



The Holy Sacrifice Of the Mass

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From Sabine Baring-Gould’s

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Fr. Baring-Gould is most famous for his
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From the time that Adam sinned, fallen man has never ventured to draw near to God without a sacrifice. The sentiment that there could be no acceptance without the intervention of a victim was universally prevalent in the ancient world, indicating either a common origin in the instincts of human nature, or the existence of a tradition reaching back to the earliest date of time. Sacrifice was as [widespread] as the belief in God. If men sought the aid of an unseen Power to uphold their weakness, they felt the need of expiation to purify their vileness, and enable them to hold communion with a Holy God. The first recorded act after the Fall is the sacrifice of Cain and Abel.¹ After Noah escaped from the Ark, his spontaneous act was the oblation of sacrifice.² Abraham continually offered to the Lord.³ Sacrifice by Moses was organized into a system. The sacrifices of the Jewish people, under the old law, were lambs, and goats, and bulls, and were with the shedding of blood; they were designed to show forth the future sacrifice of Christ, the true Lamb of God; these sacrifices could not take away the sins of the world,⁴ but they were a recognition of sin before God and of hope in the coming Deliverer. The sin of the world was like a heavy debt weighing on mankind; these sacrifices were like so much interest paid, which gave witness to the fact of man being in debt, but which could not do away the principal. But Christ paid the principal, and therefore there was no more need

¹ Genesis 4:4

² Genesis 8:20

³ Genesis 12:7-8; 13:4; 15:9-10; 22:13

⁴ Hebrews 10:4

for interest to be paid, *i.e.*, no more need for sacrifices. Jesus having on Calvary offered Himself as a Sacrifice for sin,⁵ ascended to Heaven, there to appear in the presence of the Father as our High Priest and Sacrifice. There He stands before the heavenly Altar,⁶ and on that Altar He is as the Lamb that was slain.⁷ Of Course, our sins committed eighteen hundred and more years after the Crucifixion could not have been taken away by that act, for a thing cannot be taken away which does not exist. Therefore there is necessity that the Sacrifice should be continually pleaded for sin as sin is committed. This is what Christ is now doing in Heaven. He there lifts His wounded hands and displays His pierced side before God the Father, and asks and obtains by merit of that Sacrifice the remission of the guilt of all who plead on earth this same Sacrifice.

Now the way in which we plead the Sacrifice of Christ before the Father is the celebration of the Holy Eucharist; for in that we “show the Lord’s death till He come.”⁸ To this St. Paul refers when he says that Christ was evidently set forth crucified before the Galatians.⁹ So Christ is the “full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.”¹⁰

⁵ Hebrews 10; 1 Corinthians 5:7

⁶ Revelation 1:13

⁷ Revelation 5:6

⁸ 1 Corinthians 11:26

⁹ Galatians 3:1

¹⁰ The Book of Common Prayer

His Sacrifice is not repeated, but it is commemorated and applied. The Holy Eucharist can be offered for different objects, and with different intent. Joshua in war time sacrificed to God to obtain peace. Noah offered in thanksgiving for his preservation during the Flood. David in time of plague offered sacrifice, and God stayed the plague.

The Sacrifice is offered under the forms of Bread and Wine. It is the pure offering which Scripture says should be made to God in every place among the Gentiles after Christ’s coming.¹¹

The Sacrifice is offered to God for five objects: -

First: As a remembrance of the death of Christ.¹²

Secondly: As a solemn act of worship.

Thirdly: as an act of thanksgiving.

Fourthly: As a propitiatory sacrifice, or as a means of moving God to pardon our sins.

Fifthly: as a means of obtaining favor of God.

There are also four ends of sacrifice which may well be considered. (1) The adoration of Christ really present. (2) Supplication for mercy. (3) The imploring of blessings. (4) Thanksgiving for benefits.

¹¹ Malachi 1:10-11

¹² Luke 22:19