

The Invisible Sacrifice

by G.W. North

The sermon explores the concept of sacrifice as a fundamental aspect of God's nature, love, and being.

Scripture: Leviticus 17:11, Psalm 51:16, Isaiah 53:5, John 15:13, Romans 12:1, Ephesians 5:2, Hebrews 9:22, Hebrews 10:4, 1 Peter 2:5

Topics: "Spiritual Sacrifice", "The Nature of God's Love"

Description

G.W. North emphasizes that the foundation of the world was laid in a spiritual sacrifice by God, which transcends the traditional understanding of sacrifice associated with sin and atonement. He argues that this divine sacrifice is eternal and rooted in the essence of life itself, rather than being a mere ritual for forgiveness. North explains that while physical sacrifices were instituted for Israel, they were intended to reflect deeper spiritual realities and the nature of God's love. The true significance of sacrifice lies in its representation of God's being and love, rather than the act itself. Ultimately, the visible sacrifices were mere shadows of the greater spiritual truths they were meant to convey.

Transcript

It is a most sobering and significant thought that when God laid the foundations of the world, He laid them in sacrifice. Almost involuntarily there spring to mind all the things it normally associates with that thought -- animals, blood, altar and fire; but not in those things did God make His sacrifice. The sacrifice to which Peter and John refer is not flesh and blood but spiritual sacrifice. There were no flesh and blood creatures in existence when this great sacrifice was made, so all 'normal' sacrifice was completely impossible. This being so, it must also be true that sacrifice did not originally exist nor could then have been made for specific ends such as redemption or atonement or forgiveness, but was practised for some other purpose altogether. This may be quite new, perhaps revolutionary to our thinking, because we have been reared in the evangelical tradition of sacrifice for sin, but this sacrifice had nothing to do with sin, nor was it made for that purpose; it is eternal. The sacrifice of God was not, is not, nor ever shall be made in connection with anything except life itself; it has to do with being, not expiation. For this reason it is without precedent or repetition, and is impossible of imitation; sacrifice is constant in the divine order of being and life.

Sacrifice and offering lie at the heart of God, eternal as He. God is love, and love cannot be apart from sacrifice. That is why God laid it at the heart of Israel's national life. He did not command sacrifice of His people just because of sin but of necessity to proclaim to them Himself; they must know His manner of being and His love. Sacrifice as Israel knew it was the adaptation and application to men's spiritual needs

of the divine science of being. It was the physical phenomenon of a life-principle of deity. At that time sacrifice became sacrifices, repetitious and various. When bodies and blood were sacrificed for various reasons defined by God, they were intended by Him to be outward manifestations of spiritual realities; apart from that they had no value. How many in Israel understood this is a matter of speculation; David almost certainly did.

In process of time physical sacrifice had to be of course, for God had decreed that without shedding of blood remission of sins should never be available to anyone. However, vital though the need for forgiveness is, and necessary as the sacrifice was, whenever it was made the visible sacrifice was not the most important of the transactions then taking place; that for which it stood, and so poorly represented, was always the greater.

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