

THE OFFERINGS (14)

—H. L. Heijkoop

Leviticus 2:8-16

Before dealing with this section, I would like to draw your attention to verse 1. There mention is made of "any" or "any one": "When any one will present an oblation to Jehovah." Then, in verses 1 and 2, mention is made of "he", but as soon as we reach verses 4 and onward, where the different kinds of meal-offerings are presented, we find the word "thou." It is as if God says to those who approach Him after having been occupied with the Lord Jesus, "You — as an individual — are allowed to have a very special relationship to Me." That is a precious thought for us.

In verse 8 we see that these offerings all had to be presented to the Lord, but from then on everything had to be done by the priest. One who brought a meal-offering had to prepare it at home, but in the presence of the Lord he was not allowed to do anything. When it is a question of the life of the Lord Jesus, of His Person, then only a priest, someone who is regularly in the presence of the Lord to serve Him, can perform these tasks.

In verse 9 we see that the priest laid a part of the sacrifice upon the altar, and in verse 10, "The remainder of the oblation shall be Aaron's and his sons': it is most holy of Jehovah's offerings by fire." We see here once more that Aaron and his sons were allowed to eat of it, a fact on which I hope to elaborate when we deal with the law of the meal-offering. Here I want to stress the words, "it is most holy." That is a serious thought for us. When we see the Lord in His work upon the cross as the burnt-offering, it is obvious that everything is holy. But when we think of His life during which He was in the same circumstances as we are, there is a danger that we will forget who He is and that all He did was perfectly sanctified (separated) unto God. For that reason it says here, "it is most holy."

In verses 4-7 we saw three kinds of meal-offerings and we noticed that just as in chapter 1, each kind was less than the preceding one. In verse 7 there is the meal-offering of the cauldron; it does not have a special form and no mention is made of its having been baken. It is the most simple form that one can bring, a form that can be presented by one who is spiritually poor, i.e., one who has not been very occupied with the Lord's life and sufferings during His life. It is remarkable that there is no reference to its being unleavened. Of the two kinds of meal-offering mentioned in verse 4 and 5 it is expressly stated that they had to be unleavened, but not with this third one. One who is spiritually poor is not necessarily guilty on account of his poverty; one who has been converted for only one day cannot possibly have contemplated the life of the Lord. But when older believers are spiritually poor something is wrong.

We possess the Word of God, we have the Holy Spirit, and most of us have been converted for a sufficiently long time to have searched the Word of God. But how wonderful! God does not make such a distinction here. What a loss to ourselves if we have not been more occupied with the Lord Jesus, but God nevertheless gives us an opportunity to bring a sacrifice. And what a grace that God gives priests! When, for instance, a poor one comes with merely a general impression of the Person of the Lord Jesus, understanding so little of Him that he does not see how perfect and without sin everything was in Him, then a qualified priest is needed to lay the sacrifice upon the altar. The Holy Spirit uses another brother, one who expresses the feelings of the brother who came with the offering in a manner which is entirely acceptable to God, unleavened.

In verse 11 we have once again a general principle: neither leaven nor honey is allowed in it. "No oblation which ye shall present to Jehovah shall be made with leaven; for no leaven and no honey shall ye burn in any fire-offering to Jehovah." Leaven is the principle of sin, it corrupts everything with which it comes in contact: it makes it rise, causing it to appear greater than it really is. Honey speaks of human soft-heartedness, natural sweetness, of the good that can be found in creation, but which is connected with the human nature. It speaks of things that are good in themselves, but which ought not to be included in an offering brought to God. Here we may think of the love between parents and children or between husband and wife. These things have been given by God Himself and it would even be sin if they were lacking, but they have nevertheless no place in the sacrifices we bring to God. The Lord Jesus said to His parents, "Did ye not know that I ought to be occupied in My Father's business?" And when in John 2 Mary came to the Lord to tell Him what He had to do, He said, "What have I to do

with thee, woman?" (vv. 3-4). This was not lack of reverence from His side; He was in God's service and His mother was not allowed to influence it. Only what God said was important. So there was neither leaven nor honey in the Lord.

I believe that the thought goes further: these things should not be found in us either. In our sacrifices some leaven and honey could perhaps be present. The question is, How do we bring our sacrifices? For instance, in Psalm 45 we read that the children of Korah said, "My tongue is the pen of a ready writer" (v. 1). There was no leaven there. When we are gathered around the Lord to bring Him our worship, are we so guided by the Holy Spirit that we use the very words He wants us to use? If so, there will not be any leaven. But when we search for our own words, or want to utter beautiful thoughts that do not flow from our hearts, then there is leaven: we want to be more than we really are, When we want to express the things in our hearts with beautiful words, simply because we love to make beautiful sentences, then there is leaven. If the Holy Spirit uses our tongues, He will give remarkable words, as seen in Psalm 45. They may not be "beautiful" words to human ears, but these words will reveal the feelings of our hearts; they will be for God and they will be beautiful to God. That is the leading of the Holy Spirit.

This is a serious thought for us. No leaven is allowed in the sacrifices we bring. All must be done under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and we must express our feelings according to the simplest words given by the Holy Spirit. Obviously, when a brother is the mouth piece of the assembly he should be understood by all, and all should be able to say, "Amen." But to say that everyone must be able to understand it is not the same as to require beautiful expressions and perfect grammar.

The same thing holds true for the honey. It is possible that we want to bring purely human thoughts. When I was young I had to learn a hymn that had been written by an unbeliever, yet it spoke of the Lord Jesus upon the cross. That poem was so touching that one could hardly read it without getting tears in the eyes. But it expressed purely human feelings, purely human compassion for the Lord; a real human admiration for a remarkable Man. But God does not desire *compassion* for the Lord Jesus as we can see in Luke 23. The women of Jerusalem wept for the Lord Jesus, but He said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep over Me, but weep over yourselves and over your children" (v. 28). He does not desire simply human compassion, but hearts that share His feelings. The Father desires those who worship and express before Him what they have felt. Certainly, the Lord Jesus did suffer much: He was surrounded by His enemies, He was spat upon, beaten, scourged, and afterwards crucified. What a terrible, bodily suffering that must have been! We can look at it and feel it, but we must have *spiritual* and not merely human feelings. So it is with everything. We must see the Lord from *God's* side and search what the Word tells us about Him. Then we must bring those spiritual feelings as sacrifice, but we must not burn leaven or honey before God's face.

In verse 12 we find a special offering, "As to the offering of the first-fruits, ye shall present them to Jehovah; but they shall not be offered upon the altar for a sweet odour." They were not to be brought upon the altar. They could be brought to the Lord, but not laid upon the altar, for they were not a type of the Lord Jesus. We find something similar in chapter 23:15, etc. There we have a meal-offering of two baked loaves which were baked with leaven. They had to be brought to God, but at the same time a sin-offering had to be brought (v. 19). This sacrifice speaks of the Assembly which consists of believers from among the Jews and the nations. The dough was baked, and the baking stops the activity of the leaven. So it is also in the Assembly. Although the activity of the Holy Spirit causes the leaven to cease its action, yet the flesh is there. We are allowed to sacrifice our bodies to God as we read in Romans 12:1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the compassion of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your intelligent service. Nevertheless they are not allowed to come upon the altar; nor are they sacrifices "of a sweet odour." That could only be true of the Lord Jesus, in whom was not a single sin, in whom everything was perfectly to the honour of God and in whom God found His delight.

Then we read in verse 13, "Every offering of thine oblation shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thine oblation: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt." It is remarkable that the necessity for salt is mentioned three times here. Salt must certainly have been important to God. It had to be present in every meal-offering. Neither leaven nor honey was allowed in it, but salt was, and the salt is called "the salt of the covenant of thy God."

Salt prevents spoiling and thus is the opposite of leaven. It also keeps that which has been spoiled separated from the rest, and besides it speaks of God's judgment over evil. In Ezekiel 47:11 we read that one day the curse will be taken away from the earth, yet in the marshes and pools, salt must remain. So even during the Millennium there will be a memorial of God's judgment over the earth (see also Gen. 19:26). For the same reason salt always had to be part of the offerings.

We have been brought into a relationship with God. "The covenant" is mentioned, yet we know that God does not enter into a covenant with His children. The first and second covenant are both for Israel, but we have been brought into a much higher

relationship with God, and in God's dealings with us there is salt. From His side nothing is spoiled, the relationship is completely separated in holiness. So it should be from our side, specially when we bring a meal-offering. We have seen that the meal-offering signified the life of the Lord Jesus upon earth. His life was characterized by a perfect obedience, by a perfect separation from everything that was not in agreement with God, and by a perfect consecration to God. Now suppose my coming to God with a meal-offering, expressing before God how wonderful the Lord Jesus is, how glorious He is, how perfect His obedience was, how perfectly He was separated from all evil and entirely consecrated to God, was without concern for my own walk and was done in indifference about my behaviour, would these things not be contradictory to each other? Would God accept such an offering? Would He not rather call it hypocrisy? Is not it just that? How can I admire the consecration of the Lord to God while doing my own will in my personal life? How can I admire the total separation from evil in the Lord Jesus and bring Him as a sacrifice to God, while I am indifferent about my own practical life? Is not that hypocrisy?

If these characteristics of the Lord are so precious as to prompt our worship, then shouldn't they be precious in my life? If God can find His delight and satisfaction in these characteristics being present with the Lord Jesus, wouldn't it likewise be acceptable to Him if He found them present with me? What is the basis on which we have been brought into a relationship with God? That basis is the sacrifice brought by this Person. In 1 Peter 3:18 we find a wonderful thought, "Christ indeed has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." That was one of the purposes of the work of the Lord, to bring us to God. Herein is everything contained; therefore the Lord had to die for our sins. He had to pull us out of the domain of sin, the world and Satan, and for this purpose the Holy Spirit has come to dwell in us. What a contradiction it is if I do not sanctify my life! Here we have the salt that had to be presented upon each sacrifice. God has accomplished everything for us and He expects us to have faithful hearts. He has delivered us out of all our circumstances to bring us to Himself in the glory and He expects us to be found before Him with a mind as described in 1 Peter 1:15-17, "But as He who has called you is holy, be ye holy in all your conversation (manner of life) because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy. And if ye invoke as Father Him who, without regard of persons, judges according to the work of each, pass your time of sojourn in fear." That is the salt which is mentioned here. When we see the glory of the Lord and when we offer this as a meal-offering to God, God also expects our walk to display a holy fear of displeasing Him. We can be thankful, that we do not have to wait until we are perfect in our walk; if that were so, we should have to wait until we are in heaven. Only *one* Person is perfect and there is no second one. But if we desire greater fellowship with Him, and to judge in ourselves all that is not in agreement with Him, then there is the salt of the covenant of our God upon our sacrifice.

Next we have in verse 14 the meal-offering of the first-fruits: "And if thou present an oblation of thy first-fruits to Jehovah, thou shalt present as the oblation of thy first-fruits green ears of corn roasted in fire, corn beaten out of full ears." Here we have something that differs from verse 12. *There*, the subject was the *offering* of the first-fruits, and here it concerns the *meal-offering* of the first-fruits: these two expressions are distinct in the Hebrew. In verse 12 it was a type of ourselves, but here it is once again a type of the Lord Jesus. Yet it is not the same type we found in the preceding verses.

If we read very carefully, the significance will become clear to us. The question here concerns young ears, green ears, roasted in the fire. That speaks of something that has not ripened yet. Does this not cause us to think of expressions of the Lord Jesus such as we find, for instance, in Psalm 102:24, "My God, take Me not away in the midst of My days," and in Isaiah 53:8, "He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of My people was He stricken"? In Luke 23:31 the Lord said something similar; there He referred to Himself as "the green tree." He had come as King of Israel but He had to die rather than to reign.

In Daniel 9 we have the seventy weeks of Daniel, and at the end of the seventieth week the work should have been completed and all the blessings for Israel should have become a reality. But after sixty-nine weeks the Messiah was cut off and He had nothing. We see there the Lord Jesus, who appeared on earth as a Man and lived entirely according to God's thoughts, glorifying God in everything. And God's Word had confirmed that the man who would live according to His thoughts would be blessed and would live. But *He* had to die. The Law said, "Do this and thou shalt live." The Lord had fulfilled the Law, but yet He had to die. If Adam had not sinned he would have continued to live, he would never have died. The Lord Jesus never sinned but He had to die.

In Psalm 22 He cried out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" And a little later, "Our fathers confided in Thee... they confided in Thee, and were not confounded" (vv. 4-5). Who were these fathers? Sinful men, such as we are, but they had trusted in God and God had delivered them. The Lord then added to this, "But I am a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and the despised of the people" (v. 6). He cried out, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me," and He received no answer. It is true, Psalm 22 is more the sin-offering, but I quote it to give a clear example of the character of these verses. He was the green tree and had to die, being young. His glory as King of Israel was cut off. That is the side of the Lord's suffering that is presented us

in this portion. Finally oil and frankincense had to be put on it as well: It was a meal-offering. These speak of the glory of the Lord Jesus and that is always acceptable to God.

To be cont'd

THE FAITH TO CONTEND FOR (2)

—R. K. Campbell

2. The Persons of the Godhead - The Triune God.

The Bible presents to us the Triune God of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, existing in three distinct, divine Persons, one in essence, unity, purpose and action. In the very beginning of the Bible we read that "God (Elohim) said, Let *us* make man in our image" (Gen. 1:26). "Elohim" is the plural form of God and denotes three or more, for in the Hebrew language there are three forms (numbers): the singular, dual and the plural. Then in new-testament passages we have the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit mentioned together in equality (Matt. 3:16-17; 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 1:4-5). In other places we read of "the Godhead," (Acts 17:29, Rom. 1:20 and Col. 2:9). This term denotes the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There is perfect unity in the Godhead for these three Persons are One in essence, purpose and action. This is emphasized throughout John's Gospel and stated in particular by the Lord Jesus when He said, "I and My Father are one" (John 10: 31). The truth of the Triune God and the Godhead of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is therefore an essential part of the Christian faith for which we must earnestly contend. Refusal to own this is apostasy and heresy. The truth of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ is a most vital and basic part of the faith delivered to the saints. His deity is proclaimed in many Scriptures. In connection with His birth, the angel of Jehovah proclaimed the fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14, "Behold the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which is, being interpreted, God with us" (Matt. 1:23). Then to Mary the angel Gabriel said, "The holy Thing also which shall be born shall be called Son of God" (Luke 1:35). The miraculous virgin birth of Jesus, His deity as Son of God and His sinless humanity as "the holy Thing" are all thus clearly stated in the above Scriptures.

John's Gospel opens with the sublime and majestic words: "in the beginning was the Word (Logos), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. *He* was in the beginning with God. All things received being through Him; and without Him not one thing received being which has received being... And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we have contemplated His glory, a glory as of an only-begotten with a father) full of grace and truth (John 1:1-3, 14). Here Jesus Christ is spoken of as the Word who was ever with God and was God, and as the One who created all things. Then He, the eternal Word, was made flesh and dwelt among men on earth. "God has been manifested in flesh," as 1 Timothy 3:16 declares. The Creator walked among men.

God the Son became a true man with a body, spirit and soul: "made like to His brethren... sin apart" (yet without sin — K.J.V.; Heb. 2:17, 4:15). Though He took full humanity into His Person, He never gave up His deity but subsists forever as the "God-Man." So Romans 9:5 says, "according to flesh, is the Christ who is over all, God blessed forever." God has been made known, manifested and declared in His Son, the Man Christ Jesus. So Jesus could say, "He that has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

Having died on the cross and accomplished the work of redemption, Jesus rose bodily from the grave and ascended into heaven. There He is exalted as the Man Christ Jesus and from there He will come back to earth as King of kings and Lord of lords (Acts 2:32-33; 7:55-56; Rev. 19:11-16).

In closing we quote the words of the aged apostle John: "For many deceivers have gone out into the world, they who do not confess Jesus Christ coming in flesh — this is the deceiver and the antichrist... Whosoever goes forward, and abides not in the doctrine of the Christ has not God" (2 John 7, 9). These solemn words show that the confession of the deity of Jesus Christ, His virgin birth and complete sinless humanity, His atoning death and bodily resurrection and glorification in heaven is a most vital and essential part of the Christian faith we must earnestly contend for.

To be cont'd