

# **THE VOLUNTARY OFFERINGS**

*An introduction to the voluntary offerings of Leviticus 1,2 and 3  
and their typical teaching*

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# THE BURNT OFFERING – ACCEPTED IN CHRIST

By Jeffrey Brett

Leviticus 1

## Introduction

In the first verse of Exodus 9, the Lord said to Moses to go to Pharaoh and say unto him: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me". The great theme of the book of Exodus, as implied by its name 'Going out', is the deliverance of the children of Israel from the bondage of Pharaoh. In chapter 12 they are redeemed from judgment by the blood of the lamb. Then in chapter 14 they cross the Red Sea, opened up to them by the rod of Moses, and find themselves saved from every power that previously held them in bondage. In chapter 15, led by Moses they are able to sing of the salvation of the Lord.

All this is a picture of the salvation that the believer on the Lord Jesus has today. We have been redeemed to God by the blood of Christ. The power of sin and death has been broken in the death and resurrection of Christ. We have a new life in Christ, with a new power for living in the Holy Spirit, so that we can now serve God acceptably in this world.

Much of the rest of the book of Exodus concerns the instructions to Moses concerning the building and setting up of the tabernacle. When we come to chapter 40, the work is completed. We read in verse 33: "And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work". A very

wonderful thing then happened: "Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle".

The book of Leviticus follows on from this point and deals with the service of God that went on every day in the tabernacle. We have arrived at the point that God had before Him when He commanded Moses to tell Pharaoh to let His people go. They could now serve Him freely and willingly, as He had redeemed them to Himself and delivered them from Egypt.

### **The burnt offering**

Our subject is the meaning of the burnt offering and we hope to see its relevance to us today. The burnt offering is a picture of the acceptance of the believer before God, based on the perfection of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus. The first verse of Leviticus 1 says: "And the Lord called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation". Having descended in a cloud and taken up His abode in the midst of His people, He speaks from the tabernacle with a view to His people drawing near unto Him to worship. God starts with the burnt offering, as it is the basis of all the other offerings. It is a picture of the greatness of the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ as being able to carry out the will of God perfectly, that God may be glorified and man brought into blessing as a worshipper.

This offering was a voluntary gift, not like the sin offering which was something God *demand*ed. It was a free will gift to God. This immediately brings to our minds the willingness of the Lord Jesus in coming into this world to do the will of God. We often think of the words of Psalm 40, which are quoted in Hebrews 10: "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of Me,) to do Thy will, O God". This is one of the chapters of the New Testament which shows us the importance of the old sacrifices offered in the tabernacle. They all looked

forward to the fulfilment of them by and in the Person of the Lord Jesus. He came into this world to carry out the will of God, which, according to Hebrews 10:10 involved *our sanctification*: "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all". This sanctification could only be by the offering of Himself to God as a sacrifice in death.

### Identification with Christ

The offering had to be a domesticated animal taken from the herd or the flock. In our worship of God we have to learn what is suitable to Him. We may have our own ideas on this, but what is important is what He wants. No wild animal would be accepted. There was nothing wild, or untamed about the Lord Jesus. He came in perfect obedience to do God's will, not His own, even as far as the laying down of His life in death, even the death of the cross. Verse 3 says: "Let him offer a male without blemish". The Lord Jesus came into this world as the "Seed of the woman" and His manhood was absolutely perfect. There was no blemish in Him caused by sin. If there had been, then His offering would not have been accepted by God. We must always remember this. The Lord Jesus was without sin although a man like you and I, but as conceived by the Holy Ghost He had a nature that was pure and holy. Only thus could He be a perfect offering to God.

In verse 4 we learn how the perfection of the offering was transferred to the offerer: "And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him". The word for 'put his hand upon' in the original language means 'to lean upon'. The idea in Scripture of laying on of hands is *identification*. Here the offerer is fully identified with the offering so that all that is true of the offering becomes true of the person who offers it. How wonderful this is when applied to the believer on the Lord Jesus Christ. To understand that when in faith I trust Christ as my

Saviour, all the perfection of His Person and work is transferred to me in the sight of God. John in his first epistle says: "(...) as *He* is so are *we* in this world" (1 John 4:17). We do not even have to wait until we are in heaven; even now in this world God sees us perfect in Christ. This is probably the most important lesson we have to learn from the burnt offering. We have the same idea of identification in the sin offering, but there all the sin of the offerer was transferred to the offering and it was then slain in his place.

### **The work of the offerer and the priests**

The offerer then had to kill the burnt offering himself. It would have been no light matter for him. Having brought his bullock as a gift, then having laid his hands on its head, he had to slay the animal before it could be offered to God. Then in verse 5 the priests are first mentioned. They had to take the blood of the animal and sprinkle it round about the brazen altar. The priests are those who have been separated to God. They had been washed, anointed and consecrated, and would have a deep appreciation of the value of the blood of the sacrifice. They themselves stood before God in the value of it. But then we have the duty of the offerer: "And he shall flay the burnt offering, and cut it into his pieces" (Lev. 1:6). Flaying means that he skinned the animal. This would bring to light all the inward parts of the beast and he could then cut it into pieces.

These detailed instructions would remind us of the necessity of having spiritual exercises and being intelligent as to something of the deep perfections of Christ. These, of course, are only known fully by God, but what a privilege it is that we can appreciate them a little bit and share God's pleasure in His beloved Son. We can only do this as we enjoy the position that the death of Christ has brought us into before God. Paul speaks of this in Ephesians: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself,

according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:5-6). May we understand more and more that when God sees us before Him, He sees us graced with all the beauty and perfections of His beloved One. There is no Christian blessing higher than this.

The priests carried out all the rest of the instructions. Let us remember that according to Peter's first epistle, every believer is a priest as well as an offerer: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5). Of all the many privileges that we have as believers, that of drawing near to God as a worshipping priest is the greatest, and we should all, not just a selected few, be concerned about this, because according to Scripture it is open to every Christian.

Verses 8 and 9 tell us: "And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood that is on the fire which is upon the altar: but his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord". We need to consider these various parts of the animal carefully to see the typical meaning. What a privilege it is for us to think of the Person of the Lord Jesus in the light of these scriptures. We can link three of them with verses in the New Testament which speak of the sinless perfection of the Lord Jesus.

### **The animal's head, entrails, legs, and fat**

When we think of the *head* of the animal, we are reminded of the mind of the Lord Jesus. He perfectly knew what was in the heart of God and was able to carry it all out to God's glory. Second Corinthians 5:21 also reminds us: "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin". There was never

a sinful thought in the mind of Jesus as He lived here. He ever lived to please and to do the will of His Father.

The *inwards*, which would refer to the intestines etc., would remind us of the ever moving feelings and compassions that were His as He sought to live here for His Father. At the same time, He entered fully into the feelings of men and women all around Him. But again, none of those emotions and motives were affected by sin. The Apostle John wrote in his first epistle: "And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins: and in Him is no sin" (1 John 3:5).

And then the *legs* would remind us of the perfect walk of the Lord Jesus. Wherever He went, whatever He did was all in perfect obedience to the will of His Father. He never once exercised His own will. He never sought to glorify Himself, always His Father. And so the Apostle Peter tells us in his first epistle: "(...) who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (1 Pet. 2:22). So the three main writers of the New Testament epistles all bear witness to the sinless perfection of the Lord Jesus. This is in keeping with His being the true burnt offering, the One who could lay down His life as a sacrifice for the pleasure of God.

The remaining part, the *fat*, would tell us of the excellence of the offering. In all the offerings the fat is all for God; it was forbidden for the Jews to eat fat. It would tell us of that which only God could see in Christ. Those deep perfections that only the One who could look into His heart could see. The devotion, the faithfulness, the preparedness to give up all in submission to God's will, only God could fully evaluate. So all the fat was burnt on the altar.

### **Burning the offering**

We must comment on the two words that are used in the offerings for burning. In the sin offering the word used means 'to

consume', and we can understand the significance of that meaning when the judgment of God against sin is the subject. But with the burnt offering the word used means 'to cause to ascend as *incense*'. The same word is used for the light of the candlestick and the altar of incense in the holy place of the tabernacle. We can understand that a totally different thought is brought before us. There was no judgment for sin in the burnt offering; it was completely for the pleasure of God. Judging sin brings God no pleasure, although His righteousness demands it. But the burnt offering speaks of the pleasure that God has in His well-beloved Son, who as a man in this world ever brought delight to His heart and never more so than when He laid down His life to accomplish His Father's will.

How wonderful to think that even on the cross of Calvary, with all its terrible suffering and shame, there arose to God a savour of sweetness because of the perfection of the One who died there. With us, sadly, trial and suffering, the hatred and bad treatment of others, often brings out the worst in us, but in the Lord Jesus it only brought out His deep perfection. A hymn writer has touched on this with the words: "Where sin o'er all seemed to prevail, redemption's glory shed". At Calvary where man had done a terrible sin in killing God's well-beloved Son, there arose a sweet savour of His offering Himself in order to accomplish redemption for us.

### **God's provision for the poor**

The remainder of this chapter deals with the alternative animals that could be offered. How gracious it was of God to make allowance for those who could not afford to bring a large offering such as a bullock. A sheep or a goat was quite acceptable according to how much the offerer could afford, and in extreme cases even turtledoves or young pigeons could be brought. So there was no excuse for any, for none could have said: 'I am too poor, I cannot afford to give God anything'. How

true this is with each one of us. There is no true believer who has no appreciation of Christ. We may think we have nothing suitable for God, but this is only belittling the grace of God that delights in even the smallest appreciation of His Son, the Lord Jesus.

There are, however, at least two ways we can consider these various animals. Obviously their size and value would suggest different appreciations of the worth of Christ in our hearts. If this is so, then we must be exercised to bring to God at least what we are each capable of giving. God does not expect a very young believer to have the same appreciation of Christ as a mature Christian, but likewise, He would not accept a turtledove from one who could afford much more. But whatever animal was brought, it is said of them all: "a sweet savour unto the Lord". However small our appreciation of the Lord Jesus may be, God knows our hearts and He alone knows the full value of His Person and work. How delightful to God must be the thanksgiving of the youngest believer for what Christ has done on the cross of Calvary. It may be said with stammering tongue and poorly expressed thoughts, but God reads the heart, and it is His valuation of the gift that counts, not ours.

The second way of looking at these animals is to see different aspects of the work of Christ. If we think of the characteristics of these animals we can see differences apart from the size and value of them. The *bullock* is characterised by strength – not speed, but a slow steady tread that can go on for hours until the day's work is done. This would remind us of the ability of the Lord Jesus to do the work that God gave Him to do. We thought at the beginning of that scripture from Hebrews: "I come to do Thy will, O God" (Heb. 10:9). Other scriptures use the character of the *sheep* to describe the Lord Jesus. Isaiah 53:7 says: "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth". The *sheep* would speak of the willingness of the Lord Jesus to do the will of God. The *goat* is a strong animal and its

horns are often referred to. It was used in the consecration of the priests. I think it speaks of the devotion of the Lord Jesus. Finally the *birds* would speak to us of the One who came from heaven to do the Father's will.

### **The law of the burnt offering**

In Leviticus 6:9 we read of the law of the burnt offering. From this we learn that the fire of that offering on the altar was never to be allowed to go out. Morning and evening a sacrifice was offered and the fire was kept burning all day. This teaches us that the death of the Lord Jesus as bringing pleasure to God and upholding His glory is the basis for everything and for all time, both for God and for the believer. May there be a greater appreciation in our hearts of all that Christ has done and a greater response to God who gave Him, so that our response in worship to Him may increase.

# THE MEAL OFFERING – THE FRAGRANCE OF CHRIST

By Arthur Goodwin

## Leviticus 2

The subject for our consideration is the meal or grain offering and we find it recorded in Leviticus 2, where it is referred to in our Authorised Version as the meat offering. In Leviticus 1 we have the burnt offering brought before us. There we read of the sacrifice of the bullock, the sheep or the goat, all of which spoke of Christ's death and all of which went up as an offering to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. The meal offering, however, was one of a different sort. It was a *bloodless* offering and is not pertinent to the *death* of Christ, but rather to His *life* here upon earth. The meal offering has no connection with sin-bearing.

## Fine flour

Let us first consider what we might call the composition of the meal offering. Its main ingredient was fine flour, that is grains of wheat which had been ground between the millstones and beaten until its composition was without any unevenness, roughness or coarseness but continual even smoothness. Such were the graces which characterised our Lord Jesus in every step of His pathway down here. His life was one of absolute perfection, and this offering which typified such characteristics was again one that went up to God as an odour of a sweet savour or an odour of rest. It was not so with other great

servants of God. Moses, for instance spoke unadvisedly with his lips (Num. 20:10); Peter denied his Lord (Matt. 26:74); John was one who sought a position of prominence in a coming day (Mark 10:37); and Paul too was guilty of straying from the path of complete obedience.

And I believe that this aspect of the meal offering has its application to ourselves, for in Ephesians 1:6 we are told that we are "accepted in the Beloved". If we desire to know God's thoughts about us, we do not look at ourselves but at Christ. In 1 John 4:17 we are told: "As He is so are we in this world". He is "our life" (Col. 3:4). In 1 John 5:20 we read: "We are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and Eternal Life". In verse 11 of the same chapter we have: "God hath given to us eternal life and this life is in His Son". So we have in 2 Corinthians 4:10: "(...) that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh".

Such a conception of God's admiration of us, His children reminds me of Balaam's forced prophecy of Israel from the top of mount Pisgah. Despite all their shortcomings and their mutterings against Jehovah, it is recorded: "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel" (Num. 23:21).

## **Frankincense and oil**

The second ingredient of the offering was frankincense and it was this which gave a fragrance to it. It typified the graces and moral glory of our Lord Jesus, that aspect of the Lord's life which only God could discern. Every thought, word and deed from Him was fragrance to God. You will notice that all of the frankincense with part of the flour was burnt on the altar as a memorial to God.

Then we find that oil was also an important part of the offering. In verse 4 the cakes were made of fine flour mixed with

oil, but the unleavened wafers were anointed with oil. Here I believe the Holy Spirit is very careful to portray the truth about the Man Christ Jesus. Oil, as we know is a type of the Holy Spirit and the *mixing* would remind us of Luke 1:35 and Galatians 4:4, two scriptures which speak of the virgin birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Luke tells us: "(...) the Holy Spirit shall come upon thee and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God". But it is also stated in verse 4 that the unleavened wafers were to be *anointed* with oil, and here again we have a beautiful demonstration of the way in which the Holy Spirit inspires Scripture to reveal the truths of our Lord's Person and work. Our Lord is named in the Word both as Messiah and as Christ, the former being Hebrew and the latter Greek, but both mean: the *Anointed*.

At His baptism by John we read: "And the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved son; in thee I am well pleased" (Luke 3:22). In Acts 10:38 we read that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit, and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him". So He was anointed with the Spirit before His earthly ministry, and He could say: "I cast out demons by the Spirit of God" (Matt. 12:28).

## Salt

In verse 13 of our chapter we find that salt was also a component of the meal offering, or indeed of any of the offerings and it is spoken of as the "salt of the covenant". Salt is a preservative and would be in keeping with this description, for it would remind us that the promises of God as revealed in His covenants are enduring. The thought of the salt in its preservative character can be applied in two ways, firstly that

the promises of God are vouchsafed to us and secondly that the offering of Christ will preserve us from a coming judgment such as the offering itself had to pass through when it was consumed by the fire. Then in Colossians 4:6 the believer is exhorted to let his speech be always with grace, "seasoned with salt".

Grace and truth are often linked together, as we find for instance in John 1. There it is recorded that the Word was full of grace and truth (v. 14), and then in verse 17: "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ". Salt in these two contexts would correspond to the *truth* which was always perfectly exemplified in our Lord in manhood. His words were always uttered in grace, but when necessary with the salty application. For instance when the scribes and Pharisees brought before Him the woman that had been taken in adultery and urging the Lord's condemnation of her because it was the law of Moses, after He had dealt with these men He asked her: "Hath no man condemned thee?" She replied: "No man, Lord". Then His reply was: "Neither do I condemn thee". Here were His words of grace, but immediately He adds: "Go and sin no more" (John 8:1-11). Here was the use of the salt.

### **No leaven**

These are the components that had to be included in the meal offering, but there were two specific things that had to be *excluded*. The first was leaven and bearing in mind that which leaven represents in Scripture it is very pertinent to find that it was excluded from all of those offerings which represented the Lord Jesus. Although it is not generally realised it is without question that leaven in Scripture always represents *evil*. In 1 Corinthians 5, where the apostle is dealing with terrible immorality in the assembly, he says: "A little leaven leavens the whole lump". Then in Galatians 5, where he is dealing with

terrible doctrinal error in the assembly, again he uses the same expression: "A little leaven leavens the whole lump".

In Matthew 13 among the kingdom parables the Lord tells the parable of the woman who hid leaven in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened. The interpretation often given to this parable is that it is a picture of the Gospel, which will continually be preached until the whole world is converted. Hardly anything could be further from the truth. Do we see anything like this being brought to pass after two thousand years of Gospel preaching around the world? Rather the world seems to get worse and further from God. No! Leaven in this case is *evil* that has been introduced into the professing Church and has continued to work until it has brought about the present day position where we find a heterogeneous mass of real and professing Christianity; in short Christendom.

### **No honey**

In verse 11 we are also told that honey was another ingredient that was not to be offered with any offering of the Lord made by fire. Honey, in Scripture, appears to have two interpretations. For instance we read that the land of Canaan was a land of "milk and honey". Then, in speaking of the Lord prophetically, Isaiah tells us that "butter and honey shall he eat" (Isa. 7:15). But in Proverbs 25 we have what appears to be a warning. Verse 16 reads: "Hast thou found honey? Eat as much as is sufficient for thee lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it"; and again in verse 27 it says: "It is not good to eat much honey".

But in connection with the meal offering it would appear that it is the natural sweetness of honey that is being typically pointed to. Natural sweetness, whilst not offensive, has to be used with discretion. The Lord's ways and words were always gracious, but in John 2:4 we read of Him saying to His mother: "*Woman*, what have I to do with thee?" Whilst such an

expression might have been the mode of conversation of that day it does, to our ears, have the sound of harshness. I am sure that our Lord did not address His mother in this way, but on the other hand there was no trait of natural sweetness or ingratiating. There was no honey. But in John 19, where the Lord is upon the cross and His mother and the disciple John are looking on, His words were: "*Woman*, behold thy son", and to John: "Behold thy mother" (John 19:26-27). So we can see that whether it be in His normal ministry, or whether it be in the dying hours upon the cross, His expressions are still the same – natural sweetness is absent.

### **The sufferings of Christ**

We would now say a little about the sufferings of Christ as they are depicted in the meal offering. As we have already pointed out this offering does not show Christ suffering for sin; there is no atonement in the offering, there is no three hours of darkness; all is typical of the perfect *life* of our Lord. The first oblation mentioned is cakes that are baked in the oven. The word for 'cakes' means cakes that had been pierced or pricked and gives the thought of abuse, whilst wafers that had been rolled also gives the thought of great pressure, and the fact that they were in the oven and enclosed indicates that they were not open to the eyes of men. They were *hidden* and I think would represent those sufferings which were unknown by man, but known to God alone. Think of the Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane, where we know that His sufferings were such that His sweat became blood. Who was aware of this but Himself and God?

In verse five the offering is baked in a pan and that would be a vessel that is open. Here the sufferings of our Lord that were endured could be seen by all and would no doubt come within the embrace of Hebrews 12:3 – the One who "endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself". The last vessel

mentioned is the cauldron and is perhaps a little more difficult to understand. It seems to point to a combination of public rejection and hostility and to His own feelings. Such conditions might have been experienced, for instance, when He wept over Jerusalem, no doubt experiencing on that occasion the rejection of His own people Israel. How heartbreaking it must have been to the Lord knowing that, in love, He had come to His own people and they had rejected Him.

### **The law of the meal offering**

In Leviticus 6:14-18 we have what is known as the law of the meal offering. After the memorial part was offered up to God the remainder accrued to Aaron and his sons. The expression "Aaron and his sons" would, I think, represent Christ and His assembly, and this is in effect where we come in. The priests were to eat the meal offering in the holy place, that is, it was eaten in the presence of God, and again, so to speak, to emphasize the fact of its holiness it was to be eaten with unleavened bread. Jehovah Himself says: "I have given it to them", and moreover it was most holy. The worshippers had themselves provided the offering, but God says: "I have given it to them".

How much would such an understanding have enhanced the appreciation of the eating. For Aaron and his sons it was their privilege to feed upon that which was representative of Christ Himself and moreover Christ in His manhood. Surely this should be the portion of us all. Aaron was of the tribe of Levi, a tribe that was set apart by God specifically for service at the altar. Aaron was the high priest and to him and his sons was given the privilege of leading the worship of the people. Today Christ is our High Priest, but all believers are Levites, all are of the priestly family. There is no special selection of a company who are solely authorised to lead the worship of the saints.

The high priest alone was permitted to pass within the veil into the presence of God, and that only once a year. But the veil has been rent and now every blood cleansed child of God is invited to draw near to worship. The way is open for us all, but not all believers are aware of their privileges. The apostle Peter tells us in the second chapter of his first epistle that we are both holy priests and royal priests, *holy* priests to offer up spiritual sacrifices and *royal* priests to show forth the praises of Him who has called us. Constant contemplation of the Lord Jesus Christ as He walked through this world, His moral glory constantly being brought before us is surely the very food of our souls. This is feeding upon Him.

### **A new meal offering**

Our last consideration of this offering is found in Leviticus 23:15-22, where the children of Israel were commanded to "offer up a new meal offering unto the Lord". What makes this meal offering so significant is that it was to be baked *with leaven*, which appears to be in total contradiction to what we have been considering already.

But if this passage is considered carefully I think that once again it will show the accuracy of Scripture. It will be noticed that this new meal offering is brought in here in connection with the feast of Pentecost, and we only have to turn to Acts 2 to learn of the great event which took place at that time. There we are told that the Holy Spirit descended from heaven and baptised the then company of believers into one body, and thus the Church was born. Although they were believers they still had that old nature, they were still sinners although saved by grace. And we too are among that number if we are disciples of our Lord Jesus.

Therefore *leaven* formed part of this meal offering to demonstrate what was prophetically figured. The meal offering offered at the time of Pentecost prefigured features of a then

coming day. But baked leaven is rendered inoperative, and so it is, or it should be descriptive of those who are members of Christ's body. How marvellous is that minute accuracy, as this demonstrates that the Bible which you and I treasure so much is no ordinary book but the very word of God.

# THE PEACE OFFERING – A FIGURE OF FELLOWSHIP

By Ernest Brown

Leviticus 3

## Introduction

Imagine, for a moment, that I am a happily married man, which I am! Imagine, also, that I love my wife very much, which I do! Imagine, further, that I try very hard to avoid upsetting her, which, again, I do try to achieve! Imagine, however, that, one day, I do something which upsets her very much. What am I to do, to put things right, to make amends? I know. I will go out and buy the biggest box I can afford of her favourite chocolates. I do so. I give it to my wife, saying how sorry I am for what I had done. She accepts my apology. She is duly placated. She enjoys the chocolates. We are back to where we were before I offended her. Everything is fine. The enjoyment of our long-term relationship is restored. Well and good. Now, many people would say that I had given my wife a Peace Offering. However, in the proper sense of the term, as defined in the Bible, that would not be so. Strictly speaking, I would have given her a Trespass Offering, which is not our subject now.

Imagine, then, a rather different scenario. Imagine, as before, that I am a happily married man, which I certainly am! Imagine, as before, that I love my wife very much, which I certainly do! There is no outstanding grievance between us. All is well. Imagine, then, that, thinking about this, I ask myself, 'How can I show my wife how much I really love her? What can

I do to share with her my enjoyment of our most happy relationship?' I know! I will buy the biggest box I can afford of our favourite chocolates. We will sit down together with the box of chocolates, enjoy each other's company and the chocolates we both like, and share together our mutual appreciation of the joy of our long-term relationship. Now that would be a Peace Offering. Not as something necessary to make peace, or even restore peace, but rather *a celebration of the peace which already exists*. Note, it is the same box of chocolates, but enjoyed for a very different reason.

Generally speaking, the Old Testament offerings give us a better understanding of the content, the substance, of worship: the true worship, spiritual worship, Christian worship. They outline the sort of thoughts that fill our minds when we are in a true spirit of worship. They are not connected at all with what we can do. We offer to God that which is well pleasing to Him, that is, the fragrance and sweetness of the Person and work of Christ. The offerings set out, in a special manner, types, or pictures, given by the Holy Spirit, of the glory of the Person, and the value of the work, of the Lord Jesus Christ, and also the blessings which have become ours as a result of what He has done. They instruct us in things which we could not otherwise have learned.

And the Peace Offering signifies the worshipper having fellowship with God and man in the enjoyment of a settled peace. It is the result of possessing and enjoying peace which has already been established, rather than the work necessary to establish that peace.

### **Leviticus 3 and 7**

Let us now turn to the Bible itself and check whether my suggestions stand the test of Holy Scripture. For this, we should really start by reading Leviticus 3:1-17, which give us the details of the Peace Offering in its constituent parts. We should also

read Leviticus 7:11-36, which is the Law of the Peace Offering. That is, it explains the way in which the Peace Offering had to be celebrated. While we are bringing these things together, we should also bear in mind Psalm 118, the Psalm of the Peace Offering, which tells us what it felt like for the Lord Jesus to be the answer to all that the Peace Offering signifies. We will return to that later.

First of all, what do we learn, overall, from Leviticus 3 and 7? They tell us that the value to God of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ is so great that the peace established by it can be fully enjoyed by all the different parties involved. There is that established by the death of Christ which *God* Himself enjoys. There is that which *Christ* personally Himself enjoys, as the fruit of His death upon the cross. There is that which can be enjoyed collectively by the *Church*, as such. There is also that which can be enjoyed by each individual *Christian believer*. Furthermore, all the parties involved can share that enjoyment with each other. The appropriate words to give us the right idea about the Peace Offering are words like *peace, prosperity, praise, fellowship, communion, celebration*.

Let us begin by considering that the word the Bible uses to signify a Peace Offering is used consistently throughout Scripture. A prime feature of the Peace Offering is that it is a voluntary offering. It is offered *willingly*. It is not obligatory. It is also a sweet savour offering. That indicates that what is being offered is rising up to God as a sweet aroma. That is, what is being done is acceptable to God. It pleases Him, it gives Him pleasure.

## **The Peace Offering in Psalm 40**

Then, apart from the many examples of the use of the term Peace Offering itself, there are special cases which are particularly instructive. For instance, in Psalm 40, we get a marvellous summary of the major offerings detailed in the

opening chapters of Leviticus. In verse 6 of that Psalm, we read: "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required". Careful study of the words used there, and comparing the usage of the same words throughout Scripture confirms that it is fair to read that verse like this: "Peace-offering and meal-offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required".

It is common knowledge that, in the Psalms, generally, we get the expression of the feelings of men who have gone through a variety of experiences, both pleasant and painful, with the help of God, indeed with the joy of the felt presence of God in those experiences. Further study makes plain that in some very special Psalms, called for convenience the Messianic Psalms, we are given a special insight into what it felt like to the Lord Jesus Himself to go through many of life's experiences, again both pleasant and painful, and in some cases even death itself, in the conscious knowledge of the presence of God. Psalm 40 is one of these Psalms.

### **Christ, the fulfilment of the offerings**

This is such an important matter that we have to ask ourselves: 'Is there anything in the New Testament to justify this assumption that the Peace Offering in Leviticus 3 and 7 and the reference to it in Psalm 40, are intended to give us a picture of something that can only be fully true in the experience of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself?' The plain answer to that important question is: 'Indeed there is!' The very words that we have read from Psalm 40 are quoted verbatim in Hebrews 10:5,6 and 8. The clear exposition there of what Psalm 40 is foretelling is that only in the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ can be seen the fulfilment of what Psalm 40 refers to in the offerings.

The letter to the Hebrews in particular is full of references to the fact that the Old Testament ceremonial offerings were

nothing in themselves. Their true value is that they looked on to the one perfect offering, the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross of Calvary. The fullness of all that Christ achieved in His death is so great that no one type would or could be sufficient to spell out all that was accomplished by that perfect sacrifice. But, Christ having died and risen again, God has been proven to have been perfectly right in forgiving men who acted in accordance with His instructions in the days before Christ came into the world. We learn, from Romans 3:24-26, that we are “justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus”.

That is, God was right in the days before Christ came into the world in forgiving men on the basis of the Old Testament offerings, because they all looked on to that supreme, once and for all sacrifice made when “once in the end of the age Christ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself”, as Hebrews 9:26 affirms.

### **Offering to God the fragrance and sweetness of the Person and work of Christ**

In addition to that, we have a lovely, if a little oblique, reference to the same thing in Ephesians 5:2, where we can justifiably read: “(...) walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and hath given Himself for us a meal-offering and a peace-offering to God for a sweet-smelling savour”. There we have it. These Old Testament pictures are intended to teach us that when the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross, He laid the only true basis for worship, true worship, spiritual worship, to arise from worshippers on earth to God in heaven. We read in John

4:23-24: "(...) the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth".

That takes us a stage further. The consistent teaching of Scripture, in both Old and New Testaments, is that worship flows from the completion of a sacrifice which is fully acceptable to God. Only the final, full revelation of God as Father in the Person of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, has made it possible for true spiritual worship of God as Father to arise voluntarily from willing hearts rejoicing in the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins. Only the death of Christ has made the forgiveness of sins available. Not only that, but we find that our hearts are in tune with God's own heart in thinking right things, holy things, spiritual things, about Christ personally and the value to God of what Christ has done.

Before we look at some of the details of the Peace Offering, let us recap. Peace, perfect, lasting, spiritual peace is now available because Christ has died and risen again. Those who enjoy that peace by faith can worship God in the enjoyment of the knowledge that God Himself enjoys, even more than they do, of all the beauties and perfections of Christ personally, and the value to God of His sacrificial death. Indeed, God has demonstrated that fact in that He has raised Him from among the dead. It is a wonderful thing that saved sinners on earth can share with God in heaven the celebration of the perfection of the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. We enjoy, together with God and man, what God has made known to us of Christ.

### **Some details of the Peace Offering**

Now let us see how the details of the Peace Offering in Leviticus 3 and 7 graphically illustrate what the New Testament plainly teaches. Going down the verses, we notice that:

### **(1) A voluntary offering**

The Peace Offering was (very often) a voluntary offering, a freewill offering (Lev. 7:16).

### **(2) Unrestricted access**

It was open to the offerer when he came, and, within prescribed limits, what he offered. Hebrews 10 (vv. 19-22) affirms that we have constant, immediate, unhindered access into the very presence of God at all times.

### **(3) A sweet savour offering**

The Peace Offering was a sweet savour offering. In taking the opportunity to present to God the preciousness of Christ, we know that we are offering that which is well pleasing to Him. Our appreciation of the fragrant perfections of the Person and work of Christ arises as a sweet savour unto God.

### **(4) A flawless animal**

If the offering was to be a fair picture of the perfection resident in Christ, the animal must be completely without flaw.

### **(5) Male or female animal**

In some offerings, the male animal is specified as being appropriate, in others, the female. In the Peace Offering, the offering could be either the male or the female. What can we learn from that distinction? There is only one way to find out. We must compare Scripture with Scripture, and the usage wherever the concept is introduced. That is the only true way to arrive at a conclusion about what we are intended to learn.

When we do that, the distinction becomes reasonably clear. When the *male* is specified, we are directed to think about God's side of the matter, that is, the revelation of what God has done in Christ. When the *female* is introduced, it is more the worshipper's apprehension and appreciation of what God has done that is involved. Sometime, check it through for yourself. I, for one, am satisfied that the usage confirms the suggestion. It fits.

### **(6) The fat given to God**

Consistent with all offerings, all the fat, the sweetest part of the sacrifice, must be given to God who Himself knows best the perfections of His beloved Son. The blood, shed and applied on and round about the altar, testifies to the fact that the peace enjoyed has been secured on a *righteous* basis. As we read in Colossians 1:20: "He has made peace by the blood of His cross". Most of the flesh of the sacrifice must be burned upon the altar, in token of the fact that the righteous claims of God had been fully met. The application of the fire served to bring out the aroma of the sacrifice, which then arose to God as a sweet savour. The more intense the fire, the sweeter the aroma that arose to God as a sweet-smelling savour.

### **(7) Oil**

We learn in Leviticus 7 that the use of oil was prominent in the way the Peace Offering was celebrated. A reminder, surely, that all the Lord Jesus did, in life and in death, He did in the energy and power of the Holy Spirit.

### **(8) Leaven permitted**

Significantly, leaven, which in Scripture is always a symbol of evil, was permitted, but it must be carefully controlled. There is no reference to leaven in Leviticus 7:12, which speaks of Christ *personally*. There can never be any suggestion of evil attaching to Him. However, there is a reference to leaven in verse 13, which brings us, the offerers, into the picture. Even there, the leaven had to be carefully controlled. There is no suggestion of the leaven being *active*. It has been in the oven and baked, judged in the presence of God by the application of fire. Furthermore, the offering must not be stale, but absolutely fresh. Then again, no uncleanness could be permitted in anything which represented Christ.

### **(9) How the offering was presented**

The manner in which the offering was presented had a delightful significance, too. The breast of the sacrifice was waved in a horizontal movement which released the full savour of the offering before the Lord, in appreciation of and enjoyment of His love. Similarly, the right shoulder was heaved in a vertical movement unto the Lord, in appreciation and enjoyment of the power and ability of Christ to secure everything for God.

## **The Peace Offering in Psalm 118**

I have already suggested that Psalm 118 gives us an idea of what it felt like to the Lord Jesus to be the Peace Offering. Bearing in mind what we have been considering, we cannot be surprised that the Psalm is full of expressions of appreciation and praise. It is surely right that He who bore the cross, and made the supreme sacrifice, should have a major role in the celebration of the victory which He Himself gained.

Through the work of Christ, and in the power and energy of the Holy Spirit, we have the joy and privilege of being constrained to enter into the enjoyment and appreciation of all that God has wrought in Christ. We revel in all that we have had revealed to us of the glories of the Person and the value of the work of the Son of God. As the Apostle John says in his First Epistle: “(...) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full”. The hymn writer must have had the truth of those words in mind when he penned the words:

*By Thy grace Thou now hast called us  
Sharers of Thy joy to be,  
And to know the blessed secret  
Of His preciousness to Thee.*