christ, just as they regard the feeling of repentance and the expression of that feeling as binding on men, without waiting for an express injunction. Their reasoning on this subject is not necessarily meant by them to be at all in conflict with the ordinarily accepted evangelical interpretation of the Saviour's death. They may consider it as a proper atonement for sin, and all sacrifices as efficacious just as far as they are typical of his death.

We shall now devote a few pages to an examination of the reasoning of Davison, in his *Treatise on Primitive Sacrifice* (London, 1825), and of G. S. Faber, in his *Treatise on the Origin of Sacrifice* (London, 1827), in reference to this question.

Davison strenuously denies that the doctrine of sacrifices — that is, such as have a proper atoning power — can be deduced from the light of nature or the principles of reason. Nature, as he argues, has nothing to say for such an expiatory power, and reason has everything to say against it. The life of a brute creature never could have been supposed to be a fit ransom for the life of a man. The blood of an animal could never have been imagined to possess any virtue by which it could wash away sin, purify the conscience, or avert the punishment merited by the offender. Reason,

indeed, suggests repentance as an essential condition of pardon. It might possibly suggest the putting of an animal to death as a suitable and impressive act by which to represent one's repentance for sin; but beyond this it would never go. In a word, one of the last resources of natural reason in the mind of a transgressor for removing the guilt of a moral transgression would have been the shedding the blood of a sacrificial victim. "Expiatory sacrifice must have been of God's own appointment to reconcile it either to God or man himself, till he was fallen under a deplorable superstition."

Did expiatory sacrifices, therefore, exist previously to the time of Moses and the establishment of the Sinaitic ritual? If they did thus exist, they are to be ascribed to an explicit command of Jehovah or to a plain signification of natural reason. They could not, as has been stated already, be ascribed to natural reason, for they are utterly abhorrent to our reason. They cannot be ascribed to a divine command, for there are no traces of such a command. It is admitted, indeed, by all, that the scriptures are quite sparing of direct evidences in favor of a divine command touching sacrifice; and very elaborate attempts are made to supply, by means of inference, this deficiency of direct evidence. In the judgment of Davison, these attempts are altogether unsatisfactory. If a command was uttered for the observance of the Sabbath on the ground that that observance was connected very closely with even the existence of religion in the world, such a command was equally necessary in the case of sacrifice, and for an analogous reason. And the higher our conception becomes of the importance of expiatory sacrifices in relation to human welfare, the more intimate we conceive their connection with the very essence of the gospel to be, so much the more imperative are we required to regard the necessity of a divine command for their observance. In this state of the case, Davison takes refuge in the position that we actually have no one positive example of any such atoning virtue ascribed to sacrifice in the primitive religion. There is no proof of the existence of such a virtue

in the sacrifice of Cain and Abel, nor in that of Noah. He admits that sacrifice, regarded merely as an expression of gratitude or of reverential homage, is in accordance with reason. It is equally so, it is admitted by him likewise, as a symbol of repentance or of supplication for the return of the divine favor. But the moment you conceive of sacrifice as an expiation, it at once ceases to be in consonance with human reason. Nature instinctively revolts against it. Sacrifice, in the two former senses, may have existed in the antediluvian ages; but in the meaning of an expiation, no vestiges of it are anywhere discernible. It was not till the promulgation of the Sinaitic law that we have any evidence that sacrifices of this species could be agreeable to the divine mind. It was then explicitly announced: "The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls. For it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."

One might suppose, the writer of this Article cannot but remark, that the thought would have suggested itself to the mind of Davison that, if God did thus command the offering of expiatory sacrifices, they could not be in themselves so very repugnant to our nature as he would fain have us believe. No other rite is introduced into the Jewish cultus so abhorrent to all right feeling as Davison supposes expiatory sacrifice to be; and it is very hard to suppose that this rite could have been introduced, if we are to give to it such odious qualities as Davison does not hesitate to do. It will scarcely answer for Davison to resort to the supposition, for the purpose of relieving himself from this difficulty, that God allowed expiatory sacrifices to form a part of the Mosaic ritual because it already formed a part of the Egyptian worship, and the Israelites had become so accustomed to it that it would certainly have been practised by them, even if it had been peremptorily forbidden; for this would be virtually to admit that expiatory sacrifice is, after all, not so very repugnant to our nature, else it would not have been so generally in vogue. It would also be somewhat difficult to

show on what grounds God could properly have directly countenanced such an odious rite as expiatory sacrifice is represented as being, even supposing the Israelites did cherish so strong a partiality for it, and would have practised it in the face even of a plain prohibition. No evidence could command our assent to such a statement, that was not of the most direct and positive character; and no such evidence is to be found in the scriptures. We certainly think that the representations, so often made by Davison and other writers, of the utter incongruity between atoning sacrifices and our natural instincts are greatly exaggerated. Especially do we conceive this to be the case, when we look at the subject in the light thrown upon it by the sacrifice of Christ. No such incongruity with our natural instincts can be conceived to belong to that sacrifice; and if the antitype is in harmony with our nature and our reason, the type must be so likewise. No odious qualities are discernible in the type that are not discernible in the antitype.

Davison will not concede that expiatory sacrifice was incorporated into the Mosaic ritual on the ground that in the antediluvian period they had been very commonly observed. He will not allow us to reason backwards from the time of Moses to the ages before the flood. "Here in the Mosaic law," he says, "the declared expiatory power of sacrifice of a certainty begins." Until this period sacrifice had no typical character. It acquired now, for the first time, its reference to the death of Christ. It became a prophetic service, suited to its pre-ordained antitype in the evangelical dispensation.

The ground taken by Davison is this, — that inasmuch as no command for the practice of expiatory sacrifices before the flood is anywhere to be found, and inasmuch as such a rite is in itself wholly abhorrent to our nature, we are not at liberty to suppose that such sacrifices were in use in the antediluvian ages. Is this doctrine correct? Are there adequate grounds for the belief that expiatory sacrifices were in use before the flood? and may we therefore infer that

they were in use at this time because they were divinely commanded?

The religious usages which existed before the time of Noah, as one might very naturally presume, would have peculiarities analogous, in a greater or less degree, to the evangelical scheme. There would exist in that ancient religion certain elements which could be fully understood only when their typical character was perceived, when they were regarded as emblematic of the sacrifice of Christ. Such is the harmony necessarily existent between Christianity as a scheme of reconciliation between God and man to be brought about by means of the atoning death of Christ, and our nature, that man might almost be expected of himself to contrive observances that should refer to that death, and be — obscurely, it may be, and indefinitely, but yet really — emblematic of it. Or, if this is too much to concede, we must believe that a ritual such as God would prescribe would embody features which would be proper only on the ground of their being symbolical of the great sacrifice, even though that symbolical character might not be always apprehended. We maintain that, even if we were not informed explicitly of the expiatory character of the death of Christ, we might fairly presume that it had that character, on the ground that an expiation is the only method which we should suppose fitting for the purpose of securing the salvation of the human race from sin. Well nigh all the reasoning which has been directed against the idea of an expiation for sin having been effected by the death of Christ derives the greater part of its force from a misconception; as if it was the purpose of that death to render God merciful when he was not so before, instead of simply providing the means by which the actual exercise of mercy could be made consistent with the perpetuity of good government. When this misconception is removed, many, if not all, of the objections to the doctrine of the atonement disappear. And we maintain, at the same time, that, in regard to the question of the existence of expiatory sacrifices before the days of Moses, the presumption

is in favor of the existence of such sacrifices, on what may be denominated *a priori* grounds. We should certainly expect to see such sacrifices prescribed in a system of religion ordained expressly by divine wisdom. If there were to be found in the Pentateuch passages of doubtful significance relating to sacrifices, we maintain that in fixing their sense the expiatory theory, rather than the opposite, should have the benefit of the doubt. And it is specially important to take notice that, as is true in reference to the death of Christ, many of the objections to expiatory sacrifices arise from a wrong idea of their proper function. It would seem to be imagined that an intrinsic power to atone for sin was thought to belong to them — a power altogether separate from their typical reference; and it is declared to be a preposterous notion that the blood of an irrational animal could possess any such atoning virtue. No intelligent advocate of the expiatory theory ever attributed to animal sacrifices such a power. These sacrifices become a proper atonement only when they are symbolical of the death of Christ.

Mr. Faber states this prefatory argument in favor of the existence of sacrifices in the patriarchal ages, and so of a divine command for their observance, somewhat as follows: The three dispensations, the patriarchal, the Levitical, and the Christian, embody substantially one religious system, the central feature of which is the promise, and eventually the actual appearance, of a Saviour from heaven. These three systems must, of course, have a close affinity with each other. There can be nothing essentially characteristic of any one which does not for substance exist in all, or which, at least, is not in harmony with all the others. Now, in these three dispensations, we notice as a very prominent feature the extraordinary rite of living sacrifice. In the two former dispensations, the victims sacrificed are irrational animals; in the latter dispensation, the chosen victim is the Lord Jesus Christ. In the next place, it is to be observed that these three dispensations are already progressive; and we might expect, consequently, that any obscurities noticeable in the

first dispensation would be partially removed in the second, and that the work of elucidation would be completed in the third — that it would throw light on all that had gone before it. If, then, we can find out from the study of the third dispensation what is the nature and significance of sacrifice as illustrated in the death of Christ, and what was the purpose meant to be answered by it, we conceive ourselves authorized to infer that the nature and purposes of the animal sacrifices provided for in the two former dispensations were identical with these. And we are taught, in terms too explicit to be easily misapprehended, that the purpose of the sacrifice of Christ was expiatory. He died that he might atone for our sins; he bore our sins in his own body on the tree that he might effect a reconciliation between God and man.

It must be remembered that hitherto we have only ventured to infer from the acknowledged import of the sacrifice of Christ the import of the patriarchal and Levitical sacrifices. Is there evidence of a more positive character that the purpose of the latter sacrifices was identical with that of the first? In regard to the Levitical sacrifices, the evidence seems to be of a very decided character. It is affirmed, in Lev. xvii. 11, that the blood of the slain animal is shed upon the altar to make atonement for the sins of the people. It is asserted, likewise, in the Epistle to the Hebrews (ix. 7), that the high-priest of Israel went once every year into the tabernacle with blood which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people. Language more explicit and of a clearer signification could not easily be found. The two dispensations were most intimately related to each other. The sacrifices prescribed under the second dispensation were typical of the sacrifice offered in the third. The former had, indeed, no atoning power in themselves, but were efficacious only as they were typical of the sacrifice of the Redeemer.

Can the same identity of nature and purpose be made out in reference to the patriarchal sacrifices? No evidence, it is conceded by Mr. Faber, of a direct and positive character in favor of this identity can be brought forward; but in the

absence of any intimation to the contrary, such an identity might reasonably enough be inferred. It is scarcely possible to imagine that if expiatory sacrifices were deemed needful for the Israelites after the time of Moses, they should not have been prescribed during the patriarchal period.

There are, however, considerations of a more decisive nature going to prove that the doctrine of an atonement effected by means of expiatory sacrifice was known during the patriarchal ages and received the divine sanction; in other words, that expiatory sacrifices, in the proper signification of that phrase, existed before the time of Moses, and, if not directly commanded by Jehovah, were at least so far approved by him that they may be properly conceived to have been, in effect, if not really, commanded by him.

The first of these considerations is, that sacrifices of an expiatory character prevailed throughout the pagan world. The arguments which go to demonstrate the truth of this affirmation may be found drawn out at great length in the well known work of Archbishop Magee on the Atonement. It is necessary for those who admit the general prevalence among heathen nations of expiatory sacrifices to account for it. One method used for this purpose has been to maintain that such sacrifices are in accordance with the natural impulses of our mind. Our very nature seems to encourage the presumption that the anger of God due to us for our transgression may in this way be appeased. It is believed that a human government might be induced to pardon a rebellious subject, under certain circumstances, if such a sacrifice were to be presented. But Faber and the large majority, if not all, of the writers on this subject seem to agree in rejecting this view, and they incline to the belief that the universal prevalence of expiatory sacrifice may be traced to a direct command. By others the prevalence of these sacrifices is ascribed to superstition. In the absence now of direct testimony on the subject, — for all are understood to allow that the scriptures do not give any formal command relating to it, — the supposition of a revelation

from God equivalent to a command affords the best solution of what otherwise is so difficult to explain. But it may be asked here, whether those who conceive the main element in the divine plan of salvation to be the expiatory sacrifice of Christ ought not to admit that such a scheme would, as a matter of necessity, commend itself not only to the conscience as right, but to our natural instincts as proper and suitable to the character of God and of men, and that this felt harmony would be so complete as to lay a foundation for the belief, in thoughtful minds, that some such scheme would at length be actually disclosed, and to prompt them, as it were, spontaneously to present animal sacrifices as symbolical anticipations of the great sacrifice which they conceived it possible, not to say probable, would ultimately be offered. Whatever answer, now, may be given to this question, we must suppose that the doctrine of sacrifice was transmitted by Noah to his descendants, and that it must have come to him as a fragmentary portion of a revelation which had been made, from time to time, to his progenitors. The presumptive evidences all countenance this supposition; and that theory which accounts for an alleged fact the most satisfactorily is, in the absence of positive evidence, to be accounted the true theory.

A second argument for the existence of patriarchal expiatory sacrifices is derived from the record of Job's sacrifice for his children and for his three friends. It is not necessary to narrate at length the circumstances under which these sacrifices were offered. The important question in regard to them is, whether or not they were expiatory. It must be owned that the reply given to this question is not in the highest degree satisfactory. It is admitted that the language in which the account of these sacrifices is given does not in itself afford any positive proof that they were expiatory. But yet the fact that God is represented as saying by implication that if the sacrifice be offered he will avert his displeasure from the friends of Job, would go far to justify the assertion that it was of an expiatory description. It may

reasonably be doubted whether any sacrifice whose avowed object and actual effect were the removal of the divine displeasure could properly bear any different name; especially when, as was the case with this sacrifice of Job, it was presented in accordance with a divine command.

Attention is next directed to the sacrifice offered by Noah after he left the ark. The scriptural narration gives us plainly to understand that on its being presented God smelled a sweet savor, and uttered a promise equivalent to that of forgiveness of the sins by which the flood had been occasioned. It is evident that, as the result of the sacrifice, God, who had hitherto been offended with men, now saw it to be right to exercise grace towards them. He would forbear to inflict on them the punishment which they merited. The sacrifice of Noah appears to have been, we are authorized to infer, of the same character as that of Job, adverted to on a preceding page,—to have had in view a similar object, and to have been productive of a similar result. It may, like that, be fairly considered to have been an expiatory sacrifice.

We now come to a consideration of the more important sacrifice of Cain and Abel. A principal question which we are to discuss relatively to it is: What is meant by the word "sin," in God's answer to Cain's complaint, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door." It is maintained by those who advocate the theory of a direct divine institution of sacrifice, that the word translated "sin" should be translated "sin-offering," and that what God designed to say to Cain was, that, although he stood self-convicted of sin, he need not despair, inasmuch as a victim, which could be presented as a sin-offering, was at hand, and in this way the just consequences of his sin might be averted from him. Ought, then, the word translated "sin" to have been rendered "sin-offering"? It is contended, on the one hand, that, instead of being rendered "sin-offering," the proper translation is "punishment for sin." But to this it is replied, that, out of the whole range of scripture, not one passage can be brought forward in which the word in

question (כַּפָּרָה) must be translated "punishment for sin." It is doubted, indeed, whether one passage can be produced in which "sin-offering" is not the best rendering, not to say the only one, which the exigencies of the passage require. It is enough, at present, barely to state the argument employed by Faber and others on this subject, without attempting to give the various particulars out of which the argument is constructed.

The evident intention of the answer made to Cain by Jehovah was to show him that he had no proper ground of complaint in view of the different feelings entertained by the Almighty in reference to his sacrifice and that of Abel. If he had done well, he should certainly be regarded with favor; if, on the other hand, he had sinned, there was ready at hand a means by which all ill consequences likely to result from his transgression might be prevented. It is argued that the displeasure of God was directed against Cain not because he had refused to bring a proper sin-offering, but because his character had been so much worse than that of Abel. But there is no proof that his character, previously to the sacrifice, had been worse than that of Abel; at any rate, so much worse as to render his sacrifice displeasing to Jehovah. Or, even admitting that this was so, still his character was not so depraved that no sacrifice he could bring could be considered as a proper atonement. The common views entertained of Cain's character are derived less from what we know of him before the sacrifice in question than from what is told of his subsequent conduct. It is certain that both his conduct and that of Abel had been such as to require that they should offer expiatory sacrifices, even though the iniquities of one of them had been altogether inferior in enormity to those of the other; and if both had presented such a sacrifice with right feelings, it would have been accepted by the Almighty in each case with the same favor. But as it was, Cain was told that the particular sin which he had perpetrated could still be atoned for by sacrificing the victim which stood at the door. We have, then, in this passage, if this reasoning be correct, an indubitable instance

of an expiatory sacrifice to be offered, if not in obedience to a formal command, at least in obedience to an implied command, and with the evident approbation of God. And are we not justified in the presumption that if this sacrifice was of this character, it was not by any means a solitary case? Was not the custom of offering such sacrifices a prevalent one?

Again, we are told in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that by faith Abel offered a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain. What was the nature of this faith cherished by Abel? It is apparent that the faith stated in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews to have been cherished by so many different men, must have been in all cases substantially the same sentiment. We must seek for a definition of it, such as will suit all the instances in which it was exercised. It would seem, therefore, to be quite evident that the faith here celebrated could not have been what is ordinarily defined as evangelical faith, — faith in Christ as an atoning Saviour, — because it could not have been by virtue of this faith that we understand the worlds to have been created by Almighty power; neither could it have been by such faith that Noah was prompted to build an ark for himself and his family. We ought rather to understand by it a cordial belief in divine revelation, without any special reference to the particular matter which that revelation had in view. This definition of faith applies to the different examples alluded to in the chapter, better than any other. Abel, then, offered the sacrifice which he did, in compliance with such a revelation from God, in simple faith in its reality. Cain brought an offering of such a material as he thought proper, in disregard of the divine revelation. He may previously have been a worse or a better man than Abel. His conduct, however, in regard to this sacrifice — his acting so independently of the divine will — was the particular feature which awakened so much displeasure against him in the divine mind.

Another argument in favor of the direct divine institution of sacrifice is drawn from a consideration of the language used on this subject in the Levitical law. It would, as a

matter of course, be conjectured that if the rite of sacrifice had not been in use at the time of Moses, if it had not till that time been commanded by Jehovah, some intimation of this fact would have been given in the law. At all events, one would naturally suppose that such language would not have been employed as would lead to the supposition that the contrary was the fact—that expiatory sacrifices were then for the first time commanded to be observed. Now, it is alleged that the terms used in the Levitical law are of the latter kind—that they imply that expiatory sacrifices had been customarily offered by men, and that they were by no means abhorrent, but on the contrary pleasing, to the mind of God.

Let us look, for a moment, at some of this language. In the opening chapter of Leviticus, where, if anywhere, we should look for a command to present expiatory sacrifices, the reader must be struck with the total absence of any such command. The chapter seems to proceed on the supposition that no command of the sort was required. It assumes that no doubt either as to the propriety or the duty of presenting atoning sacrifices existed in the mind of the Israelites. It is said all along: If any man among you will offer a sacrifice, let him offer it in this or that manner. Directions are given as to the kind of animal which should be employed as a victim, as to the rites by which the sacrifice should be accompanied; but this is not preceded by any command to offer sacrifice in the general, as one would presume would be the case if it was now for the first time made a matter of obligation. Let it be carefully noted that there exists this absence of command to offer sacrifice, whatever be the particular kind of sacrifice—whether peace or thank or sin offering—which is referred to. The opponents of the theory of the divine institution of sacrifices before the time of Moses should be able to account in a satisfactory manner for the lack of any divine command relative to the matter.

It may be urged, still further, that God, speaking through the mouth of Jeremiah, expresses himself in such decisive

terms as these : "For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them, in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices." The commands to which God must be supposed to have reference in this passage are, unquestionably, those which relate to the original institution of sacrifice. No others can be thought to be alluded to, because commands of a different import, those which relate to the selection of victims and to the accompanying rites, are very frequent.

Those who deny that expiatory sacrifices were commanded during the patriarchal dispensation are still obliged to admit that they were not commanded under the Mosaic dispensation, unless they refuse to give credence to what is affirmed in the preceding citation from Jeremiah as to the want of such a command. At the same time, they can hardly fail to own that these sacrifices, if not commanded expressly in the law, were yet allowed, and to all appearance were divinely approved. In other words, the rite of sacrifice, which it is argued God never formally enjoined, which is said to be only the outgrowth of a degrading superstition, is still confessed to be set forth in the Levitical law, not only as a permitted rite, but as positively countenanced and approved by Jehovah. Now, it would seem to be much the easier course to admit that the Levitical law, while it does not reveal nor command the observance of sacrificial rites, yet recognizes them, and recognizes them on the ground that they had already, in effect, if not literally, been enjoined by Jehovah.

It is a favorite topic with those who will not acquiesce in the idea that expiatory sacrifices were instituted by Jehovah, that they are the offspring of superstitious views of the divine character. Now, if it can be shown that these sacrifices were permitted, not to say positively countenanced, by the Almighty, it would seem to take away no small part of the force of the objection that they are an altogether superstitious observance; for it should not be conceded for a moment that God would either enjoin or approve of a religious service which was simply the offspring of a superstition. Faber

contends, however, that every form and mode of sacrifice, when viewed as not commanded by Jehovah, is marked by gross and unreasonable superstition. We do not regard this notion of Mr. Faber as founded on a view of the real state of the case. God would not command the practice of a rite which was intrinsically superstitious. Neither are we willing to allow that atoning sacrifices deserve to be branded as superstitious, if they are contemplated in their proper aspect. We do not believe, indeed, that the slaying of an irrational animal can itself have the effect of appeasing the wrath of God. It is a conceded point that it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin. Wherein, then, does consist the power of a proper atoning sacrifice to take away sin? What is the proper aspect in which it is to be regarded? We acknowledge that the scriptures content themselves with laying down the doctrine that Christ bore our sins and was made a curse for us, without undertaking to explain at all fully how it is that the death of Christ has this atoning power; and on this it becomes us to speak with great caution. But may we not regard all sacrifice as a symbol; and those sacrifices which are expiatory as typical of Christ's death, and that as a species of symbolical punishment — a manifestation of the divine feelings in reference to sin and its evil desert, as well as an acknowledgment on the part the transgressor that he merits a punishment analogous to that now experienced by the substituted victim? And we are not sure but that, without any express injunction from heaven, the reasonableness of expiatory sacrifice might have suggested itself to the mind of a thoughtful transgressor, and that he might have gone on to perform the service without subjecting himself to the imputation of practising superstition.

But, whatever may be thought of this reasoning, we regard the argument of Mr. Faber as being on the whole conclusive that, as sacrifice was in use during the patriarchal ages, was accepted and approved by the Almighty, it should not be stigmatized as a superstitious observance, but as being an act of obedience to a virtual command of Jehovah.

We shall now advert to a number of objections, started by Davison and others, to the doctrine that atoning sacrifices were prescribed by Jehovah under the patriarchal dispensation. That a command was not requisite in the case of eucharistic sacrifices, or indeed of any except those which were strictly piacular, may be readily enough allowed. Men, it may be easily supposed, might offer them spontaneously. Sacrifices might seem to men in those primitive ages to be an apt symbol of gratitude, and especially of the contrition and sorrow which the consciousness of sin enkindles. They may be supposed not to need any revelation from heaven to suggest to them that sacrifices regarded as fines might avert the wrath of God. But we cannot believe, so Faber maintains, that without divine command men would ever arrive at the notion of a strictly piacular sacrifice. We are, then, driven to the conclusion that, if anterior to the time of Moses God ever accepted sacrifices of this nature, then the rite itself and the accompanying idea of an atonement must have been expressly ordained and revealed by the Almighty. Are there any strong, still more any insuperable, objections to this doctrine?

One such objection has already been incidentally referred to. We have, it is urged, an explicit affirmation of the divine appointment of the Sabbath, and from the fact of this appointment we infer the obligation of observing the Sabbath; and therefore, from the absence of any formal direction of this kind in regard to sacrifice, we are to infer that it was not practised, and ought not to have been practised, during the patriarchal ages. No reason, it is alleged, can be given why an injunction should have been laid down in the one case, and in the other an almost perfect silence be observed, except that piacular sacrifices — for they are the ones particularly in view — were not meant to be offered. Warburton is more positive even than Davison in the statement of this objection. The objection has a good deal of plausibility, and it is not to be wondered at that writers on the other side — as Faber, for example — take much pains to refute it. Admitting the

absence of any formal direction in relation to sacrifices, it may be very pertinently asked where we are to look for any formal statement in regard to the duty of observing every seventh day as a Sabbath. We are, indeed, told that God rested on the seventh day from the work of creation, and blessed and sanctified that day; but we are not told that every successive seventh day was sanctified, nor that every such day should be set apart by man for the duties and observances of religion. We have no doubt that the observance of the Sabbath has always been in agreement with the mind of God, and that the failure to practise such an observance is sinful; but one will look in vain in the scriptures for any explicit and formal command to this effect, anterior, at least, to the time of Moses. On the contrary, Faber maintains that we do possess, in respect to the primitive institution of piacular sacrifice, evidence stronger and more direct of its having come from God, than we have for the primitive divine institution of the Sabbath. We can produce, he says, an absolute command, addressed to Cain, to present a sin-offering, — that is, a piacular sacrifice, — with the very plainest implication that to do so was a matter of moral obligation on the strength of the divine institution of that species of sacrifice. The obligation to observe the Sabbath grows out of man's moral nature; it corresponds to his wants as a moral being; and, in the circumstances in which he is placed, this observance is an indispensable condition of the attainment of the great purposes of our being. We regard the obligation to perform piacular sacrifices as resting on a similar basis. It corresponds to our moral wants. It meets our necessities as sinners as nothing else can.

Another objection to the alleged existence of expiatory sacrifices in the patriarchal ages is put by Davison in this form. If such sacrifices were offered, they must have had exclusive reference to sin in the strict sense of that term — to proper violations of the eternal law of right. No other law had yet been proclaimed. But at Sinai a ceremonial law was put forth, and expiatory sacrifices were directed to be used

in the event of any of these ceremonial laws being violated. They were carefully restricted in their scope to transgressions of this character. Now, it is claimed that had expiatory sacrifices been used before the time of Moses, then in the Levitical law, "the divine economy would have been retrograde; a sacrament of grace and pardon would have been withdrawn, or, which is the same thing, it would have been reduced from greater purposes to less; and this is a change highly inconsistent with our best notions of the progressive order of revealed religion." It is not to be supposed that a transgressor of God's law under the patriarchal dispensation would have had pointed out to him a method of obtaining forgiveness which a transgressor under the Mosaic economy would not be able to use. This would be tantamount to the assertion that God was less merciful under the latter than under the former economy; or, what is still worse, to the assertion that violations of a ceremonial rule were really of greater importance, and stood in more pressing need of forgiveness, than is the case with violations of the eternal law of rectitude.

Now, it should be remembered, in respect to this objection, that under both dispensations, the patriarchal and the Mosaic, expiatory sacrifices are not supposed to have any intrinsic efficacy in the way of procuring pardon for transgressors. It is explicitly asserted that it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. They had no power of this sort, except as they were typical of the sacrifice of Christ. It may not, indeed, have been necessary that the worshipper should always have been distinctly conscious of the reference of his sacrifice to the death of Christ. All that may have been required of him was to present his offering with that penitent mind and that submission of himself to the mercy of God which constitute the elements of saving faith. The worshipper acknowledged that in nothing he could do of himself did there lie any reason why his sin should be forgiven; that if it were forgiven, it would be exclusively of the divine compassion. Under neither dispensation, the

patriarchal nor the Mosaic, was the sacrifice itself, aside from its typical character, supposed to have any virtue in the procurement of pardon. The Levitical law, then, need not suffer from any comparison between itself and the patriarchal dispensation, as if the scope of the divine compassion was limited in it to a greater degree than it had before been.

It may be argued, still farther, that the supposition that sacrifices under the Mosaic economy were confined to ceremonial transgressions is not well-founded. It is granted, by Davison himself, that there were "certain cases of moral transgression, in favor of which an exception from the general severity of the law was admitted, and an atonement ordained." Here, then, is an abandonment of the ground first assumed. And it is not enough to plead that the cases specified were exceptional, and of little relative importance. It remains true that moral transgressions, strictly defined, were atoned for by expiatory sacrifices.

Besides, the fact should not be lost sight of, that violations of the law, on the part of the ancient Israelites, were in many cases both sins against God and infractions of the civil code; and the same difficulty which exists at the present day in the way of procuring pardon for the latter class of transgressions would have arisen among the Israelites. The very maintenance of civil society requires an adherence to the principle that violations of the law must be followed by the threatened punishment. No provision for pardon can be involved in the civil law. It does not, and cannot, know anything of mercy. There would have been no propriety under the Mosaic economy in appointing a peculiar sacrifice for transgressions of this character. Under no government, and in reference to no law, can such a provision be supposed to exist. Pardons must originate in a source outside the law. There was not, then, in the Mosaic economy, any retrogression, any peculiar limitation of the divine compassion beyond what had always existed. At the same time, under the Mosaic, as well as under the patriarchal dispensations, violations of the divine, in distinction from the civil law,

— that law whose penalty comes upon the sinner not in this, but in the future life, were forgiven on the ground of penitence and submission to the mercy of God— that mercy which it had been promised should be exercised in view of the sacrificial death of Christ.

It is, no doubt, the doctrine of the New Testament that expiatory sacrifices possess no intrinsic virtue enabling them to atone for sin. This is the principle, without question, which underlies the confession of David that God does not desire sacrifice, nor delight in burnt-offerings. In itself sacrifice is powerless, and when presented with no reliance on anything beyond itself it is positively offensive to Jehovah. God distinctly affirms that when thus presented he is weary to bear it. But the case is wholly different when, on the part of the worshipper, there is a recognition of the typical character of the rite— when trust is placed not in the rite itself, but in the antitype, the death of Christ, to which it refers.

The language of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (vii. 26–28) deserves careful consideration, as going to prove that under the Mosaic dispensation sacrifices were not supposed to refer exclusively to mere ceremonial transgressions. It is asserted in this passage that high-priests under the Mosaic law were required daily to offer up sacrifice, first for their own sins, and then for the sins of the people; but Christ, in contrast with this, offered up sacrifice once, when he offered up himself. The affirmation plainly amounts to this,— that the same thing as to import and design was done by the high-priest of old as was done by the Saviour; that an atonement was meant to be made by each for the same class of transgressions. For what class of transgressions, then, was the death of the Saviour meant to atone? Surely, no one will claim that his death referred only to ceremonial transgressions. That death can be thought to relate only to violations of moral law. And we seem required to infer from this, that the sacrifices daily presented by the high-priest had a similar reference to sins, in the proper sense of that

term. In short, it would appear to be beyond dispute that Mosaic sacrifices were meant to atone for moral, as well as ceremonial, transgressions.

It is objected, again, to the doctrine for which we are contending that the gospel dispensation is spoken of in the New Testament as a "mystery which had been hidden from ages and from generations, but which now at length is made manifest to the saints of God." These words, it is alleged, imply in the plainest manner that, even if there had not been a perfect ignorance of the evangelical scheme on the part of the Jews, before the actual appearance of Christ, we must at least suppose that a disclosure of its chief features, such, for example, as the atoning virtue of the death of Christ, had been withheld. "If this doctrine had been made known,— and most certainly it would have been made known virtually had there been a discovery given of the proper expiatory power of sacrifices to atone for moral transgressions,— it could not have been asserted, as it has been, that the gospel was a mystery which had been concealed from the beginning of the world.

This objection is disarmed of its force, when it is conceded, as it is by the very men who urge it, that the gospel was only so far a mystery that the ancient Israelites were not "in possession of the perfect truth." It is very easy to conceive of the possibility of such a faith as should result in the actual forgiveness of sin, even though there exist none other than very indistinct conceptions of the conditions on which God would pardon the transgressor. There might have been, as we have had occasion more than once to intimate, such a conviction of just exposure to punishment and of utter inability to atone for sin, such a submissive reliance on the mere mercy of God as constitutes the very essence of evangelical faith. We may well believe that there may have existed, and may still exist, with thoughtful men to whom the Bible never has been given, such a mental state, as that the instant the fact of a crucified Saviour should be disclosed, he would be at once accepted as the ground of a hope of salvation.

For all that appears, then, there may have existed in the ages before Christ such an ignorance of the precise features of the plan of salvation through an atonement as to make it proper for the scriptures to represent that plan as a mystery hidden from men ; while, at the same time, a sufficient disclosure was made to render possible a faith that should save on the ground of expiatory sacrifice.

What has now been written will, it is thought, afford an adequate view of the controversy on the question, whether or not sacrifice be of divine institution ; so far at least as the practice of expiatory sacrifice in the patriarchal period may be thought to have any bearing on the question. A doubt may still be entertained whether the alleged absence of formal command would prove that this kind of sacrifice was not in full agreement with the will of God, and was not accepted by him. At this point, however, we dismiss the subject.

---

## ARTICLE VII.

### REVIEW OF THE "IDENTIFICATION OF MOUNT PISGAH."

BY REV. THOMAS LAURIE, D.D., PROVIDENCE, R.I.

In the midst of Centennial celebrations of the Revolution, it is pleasant to note the bands of love that now unite the two nations then at war. It is not less pleasant to note that some of these relate to our common inheritance—the English Bible. One of them is our united revision of that time-honored translation, and another our united exploration of the land of the Bible. England has invited us to join in this more thorough exposition of "The Land and the Book," and America has accepted the invitation, with a cordial devotion to the work, and no less cordial reciprocation of the kind feelings that prompted the offer.

Nothing will do more to correct the false impressions of the word of God that scepticism circulates so industriously, and at the same time promote its intelligent study, than the