

THE THEORY OF SACRIFICE.

IN welcoming the publication of M. Alfred Loisy's treatise on the history of sacrifice we have to draw attention to what is virtually a history of religion culminating in a theory of its future.¹ The personality of the author, the significance and, we may add, the opportuneness of the subject, and the wealth of illustrative matter, give the volume an importance which entitles it to a more competent treatment than lies within the power of the present writer. However, the subject of sacrifice is attracting an increasing amount of attention among those who are not theologians, and it holds so central a place in the technical study of religions, that the attempt may be made to describe how M. Loisy's work strikes one from the point of view of comparative religion, and wherein and why the present writer feels obliged to differ from him. As is well known, at the rise of the comparative study of religions new lines of enquiry were opened out the consequences of which cannot even yet be discerned. The discussion of the origin and essential meaning of sacrifice was set upon a new basis. But the variety of standpoints from which the data of religion have been viewed, the difficulty, if not impossibility, of setting aside prejudices and preconceptions, and the size of the field to be investigated, have combined to prevent congruent results. The various theories of sacrifice that have appeared from time to time have been found imperfect, and M. Loisy's volume raises, and in an acute form, problems of principles and methods which are complicating the modern study of religions and are vital for our personal conceptions of religion itself.

It will be remembered that the founder of anthropology, Sir Edward Tylor, chiefly emphasized the gift-aspect of sacrifice: men give to the supernatural beings to achieve some end or to express their indebtedness. There is, in fact, enough evidence to justify the oft-quoted formula *do ut des*, and also the more naïve *dabo si dederis*, for which we may compare Jacob's vow (Gen. xxviii 20-22). On the other hand, Robertson Smith, the founder of comparative religion on the basis of anthropology, directed attention to the sociological and psychological aspects of sacrifice. The community is the religious unit, it included the communal gods or sacred beings (who might be totems); 'the fundamental idea of ancient sacrifice is sacramental communion . . .

¹ *Essai historique sur le Sacrifice*, 552 pp.; Nourry, Paris, 1920, 30 francs.

all atoning rites are ultimately to be regarded as owing their efficacy to a communication of divine life to the worshippers, and to the establishment or confirmation of a living bond between them and their god.¹ To this it has been objected, *inter alia*, that too much stress is laid upon the commensality of gods and men, and that the theory (obviously suggested by Christian evidence) is too universally extended to the lower religious cults. It is, however, freely recognized that there is a 'mystical' element in primitive society, and that the individual does indeed form part of a social system of which the gods are also part. The very etymology of the word 'atonement' is significant, and (a) the place of the individual in some larger whole (however constituted), and (b) his relationship or 'oneness' with what he feels to be most vital for his welfare, are, in effect, two leading lines of enquiry which Robertson Smith powerfully stimulated.

Meanwhile, an important step was being taken by Sir J. G. Frazer. His work may be said to concentrate upon the theory of the ceremonial killing of sacred representative individuals, veritable 'pillars', not merely 'of society', but even of the world or the cosmos. They must be carefully preserved or hemmed in by tabus; or they must be put to death when they show signs of weakness, lest by their loss of strength the welfare of the social group or of the world or of nature be endangered. Sacrifice is seen to be bound up with some very remarkable notions of man's relations with the forces of nature; it serves to strengthen divine kings, or gods, or impersonal powers. Man, in some sense, is part of nature (although that concept has hardly arisen); and the ruling idea is not that of 'religious' communion, homage, or subservience, but the more 'magical' one of man's influence with or power over superhuman or natural forces. While Sir James Frazer illuminates what we may call the mechanism of magic and religion, MM. Hubert and Mauss, taking another line, point out, among other things, that the sacrificial victim is an intermediary between the ordinary world and the realm of the supersensuous, between the 'profane' or 'secular' and the 'sacred'. They very justly emphasize the fundamental significance of the psychical state of all the participants; and it may be added that when F. B. Jevons draws attention to the strange neglect of prayer by students of religion, he points out that prayer and sacrifice are logically indissoluble, and he, likewise, lays stress upon the subjective aspect of the evidence.²

The foregoing is of course no adequate synopsis of modern theories of sacrifice. It merely recalls the many-sidedness of M. Loisy's subject,

¹ See the summary in his *Life* by J. S. Black and G. W. Chrystal (1912), pp. 513-520.

² *Introduction to the Study of the Comparative Religion* (1908), pp. 175 sqq., cf. p. xix.

and it may enable one to realize that one now can pass from a survey of the data of sacrifice to that of theories of sacrifice, their implications and interrelations, and that such theories are themselves material for the next stage in comparative religion. It will be noticed, meanwhile, that they miss one important aspect. Men offer sacrifice or pray to achieve some end, or they simply do or attempt to do what is elsewhere accompanied with sacrifice or prayer; but sooner or later the question arises whether the differences are subjectively or objectively material. Throughout men may be said to imply, at least, some conception of causation, some theory of things, which justifies their prayer or sacrifice to move the forces of nature or influence the gods effectively. They are acting 'as though' certain propositions were true, and it is quite apropos to quote from a Christian writer who has a first-hand acquaintance with the Indian religions that 'religion is a religious *theory* [my italics] controlling, in organized form, the life of a community'.¹ After all, the student does not act otherwise when he approaches the deeper problems of comparative religion in the light of his convictions of what is most real and true, and it is entirely because there are no convergent theories of reality prevailing to-day that the most serious differences are found among lay and other students of religion. The purely theoretical study of sacrifice, as of religion in general, is inevitably bound up with one's implicit or explicit theory of the greatest realities, with the result that M. Loisy's work, like every other, must be estimated with reference to its contribution to modern religion.

Indeed, it is self-evident that in no circumstance can we afford to be indifferent to theories of sacrifice. We are only too painfully familiar with all that sacrifice entails: we think of the destruction, loss, renunciation, or suffering for some greater and perhaps undefined gain, for some faith or hope or ideal. There is to be some recompense; and whatever we may think of any particular aim or cause, we have seen and still see confidence and faith sustaining men, and great sacrifices for some greater assurance. Our experiences of sacrifice are so living and real that when we turn to the data from other lands and ages we can do so in no antiquarian spirit oblivious of what sacrifice means for this age. When men are endeavouring to find in the sacrifices of this age some clear meaning that will guide and inspire the future, the theory of sacrifice in human history cannot be pseudo-academic and ignore the events of to-day, and since M. Loisy is at pains in his volume to shew that the idea of sacrifice has grown increasingly richer and fuller, we are entitled to approach his treatise keeping in mind our experiences, sufferings, and hopes.

Studies of the data of religion invariably reach conclusions of greater

¹ J. N. Farquhar *The Crown of Hinduism* (1913) p. 445.

or less significance for modern thought, and since M. Loisy ends with a positivism, or humanism, or an ethical religion, in which there appears to be no room for religion as commonly understood, although the word is retained, we are entitled to expect careful attention to the facts that are really significant for the trend of religion and to the principles upon which any historical treatment of the subject depend. It goes without saying that anything that proceeds from his fertile and facile pen may count upon a sympathetic reception and will be read with interest and respect. That he would be clear and fearless was to be expected; and M. Loisy writes with courtesy and restraint even where some bitterness might perhaps have been excusable. He has written the most exhaustive treatise on Sacrifice, he has marshalled his evidence fully, accurately, and patiently, and we gratefully recognize the value of a work which no student can afford to neglect. But it must be said at once that its rationalistic temper is likely to prejudice some readers and blind them to the value of its contents, and that others attracted by its brilliance may perchance accept its methods and conclusions without the criticism that they need.

The volume is the fruit of lectures delivered by M. Loisy after his appointment to the Chair of the History of Religions at the Collège de France (May 1909). Sacrificial rites are the most constant and permanent, the most suitable for discerning the spirit of ancient cults. It is for this reason that the subject was chosen. Sacrifice is a genus with a great number of species which have undergone changes of form and significance; they cannot be reduced to a single type; there are as many forms of religion as of human civilization, and sacrificial rites are the skeleton of the principal religious cults (pp. 2, 10, 467). The phraseology is worthy of notice. We have to find the 'skeleton', the skeletal features of human development, and the task of tracing the history of sacrifice is analogous to that of finding a theory of evolution in the world of inorganic and organic matter.

The evolution of sacrifice is to be understood, following M. Loisy, by distinguishing broadly three stages in the history of religion. Among uncivilized tribes 'magical' practices prevail, the rites are imitative or representative, to control an enemy, an edible animal or plant, or the processes of nature. They are, in general, to the end that everything may function for the welfare of the tribe. In time, impersonal natural forces are associated with spirits and are regarded as personal. Food is given to the dead, to spirits, and to gods in order to sustain them. These become patrons of the effective powers, and the gifts are then offerings of homage or gratitude. In spite of the increase of knowledge a belief in personal powers of nature persists, and they are treated more or less as free powers to be won and exploited. The ritual is

avowedly religious, but it partakes of magic, and some religions are cosmical and almost magical (e.g. early China). Throughout, the sacrificial ritual serves to express and develop the national life and consciousness, and in some cases (e.g. early Israel) to eliminate it would be to cut out the most characteristic and essential expression of national life. Little by little the national religions manifest an interest in the eternal and happy life of the individual; and meanwhile the growth of empire favours the growth of ideas of universal religion. 'Saving gods' arise for the individual, and the cults become more spiritual. Still, the magical efficacy of sacrificial rites is not lost, and it is significant that St Paul seriously finds a parallel between pagan and Christian rites and condemns communion with demons (1 Cor. x 17-22, pp. 29, 429). In the Eucharist 'en un sens nous sommes ici très loin des vieux rites magiques, et à d'autres égards nous en sommes encore tout près'.

We are taken from the lower tribes, notably of Australia and Africa, to those more highly organized and developed, until we reach the great national religions. Among them we find brotherhoods, societies, mysteries, and individualistic reforming tendencies, and finally the origins of Christianity itself. It is notoriously difficult to do justice to theories from which one dissents, and we should be sorry to misinterpret and pervert M. Loisy's views; but we are bound to say that as we read him we feel that the historical thread is not a true one, and that the stages are too incommensurable for an evolutionary theory of sacrifice. The difference between the first two stages is that of social and political development, tribes become confederations, nations, &c.; but the difference between the second and the third is accompanied with the disintegration of these larger unions, and the spread of separatist, anti-nationalist, and individualist tendencies, and the rise of a new religion. We have intelligible social-political vicissitudes, but one cannot agree that these stages are a support for M. Loisy's theory of the nature of the fourth stage in the history of religion.

In defining religion and sacrifice M. Loisy seeks a formula that shall represent, not so much the reality or principle that is the basis of all religions, as the general direction which the religions of mankind seem to take (*s'orienter*) as they develop. His qualification is important because differences of opinion constantly turn upon the nature of this orientation, no less than upon the relation between magic (which he rightly regards as unprogressive) and religion (which he hopes to see purged of its supernaturalistic features).¹ As regards the nature of

¹ Page 5: 'La religion est l'ensemble des notions, coutumes et pratiques par lesquelles les hommes vivant en sociétés pensent être constitués en rapport normal avec les puissances ou les principes supérieurs dont ils se croient dépendants.'

sacrifice he considers that in its essence it is neither a gift nor a food-offering to gods, spirits, or the dead. At the lowest stage of mankind there are no personal powers to receive gifts (cf. p. 26). Nor is sacrifice a communion, because the universality of totemism, still less that of the ceremonial eating of the totem, has not been proved. Moreover, when religions have arisen in totemic areas they do not seem to have sprung from totemism (p. 6). M. Loisy's attitude to totemism is not very clear throughout; but in any case the universality of some one type of totemism is not strictly relevant. Totemism contains ideas which, on any theory, are significant for religion, and if religion has not sprung directly from totemism, still less has it grown out of magic. However, the true starting-point of sacrifice is, in his opinion, 'la mentalité magique et mystique de l'homme inculte', which made man see in all living things powers to be managed and resources to be exploited. Here in the '*considération mystique*' of the primitive hunter when he refrains from offending his prey, or hopes, by eating it, to assimilate its virtue, is the germ, though nothing more, of the entire economy of sacrifice. Certainly M. Loisy has at least cut the knot, and it is singular that, while relying upon man's magical and mystical mentality, he objects to the definition of MM. Hubert and Mauss on the ground that their own terms are too abstract and obscure.¹ Granted the fundamental difficulty of finding the best working conceptions, the question is whether we can find such as will have some real meaning for our own world of life and thought. As it is, M. Loisy uses as his key a primitive mysticism, which unreasonably insists upon surviving, and starts with the notion of the concrete 'sacred act' as the ultimate feature of sacrifice. Accordingly, sacrifice is a mystic sacred act of unverifiable efficacy which, while working on the visible world, pretends to rule or influence the forces of the invisible world (p. 9). This last is a world of faith, the faith which affirms the reality of things

Sacrifice is 'une action rituelle,—la destruction d'un objet sensible, doué de vie ou qui est censé contenir de la vie,—moyennant laquelle on a pensé influencer les forces invisibles, soit pour se dérober à leur atteinte lorsqu'on les a supposées nuisibles ou dangereuses, soit afin de promouvoir leur œuvre, de leur procurer satisfaction et hommage, d'entrer en communication et même en communion avec elles'. For the sake of comparison I venture to cite my own tentative statement in the art. 'Religion', Hastings's *Ency. of Rel. and Ethics* p. 693: 'Religion primarily involves some immediate consciousness of transcendent realities of supreme personal worth, vitally influencing life and thought, expressing themselves in forms which are conditioned by the entire stage of development reached by the individual and his environment, and tending to become more explicit and static in mythologies, theologies, philosophies and scientific doctrines.'

¹ They define sacrifice as a 'procédé' which 'consiste à établir une communication entre le monde sacré et le monde profane par l'intermédiaire d'une victime, c'est-à-dire d'une chose consacrée, détruite au cours de la cérémonie' (p. 7).

which are not seen, and justifies the immolation of untold bulls to a Zeus that has never existed. This faith is essential—and we are left wondering at the end whether the next stage in religion is to be solely a 'faith' or whether it will be in some contact with ultimate reality.

M. Loisy draws a necessary distinction between the negative sacrifice, for the elimination of harmful influences, and the positive, which is to regulate or sustain the influences that are beneficial. While it is 'magic' to endeavour to promote the processes of nature or to banish evil, food-offerings are not sacrificial and do not become so until they are combined with the 'sacred act'. Sacrifice itself is not absolutely primitive, because at the lowest level man has no care for the future, no conception of unseen personal powers, and no notion of influencing nature. Food-offerings and sacrifices proper begin with the cult of the dead, and increasing attention to agriculture promotes seasonal rites. In this way sacrifice comes to play an ever larger part in man's life and in the development of ideas of personality; the 'sacred act' has thus made for the abounding richness of social life, though we are reminded that there is no breach of continuity between the magic of totemism and the Eucharist.

After an introduction on the definition of sacrifice (it is 'l'action par excellence, l'action sacrée, mystiquement efficace'), and on the plan of the book, the opening chapter deals with the sacred word and deed, agent, time, and place. Primitive man, when he thinks at all, discovers only 'moyens imaginaires, sans réelle efficacité'; the more devoid these are of any true and natural power, the more effective and holy they are (p. 19). M. Loisy's terms are ambiguous, and we must distinguish between his statement of data and his estimate of their value. When he treats the restrictions (e.g. purity) imposed upon representative individuals (priests, &c.) as primarily magical rather than moral, he characteristically takes a rationalistic rather than a psychological view of early tabus (pp. 39, 101, 107, 118). He remarks that the 'mystic virtue' of the old kings and priests 'est dite esprit saint dans le culte chrétien' and that the power with which certain persons are invested for the accomplishment of certain sacred acts, whether the source be of God or of Christ, is a notion which is essentially the same as in the primitive cults and in the religions of antiquity (p. 45). But he does not observe that he has brought his discussion to the point where, in the interests both of his own theory and of the validity of his own methods, a deeper and completer treatment is necessary if it is to be considered scientific or objective. It is instructive to note quite another method of enquiry in Dr Marett's studies of Mana and Tabu, the widespread conceptions of some wonderful or sacred power which man can utilize, and of the heed, caution, respect, and reverence where

'Mana' or the 'supernatural' is concerned.¹ What Dr Marett calls the 'Tabu-Mana formula' has the merit of emphasizing a typical combination of supreme importance, since Tabu alone can lead to grovelling superstition, Mana alone can end in arrogance or indifference as regards all that is sacred, while, on the other hand, together each regulates and supplements the other. The combined concepts are so invaluable for a more discerning understanding of what we call the 'lower' religions that it is much to be regretted that M. Loisy did not adopt a less rationalistic method of handling the data. It is on the psychological side that his treatise is most open to detailed criticism, although one must freely admit that psychology brings new and difficult problems, and that the more appreciative our attitude to the lower religions the more difficult is it to indicate the true superiority, either of the religions we consider higher or of the religion of humanity by which M. Loisy would replace them.

Again, when M. Loisy turns to the use of blood, sacred water, the Indian *soma*-drink, and the like, he naturally notes that blood was regarded as a source of life (p. 49, cf. pp. 81, 189); but does he observe the real significance of the psychical state produced by the *soma* and its vision of immortality? Men, taken out of themselves, and in a state often artificially produced by 'elevating' liquor, or drugs, or tobacco, have felt that they participate in another existence; they have had experiences which confirmed old religious convictions or gave birth to new ones. Throughout, there has been enough to justify Plato's jibe at the 'immortality of drunkenness'; but M. Loisy leaves off at a point where serious questions arise which concern his own special subject.

The second chapter ('La Figuration rituelle') contains a description, admirable from the purely comparative point of view, of the world-wide imitative and symbolical practices. What is 'une réalité mystique' will seem to outsiders a drama if not a comedy. Capable of becoming more ideal and spiritual, the symbolism remains religious as long as it is a mystic realism, otherwise it is a dramatic representation, and not a sacred act, a sacrifice, or a sacrament (pp. 59-61). The imitative ceremonies for the food-supply become periodical, and the yearly round of nature, with nature's life, death, and rebirth, impresses itself upon the 'primitive theologies'. Men seem to collaborate with the gods, there is a correspondence between the mundane liturgy and the celestial order; and indeed, viewed from the outside, the mimetic rites are often

¹ *The Threshold of Religion* (1914), especially chapters iii, iv, and vii ('the birth of humility'). He concludes chap. iv with the words: 'in the meantime all religions, low and high, rudimentary and advanced, can join in saying with the Psalmist that "power belongeth unto God"'.

as extraordinary as the superb *naïveté* of the actors. Only from the inside can we see the strange tabus, the restraint, pain, and discipline, the typical sincerity of the actors, and the solemnity of the proceedings. M. Loisy does not fail to note the social and moral value of even the primitive sacrifices and their educative value in associating men with their ancestors and in thus engendering a sense of social unity (p. 116). In course of the progressive spiritualization of the rites the lives of men were incalculably strengthened and enriched. But the development was a complex one. Rites were detached from their original purpose and entered into a new social organism; they were extended to a more general purpose, and, like the Passover, served some great national purpose. Ceremonies to 'procure' became commemorative (cf. p. 500), and the cycle of the year would be associated with events of tribal or national history, no less than with the course of nature and the cosmical order. Upon these and other vicissitudes M. Loisy is exceedingly helpful, and he reminds us that, in the circumstances, the interpretation of any rite cannot necessarily be determined from its origin (pp. 70 sqq.), a principle of the greatest importance in view of his own emphasis upon the magical origin of the higher religions.

M. Loisy's discussion in this and other chapters of the rise of Christianity cannot be very well summarized. He points out that in early Christianity, as in the mysteries, the religion is not that of the nation, but of the individual. Religion is tending to be universal, but the extant religions are still religions of the elect; and although Christianity has the ideal of an international brotherhood, a true religion of humanity has yet to be sought (pp. 74 sq., 123, 537). The movement of religion is towards a profounder spiritualization, and the Christian rites differ from others in the fact that nature is excluded. Thus they stand in contrast to the physico-moral symbolism of the Avestan religion (cf. pp. 86, 465). But M. Loisy does not, I think, refer to St Paul's conception of the whole of creation as groaning and travailing (Rom. viii 22), and in view of his argument towards a religion of humanity and of the varying ideas of the relation between Man and Nature as exemplified in the magical and religious systems, where the concept of Nature has hardly emerged, it is exceedingly instructive that in the apostle's mind Nature should so participate in Man's hope that religious evolution might seem to be only part of a greater and grander process which our current dichotomies obscure. A humanism, no less than a theism, has to take an intelligible attitude to what we call 'Nature'.

The complexity of social-religious development is also illustrated in the vicissitudes of (a) the totem, which may become a veritable anthropomorphic sacred being, (b) the conception of the totem-essence or

spirit in which the members of the group participate, and (c) the officiating members themselves. In the last-mentioned we have the representatives. They represent (in one sense) the revered or sacred object or being, and (in another sense) the rest of the group (pp. 75 sqq., 80, 85). This representation, and in the twofold sense of the term, is an exceedingly important conception. The special individuals represent, realistically or symbolically, spirits, gods, or cosmic powers, and also, often quite realistically, the whole of which they are the representative part. For M. Loisy this latter 'mystical' representation of the whole by means of a part is on a line with primitive mystical mentality (cf. p. 235 sqq.), but it really manifests an idea capable of profound restatement.¹ The 'representative' represents others, whether in some undifferentiated or in some more or less specialized sense; and where he is an intermediary, in the religious sphere—representing the gods to men and (in the other sense) men to the gods—he serves to guide the ideas of the group. For, in the first place, it typically happens that in the 'sacred' or 'holy' state the representative is conscious of that which is more holy and sacred; and, second, in the sacrifice of the holy to the holiest the worshippers become conscious of a reality far transcending that of the visible and familiar representative.

But M. Loisy, harping upon the magical and the mystical, seems to miss the vast importance of the idea of representation, so vital also for the political and social philosophy of this age, and fails to come to grips with the subject. Moreover, when purifying rites are under consideration, and the familiar ritual of the scape-goat discussed, he follows in the footsteps of those who see only the simplicity or the folly of man's belief in the efficacy of the ceremonial.² These writers do not perceive that we need some explanation or theory—of mankind, natural selection, or divine rule—such that we may understand this evolution and why man's nature has so deceived (!) him. We need a theory to account for this apparent irrationality. The endeavour to explain the existence of beliefs and practices which one deplores goes back at least to the day

¹ For example, I notice incidentally that Mr Wells (*God the Invisible King*, 1917, p. 115) speaks of a new religious conception of the God-fearing man who performs the will of God in his private life and in the acts and order of the state and nation of which he is part. He continues: 'I give myself to God not only because I am so and so but *because I am mankind*.' Here is only one of many cases where a religion of humanity, to have any success, must pay heed to human tendencies as manifested both in the world's religions and in writers on religion.

² Cf. Sir J. G. Frazer *The Scape-goat* Preface, on the old 'superstitions' and the 'process which has refined the base and foolish custom of the scape-goat into the sublime conception of a God who dies to take away the sins of the world'. So M. Loisy writes: 'le mythe chrétien de la rédemption est le plus sublime effort qui ait été tenté pour moraliser cette vénérable absurdité' (p. 127, cf. p. 15).

of Ezekiel (Ezek. xx 25 sq.). We do not expect M. Loisy to accept Ezekiel's solution, but in a treatise of this sort an author is bound to pay a little more regard to the curious or thoughtful reader who is not so easily satisfied by his *deus ex machina*.

M. Loisy's survey of the varieties of sacrifice is valuable. He argues that cannibalism preceded human sacrifice (p. 114); for sacrifice is to create and increase life, and what more potent victim than man? Apart from the question of priority, the interesting point is that when we ask what is meant by 'life', it is precisely here that, as he well remarks, the idea of sacrifice admits of growing increasingly humane, moral, and spiritual (cf. p. 120). Sacrifice, then, is to strengthen life; but what is killed is not really annihilated, and we have to bear in mind that primitive man could recognize a 'spiritual' aspect of the 'material', e. g. the 'soul' of objects, metals, &c.¹ Without deciding whether the cult of the dead or that of spirits of nature is the earlier (p. 131, cf. p. 12), he urges that the belief in the efficacy of the dead must be the starting-point of any enquiry into sacrificial rites. The dead were to be feared and avoided, or they were to be besought and their help implored, or their continued welfare was secured by appropriate mortuary cults. The more powerful dead naturally received greater attention, and the conviction of the mutual interdependence of dead and living, and of some relationship between men and spirits who, if not dead ancestors, were at least regarded as personal and effective powers, gave rise to numerous ideas and speculations which were commonly of a most inconsistent character.

In turning next to the seasonal sacrifices, the pacification of the animal to be killed (pp. 205 sqq.) and the practice of first-fruits, thank-offerings, and the like, are especially important. We note, *inter alia*, that the sacred being (edible totem, effective spirit, &c.) will not hurt its own kin, and that offerings will be made to the spirits or gods who are the givers or effective powers, or, it may be, to the men who represent the gods. The offerings serve, among other purposes, as a safeguard against sterility or to guarantee future blessings. It would be imprudent to over-simplify, but it may be suggested that there are two fundamental features, one, the common custom of preserving a *material* portion of a dead animal to secure its reincarnation, the other, the observance of some rite in order to preserve its *spirit* or soul, so that, although it has been eaten as food, it can be born again. These seem to me to be fundamental, and it is worth while referring (in a foot-note) to the elaborate system among the Esquimaux of the Behring Straits, the best points of which are not brought out by M. Loisy, although they

¹ Some examples of primitive symbolism are given on pp. 119 (the symbolical representation of grain), 161 n. 7, 479 n. 2.

are given by Frazer.¹ When, a little later (p. 212), he has occasion to comment upon the close connexion (on his definitions) between religion and magic, it is necessary to bear in mind the numerous marginal cases where we have to rely upon our own particular definitions, and upon the assumption that the original informants have given all the essential details. We sometimes find two virtually identical imitative ceremonies (e.g. to ensure child-birth), but because in the one there is a prayer which is apparently wanting in the second, it seems only natural to class them as religion and magic respectively. Yet we obviously cannot afford to be so entirely at the mercy of our observer; and even if we grant his accuracy, we clearly need a sounder basis for our estimate of the two rites. We need some conception of psychological or mental development (the subjective aspect) and also some conception of the Divine working in human development.

The inexhaustible topic of divination is handled only as far as sacrifice is concerned, and M. Loisy observes, truly enough, that sacrifice is, on the one hand, a presage, it carries a meaning, it requires interpretation, it is a revelation; on the other hand, it is to produce a revelation, to influence a decision, or bring about a result. He holds that the divination-sacrifice goes back before the recognition of personal spirits to the stage where the animal was more or less a member of the kindred group, participating in the same life (p. 267). From the first there was a glint of divinity in the beast immolated for purposes of divination; and it is an easy step to the sacrifice of a specific sacred animal and thence to the consultation of the gods through the interpretation of the carcase. So, divination became the science of the absurd (p. 270)—though it might have been added that divination by means of the liver (in ancient Mesopotamia) paved the way for anatomy, even as astrology led to astronomy; and perhaps the age of pseudo-sciences is not yet past! M. Loisy does not fail to notice the inconsistency in this type of sacrifice, for if the sacrificial victim reveals the unseen, why repeat it when the first attempt is unsatisfactory, and if what is fixed is fixed, how can any sacrifice alter it? There is some compromise between religion and magic (p. 269 sq.). But this compromise runs through all religion and deserves a deeper analysis. It is easy to see

¹ Frazer *Taboo* pp. 207, 295; see also *Index Volume*, s.v. 'Sedna'. The goddess Sedna preserves the souls of the seals and whales that have been killed and eaten by the Esquimaux, and they are sent forth again to be reborn. The capture of the food and the welfare of these souls depend upon the observance by the hunters of certain tabus of a moral order. So, not only can the animals be reincarnated and used again as food (cf. for analogies, Loisy, pp. 23, 205 sq.), but the system of ensuring the food-supply (without prejudicing the sanctity of life) is bound up with a spiritual theory of tabus and a belief in a deity of a moral order. Frazer notes that 'we seem to see a system of animism in the act of passing into religion'.

a profound difference between the reliance upon witchcraft, and the like, in order to learn the future and the unknown, and the reliance upon a religion which helps one to face any future. Similarly, we can distinguish between the assumption that events are pre-ordained or pre-determined, and the confidence in principles or truths that are unchangeable and permanent, manifesting themselves inevitably in history and therefore the required basis of all one's actions. But man is only slowly understanding the universe in which he finds himself, and the divination-sacrifice is in keeping with the paradoxes of religion and magic, in the sense that men act as though they held in their grasp the powers otherwise attributed to unseen forces or gods, while, at the same time, they feel themselves to be in the hands of these mighty forces themselves. From the comparative point of view we may find an analogy in the paradox of the immanence and transcendence of the Divine, and there is no evident reason why this paradox should not have been realized at an early stage of development.¹ It may be added that at the conclusion of the chapter M. Loisy finds the oracular sacrifice in the early interpretations of the crucifixion.² To this it may be said that the present age is witnessing not only sacrifices for some larger, if undefined or unknown hope, but also the anxiety to find an interpretation in the sacrifices of the past and present that shall be a solace and a stimulus—the deeper study of the world's religions cannot be divorced from the unrest in the realm of religious thought.³

In the sacrifices that accompany oaths, ordeals, and alliances the gods are secondary; the primary idea being that of magical constraint. M. Loisy agrees with Westermarck that in the use of the oath of imprecation—which he finds implied in 1 Cor. xi 29 sq. (p. 306)—the morality of the god did not provoke the appeal, but the custom of appealing gradually moralized the god (p. 289). This view is instructive on account of the admitted relation between the character of a people's god or gods, and the psychology of a people with all its moral, social, and other ideals. Thus, as regards the Semites, the psychology of this people is reflected in its conceptions of its gods, which in turn influence the various forms of Semitic life and thought. But, if we are neither

¹ There marks on the Mana-Tabu formula above (cf. p. 334, n. 1) will have shewn that some rudimentary form of this paradox is to be recognized if the data are to be handled intelligibly.

² He refers further to his *Mystères païens* pp. 273-285.

³ It should be mentioned that M. Loisy passes too abruptly from the rudimentary and national religions to Christian thought without enlarging upon the religious ideas discussed and developed, e. g. in Indian, Chinese, and Hebrew thought. Between the seemingly concrete 'magic' and the more explicitly 'spiritual' there are intermediate stages which do not receive the attention they merit. This criticism does not by any means apply to M. Loisy alone.

polytheists nor thorough-going rationalists it is not so easy to describe the vicissitudes of the gods. As theists we have to study the relations between God and man, and in studying religion we bear in mind Robertson Smith's conception of the typical group-unit in which the gods and worshippers are one, and we have to follow the history of systems of thought. When we take a long view and survey the religion of a people or of an area, at one time, it is seen to be permeating and stimulating the environment, whereas, at another, it appears to lag behind the advance of ethics and knowledge. Vicissitudes of this sort in the actual history of religion scarcely support Westermarck's too facile generalization, and we have to estimate it in the light of the fact that men's conceptions of gods are not to be confused with the ultimate realities which underlie religion. How did a people come to have higher moral conceptions of their god?—that is the question which Westermarck's view does not answer.

In chap. viii we learn that sacrifices of purification and expiation have also a magical origin. But the moral element gradually grows as society comes to recognize the significance of purity and impurity. Impurity and sin are primarily physical, and the modern conception of sin as a voluntary offence, an internal disorder of the mind, makes it difficult to follow the evolution of the fundamental ideas (p. 319). We constantly find an amalgam of magic, religion, and morality; and the magical and magico-religious rites, where the sacrificial victim (animal or human) delivers men from the demons that torment them, are the ancestor of the idea that the death of Christ was a ransom and substitute (p. 361 sq.).

The following chapter, on the sacrifices of consecration, introduces the reader to the means whereby men acquire *mana*, inaugurate a guardian or *genius*, or in any way strengthen the realm of the supernatural.¹ The chapter is all too short considering the fundamental ideas that are involved, but M. Loisy has not failed to signal out one especially interesting feature. By means of a foundation-sacrifice or the like it was thought to be possible to give a building a protector, or ensure the safety of its occupants. Christianity spiritualized this: 'la seule différence — qui est considérable au point de vue de l'humanité, mais presque nulle quant à la signification religieuse des rites — consiste

¹ Here should be noticed the Egyptian custom of presenting a small image of Maat to the divine statue when it is being consecrated. Now, Maat was the goddess of Truth, so that by this practice the statue, we may say, became a real god, in very truth (cf. e. g. *Ency. Brit.* art. 'Egypt', p. 54, col. 1). M. Loisy regards Maat as a sort of 'vertu divine' and thus misses what is clearly behind the Egyptian mind. And this is only one of many cases where a more psychological penetration takes us into the mind of men whose mentality, though it may differ from our own, is well worth while trying to understand.

en ce que le Christianisme utilise des morts glorieux pour la consécration de ses temples et l'avantage des fidèles qui y fréquentent, tandis que la barbarie antique tuait des hommes tout exprès pour la garantie de ses bâtiments' (p. 382). Similarly, there is a whole world of difference between the altar consecrated by the bones of the faithful (Rev. vi 9) and the deliberate sacrifice of sacralized victims in order to dedicate a shrine.¹ But surely the 'religious' significance of the difference is as important for the history of religion as the 'humanitarian', and it is analogous to that between the divination-sacrifice for a purpose and the interpretation of a sacrifice (above, p. 339).

In the chapter on initiation we verge upon questions which are as essential for M. Loisy's subject and his anticipations as was that of representation. He discusses initiation into the community as a whole (among simpler tribes), that of special individuals (including the consecration of chiefs and priests), and that into religious societies and brotherhoods. The three correspond approximately to his three great stages of development (above p. 330 sq.). Initiation itself is a world-wide phenomenon. The ordeals of the initiates have their relatively mild equivalents in civilized societies, the psychological factors are throughout similar, and when the initiate has become 'one of us' there is a new bond that may be far more effective than that of blood-kinship. Among the Central Australian Arunta, the most primitive of all tribes, initiation means participation in the 'pouvoir mystique' of the tribe, and its little world of beliefs and practices (p. 388). Upon the higher levels, as among the Zuñis of New Mexico, the initiate enters into rapport with the dead, spirits, gods, or cosmic powers. Even among African tribes the rites of circumcision are something more than a preparation for the sexual life, and the practice which acquired a unique religious and national significance for the Jews does not seem to have been without some sacramental meaning even for the lowest tribes (*ib.*). But here M. Loisy has not observed an important fact. When circumcision was practised, not as a puberty-rite, but shortly after birth, the infant was introduced at once into the community, and without the discipline and training in matters of tribal significance which the puberty-rite involved. And in general, while in the growth and differentiation of primitive society the earlier initiation ceremonies for the effective group as a whole came to be confined to special classes of individuals (in the rise of class-divisions), the entrance into the community as a whole was extended to those who had no sense of communal responsibility. Throughout the

¹ Franz Boll, in his studies on the *Weltbild der Apokalypse*, has an ingenious astral explanation of the martyrs under the altar (cf. the review in *Revue Biblique*, April 1921, p. 285 sq.); but an astral version of the old sacrificial rite can only be secondary. An astral *façon de penser* cannot be primary.

social-religious sphere we find indications that questions arose as to the position of the new-born, and the necessity was felt not only of not excluding them, but also of formally including those old enough to understand their position. In more differentiated societies we see the significance of infant baptism and of some later service (communion), virtually corresponding to the practices in undifferentiated societies; and further instructive parallels emerge as society became more complex. People then came to feel that they had an *a priori* claim to the favour of their gods, without any initiation, introduction, or discipline. They grew up with the expectation of divine favours which had otherwise been part of a veritable system of mutual claims. They took over certain concepts and ideas which primarily belonged to a sort of organized, self-supporting, and self-regulating system.¹ Hence it is interesting to see, at a more advanced and differentiated stage, that people will feel they have an *a priori* claim upon the state, although primarily the claim of the individual to the protection of the social-religious group was bound up with a unifying system of ideas in which the responsibilities no less than the privileges were clearly understood.

This digression seems called for because any treatment of the *history* of religion, particularly one with a distinctive theory of its next stage, might reasonably be expected to take a more dynamic view of the actual vicissitudes. It is in these recurring tendencies that we may see a clue to the real history of religion and escape that curiously mechanical and intellectualistic conception of religion which mars M. Loisy's learned treatise. Another question which merited fuller treatment is the revelation to the initiated of the awe-inspiring secrets. If the revelation destroys infantile credulity and popular myth, it also preserves a belief in the virtue of the initiation; but is it possible that it is a false revelation, a semi-rationalism (so p. 389)? We have not yet reached the heart of the matter. In citing the New Mexican evidence M. Loisy appears to overlook a certain moral aspect of the revelation: among the Sia Indians the masked men who represent the gods disclose their identity and tell the boys, 'now you know the katsuna [gods] you will henceforth have only good thoughts and a good heart, some day perhaps you will be one of us.'² The revelation of the mysteries does not

¹ One may consider the compound ideas Mana + Tabu, Immanence + Transcendence, and Liberty + Responsibility (or the like), and the way in which confusion has arisen through concentration upon one element only of each pair.

² Hutton Webster, *Primitive Secret Societies* (1908), pp. 187-189. Miss J. Harrison (*Themis*, p. 63) notes that the sanctity of the sacred bull-roarer survives the revelation, and speaks of the fundamental awe which 'is on the way to be reverence, and reverence is essentially religious'. Dr Marett (*Threshold of Religion*, pp. 157 sqq., 164) has a characteristic discussion of the ἀποκάλυψις: 'the native mind [is not discomfited by the discovery that the sacred bull-roarer is of

necessarily have a disintegrating effect. Familiarity with and the most intimate knowledge of what has been respected or revered need not breed contempt. This age, when the mysteries are being forced to disclose their secrets as never before—through comparative religion, biblical criticism, science, &c.—has to find some more satisfactory explanation of human nature than the cul-de-sac of the rationalist and the positivist; and the fact remains that the fuller knowledge of the sacred, instead of turning it into superstition, can make it more sacred.

A valuable chapter on the place of sacrifice in the ordinary service of the gods may be specially commended for its exposition of M. Loisy's main theories (pp. 419-466). Sacrifice is to feed and strengthen the gods who now receive tribute and homage. We are at a higher stage; but the primitive magic survives, for it is magic to offer food to spirits who do not exist, but are supposed to direct the cosmos (p. 422). The sacrifice-idea is, however, fuller; and at last the rite becomes 'a sort of universal sacrament bringing to all the circumstances of the national, family, and individual life, the guarantee of divine protection and indulgence' (p. 456). The renunciation is for some ultimate profit; it had always been for an increase of life (cf. p. 120), but the ideas have become richer and, we must add, more in harmony with our modern Western thought. In nourishing the gods man had hoped to be nourished himself (p. 439)—we have always to observe this indefinable unity of gods and men, all part of one thought-system, so to say; and it is therefore the more illogical, though hardly surprising, when M. Loisy concluded by simply eliminating all that section of experience and thought which lies outside the positivist's grasp. That man has been looking through distorting glasses we can understand, for we can see the nature of some of the distortions and perceive the efforts to remedy them. But when M. Loisy virtually tells us that what we are looking at does not exist, and that the next stage in religion must recognize this, he is sawing off the bough on which he is sitting. He himself points out that religion is tending towards universality, it has emancipated the individual from society and has placed him in absolute contradiction with his starting-point; the goal, however, is not to dissolve society but to make it perfect, and to unite human groups into a more profound unity (p. 461). Precisely, and therefore a stage far removed from the 'magical' or 'religious' ideas that prevail among men is hardly to be expected.¹

wood and string but] struggles hard against materialism, seeking to distinguish the inward grace from its external vehicle, though all uncertain whether to ascribe to this indwelling vitalizing force a personal or a quasi-impersonal nature.'

¹ The chapter ends typically enough with these words on the Christian sacrament (p. 466): 'puissant ressort de confiance morale, mais toujours dans la ligne des

The sacrificial systems of the different religions are next sketched in outline (pp. 467-520). The chapter may be recommended as a general survey of the whole field. Notice should be taken of the intermediate stages (e.g. p. 483), since they strengthen the view that there is no clear-cut division between 'magic' and 'religion', and that consequently the history of religion in the future is unlikely to deviate so drastically from its path in the past as M. Loisy expects. He draws special attention to the primitive ideas underlying the higher religions, and concludes that even the post-Reformation treatment of the Last Supper, in spite of the protest that it is not a sacrifice, is along the line of evolution of the 'sacred action', as long as it is bound up with ideas of sin and expiation, of a mystical regeneration and of life eternal 'comme avec des réalités'. What has to be said in this and other chapters on the mystery-religions is of course treated far more fully by M. Loisy in his *Mystères païens*.¹ But we have not noticed any discussion of the points which fall to be considered at this stage—that is, if, instead of a merely 'comparative' study of comparable data, we are to consider the underlying ideas, their value, and their future development. What is said, for example, on the salvation of the individual and the mysteries (p. 506 sqq.) certainly needs to be supplemented by (1) the part played by the idea of the Suffering Servant, (2) individualist tendencies outside the Western Asiatic area, and (3) the recurring tendency to demand a Saving or Redeeming God in Central and Eastern Asia no less than in the West.

Only the briefest mention can be made of M. Loisy's concluding chapter. Sacrifice is not absolutely primitive—earliest man did not attempt to provide for his food, and the feeding of the dead is not primary. Nor has it always had the same meaning. Its history has been an increasing rationalizing of practices in themselves devoid of reason and morality. Yet, 'il y a autant de magie à prétendre émouvoir la divinité par une prière, obtenir l'immortalité bienheureuse et entrer dans la communion de l'Être suprême par le moyen d'un sacrement, qu'à vouloir produire un phénomène naturel par la vertu d'une incantation et d'une mimique quelconque . . . c'est une projection d'activité mystique en dehors de la réalité' (p. 525). The fundamental misconception is the magical one of the part representing the whole—the ear of corn and the harvest, the firstling and the flock, the leader and the

sacrifices antiques; car il s'agit toujours, moyennant une action sacrée, une figuration rituelle, de prendre assurance d'un concours invérifiable.' But what 'concours vérifiable' is to take its place?

¹ Reviewed at length by R. P. Lagrange in the *Revue biblique*, 1920, pp. 420-446, who also discusses exhaustively the Attis cult and Christianity, *ib.* 1918, pp. 419-480.

people, the First Adam symbolical of sinful humanity—it is the same ‘mirage mystique’, though the Christian is grander and more beautiful (p. 526; cf. above, p. 336 and n. 1). The Christian sacrament has points of contact with lower cults from the Arunta upwards, but there are significant differences, although its truth lies in faith, and faith alone (pp. 529 sqq.). The history of sacrifice is that of the most tenacious illusion that ever held man—the irrational and vain effort to buy the free use of things already at men’s disposal, to buy the prosperity of nations, which, however, depends upon themselves, and upon causes or accidents ‘que ne gouverne aucune volonté arbitraire’, and to buy a happy immortality, ‘avantage incertain, insaisissable, et qui, dans la mesure où il pourrait correspondre à une réalité, ne dépendrait d’aucun rite sacrificiel, d’aucun symbole de rédemption’ (p. 531). The profit that has arisen from sacrifice has never been that which was sought. Sacrifice has given men ‘confiance morale en la vie’; it has helped men to face real and imaginary dangers, and in daring they did actually obtain more or less what they wanted. The ‘sacred act’ wrought the social bond which has led from the group of savages to the idea of universal brotherhood foreshadowed in Christianity, from the childish traditions of the Arunta to the artificial but inspiring traditions amid which Christianity has grown up. So, finally, we are to pass (with M. Loisy) to the goal to which the religions have apprenticed man.

His concluding pages on the goal of the world’s religions do not admit of any summary that would do justice to his eloquent idealism. He looks for a ‘faith’ which, leaving aside the old symbols and rites—an obstacle to the progress of humanity—will give humanity new zest. *Religions* die, but not *Religion*: every religion has never been aught else than the self-consciousness of society, realizing itself in the sacred act. Humanity—if we understand him aright—will evolve its own religion to satisfy its own needs and aspirations. And the needs are the three religious needs: confidence in life, social cohesion, and devotion to society (p. 539). Humanity can, as always, be self-confident; and, while the ‘sacred act’ was always superfluous, duty will be the sole effective sacrifice.¹ Duty requires a faith that must be ‘religious’, but in no equivocal sense; there must be no adhesion to old beliefs, no mystical union with a metaphysically transcendent being. Faith is trust in life and of its becoming perfect, and it expresses itself in moral grandeur, and in the love for concrete humanity—for our environment,

¹ Remarking that the survival of magic more or less paralysed the national religions, and the survival of national religion [i.e. particularism] cramped the ‘économies de salut’, he asks: ‘serait-il si téméraire de dire que les économies de salut se sont posées finalement au travers d’un épanouissement plus large de l’humanité?’

country, and nation. Religion is the respect for right, the right of every individual in society, and society's rights towards the individual. Religion is the respect for the humanity in ourselves, 'et l'on peut espérer que ce respect finira bien par être plus efficace de bonheur pour les hommes que ne le fut jamais la considération de forces insaisissables, images flottantes de l'humanité qui se cherchait elle-même et qui pensait trouver dans ces idoles l'appui qu'en réalité elle prenait dans son propre cœur' (p. 540).

This summary though, it is hoped, not unfair account of M. Loisy's treatise may afford some idea of its range, character, and value. Its idealism is often exceedingly attractive, and the wealth of material makes it invaluable to all students. Space has not permitted a more adequate account of the contents of a book which, in a second edition, would gain by an enlarged index.¹ However strongly one dissents from his general tendencies one must recognize that his array of material—often more valuable than his interpretations, which we can correct—is more likely to attract the intelligent reader than many of the apologetic works which are as extreme in their way as M. Loisy is in his. But apart from this the weakness of M. Loisy's constructive work cannot pass unnoticed. The religion of humanity is no new ideal; it has been criticized frequently and fully, and M. Loisy does not meet the criticisms. Comtism has had noteworthy vicissitudes which are exceedingly significant for M. Loisy's theories. It does not prove to answer human needs, and it is strange that a writer who is aware that the early ethical Buddhism (the Hinayana) could not become a religion of the people (in the Mahayana) until it nourished ordinary human aspirations (pp. 534 sqq.) should not have borne this in mind.² A well-known psychologist, who manifests no weakness for an orthodox or transcendental religion, has observed that Comtism itself was obliged to 'smuggle in' the concepts it condemned as illegitimate, and he, for his part, looks for a religion where 'humanity would be regarded as an expression of *transhuman Power* [my italics] realizing itself in Humanity'. Yet he quite perceives

¹ There should be many more headings, e. g. Continence (or Purity, Sin, or the like), Holocaust, Magic (e. g. pp. 422, 523), St Paul, Prayer, Saracens (the oft-cited Nilus, pp. 437, 455, 515), Varuna (pp. 342, 396). Moreover, several of the important headings are very incomplete, e. g. Sacrifice, Human (add pp. 492, 501), Durkheim (add p. 468 and other important references), Figuration (p. 75, &c.), Prémices (pp. 203, 426 &c.). An index of biblical passages would be appreciated; also, perhaps, one of the chief classical references.

² Mr Wells, commenting upon Sir Harry Johnstone's plea for a religion that would devote itself to the Service of Man, remarks, with all truth, 'without God, the "service of man" is no better than a hobby or a sentimentality or an hypocrisy in the undisciplined prison of the mortal life' (*God the Invisible King* p. 113).

that if this Power be regarded as 'purposive intelligence' we get back to the theism that must at all costs be avoided.¹ Indeed, M. Loisy's solution raises so many problems of the sort that persistently clamour for solution that it is, again, a little surprising that an historian of religion has not taken steps to anticipate this, has not, one might almost suspect, even realized the necessity.

In view of the fact that this age is endeavouring to reconcile its experiences, aspirations, and positive knowledge, a constructive essay towards a religion of humanity would at least have been suggestive, but that is not what lies before us in this volume. M. Loisy's tendencies and conclusions are an illustration of the bankruptcy of certain methods of research; and this is the more to be deplored, because the study of religions, as cautious readers will find in this treatise itself, has very much to contribute to a better conception of religion, and, therefore, to a further stage in the history of religion.

STANLEY A. COOK.

THE SYNOD OF ALEXANDRIA AND THE SCHISM AT ANTIOCH IN A.D. 362.

(continued)

V. ANTIOCH.

MEANWHILE at Antioch Lucifer, who had proceeded thither with other bishops² after the preliminary council in the Thebaid, endeavoured to carry into effect the policy arranged with Eusebius and Asterius who had gone to Alexandria. As Eusebius understood it, the intention was to reconcile the Eustathians and Meletians, and ordain Paulinus as bishop of both. Lucifer, however, found the Meletians' loyalty to their still absent bishop greater than he had expected. They refused to reunite under Paulinus. The right course would then have been to have informed the Synod of the difficulty of effecting a reunion. But Lucifer's whole project, the reconquest of the churches for the uncompromised, was in danger; his impetuous nature would not brook the opposition, and, in concert with Cymatius and Anatolius, he ordained Paulinus, who promptly sent his legates to Alexandria. Their

¹ J. A. Leuba *A Psychological Study of Religion* (1912) pp. 312 sq., 326 sqq., 332.

² Among them were probably Cymatius of Palta in Coele Syria, Anatolius of Beroea [the *Tonnus* probably wrongly has Euboea], and Karterius of Antaradus *vide infra*.