

the Cross is marked on our brow to seal us as soldiers of the crucified one. But "the offence of the Cross has not even yet ceased."

Such were the means used to stir up the popular mind against the Christians. Then also came the moral side. The uprightness and purity of the Christian morals seemed to blame the terrible foulness of the heathen lives, and the result was that foreshown by the wise man. "Let us lie in wait for the righteous; because he is not for our turn, but is clean contrary to our doings: he upbraideth us with our offending the law: he was made to reprove our thoughts."

Thus day by day the Christians were offended and pained in word and deed, by ridiculous and untrue accusations, and by horrible and unholy customs; and the pagans around them continually broke out into persecution from public hatred or private spite, but this only encouraged the spread of the Truth.

"We will never fail," is his cry of triumph, "Strike us down we will rise the more. We recompense to no man evil for evil; but we warn you, Fight not against GOD."

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### Divine Worship.

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#### IV.

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#### THE WORSHIP OF THE OLD DISPENSATION.

In our last paper we saw that the worship of fallen man must be *sacrificial*; which as I showed you means that it must be offered up in the name of Jesus and depends for acceptableness on the sacrifice of Jesus, and that in man's worship, the sacrifice of Jesus must even be pleaded and is the highest offering we can offer to God.

But now let us enquire, how did men worship God *through Jesus* before Jesus came into the world. And how did men in those days offer to God the sacrifice of Jesus, before it was effected?

We can find the answers to these questions in the Old Testament.

The first account given us of worship being offered to God by fallen man is in the case of Cain and Abel. These two brothers met together in some appointed place, to worship God; and their chief act of worship consisted in their offering to God what is called a *sacrifice*; Cain, being a farmer, offering of the fruit of the ground, but Abel, being a shepherd, offering of the firstlings of his flock. From the fact that this mode of worship is written about as if it were nothing unusual or strange, and is not stated to have been a new departure, and that

all the subsequent worship of the Old Dispensation partook of the same character, we may be almost certain, that Adam and Eve worshipped in the same way and that from them their sons had learned that this was the correct way in which to worship God; and we may believe that since man could hardly have found this out for himself, God had, in the first instance, instructed them in the matter. Perhaps Genesis iii. 21 tells us when, We read there that "unto Adam and his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins and clothed them." Now, as man seems to have been at first forbidden to eat animal flesh, the question arises: What became of the animals, whose skins were used for clothing? The animals may have been slain for sacrifice and their flesh consumed as an offering to God. So suggests Bp. Wordsworth.

Whether this were so or not, this much is certain, that from the very first, animals were slain as an act of worship to God, generally at some place set apart for that purpose, the blood being poured out on the ground and the flesh (or a portion of it) consumed by fire.

The fact that Cain and Abel offered their sacrifices in the same place (which we infer from the Mosaic account) seems to show that this was some sacred spot, on which an altar had been reared and consecrated for that purpose; and as Cain did not slay Abel then but afterwards when they were alone in the field, it seems probable that Adam was present when they offered, and in all probability acted as the Priest. In those days the head of the family was the priest of the family, Abraham, Noah, Job for example acting in this capacity: therefore we can hardly doubt that Adam, who was the head of the whole human race, held the same office.

Let us sum up now, what we have gathered either directly or by inference from this account of the first recorded act of human worship.

There seems to have been a sacred place, consecrated for worship, even in that early time. The worship consisted chiefly in offering to God what are called sacrifices. In all probability Adam acted as Priest. And this worship, in Abel's case, was acceptable to God. "The Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering," we read.

But why had God not respect to Cain and his? We do not know fully; but Cain we know did not offer in the right spirit, for St. Paul says "*By faith, Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain.*" There seems to be some ground for the opinion, which some have held, that the difference between what they offered, explains why Abel's offering was accepted and Cain's rejected. As we shall see, *animal* sacrifices were regarded as indispensable;