protest in a strong form, “ I have come to abolish the sacrifices; and if ye do not cease from sacrificing the wrath of God will not cease from you ” (Epiph. xxx. 16). Among the Greeks the philosophers had come to use both argument and ridicule against the idea that the offering of material things could be needed by or acceptable to the Maker of them all. Among both Jews and Greeks the earlier forms of the idea had been rationalized into the belief that the most appropriate offering to God is that of a pure and penitent heart, and among them both was the idea that the vocal expression of contrition in prayer or of gratitude in praise is also acceptable. The best instances of these ideas in the Old Testament are in Psalms 1. and li., and in Greek literature the striking words which Porphyry quotes from an earlier writer, “ We ought, then, having been united and made like to God, to offer our own conduct as a holy sacrifice to Him, the same being also a hymn and our salvation in passionless excellence of soul ” (Euseb. *Dem. eυ.* 3). The ideas are also found both in the New Testament and in early Christian litera­ture: “ Let us offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to His name ” (Heb. xiii. 15); “That prayers and thanksgivings, made by worthy persons, are the only perfect and acceptable sacrifices I also admit” (Just. Mart. *Trypho,* c. 117); “We honour God in prayer, and offer this as the best and holiest sacrifice with righteousness to the righteous Word ” (Clem. Alex. *Strom.* vii. 6).

But among the Jews two other forms of the idea expressed themselves in usages which have been perpetuated in Christianity, and one of which has had a singular importance for the Christian world. The one form, which probably arose from the conception of Yahweh as in an especial sense the protector of the poor, was that gifts to God may properly be bestowed on the needy, and that consequently alms have the virtue of a sacrifice. Biblical instances of this idea are—“ He who doeth alms is offering a sacrifice of praise” (Ecclus. xxxii. 2); “To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased” (Heb. xiii. 16); so the offerings sent by the Philippians to Paul when a prisoner at Rome are “ an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God ” (Phil. iv. 18). The other form, which was probably a reh\*c of the conception of Yahweh as the author of natural fertility, was that part of the fruits of the earth should be offered to God in acknowledgment of His bounty, and that what was so offered was especially blessed and brought a blessing upon both those who offered it and those who afterwards partook of it. The persistence of this form of the idea of sacrifice constitutes so marked a feature of the history of Christianity as to require a detailed account of it.

In the first instance it is probable that among Christians, as among Jews, every meal, and especially every social meal, was regarded as being in some sense a thank-offering. Thanksgiving, blessing and offering were co-ordinate terms. Hence the Talmudic rule, “ A man shall not taste anything before blessing it ” (*Tosephta Berachoth,* c. 4), and hence St Paul’s words, “ He that eateth, eateth unto the Lord, for he giveth God thanks ” (Rom. xiv. 6; cp. 1 Tim. iv. 4). But the most important offering was the solemn oblation in the assembly on the Lord’s day. A precedent for making such oblations elsewhere than in the temple had been afforded by the Essenes, who had endeavoured in that way to avoid the contact with unclean persons and things which a resort to the temple might have involved (Jos. *Antiq.* xviii. 1. 5), and a justification for it was found in the prophecy of Malachi, “ In every place incense is offered unto my name and a pure offering; for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts ” (Mal. i. 11, repeatedly quoted in early Christian writings, *e.g. Teaching of the Twelve Apostles,* c. 14; Just. Mart. *Trypho,* c. 28, 41, 116; Irenaeus iv. 17. 5).

The points in relation to this offering which are clearly demonstrable from the Christian writers of the first two centuries, but which subsequent theories have tended to confuse, are these. (1) It was regarded as a true offering or sacrifice; for in the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles,* in Justin Martyr and in Irenaeus it is designated by each of the terms which are used

to designate sacrifices in the Old Testament. (2) It was primarily an offering of the fruits of the earth to the Creator; this is clear from both Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, the latter of whom not only explicitly states that such oblations are continued among Christians, but also meets the current objection to them by arguing that they are offered to God not as though He needed anything but to show the gratitude of the offerer (Iren. iv. 17, 18). (3) It was offered as a thanksgiving partly for creation and pre- servation and partly for redemption: the latter is the special purpose mentioned (*e.g.*) in the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles;* the former is that upon which Irenaeus chiefly dwells; both are mentioned together in Justin Martyr *(Trypho,* c. 41). (4) Those who offered it were required to be not only baptized Christians but also “ in love and charity one with another there is an indication of this latter requirement in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 23, 24, where the word translated “ gift ” is the usual LXX. word for a sacrificial offering, and is so used elsewhere in the same Gospel, viz. Matt. viii. 4, xxiii. 19), and still more explicitly in the *Teaching,* c. 14, “Let not any one who has a dispute with his fellow come together with you *(i.e.* on the Lord’s day) until they have been reconciled, that your sacrifice be not defiled.” This brotherly unity was symbolized by the kiss of peace. (5) It was offered in the assembly by the hands of the president; this is stated by Justin Martyr (*Apol.* i. 65, 67), and implied by Clement of Rome *(Ep.* i. 44. 4).

Combined with this sacrifice of the fruits of the earth to the Creator in memory of creation and redemption, and probably always immediately following it, was the sacred meal at which part of the offerings was eaten. Such a sacred meal had always, or almost always, formed part of the rites of sacrifice. There was the idea that what had been solemnly offered to God was especially hallowed by Him, and that the partaking of it united the partakers in a special bond both to Him and to one another. In the case of the bread and wine of the Christian sacrifice, it was believed that, after having been offered and blessed, they became to those who partook of them the body and blood of Christ. This “ communion of the body and blood of Christ,” which in early writings is clearly distinguished from the thank- offering which preceded it, and which furnished the materials for it, gradually came to supersede the thank-offering in import- ance, and to exercise a reflex influence upon it. In the time of Cyprian, though not before, we begin to find the idea that the body and blood of Christ were not merely partaken of by the worshippers but also offered in sacrifice, and that the Eucharist was not so much a thank-offering for creation and redemption as a repetition or a showing forth anew of the self-sacrifice of Christ. This idea is repeated in Ambrose and Augustine, and has since been a dominant idea of both Eastern and Western Christendom. But, though dominant, it has not been universal; nor did it become dominant until several centuries after its first promulgation. The history of it has yet to be written. For, in spite of the important controversies to which it has given birth, no one has been at the pains to distinguish between (i.) the theories which have been from time to time put forth by eminent writers, and which, though they have in some cases ultimately won a general acceptance, have for a long period remained as merely individual opinions, and (ii.) the current beliefs of the great body of Christians which are expressed in recognized formularies. A catena of opinions may be produced in favour of almost any theory; but formularies express the collective or average belief of any given period, and changes in them are a sure indication that there has been a general change in ideas.

It is clear from the evidence of the early Western liturgies that, for at least six centuries, the primitive conception of the nature of the Christian sacrifice remained. There is a clear distinction between the sacrifice and the communion which followed it, and that which is offered consists of the fruits of the earth and not of the body and blood of Christ. Other ideas no doubt attached themselves to the primitive conception, of which there is no certain evidence in primitive times, *e.g.* the idea of the propitiatory character of the offering, but these