

WEEK 14

The Basis of All Our Priestly Service— the Fire from the Altar of Burnt Offering

Scripture Reading: Lev. 9:24; 6:12-13; 10:1-11; Heb. 12:29; Luke 12:49-50;
Rev. 4:5; Exo. 3:2-6

OUTLINE

<< DAY 1 >>

I. God is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29; Deut. 4:24; 9:3):

- A. *As the burning One, God is holy; holiness is His nature, and whatever does not correspond with His holy nature, He, as the consuming fire, will consume (Heb. 12:29).*
- B. *In Daniel 7:9-10 God's throne was flames of fire, its wheels were a burning fire, and a stream of fire issued forth and came out from before Him; the fire here indicates that God is absolutely righteous and altogether holy.*
- C. *Through His death the Lord released Himself into man as the fire of life to burn on the earth (Luke 12:49-50; John 12:24):*
 - 1. The pneumatic Christ as the sevenfold intensified life-giving Spirit is a burning fire (Heb. 12:29; Rev. 4:5; 5:6; 1:14; cf. Zech. 2:5).
 - 2. This fire is the impulse (the impelling force) of the spiritual life, an impulse that comes from the Lord's released divine life.
 - 3. "We all have been burned by this fire; we have been brought together by this fire; and now we are burdened that this fire would burn many others. When the

concealed glory of Christ's divinity was released, a divine fire was cast on earth to burn the whole earth. Let the fire burn on! No one can stop it" (The Issue of Christ Being Glorified by the Father with the Divine Glory, pp. 11-12).

D. The seven Spirits of God are the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne; these lamps of fire are for the carrying out of God's administration (Rev. 4:5).

« DAY 2 »

E. The fire burning out of the midst of the thornbush was the Triune God, the God of resurrection (Exo. 3:2, 4, 6; Matt. 22:31-32).

F. The word of God is a fire that burns us and many of the things in which we have confidence (Jer. 23:29; 5:14; 20:9).

G. Those who have a desire to serve God must know that God is a consuming fire that burns and energizes; when God comes to the earth, fire comes to the earth, and when God enters into man, fire enters into man and burns in him (Heb. 12:29; Luke 12:49).

H. The fire that burned on the altar of the burnt offering came down from the heavens (Lev. 9:24):

1. After coming down from the heavens, this fire burned continually upon the altar (6:13).
2. The divine fire, the burning Triune God, enables us to serve and even to sacrifice our lives (Rom. 12:11; cf. Acts 15:26; 20:24; 21:13).

II. Every priestly service to God must be based on the fire from the altar of burnt offering, and our service must be the issue of the burning of this fire (Lev. 9:24; 16:12-13; 6:13; 10:1-11):

A. God wanted the service of the children of Israel to be based on this fire; the burning of incense was their service to God, but the

fire used for burning incense had to be taken from the altar (6:13; 16:12-13).

B. Our service must come out of the burning of God's fire (Exo. 3:2-6).

« DAY 3 »

C. Fire is a source of energy; in order for our service to be full of energy, our service must pass through the fire from the altar (Lev. 6:13):

1. This fire should be the energy, the driving force, the impulse, within us; if we have this fire, our service will be out of God, not out of ourselves (Luke 12:49).
2. The energy and the motivating power for the New Testament service began with fire from heaven; the fire that descended upon the Galilean fishermen became the energy and the motivating power within them (Acts 2:3).
3. This fire burns on those who love God, who offer themselves to God, who are willing to forsake everything for God, and who are willing to place themselves in His hands in order to be broken (Lev. 9:24).

« DAY 4 »

D. The fire from the altar is the genuine motivating power of service (6:13):

1. What God does concerning our service is to send His fire to burn within us (Luke 12:49; Rom. 12:11).
2. If we offer ourselves to God sincerely, fire will descend from heaven and burn us; this burning will become the energy that moves us, and the issue of this burning will be our service.

E. The fire from the altar produces a powerful service:

1. The altar of burnt offering is the cross of the Lord Jesus, and the fire is the

Spirit (Gal. 2:20; Acts 2:3-4).

2. The basis of genuine service is knowing the cross and placing ourselves on the cross in order to be gained by God and to allow the divine fire to burn within us; this produces service (Lev. 6:13; Rom. 12:11).

F. Those who experience the fire from the altar build with gold, silver, and precious stones (1 Cor. 3:12):

1. Such a work is full of the element of God, has the power of the cross, and expresses God (1:18; Phil. 1:20).
2. Only the work that is produced through burning is of gold, silver, and precious stones; the work that is not produced through burning is of wood, grass, and stubble (1 Cor. 3:12).
3. The day will come when the work of each will be tested by fire; if our work is the issue of fire, our work will stand the test of fire (v. 13).

« DAY 5 »

III. We must serve God not with strange fire but with the fire from the altar (Lev. 10:1-2; 9:24; 6:13):

- A. According to typology, strange fire is any fire other than that which burns on the altar (10:1).*
- B. The failure of Nadab and Abihu lay in their failure to use the fire from the altar; what they used was common fire, not holy fire.*
- C. Strange fire signifies man's natural enthusiasm, natural affection, natural strength, and natural ability offered to God.*
- D. Strange fire is fire of the self; it is fire that issues from the soulish life, the fleshly life, and the natural life (Matt. 16:24-26; 1 Cor. 2:14):*
 1. Strange fire means that the self-life interferes with the works of God.

2. Although the works are God's, the self-life wants to dictate the way that the works are carried out.
 3. Offering up strange fire is employing the self's methods and wisdom and insisting on the self's proposals in the service of God.
- E. Nadab and Abihu were judged not because they did something that was not for God but because they acted according to the natural life and did something for God in a natural way (Lev. 10:1-2).*
- F. The offering of strange fire was a sin of presumption; Nadab and Abihu presumed to do something for God (Psa. 19:13).*
- G. This is a strong warning showing us that, in touching the divine things, we need to apply the cross to our natural life; otherwise, we will suffer spiritual death.*
- H. God pays attention not only to whether there is fire but also to the source and nature of the fire; our zeal must come from the altar (Lev. 6:13).*

« DAY 6 »

I. Everyone who is called of God must realize that he is a thornbush with a fire burning within him and that this fire is God Himself (Exo. 3:2-6):

1. We need to learn one lesson: to work for God without using the natural life, with its energy, strength, and ability, as the fuel but by letting God burn within us.
2. We need to be burning in spirit, serving the Lord as a slave with the fire of His life, not with strange fire, which brings in spiritual death (Rom. 12:11; Lev. 10:1-2).

IV. The fire on the altar of burnt offering should be kept

burning continually; it must not go out, and it shall not go out (6:12-13):

- A. *Day by day and on many occasions, we need to offer ourselves in Christ to God as a continual burnt offering to be burned by Him so that we may burn others (cf. Rom. 12:1-2; Num. 28:2-4, 9-11, 16-19, 26-27; 29:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 39-40).*
- B. *The Spirit causes our spirit to be burning and our gifts to be flaming; hence, we should not quench Him (1 Thes. 5:19; Rom. 12:11; 2 Tim. 1:6):*
1. We must allow the Lord to burn us and to keep us burning continually by fanning our God-given spirit into flame (vv. 6-7).
 2. We must enjoy God as the fire of love to love Him and others with His love (2 Cor. 5:14; S.S. 8:6-7; 2 Tim. 1:7).
 3. We must have a time with the Lord every morning to have a new beginning and be revived by Him (Lev. 6:12; Prov. 4:18; Lam. 3:22-24; Psa. 119:147-148).
 4. We must call upon the Lord, stirring ourselves up to lay hold of Him (Rom. 10:12; 2 Tim. 2:22; Isa. 64:7a).
 5. We must pray-read God's Word, striking the Spirit of the Scripture with our spirit to catch the divine fire (Jer. 23:29; Eph. 6:17-18; 2 Tim. 3:16).
 6. We must be filled with the sevenfold intensified Spirit as the seven lamps of fire and the seven flaming eyes of Christ by opening ourselves to the Lord unreservedly in order to be enlightened by Him, burned by Him, and infused with Him (Rev. 4:5; 5:6; 1:14; Prov. 20:27; Mal. 3:2).
 7. We must always rejoice, pray unceasingly, and give thanks in everything (1 Thes. 5:16-18).
 8. We must speak for the Lord to impart Him into others, enjoying Him as our burning power for purging and motivating in God's economical move (Acts 2:3-

4; 6:4).

9. We must coordinate with one another in and among the churches to enjoy God as our sanctifying fire for His one move (Ezek. 1:4, 13; Rev. 1:20; Zech. 2:5).
10. The burning of the sevenfold intensified Spirit as the seven lamps of fire motivates us to rise up and take action for the carrying out of God's economy (Dan. 11:32b).

« WEEK 14 — DAY 1 »

Morning Nourishment

Heb. 12:28-29 Therefore receiving an unshakable kingdom, let us have grace, through which we may serve God well-pleasingly with piety and fear; for our God is also a consuming fire.

Dan. 7:9-10 I watched until thrones were set, and the Ancient of Days sat down....His throne was flames of fire, its wheels, burning fire. A stream of fire issued forth and came out from before Him...

God is holy; holiness is His nature. Whatever does not correspond with His holy nature, He, as the consuming fire, will consume....To satisfy God's righteousness we need to be justified through the redemption of Christ. To meet the demands of His holiness we need to be sanctified, to be made holy by the heavenly, present, and living Christ. (Heb. 12:29, footnote 1)

The fire in Daniel 7:9-10 means that God is absolutely righteous and altogether holy (Heb. 12:29). Without holiness no one can see the Lord or contact Him (Heb. 12:14 and footnote). (Dan. 7:9, footnote 2)

[The fire is] the impulse of the spiritual life. This impulse comes from the Lord's released divine life. (Luke 12:49, footnote 1)

[The Lord's] death was by His being the God-man to accomplish God's redemption for man (Luke 23:42-43) and to release Himself into man as the fire of life to burn on the earth (12:49-50). (Luke 24:51, footnote 1)

Today's Reading

Revelation 5:6 says, "I saw in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders a Lamb standing as having just been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." These seven eyes, the seven Spirits, are "like a flame of fire" (1:14; 2:18). Elsewhere we are told that the seven Spirits of God are "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne" (4:5). Christ today is a burning fire. We all have

been burned by this fire; we have been brought together by this fire; and now we are burdened that this fire would burn many others. When the concealed glory of Christ's divinity was released, a divine fire was cast on earth to burn the whole earth. Let the fire burn on! No one can stop it. (CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 5, "The Issue of Christ Being Glorified by the Father with the Divine Glory," p. 321)

"Then fire came forth from before Jehovah and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they gave a ringing shout and fell on their faces" (Lev. 9:24). This fire signifies that God's holiness as a consuming fire accepts our offerings by burning. Anything that corresponds to God's holy nature, God's holiness accepts by consuming it. But anything that does not meet the requirements of God's holiness will be judged by God's holiness through burning. In such a case, the fire represents the God who is the consuming fire (Heb. 12:29).

After we enjoy God's presence, the appearing of His glory, and the Lord's blessing, we should be prepared to receive the consuming fire. It is a spiritual law that God's blessing is followed by the consuming fire of suffering. This fire is a sign that God has accepted what we have offered to Him in Christ and with Christ.

The same fire, which is the representative of God's holiness, may either be a consuming fire for God's acceptance or a judging fire. The consuming fire accepted the offering up of Stephen (Acts 7:55-59), whereas with the coming of Titus in A.D. 70 this consuming fire judged the mixture at Jerusalem.

To us today, the consuming fire may be a divine acceptance of our offering to God, or it may be God's judgment due to our offenses....If we enjoy Christ and offer Him to God, the consuming fire will be God's acceptance. However, if we offend God's government and a burning comes to us, this burning is God's judgment upon us for touching His government. This is a serious matter. (Life-study of Leviticus, pp. 284-285)

Further Reading: Life-study of Leviticus, msgs. 31-32; CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 5, "The Issue of Christ Being Glorified by the Father with the Divine Glory," chs. 1-2

<< WEEK 14 — DAY 2 >>

Morning Nourishment

Lev. 9:24 Then fire came forth from before Jehovah and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they gave a ringing shout and fell on their faces.

1 Chron. 21:26 And there David built an altar to Jehovah, and he offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. And he called on Jehovah, and He answered him with fire from heaven upon the altar of burnt offering.

Those who have a desire to serve God must remember that our God is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29). When God comes to the earth, fire comes to the earth. When God enters into man, fire enters into man and burns in him....God is not cold. He is fire that energizes and burns. Those who draw near to God experience the burning. God is a consuming fire, and His eyes are like a flame of fire (Rev. 1:14). Whoever touches Him will be burned. (The Service for Building Up the House of God, p. 28)

Today's Reading

This fire that burned all the offerings on the bronze altar came from the heavens (Lev. 9:24; cf. 1 Chron. 21:26; 2 Chron. 7:1). It was not a fire started by man; it was the fire that came from God. And that fire, from the time that it came, never ceased. The fire burned all the time, day after day, from evening until morning (Lev. 6:9). That fire was holy fire, not strange fire.

The fire on the altar of burnt offering burns out all the natural and negative things before God....Anything that can ascend to God must first be burned at the altar with the divine fire. Whatever has been burned on the altar with the divine fire will be accepted by God. Thus, to burn the incense before God at the incense altar, the fire that comes down from God is needed. This divine fire, which burns out all the natural and negative things, is needed for our service. (CWWL, 1979, vol. 2, "Basic Lessons on Service," p. 106)

Every service to God must be based on the fire from the altar of burnt offering. In the Old Testament the priests burned incense before God. The burning of incense symbolizes the service rendered to God by man. The fire used to burn the incense had to be taken from the altar of burnt offering (Lev. 16:12-13). If a person did not burn incense with the fire from the altar of burnt offering, that is, if he offered strange fire, his service was not accepted by God, and he suffered the judgment of death (10:1-2). This example shows that our service to God must be based on the fire from the altar of burnt offering.

When the children of Israel followed the tabernacle in their journey through the wilderness, their service before God began with the burning of the fire on the altar of burnt offering. The fire on the altar of burnt offering descended from God (9:24). The children of Israel could not begin their service to God until the fire descended. Although they had been delivered by God out of Egypt, had crossed the Red Sea, and had raised up the tabernacle at the foot of Mount Sinai, they could not serve God, because they did not have a basis for their service. The basis of their service was the altar of burnt offering with fire burning upon it. It was not adequate to have the altar of burnt offering. The altar had to have the fire that descended from God.

At the beginning of Leviticus God was before the Israelites, yet they still could not serve Him...The offering of the burnt offering was the prerequisite for fire to descend from heaven. Merely having the altar was not sufficient; the burnt offering had to be placed on the altar. After the sacrifice of the burnt offering was killed, skinned, cut, washed, and placed on the altar, fire could descend from heaven. God wanted the service of the children of Israel to be based on this fire. The burning of incense was their service to God, but the fire used for burning incense had to be taken from the altar. Hence, the service that we render to God must originate from the fire on the altar of burnt offering, and our service must be the issue of the burning of this fire. (The Service for Building Up the House of God, pp. 19-20)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1979, vol. 2, "Basic Lessons on Service," Isn. 14

« WEEK 14 — DAY 3 »

Morning Nourishment

Lev. 6:13 Fire shall be kept burning on the altar continually; it shall not go out.

2 Chron. 7:1 And when Solomon had finished praying, the fire came down from heaven and devoured the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of Jehovah filled the house.

Acts 2:3 And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which were distributed; and it sat on each one of them.

Fire is a source of energy....In order for our service to be full of energy, our service must pass through the fire on the altar. This is not strange fire, which is of man and of the earth. Rather, this is holy fire. This fire is of God and of heaven. Our service must come out of the burning of God's fire. This fire should be the energy, the driving force, the impulse within us. Then our service will be out of God, not out of ourselves. (The Service for Building Up the House of God, p. 20)

Today's Reading

God accepted the service of the Israelites based on the fire from the altar of burnt offering....After a period of desolation, David was raised up by God. David had a desire to serve God and to build a house for God. This desire was fulfilled through his son Solomon. After Solomon finished building the temple, he took the bronze altar, the altar of burnt offering, and put it in the temple. He also offered sacrifices and the burnt offering upon the altar (2 Chron. 7:1). At that time, the service to God was resumed.

Therefore, the service of the children of Israel in the temple was based on the fire from the altar of burnt offering. Every time they burned incense and served before God, they had to pass through the altar of burnt offering....The fire was kept burning on the altar continually until the destruction of the temple (Lev. 6:13).

When the Lord Jesus was on the earth, He was the tabernacle of God, the temple of God (John 1:14; 2:21). Any people who had the desire to serve God had to serve through the Lord Jesus...The Lord also set up an altar—the cross on Golgotha—and offered Himself upon it as the burnt offering. Then one day fire came down. This fire was the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4). The Lord Jesus Himself was willing to go to the cross and offer Himself to God. He also led Peter, John, James, and the rest of His lovers and followers to offer themselves to God, just as He did. Therefore, God accepted them as a satisfying fragrance of Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 2:15). Before Pentecost a hundred and twenty lovers of Jesus gathered in an upper room in Jerusalem (Acts 1:13-15) and presented themselves to God. As a result, on the day of Pentecost the Spirit descended upon them as tongues of fire. This was the beginning of the New Testament service. The New Testament service began on the day of Pentecost with the fire that came down and began to burn.

The energy and the motivating power for the New Testament service began with fire from heaven. The fire that descended upon the Galilean fishermen became the energy and the motivating power within them. After the day of Pentecost they could speak for God, preach the gospel, save sinners, and establish churches. The disciples were not the source of the power for their work. The source of that power was heaven; the power came from the fire that descended from heaven.

At the time of Pentecost...the fire descended only on the hundred and twenty because they were on the altar of burnt offering. The fire of the Spirit descends only on the altar of burnt offering. This was not the fire of judgment, which will come in the future. This was the fire of salvation (Luke 12:49). This fire burns on those who love God, who offer themselves to God, who are willing to forsake everything for God, and who are willing to place themselves in His hands in order to be slain and broken. Their service to God is the issue of the burning. Whether in the Old Testament type or in the New Testament reality, man's service to God always comes out of the fire from the altar. (The Service for Building Up the House of God, pp. 21-22)

Further Reading: The Service for Building Up the House of God, ch. 2

« WEEK 14 — DAY 4 »

Morning Nourishment

Luke 12:49 I have come to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish that it were already kindled!

1 Cor. 3:12-13 But if anyone builds upon the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, stubble, the work of each will become manifest; for the day will declare it, because it is revealed by fire, and the fire itself will prove each one's work, of what sort it is.

The fire from the altar [is] the genuine motivating power of service. The only thing that God does concerning man's service is to send His fire to burn within man. To serve God and to work for Him mean that man is joined to God and is mingled with God...The service comes out of God; it does not originate in man. The service is God moving through man.

God has erected an altar, and those who are willing, those who love Him, may come forward willingly to be dealt with, broken, and placed on the altar. Such a person can say, "Lord, here I am. My only desire is to satisfy Your need." If we would offer ourselves sincerely in this way, fire will descend from heaven and burn us. This burning will become the energy that moves us. The issue of this burning will be our service. God wants His fire to burn in us. (The Service for Building Up the House of God, pp. 22-23)

Today's Reading

In Luke 12:49 the Lord Jesus said, "I have come to cast fire on the earth." The Lord Jesus came to the earth not only to save us but to cause fire to burn on us.

If the Lord had not placed Himself in the Father's hand, the fire could not have been cast to the earth. This fire is the Spirit. When the Lord Jesus went to the cross and suffered death, He was gained by God, and God poured out the Spirit as fire from heaven. This fire descended on the hundred and twenty disciples and burned in them. All the service in the New Testament age comes out of that

burning.

The fire on the altar [burns] and [produces] a powerful service....The altar of burnt offering is the cross of the Lord Jesus, and the fire is the Spirit. The Spirit has descended and is burning through the cross as the altar of burnt offering. Any person who is willing to touch the cross, that is, to receive the cross by applying the death of Christ, will be gained by God. Then the fire on the altar of burnt offering, that is, the Spirit, will burn in him until it produces a service. All genuine service comes out of such a burning.

The basis of genuine service is knowing the cross and placing ourselves on the cross in order to be gained by God and to allow the divine fire to burn within us. This produces service.

The saints who pray and apply the death of the cross will receive grace from God, and His holy fire will burn within them. Such saints do not care for themselves or set their mind on themselves but care only to satisfy God's desire.

Those who experience the altar of burnt offering build with gold, silver, and precious stones (1 Cor. 3:12). Gold refers to the divine life and nature. Silver refers to Christ's redemption and to the principle of the cross. Precious stones refer to God's image. The work of believers who experience the altar of burnt offering is full of the element of God, has the power of the cross, and expresses God.

Only work that is produced through burning is of gold, silver, and precious stones. The work that is not produced through burning is of wood, grass, and stubble.

The day will come when the work of each will be tested by fire (1 Cor. 3:13). If our work is the issue of fire, our work will stand the test of fire....If our work is according to the natural man, by the flesh, and earthy, it is of wood, grass, and stubble. When the work of each is manifested by fire, such a work will not endure the test but will be consumed, and we will suffer loss (v. 15). (The Service for Building Up the House of God, pp. 23-25, 27-28)

Further Reading: The Service for Building Up the House of God, ch. 2

« WEEK 14 — DAY 5 »

Morning Nourishment

Lev. 10:1-2 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer, and put fire in them and laid incense on it, and they presented strange fire before Jehovah, which He had not commanded them. And fire came out from before Jehovah and consumed them, and they died before Jehovah.

The strange fire offered by Nadab and Abihu was common fire, not holy fire. It was not fire from the altar (Lev. 16:12), which came forth from God, from heaven (9:24), but fire from man, from the earth, with no base of expiation. Strange fire signifies man's natural enthusiasm, natural affection, natural strength, and natural ability offered to God. Nadab and Abihu did something for God, but they did it in a natural way. Hence, God judged this offering by consuming the two priests (10:2). This is a strong warning showing us that in touching the divine things we need to apply the cross to our natural life. Otherwise, our careless touching of the holy things of God will bring in spiritual deadness, and may even result in physical death (Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor. 11:27-32; 1 John 5:16), as a judgment from the holy God. (Lev. 10:1, footnote 2)

Today's Reading

The strange fire signifies the natural enthusiasm (Lev. 10:1) not dealt with by the cross and not in resurrection. Here we have to stress and develop what it means for us to be dealt with by the cross in our enthusiasm so that we can serve the Lord. In order to be in resurrection, we have to pass through the dealing of the cross. We should not bring in our natural hotness. Whether it is good or bad, pure or impure, it is still natural.

Strange fire in the priestly service causes death before God [Lev. 10:1-2]....Maybe the two sons of Aaron did this with a good heart, with a good intention, but still they were burned to death. The offering of strange fire caused death to these two priests before God.

We are today's priests...[so] we must be careful about what we offer to God. We may have a good heart and a good intention in offering something to God, but if we offer the wrong thing, this can cause death to us. This does not seem like something serious, but it is serious in the eyes of God. This death is mostly in the spiritual sense. Whenever we serve the Lord with a kind of natural enthusiasm, this brings in death to our spirit.

We all need to serve, to function, and to use our one talent, our gift. But we must be careful not to serve in a natural way, with our natural hotness. Of course, the Lord wants us to be hot in the spirit, not cold or lukewarm. But we have to be hot in our spirit, not in our natural life. In Romans 12:11 Paul tells us to be "burning in spirit, serving the Lord." Any hotness in our natural life is strange fire to God, and this brings in death.

The offering of the strange fire might have been related to the drinking of wine. Right after Nadab and Abihu's death, God charged the priests not to drink wine [Lev. 10:8-9]....Drinking wine, in the Bible, signifies the overenjoyment of the worldly, natural, or physical, material things. In other words, if we overly enjoy anything of this world, this always makes us drunk. When we are drunk, we are excited and out of control, doing things without regulation. It might have been that the two sons of Aaron were drunk, so they were excited and went beyond themselves to do something without being regulated. This means that they offered strange fire in a presumptuous way. The offering of strange fire was a sin of presumption. They presumed to do something for God. Actually, that was not a real offering to God but something of their presumption against God's regulation.

People do presumptuous things because they have overenjoyed something. They are drunk. When the priests are drunk, they lose the discernment of holiness (Lev. 10:10), and they are unable to teach God's people (v. 11). When we lose our discernment because we are drunk, we are not being regulated; so we surely cannot teach others so that they can be regulated. (CWWL, 1979, vol. 2, "Basic Lessons on Service," pp. 106-109)

Further Reading: Life-study of Leviticus, msgs. 33-34

<< WEEK 14 — DAY 6 >>

Morning Nourishment

Rom. 12:11 Do not be slothful in zeal, but be burning in spirit, serving the Lord.

2 Tim. 1:6-7 For which cause I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God...For God has not given us a spirit of cowardice, but of power and of love and of sobermindedness.

1 Thes. 5:19 Do not quench the Spirit.

The Spirit causes our spirit to be burning (Rom. 12:11) and our gifts to be flaming (2 Tim. 1:6). Hence, we should not quench Him. (1 Thes. 5:19, footnote 1)

The redemption accomplished through Christ's blood made us not only a kingdom to God but also priests to God (1 Pet. 2:5). The kingdom is for God's dominion, whereas priests are for the expression of God's image. This is the kingly, royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9), which is for the fulfillment of God's original purpose in creating man (Gen. 1:26-28). This kingly priesthood is being exercised in today's church life (Rev. 5:10). It will be practiced intensively in the millennial kingdom (20:6) and will be ultimately consummated in the New Jerusalem (22:3, 5). (Rev. 1:6, footnote 2)

Today's Reading

God in His economy intended that all His people be priests serving Him directly. In Exodus 19:6, God ordained the children of Israel to be a kingdom of priests....However, because they worshipped the golden calf (Exo. 32:1-6), they lost the priesthood, and only the tribe of Levi, because of its faithfulness to God, was chosen to replace the whole nation of Israel as priests to God (32:25-29; Deut. 33:8-10). Hence, there was a mediatorial class between God and the children of Israel....In the New Testament, God has returned to His original intention according to His economy, in that He has made all believers in Christ priests (Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9). But at the end of the initial church, even in

the first century, the Nicolaitans intervened as the mediatorial class to spoil God's economy....In the proper church life there should be neither clergy nor laity; all believers should be priests of God. (Rev. 2:6, footnote 1)

The release of the glory of Christ's divinity was to cast fire on the earth. In Luke 12:49 He said, "I have come to cast fire on the earth, and how I wish that it were already kindled!" This fire is the impulse of the spiritual life, an impulse that comes from the Lord's released divine life. To cast fire on the earth is to burn the people of the earth. When Christ was baptized with the baptism of His death on the cross, the glory of His divinity was released. From the time of His resurrection a fire has been burning on earth. This fire started from Jerusalem, and then it spread through Judea and Samaria to the uttermost part of the earth. Today this fire is burning all over the earth—in America, in Russia, in Romania, in Poland, in Brazil, in Africa, in Australia, and in New Zealand. (CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 5, "The Issue of Christ Being Glorified by the Father with the Divine Glory," p. 321)

There are three kinds of burning. The first kind is the burning at the altar, which is for salvation and acceptance. It is precious and glorious. The issue of this burning is that we become a sweet fragrance to God, and we have the appearance of precious stones. The second kind of burning is for the believers who are not willing to be dealt with or to be broken. One day their work will be proved by fire. They will suffer loss, but they themselves will be saved, yet so as through fire. These two kinds of burning are for believers. The third kind of burning is for those who reject the Lord and His salvation. These people will be cast into the lake of fire forever. Everyone will be burned; no one can escape.

We should place ourselves on the altar of the cross, not pitying or loving ourselves, but rather hating and dealing with the self by putting everything we have on the altar in order to be gained by God. Then fire will descend on the altar to burn us. The issue of this burning will be a service. (The Service for Building Up the House of God, pp. 29-30)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1993, vol. 2, "The Spirit with Our Spirit," ch. 8; CWWL, 1985, vol. 5, "The Way to Practice the Lord's Present Move," ch. 2

<< WEEK 14 — HYMN

Hymns, #279

1

First the blood, and then the ointment,
Cleansing, then anointing comes;
If we pass not thru Golgotha,
Ne'er to Pentecost we'll come.
If the blood has never cleansed us,
Ne'er the Spirit's pow'r we'll know,
If for Christ we'd truly witness,
Self-life to the cross must go.
Through the cross, O Lord, I pray,
Put my soul-life all away;
Make me any price to pay,
Full anointing to receive.

2

Christ, the Rock, must first be smitten,
That the living water flow;
Without death the Spirit's fulness
Ne'er could dwell in man below.
If with Christ we die completely,
Willing thus our all to lose,
He will clothe us with His power
And to win the world will use.

3

First the altar, then the fire,
If no loss, there'll be no gain;
If our all has not been offered,
To the throne we'll ne'er attain.
If to sacrifice we're willing,

All forsaking, God t'obey,
He to us will be committed
And through us His pow'r display.

4

First we must prepare the vessels,
That the oil they may contain;
Dig the valley full of ditches
That they may be filled with rain.
First we must go thru the Jordan,
Ere anointed from above;
First in death we must be baptized,
Then experience the dove.

5

When we see the ripened harvest
Of the golden countryside,
We may know that many seeds have
Fallen to the earth and died.
Ere the fruit of life may blossom,
We must surely suffer death;
If with Christ we've not been buried,
We'll not feel the Spirit's breath.

6

Since it must be thus, I pray, Lord,
Help me go the narrow way;
Deal with pride and make me willing
Thus to suffer, Thee t'obey.
I for greater power pray not;
Deeper death is what I need.
All the meaning of the cross, Lord,
Work in me—for this I plead.