

made a pilgrimage towards the Orient. Here we may have a cause of St. Patrick's independence of the Roman Church, which should not be ignored in estimating his place in history.

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THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN SACRIFICE AMONG THE SEMITES.

I.

THAT the question as to what the essential element in sacrifice originally was, is not merely academic, has, it is hoped, been shown in a previous article.¹ For those who maintain that there is a basis for the belief in the evolution of religious conceptions, who are convinced of the eternal existence and omnipotence of God, and who believe that in all ages God's love for His creation has been manifested, the importance of considering what have been the conceptions of the relationship between God and man (*i.e.*, the central core of all religion) in the early history of mankind, so far as this is known, will be obvious. For this relationship, or man's varying conceptions of it, has in all times been outwardly manifested by sacrifice. Both the form and the meaning of sacrifice have gone through different stages during the religious history of mankind, from the earliest ages up to the present day; but one thing has been common to man from the beginning, namely, that sacrifice was the visible expression, on the part of man, of his belief in the relationship between himself and his God.

Moreover, be the primitive conceptions of sacrifice what they may, the adequate study of the most spiritual forms of sacrifice in the Christian Church is impossible without a reference to them; for the fundamental truths (or, at least, the adumbration of the fundamental truths) which they contain are indelibly marked upon all subsequent conceptions of sacrifice.

There are, indeed, few things which more forcibly tend to strengthen belief, not only in a "Final Cause," not only in a Creator of the world, but also in an Eternal Father, who both created and loved His children, than this *fact* of an irresistible longing on the part of man, throughout all ages, of effecting that closer union between himself and his God which, directly or indirectly, lies at the bottom of all conceptions of sacrifice,

¹ CHURCHMAN, June, 1905: "Sacrifice: a Study in Comparative Religion."

whether it be an act of communion, or propitiatory, or expiatory, or vicarious.¹

II.

What was originally the meaning and object of sacrifice? What was its essential element? If we restrict ourselves here, for the most part, to *Semitic* belief and usage, it is for two reasons: first, because the subject is far too vast to be considered in regard to primitive man generally; and, secondly, because Semitic belief (or one branch of it) on the subject is the direct ancestor of Christian belief, and is therefore, for Christians, the most important department of the study.

In seeking to ascertain what was the essential element in sacrifice among the early Semites, it is necessary to mention, in passing, that the data available for arriving at a conclusion are gathered from—

- (a) The literature of the Semites—Hebrew, Arabic, etc.
- (b) The monuments—Babylonian, Assyrian, Phœnician, etc.
- (c) The usages and beliefs of the surviving representatives of the race in the East.

It seems necessary to insist on the fact that *all* these data should be taken into consideration if some definite conclusion is to be reached.

There are two main theories as to what the essential element in sacrifice originally was, and it is proposed to indicate (necessarily in the briefest possible way) some of the chief arguments upon which the two rival theories are based. The arguments can, of course, only be indicated, not worked out; for details recourse must be had to the literature referred to below.

The two foremost champions of these theories are respectively the late Professor W. Robertson Smith and the late Professor S. I. Curtiss. The theory of the former is elaborated in the following works:

The article on "Sacrifice" in the "Encyclopædia Britannica" (Ninth Edition, vol. xxi., p. 133 *et seq.*).

"The Religion of the Semites" (New Edition), London, 1894.

"Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia" (New Edition), London, 1903.

¹ There is, too, a subsidiary, but nevertheless very practical, importance in the study of this subject, in that it enables one to point to the origin of, and thus explain, the existence of such an abnormal conception of sacrifice as is involved in the uncatholic doctrine of Transubstantiation. Without desiring in any way to be unfair or unkind to fellow-Christians, the writer must confess that this study has again and again pressed upon him the conviction that the existence of this doctrine is analogous to what in another domain of learning would be described as "reversion to type." The point of this remark will become apparent after reading Section III.

That of Professor Curtiss in :

"Primitive Semitic Religion To-day," London, 1902.

"Discoveries of a Vicarious Element in Primitive Semitic Sacrifice," in the *Expositor*, August, 1902.

"Some Religious Usages of the Dhiáb and Ruala Arabs, and their Old Testament Parallels," in the *Expositor*, April, 1904.

"The Origin of Sacrifice among the Semites, as deduced from Facts gathered among Syrians and Arabs," in the *Expositor*, December, 1904.

"Survivals of Ancient Semitic Religion in Syrian Centres," in the *Expositor*, June, 1905.

The following abbreviations are used :

R.S.—"The Religion of the Semites."

Kinship—"Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia."

P.S.R.—"Primitive Semitic Religion To-day."

III.

It is impossible in a magazine article to give, even in outline, an adequate idea of all the arguments, so elaborately worked out in the above-mentioned works, whereby Professor Smith's theory as to the essential element in sacrifice is supported; only some of the leading features can be pointed out.

What strikes the student of this subject of the original meaning and object of sacrifice is its extreme complexity; scarcely has one come to some apparently fixed conclusion than a new element reveals itself, the consideration of which may or may not upset some previous deduction, but in any case demands its place in the system. The more one studies "The Religion of the Semites," the more one realizes what a vast domain has got to be explored before one is justified in coming to a conclusion. "Why sacrifice is the typical form of all complete acts of worship in the antique religions, and what the sacrificial act means, is an involved and difficult problem."¹ There can be no doubt about the truth of these words.

Throughout the natural world there are two great principles which reign supreme—self-preservation and the propagation of the species; the latter is really involved in the former. It is possible that we have here the key to what was originally the essential element in sacrifice. The main problem in the life of primitive man was that of self-preservation; what could he do to ensure this? When once he had reached the stage in which he realized the existence of a higher power, the question of self-preservation depended no more upon himself, but upon that higher power; then the central object of life became this: how to secure the continued help of this higher power. Students of Frazer's "Golden Bough" will know

¹ R.S., p. 215.

that, however crass it may sound to modern ears, primitive man firmly believed that union with the higher power, or deity, secured all that was necessary. How was such union to be effected? It was effected, according to Professor Smith, by means of sacrifice. "The leading idea in the animal sacrifices of the Semites was not that of a gift made over to the god, but an act of communion, in which the god and his worshippers unite *by partaking together of the flesh and blood of a sacred victim.*"¹ The reference here, it will be noted, is restricted to *animal sacrifices*, because, while cereal oblations were merely tributes paid to the deity, an animal sacrifice was essentially an act of communion.² That animal sacrifices are older than cereal oblations is obvious when one remembers that the nomadic life, with its flocks and herds, is older than the age of agriculture. But there is a further and very important element with regard to these animal sacrifices: a highly significant factor in the elaboration of Professor Smith's theory is the existence of *Totemism*. Quite briefly, *Totemism* means the belief that the members of a clan traced their descent from some animal. Of course it is not contended that the Israelites held such a belief, but that some early Semitic ancestors did scarcely admits of doubt.³ For, first, *Totemism* is practically universal among primitive races;⁴ secondly, the Arabs, who are not only members of the same branch as the Israelites, but the original stock of all the Semites,⁵ most certainly believed in it;⁶ this is clear from the large number of animal names attaching to clans, even at the present day; the following are a few examples: *Asad*, "lion"—the Arabs worshipped their god Yaghuth under the form of a lion; *Bakr*, "young he-camel"; *Bohtha*, "wild-cow"; *Thaur*, "steer"; *Hamana*, "dove"; *Hanash*, "serpent"; *Dobb*, "bear"; *Dhi'b*, "wolf"; *Ghorab*, "raven"; *Cird*, "monkey"; *Kalb*, "dog"; *Yarbu*, "jerboa," etc.;⁷ and, thirdly, indications of this are not wanting in the Old Testament itself—e.g., *Akbar*, "mouse" (Gen. xxxvi. 38; 2 Kings xxii. 12; cf. Isa. lxvi. 17); *Caleb*, "dog" (Josh. xiv. 15 *passim*; cf. Isa. lxvi. 3); *Simeon*, "hyæna"; *Levi* and *Leah* (both come from the same root), "wild-cow"; *Rachel*, "lamb"; *Shobal*, "lion"

¹ R.S., pp. 226, 243.

² R.S., p. 243.

³ Kinship, chap. vii. Cf. *Journal of Philology*, "On Animal Worship and Animal Tribes among the Arabs and in the O.T.," vol. ix., p. 75 *et seq.*

⁴ Frazer, "Golden Bough," ch. iii. *passim*; Stade "Geschichte des Volkes Israel," vol. i., p. 407.

⁵ Cf. "Church and Synagogue," vol. v., p. 87 *et seq.*; "Der alte Orient," No. iii. 1.

⁶ Cf. *Expositor*, 1904, p. 280.

⁷ See the many details in Kinship, pp. 223-235.

(Gen. xxxvi. 20); *Epher*, "young antelope" (Gen. xxv. 4); *Oren*, "goat" (1 Chron. ii. 25), etc. It may possibly be thought by some that these names of animals are accidental, or find their origin in some trivial occurrence of which we now know nothing, or that some personal characteristic in an early ancestor was the cause of his receiving a "nick-name," which afterwards stuck to his descendants; but when *all* the elements of the problem are taken into consideration, these suppositions are found to be inadequate for explaining the facts; it is not too much to say with Professor Smith that assumptions such as these "can seem plausible only to those who do not know savage ways of thought."¹

Further, there is much evidence to show that the early Semites (and among them are, of course, included the ancestors of the Israelites), in common with early men of other races, drew no sharp distinction between the nature of gods, men, and animals. They believed in the existence of kinship between gods and men, and gods and sacred animals.² There is, indeed, a mass of evidence to show that sacrificial animals were originally treated as kinsmen, which is equivalent to saying that the victims in animal sacrifices were drawn from animals of a "holy" kind, whose lives were ordinarily protected by religious scruples and sanctions.³ When such an animal was killed and eaten by the worshippers, they believed that its sacred life was distributed to them, and that it formed a communion between the god and his worshippers. As Professor Smith points out: "Primarily the circle of common religion and of common social duties was identical with that of natural kinship, and the god himself was conceived of as being of the same stock with his worshippers."⁴ It was natural, therefore, that the kinsmen and their kindred god should seal and strengthen their friendship by meeting together from time to time to nourish their common life by a common meal."⁵ This "common meal" was known to the Israelites as the *Zebach* (זֶבַח), and it was the typical sacrifice among all Semites; originally it was a sacrifice offered by a clan, so that it had the character of a public feast at which the worshippers met their god. The prevalence of such public feasts was not confined to the Semites; the same thing is found among a great variety of peoples.⁶ "Everywhere," to quote Robertson Smith again, "we find that a sacrifice ordinarily involves a

¹ Kinship, p. 237.

² Cf. R.S., p. 41 *et seq.*, p. 85 *et seq.*

³ Kinship, p. 307 *et seq.*

⁴ This kinship between the god and his worshippers is found all over the Semitic area; cf. R.S., p. 52; Kinship, p. 298 *et seq.*; "Golden Bough," vol. ii., pp. 318-366.

⁵ R.S., Lecture ii.

⁶ Frazer, *op. cit.*, ch. ii. *passim*.

feast, and that a feast cannot be provided without a sacrifice. . . . When men meet their god, they feast and are glad together, and whenever they feast and are glad they desire that the god should be of the party. This view is proper to religions in which the habitual temper of the worshippers is one of joyous confidence in their god, untroubled by any habitual sense of human guilt."¹

It will, therefore, have been seen that the original object of sacrifice was connected with the world-wide principle of self-preservation; animal sacrifices (with which alone we are concerned; for this is the oldest form of sacrifice) were public feasts, at which worshippers and their god partook of a common meal; the animal sacrificed was a "holy" one—*i.e.*, a kinship was believed to subsist between it and the god, and between it and the worshippers; therefore, when the worshippers consumed the sacrifice, they believed that they absorbed the common life of which they, their god, and the holy victim partook. By this means the closest possible union was formed between the worshippers and their god; this was the great object in life among early men. Thus the essential element in sacrifice was, according to Professor Smith, the effecting of a union between the worshippers and their god.

This is merely a bare reference to a few of the leading ideas of Professor Smith; his arguments are so full and elaborate that they must be studied in the above-mentioned works in order to be adequately grasped.

IV.

We consider next, in outline, the theory advocated by Professor Curtiss. He rightly maintains that three preliminary considerations must preface the arguments whereby his theory is supported. The first of these is the persistence of custom among Orientals. "To the Arab or Syrian custom is mightier than right; indeed, custom is the only right he knows. Both morality and religion depend upon it. The heavens might sooner fall than custom be set aside."² He maintains, therefore, that if we can get at what Semitic usage and conception with regard to sacrifice really is among the living Semites of to-day, we shall then know also what was

¹ R.S., pp. 252, 255.

² P.S.R., p. 65. For further information on this point reference may be made to a very interesting series of articles by P. G. Baldensperger on "The Immovable East" in the *Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund*, 1903-1905. Well-nigh inexhaustible material will be found in the "Hebräische Archäologie" of Nowack, as well as in that of Benzinger, also in Wellhausen's "Reste Arabischen Heidenthums."

originally the essential element in sacrifice among them. The second consideration is the conception of God which is held by the modern Arabs and Syrians. They believe that God can be bought over, that He is "bribeable." In human government Orientals grow up with the idea that their earthly rulers are always susceptible to bribes, it is what is constantly experienced; therefore it is not to be wondered at that they have similar ideas regarding their Divine Ruler—it must be remembered that the Oriental mind works in a mental environment very different from that of the Western. It follows, therefore that the modern Semite has *no ethical conception of God*, as One who is holy and just; indeed, God is for him a somewhat unreal, far-away Being—powerful, it is true, but not nearly so interested in man as the *weli*, or local saint, who is always at hand ready to be propitiated. "The idea of God is very vague. He seems to be mainly an enlarged edition of a Bedouin sheik—that is, of a beneficent but capricious despot."¹ It follows (and this is the third preliminary consideration) that the modern Semite has very inadequate ideas upon the subject of *sin*. As among the ancient Hebrews, he identifies sin with misfortune, and, in the words of Professor Curtiss, "so long as misfortune is regarded as equivalent to sin, as long as good and evil may come from God, so long as right is not right in itself, or wrong wrong by its own nature, but right and wrong are made by God's decree, just as by any earthly potentate, the consciousness of sin, as guilt, is dulled, and men's minds are confused. The forbidden thing becomes a means of wrong-doing simply because it is forbidden, and not with respect to its ethical character, and the relation of men to spiritual beings becomes a matter of barter."² These three preliminary considerations are, therefore: that custom among Orientals is very persistent; that the conception of God among the Semites of to-day is vague; and that, in their idea, sin is not a question of ethics. The actual theory of Professor Curtiss may be briefly summarized now.

If it can be ascertained what, among living Semites, is always and everywhere the custom and conception regarding sacrifice, it may be taken for granted that these have been the same "back to the very beginnings of the history of the Semites." If, that is to say, a feast at which the god or the saint (*weli*) was present in the character of host was the customary idea of sacrifice in primitive times, it is to be expected that this would be the customary idea at the present day.

¹ P.S.R., p. 67. See further Nöldeke, "Sketches from Eastern History," p. 28.

² P.S.R., p. 130.

But if, on the other hand, it is found that there is another element in sacrifice dominant among those Syrians, Arabs, and Bedouins who are nearest the condition of primitive life now, we may be certain that the same element was dominant in the primitive history of the Semites. Now, Professor Curtiss says that he has found in all parts of those countries in which the primitive Semite is to be found (Syria, Palestine, and the Sinaitic Peninsula) the notion that the essential element in sacrifice is the shedding of blood, "the bursting forth of blood." He maintains, therefore, that the consummation of a sacrifice is in the outflow of blood, and that the feast which follows adds nothing. The following are the main arguments upon which this theory is based :

1. Sacrifices are offered universally at the present day both by Arabs and Fellahin, as well as by Christians and Mohammedans, in Syria, Arabia, and the Sinaitic Peninsula. In the vast majority of cases the victims in these sacrifices are offered up in payment of vows. But the main point lies here, that no part of the sacrificed animal comes upon an altar (unless the threshold of a house or entrance to a tent be regarded as such) ; no sacrifice is ever consumed by fire. No evidence has been found among Syrians or Arabs of the existence of burnt-offerings. "If present usage," says Professor Curtiss, "represents the primitive, then it seems probable that the original element in sacrifice was not its consumption by fire, but in its being *presented to God*, and, if it were an animal, in its blood being shed."¹ An important piece of evidence is adduced in the case of the *dahhiyeh* sacrifices—*i.e.*, those offered by the orthodox Moslems in connection with the pilgrimage to Mecca on the 10th of the pilgrim month, at Muna, three miles distant from Mecca ; these sacrifices are not used for feasting : they are either buried or are given to the Bedouins. The term *dahhiyeh*, which comes from a root meaning "early in the morning," is the name given to the sacrifices (probably) because they are offered in the morning ; they must be regarded as entirely distinct from those offered at the shrines of *welis*, which (as pointed out above) are offered in payment of vows, and are the normal sacrifices.

2. Further, facts are brought forward which seem to point to the idea of sacrifice being *vicarious*. Thus, the saying, "Every house must have its death, either man, woman, child, or animal," means that, when a man slaughters an animal as a sacrifice for his house, it is "on the understanding that the being whom he fears will now spare him and his family because he has offered up a substitute in their stead." Again, a sacri-

¹ P.S.R., p. 229.

fice is offered when a bridal couple make their home in a house, be it a new or an old one; the same is done when a family moves from one house to another; in each case the sacrifice is of a substitutionary character.¹

Once more, sacrifices for the dead are offered because they are believed to be *keffareh* (i.e., "covering") for sins. An animal is killed on behalf of the spirit of one who has died; this animal is called *fedou* which means "redemption."² The central idea of these sacrifices seems to be that the bursting forth of the blood of the victim is a covering of the sins of the departed. That such sacrifices are regarded as *vicarious* must obviously be the case.

3. The conception of the vicarious element in sacrifice is strongly brought out by *the use of blood* among modern Semites; only a few examples, by way of illustration, can be given.³ In an old Greek church at Saned the people take the blood of the sacrifices and put it over the lintel; on the doorposts and on the door itself are also marks of blood. Much the same kind of thing is to be seen at Ayun, a ruined town not far from Salkhad; traces of blood were seen on the doorposts of a shrine of St. George at Tell Shaaf, near Busan. In Busan itself there was a remarkable use of blood; "at the entrance to a court was a double door; on one leaf of it were stripes of blood crossing another stripe at a slant"; no explanation of this was forthcoming, excepting that the people had been killing a sheep some days before and had put some of the blood on the door. In a *makam*⁴ in the same village, there was also an instructive example of this; it is a little building, with a dome, which was plentifully smeared with blood, and there was also blood on the threshold, the doorposts, and the lintel; in front of the building were three pillars about 3½ feet high; all were smeared with blood. A very significant instance of the use of blood is offered by the following incident: "In the neighbourhood of Nablus it is customary, when a reconciliation has been made between the murderer and the avenger of blood, for the murderer to kill a goat or a sheep; he then kneels before the avenger with a red handkerchief tied about his neck. Some of the blood of the animal slain is put on the palms of his hands; the avenger draws his sword and intimates that he could take his life from him, but that he gives it back to him."⁵ The blood of the

¹ P.S.R., p. 224 *et seq.*, where further details are given.

² *Expositor*, 1902, p. 132 *et seq.*

³ P.S.R., p. 181 *et seq.*; *Expositor*, 1902, p. 130.

⁴ I.e., the dwelling-place of a saint; it is equivalent to the **במה** ("high-place") of the Old Testament.

⁵ P.S.R., p. 191.

animal slain has been shed in place of that of the murderer. One more example must suffice. Near Hamath is a shrine called Abu Obeida; it consists of a small building with a court in front of it and graves behind. On the outer door of the court were blood-marks made in the shape of a capital T; in front of the court the place could be seen where the victims, whose blood was used, were sacrificed; and at a little distance from the steps leading to the entrance was a small hole in the ground; into this hole the blood which was not used was poured.

All these examples of blood-sprinkling (and there are many others which could be given) go to show, according to Professor Curtiss, that it is blood which is the all-important thing in sacrifice, and that "there are malignant powers of the air who must be placated and turned away by the sign of a surrendered life in substitute blood."¹

4. The last argument in support of the theory of Professor Curtiss is an etymological one; he holds that the etymology of the Arabic and Hebrew words for "altar" bears out his conclusions. "If, as we seem to have found, primitive sacrifice consists wholly in the shedding of blood, the place where the sacrifice is slain becomes simply the place of slaughter or the place of sacrifice. This conclusion is confirmed by the etymology of the oldest words for 'altar,' both in Arabic and Hebrew. We may be sure that in the form of these words we shall get the primitive idea."² He holds that in both languages the etymology of the word "bears unequivocal testimony to the fact that slaughtering an animal by the shedding of blood was the primitive idea of sacrifice."³

Thus, Professor Robertson Smith holds that the oldest form of sacrifice was a sacrificial meal, its primary object being the effecting of a communion between the worshipper and his god. In support of this he uses—

1. The analogy of other early races, as well as of that of all early Semites.
2. All available Semitic literature.
3. The usage, custom, and conceptions of living Semites in the East.

Professor Curtiss holds, on the other hand, that the oldest form of sacrifice was the bursting forth of blood, its primary object being that of substitution, its essential element being its vicarious character. In support of this he is guided by the usage, customs, and conceptions of living Semites in the East. He ignores the literature, believing that the data furnished in

¹ P.S.R., p. 227.

² P.S.R., p. 230.

³ P.S.R., p. 230.

ancient literature are "inadequate for a satisfactory induction."¹ The analogy of other early races is not referred to.

The most natural thing now would be to attempt to form an estimate as to the relative value of these two theories, and to offer some suggestions with regard to them; but this would require an article for itself, which we hope to contribute to some future number of this magazine.

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THE DEARTH OF CANDIDATES FOR HOLY ORDERS.

ONE of the most serious problems in modern times is the lamentable lack of men seeking ordination in the Church of England. The dearth of curates is appalling, and the needs of the Church at home and in the mission-field are most keenly felt. The question is being seriously asked, What are we to do? The population of our country is rapidly increasing, missionary work is making great strides, and, naturally, a large increase is required in the number of workers. Instead of the increase we should expect, there is a steady decrease, as the ordination statistics show. Many parishes are undermanned, many incumbents have to wait a considerable time before they can obtain the assistance of a colleague, and thus much valuable work is crippled for lack of workers to carry it on. There is no dearth of men—as such. Men are plentiful enough. Almost every profession or calling in life is overstocked, and the competition is most keen in obtaining positions in the labour market. Yet, curiously enough, in the Church of England to-day the demand for workers by far exceeds the supply. The solution of the mystery must come from within. There is evidently not sufficient attraction to draw men to the ministry, or else there are grave hindrances that come in the way. At any rate, the question must be faced, and obstacles, if there are any, removed.

Some have attempted to solve the difficulty. Truths have been stated, shortcomings laid bare, and reforms suggested. It is undoubtedly true that there are two leading causes for this shortage. One is the lawlessness in the Church of England at the present time; the other is the Higher Criticism. So much has already been written upon these topics

¹ P.S.R., p. 221.