

The Peace-offering Or the Communion-offering

Peace and Communion · Leviticus 3–7

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The Peace-offering Or the Communion-offering It is the food of the offering made by fire unto Jehovah (Lev. 3:11).

Those who look to the offering of Christ on the cross for no other reason than to have peace with God come far short of the Lord's mind. But those who do know Him as having made peace through the blood of His cross, and as having obtained eternal redemption for them, find it their sweetest employment, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, to have to do with Him for communion. The first three chapters in Leviticus are most inviting to us as to this; for they not only shadowed forth the perfections of Jesus when on earth, but also the sweet savor Jehovah found in Him both in life and in death. In neither of these chapters is the subject sin-bearing; though it be true, both in the burnt-offering and in the peace-offering, that a life was sacrificed, blood was shed, and sprinkled round about upon the altar, because God's way of blessing us, or of communion with us, could be founded on nothing less than the precious blood of Christ. Even in the glory this will be had in everlasting remembrance. All these offerings, when tested by the fire of divine holiness, only brought out that which was a sweet savour unto Jehovah. As long as souls are thinking only of their own safety, of what Christ did in the death of the cross to save sinners, there may be peace; but unless they are beholding Him by faith who is now in the presence of God for us, there will be little consciousness of communion. Beholding Him now glorified, and having the comfort of being always accepted in the Beloved {Eph. 1:6},

and complete in Him {Col. 2:10},

we are free to look back upon the cross, remembering Him there, and entering into the love of God, and the grace of the Lord Jesus, by the communion-power of the Holy Ghost. We can then, as the Spirit of truth may graciously guide, find delight in thinking of the Father's purposes and grace in Christ, and the personal glory and perfections of Him who accomplished redemption; what He is to the Father, what He is to us, and all the relationships and offices He now so perfectly sustains. In the first chapter of Leviticus, the unblemished victim set forth Christ as the burnt-offering {Lev. 1:3}.

It was so called because the fire was always burning -The fire shall ever be burning on the altar; it shall never go out (Lev. 6:12, 13).

Of this offering, not only the fat, but every part was burnt. Even those parts naturally unclean, the inwards and the legs {see Lev. 1:9},

were washed in water, to be a fit type of Him, who, inwardly,

in thought, feeling, desire, affection, as well as outwardly in walk, was always well-pleasing to the Father. In the burnt, or ascending offering, the whole victim, when tested by fire from heaven, the

searching fire of divine holiness, was a sweet savor, a savor of rest to Jehovah. It gives us God's estimate of the perfect surrender, and infinite acceptability, of Christ in death, who was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. It is not here sin-bearing, but another aspect of the death of Christ for the glory of God; and as that death was for us who believe on His name, we are accepted in all the acceptability of the offering -accepted in the Beloved {Eph. 1:6}.

As the man who brought it put his hand upon its head, thus identified himself with the offering, and was told, It shall be accepted for you {see Lev. 1:4},

so the one who now approaches God by the one offering of Christ is accepted in all the acceptance of Christ Himself. Precious truth for our souls! But in the burnt-offering, be it observed, no one had part with God. It is the entire surrender of Jesus to God. The priest that offered it had the skin for himself (Lev. 7:8); because all we can now possess of the burnt-offering is what was externally manifested; the inward perfections of devotedness, and every other activity for the glory of God the Father, He only could truly estimate. While the knowledge of the truth set forth in the burnt-offering, then, delights our hearts in the Lord, and furthers communion, yet in it no one could partake; all was for God. This view of the perfectness of Jesus enjoins us to follow in the same path of unreserved obedience, and to walk in love as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour (Eph. 5:2).

In the meat-offering, we have not the shedding of blood, but that which set forth the perfect acceptability to God of the man Christ Jesus in the days of His flesh. It was composed of fine flour, oil, and frankincense. The fine flour

represented the spotless purity and evenness of Jesus; oil

was mingled with it to typify Him who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, or the oil was poured on the flour to remind us of Him who was anointed by the Holy Ghost; while the frankincense {Lev. 2:1}

foreshadowed the excellencies of the man Christ Jesus. A handful of the fine flour and all the frankincense was burnt upon the altar, and was a sweet savor to God; for all the trial and testing only brought out from Jesus, according to divine

holiness, that perfectness in which Jehovah could find a savor of rest. Every thing in Him, every act and word, every step He took, all the activities of that blessed Person, were for the glory of God. The remainder of the meat-offering was to be eaten by the priests, Aaron and his sons. It was food for God's priests. They were to eat it in the holy place. The meat-offering was to be offered without leaven,

because nothing corrupting could be a type of the pure and spotless Son of God, whose flesh saw no corruption. No honey {Lev. 2:11}

was to be mingled with the meat-offering, because it was not mere amiability, a natural sweetness which soon becomes sour, which characterized the man Christ Jesus, but perfectness as man according to God. Salt {Lev. 2:13}

was to be mixed with every meat-offering, that the incorruptible and savory qualities of Jesus might be marked. As priests unto God, believers now feed on Christ, the bread of God {John 6:33}, the bread which came down from heaven {John 6:41}.

It is the spotless and perfect One, whom the Father sent, who said, The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world {John 6:51}.

How blessed this is! What precious thoughts of communion are here spread before us by the hand of God, That the priests should eat of the same fine flour

and oil

of which a part, with all the frankincense {Lev. 2:1-3},

had been a sweet savor to God, is wonderful indeed; and that the deep reality of the type should find its fulfilment in the Son of God -- in Him who was the bread of God,

the One in whom the Father found real delight -- and yet that it should be presented to us, as the bread which came down from heaven,

for our sustainment as well as life, is surpassingly marvelous. But such is the case; for by entering into the perfection and excellencies of Christ when on earth, and also His walk and service, as set forth in Scripture, in which He glorified the Father, we have fellowship with the Father; and while eating of this living bread, we have fellowship with Him who was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief {Isa. 53:3}. The bread,

said He, that I will give is my flesh . . . he that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in Him {John 6:51-56}.

How precious to our souls it is to be thus occupied with Christ! and how rich the grace that has brought us into it! It is, however, to the peace-offering that we must look for further lessons on communion. It has been called by some "the communion-offering." It was a sweet savor offering; for it did not set forth Christ as having been made sin for us. The victim was unblemished, killed, and its blood sprinkled round about the altar; because it foreshadowed Christ, and all our blessings are founded on His death. There never could have been communion between the Father and us, unless we had been reconciled to God by the death of His Son; there could have been no liberty to enter into the holiest but by the blood of Jesus. The peace-offering might be of the herd either male or female, or it might be a lamb, only it must in either case be without blemish. The smallest blemish would render it unfit to be offered; for it could not then portray the holy, spotless Son of God. The directions as to this were most stringent, though anything superfluous, or lacking, would not render it unfit for a freewill-offering. We read: It shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein. Blind, or broken, or maimed, or having a wen, or scurvy, or scabbed, ye shall not offer these unto the Lord, nor make an offering by fire of them upon the altar unto the Lord. Either a bullock or a lamb that hath anything superfluous or lacking in his parts, that mayest thou offer for a freewill-offering; but for a vow it shall not be accepted (Lev. 22:21-24).

The male bullock, or a female bullock, that which was weaker, or a lamb, that which was of less worth, teach us that the measure of our communion depends on the estimate we have of the perfections and worth of Him who loved us, and gave Himself for us; though communion would be known, but in a lesser degree, by those who have a weaker apprehension of the personal qualities and worth of the sacrifice. This is comforting. Again, before the peace-offering was killed and eaten, the offerer must be conscious of his identification with it by having laid his hand upon its head. It was then killed before Jehovah at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation {Lev. 3:2};

or, if a lamb, or a goat, he killed it before the tabernacle of the congregation. So every believer now looks back on the death of Jesus, and knows that Christ died for him, to bring him to God. He has now, by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, rest, and is at home in the presence of God. Let us well ponder these points. Communion is founded on the death and blood shedding of the Son of God. Without it we must have for ever been outside His presence. The veil was not rent till Christ died. The blood too was not only shed, but sprinkled upon the altar round about {Lev. 3:2};

and we can be before God in the peaceful consciousness of the blood of sprinkling, which speaks to us of liberty to draw near, to be inside the veil with boldness. What a holy ground is here laid for communion! What a way of righteousness, as well as

of perfect peace! How it invites us to draw near {Heb. 10:22},

as well as to come boldly {Heb. 4:16}!

No doubt, as we grow in the knowledge of the personal glory, perfections, and moral excellencies of Christ, our communion will be enlarged. This is why some saints have a deeper character of fellowship than others; though a feeble apprehension of Christ, and of the value of His blood, as that on which peace and communion are founded, are often in truehearted souls connected with great joy in the Lord, and an earnest, worshiping heart. The true ground of communion having been laid in this typical offering, we then find communion itself most blessedly established. Jehovah had His part, the priest his, the son of Aaron who sprinkled the blood had his part, the offerer also fed upon the sacrifice, and as many others as were welcomed to the feast. All the fat is Jehovah's, and certain inward parts were also offered by fire. It was called the food of the offering made by fire unto the Lord {Lev. 3:11}.

We read, He shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace-offering, an offering made by fire unto the Lord; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is on them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away. And Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt sacrifice, which is upon the wood that is on the fire: it is an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD (Lev. 3:3-5).

Observe here that the LORD (Jehovah) had His part first, and that part was the inward worth and excellencies of the victim; for He only knew, or could estimate, the real worth and inward energy and affection of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is an important point to notice; for we may be assured that those who are walking in fellowship with the Father seek His glory and His things first. Those whose principle is to attend to the things of God after they have done their own things know little of

communion, even if they do of peace. The Lord had the first and the best of the offering, because He only could enter into the infinite depths of His worth; and those who know His grace delight to honor God, and to do all for His glory! We see this principle often brought out in Scripture. In olden time, the children of Israel spent the first and best of their time and energy in gathering the manna which God provided for them. In the Proverbs it was written, Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase (Prov. 3:9).

When God provided for the maintenance of the priests, besides parts of the various offerings, it was written that the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the first-fruits of them which they shall offer unto

the LORD, them have I given thee (Num. 18:12);

which gives us another example that the first and best of all we are, and have, are to be devoted to God. In judging of our own state, it is perhaps scarcely possible to over-estimate the importance of the question, whether we are in the habit of rendering to God our first and best? Besides the food of the offering {Lev. 3:11},

the inward parts and fat being tried by fire, and all coming up to the Lord as a sweet savor {Lev. 3:5},

we find that if any of certain peace-offerings were left till the third day they were burnt. The remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day shall be burnt with fire (Lev. 7:17).

This shows how guarded God was as to communion; that it was confined to Himself and those who could have communion with Him; so that any part that was left should not be used by any one, or for ordinary purposes, but be burnt. We see the same principle brought out elsewhere: They [the priests] shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them: but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy. And if ought of the flesh of the consecrations, or of the bread, remain unto the morning, then thou shalt burn the remainder with fire (Ex. 29:33, 34).

There was the same strict injunction with regard to the paschal lamb: That which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire (Ex. 12:10).

Nothing can more clearly show that communion is confined between God and His own people; and those who enter into it by the power of the Holy Ghost know that the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him. It is not to be wondered at, then, that the apostle should have written, What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

To return to the offering. As we have seen, Jehovah had His part, and when tried under the action of fire was a sweet savor unto Him. The remainder was eaten. Aaron and his sons, typical of the Church, had the breast {Lev. 7:34}.

The priest who sprinkled the blood, who thus foreshadowed the Priest in heaven, had the right shoulder {Lev. 7:33}.

The man who brought the offering, and those he associated in fellowship with himself, partook of the remainder. It is a remarkable picture of communion, all having joint participation in the same offering. There was, however, the strictest injunction that all that be clean shall eat thereof {Lev. 7:19};

that is, an Israelite who was defiled would be disqualified for eating the peace-offering. If he partook of it while his defilement was not judged and cleansed according to the direction of Scripture, he might come under the severest judgment of God in being cut off from His people. But the soul that eateth of the flesh of the sacrifice of peaceofferings that pertain unto the Lord, having his uncleanness upon him, even that soul shall be cut off from His people. Moreover the soul that shall touch any unclean thing, as the uncleanness of man, or any unclean beast, or any abominable unclean thing, and eat of the flesh of the sacrifice of peace-offerings which pertain unto the Lord, even that soul shall be cut off from His people (Lev. 7:19-21).

who is the holy and the true. It is of the most importance that our souls clearly enter into this; for however we may abound in knowledge and gifts, and speak forth high-sounding doctrines, nothing can go on well or profitably, either individually or collectively, if we are acting while uncleanness is upon us as if there were nothing amiss. Happy those who, like the offerer, can wave before God the virtues and excellencies of Christ, who loved us, and gave Himself for us; and can feed upon His perfect love and almighty power to us-ward, as the breast

and the right shoulder

so sweetly set forth. Surely our hearts are filled with abiding consolation and strength for service and worship, when we know the sweetness and power of such precious fellowship. Communion with one another flows out of this; for walking in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another {1 John 1:7},

How guarded then an Israelite had to be, lest, through carelessness, he should do that which would bring down such severe judgment of God upon himself.

and

And looking at communion as taught in the New Testament by the apostle Paul, we find that

What a wondrous privilege to be thus known and enjoyed on earth! Yet let us never forget the impossibility of its being really known by any, even of God's children, who are careless as to unjudged evil. If evil thoughts, and carnal ways and words, unclean and unholy desires and associations, be tolerated by us instead of bowing us in the dust before God in humiliation and confession, let us not be surprised if leanness of soul be our portion; or the Lord's rebuke and chastening overtake us, because

He loves us, and has separated us unto Himself from this present evil world. It is well when selfexamination leads to self-judgment, and then to self-loathing. The eyes of our heart become then wholly fixed on the glorified Son of man.

many {1 Cor. 11:30}

came under the Lord's discipline, both in being afflicted with sickness, and cut off, because they did not judge themselves as to their walk and state in partaking of the Lord's Supper. They did not discern the Lord's body. Hence we read: For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world (1 Cor. 11:29-32).

How impossible, then, it is that we can be in communion with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, and with one another, with careless, unjudged walk! It was not selfexamination with the people to see if they were Israelites, for that was their birth condition; nor is it self-examination with us to discover whether we are children of God, for that was for ever settled when we were born of God by faith in Christ Jesus; but, as an Israelite, who had uncleanness upon him, by reason of having touched what was defiling, had to be cleansed from it, and made clean before he ate of the peace-offering, so we have to be clean when approaching the Lord's table, or to enable us to be in communion with the Lord as to anything else. How blessed it is to know that, having been perfected for ever by the one offering of Christ, when we do, as God's children, sin, it is a question then, not of eternal condemnation, but of communion; and through the advocacy of the Lord Jesus, and the action of His word and Spirit on our souls, we are bowed before Him in confession, and cleansed by the Word, so that we are again restored to communion with Him

the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? {1 Cor. 10:16}

A peace-offering might either be for a thanksgiving {Lev. 7:12},

or a vow, or a voluntary offering {Lev. 7:16}.

The offering for a thanksgiving

must be offered with a meat-offering, unleavened cakes mingled with oil,

a shadow of the perfect man Christ Jesus, as conceived by the Holy Ghost; and unleavened wafers anointed with oil (Lev. 7:12),

reminding us of that blessed One who was anointed with the Holy Ghost; and cakes mingled with oil and fine flour fried, setting Him before us in His sufferings. Observe thus far the entire absence of leaven, because it might express the perfect purity of the humanity of Christ. Then, besides these things, he shall offer for his offering leavened bread with the

sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace-offerings (Lev. 7:13).

And why do we now have leaven? Surely not to express what Christ was, but what we are; for even in our thanksgivings to God our Father we still have that in us -- the flesh -- in which dwells nothing

good. When we have glorified bodies, there will be the entire absence, and for ever, of all evil; but now leaven, that which is corrupt and evil, is so in us, that as God's children we are enjoined to lay aside all malice, &c. Moreover, a peace-offering for thanksgiving was to be eaten the same day in which it was offered, because in approaching to render thanks our communion will not be long continued. He shall not leave any of it until the morning {Lev. 7:15}.

With a voluntary offering {Lev. 7:16}

the communion is continued longer; it might be eaten for two days. But no peace-offering was allowed to be fed upon for more than two days, because if the offerer and the friends he invited continued to live upon it day after day, it would look like a person slaying an animal for his own feasting, instead of bringing an offering unto the LORD. Besides, we doubt not that the third day in Scripture often refers to resurrection. We therefore read that the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day shall be burnt with fire. And if any of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace-offerings be eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted, neither shall it be imputed unto him that offereth it: it shall be an abomination, and the soul that eateth it shall bear his iniquity (Lev. 7:17, 18).

What a picture of communion is presented to us here! God finds a savor of rest in the part offered to Him; the priest who sprinkled the blood, typical of the Priest in heaven, had his part; Aaron and his sons, shadowing the Church, had their part; while the offerer and his friend's also fed on the same offering; what was left was burnt with fire. Can anything more touchingly set forth what communion now is? What nearness to the Father, what joy, what thanksgiving, what worship, must be associated with this joint participation of that one Object which has so perfectly pleased and satisfied God! How all these details speak to us of reality! Though divine grace has called us, saved us, and set us apart for God by the blood of Jesus and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, yet He, to whom we are now brought, is holy. Still He says, As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy (1 Pet. 1:15, 16).

While rejoicing in Christ Jesus, in whom we are complete in standing and nearness to God, may we be so conscious of all the provision He has made for us, as to be preserved from carelessness about our state, and, by Christ, offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually; that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name {Heb. 13:15}.