This is not a book for general reading; nor just an 'easy read'. It is by rights a theological textbook of some weight and requires application; that said, it is well worth the effort and a gift to anyone with an appetite for reasonable study.

For many of us, sacrifice has been understood in our own lives as something given up, perhaps for a good end; and historically as something destroyed, as in the pagan sacrifice of animals.

Daly maintains that Christian sacrifice is Trinitarian: the Father giving the Son, the Son returning total love to the Father in the Spirit, and becoming real in Christians as we respond to the same Spirit and offer our love, thus entering into the relationship of love in God.

He works through the history and Old Testament background of sacrifice, then to the self-giving of Jesus, picking up on New Testament, early and medieval Christian writers; and pointing up the mistaken understandings of propitiation and atonement theories there. He then makes a thorough study of Eucharistic Liturgies and the 'Sacrifice of the Mass' and is clearly ecumenical in his research, including observations on the Reformation.

Daly indicates how sacrifice has become 'spiritualised', and depends largely on attitudes and disposition, so that it is in self-offering rather than in the action which may ensue. Finally, he looks at the religious-scientific debate and post-modernism and the privatising of religion. In the psycho-social sphere he discusses original sin, human desire and mimetic theory (after Girard) and indicates a path of convergence between quantifiable data and the phenomena of the Christian life.

The whole work is extremely well referenced, every page with footnotes.

His summary is autobiographical, showing how the work gradually built up and was formulated, and his total involvement in the subject. What he unveils is love, that reciprocal self-giving love which is life to us all.

Elizabeth CSF