

SACRIFICES ACCEPTABLE UNTO GOD

By

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Article One

The sacrifices which are acceptable unto God is a subject worthy of the earnest attention of the true worshippers; therefore I submit some thoughts upon it, trusting you will find them according to the testimony of the Lord.

The Bible is a wonderful Book in the history it gives of *sacrifices*. This is, indeed, one of its most prominent features. Both in the Old and New Testaments divine sacrifices stand out in bold relief, and enter very largely into the worship of God. Take them away, and the worshippers could have no access to Him. Yet how casually and lightly the general readers of the Bible pass over its sacrifices, as of minor importance and little interest. What a misapprehension! For sacrifices are the only way of approach unto God, and they underlie and support all worship, giving it its acceptance and virtue. We cannot, therefore, too well understand their nature, design, and meaning.

In the infancy of our race sacrifices began, yet not until man had sinned. This is significant, and is an index to the need and design of sacrifices. They are needed because man is a *sinner*, and they are offered *for his sins*. If God accepts the sacrifice He also accepts the worshipper who makes the offering. This indicates that the sacrifice bears the sin and takes it away, and through it the sinner who brings the offering is justified and accepted with God as righteous. This is awe-inspiring and wonderful, and it is the only way of a sinner's approach unto God. Thus is it seen how supremely important it is that we come to Him with an acceptable sacrifice with which He is well pleased.

The sacrifice that takes away and covers sin must be sinless, (without blemish) and must give its blood and life for the sinner. This done, it becomes a covering and robe of righteousness to the sinner. It has made him free from sin and death; therefore he lives a *new* life in righteousness, and thus worships God in holiness. In no other way can God be worshipped. Sacrifices for sin mean all this, and every true worshipper must approach

unto God with a sacrifice that possesses all this infinite merit and efficacy in His sight.

From this we understand that every acceptable sacrifice must be of God's own appointing, that He has ordained and sanctified. All other sacrifices will be rejected, as Cain's, as unholy and unfit. This was the fatal error of Cain, the first-born, and the first to make a sacrifice unto God for his sins. He offered of the fruit of the ground, which was cursed for man's sake after he sinned; it was of his own works, for he was a husbandman. His sacrifice carried in it no confession of sin and merited death, thus lacking the elements and nature of *atonement* or reconciliation for sin, and thereby denying the justice of God in requiring such a sacrifice and atonement to redeem him from sin and death. But his brother Abel offered in sacrifice the firstling of his flock, a far more excellent sacrifice than Cain's, which God accepted – both it and Abel – because it was a lively symbol of a full and perfect atonement for his sin, removing sin and death from him; and by it he obtained witness that he was righteous. His lamb of sacrifice represented his earnest desire to be sinless, and was a touching confession of his merited death as a sinner, and expression of his faith in God's mercy in ordaining for him a sacrifice to take away his sin.

The offerings of Cain and Abel fitly represent the opposite principles of all later sacrifices, by which the children of men seek to obtain the favor and blessing of God and be saved. Both admit the need of a sacrifice, while they differ as to what God righteously requires of those who approach unto Him, as sufficient unto their salvation in His holy presence. It behooves us, then, to carefully investigate *our way* of approach unto God as His worshippers, and know whether we bring the offering of Cain only, or the more excellent sacrifice of Abel, remembering that, while Abel and his offering were accepted, Cain and his were rejected. This should be of the greatest concern to each of us, and we should not be deceived or rest in an uncertainty, but examine and prove our own selves, whether we be in the faith with Abel, or reprobates with Cain. In the holy Scriptures we have the more sure word of prophecy, and they are a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.

It is both instructive and wonderful, that the *first sacrifice* of innocent life for sinful man God Himself made! He thus clothed our sinful parents by the death of the innocent for them. And this was because of their sin and shame. Must He not as well clothe us, their sinful children? Will any sacrifice less than that, that He provides for an offering for our sin, take away our guilty stains and clothe us in the garments of salvation? The strong faith of Abraham assured his questioning son that “*God would provide*

Himself with a lamb for an offering – and it was so. No other offering will God accept at the hand of any, whoever may bring it. Though it were the consecrated priests of God, the sons of the favored high priest, yet they and their offering were rejected and they died before the Lord, because God had not appointed and sanctified it.

But because God provided the believing and trusting Abraham with a lamb for a burnt-offering, his son Isaac lived, as one received back from the dead. So it was, too, with the children of Abraham, as the stars for multitude, when they offered the lamb which the Lord provided in Egypt, and God accepted and saved them. In themselves they were sinners, as others; but they believed God and His servant Moses, and sacrificed the “*lamb without blemish,*” sanctified of God and He accepted and saved them.

The offering to God, in worship, of this Sacrificial Lamb was perpetuated and observed by this people of the covenant, as He ordained, until the awful night of its final fulfillment, when Jesus ate the last Passover with His disciples, and was then led away as a lamb to the slaughter to be crucified, and the next day “*Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.*”

All other divine sacrifices but pointed to Him, and in Him they were all forever perfected and ended. Pointing to Him, John said, “*Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!*” This is the Lamb that God provided for an offering, who gave Himself for our sins as a sacrifice and sweet smelling savor unto God. His death put away sins, as a debt which is paid and covered, and His bodily resurrection abolished death for all whose sins He atoned for. This is the one and only Sacrifice for our sins that God will accept, and every true worshipper must approach unto Him in the name and faith of Jesus the Crucified, and find pardon and salvation and life through Him and by His death.

Abel’s lamb represented his faith in the holy Lamb of God. And so did Abraham rejoice to see the day of God’s Anointed Son, when his own son was saved from death, and the ram which God provided was sacrificed instead of Isaac: It was so in all the offerings of all who sacrificed in faith in God – they all pointed and looked away to the One Sacrifice for sin, when our glorious High Priest should offer Himself without spot unto God, for all who shall ever come unto God by Him – *Himself* our righteousness, our salvation, our *Life*. God accepted us IN His *Son*. Blessed God!

Article Two

The former article presented *sacrifices* in their general nature and significance; but the purpose in this article is to show *particular* sacrifices, with their several meanings, in the Divine service and worship. Let me suggest to all who may read this, you would find an investigation of divine instituted sacrifices highly interesting and helpful in understanding the great and most wonderful doctrine of Redemption, as delivering perishing sinners from guilt, bondage, and death. For a true knowledge of this one feature in the salvation of the elect children of fallen Adam, will itself show how impossible is the prevalent belief of conditional life and immortality, or conditional time salvation, as depending upon sinful man.

Why, the very fact of *sacrifice* in the acceptable worship of the Holy One, and that we cannot approach unto Him only through the offering of such sacrifice, is itself a most awful evidence and confession that *sin, guilt, and death* stand in direful array between God and us, as the cherubim and flaming sword stood between our sinning first parents and the Tree of Life. This puts an everlasting veto upon all *manism*, or human conditions and creature efforts and performances, as admitting us into the Divine Presence, or in the least entitling us to salvation and its blessings and favors in time or eternity.

The Divine rejection of Cain and his offering is an example of this solemn fact. The Pharisee who thanked God for what he had done is another case in point. The elder son in our Lord's parable is still another. The rich young ruler, who turned sorrowfully away from Jesus, is yet another. Finally, the whole house of Israel, who trusted in themselves and their works, are a fearful and everlasting warning to all peoples, who would approach unto God, that He will accept and bless none who claim any works of righteousness of their own, or who do not bring and present them in spotless holiness. This awful but just Truth strips all men of the least vestige of worth or merit in the worship of the Holy God, lays the sinner low at His footstool, and shows that even His *saints* can receive His pardon, favor, and blessing only through the infinite holiness and for the sake of the acceptable sacrifice that they bring. That all-sufficient offering is Christ, "*the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!*"

Let us now briefly consider sacrifices in *particular*, as the Covenant-God Himself instituted them.- Leviticus viii. Shows us that these are of three kinds: *sin-offerings, burnt-offerings, any peace-offerings*. These three were

so inseparably connected that they were interlaced or ran into one another, so to speak; yet they were not the same, but differed in design and meaning, and together they made one divine doctrine or system of worship – a worship both Scriptural and typical, literal and spiritual. But many of the worshippers entered not into the spiritual meaning and blessedness of that divine service; but looked to, and trusted in, its mere visible forms and literal observance, the legal and dark veil being upon their hearts; while the true worshippers (by the gift of faith) followed the High Priest into that within the veil, and saw the day of Christ and His one offering for sin, and were glad and rejoiced, as did their father Abraham, when his son Isaac was released, and the ram was offered instead. All the Divinely ordained sin-offerings had this wonderful meaning, and were as symbols and object-lessons to lift up the heart and nurture the faith of those who penitently drew near to God in supplication and soul-devotion, confessing their sins. For in all their heaven-appointed sacrifices for sin, the children of Israel beheld the *death* of the victim or offering, and then the consecrated priest offered its *blood* as an atonement for their sins. “*Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.*”

Especially on the great Day of Atonement once every year was this fulfilled with awful solemnity before their eyes, when the sanctified High Priest of all Israel passed beyond the mysterious veil with the atoning blood of the slain offering for sin into the most holy place of God’s Temple, called the “Holy of Holies,” where he sprinkled the blood on the Mercy-seat and burnt the sweet incense in the Golden Censer in the presence of the Lord, who dwelt between the Cherubim. God accepted the Atonement and the holy incense at the hands of the High Priest, that he and his people died not, and heard in Holy Heaven the intercession on their behalf, because of the Atonement.

Let it be remembered that all the offerings by the Law were to be without spot or blemish, that is, perfect and clean animals only could be offered, thus showing that the only offering for our sins that God will accept for us, as bearing our sins and dying for us, that we might live before Him *must be sinless and holy*; and only by and through such a perfect sacrifice, and “by means of death,” as a complete atonement or satisfaction for our sins, can we come unto God and be accepted with Him.. Such was the solemn significance of every sin-offering and trespass-offering. Only with and in virtue of such a perfect sacrifice for the sins of all His covenant people could the High Priest himself pass through the veil and appear before God in the Holy of Holies. Without this sacrifice for sin and its remission

and removal, he must have died before the Lord, and with him all his kindred or people must have also perished in their sins.

The solemn and heart-moving lesson taught us in this is, that every part of our salvation, with all its benefits and joys, are vouchsafed to us through the full atonement for our sins, as covenant-blessings. The perfect sacrifice for sin thus made, and accepted of God in Heaven through the ordained High Priest, sin and death were (ceremonially and typically) removed; therefore the worshippers had access unto God, and they and their offerings and services were accepted with Him. This was vividly shown on the great atonement day, by the slain goat, and the living escape goat that bore away the sins of the people. For each goat bore their sins, and represented *death for sin*, and *life* through the putting away of all their sins. This wonderful fact was touchingly shown again, when Moses died in the wilderness upon the Mount in full view of the Land of Promise, and then, lo! Joshua, the Minister of Moses, led the children of the Covenant across the mystic River of Death into that good land of the living!

All this was blessedly fulfilled and made real and true and perpetual forever, when Jesus, the Christ of the Covenant, our dying and yet living "*High Priest of things to come*" passed into Heaven itself, to appear in the very presence of God *for us*.

Such is the meaning of the sacrifices offered continually for sins until Christ came, and "*suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.*"

Thus now, sin being ended and death taken out of the way, the true worshippers have *personal acceptance* with God, and He is well pleased with their sacrifices of *burnt-offerings*, and of *peace-offerings*.

In the death of the sinless victims offered in sacrifice for their sins and trespasses, the worshippers confess that they themselves deserve the penalty of death, and they indeed thus virtually died and paid the penalty for their sins; then received life from the dead and "*passed from death unto life,*" because the innocent lamb was *their own* and its death was theirs or *for them*. Not only did every spotless victim belong to them, as that which God had provided, as the firstling of Abel's flock, and the first-born son of Abraham, and "*the only begotten Son of God,*" but the sacrifice was valuable and precious to them – the best that they had – the best that God Himself had provided for an offering for sin; and God accepted the sacrifice at the hands of the worshippers because it was both *theirs and His*. Had it not been their own, but stolen or borrowed, it could not have atoned for them. Thus Atonement for sin is *personal and special*, because there is a close and inseparable relation between the *sacrificer and sacrifice*. Hence,

all that it is and does, he is and does, for it is this and does this *for him*. **It is His sacrifice.** This is the great mystery of the *sinner's acceptance* with God. Salvation and all spiritual and Gospel blessings, in time and eternity, flow to sinners through this medium and for this cause – because “*Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.*” So, as it is only *in* and *through* Him that we merit and receive any favor and blessing from God, **every blessing is His free gift and favor or grace**; therefore it cannot be for our sakes, or for what we do, but for “*Jesus only.*”

Third Article

All sacrifices in the worship of God show man's alienation and separation from Him, as we have seen, and that it is only by Divinely appointed sacrifices sinners are restored to communion with Him. Left to themselves, the separated sons of Adam and divided nations of the earth sought to restore themselves to the favor of God, or to propitiate their imaginary gods by means of their own sacrifices and works; and thus they wandered in ignorance before God proclaimed the Law of Sacrifices upon Mount Sinai by His servant Moses, and the Gospel of Service upon Mount Zion by His Son Jesus. But now behold both in the Law and in the Gospel, God is seen as coming down to the estranged and wandering children of men as their Covenant-God, *Himself* providing and making known the way for their restoration, return and access unto Him, that they may come and kneel before and worship God who created them. The first is the vain endeavor of men to build a mud-tower to heaven and raise themselves up to God (and they yet have “endeavor” organizations); the last is God's effectual way of “bringing again that which was driven away, and binding up that which was broken,” and of raising up to Himself the elect but fallen children and people of the Covenant; that they may acceptably worship Him in the mountain of His holiness, and commune with Him and He with them.

The *burnt-offerings* of the people of the Old Covenant, which in the order of nature were subsequent to their sin-offerings, were self-dedicatory, representing that their sins were atoned for and put away, and so they themselves in their persons and services were accepted with God and were His consecrated worshippers, giving themselves freely and wholly to Him in entire devotion, because He had redeemed and saved them, and had separated them from the nations, from their sins and their idols. The burnt-offering, which was wholly burnt, was expressive of this sacred obligation of all the saved people, and was a symbol and pledge that *they were the*

Lord's, and that all they had and were belonged to Him. Joshua (type of Jesus) expressed this entire consecration and devotion to God when he said, "*but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods; for the Lord our God, He it is that brought us up and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.*" And so Moses, their leader out of Egypt and bondage, taught them to sing, "*Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help and the sword of thy excellency!*" "*Saved by the Lord!*" Thus is set forth their absolute dependency upon Him who saved them, as also their supreme obligations to consecrate themselves entirely to the Lord their God, who had so graciously raised them up into holy communion with Himself, having put away their sins and blotted out as a thick cloud their transgressions which had separated them from Him. The burnt-offerings had this meaning, and impressed the saved people that the **Lord was their all and they were His inheritance**. All they were as the people of the living God, and all that they possessed, the Lord had made them and bestowed upon them. To Him they owed themselves and all their mercies and blessings; therefore, to Him belonged all their devotions, worship, and praise, so that it was just and right for them to be wholly consecrated to the service of the Lord, and that they should love Him with their whole heart and soul, mind, and strength, as a tribute of honor and glory to Him for what He had made them and done for them. In the light and view of this, the departures and idolatries of the Lord's redeemed people were extremely hateful and displeasing, and brought upon them their worst calamities, as merited judgments, that so they might return to the Lord who had bought them.

Let us now apply all this solemn and wonderful meaning and lesson of the *burnt-offerings* to the people of the "*New and better Testament,*" that our minds and hearts may be suitably impressed with *our* most sacred and supreme obligations to be sincerely and entirely consecrated in humble devotion and service to the God and Father of our only Lord Jesus Christ, who has wrought so great salvation for us, and quickened us together with Christ, to the end that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him and behold His glory, that where He is there we shall be, and live because He lives.

These Scriptures will suffice to impress this at present: "*He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.*" "*Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit,*

which are God's." "I beseech you therefore, brethren, **by the mercies of God**, that ye present your bodies a **living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the **renewing** of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." "Yield yourselves unto God, as those that are **alive** from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." "Now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto **holiness**, and the end everlasting life." "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God, When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me." To be thus with the holy Son of God, they must first be transformed into His image of perfect holiness before God in love, and in "d consecrated unto the worship of the holy and blessed God, then His people gathered unto His holy sanctuary with their *peace-offerings*, which they freely offered up in devotional sacrifice and service, because God was their God and Savior, and had so greatly blessed them. Through their *peace-offerings* they said, "*The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.*" So these last offerings of the children of the Covenant were cheerfully given in the gratitude of their hearts, as so many offerings of thanksgiving and tributes of praise. Thus they were a kingdom of priests unto God, and He dwelt among them. They were His footstool, the place of His feet, which He made glorious. How wonderful that God should come down and dwell among men! "*I will be their God, and they shall be My people.*" So is the covenant that He makes with them.

Through the sin-offering their God has taken away their sins; through the burnt-offerings He has brought them into the bonds of the covenant as His "holy nation," a people separated unto Himself from all other peoples and nations; and now, through the peace-offering, they make His praise glorious in His temple!

As applied to the New Testament people in their worship and service, the Supper of the Lord, which superseded the Passover, shows the suffering for sin unto death, as witnessed by all the sin-offerings until Christ died for our sins; then, Gospel baptism, in which is shown that our sins were burned up or consumed and we were cut off by death, as was Christ, and were also quickened and raised up together with Him, to live in newness of spirit and

serve God in righteousness all the days of an endless life – baptism is the spiritual realization of the whole burnt-offering. Thus it is seen through the sacrifices under the Law that the people saved by the Lord are a *regenerated* kingdom, a people separated from their sins and raised up out of death into a new life, a new and living and holy people! This is very wonderful, and it is the Lord's doing. It is all fulfilled and realized in our Lord Jesus Christ, in and with whom we are complete and united.

And now, henceforth and forever, our peace-offerings of thanksgiving and praise unto the God of our salvation are offered up with love and joyfulness through our consecrated and glorified High Priest, who lives in the presence of God for us. "*This people have I formed for Myself; they shall show forth My praise,*" saith the Lord. It is indeed their delight and joy to do so, because His love is in their hearts, and they walk in the light of His countenance, which is heaven to their souls. This was beautifully represented by the last of the three great yearly feasts of Israel – the feast of Tabernacles in the end of the harvest-year, a time of great rejoicing among all the people of God. At this feast the happy Jubilee was proclaimed through the priests by the blowing of trumpets; and all the people were made free to return home to their inheritance in the good land. O, my soul, rise up and praise and bless God for all these great things!

One lesson more is taught us by the *peace-offerings*, and it is important, and will close this consideration of *sacrifices*. The peace-offering, like the burnt-offerings and the sin-offerings, were of *the very best* that the offerers had to bring in sacrifice to God; and when brought and offered as a tribute of homage and gratitude, a part of this offering was burned on the altar in devotion to God, and the remainder was shared between the priests and ministers of the sanctuary and the worshippers who brought the sacrifice. Thus is shown the close and sacred relationship between God and His servants and people, and that their interests and love and blessings are joined together and mutual. It is so in the Gospel kingdom and inheritance and service. Our adorable King Himself "*came down from heaven,*" and so God's divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness; and in this fullness of salvation and heavenly riches and blessing every one of this holy priesthood is embraced together, as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Thus all this divine service of ministration and grateful honor and praise comes down from God out of heaven to those who offer praise unto Him, and it is sanctified unto His glory and ascends up to Him again in supplication and thanksgiving, as the incense of loving hearts. "*For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is*

*abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God.” “They which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple, and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar” (of the sacrifices and offerings of their brethren); “even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel;” that is, of the grateful peace-offerings of their brethren in the gospel. “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God; if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it of the ability which God giveth; **that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ.**” Thus and in this manner the sacrifice of peace-offerings is fulfilled unto the glory of God by His worshipping people, as a royal priesthood, and His praise arises in His temple.*

“But to do good, and communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, My brethren, ye have done it unto Me,” says the Lord. “I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord.” “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.” “Offer the sacrifices of righteousness; and put your trust in the Lord.” “I will offer in His tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord.” “The voice of them that shall say, Praise the Lord of hosts: for the Lord is good; for His mercy endureth for ever: and of them that shall bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the Lord.”

“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor.”

*“Now once in the end of the world hath He appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. . . . And unto them that look for Him shall He appear the **second time**, without sin, unto salvation.” “And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; salvation, and glory and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are His judgments.”*

*“When we’ve been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We’ve no less days to sing His praise
Than when we first begun.”*

*David Bartley.
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