

and Abel's was of this kind, whilst Cain (disobediently, it may be) offered but of the fruit of the ground.

Of one thing we are sure, however, the worship accepted by God at that early period consisted chiefly in offering to Him animal sacrifices; the animals not being those worthless to man, but valuable to him; the slaying and offering being conducted in a religious way; prayers and praises probably being offered at the same time by the worshipper, in connection with his sacrifice.

And as it was in the days of Adam, so was it in the days of Noah, for Noah, we are told, as soon as he was come out of the Ark, builded an altar unto the Lord and offered on it many burnt offerings, as an act of highest worship; which was pleasing to God, for we read "the Lord smelled a sweet savour."

And so also was it in the days of Abraham; for Abraham was continually building altars in the land promised to him and his descendants (as, for example, at Shechem, Bethel and Hebron), and to say that he built an altar is to imply that he offered sacrifices thereon.

Then when we come down to the time of Moses, it is plain that the offering of animal sacrifices made up the chief part of the Divine worship, which was commanded by the law. And it was so ordered by God, for from Him, not from man, came the whole complex system of Jewish sacrificial worship, and we must bear in mind that this worship did not differ at all in its principles, from the preceding worship of the Patriarchal Period: it was the same sacrificial worship, only more developed, enlarged and systematized. The family had grown to be a nation, which necessitated this growth and development of their public worship; what was sufficient for the Patriarchal families not being so for the great Jewish nation.

And this system of worship instituted by Moses, under the direction of God, continued with little change down to the time of the coming of Christ, except when idolatry encroached on it, or when it ceased for a time during the captivities.

Throughout the Old Dispensation then, by which is meant the entire period from the Fall down to the founding of the Christian Church, the most important and striking feature in Divine worship was the offering of animal sacrifices. Other offerings were made to God and were called sacrifices, such as offerings of meal, of wine, of oil and the like; but these were only secondary and were offered only in connection with the offerings of animals.

And it is interesting to note, even the heathen, when they worshipped their false gods, worshipped

in a sacrificial way. The children of Israel, following probably what they had seen in Egypt, sacrificed to the golden calf in the wilderness; we read of the Philistines offering a great sacrifice unto Dagon, their god, because of the capture of Samson; at Carmel two bullocks were offered to Baal by his prophets; and the heathen wives of Solomon, we are told, sacrificed unto their gods in the high places built for them (sad to say) by Solomon.

And as the Canaanites and Egyptians did in those earlier days; so did the Greeks and Romans and other nations who succeeded them in time. Over the whole world sacrificial worship was the rule, whether amongst those who worshipped the true God or amongst those who worshipped gods that were false: the heathen doing so because of the traditions from the past, that had descended from the days when their ancestors too had served the true God.

Now what did this mode of worship mean? How could God prefer it and accept it? Why did He command it? There must have been the strongest reasons for it, or else the all-wise God would never have directed man so to worship Him. What were those reasons?

The chief one was (well-known to all instructed Christians) that this was the way which God had appointed by which man could constantly plead (in advance, as it were) the all-availing sacrifice of Jesus, yet to be offered up.

The moment man fell, that moment the Messiah was promised; and on His work and coming God based all His dealings towards man. Did God show mercy before Christ offered His sacrifice? He did so because to Him it was as if the sacrifice were already offered up. The Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. xiii. 8), because the redeeming death of Jesus was decreed and determined from the foundation of the world; and for God to determine is to perform. The sweet odours of Christ's sacrifice filled the world from the first. It was as a glorious light, illumining the past as well as the future. It was the central event in the world's history, to which all eyes looked wistfully forward from Adam's time to John the Baptist's: and to which all since the event who have received the Gospel look joyously back. We must fix this fact well in our minds, in order clearly to understand the worship of fallen man, whether during the Old or the New Dispensation; for on the sacrifice of Christ this worship has been from the first and is to-day based; and what has not this for a foundation is valueless and unacceptable.

It matters not whether all who worshipped in the olden time understood this. Some may have done