

THE OFFERINGS (12)

—H. L. Heijkoop

Leviticus 2:1-3

Chapter one of Leviticus spoke of the burnt-offering; in the second chapter we see the meal-offering. The burnt-offering speaks of the value of the work of the Lord Jesus upon the cross. However, the meal-offering, speaks of His life before the cross. Neither sprinkling with blood nor redemption are mentioned; there is nothing found that relates to the work of the Lord upon the cross.

Why does the meal-offering follow the burnt-offering? Human logic would cause us to first discuss the *life* of the Lord and afterwards His work upon the cross, which is how it is presented in John 6. First the Lord said that He is the bread of life (v. 35 etc.) and then He said that whosoever eats His flesh and drinks His blood has eternal life (vv. 53-54); only after one has eternal life, can he eat of Him as the bread out of heaven.

In Leviticus we find how God's people can approach God. God dwells in the midst of His people and invites them to come to Him and bring sacrifices to Him. But how can a man approach God with joy and confidence, without fear? For this, he must first of all know the perfections of the work of the Lord Jesus, not only as the sin-offering but specially as the burnt-offering. In the burnt-offering we see how God has been perfectly glorified in the work of the Lord Jesus and how the glories of that work are put to the account of those who approach Him. One who has thoroughly learned the burnt-offering is a son of Aaron, he has boldly entered the sanctuary and is habitually there to serve. Such a person is then free to be occupied with the life of the Lord Jesus.

Strange as it may seem, the meal-offering is more exalted than the burnt-offering, and things become even more wonderful when we see for whom it was meant. The burnt-offering was for God alone: the one who brought the sacrifice did not receive anything of it, not even the priest (except that the priest received the skin). But Aaron and his sons received a part of the meal-offering (v. 3). Yet, the meal-offering is more exalted than the burnt-offering, for chapter two repeatedly says that it is "most holy." There is a danger that we do not make this a reality. How great is the guilt of those unbelievers, who degrade the glory of the Lord as Man!

Now as to the meal-offering itself; it was to be of the finest part of wheat flour. In John 12:24 the Lord referred to Himself as the "kernel of wheat," which He is as "the fruit of the earth (Isa. 4:2) and as "the Man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5): perfect and true Man. These three passages tell us *who* finished the work. He is presented to us as Man, nevertheless this Man was the eternal God; and although He was the eternal God, yet He was truly Man: God and Man in one Person. That is the wonderful mystery of His Person, which only the Father can understand.

But here we find *what* He was as Man. He was perfectly Man: He had a human body, a human soul and a human spirit. All of this is typified by the fine flour which is characteristic of the life of the Lord. Something could be hidden in whole kernels of wheat. Every farmer knows that insects could be in there, but in fine flour that is not possible. The particles are so small that nothing can be hidden in it because all that is in the flour can be seen. Further, all the particles are equal.

Herein we see the characteristics of the Lord's life upon earth. Everything in Him was visible and there was not a single thing that was dominant over another. When the Jews asked the Lord in John 8, "Who are Thou?", He said to them, "Altogether what I say to you" (v. 25). This meant that each of His words revealed *what* He was. And so it was with His deeds and in every other way He revealed Himself. In John He is called "the Word." The Greek word (*logos*) does not primarily indicate the spoken word, but the *thought* contained in that spoken word and so the Lord could say that He was altogether that which He spoke. We know that this is not always so in our case, although it is perhaps not quite as bad as a politician once put it: "Words are the means to hide thoughts." But isn't it often true that our words do not really present our true thoughts? This, however, was not the case with the Lord Jesus: with Him all was equal.

There was nothing with the Lord Jesus that was particularly prominent. When we consider the great servants of the Lord Jesus, we find with each one of them a dominant feature in their character: John was characterized by love, Paul by depth and zeal, Peter by his tendency to be first and his spontaneity. Some outstanding feature of every person could be mentioned. Nearly every brother or sister has a characteristic feature that is dominant. But this was not the case with the Lord Jesus.

When He had to reveal love, it was a perfect love; when He had to show mercy, He showed it in a perfect manner. Think of the manner in which He spoke to the Samaritan woman in John 4. What a grace! What wisdom! He had the ability to do all that was needed to touch her heart. But when He confronted the Pharisees He took another attitude. There we do not see love but righteousness, and, as far as they were concerned, the full revelation of the truth which He had to bring to light before such people. We observe this during the Lord's entire life. In Luke 2:49, the Lord said, "Did ye not know that I ought to be occupied in My Father's business?" The Lord knew who He was, that He was the Son of God, and yet He was subject to His parents. These were sinful people and He was the Creator of man, yet He was subject to them, and we read that He advanced in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and men (v. 52). Yes, the Lord was truly Man.

The Lord was also perfectly what a man had to be. Deuteronomy 6 says that man must love God with all his capacity (v. 5), a thing not one single person has done. God thus concluded, "There is not one that seeks after God" (Rom. 3:11). But when the Lord Jesus came, the *Man* Christ Jesus, He loved God with all His might. When we read the Word of God from Genesis through Revelation looking for all God has said that man had to be and had to do, we will see that the Lord Jesus accomplished all of it. Conversely, if we search the Bible for those things that man had not to be or to do, then we find that something of that kind was never found with the Lord Jesus.

God had given the Law to Israel. Oh, God knew very well that they would not be able to keep the Law. Israel however thought it was capable of serving God in its own power and therefore God had to give the Law. The Law tells man what to do if he does not want to be condemned. The Lord Jesus fulfilled the Law, all that God's righteousness required. But He did more than that. It is not just that He did nothing wrong: He did all things well. His whole life was in fullest obedience. Coming into the world, He said, "Lo, I come... to do, O God, Thy will" (Heb. 10:7), and "My food is that I should do the will of Him that has sent Me" (John 4:34). Philippians 2:8 says that He was obedient unto death, and that the death of the cross. It was not that He was *often* obedient, but *always* obedient.

Think back to the time of His temptation in the wilderness. During forty days and nights the Lord did not have food; then at the end Satan said to Him, "Speak, that these stones may become loaves of bread" (Mat. 4:3). Would that have been a wrong act? The Lord has more than once multiplied bread to feed a multitude. But this time He did not do so and said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which goes out through God's mouth" (4:4). He would not do anything that God had not told Him to do. After forty days without food, He preferred to remain hungry as long as God did not tell Him to eat.

Let us also consider John 11. The Lord heard that His friend Lazarus was sick, yet He did not go to him although He knew what the result would be. Martha said to Him, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (v. 21). That was true, yet the Lord did not go there. He waited until God told Him to go. When He finally was ready to go, the disciples said to Him, "Just recently the Jews tried to stone Thee and Thou goest there again?" Oh yes, the Lord knew it, but He said, "if any one walk in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world" (v. 9). The Father had told Him to go and He went; He left the consequences up to the Father; He did not take them into account. He only did what the Father told Him to do.

What must this have been for the Father! For four thousand years God had sought whether there was any one who did good, someone who sought Him, but He found none. He has seen hundreds of millions of men and women, and had to say of all of them that every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. But here was the only Man, truly Man, the Man who completely conformed to God's thoughts, a Man as God desired man to be. And more than that: He had not sinned. Peter said that He "did not sin" (1 Peter 2:22) and John said, "In Him sin (i.e. a sinful nature) is not" (1 John 3:5) and Paul wrote, "Him who knew not sin" (2 Cor. 5:21). This is what was so wonderful in that Man: not just that He had not sinned, but that He did not have a sinful nature. Even if it would be possible for a man not to sin, he would still have a sinful nature. A little baby may not yet have sinned but it still has a sinful nature. The Lord was perfect Man, for He was born of a woman. However He was not conceived from a man. The angel said to Mary, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and power of the Highest overshadow thee, wherefore the Holy Thing also which shall be born shall be called Son of God" (Luke 1:35). He was the Son of God as Man on earth; He was the Holy One, entirely separated from all that was contrary to God, during His whole life. What a wonderful Person!

But the meal-offering did not only consist of fine flour. The statement follows, "And he shall pour oil on it" (v. 1). As we have seen, the Holy Spirit came over Mary; the Lord has been born of the Holy Spirit. He was truly Man, born of a woman, but without a sinful nature, and when we look over the Lord's life, we not only see that everything was perfect, but that everything was characterized by the Holy Spirit.

We do not know much of the first thirty years of the Lord Jesus upon earth but we can hardly imagine how terrible these years must have been. Just imagine a child that never lied, never said anything bad, never disobeyed. Would such a child

have had an easy life among the others? The Lord Jesus grew up in Nazareth and how terrible it must have been for Him to live in that atmosphere. The people did not like Him: in that same Nazareth where He had lived for about thirty years, they wanted to kill Him (Luke 4:29) for they hated Him. What must this have been for Him! He, the pure One, the Holy One, had to live in that contaminated atmosphere. He who was love, received hatred in return. That was His life during those years.

After that followed the three-and-a-half years of His service, which started out with the Lord's being baptized with the baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins, as if He were a sinner. He was the Lord, but it was the path that God put before Him. He said to John, "Suffer (it) now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (Mat. 3:15). It was God's path for Him that He make Himself one with men who confessed their sins, so that He might redeem them through the work upon the cross; therefore the Lord went that way. Certainly, God testified as to Him: the heavens were opened and the Father announced, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I have found My delight" (v. 17), and the Spirit of God descended upon Him. When we continue to read in Luke, we notice that all that He did was characterized by the Holy Spirit; He was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted; through the Spirit He preached the gospel and healed the sick. Not only was everything perfectly good and in perfect obedience to God, but everything also had the anointing of the Spirit. That is what we see in the oil which was poured over the fine flour.

Then there had to be a third feature, "And he shall put frankincense thereon" (v. 1). The frankincense speaks of the moral perfection of the Lord Jesus. It was one of the ingredients of the incense that had to be brought upon the golden altar of the tabernacle. That was the remarkable feature in the Lord's life! Not only was all that He did perfect and not only did He reveal the anointing with the Holy Spirit, but also the manner in which He acted was always to glorify God. He was obedient, thereby He glorified God in all things: everything bore the character of what He was in Himself. Can the same be said for man? Two persons doing a specific task, do not do it in the same manner. The performance of a person is characterized by what he is, and so it was with the Lord. Of ourselves we could not have been able to discover these perfections, but God directs our gaze and shows us that these beauties are found in Him, and thereby we know them. When we reverently observe Him, we may notice His perfections, but we are not able to fathom to their full depth the glorious manner in which He did all things, for only God can do so.

In verse 2, when the meal-offering was brought to God, the priest took for himself a handful of the fine flour and oil, but "all the frankincense" was offered up to God, it was for God alone. Only the sons of Aaron were allowed to offer the frankincense to God. In this connection it is not without significance that the words are repeated here: "it is most holy of Jehovah's offerings by fire" (v. 3). When the Lord Jesus was here below, the unbelievers did not notice anything special in Him; in Isaiah 53:2-3 we read that the faithful remnant will confess that fact. And what about those who believed? They certainly saw something in Him, but only a few discovered who He really was. That became evident after the Lord had died. He had said that He would rise again, but the disciples did not believe it and thought that all was finished. They had never really seen who He was. That is the danger when we are simply occupied with the Lord Jesus as Man.

God guards against this in a very unique way. As far as the burnt-offering was concerned, we have seen that he who brought it had to put his hand upon the head of the sacrifice, and then kill it and flay it, divide it in its pieces and wash the inwards and the legs with water. Then he was allowed to enjoy its odour. But here the offerer is not allowed to do anything. The life of the Lord is so exalted in God's sight that only a son of Aaron was allowed to occupy himself with it. The one who brought the offering had to prepare it at home but he was not allowed to do anything else. Everything else had to be done by the sons of Aaron. God desires that all of it be done in a holy manner, and only those who are always in His presence and have learned how He judges all things, what He values, are capable of presenting the meal-offering. So the sons of Aaron were the ones who had to lay the meal-offering upon the altar.

In verse 3 — and what a beautiful verse that is — we read, "And the remainder of the oblation shall be Aaron's and his sons': it is most holy of Jehovah's offerings by fire." Aaron is a type of the Lord Jesus and the words "and his sons' " are added to it, that is to say those of his house who practically realize what they are; together they were allowed to eat of it. Let us remember: one part of the sacrifice is for God, and man may eat of the other part, but together with the Lord. Later on we will see where they had to eat it, not at home, but in a holy place. What a wonderful fact! I hope to say more of this once we reach those verses.

To be cont'd

CHRIST'S SINLESSNESS

—J. van Dijk

Recently, R. W. DeHaan, teacher of the Radio Bible Class, gave a series of messages, later published in booklet form under the title *COULD JESUS SIN?* We were saddened to note that this vital question was answered with a not to be mistaken, Yes. Since this is serious doctrinal error, taught by one whom we had considered to be fundamental, we feel compelled to review his arguments in *COME AND SEE*. In doing this, we will follow the headings used in the booklet.

1. *Christ was Really Tempted*

There is of course no denying of this statement in its simplicity. We must, however, see what is meant by it. The booklet says that it means, Christ had to overcome a genuine forbidden desire; the temptation had genuine appeal to Him. Let the Lord Himself respond to these statements by His remark about genuine appeal and forbidden desires in Matthew 5:28. "I say unto you, that every one who looks upon a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." This means nothing less than that the Lord considers the very presence of a genuine forbidden desire to be sin. Paul adds to this, "I had not known sin, unless by law: for I had not had conscience also of lust unless the law said, Thou shalt not lust" (Rom. 7:7). And James explains the workings of temptation as follows, "Every one is tempted, drawn away, and enticed by his own lust; then lust, having conceived, gives birth to sin; but sin fully completed brings forth death" (Jam. 1:14-15). Could any of this be applicable to our blessed Lord? To suggest it, would be to blaspheme!

In what manner then was the Lord tempted? We can easily see that temptation has two sides. First of all there is the side of the tempter. When he tempts someone, it is entirely immaterial whether or not the one being tempted *will* or *can* give in to the temptation: temptation remains temptation as far as the tempter is concerned. Therefore we are instructed in Matthew 4:7, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." But there is also the side of the one being tempted. The same temptation can be put before two persons. To the one it may be no temptation at all whereas the other may readily fall for it. Yet, both were tempted. Therefore we read in James 1:13, "God cannot be tempted with evil." In Matthew and James we find the two sides of the word temptation. Christ, being God manifested in flesh, could not be tempted in the sense James uses it, that is with the inevitable result of sin, for Christ could not sin.

But someone may ask, "Why was He tempted if He could not sin?" First of all, God did not need proof that He could not sin, God knew this for God foreknew Him as a Lamb without blemish and without spot from before the foundation of the world (1 Pet. 1:20). Even before the temptation God said that in Him was His delight (Luke 3:22). Satan, however, sought His fall, and God wanted to manifest for our sakes who and what Christ was: the sinless One, the holy One, the faithful One.

Another reason for His temptation is seen in Hebrews 4:15. He was "tempted in all things in like manner, sin apart." This made Him fit as High Priest. Note well, sin apart! James showed us how sin plays a role when we are tempted, but it did not do so with Him. When one of us is tempted, frequently (perhaps not always) two things are involved: our weaknesses and our sinfulness. Our (not sinful) bodily needs, such as hunger, are frequently used by Satan to trigger our sinful independency from God.

Intertwined as these two things may be in us, it is only the latter, our sinfulness, that causes us to sin. With our Lord however, there was no desire other than to do the will of Him who had sent Him. Nevertheless, our Lord hungered, He felt the pangs of this human weakness in His own body. Now He is able to sympathize with us when we are tempted, for He knows our weaknesses which Satan uses, and He prays for us. Thank God, He *could not sin*, for such a High Priest is exactly the one we needed (Heb. 7:26).

Is it out of place to remind us that we seek for the same impossibility to fail in the affairs of this world? We test airplane engine supports. After a successful test the plane is put back into service. But when someone tells us that, in spite of what the test results showed, the support *could* have failed, we immediately send the plane back for further testing. We are not satisfied with a support that *happened not to fail* under the tests we subjected it to, we want a support that simply *cannot* fail.

2. *Christ was Really Man*

Some remarks under this heading touch the question What is man? Others deal with: Who is Christ? We review them in this order.

The booklet presents Adam and Eve as having the power to sin or not to sin, a feature that the author considers to go along with humanity. God's Word, however, does not say they had such power. From the few facts presented we could at best conclude that *they lacked the power not to sin*. They missed that essential holiness that characterized the last Adam.

One was needed with better qualities than the first Adam, One who was born of God, for such a One can not sin (1 John 3:9). There is no Scriptural justification for the remark that Christ was like Adam before the fall. Christ was holy, but this is never said of Adam. It means: all traces of sinful deeds and of tendency to sin were absent from Him, but besides this He was also entirely untouchable by sin. This could never be said of Adam.

The following remarks touch the question: Who is Christ? Although He was truly Man, this could never be separated from His being God (Col. 2:9). I will comment on a few of these remarks, realizing what God's Word says about Him (who is God manifested in flesh — 1 Tim. 3:16) in Luke 10:22, "No one knows who the Son is but the Father." We do not read in Scripture, as the booklet says, that Christ needed to be awakened so He could rescue the disciples in the storm (Mat. 8:23-27). To the contrary, He had to say to them, "O ye of little faith." While He was asleep He upheld the universe by His power (Col. 1:17), how could a storm harm Him, and them while He was with them?

Scripture does not say (yet the booklet does) that Christ "set aside the independent exercise of His infinite knowledge and power as God." First of all, even in eternity past there was never such a thing as an *independent* exercise of the power of the Son. He is always presented as acting in complete harmony with the Father. Then, He is presented as having divine knowledge in John 2:35, "He knew what was in man." In Luke 5:21-22 we see that He knew the reasoning *in the hearts*. Finally, we see Him in Matthew 14 multiplying bread and walking on the sea. And when He offered Himself through the eternal Spirit to God, He used His power to lay down His life. He also referred to Himself as the "I am" (John 18:6). So we conclude: there was no independency to be set aside, His knowledge and His power He displayed, and He called Himself by the name of Jehovah.

3. *Christ was Really Substitute*

The points raised under this heading involve first of all this question: How could the Lord Jesus have been our substitute and representative if He could not have sinned?

If we look at the offerings, we notice that no mention is made of the behaviour of the sacrifice but that it had to be without blemish. This tells us that primarily, not an absence of sins is looked for but rather the inward quality of sinlessness and untouchableness by sin (which of course do result in an absence of sins). The point is this: one who could have sinned would have been entirely unsuited to be our substitute, even if he had never committed an actual sin. Therefore Hebrews 7:26 refers to Christ as harmless or guileless, without an evil thought.

But should not our substitute be an exact counterpart of Adam, as the booklet claims He should be? May I ask, "Where in Scripture do we find such a requirement?" Obviously only scriptural requirements are to be considered, not human notions. In 1 Corinthians 15 we notice only points of distinction between the first and the last Adam, no points of similarity. This in itself clearly demonstrates that God certainly does not require an exact counterpart as substitute.

With this we conclude our review. It may be good however to summarize the main points established.

1. Temptations are real, even if the one being tempted can not give in to the temptations.
2. Christ's holiness is not the same as Adam's innocence, Adam lacked the power not to sin. Christ's Manhood must never be separated from His Divinity; although He laid down His outward glory, He never set aside His divine power and knowledge.
3. One who can be touched by sin cannot be a substitute. There is no scriptural requirement for a substitute to be an exact counterpart of that for which it (the animal) or He (Christ) is a substitute.

If we keep the basic teachings of Scripture before us, we will not become prey to Christ-dishonouring notions. Meanwhile, let God's Word (2 John) be our guide in our relationship with those who do not bring the doctrine of Christ.

GOD'S PURPOSE (5)

—J. van Dijk

Now that we have considered how, collectively, the Assembly should give expression to the Headship of Christ, we may also observe how we as individuals may do so in various ways. However, it is most instructive to see what God has done, before we do so.

When God completed His creation, He did not fail to give expression to the desire of His heart. He created man, but He also created woman. We are so used to the setting in which we live that we seldom ask the question why God only created two kinds of men. We take it for granted that there are men and women. But God, in creating them, had His own purpose in mind. God's creation was not finished without a clear expression of what He had purposed by Himself, the relationship between Christ and the Assembly. So God created a man and a woman who, respectively had to be a type of Christ and the Church. Even the manner of the woman's creation was typical of the Assembly's origin, as the fruit of Christ's death: the woman was taken from Adam's side during his deep sleep.

Then, God brings Adam and Eve into a most intimate relationship which God blesses with fruit bearing (Gen. 1:28). How expressive is all of this of the relationship between Christ and the Assembly. "They shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). God, so it seems, is not satisfied and did not rest until His most perfect type expressed that which He had purposed in eternity past.

But now observe how all this is presented in Ephesians 5:29-31. When we speak of Christ and the Assembly we often refer to marriage as a fact of life we are familiar with that we may use as example of the relationship between Christ and the Assembly. But God does not put it quite that way. God says: "*Because of this (because of the relationship between Christ and the Assembly) a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall be united to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh.*" God gave marriage to be a type of Christ and the Assembly. Perhaps we may even say, God would not have given this relationship if Christ's Headship had not been the subject of His purpose.

How solemn does this make our marriage relationship. Are all husbands indeed the head of the household? Do we realize how Satan loves the destruction of this type? Where does the reluctance to quote such verses as, "Wives, submit-yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord," find its origin? And (just so we keep a balanced view of this relationship) why do husbands display so little of what Christ once expressed by saying, "I am in the midst of you as the One that serves" (Luke 22:27)? The great adversary has beclouded many a mind, even among Christians, so that the beautiful picture, given by God, might be destroyed.

To be cont'd