

tution specially commanded by God. I can see no reason why we should affirm or believe such a thing, for certainly we have no record of any such command in the Bible. The first mention we have of sacrifice is to be found in the offering of Cain and Abel, but there is no divine command set forth in connection with them. The Scripture simply informs us that "Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and the fat thereof." (Gen. iv. 2, 3, 4.) Each man brought of his store, such as it was, and offered it to the Lord. They acknowledged an unseen God not only as their own Creator, but as the source, likewise, of all that the earth did yield and the flock bring forth. And, prompted by gratitude and reverence, they gave a visible token of that acknowledgment by the outward offering taken from their fields and flocks.

If we can find in the nature of the case an adequate explanation of the origin of sacrifice we are not called on — the accepted rules of investigation rather forbid us — to seek any other. The custom fell into fearful and most hideous abuse, as when human beings were made victims, and even parents offered their children. The fact that human sacrifices have been almost, if not quite universally, prevalent among the various tribes and nations of the earth, stands as a sad commentary on the natural and unguided proclivities of the human race. Deep in the recesses of the forest the Druid slew his victims. High up on the pyramid, and upon a block of jasper the Aztec priest officiated at his horrid rites. In the rude ritual of