

「生けるいけにえ」(ローマ12:1)

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ABSTRACT Nobuyoshi KIUCHI, “A Living Sacrifice (Rom 12:1)”. The presence of three expressions taken from sacrificial ritual in the OT in Rom 12:1 (‘living,’ ‘holy,’ ‘acceptable to God’) poses the question how sacrifice in the OT is understood by St. Paul in relation to the Christian life.

This short study aims to elucidate the meaning of “a living sacrifice” by surveying the relationships between the sacrifice and the offerer as found in Leviticus, prophetic book, and the Psalms. In the prophetic books the emphasis is often that ritual without heart is wrong, that obeying the Lord is more important than merely offering sacrifice, while in the Psalms more emphasis is placed on obeying the Lord and his commandments due to the limit and insufficiency of the offering of animal sacrifices to express the Psalmists’ devotion.

Initial intentions in Levitical regulations on sacrifice find their ultimate expression in the sacrifice of Christ, and this enables the believer to offer his/her body as “a sacrifice, living, holy, and acceptable to God.” While these expressions have been often taken to mean that literal sacrifices became spiritual in the NT, this is superficial because OT sacrifice was also spiritual. From the viewpoint of the essence of the sacrifice, the only substantial difference between the OT and NT concepts of sacrifice lies in that the animal sacrificed in the OT became the believer.

It is argued that in interpreting the three expressions in Rom 12:1 no reference is made to any particular sacrifice in the OT such as the burnt offering, and that only features common to all the sacrifices are meant here. The term “living” in “living sacrifice” has been taken mainly as referring to spiritual life. However, though this is ultimately correct, it is artificial to take only this term as spiritual: the other two are equally spiritual. Moreover, it is based on the assumptions, that there never existed a literal

“living sacrifice,” and that “literal” sacrifice in the OT was apparently not spiritual, which is false. It is noted that “living” is deliberately added, and that there is room for considering a literal “living sacrifice” behind this phrase. It is proposed that the Azazel goat in Lev 16, which was kept alive to bear the sins of the Israelites, provides a fitting background for Rom 12:1, though this too should be applied to NT believers only generally, i.e., suffering for the others by the power of the Holy Spirit.