



CLEAN AND UNCLEAN.

SUBSTANCE OF A LECTURE

ON

LEVITICUS XI.

“Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.”

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

CLEAN AND UNCLEAN.

LEV. XI.

THE priests of old were such as, being brought near to Jehovah themselves by solemn ceremonial, were charged by Jehovah to "put a difference between holy and unholy, and between clean and unclean," that they might "teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the Lord hath spoken unto them by the hand of Moses." (Lev. x. 9-11.) To this end they were to abstain from wine or strong drink when they went into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they died. To-day, all believers are priests, and in the New Testament the injunction, "Be not drunk with wine but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. v. 18) has for them certainly a figurative meaning, including all that is opposed to being filled with the Spirit—all that would intoxicate or create excitement, and carry away nature. Any passion or movement of the human heart when under its influence deprives one of the power to distinguish between clean and unclean, and by consequence, of teaching God's ways to others. Grief or joy, ambition, covetousness, or emulation, all that moves the human spirit and stirs it up, unfits for priestly discernment and for priestly service. On the other hand, the reality of that which this excitement of nature only

simulates must be known—one must “be filled with the Spirit,” as in Acts ii. 4, the effect of which was mockingly attributed to new wine (ver. 13). (See also Acts iv. 31.) Individuals who stood forth to teach others in that day were filled with the Spirit, as Peter (Acts iv. 8); Stephen (Acts vi. 5 and 8; vii. 55); and Paul (Acts xiii. 9).

FIGURATIVE.—PETER’S VISION,

In our chapter we have the difference between clean and unclean animals, and what constituted it. This was literal for Israel, who might not eat nor touch the animals here prohibited, to make a difference between them as the people among whom Jehovah dwelt and the Gentiles who knew not Jehovah; for us it is figurative, and sets forth certain traits which should characterise the Christian, as also that which should be avoided by him. The vision of Peter in Acts x. shews these animals are figurative, and warrants the application of them to persons, and each may represent some trait that should characterise those who are cleansed; the sum of the traits thus typified being included in that which goes to make up the character of “what God hath cleansed.” Peter, in his vision, sees “heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him as it had been a great sheet, knit at the four corners and let down to the earth, wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air; and there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter, kill and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord,

for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common." (Vers. 11-15). The object of this vision was to shew Peter that though by nature the Gentiles were ceremonially unclean, yet God could cleanse them; and that those thus cleansed should no more be considered common, but a peculiar people unto Himself, who should exhibit the characteristics of the nature imparted to them as thus cleansed.

NECESSARY CHARACTERISTICS.

In verse 46, there are four classes mentioned, namely:— (i.) The beasts; (ii.) The fowl; (iii.) Every living creature that moveth in the waters; and (iv.) Every creature that creepeth upon the earth; and, without going into all the details of these, we will look at the leading characteristics of each class, and those exceptions which are specially instructive. We know that for us it is not a question of what we may eat or drink; that which was forbidden to the Gentiles in Acts xv. having no reference to the Levitical law in this chapter, but going back to God's institutions in creation and in the government of the earth, as committed to Noah. That which is clean, and which may be eaten, typifies for us each a characteristic which ought to mark a Christian so as to enable him to exercise his priestly functions; a certain moral state of soul being necessary to a right fulfilment of the functions of a priest, which is the highest dignity that has ever been conferred upon mortal man. "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at

his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." (Mal. ii. 7.) "If thou take forth the precious from the vile thou shalt be as my mouth." (Jer. xv. 19.) "Neither shall any priest drink wine when they enter into the inner court. . . . And they shall teach my people the difference between holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean." (Ezek. xliv. 21, 23.) If there had been this moral state of soul in Nadab and Abihu, they would not have offered strange fire.

I.—BEASTS—Earth. Walk and Meditation. (Psa. i.)

We will look at them in the order followed in the chapter, namely, (i.) beasts; (ii.) fishes; (iii.) fowls; (iv.) reptiles and creeping things. The general rule is, that "the animal be suited to the element it is called to live in, that is, that all be according to divine order."

In the first class there are two main characteristics, and some instructive exceptions (vers. 1-8) :—

1. In whatsoever parteth the hoof and is cloven-footed, we have,—Walk.
2. In whatsoever cheweth the cud we have —Meditation.

"That was allowed which united mature digestion, with the absence of that wilful energy that goes boldly through everything, while the grossness which swallows all, and the lack of quiet firmness, renders unclean." Both of the above traits are necessary to render clean: one without the other would not do, and doubtless the first must be the outcome of the second.

1.—WALK.

He must have a cloven foot with a divided hoof, that is, the feet quite split open. A cloven hoof leaves a clean, firm mark, and indicates that a Christian must walk quietly and firmly upon earth, and leave footprints along the path of life which shall glorify God. One who has run off into all kinds of error; whose path has been an erratic one; who has failed in righteousness, or been obliged from any cause to compound with his creditors should be careful how he undertakes to teach others, or takes a too prominent part before others. The Christian is one who did walk according to the course of this age but now he walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, but walks worthy of the vocation wherewith he is called. The unequal yoke; the greed of gain; the race for wealth; the putting out the hand for bribes; the using spiritual power for temporal advantage, leaves footprints of a different character to those typified by the cloven hoof.

Not only does the cloven hoof enable one to leave a clean track in the ordinary walk on earth, but it also gives ability to mount up on the high places—to rise superior to the influences of the earth upon which we tread. Power for such a walk proceeds from God, whose ways are perfect, and who has given a perfect example in the blessed Man of the first Psalm: "Who walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." (Ver. 1.) He is able also to become the strength and power of the believer, as David says, "And he maketh my way perfect;

he maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places." (2 Sam. xxii. 33, 34; Ps. xviii. 32, 33.) (See also Hab. iii. 18, 19.)

2.—MEDITATION.

And this must be the result of the second trait that marks a clean animal: he must "chew the cud;" he must be a true ruminant. To this the Man of the first psalm also answers, "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law, doth he MEDITATE day and night." (Ver. 2.) What marks the ruminating animals is, that, having eaten, they chew their food over again the second time before it passes into the system, thus rendering it more easily assimilated, and capable of yielding the greatest amount of nutriment. Now the word of God is the food of all who are clean in God's sight; a word to be fed upon. Man lives by it, and as the Lord quoted in answer to Satan, "by *every* word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." It is not merely the nibbling at the green twigs, but feeding upon the broad pastures and then lying down to go over that which has been eaten, as in Psalm xxiii. 2, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, he leadeth me beside the still waters." Now all the green pastures of the word of God lie open to the believer. But he must be a ruminant, and meditate upon what he reads or hears. Reading the word morning and evening, and forgetting it, will not do; we must meditate upon it, and assimilate it, that is, chew the cud, so that it may be made our own, and pass into our spiritual being. In this way the application of the word is grasped,

and all its power is felt in the soul, and the heart is established in grace, not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. Thus the Psalmist can say, "I have more understanding than all my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation" (Ps. cxix. 99); and again, as a result, "I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word." (Ver. 101.) Thus we are able to rightly divide the word of truth.

And these two things must be combined to constitute a clean being in God's sight. A perfect walk, with the ability to mount up on the high places, the outcome of meditating upon the word of God. A man may walk apparently blamelessly, yet if it is not the result of the inward life which finds its springs in God's word, it will not be accepted.

EXCEPTIONS.—REALITY.

In the exceptions we find that not only will one characteristic without the other not pass muster, but also in some cases the requirements may appear to be present, but are not really so. The camel chews the cud, it is a true ruminant, and appears to divide the hoof, but does not really do so; the feet are not quite split open, for though it has two toes covered by hoof, which gives it the appearance of a divided hoof, yet the sole of the foot is common to both; it is therefore unclean. It is unable to stand in slippery places, and cannot mount upon the rocks. Suited, doubtless, to the desert where it is found, we are concerned here only with its typical teaching as unclean. Put a camel in a miry place, and see how

it flounders about! Does it leave a clean track? I trow not. So some Christians. They always appear to be reading the word of God, but do not seem to be able to reduce it to practice; every difficult passage in their path is marked by failure. Some even boast of what they know of heavenly truth, but have to own they are not able to walk consistently on earth. A Christian who is not able to shew a clean track through this world is deprived of the ability to exercise his priestly functions, whether it be on the one hand to teach others the ways of the Lord; or, on the other, to offer to God His food—the blood and the fat,—the very highest dignity that God can confer upon a man. “My bread,” says God in Ezekiel xliv. 7. “The fat and the blood.” Wonderful privilege indeed to be able to present to God in the assembly of His saints that which speaks of the personal excellency, and of the atoning death of His Christ, that which satisfies the heart of God. One thus failing may “Eat the bread of his God, both of the holy and most holy, only he shall not go in unto the veil, nor come nigh unto the altar, because he hath a blemish.” (Lev. xxi. 22, 23.)

In the blessed Lord Jesus Christ Himself we find a perfect example (and *only* there an absolutely perfect one), of a clean walk as a result of feeding upon the word of God,—that perfect Man of whom it is written, “He wakeneth mine ear morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the instructed.” No rebellion or turning away back is found in Him, but He gives “His back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.” (Isa. l. 6.) In the temp-

tation, too, in the wilderness, He meets the devil with the word alone, that upon which He feeds. His whole walk also was the result of feeding upon the word, and we must have our walk regulated by that word, or we cannot rightly exercise our priestly functions.

On the other hand, the coney and the hare (which are neither of them ruminants, the first being a pachyderm and the last a rodent) both *seem* to chew the cud, but do not really do so, the sideway motion of the jaws being to keep their two front teeth short and sharp, in order to be able to use them. These present neither of the true features of a clean animal really. So, many a man seems to present one feature of a clean animal by reading God's word, but alas! only to sharpen his teeth against God's people, furnishing himself with arguments against them from their own quiver, but always wresting the scriptures to their own destruction. So Satan used the word against Christ, the Living Word saying, "It is written," but misquoting—liar as he is—the scripture. All, of course, in vain against that blessed Man, as it will prove to be in vain against us also, if we do really what they do only apparently, that is, feed upon every word of God.

MANY WALK!

Again, the swine divides the hoof really, but it does not chew the cud; he is unclean. It is a gross feeder that swallows everything it finds. At times it may feed upon wholesome food, but it does not digest it, and so all is alike to it. Will is expressed in the walk of the swine also, which

follows its own erratic path, spite of all endeavours to lead it aright. So some men may leave tracks clean enough along their pathway, but what a tortuous, winding, erratic path do they pursue! How evident that it is not the result of feeding upon God's word, but the outcome of their own wills. "Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ." (Phil. iii. 18.)

There is, again, a certain class of people who are said to be very upright in their walk, which may be true from a human standpoint, as they make everything of their walk, and propose to attain heaven by it; but they deny the inspiration of the word and the divinity of Christ. The cloven foot does not enable such a one to mount upon the high places; he does not walk superior to earth's attractions, having imbibed deadly spiritual poison as food.

II.—FISHES—The World.

In this class the influences of the world which surround us are in view more than the earth upon which we tread. A general rule is given, "Whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them shall ye eat." (Ver. 9.) Suitability to the element is still the rule, and here we find typified some additional features which should characterise the Christian as he passeth through the currents of this world.

1. In the fins, we have power for progress through the world.

2. In the scales, the armour to keep out the influences of the world.

1.—PROGRESS.

Not only are we to walk firmly and uprightly on earth as Christ did; but, as He did also, we should be able to progress through this evil world spite of all that sweeps down upon us in a contrary direction. Not to be carried away with the tides and currents that sweep the giddy multitude around us hither and thither, but by a right use of the power and means of propulsion to hold our own, and to make distinct progress against the course of this world. We are in the world, but not of it. We were of it, but have been taken out of it by Him whose we were, and have been given to Christ, and now sent into it by Christ as He was sent into it, to do the Father's will and to finish what He may give us to do. Now, all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but of the world, which passeth away, while He that does the will of God abides for ever. Here we have represented in the fins the need of those who do business in the great waters; those who, from the moment they leave their houses, are surrounded by the influences of the world on every hand. Such may make up their mind that they will have to go *against* the current, and for this they need life and power—present living ability to apply the principles of God's word in the power of the Spirit to the surrounding circumstances, and this continually. For this, spiritual intercourse must be continually maintained. Yesterday's power will not do to resist to-day's adverse currents, and these currents are continuous and unvarying in their op-

position to progress heavenward. We are here to get through the world, and not to get on in it.

2.—PROTECTION.

But in order to this we need to be fenced about with scales also, which answers to an armour to keep out the spirit of the world. It would not, perhaps, set forth the panoply of God in Ephesians vi., where it is a question of fighting for the maintenance of a position in heaven, closely as it may be linked with this; but rather as the armour of light in the midst of darkness, in Roman xiii. 12; and the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, in 2 Corinthians vi. 7, *that the ministry be not blamed*. To let in the spirit of the world, and to conduct one's business upon worldly principles, which, as tested by the standard of God's word are unrighteous, and will be found for the Christian unsound, is to be like fish without scales; such will soon cease to use their fins, and drift off with the current of the world like dead fish, that cannot swim against the stream. Nothing of that which surrounds us must be allowed to penetrate the scales. We are in an element saturated with what is utterly uncongenial to spiritual life, and we must not yield to it nor let it in upon our spirits. On the contrary, we need to be continually strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith. He who is absorbed by the cares of the world, or engrossed by its business, will not be able to teach others the law of Jehovah, nor to offer in the assembly of God the blood and the fat.—“My bread,” saith the Lord.

But there is not only the business of the world ; there are also its politics ; its attempts to improve the fallen race, to elevate the masses, by temperance, philanthropic effort, and the like. All these things shew how distinctly the current of this world is opposed to God, and that in its very best estate. God is occupied with none of these things ; but is, on the contrary, saving individuals out from the general ruin and impending judgment of the race, and would have His people free from all the excitement in which the world finds its life, in order that He may use them as instruments to accomplish His purposes of blessing towards others whom He will save. We need in this world, beloved brethren, both the fins and the scales ; let us see to it that we use them, that we neither let in the spirit of the world nor be carried away by its currents. God's philanthropy is the only one that should occupy us, and it is of an entirely different character to man's. Man would elevate the race!—an impossible task!! God will save individuals of that race from its awful impending doom. Man will use righteousness, temperance, and like means to accomplish his object, all of which, however, only condemn him. God uses the gospel alone as His means. “After that the kindness and philanthropy of our Saviour God appeared ; not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.” (Tit. iii. 4, 5.) How easy to be deceived here, and to adopt human methods which must prove ineffectual and abortive, besides being carried away with a current of excitement which unfits for the exercise of priestly functions, whether of

rising in the power of the Spirit to present to God His bread, or of teaching others His ways.

II.—FOWLS—Higher Regions.

Of the birds, we have only the exceptions given; the rest were clean. There is, however, one important positive characteristic which is implied, and that is, the use of wings. The exceptions are negative and as follows, namely, carnivorous birds; omnivorous birds; night birds; and birds that use not their wings.

I.—CARNALITY.

The carnivorous—those that fed upon flesh. All that is fleshly or savours of carnality renders unclean. "Are ye not carnal," says Paul in writing to the Corinthians (1 Cor. iii. 1-4), "and walk as men?" Envy, strife, and divisions,—“I am of Paul,” and “I of Apollos,” are cited to prove their carnality; things which we should not judge would prove it, looking from the standpoint of our education. And this rendered it impossible for Paul to teach them truths about the mystery (chap. ii. 7) and other things, which he delighted to teach any who were able to receive them, as to the Colossians and Ephesians. To the Hebrews also he writes, “When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God.” (Chap. v. 12.) He calls both the Corinthians and Hebrews babes in a bad sense; they were unable to say a word, they couldn’t speak when they ought to be teachers. Such is the effect of carnality.

2.—INDISCRIMINATE FEEDING.

The omnivorous — those that fed upon everything — were also unclean. We cannot feed indiscriminately upon the word of God and that which satisfies the human mind. We must take heed what we hear, and try the things that differ. We need “a discerning mind; a spiritual judgment; and a heavenly taste;” so shall we be kept before God. What forms our reading, beloved brethren? Is it the current literature of the day? Is it the newspaper? What is to be found in the homes of believers? True the newspaper has a certain place in furnishing information as to one’s business, or upon other matters, but is this the use to which it is put? Has it a place in the house? Does it seem, as to some, that you need a different class of reading to that which God has provided in His word? Is it not this which answers to the action of the children of Israel in Numbers xi.? There we find that they were not content with the manna which God supplied, but longed for Egypt’s food—the fish, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlick. And they said, “But now our soul is dried away, there is nothing at all besides this manna before our eyes. . . . And the people went about and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans and made cakes of it;” to make it as much like the provisions of Egypt, that is, of the world for us—as possible. Ah! beloved, there is no food, after all, like manna for the wilderness! The old corn for the land, no doubt, but both set

forth Christ, and God has nothing else for us but Christ. The soul in communion is satisfied!

“Lord, ’tis enough, I ask no more.”

3.—NOT OF THE NIGHT.

All night birds are unclean. The Christian is not of the night. “Ye are all the children of light, and the children of day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch and be sober.” (1 Thess. v. 5-6.) Or, should he be overtaken in sleep,—such a curse to God’s people—the word for him is, “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.” (Eph. v. 14.)

4.—GROVELLERS.

Then all birds furnished with power to fly, but who grovel upon earth, are unclean (ver. 20). All these things for us render us unclean, and incapable of distinguishing between holy and unholy; so that we cannot teach others, or offer the bread of God really. Moreover, we see, from I Corinthians i.-iii., that we cannot ourselves be taught unless these things be put away from us.

WINGS.

But this verse 20 implies that all clean birds used their wings, and we must also learn to use our wings, and that with a right object. Some birds that are unclean use their wings, but with the object of rapine. The believer must use his

wings with a right object, that is, to mount up into the firmament of heaven toward the object of his affections, which is Christ. This carries us up away beyond this scene. The wings of faith are spread in the power of the Spirit, and the believer is carried up into eternal life (John iv. 14.) Up beyond the region of sight and sense, into His presence, where we expand in the knowledge of His thoughts and ways, and are delivered from a thousand snares. "Truly in vain is the net spread in the sight of anything on the wing." (Prov. i. 17.) It is not here of any bird. Some birds there are that do not use their wings—such will walk into the snare laid for them; but the one who mounts upon the wings of faith, and basks in the heavenly atmosphere of His own blessed presence, goes unscathed. I remember once when in England seeing an old bird teaching one of its young ones to fly. The parent bird left the nest and hopped on a twig a little way off, calling the young one to follow it; soon the little bird ventured, and reached its mother; then the old bird flew to a bough still further on, and in a short time the young one came to it again; from thence it alighted on the ground, and then back stage, by stage to the nest again, followed in due course by the smaller bird. The young bird had affections, and learnt to fly by following the object of its affections. It wanted to be with its mother, and found it had power to follow her, though very timid at first. So if the believer's heart is set upon being with Christ, he finds he has power to mount up into the sphere where He is, and this is a different thing from having Christ walk with me on earth, keep-

ing my heart superior to the scenes through which I may be called to pass.

THE FRIGATE BIRD.

But some of these unclean birds are birds of longest flight and most untiring wing; and scripture warrants the application of them in this respect, as the eagle in Isaiah xl. 31: "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles." And it may be mentioned here, as an illustration of this one point, the use of wings—although the bird is a cormorant, and so unclean—that the Frigate bird, a well-known object to those who have passed through the tropics, lives at times for whole days upon the wing. It has the greatest spread of wing of any bird for its size, and having very short legs, it seldom alights upon the earth, as it has the greatest difficulty in rising from a flat surface; the point of a rock, or a jutting promontory, whence it can launch at once into its favourite element, supplies its resting place for the moment.

Now during the period of a storm, when it sweeps with terrific force through the lower regions of the atmosphere, this bird spreads its wings and rises straight up until it reaches the calm zone of air, which, we are told, lies always above, when the tempest rages below. And there, with outstretched wings, it literally and for days "rides upon the storm." Then when the calm succeeds below, it comes down again in search of food. How good would it be for us if we, too, could rise above the storms

which from time to time sweep over God's people in this world, like birds of an untiring wing, and in the sunshine of His presence find not only our peace, our calm and rest; but our food and joy also. Then should we be able to offer to God His portion, as well as to teach others the statutes of Jehovah.

UNSUSTAINED FLIGHT.

From verses 22-28 we learn something more as to the use of wings. Locusts and grasshoppers which have both wings and legs above their feet to leap withal upon the earth, are clean. This many of us may feel to be a merciful provision for us. They are not fowls, but they have both wings and feet, and use both. They have also ability to leap, and to make, when thus above the earth, a more or less prolonged flight above it, though they eventually come down again. So with many believers. At times they rise above earth; the flight perhaps is not a very great one, nor for very long, but they do rise above the earth and soar heavenwards—a delightful experience! although in a little they descend to earth with all its cares again. God in His mercy recognises such as clean. Would we could all use our wings more! How blessed to be able to stretch them out and to mount right up above earth into the heavenly region, and there, as Paul, unconscious of the body, to enter into the revelations that have been given us as our common heritage—that which belongs to every “man in Christ”! Not that all enter into what Paul saw and heard, but that which is the subject of revelation is for us.

Alas! how little we know of the transcendent character of these revelations.

IV.—REPTILES—Crawlers Unclean.

The last class (vers. 29—43), including all creeping things and reptiles, with whatsoever goeth upon the belly (ver. 42), are all unclean. They belong wholly to earth, and that which is earthly is not clean. Let us beware, beloved friends, how we allow earthly tastes a place, for all creeping things that cannot rise above the earth are unclean. The creeping things all belong to earth, and there is among them the serpent, and he belongs to hell! There are not a great many steps between earthly and devilish; nay, there is but one. The gradations are given thus:—earthly; sensual; devilish. (James iii. 15.)

The Unclean Contaminates.

In verse 31 we read that these creeping things were not only unclean themselves, but as ever in God's word they contaminated anything with which they might come into contact. We need to have a deeper sense of the dreadful contaminating power of that which is unclean; this a true priest is ever conscious of, as Haggai teaches us, who was sent to the priests to learn this lesson. "Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying, If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garments, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priest answered and said, No! Then said Haggai, if one that is unclean by a dead body,

touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priest answered and said, It shall be unclean!" Yes, alas! evil is communicable by contact, and oh, how easily! But not so holiness. The holy on the contrary may be easily defiled.

This may be otherwise illustrated by taking two glasses, the one of pure, clean water, and the other of dirty water. If a drop of the clean water be put into the glass with the dirty water it will not make it clean, but will partake of the common defilement; whereas, if a drop of dirty water be put into the clean, it will make it all dirty. Let us bear this in mind, and beware of contact with that which is unclean, if we would that our lips should keep knowledge and that others may learn the law at our mouth.

PROVISION FOR CLEANSING.

But then, blessed be God, in verses 32-35, we have provision for cleansing when thus defiled, and unless such a provision were made, who could abide the searching requirements of this chapter for those who would exercise the priestly functions? It should be noted, however, that the provision is for cleansing us *from* the defilement, whether of circumstances or of food, and not for maintaining us in it. If the circumstances, indicated by a vessel of wood, or any raiment, become relatively unclean, they must be cleansed by being put into water, that is, for us the word of God in the power of the Spirit must be applied to them, and the moral defilement cleansed. (Ver. 32.) If they cannot be cleansed,—being all of earth—they must be entirely broken up, and so

the spirit gets freed of them (vers. 33-35.) If it be a question of food, it must be abandoned. (Ver. 34.) This is stringent, but imperative, if we care for priestly honours rather than earthly circumstances and food. Alas! how many value and retain the circumstances and the food rather than that honour which cometh from God alone. Such must assuredly eventually cease their priestly functions, and possibly give up their priestly position, until God in mercy breaks them down and restores them, as we may surely count upon Him that He will where He has wrought at all in the soul.

TWO THINGS INCONTAMINATE.

“Nevertheless a fountain or pit in which is plenty of water shall be clean. . . . And if any part of their carcase fall upon any sowing seed which is to be sown, it shall be clean.” (Vers. 36, 37.) Here are set forth two things which are incontaminate, to which uncleanness cannot be communicated by contact. The fountain, or pit in which is plenty of water, sets forth the Holy Spirit; and sowing seed, the word of God. These surely are incontaminate,—as the living Word—the blessed Lord Jesus Himself—never contracted defilement, there being no affinity with it in His nature, which was as incapable of defilement as oil is of being mingled with water; but if He, with the finger of God and in the power of the Spirit, touched a leper, the leprosy fled. Would we then escape the contamination of the unclean around us? The only way is to be filled with the Spirit, and to bring the word of God to

bear upon it. So that in the power of the Spirit presenting the gospel of the blessed God to sinners, or deeper truths to saints, involved in any of the spiritual filthiness in which, alas! they are so frequently found, we may perchance, deliver them and escape the pollution ourselves. Are we thus, beloved brethren, each in our measure seeking in the power of the Holy Spirit to spread the truth of God in a place where it is so generally rejected?

Reasons for Holiness.

Reasons for the inculcations of these holy principles are given in verses 44, 45. The first is—"For I am Jehovah, your God." They were the people of His choice, who had made a "covenant with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac, and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and unto Israel for an everlasting covenant." (Psa. cv. 9, 10.) And because He—their God—was holy, they too must be holy. There must be moral conformity to His character and nature, as it is written, "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me." Secondly,—He had brought them up out of the land of Egypt *to be* their God, therefore they should be holy. As David said, The Lord of Hosts is the God of Israel, even a God *to* Israel. Here, therefore, holiness is demanded in order that Jehovah may prove Himself to be a God to Israel. We, too, have been brought up out of a greater bondage than that of Egypt. Our God has done this, or we should never have escaped from the mighty foe who held us as lawful captives in his hand; we, also, are therefore called upon to be holy, because He is holy and in

order that He may prove Himself to be a God *to* us. How often it is the case that God is not able to come in for our help as He would do because we are not walking as a separate people to Himself. To help us in such a state would be to uphold us in a wrong position, and this in love He cannot do.

If, therefore, we would have God act as God to us; if we would be free and happy in worship, free to offer to God in the place where He delights to make Himself known—in the assembly of His saints—that which He seeks, that which answers to the blood and the fat, “*My bread!*” If we would be able to teach others His ways, then shall we seek to exhibit the traits of holiness as those who partake of a holy nature, His own holy nature which loves the good and hates the evil; and to avoid all that which is the outcome of our own native, unholy nature, and so be a people to His praise; a people blessed of the Lord, with the Eternal God our refuge, and underneath the everlasting arms.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM.

**THE PLEDGE, POWER, PROTECTION AND GUIDANCE
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE WILDERNESS.**

BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT.

THE RECEIPT.

THE PASSOVER.

NOTES ON GALATIANS.