Growing up in the way, we were taught to have a good sacrifice and to daily sacrifice. Here are some worker quotes pertaining to “sacrifice” which is typical of the use of the word. I did not ‘cherry pick’ these. I have only two additional quotes that I did not use as they were talking about the physical sacrifice of Jesus. There weren’t in the same context as these here so they were not included.

1) CLARENCE ANDERSON – Where there is love there will be sacrifice; if we really love the Lord, there will be sacrifice. You can have sacrifice without love, but you cannot have love without sacrifice. (Post Falls 1970) Quotations By Workers P.21

2) PERCY BIRILLIE – Blessing always follows obedience, joy follows sacrifice. (Post Falls 1959) Quotations By Workers P.27

3) ARTHUR BOYCE – The course of your troubles and disappointments and sorrows can be traced to the lack of sacrifice in your life. Keep the spirit of sacrifice going in your life. (Silverdale, B.C. 1961) Quotations By Workers P.19

4) EDDIE CORNOCK - We aren't saved only by Christ's redemption. There is one thing we must do. We must present our own bodies as a sacrifice. Some of us may leave a big question mark in God's eyes. (Hayden Lake 1949) Quotations By Workers P.13,16

5) DON FISHER - If we are willing to sacrifice the present we will have an inheritance in the future. Quotations By Workers P.20

6) PERCY FLETCHER - sacrifice comes first, then light is seen. (Olympia Convention 1957)
Quotations By Workers P.20

7) MERLIN HOWLETT - It's by sacrifice that God understands how really grateful we are. (Devon MT 1977) Quotes By Workers P.22

8) NEILS JORGENSEN - We are only going to stand beneath the altar of the living God by sacrifice
- the altar of sacrifice, living for God. The thing that will keep our lives upon the altar of sacrifice is the love of God. If we lose the love of God we will have the spirit of rebellion. Quotations By Workers P.20

9) JOHN MASTIN - One thing necessary for the kingdom to be preserved is for us to be willing for sacrifice and self denial. If God can't find people willing to deny self, it won't work. (Devon, MT 1977) Quotes By Workers P.21.

10) ERNEST NELSON - sacrifice was the foundation of The Truth. Absence (not going to meeting) can rob us of what sacrifice can bring us. (Olympia Convention, 8/24/79) Quotations By Workers P.20.

11) RICHARD SULLIVAN - Without sacrifice there is no true worship. (Post Falls 1971) Quotations By Workers P.21.

12) EVERETT SWANSON - sacrifice is an investment. God won't accept our sacrifice unless it is spotless. It must be our best. (1971) Quotations By Workers P.21.

13) THAROLD SYLVESTER - The amount of joy one has is directly related to the amount of sacrifice and willingness. Quotations By Workers P.19

After reading these quotes, I began to wonder what this sacrifice means. Anyone spending time in “the way” knows what the worker is talking about. Sacrifice means “dying to self” by keeping our appearance modest, coming to meetings, giving even our personal freedom, joy, happiness, not associating with outsiders, being willing to follow the lowly way, humbling ourselves, having an open home, sacrificing our earthly joy, happiness, and pleasures to have them in eternity. These are all marks of “having a good spirit”. This is what it means to sacrifice. According to the workers, “the way” requires our sacrifice.

SACRIFICE ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE

I went to the Bible to study the use of the word “sacrifice”.

The word sacrifice appears several times in the New Testament. Three Greek words are
translated as **sacrifice**. First, is **Strong's Number G2380 (thyô)**. This word is translated as **sacrifice**, slay, and kill. It means exactly that, to slay or kill. This cannot be the **sacrifice** that is mentioned by the workers.

Next is **Strong's Number G1494 (eidólothytos)**. This word means “the flesh left over from heathen sacrifices”. In the New Testament, this word is always accompanied with the word “idols”. This cannot be the **sacrifice** that is mentioned by the workers.

The last word translated as **sacrifice** is **Strong's Number G2378 (thysia)**. This word is the same word used by the workers. The following shows its use and meanings in the New Testament.

- a **sacrifice**, victim; primarily denotes “the act of offering;” then, objectively, "that which is offered"
  - (a) of idolatrous "sacrifice" Acts 7:41;
  - (b) of animal or other "sacrifices," as offered under the Law, Matt. 9:13; 12:7; Mar 9:49; 12:33; Luke 2:24; 13:1; Acts 7:42; 1Cor. 10:18; Heb. 5:1; 7:27; 8:3; 9:9; 10:1, 5, 8, 11; 11:4;
  - (c) of Christ, in His "sacrifice" on the cross, Eph. 5:2; Heb. 9:23, where the plural anti-typically comprehends the various forms of Levitical "sacrifices" in their typical character; Heb. 9:26; 10:12, 26; in a sense Phil. 2:17
  - (d) metaphorically,
    - (1) of the body of the believer, presented to God as a living "sacrifice," Rom. 12:1;
    - (2) of material assistance rendered to servants of God, Phl. 4:18;
    - (3) of praise, Heb. 13:15;
    - (4) of doing good to others and communicating with their needs, Heb. 13:16;
    - (5) of spiritual "sacrifices" in general, offered by believers as a holy priesthood, 1Pet. 2:5.

Concerning (a), (b), and (c) above: the workers “use” of the word **sacrifice** does not mean “an idolatrous”, “animal sacrifice” or “Christ sacrifice on the cross”. The workers “use” of the word is metaphorical as in (d). The metaphorical use of the word **sacrifice** occurs five times in the New Testament.

1) Romans 12:1 (NKJV) “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living **sacrifice**, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.”
So, what is meant by this verse? Is Paul talking about physical sacrifice of the living body? No. Paul actually defines what he means by a living sacrifice by using the words, “which is your reasonable service”.

Reasonable
is translated from the Greek word logikos. This word used here means “logical, pertaining to the soul or spiritual”.

Service is translated from the Greek word latreia. The word used here means “the service and worship of God according to the requirements of the Levitical law or services rendered for hire.”

The living sacrifice that Paul refers to means the following:

your spiritual form of “the physical service and worship of God that was required by the Law”.

This verse doesn’t really talk about anything physical. Nothing in this verse or the following verses define the results of this sacrifice.

2) Philippians 4:18 (NKJV) “Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things [sent] from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God.”

This is talking about a physical sacrifice. It was probably money and maybe food and other necessities. Whatever they sent was able to completely meet the needs of Paul. Without a doubt, it was a physical gift sent by Epaphroditus. Does Paul record anything to show what this physical sacrifice produced? No.

3&4) Hebrews 13:15-16 (NKJV) “Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of [our] lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

These verses refer to the sacrifice of praise, doing good, and sharing (fellowshipping). Does the author intend to state that “praise”, “doing good” and “fellowshipping” are sacrifices? No. He is merely using a familiar term that the Jews (Hebrews) would understand. Unlike physically following the Law, “praise”, “doing good” and “fellowshipping” would be a spiritual form of the physical act of following the Law. (See Romans 12:1 above). Whether it is physical or spiritual, it really doesn’t matter. The author’s main point is praise, doing good, and fellowship, not sacrifice. Also, the author does not write about receiving anything for this “sacrifice”
or that anything would be produced in one’s life.

5) 1 Peter 2:5 (NKJV) “you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

Again, here Peter is referring to a sacrifice offered up. As the smoke of a burnt sacrifice would rise up, Peter correlates this to the spiritual praise and worship offered to God. Peter does not record what this sacrifice produces.

COMPARISON

I’ve taken the worker’s quotes and shortened them to their simplest meaning. They are numbered to match each worker’s quote. Read the quote, and then read the shortened version.

[1] Without sacrifice, we cannot love God.
[3] Sacrifice will prevent troubles, disappointments, and sorrows.
[6] Sacrifice opens the eyes.
[7] Sacrifice communicates gratefulness to God.
[8] Sacrifice proves our love.
[9] Sacrifice preserves the kingdom.
[10] Sacrifice is required by The Truth. Sacrifice is ruined by not going to meetings.

Does the worker’s quotes about sacrifice agree with what is said about sacrifice in the New Testament? You decide. Nowhere in the NT does it talk about sacrifice producing anything. It does not say that sacrifice produces salvation. It does not say sacrifice produces joy. It does not say sacrifice prevents anything. It does not say sacrifice proves anything. These quotes by the workers are simply not biblical. So why do they preach about this type of sacrifice?

A worker learns theology, how, and what to preach from other workers. Most like if a worker says something, he heard or learned it from an older worker. If we go all the way back to the
early 1900’s, the workers were just getting started. All of the people they were preaching to most likely attended a local denomination church. During this period, the denominational churches were becoming very liberal in their preaching. The worker’s preaching was in contrast to their fellow preachers in Christ. Thus, the workers (claiming others were destined for hell) preached self-denial and personal sacrifice to their way. They preached a strict dress code and clean living was necessary for true faith. (Notice how we are stuck in the “dress” of that time – minus the black stockings.) And as such, the preaching of sacrifice began and has carried on through today.

Here is where this preaching gets dangerous. Look at the quotes and what is said. Putting them in a logical sense yields the following:

If we sacrifice, we can love God, truly worship Him, and he will open our eyes. It will give us joy and prevent sorrows. Sacrificing will save us from a lost eternity. However, our sacrifice must be perfect or it will not be accepted.

Now, if someone is having a troubles, disappointments, and sorrows (pick an issue) then because sacrifice will prevent such things, they must not be sacrificing enough or in the right manner. If they are not, then their sacrifice is not spotless and thus, not acceptable. If there sacrifice is not acceptable, then there is no salvation for them and they can’t truly worship or love God. Being this unsure of their salvation and feeling so distant from God can only bring on more grief and despair as the person attempts to give more and more (sacrifice) of themselves away. The more they give of themselves, the worse they get. The more miserable they get; the more entrenched in “the way” they get. This is a vicious negative cycle that keeps the person “down” in forever needing to be miserable. This is prevalent with many that still attend meetings and a common story for those who have left.

IF NOT SACRIFICE, THEN WHAT?

So what then? If all this sacrifice is not necessary, then what is?

James 5:13-15 (NKJV) “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.”

Romans 3:22-25 (NKJV) even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth [as] a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NKJV) For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of
Sacrifice According to the Workers

yourselves; [it is] the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Galatians 3:5-7 (NKJV) “Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, [does He do it] by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? -- just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. " Therefore know that [only] those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.”

Personal sacrifice will not earn us anything. sacrifice is not a result of love nor will it produce salvation, joy, or righteousness. Isaiah 64:6 (NKJV) “But we are all like an unclean [thing], And all our righteousness [are] like filthy rags;”. No matter how much we sacrifice or how righteous we think we are, to God, we are unclean and like filthy rags. Before God, we all are just dirty sinners. So what can we do? The righteousness of God is (Rom.3:22-25) through faith in Jesus Christ being justified freely by His grace. Salvation is (Eph. 2:8-9) by grace through faith. It is a gift of God.

Consider Ecclesiastes 2:22-24 (NKJV) “For what has man for all his labor, and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun? For all his days [are] sorrowful, and his work burdensome; even in the night his heart takes no rest. This also is vanity. Nothing [is] better for a man [than] that he should eat and drink, and [that] his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God. ” Ecc. 3:12-13 (NKJV) “I know that nothing [is] better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives, and also that every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor—it [is] the gift of God. ”

What is Ecclesiastes saying? A man toils and labors all his life. His labor produces good. Nothing is better for a man than that he should enjoy the good of his labor. But the all the labor is vanity. It is all futile and worthless. Why? Because all the good from labor is a gift of God. What does this mean? Everything we have or get or need is given by God. It is a gift from His hand. Whether it be food, joy, or salvation, it is a gift from Him regardless of our efforts. It HAS to be a gift, because all we could ever earn is death. Romans 6:23 (NKJV) “For the wages of sin [is] death, but the gift of God [is] eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Of the five times in the New Testament that sacrifice is used metaphorically, only one (Philippians 4:18) refers to a physical act. And what is that act? Giving. Herein lies the irony. The only giving preached by the workers is taking care of them. They do not encourage giving to charities or the poor. We as Christians are called to take care of the needy, poor, widows, etc. Matt. 25:35-40, Acts. 6:1, Gal. 2:10 and many others.

OUR SACRIFICE AVAILS NOTHING

I’m not trying to develop a theology of salvation or what is required. I’m just trying to show that the sacrifice preached by the workers is not biblical, and it will avail nothing. Wearing a bun is a
man made requirement. Forbidding women to wear pants is a man made requirement. Making it
to every meeting is a man made requirement. These are not found in the New Testament as
necessary for the church. How many meetings can we miss before we lose our salvation? If a
woman is at home with her hair down in sweat pants, is that less of a sin because no one sees
her? If we watch video on the internet, is that less of a sin than owning a TV? Having our faith in
“the way” is very dangerous. We are taught that our salvation is based on our physical actions
and how much we sacrifice. This does not agree with scripture. “The way” or
obedience to it cannot save us, only Jesus can.

Hebrews 4:16 (NKJV) “Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain
mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” What does this mean? When we have a need or
trouble, we can come to God broken, humble, and completely place all of our reliance upon
Him. We can completely rely on Him for every need for we can do nothing for ourselves.
Coming to God broken, humble, and putting all our faith in Him for all our needs is what He
wants. If we rely completely upon Him, He will supply our every need – it is a gift from His
hand.

God does not want us to be miserable. He does not require us to conform to a strict dress code.
He does not require us to completely have no life on this earth. He wants us to have joy and
peace. He wants us to love Him. He wants us to rely on Him like a child would a father. He
wants to take care of us. He does not want our sacrifice. He wants our heart. It’s a heart thing!

By Jano Mitchell