

PART SEVENTEEN

THE BEGINNING OF TRUE RELIGION

(Gen. 4:1-15)

1. *Preliminary Definitions*

It is doubtful that there is a more ambiguous word in our language today than the word "religion." It has literally come to mean "all things to all men."

The pagan etymology of the word is given us by Cicero, the Latin essayist. He derives it (*De Natura Deorum*, 2, 28, 72) from the Latin third-conjugation verb, *relego*, *relegere*, meaning "to go over again," "to consider carefully," that is, in thought, reading, and speech; and hence, as used by him, to mean "reverent observance" of duties to the gods. This etymology expresses fully the concept of "religion" that lay back of the idolatry and ritualism of pagan cults.

In our day the word is used to embrace everything from *per se* devotion to an object, on one hand, to sheer superstition, on the other. (In no area has this been more evident than in the innocuous wumgush expressed in the series of broadcasts some years ago, and later published in book form, under the title, *This I Believe*.) Considered subjectively, of course, as devotion to an object, it can take in almost any attitude or cult imaginable. From this "common denominator" point of view alone, to be religious is to be serious about something, to be serious enough to regard that something as of supreme value in life, and to take an attitude of commitment to the object that is so valued. Obviously, from this viewpoint, religion may have anything for its object, provided the anything is regarded as worthy of devotion. (Cf. John Dewey's definition of "God" as "the unity of all ideals arousing us to desire and actions"—this occurs in his little book, *A Common Faith*, p. 42.) Others have defined religion as "anything in which one believes." From this point of view devil-worship could be called a religion. From this viewpoint, the object of

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religion may be a Party or a Cause (and indeed the Leninists do, in this sense, make a "religion" of atheism); it may be an idol or an icon, or a whole pantheon of anthropomorphic gods and goddesses; it may be a fetish or an amulet, or some impersonal magic force (known variously as *mana*, *manitu*, *orenda*, *wakan*, etc.); it may be the celestial bodies (sun, moon, star) or it may be "Mother Earth" (*Terra Mater*), as in the ancient Cult of Fertility; it may be an animal, a bird, or even an insect (cf. totemism); it may be the male generative organs (phallic worship); it may be man himself (hence, Comte's so-called "religion of humanity"); it may even be the Devil, as in some "spiritualistic" cults. Or, indeed it may be *the God of the Bible*, the living and true God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:18-32, Exo. 3:13-15, Deut. 6:4-5, Acts 17:24-31, 1 Thess. 1:9-10; Eph. 1:17, 1:3, etc.). The use of the word "religion" in our day is so equivocal—and the word itself has taken on such vapidness—as to make it all but meaningless. We are reminded here of the Ohio College which referred to its "Religious Emphasis Week" as "Be Kind to God Week," and to the words of William Temple: "A lot of people are going to be surprised one day to find out that God is interested in a lot of things besides religion."

Faith, hope, and love are not criteria in themselves of their worth; rather, the criteria are the objects of one's faith, the goal of one's hope, and the recipient of one's love. So it is with religion: as just being serious about something, it is of very questionable value; the value lies in the object about which one is serious and to which one gives personal devotion. In short, the nobility of a religion (like that of faith, hope, or love) is to be determined, not by its subjective aspect, but by its objective realities. To define religion solely in subjective terms is only to denature it, or at least to vitiate its significance.

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2. *What True Religion Is Not.* (1) It is not just *respectability*. Mere respectability is a far cry from genuine righteousness. (2) It is not just a *status symbol*, although thousands of church members undoubtedly use it as such. (3) It is not *ritualism*. Pagan cults have always been built around solemn festivals and processions, and pagan temples have always reeked with the fumes of incense. (4) It is not a matter of *barter*, saying to God, "You scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours." Some persons can pray like a bishop in a thunderstorm who never think of God at any other time. (5) It is not an *escapist device*. True religion is worshiping and serving God, not especially from fear of punishment or hope of reward, but out of sheer love for God. One of our oldtime preachers used to say that he was afraid of hell-scared Christians because one had to keep them scared all the time. As a matter of fact, irreligion is more liable than religion to be a device for escape from reality.

"God and the doctor we alike adore
Just on the brink of danger, not before;
The danger passed, both are unrequited,
God is forgotten, and the doctor slighted."

(6) It is not just *wishful thinking*, "the projection of the father-image," etc. The chief concerns of genuine religion—self-abnegation, self-discipline, self-surrender, commitment (Rom. 12:1-2)—are at the opposite pole from any kind of fantasy. (7) Religion is not just a *convenience*, as the ultra-sophisticates would have it, something that needs to be maintained *to stabilize moral and social order*. Again, although it does serve these ends, they are not its primary concern. Its primary concern is the right relationship between the person and his God (John 3:1-6, 2 Cor. 5:17-20). (8) Religion is not primarily a *social institution*. Nor is it designed to be used as a support of social stability. Again, although it does serve to do this

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as a secondary end, true religion is essentially personal: it is personal commitment to the living and true (personal) God (John 4:24): it is communion of the human spirit with the Divine Spirit (Rom. 5:5, 8:26-27, 14:17; Heb. 12:14; 2 Pet. 3:18). Cf. Whitehead's oft-quoted statement: "Religion is what the individual does with his own solitariness." (9) It is not just *morality* in the popular sense of that term by which it is equated largely with *mere respectability*. However, in the true sense of the word, in the sense that morality takes in one's duties to self, to society, *and to God*, religion is morality. At the same time, it goes beyond morality in the sense of including one's deepest personal attitudes toward, and devotion to, and communion with, the Heavenly Father. (10) It is not *nature-worship*. *The esthetic experience is not necessarily a religious experience*. True religion looks beyond the appreciation of nature itself to the worship of nature's God. Nature is the created; God is the Creator.

3. *What True Religion Is*. (1) I make no apology for using the term "true religion." Religion, to be religion in the full sense of the word, accepts (1) the fact of the existence and the awfulness of sin, (2) the fact that man has allowed sin to separate him from God, (3) the fact that because God is the offended One, He alone has the right to state the terms on which He grants forgiveness, pardon, remission, justification, etc., and so receive the offender back into covenant relationship with Himself, (4) the fact that if man is ever to attain that righteousness and sanctification "without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14; Rom. 8:10, 14:17; Matt. 5:8), he must have a *revealed* system of faith and practice designed to heal the schism caused by sin and to effect his reconciliation with the Father of spirits (Heb. 12:9), (5) that, furthermore, this Remedial System must provide an adequate Atonement (Covering) for sin—adequate in that it is sufficient to vindicate the Absolute Justice challenged

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by man's rebelliousness, and at the same time sufficient to overcome that rebelliousness by a demonstration of God's ineffable love for the one whom He created in His own image (John 3:16; Gen. 1:27, 2:7). That there is such a Remedial System, and that its details are revealed in the Bible, is our thesis here. The essence of true religion is *reconciliation* (2 Cor. 5:11-21, Eph. 2:11-22), and this is the grand objective of the Christian System as fully revealed in the New Testament. It has been rightly said that the test of a culture is the manner in which it treats that which was created in God's image. The French mystic Amiel has written: "The best measure of the profundity of any religious doctrine is given by its conception of sin and of the cure of sin." (6) The Bible has little to say about the meaning of the word "religion"; indeed in one instance it seems to equate "religion" and "superstition." Scripture makes it clear, however, *what true religion is per se, and how it manifests itself*. Essentially, as stated above, true religion is *reconciliation*. This is in complete harmony with man's spiritual needs as determined by his own experience, that is, if he is honest with himself and honest with God. (Atheism is sheer stupidity, the product of ignorance or of a perverted will: no man can logically *think* his way into it.)

(7) Hence, the etymology of the word, in its Biblical sense, is precisely what it is said to be by Lactantius (*Institutes*, 4, 28) and Augustine (*Retractions*, 1, 13,), and others of the Church Fathers. They derive the word from the first-conjugation Latin verb, *religo, religare*, meaning "to bind back" or "to bind anew." Harper's *Latin Dictionary* (LD, revised by Lewis and Short) has this to say (*s.v.*): "Modern etymologists mostly agree with this latter view, assuming as root, *lig*, to bind, whence also *licitor, lex* and *legare*; hence, *religio* sometimes means the same as *obligatio*." The close relationship of the family of words formed around the root *lig* (ligament, ligature,

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oblige, etc.) to that formed around the root *leg* (*lex, legis*, "law," hence *legislate*, legal, etc.) is too obvious to be ignored. These two families of words both have the connotation of a binding force. Whatever the word "religion" may have meant to the pagan world, the fact remains that the essence of Biblical religion is a *binding of a person anew to God* (healing of the schism caused by sin: the God of the Bible is the covenant God) and is fully expressed in the word "reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:17-21). Just as the essential principle of music is harmony; of art, beauty; of government, authority; of sin, selfishness; so the fundamental principle of true religion is *reconciliation* (Eph. 2:11-22; 2 Cor. 5:18-20, 6:14-18).

(8) In the Bible, and only in the Bible, do we find revealed the Remedial System by which is effected the healing of the wounds caused by sin. As a consequence of this healing through regeneration and continuous sanctification (2 Pet. 3:8, Heb. 12:14), the righteous person ultimately attains *holiness* (from *holon*, "whole"), which is wholeness or perfection (that is, completeness, from *per plus facere*, "to make thorough, complete"). For the true Christian, eternal life begins in the here and now, through union with Christ (Gal. 3:27, Rom. 8:1); the attainment of spiritual wholeness is consummated, of course, in the ultimate redemption of the body (Matt. 5:48; Col. 1:12; Rom. 8:18-24, 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:35-58; 2 Cor. 5:1-10; Phil. 3:20-21). (Cf. also Rom. 3:23 and 2 Cor. 5:20.)

4. *The Formula of True Religion*

True religion, as defined above, is that System of faith and practice revealed in Scripture that is designed to bind man anew to God in Covenant relationship. This system—the actualizing of God's Eternal Purpose, His Plan of Redemption, for man—necessarily includes two departments or agencies (the divine and the human), and three elements (irreducibles, essential institutions). The two departments are (1) the things that God has done, and

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will do, for us; and (2) the things we must do for ourselves in obedience to His revealed Will. That is to say, God overtures and states the conditions on which He will grant us forgiveness and remission of sins; and we, out of loving obedience, accept and comply with the terms; and so reconciliation is effected, and we are bound anew to our Father in covenant relationship. Two basic principles emerge at this point, from Biblical teaching, namely, (1) *That the root of true religion on the divine side is the grace of God* (Eph. 2:1-10, esp. 2:8). (a) As Campbell has written (CS, 36): "The whole proposition must of necessity in this case come from the offended party. Man could propose nothing, do nothing, to propitiate his Creator, after he had rebelled against Him. Heaven, therefore, overtures; and man accepts, surrenders and returns to God. The Messiah is a gift, sacrifice is a gift, justification is a gift, the Holy Spirit is a gift, eternal life is a gift, and even the means of our personal sanctification is a gift from God. Truly, we are saved by grace. Heaven, we say, does certain things for us, and also proposes to us what we should do to inherit eternal life. . . . We are only asked to accept a sacrifice which God has provided for our sins, and then the pardon of them, and to open the doors of our hearts, that the Spirit of God may come in and make His abode with us. God has provided all these blessings for us, and only requires us to accept of them freely, without any price or idea of merit on our part. But He asks us to receive them cordially, and to give up our hearts to Him." (b) All the principles, institutions, laws and blessings of true religion issue from the grace of God. "Grace," writes Cruden, "is taken for the free and eternal love and favor of God, which is the spring and source of all the benefits which we receive from Him." Grace is properly defined as "unmerited favor to sinners." (John 3:16-17; Tit. 3:5-7; Acts 15:11; Rom. 3:24; Eph. 1:3-6, 2:4-9, 3:9-11). The mother who sacrifices herself for her sick

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child does it, not because she must, but because she loves the child. In like manner, to say that we are saved by grace is to say that we are saved without any necessity on God's part to save us. This means that God did not provide the Plan of Redemption for man, with its accompanying benefits and blessings, because He was under any kind of obligation to man, or to any other creature, to do so. It means, rather, that foreseeing man in a lost condition and in danger of perishing for ever, God out of His ineffable love for him, arranged, provided and offered the necessary Plan and means to reclaim and to regenerate him, to build him up in holiness, and to prepare him for citizenship in Heaven (Phil. 3:20-21, Rom. 8:28-30, Col. 1:12-15). Both Creation and Redemption have their source and root in God's amazing love, mercy, and compassion. Every blessing of the Gospel Plan, every privilege and blessing of Christian faith, worship and practice—all are manifestations of God's grace. In short, through God's grace, salvation has been brought within the reach of all mankind; however, man must accept and appropriate this salvation on the terms laid down under the New Covenant (Tit. 2:11, John 3:16-17, Eph. 2:8). *No gift, however precious, is of any value to the recipient, unless and until the latter accepts it and appropriates it to his own good.* (c) God's grace includes, necessarily, the *Atonement* provided by the Son through the offering of His body and the shedding of His blood (Rom. 3:25, 5:11; 1 Pet. 2:24; 1 John 1:7, 2:2, 4:10). (This Atonement made effectual the salvation of the elect of all Dispensations: see the ninth and tenth chapters of Hebrews.) The Son was under no necessity of providing this Covering for man's sin, but did so willingly, because of His overwhelming love for mankind (Heb. 10:10-13, John 15:13), and "for the joy that was set before him," the joy of making possible the redemption of lost sinners (Heb. 12:1-2). God's grace also includes the *revelation* by the Holy Spirit sent forth from

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Heaven (1 Pet. 1:12) of the conditions on which God proposes to receive men anew into covenant relationship with Himself. The Bible is the inspired and authoritative record of this divine revelation (1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Cor. 2:6-16; Eph. 3:4-5; 1 Pet. 1:10-12; 2 Pet. 1:21).

(2) *That the root of true religion on the human side is an obedient faith.* (a) Man's part in true religion is that of accepting and appropriating the benefits and blessings of "the gifts and the calling of God" (Rom. 11:29). This he does by faith in Christ (Heb. 11:6; John 1:10-13, 14:1, 20:30-31; Matt. 16:16; Acts 16:31; Rom. 5:1, 10:9-10; Gal. 3:26-27). This faith in Christ, however, is far more than mere intellectual assent to the Christian formula as embodied in the Good Confession (Matt. 10:32-33, 16:16; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Tim. 6:13): it is full commitment, in spirit and soul and body, to the Mind and Will of Christ (Jas. 2:18-26, Rom. 12:1-2, 1 Cor. 2:16; Phil. 2:5, 4:13; Gal. 2:20, Col. 3:17). The faith in Christ that is faith unto the saving of the soul (Heb. 10:39) necessarily includes both *obedience to Christ* (John 14:15, 15:14; Heb. 5:8-9; 1 John 2:3, 5:2-3), and stedfast *abiding in Christ* (Matt. 7:24-27, 28:20; John 8:31-32, 15:4-7; 2 John 9; Rev. 2:7, 14:13). It should be noted that *abiding*, in Scriptural terms, signifies activity on man's part, consecration, worship, service—in a word, continuing stedfastly, "always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58, Matt. 25:31-46). The *abundant* life is the *abounding* life (John 10:10). (b) *Every act of the truly Christian (Spiritual) Life is an act of faith* (Gal. 5:22-25). Repentance is faith turning the individual from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God (Acts 26:18, 2 Cor. 7:10, Rom. 2:4). The Good Confession is faith declaring itself in the presence of witnesses (Matt. 10:32-33, Rom. 10:9-10; 1 John 2:23, 4:2). Baptism is faith yielding to the authority of Christ (Matt. 28:18,

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Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:27; cf. Matt. 3:15). The Lord's Supper is faith remembering the Atonement provided for man by the Christ of the Cross (1 Cor. 15:3, 11:23-26; Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-21; Heb. 10:25). Prayer is faith communing with the Father through Christ the Son and Mediator (Heb. 11:6, John 14:13, 1 Tim. 2:5). Liberality is faith acknowledging God's ownership and man's stewardship (Gen. 1:28; Psa. 24:1, 50:12; 1 Cor. 10:26; Acts 17:24-28; Mal. 3:8-10; Luke 16:2-4; 1 Cor. 16:1-2). Meditation is faith pondering, and praise is faith exalting our God and His Anointed. The true Christian walks in faith, lives by faith, and dies in the faith (Rev. 14:13). Faith so motivates the truly religious life, that it is said in Scripture that "whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23). (c) True religion, in its practical aspects, that is, as lived day by day by God's saints, is *growth in holiness* (Rom. 14:17, Heb. 12:14, 2 Cor. 3:18, 2 Pet. 1:4), and love, mercy, compassion, and service toward all our fellows (Matt. 25:31-46, Luke 10:25-37, Jas. 1:27), especially toward "them that are of the household of the faith" (Gal. 6:10). True religion embraces all human activities that proceed from the actual *living* of the two Great Commandments (Deut. 6:5, Lev. 19:18, Matt. 22:34-40). The conclusive evidence of the practice of true religion in personal life is the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit (Matt. 6:33, 7:15-23; Gal. 5:22-25). (d) The great tragedy of our time is the tendency to downgrade sin, even to scorn the fact of sin, Freudians would try to eliminate sin by "curing guilt." However, the facts are so obvious that only the spiritually blind refuse to see (Matt. 15:14, Luke 6:39); wilful ignorance of spiritual matters becomes more widespread as population growth gathers momentum. The fact is that the devil is not just a "sick angel," that sin is tragically more than a mental illness to be treated by psychotherapy and rehabilitation, as the "experts" would have us believe. Sin is open rebel-

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liousness—and rebellion—against God and His moral law. And there is but one remedy—the remedy provided by the agencies of true religion. The sad fact is that when the blind continue to lead the blind, and the blind continue to be willing to be led by the blind, *both* shall fall into the pit (Matt. 15:14). (e) The *formula* of true religion is the following: Amazing *grace* (on God's side) *plus* the obedience of *faith* (on man's side) *equals* true religion, *equals* eternal salvation (Heb. 5:9, 2 Pet. 1:11). Note, finally, Eph. 2:8—"by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that"—that is, that salvation—"not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." This is the formula, Scripturally stated, of true religion, which embraces salvation, reconciliation, pardon, remission, justification, regeneration, sanctification, and immortalization.

5. *The Dispensations of True Religion.* (1) It is often taken for granted that we have revealed in Scripture at least two, and probably three, different religions, namely, the Patriarchal, the Jewish, and the Christian. Strictly speaking this is not true. In the light of Bible teaching itself, we do not have three religious systems revealed therein; we have, rather, the record of the three successive Dispensations of the one *progressive* revelation of true religion (cf. Isa. 28:10, 13; Mark 4:28). Those who fail to recognize this fact, and those who deliberately refuse to recognize it, put themselves outside the possibility of any comprehensive understanding of the Scriptures. Only those who accept the Bible for what it is—*one Book, the Book of the Spirit, with one theme, redemption through Christ Jesus* (John 1:29), can hope to acquire any adequate knowledge of its content. (Cf. 2 Tim. 2:15, 1:13, 2:2.) Failure to distinguish what belonged to each of the Covenants, and to each of the Dispensations, of Biblical religion, has been, from the beginning, a prolific source of error and confusion throughout Christendom, and even more so throughout the non-Christian world. A vast per-

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centage of professed church members in our day have no concept whatever of these distinctions, and the so-called "clergy" is not far behind them in maintaining this tragic lacuna in Scripture knowledge. (2) The word "dispensation" is a Bible word: it occurs four times in the New Testament, in 1 Cor. 9:17, Eph. 1:10, Eph. 3:2, and Col. 1:25. It designates the procedure by which God, in each successive period of revelation, has chosen to "dispense" both His requirements and His blessings on all who choose to enter into covenant relationship with Him (Jer. 31:31-34, 2 Cor. 3:1-11, Heb. 8:1-13, 1 John 1:1-4). The Greek original, *oikonomia*, means literally "household management," commonly designated the "economy" of a given system; hence it may be translated "administration," "provision," "dispensation," or even "stewardship" (even God is sometimes presented in Scripture as a steward). (3) Note the following matters of fact: (a) The three Dispensations of Biblical religion are the Patriarchal, which extended from Adam to Moses at Sinai; the Jewish, which extended from Sinai to Pentecost (it was abrogated by Christ's death on the Cross, Col. 2:13-15, but God graciously permitted it to continue as a social institution down to the destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70); and the Christian, extending from Pentecost to the Second Coming of Christ. (b) Each Dispensation may properly be designated a *dispensation of divine grace*; however, this phrase is descriptive, in its full sense, only of the present or Christian Dispensation (which might also be designated the Dispensation of the Holy Spirit, who came on the Day of Pentecost to abide in, and to vitalize, the Church, the Body of Christ: Acts 2:38, Rom. 5:5, Eph. 2:22). It will be recalled that Alexander Campbell spoke of the Patriarchal Dispensation as the starlight age, the Jewish Dispensation as the moonlight age, the special ministry of John the Baptizer to the Jewish nation as the twilight age, and the Christian Dispensation as the sunlight age, of Divine

revelation. (c) *Dispensations changed as the type of priesthood was changed.* Throughout the Patriarchal Dispensation the patriarch or father of the family (which frequently took in several generations of offspring) acted as priest, that is, as mediator between God and the members of his household (Heb. 7:4, Acts 7:8). Throughout the Jewish (or Mosaic) Dispensation, the Levitical (Aaronic) priesthood served as mediators between God and the nation, the children of Israel (Exo. 6:16-20; Exo., ch. 28; Num. 17:8-11, Heb. 5:1-10, 7:11-28). Under the Christian Dispensation, the New Covenant, all Christians are priests unto God, and Christ Himself is their High Priest (1 Pet. 2:5; Heb. 7:16-17, 9:11-12, 9:24-28; 1 Tim. 2:5; Rev. 1:6, 5:10, 20:6, etc.). Thus it will be noted that Dispensations changed as the type of priesthood changed—from the family to the national to the universal (John 1:29).

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"1 And the man knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said: I have gotten a man with the help of Jehovah. 2 And again she bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah. 4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And Jehovah had respect unto Abel and to his offering: 5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect."

A. Campbell (LP, 131, 132): "There was no religion before the fall of man, either in Heaven or Paradise. That would be a startling proposition in the pulpit, yet it is irrefutably true. What is the meaning of the word *religio*, from which our word *religion* is derived? Is it not to bind again? Could there be a second binding, if there had not been an antecedent bond? There was no religion in

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Paradise, while it was the home of Adam, for there was no bond broken. Accordingly, religion began after the fall of man. In like manner, there was no religion in heaven. There was superlative admiration and adoration, but no religion. This brief discussion of the word 'religion' will save you many blunders and much unprofitable thought; provided you understand how it radiates and ramifies throughout all the statutes of morality and piety. Now, while there was no *religion* in Paradise, and no necessity for it, until there was a bond broken and rights forfeited, *there was piety*. What is the meaning of the word *piety*? It is no more nor less than gratitude. An ungrateful being is a monster; hence Paul teaches us to hate ingratitude. Ingratitude is religious sin, and sin is no more nor less than ingratitude. Paul once said, let children learn to show piety, by gratitude to their parents. In consequence of sin, man is now in a preternatural state, not supernatural. The grace of God enables him to rise to the supernatural state. To this end Christianity is a scheme of reconciliation, and where there is no alienation, there can be no reconciliation." Campbell again (CS, 36 and 36, n): "Religion, as the term imports, began after the Fall; for it indicates a previous apostasy. A remedial system is for a diseased subject. The primitive man could love, wonder and adore, as angels now do, without religion; but man, fallen and apostate, needs religion in order to his restoration to the love and worship and enjoyment of God. Religion, then, is a system of means of reconciliation—an institution for bringing man back to God—something to bind man anew to love and delight in God." "*Religio* with all its Latin family, imports a binding again, or tying fast that which was dissolved." Religion was made for man, for fallen man, and not man for religion. According to the Genesis record, true religion had its beginning in the account of the sacrifices offered to Yahweh by Cain and Abel (Gen. 4:1-15).

7. *The Elements of True Religion.* By "elements" we mean the irreducibles, the essentials (those factors without which true religion could not be true religion). These elements are, and have been from the beginning, the Altar, the Sacrifice, and the Priesthood. (1) The *Altar* in Patriarchal times was an artificial erection of earth, turf, and unhewn stones, on which the patriarch offered sacrifices for his household. It was to serve as a place of meeting for man with God, who was to be approached with a gift in the form of a sacrifice (Gen. 8:20, 12:7-8, 13-18, 22:9, 26:25, 33:20; Exo. 17:15, 20:24-26; Josh. 8:30, 22:10; Judg. 6:25-27, 21:4; 1 Sam. 7:17, 14:35; 2 Sam. 24:21, 24:25; 1 Ki. 18:30-32; 2 Chron. 4:1, etc.). In the Jewish Dispensation, the Altar was incorporated into the Tabernacle, and later into the Temple, and was known as the Altar of Burnt-Offering (Exo. 27:1-8, 2 Chron. 4:1). In the Christian Dispensation, Christ Himself is both Altar and Sacrifice. Some hold that at Calvary our Lord offered up His divine nature or the Altar of His perfect human nature (John 1:14; Matt. 1:18-24; cf. Heb. 4:15, 7:26; Exo. 20:25-26). (2) *Sacrifice* under the Patriarchal and Jewish Dispensations was usually that of a lamb, a male, the "firstling" of the flock, without blemish and without spot (Gen. 4:4, Exo. 12:5). These animal sacrifices were, of course, substitutionary and typical: they were designed to point to (prefigure) the Supreme Sacrifice, that of the Lamb of God, our Passover, the Perfect Atonement for "the sin of the world" (John 1:29, Isa. 53:7, 1 Pet. 1:19, 1 Cor. 5:7, Rev. 13:8). (3) The type of *Priesthood* changed, as noted above, with the change of Dispensations—from the Patriarchal Priesthood to the Aaronic or national Priesthood, both of which were abrogated with the ratification of the New Covenant, and were superseded by the universal Priesthood of all obedient believers in Christ, with Christ Himself acting as their great High

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Priest (1 Pet. 2:5; Rom. 12; Rev. 1:6, 5:10, 20:6; Heb. 7:26-28, 9:11-12, 9:24-28).

7. *The Story of Cain and Abel.* (1) *Geography.* There is no indication in the Genesis record as to where the events occurred that are related here. It is to be taken for granted, however, that they took place somewhere outside, and perhaps in the vicinity of, the Garden of Eden, the gates of which had been closed forever to fallen man. (2) *Chronology.* It is impossible to formulate any accurate chronology of the events related in the early chapters of Genesis. Ussher's figures (now almost uniformly rejected), following in general the Hebrew text literally, cover a period from 4004 B.C. for the Creation, to 2348 B.C. for the Flood. Other authorities, following the chronology of the *Septuagint* and of the writings of Josephus, range from 5426 B.C. for the Creation, to 3171 B.C. for the Deluge. In terms of pottery chronology, the early archaeological periods of Palestinian culture are usually given as follows: the *Neolithic Age*, c. 6000-4500 B.C. (marking the development of plant and animal domestication, with pottery first appearing toward the close); the *Chalcolithic Age*, c. 4500-3000 B.C. (the period of irrigation culture, and of the widespread use of pottery, in Palestine); the *Bronze Age*, c. 3000-1200 B.C. (the period generally of Egyptian control in Palestine, terminating in the bondage of Israel in Egypt, the Exodus, and the Conquest of Canaan under Joshua); the *Iron Age*, c. 1200-333 B.C. (from the time of the Judges to that of Alexander of Macedon and the Hellenistic Period). Because of certain incalculable factors it is impossible to formulate any accurate chronology of the events related in Genesis prior to the Call of Abraham. The following tersely cogent statement will suffice here for the present: "The creation is sufficiently dated by that immortal phrase, 'in the beginning . . .,' so distant is it" (NBD, 213). (For elaboration

of the chronological problems of the events recorded in Genesis, see *infra*, Part XVIII.)

(3) V.1. "*And the man knew Eve his wife, and she conceived,*" etc. Note Whitelaw's comment (PCG, 77): "The Divine blessing (ch. 1:28), which in its operation had been suspended during the period of innocence, while yet it was undetermined whether the race should develop as a holy or fallen seed, now begins to take effect (cf. ch. 18:14, Ruth 4:13, Heb. 11:11)." (But—Does not Scripture teach that God's Eternal Purpose included His Scheme of Redemption, in view of His foreknowledge of man's lapse into sin? Does not the Cosmic Plan envision Redemption as the consummating phase of Creation?) (Cf. 1 Pet. 1:18-20, Matt. 25:34, Eph. 1:4; Rev. 13:8, 17:8.) "*And bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man with the help of Jehovah,*" etc. "The meaning of the name is 'metalworker' or 'smith'; here, however, it is represented as a derivation of a word meaning 'acquire,' 'get'" (IBG, 517); hence, a "possession." Cain seems to have been a progenitor of the Kenites (Gen. 15:19, Num. 24:21-22). Note Eve's statement, "I have gotten a man *along with* Yahweh," that is, *in cooperation with* Yahweh. Was this just the spontaneous outcry of joyful motherhood? Or was it essentially an utterance of faith, harking back to the oracle of Gen. 3:15; that is, Did Eve suppose that this fruit of her womb was the oracularly promised seed? Does her designation of this newborn babe as a *man* indicate that she had previously borne daughters only? Some commentators, including Murphy, think this possible. Certainly her statement was a manifestation of her faith in Yahweh, and in all likelihood she did recognize in Cain's birth "the earnest and guarantee of the promised seed." However, the impression conveyed by the narrative indicates that this was her first-born, and indeed the first-born of the human family. Whether either the Man or the Woman was aware of the Messianic implication in the

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oracle of Gen. 3:15 we have no means of knowing. Scripture teaching seems to indicate, however, that this implication became a matter of progressive revelation, reaching its highest point in the testimonies of the Hebrew prophets and especially in the work of John the Baptizer, the last of this great prophetic line.

(4) *V.2.* Does this mean that the brothers were twins? Some have thought so, basing their view on the repeated phrases, "thy brother" and "my brother" throughout the narrative. It seems obvious, however, that this is conjecture: no such idea is necessarily conveyed in the text. Note that the name *Abel* means "breath," "vanity," etc. Was this an unconscious "melancholy prophecy of his premature removal by the hand of fratricidal rage"? Certainly it was a proper designation of the short span of life and its tragic end that was experienced by this brother. (Cf. Jas. 4:14; Job 7:7, 14:1-2; Psa. 39:5, 102:3, 144:4; Eccl. 1:2; Isa. 40:6-8; 1 Pet. 1:24-25.) Note that whereas Abel became a "keeper of sheep" (a shepherd, sheep including goats, of course), Cain chose to be a "tiller of the ground" (a farmer). Both occupations had already been Divinely authorized by the terms of the penalty imposed on mankind (3:17-19) and the coats of skins provided for Adam and Eve (3:21). Is this "an attempt to explain why the brothers offered different kinds of sacrifice"? Did Cain's choice of occupation—the agricultural rather than the pastoral—serve to point up an innate rebelliousness, as if to assert himself and to his fellows his sheer independence, and his sovereignty over nature as well, by his toilsome wresting of a livelihood from the ground which was under a Divine anathema? On the other hand, in choosing the agricultural life was not Cain simply carrying out the terms of the penalty previously decreed on fallen man? We see no really justifiable grounds for necessarily relating differences of moral character in Cain and Abel to their respective choices of occupations.

8. *The Beginning of Sacrifice* (vv. 1-5a). (1) As noted heretofore, the beginning of sacrifice marked the beginning of true religion. Although the essential element of sacrifice—the shedding of blood—is intimated in God's provision of coats of skins for Adam and Eve, the first account of sacrifice as a Divine institution occurs here in connection with the story of Cain and Abel. Cain, we are told, brought an offering "of the fruit of the ground" unto Yahweh, but Abel brought of "the firstlings of his flock and the fat pieces thereof" ("the best of the best"). What was the consequence? God, we are told, *accepted* Abel and his offering (by what kind of *sign* we have no means of knowing, cf. Lev. 9:24, 1 Chron. 21:26, 2 Chron. 7:1, 1 Ki. 18:38), but He *rejected* Cain and his offering. We encounter here one of the most profound and most significant problems of Divine revelation, namely, *Why did God accept Abel's offering and reject Cain's?* The answer to this problem might well be said to be the key to the understanding of God's Eternal Purpose and His Plan of Redemption for mankind.

(2) Throughout this entire course it has been repeatedly emphasized that one cannot expect to get a correct and comprehensive understanding of Scripture unless he studies each text or passage, not only in the light of its immediate context, *but also in the light of Bible teaching as a whole*; and, it might well be added, unless he is willing to be open-hearted in accepting what he gets by this method. Perhaps in no Scripture narrative do we find examples of the confusion which results, and of the fantastic ideas which can be put forward by persons biased in some respect, than we find in the various "explanations" commonly offered as solutions of the problems which arise from the story of Cain and Abel, their respective offerings, and the Divine responses to them. *Why was Abel's offering accepted, and Cain's rejected, by Yahweh?* Obviously, the distinction is to be traced (a) to the dispositions of the two

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brothers, or (b) to the materials of the respective offerings, or (c) perhaps to both of these factors. Cornfeld (AtD, 22) suggests the following: "Probably soil cultivation and cattle raising developed side by side; but God's preference for Abel's offering of the 'firstlings' of his flock and of their 'fat portions' reflects a Semitic standard of values which regards the austere nomadic life as the good life." (To be sure, Jewish commentators can hardly afford to accept the simple New Testament explanation of this problem as presented below.) Skinner also suggests the entirely *subjective* explanation (ICCG, 105, 106): "Why was the one sacrifice accepted and not the other? . . . Since the reason is not stated, it must be presumed to be one which the first hearers would understand for themselves; and they could hardly understand that Cain, apart from his occupation and sacrifice, was less acceptable to God than Abel. On the other hand they would readily perceive that the material of Cain's offering was not in accordance with primitive Semitic ideas of sacrifice. . . . The whole manner of the narration suggests that the incident is conceived as the initiation of sacrifice—the first spontaneous expression of religious feeling in cultus. If that impression be sound, it follows also that the narrative proceeds on a *theory* of sacrifice: the idea, viz., that animal sacrifice alone is acceptable to Yahve. . . . Behind this may lie (as Gunkel thinks) the idea that pastoral life as a whole is more pleasing to Yahve than husbandry." (IBG, 518): "It is possible that a reason was given" in an original document, "and that its omission by J was a piece of polemic against the peasant custom of bringing *the fruit of the ground* as an offering to the Lord, instead of the time-honored nomad offering of an animal." See also HBD, 2: "Whether the gift of Abel was more acceptable because it was blood, the essence of life, instead of grain, or because it was offered with greater sincerity, is not clear. In the story of Abel's death we read of the struggle

between pastoral and agricultural phases of society." Note that these comments presuppose only a *human theory* (or tradition) of sacrifice: the possibility of a Divine ordinance of sacrifice is not even taken into consideration. (JB, 19 n.): "The younger is preferred to the elder. This theme runs throughout the whole Bible and, in Genesis, its first appearance here is followed by others (Isaac preferred to Ishmael, Jacob to Esau, Rachel to Leah). Such preference demonstrates the freedom of God's choice, his contempt for earthly standards of greatness, and his regard for the lowly." (But in each of these cases mentioned, the Divine choice was not an arbitrary one, but in response to certain spiritual excellences (aspects of faith), or lack of them, on the part of the persons involved). Tos (ABOT, 63): "The Yahwist editor did not want to present absolute genealogies or objective descendancy. His purpose was to bring home the lesson: Once man rebels against God he becomes an enemy even to his fellow man. Therefore, he used a traditional story in which God favored a good shepherd over his wicked brother who was a farmer. This was a story that would be treasured and appreciated by the Hebrews who had been a pastoral people before they settled in Palestine." Elliott (MG, 54) presents a somewhat different view: "Entering into the acceptance and nonacceptance was the matter of attitude. Certainly there was some degree of sincerity on the part of both men. The key, however, is that Abel brought the very first and best. The word used for his offering was firstling or 'best of the flock.' It comes from a root which indicates something carefully chosen. Abel recognized himself as God's slave with God as the master to whom the first and the best should be given. Cain simply gave a token to show that he was grateful for services received; he felt it was the thing to do, much in the spirit of tipping the porter for carrying the bags. . . . Cain may have given a little grudgingly, as though he was forced to do so by his

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superior, very much the way some folk give the tithe. The lesson underscored is that a gift, regardless of what, or how large or small, is a blessing to the giver only if his heart is right as he gives. Here, the essence of religion is implied—giving God the *very best*.” (Cf. 1 Sam. 12, 15:22; Isa. 1:11-13; Jer. 7:3-10, 7:21-26; Hos. 2:8-13; Amos 5:14-15; Mic. 6:8; Lev. 19:17.) This author goes on to say: “The correct answer to the acceptance of the offering is to be seen in what has been suggested above and not in any theory of the blood versus the nonblood offering, for the laws on sacrifice had not been given yet.” This last statement is a little short of amazing, to say the least. Does this writer, or anyone else, have any legitimate ground for asserting so dogmatically that the law of sacrifice had not as yet been given, or that the matter of blood versus nonblood offering had nothing to do with the human attitudes and the Divine responses in this tragic case? Especially does anyone have sufficient evidence to support such statements in view of the fact that they flatly contradict the plain teaching of the New Testament?

(3) It will be noted that in all the excerpts quoted above *the matter of faith and its source*, or the lack of it, on the part of the worshipers is completely ignored. One wonders just *why* this is so. Why did Yahweh accept Abel's offering of the firstlings of his flock, but reject Cain's offering of the fruit of the ground? Why any offering at all, if the laws of sacrifice had not been given? The only answer that can be cited which really answers the problems involved in the interpretation of this narrative is the *simplest* that can be given, the answer which is presented with such crystal clarity in the New Testament, viz., that Abel made his offering *by faith* and thus obeyed God's Word, whereas Cain presumed to assert his will above the will of God and brought an offering of his own choice. Human presumption, assertion of human authority in ne-

glect of, or in disobedience to, the sovereignty of God, is indeed "the way of Cain" (Jude 11, 1 John 3:12).

(4) Heb. 11:4—"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness in respect of his gifts: and through it, he being dead yet speaketh." But how is faith acquired? In only one way, insofar as the Scriptures inform us: *Faith comes from hearing the Word of God* (Rom. 10:17, Gal. 3:2, 5; 1 Cor. 1:21). (This is a fact, proved to be such in human experience: the whole evangelistic (missionary) program of the church is based on the fact that where there is no preaching, no hearing, there is no faith, no conversion, no church.) If Abel was motivated by faith in presenting his offering to Yahweh, it necessarily follows that the offering was in harmony with the Divine Word, and hence that the law of sacrifice had been divinely ordained. This means, of course, that the essentials of the institution of sacrifice, the observance of which marked the beginning of true religion, had already been made clear to Adam and Eve and their offspring. This means, too, that it had already been decreed by God that the very essence of sacrifice (and animal sacrifice was the primary and essential form of sacrifice under the Old Covenant) was the shedding of precious blood because "the life is in the blood" (Lev. 17:11, Heb. 9:22). Therefore, it follows that God accepted Abel's offering because Abel obeyed the Divine law of sacrifice in presenting a blood offering; Cain, on the other hand, disobeyed this most fundamental aspect of true religion. Indeed the shedding of blood is intimated in Gen. 3:21: we are told here that God, as soon as Adam and Eve sinned, made "coats of skins, and clothed them": this necessitated the slaying of animals and hence the shedding of their blood. This reasoning is further authenticated by the language of Jesus in which He referred to "Abel the righteous" (Matt. 23:35; cf. Luke 11:51, Heb.

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12:24). What is *righteousness*, and who is a *righteous* person? The righteousness which is of faith consists in obeying the Divine Word (Rom. 10:6-10; Gen. 6:19, Heb. 11:7, 8, etc.); hence the righteous person is one whose disposition is at all times to do the Father's Will to the full (Matt. 3:13). This was the disposition which Abel manifested in bringing his offering to Yahweh. This was the disposition which Cain *did not* manifest: on the contrary, he manifested the disposition to put his own will (his own way of doing things) above God's Will (God's way of doing things). What could a just God do but reject his offering? Thus it will be seen that God's acceptance of Abel's offering and His rejection of Cain's offering was not an arbitrary act on His part: indeed we are told repeatedly in Scripture that our God is no respecter of persons *as such* (Deut. 10:17, 2 Chron. 19:7, Acts 10:34, Rom. 2:11, Gal. 2:6, Eph. 6:9, 1 Pet. 1:17). In a word, both the inner attitudes of the two brothers, and their respective offerings as well, were the factors which elicited God's responses in this case: their offerings were simply proofs of the interior state of their hearts, respectively. These facts are all corroborated by the teaching of the Bible, from the first to the last, that every lamb that was ever offered on the Patriarchal and Jewish altars was divinely intended to typify (point forward to) the Lamb of God—Christ our Passover—whose Vicarious Sacrifice actualized the election (salvation) of all obedient believers of all generations of mankind, those of the Old Covenant as well as those of the New (John 1:29, 1:35; 1 Cor. 5:7; Isa. 53:7; Acts 8:32-33; 1 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 5:6, 8, 12; Rev. 6:1 ff.; Heb., chs. 7, 8, 9; Heb. 10:1-4, 8-14, etc.). Moreover, it should be noted here that Cain's rebelliousness is clearly indicated by the fact that he presented an offering from the ground, the very ground which had already been placed under a Divine anathema (Gen. 3:17, Rom. 8:20-22). To disregard these truths of Scripture is to disregard

the Word of God itself, and to flout the testimony of the Holy Spirit. (See especially Heb. 10:29.) It is to spread confusion in an area in which the truth is so simple and clear that wayfaring men, yea fools, need not err therein (Isa. 35:8). Finally, it follows that the other integral parts (elements) of true religion were present here, viz., the Altar and the Priesthood. Although no mention of the altar occurs in the text, it is necessary to infer its use: altar and offerings are inseparably linked in the institution of sacrifice. Moreover, this event occurred at the very fountainhead of the Patriarchal Dispensation with its patriarchal (or family) priesthood; hence Abel must have served in that capacity. The time element connecting man's sojourn in Eden with his history in the world outside is so indefinite (as a matter of fact it is completely ignored) in the Genesis record that we cannot rule out the possibility that many, many persons—even as descendants of Adam and Eve—were on earth by this time (cf. Gen. 5:3-5).

(Note here Scripture passages in which God is represented as manifesting "respect" for an object or the person associated with it (Gen. 4:4, 5; Exo. 2:25, Lev. 26:9, 2 Ki. 13:23, Psa. 138:6). Note other texts in which God is represented as *not* being a respecter of persons (Deut. 10:17, 2 Chron. 19:7, Acts 10:34, Rom. 2:11, Gal. 2:6, Eph. 6:9, 1 Pet. 1:17). Are these contradictory passages? Not at all. The two series simply have reference to very different kinds of "respect." The former signifies a righteous and benevolent "respect" based on "proper discrimination as to character"; the latter signifies God as acting *without partiality* (cf. Haley, ADB, p. 81).)

To summarize: *Why did God accept Abel's offering and reject Cain's?* The answer is, unequivocally: *Because Abel acted by faith, and Cain did not; because Abel did what God had told him to do, and Cain did not.* Lange (CDHCG, 256): "It is a fact that a difference in the

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state of heart of the two brothers is indicated in the appearance of their offerings. . . . This difference appears to be indicated, in fact, as a difference in relation to the earliness, the joyfulness, and freshness of the offerings. After the course of some time, it means, Cain offered something from the fruits of the ground. But immediately afterward it is said expressly, Abel *had* offered (*preterite*); and farther it is made prominent that he brought of the firstlings, the fattest and best. These outward differences in regard to the time of the offerings, and the offerings themselves, have indeed no significance in themselves considered, but only as expressing the difference between a free and joyful faith in the offering, and a legal, reluctant state of heart. It has too the look as though Cain had brought his offering in a self-willed way, and for himself alone—that is, he brought it to his own altar, separated, in an unbrotherly spirit, from that of Abel.” Murphy (MG, 148, 149): “There was clearly an internal moral distinction in the intention or disposition of the offerers. Habel had faith—that confiding in God which is not bare and cold, but is accompanied with confession of sin, and a sense of gratitude for His mercy, and followed by obedience to His will. Cain had not this faith. He may have had a faith in the existence, power, and bounty of God; but it wanted that penitent returning to God, that humble acceptance of His mercy, and submission to His will, which constitute true faith. . . . But, in this case, there is a difference in the things offered. The one is a vegetable offering, the other an animal; the one a presentation of things without life, the other a sacrifice of life. Hence the latter is called *pleion thusia*; there is *more in it* than in the former. The two offerings are therefore expressive of the different kinds of faith in the offerers. They are the excogitation and exhibition in outward symbol of the faith of each.” M. Henry (CWB, 13): “That which is to be aimed at in all acts of religion is God’s acceptance:

we speed well if we attain this, but in vain do we worship if we miss it (2 Cor. 5:9). . . . The great difference was this, that Abel offered in faith, and Cain did not. There was a difference in the principle upon which they went. Abel offered with an eye to God's will as his rule, and God's glory as his end, but Cain did what he did only for company's sake, or to save his credit, not in faith, and so it turned into sin to him. Abel was penitent; Cain was unhumiliated; his confidence was within himself." (Let me suggest here that for homiletic purposes Matthew Henry's *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, edited by Church, published by Zondervan, is in a class by itself.)

9. *The Divine Origin of Sacrifice.* The first specific reference to the Plan of Redemption is found in the oracle that the Seed of the Woman should crush the Old Serpent's head (Gen. 3:15). The second is found in the institution of sacrifice, of which we have the earliest account in the story of Cain and Abel. The Divine origin of sacrifice is proved by the following facts: (1) *By the very character of the institution itself.* Although having moral significance in the sense that it involved the moral virtue of obedience to God, it is essentially a *positive* institution. W. T. Moore (in Campbell, LP, 111, n.): "The Moral is commanded, because it is *right*; the Positive is right, *because it is commanded.*" Again (*ibid.*, 110, n.): "The idea of Sacrifice lies at the foundation of all religion. And this is very conclusive proof that religion itself is of Divine origin, for no man could ever have *originated* the idea of sacrifice. That man would have come to the conclusion, *a priori*, that the life of an *innocent victim* would propitiate Deity is an absurdity which is equaled only by the insanity of infidelity itself. The first thought to a mind, unassisted by revelation, would be that the anger of Deity would be kindled at the idea of such a Sacrifice; and consequently, it would never have been used as a means of appeasing anger, unless done by the authority of some

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Divine command. Hence, we conclude that God originated it." Whitelaw (PCG, 78): "The universal prevalence of sacrifice rather points to Divine prescription rather than to man's invention as its proper source. Had Divine worship been of purely human origin, it is almost certain that greater diversity would have prevailed in its forms. Besides, the fact that the mode of worship was not left to human ingenuity under the law, and that will-worship is specifically condemned under the Christian dispensation (Col. 2:23), favors the presumption that it was Divinely appointed from the first." Campbell (CS, 38): "Sacrifice, doubtless, is as old as the Fall. The institution of it is not recorded by Moses. But he informs us that God had respect for Abel's offering, and accepted from him a *slain lamb*. Now had it been a human institution, this could not have been the case; for a divine warrant has always been essential to any acceptable worship. The question, 'Who has required this at your hands?' must always be answered by a 'thus saith the Lord,' before an offering of mortal man can be acknowledged by the Lawgiver of the universe. 'In vain,' said the Great Teacher, 'do you worship God, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.' God accepted the sacrifices of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc., and in the Jewish system gave many laws and enactments concerning it." Campbell (CS, 38, n.): "It is a curious and remarkable fact, that God covered Adam and Eve with the skins of the first victims of death, instead of their *fig-leaf* robes. This may have pre-figured the fact that, while sin was atoned or expiated as respects God by the life of the victim, the effect as respects man was a covering for his nakedness and shame, or his sin, which divested him of his primitive innocence and beauty, and covered him with ignominy and reproach." We cannot imagine that Cain and Abel themselves originated the idea of bringing offerings to the Lord. Evidently, as Errett writes (EB, *in loco*): "God had made

known to our first parents some means and methods of approach to Him, and their children were trained in the observance of these."

(2) *By its universality.* (For an excellent example of sacrificial rites as practised by the Greeks under Agamemnon, during the Trojan War, see Homer's *Illiad*, Bk. I, ll. 428-487.) As Faber has written: "Throughout the whole world there is a notion prevalent that the gods can be appeased only by bloody sacrifices. There is no heathen people that can specify a time when they were without sacrifice. All have had it from a time which is not reached by their genuine records. Tradition alone can be brought forward to account for its origin." Again, Dummelow (CHB, Intro., 139): "The dependence on an unseen spiritual being, or beings; the consciousness of *broken communion*; the consequent need of some new, heaven-given means of access—these ideas, as well as the simpler and more childlike thought of tribute or of free-will offerings of homage and thankfulness, lie at the root of those sacrificial customs in which religion has always expressed itself even among pagans." Toy (IHR, 505, 506): "The various theories of the origin and efficacy of sacrifice (omitting the ambassadorial conception) are thus reducible to three types: it is regarded as a gift, as a substitution, or as an act of securing union (physical or spiritual) with the divine. These have all maintained themselves, in one form or another, up to the present day." As with respect to all universal traditions, e.g., those of a Tree of Life, man's Golden Age of innocence, his Temptation and Fall, the role of Satan in these events, Noah's Flood, etc., so it is with that of the institution of Sacrifice. It points up two facts in bold relief: (a) the fact of diffusion from a common origin, and (b) the fact of corruptions, by diffusion, of an original purity. *Concepts that are so widespread as to be woven into the traditions of peoples everywhere, no matter how degenerate they may have become*

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as a result of popular diffusion, point back unmistakably to genuine originals. No counterfeit ever existed that did not presuppose a genuine.

(3) *By the distinction between clean and unclean animals*, explicitly stated to have prevailed as early as the time of Noah (Gen. 7:2). It follows by necessary inference that this distinction must have been characteristic of the institution of sacrifice from the time of the Fall and the consequent ordination of the elements of true religion.

(4) *By the corroborative testimony of Scripture*: as evidenced (a) by the correlation of such passages as Heb. 11:4 and Rom. 10:17; (b) by the tenor of Bible teaching from beginning to end that animal sacrifice under the Old Covenant was substitutionary, hence typical of the great Antitype, the Lamb of God, whose Vicarious Sacrifice provides Atonement (covering) for the sin of mankind (John 3:16, 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7, 1 Pet. 2:24, Heb. 9:26; cf. Isa. 53, 63:1). (It must be remembered that there was no remission of sin under the Old Covenant, but only a "passing over" of sin by Yahweh from year to year. Cf. Rom. 3:21-26; Acts 17:30, 14:16; Heb. 9:6-10, 9:23-28, 10:1-4, etc.)

10. *The Basic Design of Sacrifice*, that is, in God's Eternal Purpose, was twofold: (1) To give to the sinner a means of approaching God and to give to God a place of meeting with the sinner; and (2) as stated above, to point forward in type to the Supreme Sacrifice at Calvary: every Patriarchal and Jewish altar prefigured the death of God's Only Begotten, Christ our Passover (John 1:29, 2 Cor. 5:7). God's positive ordinances are divine appointments. When a man agrees, for instance, to meet a friend at a certain time and place, that is an appointment. So God's positive ordinances are Divine appointments where Divine grace and human faith meet in a holy tryst. In olden times, God and man met at the altar of sacrifice (Gen. 22:1-19, Exo. 20:24-26). Similarly, the Christian ordi-

nances are Divine appointments. In the ordinance of Christian baptism, God meets the penitent believer and there confers upon him, through the efficacy of the atoning blood of Christ, the full and free blessing of remission of sins. Hence, baptism is said in Scripture to be the institution in which sins are washed away (Acts 22:16); and is also said explicitly to be for salvation (Mark 16:16, 1 Pet. 3:21), for remission of sins (Acts 2:38), and for induction into Christ (Gal. 3:26-27). The Lord's Supper is likewise the divinely-appointed observance in which the elect of God under the New Covenant meet with their Savior, King, and Elder Brother, Jesus Christ, in solemn religious convocation and communion, on each first day of the week (Matt. 26:26-29, Luke 22:14-20, Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 10:16, 11:23-29, 16:1-2, etc.). On the human side, then, the ordinances are essentially manifestations and acts of faith. When the truth is once fully appreciated by Christian people that the Lord's ordinances are not rites, forms or meaningless ceremonies, but solemn, spiritual, heart acts, essentially acts of faith, and solemn meetings with our Heavenly Father and with our Great Redeemer, then indeed a great spiritual awakening will be engendered throughout the whole of Christendom. Then, but not until then, it may be possible for Christian unity to be achieved (John 17:20-21). The change most needed in our time is a proper evaluation of the Divine ordinances in the light of Scripture teaching (cf. Rom. 6:1-11, 6:17).

11. *The Fourfold Significance of Sacrifice.* (1) *It is a propitiation*, in the sense that it is designed to satisfy the demands of justice on the sinner (cf. Rom. 3:25; 1 John 2:2, 4:10). God's moral kingdom, like His physical world, is established upon a foundation of Divine law. Transgression of this Divine law is sin (1 John 3:4). Consequently, when the Divine law is disobeyed, justice requires that something be done about it, in order that the sanctity and majesty of the law may be properly sustained. Even

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under human government, to allow infraction of the civil law to go unpunished or unpropitiated, is to encourage further violation and rebellion, and eventually, in effect at least, to completely nullify the law itself. A great many human teachers, in their eagerness to emphasize the love of God, completely ignore the fact of His unfailing justice (Psa. 89:14). In virtue of His justice, therefore, He cannot consistently allow transgression of His laws to go unpropitiated (unvindicated) and at the same time extend mercy to the transgressor. To do so would be to put a premium on sin and thus to undermine the foundations of His government. Campbell (CS, 39): "The indignity offered His person, authority and government, by the rebellion of man, as also the good of all His creatures, made it impossible for Him, according to justice, eternal right, and His own benevolence, to show mercy without sacrifice. . . . In this sense only, God could not be gracious to man in forgiving him without a propitiation, or something that could justify Him both to Himself and all His creatures." In short, God could not be wholly just and extend mercy to the sinner, without an offering from or for the latter, sufficient to satisfy the claims of perfect Justice with respect to the Divine law violated. (Cf. Rom. 3:24-26.) Propitiation is, in a sense, a legal term. (2) *It is a reconciliation*, in the sense that it is designed to bring the offended party and the offender together, and so to make peace between them. Insofar as it honors law and justice, then, sacrifice reconciles God to forgive; and insofar as it brings love and mercy to the offender, it overcomes the rebellion in his heart and reconciles him to his offended Sovereign. Campbell (CS, 40): "God's 'anger is turned away'; not a turbulent passion, not an implacable wrath, but *'that moral sentiment of justice'* which demands the punishment of violated law, is pacified or well pleased; and man's hatred and animosity against God is subdued, overcome and destroyed in and by the same sacrifice.

Thus, in fact, it is, in reference to both parties, a reconciliation." It is that factor which makes *covenant* relationship between God and man possible to both (Eph. 2: 15-16, 2 Cor. 5:18-20). (3) *It is an expiation*, in the sense that it is designed actually to cleanse and purify the heart of the guilt and pollution of sin. Campbell (CS, 40): "The terms purification or cleansing are in the common version preferred to *expiation*. . . . If any one prefer *purification* to expiation, or even *cleansing* to expiation, so long as we understand each other, it is indeed a matter of very easy forbearance. The main point is, that sacrifice cancels sin, atones for sin, and puts it away." "He put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26): this is expiation. (4) *It is a redemption*, in the sense that it is designed to "buy back" the sinner from the bondage of sin into which he has sold himself and to consecrate him anew to the service of God. Rom. 3:24, 1 Cor. 6:19-20, Acts 20:28; Gal. 3:13, 4:4-5; Eph. 1:7, Col. 1:14, 1 Tim. 2:5-6, Tit. 2:14; Heb. 9:12, 2:14-15; 1 Pet. 1:18-19, Rev. 5:9, etc. (5) Finally, it should be noted here that *the doctrine of Atonement is inseparably linked with the institution of sacrifice. Atonement is equivalent to Propitiation*. Campbell again (CS, 38, n.): "The Hebrew term *copber*, translated in the Greek Old Testament by *ilamos*, and in the common English version by *atonement* or propitiation, signifies a *covering*. The word *copber*, 'to cover,' or 'to make atonement,' denotes the object of sacrifice; and hence Jesus is called the *ilamos*, the covering, propitiation, or atonement for our sins." (Cf. 1 John 2:2, 4:10.) To make atonement, therefore, is to satisfy the claims of justice with respect to the Divine law which has been violated, and hence to provide a covering for the guilt, and ultimately for the consequences, of the sins of all persons who accept the Gift and by so doing enter into covenant relationship with God. The Atonement, the

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Propitiation, the Covering, the Gift, is God's Only Begotten (John 3:16). *There is no other.*

12. *Pagan Versus Biblical Sacrifice.* The distinguished Jewish author, Yehezkel Kaufmann, calls attention to the profound differences between the theories and practices of sacrificial rites in the pagan world and those characteristic of the Patriarchal and Jewish Dispensations of Biblical history. The pagan concepts he lists as follows (RI, 110-115): sacrifice (1) as providing nutriment for the gods, (2) as mystic union with God, and (3) as exerting influence on the Divine powers, "to heighten the powers of good over the demonic powers of evil." He writes as follows: "The mythological and magical framework that lent cosmic significance to sacrifice in paganism is wanting in the Bible. YHWH is not conceived of as dependent upon food, drink, or any external source of power. This precludes the idea that sacrifice is nutriment for the God. . . . For biblical religion, it is decisive that the mythological setting of this conception is entirely wanting. . . . The Biblical peace offering has been interpreted as a form of communion; part is consumed by the deity (the fat and the blood), the rest by the offerer in what is assumed to be a common meal with the deity. But this interpretation has no warrant beyond the pagan models upon which it is based. The Bible itself says nothing about communion. The peace offering is eaten 'before'—never 'with'—YHWH (cf. *e.g.*, Deut. 12:7, 18; 14:23, 26; 15:20). The Priestly Code makes the flesh of the peace offering the property of YHWH. The human partaker of it is, as it were, a guest of YHWH; this is the nearness to God that is symbolized by eating the peace offering (Lev. 7:20 f.). Nothing supports the notion that man becomes an associate of the deity, is elevated for the moment to divine rank, or shares in the life of the God. Joy, not mystic union, is the basic emotional content of the Israelite cult; this joy too is 'before'—not 'with'—YHWH (Deut. 12:12, 18,

etc.). The difference is fundamental, and its linguistic expression, though subtle, is crucial. . . . Pagan purification rites aim to influence the divine powers, to heighten the powers of good over the demonic powers of evil. When we examine their biblical analogues we find no echo of a struggle between evil and good, no trace of either the mythological or the magical element which underlies the pagan idea." (It should be noted here that hangovers of these magical and mystical cults still persist in the theologies and rituals of institutional Christianity, although absent from the Christianity of the New Testament. The magical aspects persist in such dogmas as those of sacramentalism, transubstantiation, consubstantiation, impanation, baptismal regeneration, etc.; the mystical, in alleged special revelations, miraculous conversions, trances, indeed all psychical (or metapsychical) phenomena of the various forms of so-called ecstatic and orgiastic "religions.") (Note here especially the pertinent statement of W. Robertson Smith (RSFI, 62): "To reconcile the forgiving goodness of God with His absolute justice, is one of the highest problems of spiritual religion, which in Christianity is solved by the doctrine of the atonement.")

13. *The First Murder* (Gen. 4:5b-8).

"5 And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. 6 And Jehovah said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? 7 If thou doest well, shall it not be lifted up? and if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door: and unto thee shall be its desire, but do thou rule over it. 8 And Cain told Abel his brother. And it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him."

(1) What a "human interest" story this is! More profoundly realistic psychology is to be found in the Bible than in any other book known to man! The Bible pictures human beings *just as they are*—some good, some bad, some

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mediocre; no doubt this is the reason why so many human rebels, puffed up in their own conceits, hate the Bible and will do anything in their power to discredit it. The apostle puts all such persons in the class to which they really belong: they are the wilfully ignorant, blinded by the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4, 2 Pet. 3:5). There are other causes of moral evil than ignorance, and one of the most potent of these is a perverted will. (2) Cain was *very wroth*, literally *incensed* (inflamed): "the wrath was a fire in his soul" (Lange); cf. Jer. 15:14, 17:4. No sorrow for sin here, "no spirit of inquiry, self-examination, prayer to God for light or pardon, clearly showing that Cain was far from the right state of mind" (Murphy). Not a semblance of recognition of his own dereliction: nothing but fierce resentment against his brother and most certainly resentment toward God. "It is common for those who have rendered themselves unworthy of God's favor to have indignation against those who are dignified by it" (M. Henry). (Note how the Pharisees walked in the way of Cain, Luke 11:52.) Evil is always resentful in the presence of the good, because in the light of the good the evil is shown up in its true colors, and resents the expose. Think how prone professing Christians are to put the blame on God when overtaken by adversity ("God shouldn't have done this to me!"). The world, even the church, is filled with puny souls who can only whimper and whine in the hour of tribulation (cf. John 16:33). (3) "*His countenance fell.*" "Cain hung down his head, and looked upon the earth. This is the posture of one darkly brooding (Jer. 3:12, Job 29:24), and prevails to this day in the East as a sign of evil plottings" (Lange). What a picture of the impudent, rebellious, sullen posture and face of a spoiled brat! (3) *Vv.* 6, 7. Here we have another instance of those vivid anthropomorphic portrayals of our Heavenly Father dealing with the rebellious child created in His own image, seeking to arrest him from a

precipitous plunge into an act of violence that would ruin his whole life, as envy of the "true witness" welled up in his heart. To paraphrase Yahweh's words of warning and encouragement to do the right: "Why this consuming anger, Cain? Why this sullenness? If you are doing the good, your countenance will be radiant with joy. If you are not doing what is right and good, then sin is couching ("lieth") at your heart's door. Retrace your steps, amend your offering, and rule over this beast that threatens you." As we listen to those words of Fatherly admonition and encouragement to self-control and obedience, we recall the words of the Psalmist, "Like as a father pitieth his children, So Jehovah pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust" (Psa. 103:13, 14). Alas! as is so often the case, the warning went unheeded! The same warning comes ringing down through the ages to all of God's saints, even those of our own time. If you are disgruntled at the minister or the congregation, critical of your brethren in Christ, and have a tendency in your heart to speak evil things of those who are trying to be Christians, just remember that sin is couching (lying, lurking) at the door of your heart; and, unless with our Lord's help, you assert your control of circumstances, sin will spring upon you like a wild beast and drag you down to the depths of infamy. Cf. Eph. 6:16—

"Life is one continued battle,
 Never ended, never o'er;
 And the Christian's path to glory
 Is a conflict evermore.

"Satan ever watches round him,
 Seeks to find the weakest part;
 And in moments most unheeded
 Quickly throws his fiery dart."

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(4) *The Murder*, V.8. "In the field"—this "means the open country, where Cain thought he would be safe from observation" (IBG, 519). Whitelaw (PCG, 80): "Beyond all question the historian designs to describe not an act of culpable homicide, but a deed of red-handed murder; yet the impression which his language conveys is that of a crime rather suddenly conceived and hurriedly performed than deliberately planned and treacherously executed." "Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him." Heavenly counsel failed to deter the rebel; the wild beast couching at his heart's door sprang, and the tragic deed was done. Not just a homicide, but a fratricide! Rage, born of consuming envy, becomes lust for blood. As it has been said of the crucifixion of Jesus: Hate is a passion never stilled, until it crucifies (1 John 3:15, John 8:44). Thus did the first Man become a prey of Satan, and his first-born a murderer and an outcast. Bowie (IBG, 518): "It was a strange contradiction that the first murder came with an act of worship. It was while he was approaching God that Cain knew how much he hated his brother. He felt frustrated because he felt somehow that God's truth ranked Abel higher than himself; and if he knew within himself that this was what he deserved, he struck out all the more blindly and bitterly against the superiority that shamed him. This is the explanation of the vindictive hostility that men may express toward those whose achievements they envy—the hostility of the citizen to a great political leader or the dislike which a minister may feel for a more honored brother minister."

14. *A Second Inquest* (Gen. 4:9-15).

"9 And Jehovah said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper? 10 And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. 11 And now cursed art thou from the ground, which hath opened its mouth to receive thy

brother's blood from thy hand; 12 when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee its strength; a fugitive and a wanderer shalt thou be in the earth. 13 And Cain said unto Jehovah, My punishment is greater than I can bear. 14 Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the ground; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that whosoever findeth me will slay me. 15 And Jehovah said unto Cain, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And Jehovah appointed a sign for Cain, lest any finding him should smite him."

(1) A *second* inquest: why so designated? Because this is essentially a repetition of the substance of Gen. 3:9-13. Again the loving Father seeks to bring His rebellious son to repentance and confession (catharsis), the only possible way to restoration and inner peace for the rebel. (2) V. 9. *The inquisition* no doubt took place at the customary place of sacrifice and at the time of the next offering. Did God speak through Adam, the father? or through Cain's own conscience? Or directly and vocally to Cain himself, in words "uttered from between the Cherubim" (3:24)? Note the question: "a question fitted to go straight to the murderer's conscience, and no less fitted to rouse his wrathful jealousy, as showing how truly Abel was the beloved one." Not that Yahweh's question was in any sense the *cause* of Cain's jealousy, but that it brought out the interior wrathful jealousy that was already consuming the rebel's heart. (It is often said that national prohibition of the nineteen-twenties brought about the spread of lawlessness. This we deny. It simply brought to the surface the lawlessness that was already there, in the hearts of the people.) (3) Note *Cain's answer*. What a combination of bravado, flippancy, sheer impudence—everything but the manifestation of an honest and good heart

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(Luke 8:15)! Whitelaw, quoting Willet (PCG, 80): "He showeth himself a *liar* in saying, 'I know not'; *wicked and profane* in thinking he could hide his sin from God; *unjust* in denying himself to be his brother's keeper; *obstinate and desperate* in not confessing his sin." (Cf. Psa. 10.) How sin spreads: at first, murder; now, lying, deceit, effrontery and profanity (feeling himself tracked by avenging justice, Cain resorts to the use of every weapon in the arsenal of sin!). "Am I my brother's keeper?" *A question of universal significance: one that must be answered in some way by every son and daughter of Adam* (cf. Matt. 25:31-46). Murphy (MG, 153): "There is, as usual, an atom of truth mingled with the amazing falsehood of this surly response. No man is the absolute keeper of his brother, so as to be responsible for his safety when he is not present. This is what Cain means to insinuate. But every man is his brother's keeper so far that he is not himself to lay the hand of violence on him, nor suffer another to do so if he can hinder it. This sort of keeping, the Almighty has a right to demand of every one—the first part of it on the ground of mere justice, the second on that of love. But Cain's reply betrays a desperate resort to falsehood, a total estrangement of feeling, a quenching of brotherly love, a predominance of that selfishness which freezes affection and kindles hatred. This is the way of Cain (Jude 11)."

(4) *Vv. 10-12*. Yahweh sees that His attempt to arouse self-examination in the sinner has not elicited the slightest evidence of a favorable response. Cain's character has proved itself to be tragically corrupt, even to the extent of manifesting not even the slightest appreciation of God's love and mercy. Hence, thunders Yahweh: "What hast thou done?"—a question that puts in bold relief the sheer enormity of the course of sin that Cain had chosen to pursue! "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." Note the repeated phrase, "thy brother": is not fratricide a truly heinous form of homi-

cide? Knowing that the guilty fratricide was not going to confess his sin, Yahweh charged him with it directly. The ground which had already been cursed so that it yielded thorns and thistles (3:18) was now cursed by the blood of the first martyr, Abel the righteous (Matt. 23:35, 1 John 3:12). This was the first curse pronounced upon a human being: only the serpent had been cursed in Eden; Adam and Eve had not (3:14). Murphy defines a curse thus (MG, 211): "A curse is any privation, inferiority, or other ill, expressed in the form of a doom, and bearing, not always upon the object directly expressed, but upon the party who is in the transgression." In the case before us, Abel's blood cried out to God for the punishment of the murderer, and that same cry has rung down through the ages proclaiming retribution upon the shedder of innocent blood. Anthropologists will testify uniformly that no people has ever been found without a customary or statutory law for the punishment of murder. (The "blood feud" or "blood revenge," the most common form of the *lex talionis*, (the infliction of death upon a murderer by the relatives of his victim), was the only device which men had, for the prevention of murder; later, of course, with the formation of nations, this right of vindication was taken from individuals and families and put under the authority of the state. Incidentally, *vindication* is the proper term to use here, as expressing the function of punishment, rather than "vengeance" or "revenge": true law never seeks revenge, but it must seek vindication when violated, that is, it must have a penalty for violation, and that penalty is designed to sustain the majesty of the law itself, that is, *to vindicate the justice of the law and of the will of the lawgiver as well*. Law is not law at all, lacking a penalty for its violation, the power to enforce the penalty, and the actual enforcement of it, if and when violated.) (It must be understood, of course, that murder is properly defined as the taking of the life of another

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person on *one's own* authority and with malice aforethought: that is, it is an individual act, a *crime* under the civil law, a *sin* under the moral law. This definition of the act has its ethical basis in two sublime truths, namely, *that life is the gift of God, and hence man's greatest good* (Gen. 2:7, Acts 17:24-25). These have always been, and still are, the foundation stones of our Western cultural heritage.) (Note that in Abel's case, the blood seeks not retribution on its own, but cries out unto Yahweh for it. For instances of sin crying out to God, see Gen. 18:20-21, 19:13; Exo. 3:9; Heb. 12:24; Jas. 5:4.) Murphy (MG, 154): "The curse which now fell on Cain was in some sense retributive, as it sprang from the soil which received his brother's blood. The particulars of it are the withdrawal of the full strength or fruitfulness of the soil from him, and the degradation from the state of a settled dweller in the presence of God, to that of a vagabond in the earth." Again (MG, 155): "It is plain that no man has an inherent right to inflict the sanction of a broken law on the transgressor. This right belongs originally to the Creator, and derivatively only to those whom He has intrusted with the dispensation of civil government according to established laws" (cf. Rom. 13:1-7, Matt. 22:21).

(5) *Note well that this Divine anathema was to come upon Cain from the ground, and in two ways: (a) in refusing him its substance: a further look at Cain's progeny, as we shall see later, makes it clear that they did not make any success of agriculture; this refusal of the earth to yield its substance to them seems to have pushed them into the building of cities and the development of what we would today call the useful arts; and (b) in refusing him a home: he and his posterity became wanderers, an unsettled, restless people, prone to violence, without stability and without faith. The further study of Cain's descendants will surely disclose their basic irreligiousness, secularism (worldliness), proneness to pride in their own*

conceits, even wickedness and violence. Thus the earth did not become a participant in the curse pronounced on Cain, but God's minister of that curse. (There is a special significance, it seems to me, in these Divine anathemas having reference to the ground (earth) and to those creatures who were to be punished through the agency of the ground. Surely, they point up the Divine repudiation of, and warning against, the Cult of Fertility which prevailed throughout the entire ancient pagan world, and which had its roots in the worship of the Earth Mother (in Greek, *Ge-mater*, or Demeter; and in Latin, *Terra Mater*). This Cult, with its practices of ritual prostitution, sexual promiscuity, phallic worship, and like perversions—indeed the grossest forms of immorality—was the foremost obstacle to the spread of the knowledge of the living and true God throughout the world of Old Testament times and the ever-present temptation to that people whom God called out to preserve this knowledge, the fleshly seed of Abraham, to forsake their Divine calling and election for the idolatrous practices of their heathen neighbors and the satisfaction of their own carnal lusts.)

(6) V. 13. "My punishment is greater than I can bear." Utter insensitivity to personal guilt now leads to self-pity, the psychological refuge of a man who will not be honest with himself or with God by facing up to the facts. As if to say, "Jehovah, you are not treating me fairly! You are being unjust to me!" A repetition of Satan's rebellious charge that our God is a tyrant! The cry of every fanatical devotee of unlimited "personal liberty." The cry of a spoiled brat. (How anyone can question the fact that Cain's wickedness was real and that it stemmed from his interior profanity—disregard for divine things—and hence from his total lack of faith, is beyond our comprehension. Everything he said and did attests the truth of the explanation given in Hebrews 11:4. Rejection of this thoroughly trustworthy Biblical explanation is surely a mark of igno-

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rance, or that of a perverted will directed by a closed mind (cf. 2 Pet. 3:5, Matt. 15:14, Isa. 6:8-10, Matt. 13:14-15, Acts 28:25-28, 2 Cor. 3:15, etc.). Even though some measure of remorse might be indicated by Cain's outcry here, still and all, it is remorse saturated with despair, the reaction that terminates in repentance unto spiritual death (2 Cor. 7:10), or, as in the case of Judas, unto physical death by suicide (Matt. 27:3-10, Acts 1:16-19). Cain's sorrow, if anything, was "the sorrow of the world," the sorrow that arises from complete lack of any understanding of God's ineffable grace.

(7) *Vv. 14-15.* (a) Cain's language here is clearly a reference to that punitive device of early familial and tribal life known as the "blood feud," "blood revenge," the device which early man found necessary to prevent wholesale murder and thus to maintain social order (see *supra*). In the course of time, as population increased, this device began to create a serious problem. The great Greek writer of tragedy, Aeschylus, known as "the poet of great ideas," deals with the problem in what is known as his Oresteian trilogy, consisting of the three plays, the *Agamemnon*, the *Choephoroi*, and the *Eumenides*. In the *Agamemnon*, the Greek chieftain is pictured as returning from the conquest of Troy, only to face the smoldering wrath of his wife Clytemnestra, who hated him because of his sacrifice of their daughter Iphigenia at Aulis (supposedly to quell the fury of the goddess Artemis which had been aroused by Agamemnon's killing of a deer in one of her sacred groves: at any rate this was Agamemnon's version of the incident). Soon after reaching Argos, Agamemnon was murdered by Clytemnestra and her paramour, Aegisthus. Orestes, the son, was saved from the same fate by his sister Electra who had spirited him away secretly to the court of the Phoenician king, Strophius, whose wife was Agamemnon's sister. There Orestes formed a close friendship with the king's son, Pylades. On attaining maturity

Orestes went secretly with Pylades to Argos, where, on the authority of Apollo, at the tomb of Agamemnon he executed strict justice (*Dike*) by killing both Clytemnestra and Aegisthus. This part of the drama is presented in the *Choephoroi* ("The Libation Bearers"). But Orestes now was not just an ordinary executioner in the ordinary sense of "blood revenge"; his crime was *matricide*, a particularly heinous kind of killing. Hence, who was now to execute the demands of justice on Orestes? And who should kill the man who would kill Orestes, all, of course, in the name of rigid legal justice? How long was this vicious circle to continue? Was there any way of putting an end to it? If so, how was this to be done without violating justice in some way? Orestes is now beset by the Furies: he goes crazy and begins to wander from land to land, until finally, again by the advice of Apollo, he takes refuge in the temple of Athena at Athens. How does Aeschylus resolve the issue, essentially a problem of finding a way of tempering justice with the more humane "quality of mercy"? The dramatist uses the device of the *deus ex machina*. He brings Athena, the goddess of wisdom, into the picture; she convenes the Court of the Areopagus to hear his plea. Orestes is acquitted by this Court, becomes sane again, and the Furies are transformed into the *Eumenides* ("The Benignant Ones"). The profound moral problem thus elaborated by Aeschylus was twofold: the deeply felt doctrine of strict legal justice, but also the existence in Heaven of an Understanding and a Will that is supreme even over the Law. (The same profound doctrine is to be found also in the *Antigone* of Sophocles, LCL edition, p. 349, ll 450 ff.). Thus it will be seen that the dramatist resolved this problem in precisely the same way in which man resolved it, that is, by taking the execution of the penalty away from the jurisdiction of the family and putting it under the authority of the state ("the People vs. John Doe"). (b) "Whosoever findeth me," cried Cain,

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“shall slay me.” This raises the question: *Just what and how many other persons were on earth at the time to execute blood revenge?* Or, as often stated by the caviler: *Where did Cain get his wife?* (cf. v. 17). (A carping old reprobate once said to an old-time evangelist: “If you will show me how and where Cain got his wife, I’ll ‘jine’ the church.” The evangelist was equal to the challenge. He answered: “Old man, until you can quit worrying about other men’s wives, you’re not fit to ‘jine’ the church or anything else that is decent.”) Cornfeld writes (AtD, 23): “Where did Cain get his wife, if Abel and Cain were Adam and Eve’s only children? It is clear that the Cain and Abel story belonged to a different tradition which assumed the presence of other people in the world besides the family of Adam. The kind of rational and critical interest which characterizes our age was remote from the ancient narrators, particularly when it came to tracing ancestral genealogies.” T. Lewis (Lange, CDHCG, 259) suggests that neither Adam nor Cain may have had any reason to know that the earth was not populated with their kind. This view, however, seems a bit far-fetched. *The most reasonable explanation is that Cain married into the Adamic family into which he was born.* We are told that after 130 years Adam begat Seth, and that throughout his long life he begat sons and daughters (Gen. 5:3-5); in proportion to his longevity he must have sired progeny of some dimensions (cf. Exo. 12:37-42). Hence in the first 130 years of the conjugal union of Adam and Eve, undoubtedly other, many other, children were born to them. The matter of the identity of Cain’s wife is no problem. He might even have married one of his own sisters: this would not have been regarded as incest during the infancy of the race. (Cf. Acts 17:30, also Gen. 20:12—here we are told that Abraham married his half-sister). Certainly Adam’s offspring were not limited to just the two brothers and their wives (provided that Abel

also was a married man) at the time of Abel's murder. *The reason for the Biblical story of Cain, Abel, and Seth exclusively, again is one that will not be apprehended by the person who fails to take into consideration the teaching of the Bible as a whole. The reason is a very simple one, namely, that the Bible is not intended to be a history of the race, but the history only of the Messianic Line or Genealogy, the Line that began with Adam and culminated in Jesus Christ.* (Luke apparently gives the real genealogy through Mary, Luke 3:23—Joseph was the son-in-law of Heli; Matthew, writing specifically to the Jews, gives the legal genealogy, Matt. 1:16.) *There is but one grand design in the content of the Bible from beginning to end, namely, to provide the evidence in oracle, prophecy, and historical fulfilment to authenticate the Messiahship of Jesus.* (Cf. Matt. 16:16, John 20:30-31, Rom. 10:9-10.) *Only when approached and studied from this point of view, does the Bible have the significance that its Author, the Holy Spirit, designed it to have, that is, the fulness of the truth to liberate man from the guilt and from the consequences of sin* (John 8:31-32, 1 Thess. 5:23). (Cf. 1 Pet. 1:10-12, 2 Pet. 1:21, John 16:7-15, 1 Cor. 2:6-16.)

(c) Cain's contemplation of his miserable doom filled his guilty heart with apprehension that some of his own kind in the flesh might take his life in retaliation (as required by the *lex talionis*) on hearing of his wanton slaughter of his brother Abel. But, again, as in his cry, "from thy face shall I be hid," he manifests his utter insensitivity to the fact of God's ineffable grace. Yahweh's face was not turned away from him completely. On the contrary, he received from God a twofold response: first, the promise that anyone who might slay him would incur vengeance *sevenfold* (that is, Cain's violent death, should it occur, would be *fully avenged*); second, Yahweh "appointed a sign for Cain, lest any finding him should slay him." Commentators disagree as to whether

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this sign was a visible one for the purpose of warning away would-be avengers, or an inward assurance to Cain himself that he should not suffer "blood revenge" at the hands of a kinsman. "In the case of Cain's murderer there was to be no mitigation of the penalty as in the case of Cain himself; on the contrary, he would be visited more severely than Cain, as being guilty not only of homicide, but of transgressing the Divine commandment which said that Cain was to live" (Whitelaw, PCG, 82). What was this "mark of Cain?" No one knows. The essential facts about it are that it was not a sign of God's forgiveness, but only a pledge of His protection; that it was not a brand of shame, but a "covering" of Divine grace; that it served to establish the principle, at the very outset of man's life on earth, that vindication belongs to God (Rom. 12:19, 2 Thess. 1:8). Murphy (MG, 156): "The whole dealing of the Almighty was calculated to have a softening, conscience-awakening, and hope-inspiring effect on the murderer's heart." Whether this desired reformation (regeneration) of Cain ever occurred, we do not know; however, judging from the general irreligiousness of his posterity as indicated in the remaining part of chapter 4, the evidence is wholly to the contrary. *After all, even though subhuman nature is powerless to resist the decrees of God, there is one power in the universe which can resist His Will and, sorry to say, His love—that power is the human will* (John 5:40, Matt. 23:37-39, Acts 7:51-53).

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FOR MEDITATION AND SERMONIZING

"Am I My Brother's Keeper?"

Cain's profane reply to God's first query reveals the spirit of a social outcast. But his antisocial attitude was only part and parcel of his murderous act. Practically all anarchists become such through their own crimes against society. If we are not willing to help those about

us, we are bound to be willing to harm them and to drag them down. The entire human race is bound up in one bundle of interdependence, and every human being must choose between social altruism and social animosity.

If it is impossible for anyone to keep from radiating moral or immoral influence, as the case may be, how much more so for God's saints. The one who professes to be a Christian takes upon himself the obligations inherent in spiritual brotherhood, whose fundamental laws are love for God and love for his fellows, and especially for those who are of the household of the Faith (Matt. 22:34-40, 25:31-46; Luke 10:25-37; Jas. 1:27; Rom. 14:21; Gal. 6:2, etc.). Conversion is *the passing from the kingdom of this world*, in which the ruling principle of life, individual and social, is selfishness, the choice of self's way of doing things above God's way of doing things, *into the Kingdom of Christ, the Reign of Messiah*, in which the ruling principle of life, both individually and collectively, is sacrifice, the choice of God's way of doing things above man's way of doing things (Acts 26:17, Matt. 6:31-34, Rom. 12:1-2, Gal. 5:16-25). Love is the fulfilment of the law (Rom. 13:10); in the very nature of the case, love is the motive which prompts Christians, members of the Body, to bear one another's burdens and so to fulfil the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2; 1 John 4:7-11; 1 Cor. 9:21; Rom. 8:2; Jas. 1:25, 2:8, 2:12).

The Voice That Cries From the Ground

"The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground," said Yahweh to Cain. God speaks in the same words today to the unbeliever, the murderer, the fornicator, the adulterer, the abuser of himself with men, the sorcerer, the idolater, the drunkard, the coveter, the seducer, the liar—indeed all who live and die outside of Christ. In this universal sense (Rom. 3:23), it is the blood of Christ—the blood "that speaketh better than that

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of Abel" (Heb. 12:24)—the blood that was shed for an Atonement for the sin of the world (John 1:29), that cries out from the ground for the execution of justice upon all who refuse to shelter themselves by faith under this Heavenly Covering (2 Cor. 5:21, Heb. 10:26-31). And so will God speak to you in Judgment, fellow Christians, if you allow your loved ones to live and die without Christ, without your speaking a word to them about their soul's salvation. So will He speak to you, if you permit the multitudes to go past your door, down the broad way that leads to destruction (Matt. 7:13-14), without ever a warning word, a feeling of concern, or a manifestation of interest on your part. Are you going through life without ever a thought of the millions who are dying without Christ and the Redemption which He has freely provided? The business of the Church is to snatch precious souls from the burning. The Church of our time can never regain its power until it undergoes a rebirth of the evangelistic passion that characterized the saints of the apostolic age (Acts 8:4, 1 Tim. 3:15, Matt. 24:14). Unfortunately for man, his sins of omission seem to be far more numerous than those of commission (Jas. 4:17, 1:22). And this brand of sin is most flagrantly obvious today in the lackadaisical attitude of institutionalized Christianity with respect to the Church's mission to the unsaved: in all too many instances the Great Commission seems to be "the lost word" (Matt. 28:18-20).

"Christ has no hands but our hands
To do His work today;
He has no feet but our feet
To lead men in His way;
He has no tongue but our tongues
To tell men how He died;
He has no help but our help
To bring them to His side."

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The Cry of the Lost Soul

"My punishment is greater than I can bear," was Cain's cry, not of confession, but of sheer desperation. "Through ignorance of the divine character, he pronounced his sin too great to be pardoned. It was not that he really knew his sin, but that he knew not God. He fully exhibited the terrible fruit of the fall in the very thought of God to which he gave utterance. He did not want pardon, because he did not want God. He had no true sense of his own condition, no aspirations after God, no intelligence as to the ground of a sinner's approach to God. He was radically corrupt—fundamentally wrong, and all he wanted was to get out of the presence of God, and lose himself in the world and its pursuits" (C.H.M., NBG, 75).

"From thy face I shall be hid." To the foregoing it should be added that Cain did not want God because he did not, in any sense of the term, know God. Like Judas who went out and hanged himself when he might have enjoyed salvation on the terms of the Gospel, Cain, thinking himself beyond the pale of Divine compassion and mercy, resigned himself to an earthbound existence. "He thought he could live well without God, and he therefore set about decorating the world as well as he could, for the purpose of making it a respectable place, and himself a respectable man therein, though in God's view it was under the curse, and he was a fugitive and a vagabond" (C.H.M., NBG, 75).

Cain's cry of desperation might well be said to have been an archetype of the cry of lost souls in the Judgment. Fully realizing at last the awfulness of their complete loss of God, they shall call on the mountains and the rocks to fall upon them and hide them "from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb" (Rev. 6:15-17). Truly it will be "a fearful thing to fall

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into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31), unrepentant, disobedient, and hence utterly rejected (Heb. 6:4-8, 10:26-30; Rom. 2:4-11; Matt. 25:41-46). In this world the wheat and the tares must grow together until the harvest (Matt. 13:24-30). But let no son of man question the fact *that there will be a harvest* in which the wheat shall be gathered into the garner (granary, Matt. 3:12) and the tares shall be burned with unquenchable fire (cf. Matt. 13:36-43). Whatever other sanctions may overtake the neglectful and the impenitent at the Last Judgment (Acts 17:30-31), we can be sure that, again as a consequence of their full realization of what eternal loss of God and all good really means, the raging fires of conscience will issue truly in "the weeping and the gnashing of teeth." Indeed it may well turn out that memory is the worm that never dies, and conscience the fire that is never quenched (cf. Luke 16:19-31, Mark 9:48, Isa. 66:24).

The Marks of Real Faith

Genuine faith always (1) does what God commands, and (2) does it in the way God commands it to be done. Errett (EB, 36): "We sometimes listen to sneers at the conscientious observance of ordinances, and often hear it suggested that if *morals* had more attention, there need be small concern about ritualistic observances. True, there may be enslavement to a ritual, and especially to rituals of human contrivance, which partake more of the nature of Cain's offering than of Abel's; and when precision in such observances is exalted above a pure morality, it is a sad day alike for the church and the world. But let it also be remembered that when God has appointed a ritual observance, the same spirit of evil that rejects it, or corrupts it, will also, when occasion serves, reject also all that is good in morals. Hence, the same evil spirit that led Cain to despise God's law of sacrifice, led him also to cast

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aside all moral restraints and to murder his brother. The spirit of rebellion is the same, whether it strikes at a divine ordinance or at the life of a brother."

We hear a great deal in our day about what is called *vital* Christianity (faith, religion, etc.) as distinguished from what is called *formal* Christianity, etc. The Bible makes no such distinctions. God's ordinances are His ordinances, regardless of their essential character, and not one of them is to be trifled with. Everything in Christianity is *vital* or it is not of Christian *faith*.

"The Moral is commanded, *because it is right*; the Positive is right, *because it is commanded*." In all Dispensations God has required of His elect *both internal and external worship*. The external, although embodying the moral virtue of obedience, is designed to serve as a testimony to the outside world. Baptism, for example, is the positive institution in which the obedient believer *witnesses* to the facts of the Gospel—the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-8); hence, any act short of a burial and resurrection (an immersion in water and an emersion therefrom) vitiates the testimonial character of the ordinance, and *simply cannot be Scriptural baptism*. Again, how often do we hear baptism spoken of as a "mere outward act," "mere external performance," etc. This kind of terminology is blasphemy: it is an evidence of the *profanity* which characterized Cain's attitude toward the ordinance of sacrifice. When, in the name of both reason and faith, did our Lord go into the business of ordaining "mere outward acts" or "mere external performances"? There is design in everything that God commands us to do: that design embraces *both man's good and God's glory* (Col. 3:17, 1 Cor. 10:31, Eph. 3:21, Rev. 7:12).

It is notoriously true that modifications, by human authority, of God's positive ordinances, have generally been to serve the ends of *convenience*. In all likelihood Cain

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was the first "substituter." He brought the kind of offering which was the more convenient for him (by occupation he was a tiller of the ground) to bring to Yahweh. It may well be said that he substituted, for the kind of offering God had ordained, an offering which he—Cain, proud Cain—considered to be "just as good." How many millions in our day, as in all ages past, are trying to substitute civic "morality," respectability, social service, fraternalism, intellectualism, tradition, etc., for the obedience of faith! How many, how very many, substitute lodge, cult, ethical society, service club, etc., for the Church of the living God! "Sprinkling is just as good as immersion." "I am willing to take my chances without immersion." "I am willing to take my chances without attending church every Lord's Day." "I am a moral man—that's good enough for me!" But are these substitutes "good enough" *for God*? God says that all such things are "vain"—that is, utterly futile! "In vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men" (Matt. 15: 8-9, Isa. 29:13, Col. 2:8, 1 Tim. 6:20, 2 Tim. 2:16, Jas. 1:26). All such "substituters" are walking in the "way of Cain" (Jude 11).

Note what the righteousness which is of faith has to say: "the word is nigh thee . . . the word of faith, which we preach" (Rom. 10:8). Faith does what God commands, and does it in the way He has commanded it to be done. Faith without the works of faith is dead (Jas. 2:26).

God's Covering of Grace

There is nothing that the earth has to offer that can provide atonement (covering) for the transgression of a law of God, or that can open up the way to God. Abel recognized this truth and brought an offering of blood. Blood is life (Lev. 17:11), and life—every kind of life—is the gift of God (Gen. 2:7, Acts 17:25). Cain refused to witness to these truths of true religion and brought an offering of the ground, the ground which had already

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been placed under the Divine anathema (Gen. 3:17). Cain represents the man who tries to approach God on the basis of something of merit within himself—commonly defined morality, good citizenship, fraternalism, social service, intellectualism, etc. He represents the class described by the Lord Jesus in Matt. 7:15-23.

C.H.M. (NBG, 63, 64): "An unpardoned sinner coming into the presence of Jehovah, to present an 'unbloody sacrifice,' could only be regarded as guilty of the highest degree of presumption. True, he had toiled to produce this offering: but what of that? Could a sinner's toil remove the curse and stain of sin? Could it satisfy the claims of an infinitely holy God? Could it furnish a proper ground of acceptance for a sinner? Could it set aside the penalty which was due to sin? Could it rob death of its sting, or the grave of its victory?—could it do any or all of these things? Impossible! 'Without shedding of blood there is no remission.' Cain's 'unbloody sacrifice,' like every other unbloody sacrifice, was not only worthless, but actually abominable, in the divine estimation. It not only demonstrated his entire ignorance of his own condition, but also of the divine character. 'God is not worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything'; and yet Cain thought He could be thus approached—and every mere religionist thinks the same. Cain has had many millions of followers, from age to age. Cain-worship has abounded all over the world. It is the worship of every unconverted soul, and is maintained by every false system of religion under the sun."

Dean (OBH, 13): "Cain's offering was only such as Adam and Eve in the innocence of Eden might have offered. It expressed no sense of sin, no prayer for pardon. Moreover, Cain lacked the faith of his brother Abel (Heb. 11:4). His spirit, as contrasted with Abel's, was one of unbelief, self-righteousness, self-will. It was a case of Pharisee and Publican at the gate of Eden."

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We cannot expect to approach God on the basis of anything within ourselves. The so-called "moralist" is the modern Pharisee, who stands off, with a great show of piety, and prays, "Lord, I thank Thee I am not like other men" (Luke 18:11), or, in modern terms, "I thank Thee, Lord, that I am not like all those poor hypocrites in the church," etc. The "moralist" puts all confidence in himself, rather than in Christ, His only hope of glory (Col. 1:27); and, in the end, his house will crumble because it is built on sand (Matt. 7:24-27).

There is but one way back to God—that Way is Christ (John 14:6, 1 Tim. 2:5-6). There is but one remedy for sin—that remedy is the blood of Christ (1 John 1:7, Heb. 9:14, 1 Pet. 1:18-19, Mark 14:24, Acts 20:28, Rom. 3:25, 5:9; Eph. 1:7, Col. 1:14; Heb. 9:22, 13:20; John 1:29). There is but one method of presenting and applying this remedy, namely, the preaching of the Gospel for the obedience of faith (1 Cor. 1:21; Rom. 1:16, 10:12-17; John 14:1, 20:30-31; Acts 16:31, 2:38, 8:12; Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 15:18-19; 2 Cor. 7:10; Rom. 10:9-10; Rom. 6:1-11; Acts 22:16, Gal. 3:27, etc.).

The Way of Cain

To summarize: What are the attitudes (motives) which characterize those who walk in "the way of Cain" (Jude 11). Obviously, the following:

1. *Spiritual insensibility.* As shown above, Cain's outcries manifested his lack of any real knowledge of God, hence of any appreciation of the Divine love and mercy (cf. John 3:16; Rom. 8:38-39, 11:33-36; Eph. 3:14-19). His reaction to God's rejection of his offering was one of sheer spiritual obtuseness (cf. 1 Cor. 2:14), apparently lacking even the slightest notion that, if he should correct his offering (as the LXX reads, "if thou offer correctly, shalt thou not be accepted?"), he would receive God's full and free pardon. He simply did not know God in the sense of having any appreciation of Him or of His love.

Hence, not one of God's questions which were calculated to induce reformation, ever "got through" to him. (Of course, in our day, even we Christians find it difficult to understand that God's love is such that when He forgives, He forgets: Psa. 103:10-18, Jer. 31:31-34, Heb. 8:12.)

2. *Unbelief.* Faith does what God commands in the way He has commanded it to be done. Abel brought an offering of faith in that it met the requirements of the positive institution of sacrifice. It was a blood-offering, as it had to be to foreshadow the blood-offering of God's Only Begotten, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (John 17:24, Eph. 1:4, 1 Pet. 1:18-20, Rev. 13:8, 1 Cor. 5:7). This fact was, of course, an integral part of God's Eternal Purpose (Heb. 9:11-28, 10:1-25). The Old Testament saints may not have known, indeed could hardly have known, the reason for this fundamental requirement (Heb. 9:22)—but God knew. This was sufficient for Abel, as it is for every man of faith. To Cain, however, who walked by sight and not by faith (2 Cor. 5:7), the details of God's law of sacrifice meant little or nothing (Heb. 11:4); hence in all justice there was only one response that Yahweh could make, and that was to reject his offering. "Blind unbelief is sure to err"—of course, it errs *because it is blind.*

3. *Self-will, self-assertiveness.* Cain elevated his own "righteousness" ("way of doing things") above the righteousness of God (God's way of doing things), the righteousness which is of faith (Rom. 10:6-10). On his own authority he came before Yahweh with *his own* kind of offering. As suggested above, this obviously was the *convenient* thing for him to do. He was the first of that long line of "substituters" (*ersatz* "Christians") who choose *what they esteem* to be "just as good" as that which God has ordained. "Such was 'the way of Cain,' in which way millions are, at this moment, rushing on. Such persons are not, by any means, divested of the religious element in

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their character. They would like to offer something to God—to do something for Him. They deem it right to present to Him the results of their own toil. They are ignorant of themselves, ignorant of God; but with all this there is the diligent effort to improve the world, to make life agreeable in various ways, to deck the scene with the fairest colors. God's remedy to *cleanse* is rejected, and man's effort to *improve* is put in its place. This is 'the way of Cain,' Jude 11" (C.H.M., N.B.G. 75, 76). Again (*ibid.*, p. 77): "There is abundance of religion, so called; but alas! charity itself is compelled to harbor the apprehension that very much of what passes for religion is but a screw in the vast machine which has been constructed for man's convenience and man's exaltation. Man would not be without religion: it would not be respectable; and therefore he is content to devote one-seventh of his time to religion, or, as he thinks and professes, to his eternal interests, and then he has six-sevenths to devote to his temporal interests; but whether he works for time or eternity, it is for *himself*, in reality. Such is 'the way of Cain.' Let my reader ponder it well. Let him see where this way begins, whither it tends, and where it terminates."

4. *Profanity* (worldliness, secularism, irreligion). Cain, like Esau, was profane (Heb. 12:16); that is to say, he lived his life "outside the temple": he not only lived in the world, he was also of the world. It seems, moreover, that he bequeathed this worldliness, this secularism, this restlessness, to his posterity (cf. Exo. 20:5-6). Not the slightest semblance of humility is to be found in anything he said or did, or in anything that is reported about the particular line which he sired. Again C.H.M. (*ibid.*, pp. 74, 77): "It is well to see that Cain's act of murder was the true consequence—the proper fruit—of his false worship. His foundation was bad and the superstructure erected thereon was also bad. Nor did he stop at the act of murder; but having heard the judgment of God thereon, despairing of

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forgiveness through ignorance of God, he went forth from His blessed presence and built a city, and had in his family the cultivators of the useful and ornamental sciences—agriculturists, musicians, and workers in metals. . . . How different the way of the man of faith! Abel felt and owned the curse; he saw the stain of sin, and, in the holy energy of faith, offered that which met it, and met it thoroughly—met it divinely. He sought and found a refuge in God Himself; and instead of building a city on the earth, he found but a grave in its bosom.”

“The way of Cain” is indeed the broad way over which the multitudes travel, not to eternal fellowship with God, but to Godless, Christless eternity.

Abel and Christ: Analogies

The Scriptures do not expressly state that Abel was intended to be typical of Christ: nevertheless, the analogies are striking, as follows:

1. *In the similarity of their occupations.* Abel chose the occupation of a shepherd. Christ is the Good Shepherd (John 10:16, Heb. 13:20, 1 Pet. 5:4) of human souls.

2. *In the similarity of their offerings.* Abel brought the best of his flock, and the fat thereof, to the Lord. This was an offering of blood and fat, the richest offering that could be made under the Old Testament plan of worship. So our Christ offered Himself freely for the sin of the world (John 1:29; Heb. 12:2, 9:14; Eph. 5:1; Matt. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:5-6). The blood of Abel’s offering prefigured the blood of Christ which was shed for the remission of sins (Heb. 9:29, Matt. 26:28, Eph. 5:25). The fat of Abel’s offering prefigured the inherent excellency of Christ’s body (a consequence of His begetting by the Holy Spirit, Luke 1:35, Acts 2:24) which was offered up on the Cross for the sin of mankind (John 1:29, 1 Cor. 11:24, 1 Pet. 2:24; Heb. 10:5, 10, 20). All this adds up to the fact that our Lord’s vicarious sacrifice of Himself was the

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richest (because the costliest) offering that Heaven could provide for the redemption of fallen man (John 3:16, Rom. 3:24).

3. *In the similarity of their deaths.* Abel was murdered by his own brother. The Lord's Anointed was put to death at the importunities of His own people, and especially of their ecclesiastical leaders. Cain exclaimed, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Yahweh replied: "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." When the Jewish leaders, supported by the mob which they had assembled to enforce their demands, besought Pilate to turn Jesus over to them that He might be put to death, their raucous cry was, "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matt. 27:25). By their wanton act, the ground has been stained by a blood "that speaketh better than that of Abel" (Heb. 12:24). God took them at their word, as all subsequent history shows. In A.D. 70, the Roman armies entered Jerusalem, after a horrible two years' siege, sacked the city, destroyed the Temple, and carried the Jews into captivity.

4. *In the similarity of the penal sanctions which overtook their murderers.* Cain was branded and sent out into the land of "wandering"; he became an outcast and a vagabond, and his restlessness was transmitted to his posterity. From the day of Messiah's Crucifixion, the Jewish nation has never had a flag it could call its own: even today, despite the establishment of the state of Israeli, the Jewish people remain scattered among all nations, and their Zionistic state faces a precarious future. (Cf. Matt. 8:11-12, 21:42-44, 23:29-39, 24:1-2; Mark 12:10-11, 13:1-2; Luke 11:45-52, 13:34-35, 19:41-44, 20:9-18, 21:20-24, 23:27-31; cf. also Deut. 28:37; Mark 11:12-14; Acts 3:13-15, 7:51-53.) The story is told of Frederick "the Great" of Prussia, who was inclined toward skepticism, once asked one of the ministers of his realm: "Reverend

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Sir, what is the most convincing proof you can give me of the divinity of Christ and the divine inspiration of the Scriptures?" The clergyman hesitated not a moment. "Sire," said he, "the most convincing proof of the divinity of Christ and the inspiration of Scripture that I, or any other person, could give you, *is the history of the Jewish people.*" But, let us not overlook the fact that the blood of Christ is upon the Gentiles as well as the Jews. According to tradition, Pilate, who presumed to cleanse himself of this blood by ceremonially washing his hands in front of the mob (Matt. 27:24-26), later died a suicide in Gaul. Moreover, the death of Christ signaled also the setting in of the dry rot which culminated in the downfall of the Roman Empire itself. The simple fact is that our sins, your sins and mine, crucified the Lord of glory. He bore them all upon His body on the Tree! We have all, Jews and Gentiles alike, been concluded under sin that we might all return to God in the same way and on the same terms (Rom. 3:23, Eph. 3:11-22).

C.H.M. (NBG, 77, 78): "The earth, which on its surface displayed the genius and energy of Cain and his family, was stained underneath with the blood of a righteous man. Let the man of the world remember this; let the man of God remember it; let the worldly-minded Christian remember it. The earth which we tread upon is stained by the blood of the Son of God. The very blood which justifies the Church condemns the world. The dark shadow of the cross of Jesus may be seen by the eye of faith, looming over all the glitter and glare of this evanescent world. 'The fashion of this world passeth away.' It will soon all be over, so far as the present scene is concerned. 'The way of Cain' will be followed by 'the error of Balaam,' in its consummated form; and then will come 'the gainsaying of Core'; and what then? 'The pit' will open its mouth to receive the wicked, and close it again to shut them up in 'blackness of darkness forever.' (Jude

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11-13).” (Cf. Num., chs. 22, 23, 24; esp. Num. 24:3-9 with Num. 31:8, 31:15 ff, 2 Pet. 2:15, Rev. 2:14; Num., ch. 16, 26:9-10, 27:1-5, with Jude 11.)

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REVIEW QUESTIONS ON PART SEVENTEEN

1. State the pagan etymology of the word “religion” as given by Cicero.
2. Considered subjectively, what generally is the word “religion” used to signify?
3. Name some of the practices which are commonly associated with the term.
4. State John Dewey’s definition of the term.
5. What significance has the *object* of religious devotion to the theory and practice in any particular system?
6. Name those matters which true religion *is not*.
7. What are the basic premises of true religion?
8. What is the essence of true religion?
9. What does the term signify in Biblical religion?
10. Explain what is meant by the phrase, the Remedial System.
11. What does the Remedial System include?
12. What is the mainspring of true religion on the Divine side? What is it on the human side?
13. What does God’s grace include?
14. What are the various manifestations of faith which characterize the Spiritual Life?
15. State the *formula* of true religion.
16. What does the word “Dispensation” signify? Name the Dispensations of true religion, and state the extent of each.
17. What kind of change marked changes in Dispensations?

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18. In what Genesis narrative do we find the account of the beginning of true religion?
19. State A. Campbell's explanation of the beginning of true religion.
20. In what interior condition of man did the necessity for true religion arise?
21. By what specific measures did God meet this human need?
22. Was religion provided for man before or after the Fall?
23. What are the elements of true religion?
24. What was the altar in the Patriarchal Dispensation? In the Jewish Dispensation? What is it in our Dispensation?
25. What was the type of priesthood in the Patriarchal and Jewish Dispensations respectively? What is it in our Dispensation?
26. What type of sacrifice was characteristic of the Old Testament Dispensations?
27. What did these offerings point forward to (typify)?
28. State the approximate dates of the Neolithic, Chalcolithic, and Bronze Ages. When did the Iron Age begin?
29. Who were the first sons of Adam and Eve? What different occupations did they choose?
30. Give the details of the first account of sacrifice.
31. In this connection, explain the probable significance of Gen. 3:21.
32. Whose offering was rejected, and whose accepted, by Yahweh?
33. What is the prevailing naturalistic explanation of God's acceptance of the one offering and His rejection of the other?
34. What is the Biblical explanation?

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35. Show how these examples illustrate a basic principle of Biblical interpretation.
36. What is meant by "the righteousness which is of faith"?
37. What is the significance of the blood in the institution of sacrifice?
38. Who is our Passover? Cite the Scripture text which states this fact explicitly.
39. State the proofs of the Divine origin of sacrifice.
40. Distinguish between moral law and positive law.
41. What was the twofold basic design of the institution of sacrifice?
42. Why have men in all ages tended to ignore, neglect, modify, even scoff at God's positive ordinances?
43. What is the Scriptural significance of a positive divine ordinance?
44. What is the testimonial significance of the Christian ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper?
45. Explain what is meant by sacrifice as a propitiation, as a reconciliation, as an expiation, and as a redemption.
46. What does the word "atonement" mean? State clearly the Biblical doctrine of the Atonement.
47. What were the chief characteristics of pagan sacrifices?
48. Why do we say that pagan sacrifices were probably corruptions of the original law of sacrifice as revealed in Scripture?
49. Name some of the remnants of the magical and mystical pagan cults of sacrifice that were carried over into institutionalized Christianity.
50. Who committed the first murder, and why?
51. How did God proceed in dealing with the murderer? What did He first try to do?
52. What was Cain's reaction?
53. In what sense did Cain's offering lack efficacy?

GENESIS

54. What did Cain try to do after killing Abel?
55. What did he say when God bluntly charged him with the crime?
56. What was his attitude?
57. In what sense, would you say, is every man his brother's keeper?
58. What was the "blood feud" or "blood revenge"?
59. In what way did man finally, by law, resolve this problem of blood revenge?
60. Distinguish between *vengeance* and *vindication*.
61. Trace the development of sinful feelings into actual crime, as exemplified in "the way of Cain."
62. What was the first curse ever pronounced on a human being?
63. What is indicated in Cain's cry, "My punishment is greater than I can bear"?
64. In what way or ways did the ground serve as the instrument of punishment to Cain and his posterity?
65. What is the answer to the question, Where did Cain get his wife?
66. Why are Cain, Abel, and Seth the only three children of Adam and Eve mentioned in Scripture?
67. What relation has this fact to the grand design of the Bible as a whole?
68. What was the "mark of Cain"?
69. What purpose was served by this "mark"? Was it a mark of punishment or a mark of Divine grace? Explain your answer.
70. What special obligations does the Christian have toward his brothers in the flesh?
71. What special obligations does the Christian have especially toward those of the household of the faith?

THE BEGINNING OF TRUE RELIGION

72. What proofs do we have from Cain's outcries that he had no real understanding of God?
73. How does Cain's cry of desperation point to the cry of lost souls at the Judgment?
74. What are the marks of genuine faith? How are these related to the Christian ordinances, especially that of Christian baptism?
75. Explain what is meant by the phrase, "God's covering of grace."
76. What are the devices to which men resort as substitutes for this Divine "covering"?
77. What folly is involved in man's presumption that civic morality, fraternalism, respectability, intellectualism, tradition, and the like, will have the efficacy to save him from sin?
78. What is the folly of trying to substitute something "just as good" for implicit obedience to God's laws?
79. How does genuine faith respond to the Divine ordinances?
80. What are the chief characteristics of those who walk in "the way of Cain"?
81. Explain Jude 11.
82. What does the word "profanity" especially imply in Scripture?
83. What are the analogies between the lives of Abel and Christ?
84. In what sense did the punishment which descended on Cain point forward to that which descended on the Jews and Gentiles who crucified Christ?
85. What is the blood "that speaketh better than that of Abel"?
86. In what sense does this blood cry out against all mankind? What, then, is man's only remedy?