

Does Association With Evil Defile?

by A.E. Booth

Association with evil defiles, and it is essential to exercise care, investigation, and discipline to maintain holiness and purity in the church.

Scripture: Exodus 12:15, Leviticus 13:1, Numbers 19:20, 1 Corinthians 5:6

Topics: "Holiness And Purity", "Separation From Evil"

Description

A.E. Booth preaches about the importance of maintaining holiness and purity in the sight of God, drawing lessons from the Old Testament types and prophecies. He emphasizes the need for God's people to be separate from evil, whether in personal conduct, associations, or teachings, as seen in the examples of leaven, leprosy, and defilement by the dead. The sermon highlights the consequences of neglecting God's standards of righteousness and the importance of obedience to His Word in maintaining order, purity, and holiness among His people.

Transcript

In answer to this question, we say, without hesitation, it does. Our witnesses are type, prophecy and New Testament Scriptures. We will give a few examples:

First, type. And here we have a large field before us. We will commence with God's people in Egypt, ere they leave that land to journey on to Canaan. Chapter 12 of the wonderful Redemption book, Exodus, gives, by way of type, the grounds upon which God could righteously take up that once guilty people, and begin with them afresh as His people. "When I see the blood, I will pass over." Here, their true history commences; and God is now with them. This was pure sovereign grace; and when this is manifested and the people placed in relationship with Him, their responsibility as His people commences. Their lives, and all their associations are now regulated by Him Who is holy. When He speaks, they are to listen; when He legislates, they are to obey. Verses 1-14, give them God's provision - "the lamb;" and when the lamb is brought inside the house, God tells His people that all leaven must be put away, vs.15-20. Now, if these verses are read with 1 Cor.5, there is no doubt as to the application. Leaven is a clear type of evil. See also Matt.16:6, Mark 8:15, Gal.5:9, and God's principle is ever the same, whether in Exod.12, or in the New Testament Scriptures - "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Jehovah speaks no idle word when He says, "Ye shall put away leaven out of your houses." God will not have that which is a type of evil, dwelling in the same house with His people, where the lamb - type of Christ - was. And neglect in following these instructions, was so serious a thing, that He says, "Whosoever eateth leavened bread from the first

day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel." And note the very words (not cut off from the Lord, which was true, but), cut off from Israel - from the very people of God - for God was there; and He looked for holiness and obedience from a people associated with Him. There could be no link whatever with leaven, because they were linked with the Lord. What an immense truth this is, and a very key to unlock much of the word which teaches us rightly God's claims of righteousness and holiness, which will develop more fully as we pass on.

Our next lesson will be from Lev.13 and 14.

LEPROSY

The instructions regarding this loathsome disease, are more lengthy and more minute than those regarding leaven. Jehovah has delivered His people from Egypt. They are now in the wilderness; and He dwells in their midst. "Be ye holy, for I am holy," are His words to the whole Assembly. All were to hear them; and there was no excuse for any one, when once the words of the Lord were read.

Now these examples of the breaking out of leprosy either in a person, a garment, or a house, are "all written for our learning." "All these things happened unto them for types, and are written for our admonition (marg.) upon whom the ends of the world are come." 1 Cor.10:11.

1. Leprosy in a person. Lev.13:1-46. When this sore evil broke out in a person, great care was necessary, that there might not be undue haste on the one hand, or neglect on the other, in allowing the disease to spread and contaminate others. If there were external marks on a person which caused the least suspicion of leprosy, that person was brought to the priest, and if there was any doubt, after the priest had looked upon him, he was shut up seven days, vs.1-4. This served a twofold purpose. First; care, lest after all the plague was not leprosy, and the man put out into a place not meant by the Lord, for him - outside the camp. Next; in case he had leprosy, or, if even while there was a doubt, he be left free to go where he chose, and defile others, God's word was, he must be "shut up seven days." At the close of the seven days, the priest looked on him again, and if there was still a doubt, the man was shut up seven days more, vs.5-8. With what care the Lord instructs them - care for His own glory, And for His people's good. Now we believe there is a special lesson in this for us. If there is suspicion among those gathered to the name of the Lord, that evil is manifest in a believer, there ought to be this priestly investigation, and care lest we be too hasty, or too slack, in the matter. If it seems that there is a serious sin which would warrant discipline, as in 1 Cor.5, but the case not fully proven, we believe the man in which there was supposed leprosy, furnishes a careful principle, given us from the Lord. The man is shut up for seven days - denied the liberty of public, Christian fellowship, until clear of any suspicion. He is not "put away" as in 1 Cor.5, but simply "shut up." We believe every Christian assembly should seek to act upon this principle in the grace of Christ and care for the holiness of God's House.

But when the priest detects the leprosy, the man is pronounced unclean - no longer a supposed leper, as in the first case, but a pronounced one. Verses 44-46 shew us that the man is now put outside the camp - answering to the discipline of 1 Cor.5, "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person."

There were two places in particular, in which leprosy might appear - in his flesh, and upon his head or beard. The former answers to moral evil in one's ways, as 1 Cor.5, and the latter - leprosy in the head - to doctrinal evil, as 2 Jn.vs.9-11, 2 Pet.2:1-3 -- false teaching, "damnable heresy." In either case, the only course is excision when the evil is proved. Such is the teaching of God's holy word.

2. Now, as to leprosy in a garment, the same minute care is manifested, verses 47-59.

This may answer to a man's character, circumstances, or habits. Leprosy was not to be tolerated in any way among those with whom God dwelt. The very garments were to be burnt with fire, if leprosy was there. God's righteous judgment and displeasure rests upon evil, wherever it is found. May we learn this lesson more fully, and seek to take sides with God against it, no matter where, or in whom, it may be found.

3. We will now turn to Chapter 14, to learn what God teaches as to association with evil. Verses 33-57, give us leprosy in a house. The house, we doubt not, presents to us "the house of God" - the assembly of God's people, where God dwells, (2 Tim.3:15); hence this refers more to our corporate fellowship. In Chap.8, we get leprosy in an individual; and in Chap.14, leprosy among a company of Christians - the house. So from these verses we learn, typically, more fully what the New Testament teaches as to cases of evil in an assembly that require to be dealt with. God's principles of holiness and righteousness are ever the same, whether in the Old Testament, or in the New - "Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever."

Let us look, then, at what is taught regarding leprosy in a house. First; "When I put the plague of leprosy in a house," (v.34.) This is never stated concerning leprosy in a person, or a garment, but only of leprosy in a house; and does it not illustrate, in a special way, the faithfulness of the Lord to those among whom He dwells? If evil is there, the faithful Lord will, by the very fact of His presence among them, put the plague there, i.e., manifest to those who have eyes to see, that there is something seriously wrong, and requiring investigation. Second; priestly inspection follows. The house was to be emptied, where there was supposed leprosy; and this also for a double reason - in case leprosy was there, that "all that is in the house be not made unclean"; and in order to lay every part of the house bare for priestly inspection. Nothing was to be covered, but all exposed to his eye. And if, after investigation, there was still a doubt, the house was to be shut up seven days, just as was the individual. This is the way in which all true and obedient Israelites were to treat a house in which there was supposed leprosy. Yea, so strict was the God of Israel, that v.46 states, "Moreover, he that goeth into the house all the while that it is shut up, shall be unclean until the even." One man might enter it through carelessness, and another through self-will and independency of spirit, to defy others. In either case God pronounces the man unclean, and this, when the house was, as yet, only "shut up."

What then are the lessons for us in this? Are there any? Surely there are; and if the house represents an assembly of Christians, then we are furnished with holy principles to guide us in exercising holy care among a gathering of God's people. And further; it establishes the truth that association with evil defiles.

If moral evil breaks out in a gathering, or "damnable heresy," is it to be allowed to continue, while the gathering is to feel no care or responsibility concerning it? We need scarcely answer this question for those who know their Bibles. The gathering is required to act upon the plain teaching of 1 Cor.5, to clear themselves in the matter. If there is carelessness as to this, the gathering ought to be dealt with just as the house was while leprosy was suspected - "shut up"; and during that time every heart rightly taught of God, and upright before Him, would carefully refrain from association with that gathering. If not verse 46 is clear as to them - "he shall be unclean." Does this mean that he is a leper also? By no means; but association with those only supposed to be leprous, rendered a man unclean. How wonderful the holiness of Israel's God - of our God. "Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, . . .glorious in holiness?" Exod.15:11. Time and again God's people have had to act according to this Scripture, where gatherings were seemingly tolerating evil.

They were shut up; and while in some cases, it has led to self-judgment, in others, it has manifested the state of the Assembly as being so low, that it could openly take sides with the evil doer, and refuse to put him away. Verses 39 and 40 teach us further as to this. When the seven days were expired, and the priest looked again upon the house, (shewing that there was no undue haste) and it was manifest that there was leprosy in one or more stones, then the stones were taken out, and "cast into an unclean place, outside the city." This is the way the Corinthian assembly acted after receiving the apostolic letter - they cleared themselves, by putting away from among them that wicked person. (1 Cor.5, 2 Cor.7.) This was serious work in either case - serious for the owner of the house in Lev.14, and serious for the whole gathering at Corinth; but they were following the Lord's instructions, which are as necessary in maintaining holiness and discipline in His house, as the blessed work of proclaiming the good news of salvation, is necessary for lost sinners; for it is only through obedience to God's word that a gathering is enabled, here on earth, to manifest the character of His holiness, in expelling evil from their midst.

Now a further work goes on. (v.41.) "They shall cause the house to be scraped." Every stone must be scraped after the putting away of any that were leprous. What searching of heart should follow every case of discipline requiring excommunication. Each heart should be bowed low before God, as there is the individual enquiry, "Am I indulging in any sin that displeases the Lord?" Thus, wrongs are discovered, confession made to God, and sins, in every form, judged at the very root. How successfully this was carried out at Corinth. After putting away the evil, there was truly a scraping of the house. (2 Cor.7:8-11.) "Ye sorrowed after a godly sort. What carefulness it wrought in you; yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation; yea, what zeal; yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." Would that this result might always follow such cases of discipline. It would prepare God's people for future service and fresh work, though it is a sorrowful way of learning our lessons, (Ps.lxvii.19), which might be learned in communion, (Ps.lxvii.13), if walking carefully and prayerfully. Lev.14, also gives us light as to the new work. "And they shall take other stones, and put them in the place of those stones; and he shall take other mortar, and shall plaster the house." v.42.

In all these exercises, souls ought to get a deeper apprehension of grace, which will lead to reviving of heart, more carefulness as to godliness of life, and fresh energy and power in making known the Gospel; not brooding over past troubles, but taking them from God's hand, and going out among the unconverted, and bringing in new material. And does not the Lord often permit such exercises, to teach us how little our sympathies have been going out in this direction? We believe time has been lost, and fresh sorrow brought among us, through trying to get old material back, in which leprosy has not been fully judged. Our sympathies are never to guide us in these things; but God's mind should be apprehended, and His word followed. Oh, that the importance of this principle, "They shall take other stones, and put them in the place of those stones," were impressed more fully upon the hearts of and all!

Now we have one point more in connection with leprosy in a house (vs.43-45). "If the plague come again . . . he shall break down the house, the stones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the mortar of the house: and he shall carry them forth out of the city into an unclean place." This was the word of the Lord in cases where the leprosy continued or reappeared. The whole house was set aside, pulled down, and put in an unclean place, (the name as when dealing with one stone: only that here it was the setting aside of a whole house) picturing the setting aside of a defiled gathering.

Surely none should doubt its application. If the house represent a gathering, then, where evil breaks out, (either moral, as 1 Cor.5, or doctrinal, as 2 Jn.) and the assembly fails to clear itself by putting the evil away, grace may wait seven days as in the first case; and while under quarantine, none were to go in,

(vs.46-47.) But in this case of leprosy reappearing, the house is set aside entirely by the Lord, and put in an unclean place, according to His instructions. So, when a gathering of professed Christians tolerates such evil, it is the burden duty of those who follow God's word, and who care for the honour of Christ, to refuse to own such a gathering any more, but give it the place God does, when He says it is unclean.

Thus far, all may agree. "But," says some one, "while we fully own that there may be leprosy in the house, and the house unclean, we do not see that this would affect any one who merely went in, and came out from it." But the Lord said far otherwise - "He that goeth into the house . . . shall be unclean." It does not say that if he went in, he would be a leper, but "he shall be unclean" - thus proving that any link with defilement rendered a person unclean. Now if we turn to 2 Jn.vs.9-11, we see that God's principles abide ever the same. Verse 9, gives us a man unsound as to the doctrine of Christ. This is leprosy in the head. Now, how are we to treat him? To be true to Christ, and to be faithful to such a one, (for he may be deceived), v.10 teaches us, "Received him not into your house, neither give him God speed." And this goes much further than church fellowship, and includes even the social sphere. Why, we ask, is God so careful? Because He is the same One Who speaks in Lev.13-14; and to be true to Himself and us, He can not lower His standard of holiness to suit man's low thoughts as to how far-reaching defilement is. And hence we read, "For he that biddeth him (the unsound teacher) God-speed, is partaker of his evil deeds." Could anything be plainer? The apostle does not say that if one receives him, he will also be a false teacher and unsound, as the man who went into a leprous house, did not by that act become a leper, yet God said he was unclean. So God also says that by receiving a false teacher, we are "partakers of his evil deeds" - put into the same company, because of being careless about a grave question such as this, that ought to stir every Christian. And if there is this careless spirit, those who honour Christ would have to treat them the same as the teacher. And the assembly that would retain such would be, like a leprous house - set aside, and no further fellowship with it permitted. This attitude will be ours if the honour of Christ is cared for, and an effort is made to check the spread of defilement among God's people. How simple and plain the word is, if we are willing to be guided by it!

So far we have dwelt chiefly on the minuteness of the care of the God of Israel as to leprosy, which answers to the more serious forms of evil which may manifest themselves among the Lord's people, and the treatment of such among the Lord's people, and the treatment of such cases. Now we will turn to Lev.15, and look at the

"RUNNING ISSUE"

and "association with evil as defiling" is there even more fully developed. In both cases, those with leprosy and a "running issue" were put outside the camp (Num.5:1-3.) The running issue represents evil working in a believer, but of a less serious nature than leprosy; yet, even for this, one was to be put outside the camp. Verses 1-3 teach that the man was unclean; Lev.15:4-14, that any contact whatever with such, was also defiling - "Whosoever touches his bed, . . . shall be unclean." "He that sitteth upon anything whereon he sat, shall be unclean." "He that toucheth the flesh of him, shall be unclean." "And if he that hath the issue, spit upon him that is clean . . . he shall be unclean." "And what saddle he rideth upon . . . shall be unclean." "And whosoever toucheth anything that is under him, shall be unclean." "And he that beareth any of those things shall be unclean." "And the vessel of earth that he toucheth, shall be broken." "And every vessel of wood, shall be rinsed in water."

How very minute are the instructions given in this chapter; yet how God-like, when we know the lessons which the Lord seeks to teach us.

1. The man was unclean.
2. Everything that he touched, was unclean..
3. Every person who touched that which the man touched, was unclean.

By this we learn that defilement goes on and on, until God's word is submitted to, and the unclean person washes himself with water. And yet, with all those types, and the plain Scripture, 1 Cor.5 - "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump;" and 2 Jn. - "is partaker of his evil deeds," many tell us that "association with evil does not necessarily defile."

Having traced out the leading thoughts regarding care in the cases of "leaven," "leprosy," and the "running issue," (these three in themselves referring more to evil itself working,) we will now look at Num.19, and gather some lessons from "defilement by the dead." This chapter leads us to consider the important fact that association with evil does defile.* The book of Numbers is the wilderness book, and there we need the greatest care and caution to follow the Word of the Lord. If not, contact with many things, defiles. But the same book tells us of love and grace also; and hence there is a provision made to cleanse the people of God from defilement, and thus fit them to abide and walk with Him day by day. Now let us note, first, the defilement itself, and how far-reaching that defilement goes. "He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days." (v.11.) "And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead body or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days," (v.16.) From these Scriptures we would learn what God's thoughts concerning defilement are, and as Israel sat at the Lord's feet, Deut.32:2, 3, and heard these words, they too learned from the very words given, what were His thoughts. And Jehovah spake no idle words.

(* Yet we are told Num.19 refers not to association with evil doctrine, and practice, but to the evil doer himself. This is wholly a mistake. That is the lesson we get in the leper, and the running issue, but in Num.19 there is no disease in the man personally, but contact with what was unclean and corrupting, defiled him)

Now the only way a man knew he was unclean, was by the Word. To this they turned for guidance; and when, by that Word, they were made aware of having contracted defilement, then the obedient heart would turn to the same Word for light as to how such defilement was to be removed. And if there was any neglect of this, very serious were the results, as we shall see. "The man that shall be unclean, and shall be purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the Lord: the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him! he is unclean." (v.20). "And whatsoever the unclean person toucheth shall be unclean: and the soul that toucheth it shall be unclean until even." (v.22.) "Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Rom.15:4. Hence we are fully warranted in taking up this book of Numbers, for God's principles are the same. These various things that would defile in Num.19, would suggest certain evils to-day that are of so serious a nature that contact, or association with them, unfit even those who are God's people for communion with the Lord, and with those who walk according to the Word. Those evils we will point out, as given in the New Testament. To be defiled by this or that in an open field may suggest contact with more open evil; a grave, evil more hidden, yet corruption and death being there, it defiled. Even though man's eye could not see it, Jehovah's did, and hence they were to avoid even the touching of a grave. Here there was no margin left for the weak thoughts even of Israel of old. They might reason and say, "But we cannot see the body beneath"; but God

would answer, "although you cannot see it, I do, and that is enough, and My Word to guide My people is 'whosoever toucheth a grave shall be unclean seven days.'" Oh, how this weighty principle of truth would settle difficulties, (legion in number) with God's people, (even if they could not see to the full end), if they would search the Word, and follow its teaching as to separation from evil, in its various forms to-day. God's knowledge of evil is thorough, is perfect; and how that evil corrupts and defiles He also knows, and hence has written, "Let every one that nameth the Name of the Lord (Greek) depart from iniquity." 2 Tim.2:19.

True, there are stages of discipline, and for every cause people are not to be "put away," but Scripture is very clear as to this: "Warn the unruly." "Them that sin rebuke before all." Yet there are others that need excision; and a careful reading of 1 Cor.5 informs us of some of those evils, as well as 2 Pet.2:1, 2 Jn. 9-11, where we learn of evil doctrines, the most serious of all, because they directly attack the person, and glory of our Lord Jesus; and all those cases in Num.19, refer to those who merit excision because of links of association with those whose teaching, or ways are so serious as to defile others.

In v.14, the Lord adds: "This is the law when a man dieth in a tent: all that come into the tent, and all that is in the tent shall be unclean seven days." Now to preserve cleanliness among those among whom He dwelt, God gave those instructions, and only as they follow His Word did they preserve this cleanliness. Turn with me, dear reader, in thought, and behold that people as they march across the desert sands. See them as they halt upon their march, and pitch their tents; the cloud now rests upon the many thousands of Israel; Jehovah their God is in their midst; their tents as a cluster, are gathered round His dwelling place.

Soon after their halt, the news spreads that someone in Tent No.1, has died; yet people are seen going in and coming out; and if Num.19 is carefully read, we learn that such are "unclean seven days" - those who are in the tent, and those who enter the tent. Nothing could be plainer if Scripture would guide. Now imagine that you see a man coming out of Tent No.1, - the defiled tent; and as he turns his face towards Tents, from No.3 on to No.10; and as those tents (we omit No.2 purposely) see him coming towards them, they close their curtain doors as one man, and refuse to let him enter. He, when told the reason from Num.19 complains, saying, "But I am not the dead man; and I am as much one of the Lord's people as you are."

They might reply, "It is quite true you are not the dead man, and we are also aware that you are one of God's people; these things we do not doubt; yet the Word of the Lord must guide us. You have been in Tent No.1, where a dead man is. Now in Num.19:14, Jehovah our God says that you are unclean, and unless you are purified with the water of purification, you remain unclean; and v.22 states that "everything you touch is unclean," and therefore we refuse you, until the defilement you contracted in Tent No. 1 is removed. And further, if you have not carefully read Num.19, we will read it to you, v.14 states that you are unclean, vs.17-19, give us the only way that any can be cleansed from such defilement. So we advise you to follow this chapter, and avail yourself of God's provision - "the water of purification," and then, brother, come to us after the seventh day, for then, v.12. states, you shall be clean, and we will receive you with all our hearts. We can assure you at this time that we love you, but we also desire at all costs to follow God's Word, and maintain purity in all our tents as far as we can."

Now, if truly submissive to God's Word, would not this instruction from Num.19 be hailed with great joy? And is not this the time and place to give such instruction, in order to check the spread of defilement?

But suppose, instead of being thankful, he further complains that they are too strict. Nevertheless all those tents from No.3 to 10, remain firm as one man. But now he perceives that Tent No.2, (the nearest to the defiled one) remained independent of all the others, and left their door open; so he turns to them with the hope that they will receive him, and save him all the trouble of having the water sprinkled upon him, and also the inconvenience of waiting seven days. And as he approaches Tent No.2, they greet him. He states his difficulties. They reply that all these tents from 3 to 10 are very "exclusive," - they exclude many of God's people; but we are more "open;" we do not doubt that you are the Lord's, and we know you are not the dead man, therefore we are happy in receiving you into our tent. Now, dear reader, I leave it with you to decide in the light of Num.19, which of these have acted aright; - those who refused him, because God said he was unclean, or those of Tent No. 2, who received him, while yet unclean. We do not raise the question as to his being the dead man, nor yet do we deny that he is the Lord's.* But the Lord in Num.19, teaches us that the man was unclean, and everywhere he might go was rendered unclean by his contact with it. And this man represents any to-day, be he a child of God or not, who holds any link of association with moral evil as 1 Cor.5, or doctrinal evil as 2 Jn.; and it furnishes us with God's way for a person to be cleansed before being received, by those who seek to maintain truth and holiness according to the words of truth.

(* Neither do we dwell upon the personal graces otherwise of any in Tents 1 or 2; this would only blind our eyes as to the main principles, and on the other hand there might be failure in detail in tents No.3 to 10, "in many things we offend all," but the principles of truth and righteousness we here insist upon.)

Now in case the man absolutely refused God's way of cleansing.

1. He remained unclean.
2. He defiled those he came in contact with. (See the application of Haggai 2:11-14 to the nation in an after day.)
3. He was deprived of the passover. Num.9:5-7, (no doubt a picture of the Lord's table.)
4. He was put outside the camp, where the leper was, and the man with the running issue, Num.5:1-3, though he himself was neither, but was defiled by the association with the tent where a dead man was.

Yet in Num.9 how lovely God's grace; v.9-13, for those defiled by the dead there was an extra provision, they could keep the Passover on the second month, thus giving them time to comply with Num.19 and be cleansed. And how beautiful to see in those defiled men, that they were earnest, and so pressed their case, and conscientious, for they hid not the fact, but confessed; "we are defiled by the dead body of a man," v.7. No wonder that God made an extra provision for such. My dear reader, if a child of God, seriously meditate upon these themes which develop the holiness and care of God for the good, yea, the permanent good of His own people, among whom He dwells.

Now, we will pass on to Tent No.2, and see how they are to be dealt with. In Num.19:22, it is clear they are unclean, and the last words of this chapter inform us that the soul that toucheth it (Tent No.2) "shall be unclean until even." (It is said by some that "Num.19 Teaches that the responsibility rests wholly with the individual defiled, and not the assembly." Let the reader judge from v.20, where we read, "that soul shall be cut off from the congregation;" also Num.5:1 to 3, and Num.9:5-14. No doubt the aim of the above statement is to deny assembly responsibility.)

Hence Tent No.2, would also be under quarantine until those there who had become defiled, were cleansed from their defilement. If they persisted in this course, we learn in v.20, that "the man that shall be unclean (by contact with the dead, or even with those made unclean by the dead, see v.22,) and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from the congregation." And Num.5:1-3, further teaches that he would be "put without the camp." The truth thus applies to one, or one hundred just the same. We verily believe that Tent No. 2 would occupy a very serious position, in treating with indifference the truth of Num.19, also lowering the standard of purity in the congregation as to association, and also acting in independency of Tents No.3 to 10, who sought to act for God.

Ponder, dear reader, these things over, and if perplexed as to this subject, rest not till you get from the Word itself "thus saith the Lord" as to these things. Men in the world understand these principles, and so do God's people in every day life. If small pox, diphtheria, or the cholera, break out, (as these things in the O.T. broke out in the camp.) see the care people exercise - they will not permit any with the disease to enter their home, and further, they will not allow any who have been where the small pox patients are, to enter, lest they bring it in their clothing or otherwise, although they, themselves, have not the disease, and thus association is not permitted. These are the principles of care we are contending for in spiritual life and association, because these lie nearer the heart of Christ, and all truly loyal to Him; and any violation of these principles thus becomes more serious, and especially when God has spoken, and spoken so plainly.

Now let us pause and consider briefly what does this provision of Num.19 speak of - His provision to keep His own clean.

The red heifer without spot, none could answer to this but One - Jesus our Lord. The heifer slain - Jesus put to death. The heifer burnt to ashes with cedar wood and hyssop, and scarlet - Jesus our adorable Lord in death, meeting the full penalty of sin, bearing the judgment of evil in every phase and form, and laying a righteous basis before the throne of God, enabling Him to walk with His people, already redeemed, and keep them clean all along the way. The ashes kept - the abiding remembrance of Christ in this place of death. The running water, and ashes sprinkled upon the unclean - the Holy Spirit through the Word, bringing home to heart and conscience, when we get defiled, that this very uncleanness came in by sin, and caused, yea, necessitated the death of Christ. We, then, according to the Word (the water) take sides with God against evil in every form that brings defilement, and clear ourselves from all association with such. May we profit by these lessons which teach us the purity and holiness of God's dwelling place!

We will now turn to one more type. This we will find in Deut.12 and 13 where we get a perfect harmony of truth, with all we have examined so far; and here we have some phases more fully developed, yet the principle is the same. In chapter 12, we are taught, as the people enter the land, vs.1-3, their path of separation from those who were there, whose ways and forms of worship were defiling.

From vs.4-32, the Lord instructs them concerning their worship and their sacrifices; and even their place of worship, is marked out for them; they have no choice, no arrangement whatever; the land, the place Jehovah put His Name, all, all, was Jehovah's choice and ordering.

"Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest. But in the place which the Lord shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings, and there thou shalt do all that I command thee," vs.13, 14. This chapter affords much instruction for the Lord's people now, and was for Israel in the Old Testament much the same as 1 Tim. is for us in the New.

In chapter 13, we proceed a step further and instruction is given to His people as to how to deal with evil in its various forms. True, they were not expected to be occupied with evil, and neither should we be, yet the Lord saw fit to instruct them, as He does His people now, concerning how to deal with such, whenever it does arise. Ignorance of facts and principles are no virtue, surely. In the New Testament, 2 Tim., and the later epistles, are much what chapter 13 of Deut. was for Israel. God does not leave His people to their poor, weak and divided thoughts, as to how they ought to act in times of failure. Hence in vs.1-5, the Lord instructs His people:

First. How to deal with a false teacher, if such were true, that a prophet arose who sought to turn the hearts of His people away from Him Who brought them forth from Egypt, and redeemed them; he was put to death, v.5. This was law. Now under grace, he is put away, as 1 Cor.5; and so serious such a course would be, that it would be wrong to bid Him "God speed." 2 Jn.vs10, 11.

Second. In vs.6-11 instruction is given them how to deal with friends or relatives. "If thy brother . . . or thy son . . . or thy wife . . . or thy friend, entice thee, saying, let us go and serve other gods . . . thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him, neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him . . . But thou shalt surely kill him, thine hand shall be first upon him thou shalt stone him with stones that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt." Those lines inform us how serious, even for those linked by ties of nature, to step in and lead God's people from paths He marks out for them to walk in. Natural links have their place; yet persons can only rightly fill this place in proportion as they follow the Word. If otherwise, in the end, the lesson will be learnt, that instead of being a help, they have been a hindrance, to others. We long to see an awakening among God's people in this respect; long to see individual consciences exercised in the presence of God, (instead of friends following friends, and relatives following relatives,) and a true enquiry for God's mind and a desire to walk with Him in paths of righteousness. It is true that wives are to obey their husbands, and children their parents; yet we would add - "in the Lord." And again - "as it is fit in the Lord." When these things are kept in remembrance before the heart, and true subjection to the Lord is first sought, everything else will adjust itself according to His mind. Deut.13 with Luke 12:51-53, 14:26, 27, needs to be pondered well by all, when the question "what is truth?" arises, and a path with God is sought after.

Third. In vs.12-18 we get information how to deal with evil in a city, and so maintain order according to God through the various cities of Israel.

"If thou shalt hear say in one of thy cities . . . saying, certain men, the children of Belial, have gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which ye have not known. Thou shalt enquire, and make search, and ask diligently; and behold if it be truth and the thing certain, etc."

Here we are brought face to face with the question of government in the cities of Israel, and the link that binds all together - "in one of thy cities." The nation were one in God's sight, and although the people were divided into various cities, yet one government guided all - one law. Thus, while there were the many cities, yet was there one people, and one government ruling all; and this would give each an interest in all. And when serious evil arose as in chap.13, each would have great concern for the other. True, each city was responsible to govern all within her walls, and act aright before the Lord, and when all did this, the same order prevailed throughout all Israel. But if a city failed to maintain order according to God, this brought out a further responsibility for the others, because it was "one of thy cities." And if evil arose, as in

this chapter, and after the earnest, patient enquiry, it was found to be truth, that this city had failed to govern those within her borders, God's Word to them was that they were to "smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, destroying it utterly, and all that is therein." They were not left to their poor sympathies here. Their work now was not that of grace, but of righteousness; and in this God did not lead them to make a mistake. Thou "shalt burn with fire the city." The city was set aside entirely, and all within her border. See a beautiful exception: 2 Sam.20:1-15, where we get a man of Belial, "Sheba, the son of Bichri;" and as Joab surrounds the city to destroy it, vs.16-20 give us the act of a faithful woman. The man is judged - is dealt with - and this satisfies Joab, and they retire and the city is left.

We believe these examples are full of profit for us now. We looked at the defilement in a tent, the leprosy in a house, and now evil in a city; yet all have to be dealt with. And so it is in the New Testament with evil in a gathering of God's people. We believe the word "one of thy cities," gives a key to their unity of old, as well as for us now. There may be hundreds and thousands of assemblies Scripturally gathered all over the world, yet as Israel, the people are one, yea, one by a closer link than ever Israel were. They were the typical people. We have the blessings typified. If 1 Cor.12 and Eph.3, 4 are carefully read, there can be no mistakes as to this. Times have changed since these lines were penned, yet the truth ever abides till the close, for us to enjoy, and to follow. God had no separate government for every city, and neither has He for His people now. There is but one government, one order, one discipline, one authority, one Book. Oh, that this was apprehended more! How it would enlarge our hearts - our sympathies, and give us care and concern for all. Now if evil was allowed in one of those cities, it was set aside, if not judged by themselves. And the same is true now among God's people. If any gathering of professed Christians, allows practices, or doctrines that are heretical, or links of association with them, and refuses to judge such, and put them away, hearts true to Christ everywhere would reject such, and refuse it as a gathering - set it aside, as Israel did one of their cities. The question of late years has been asked - "What Scripture have you for cutting off assemblies?" The answer has been well given: "We have Scripture for cutting off sin, whether in one or more." Those Scriptures in Deut.12 and 13, I have but briefly noted, but trust the chapters themselves will be closely studied by every reader, and we are sure much profit will be reaped from their important lessons.

Having now closed our lessons on the types, we will briefly notice THE TESTIMONY OF PROPHECY, mainly that of Haggai. This is one of the last three, and ought to be read with the books of Ezra and Neh.; purposely 1 refer to this prophecy, because of its special application to our day, and to those for whom I write. It was also the last voice (Hag., Zech. and Mal.) from the Lord to His people ere John's voice announced Christ's coming.

This remnant, to whom they prophesy, having returned from Babylon, are once more in their land, once more in the place of Altar (Sacrifice) and Temple (right place of worship). God can now meet and bless them according to His Word. This no doubt represents the return of God's people, in those last days, to God's order, as given in the Word for His people, which the Church had so sadly departed from - a return to the true ground of Christian fellowship and worship, left, by the great Head of the Church, until His return to take His people home.

Now, if Ezra and Nehemiah are read with care, it will be seen that although the work commenced in the energy of the Spirit, yet failure soon manifested itself among these people in their tendencies to indifference and carelessness about the things of God. Hence the need of the prophet's Voice to bring them into God's presence in exercise as to their walk and ways, and also as to the need of always maintaining order and good government firmly, as established by the Lord for the blessing of His people.

Now, we will turn to that wonderful prophesy of Haggai - but two chapters, yet five distinct messages for His people.

Verses 1-11, give the first message. Here their sins are pointed out faithfully presented. They were dwelling in their celled houses, and the Lord's house laid waste, as the Apostle wrote in an after date: "All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." Home life, comfort and ease, were sought and provided for, but the Lord's work, the Lord's interest here on earth, were neglected. No wonder a great dearth follows. "Therefore the heavens over you are stayed from dew." And have we not seen the same? Have we not felt this keenly? May God give us further awakening everywhere, as in the prophet's day. Verse 12 shows how this first message affected the remnant. "The remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the Lord their God."

Second message; v.13. The Lord's Word is full of cheer and encouragement to an awakened people. "I am with you saith the Lord." Then they once more resumed the work of the house of the Lord, that they had neglected because of the difficulties from their enemies around. "In the world ye shall have tribulation" is a truth ever true, until our Lord comes; yet "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world," are His words to His people.

Now in Haggai 2, we learn lessons of another character.

Third message; vs.1-9. The past glory of the house is pointed out; their present weakness also, compared with the past; yet they were not to fear on account of that. "Be strong!" "Be strong!" "Be strong!" "for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts," are the words of a faithful God to His people at such a time; and the future glory was what they were to look on to. "The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former," (Heb.). Forgetting the past, now encouraged by the presence and Word of the Lord, they are to look forward to the end - rejoice in the hope of the latter glory.

Fourth message; vs.10-19. Here we learn of the Lord's further desire - a revival of holiness and purity among themselves. (This is also the testimony of Mal.1, 2) "Ask now the priests concerning the law, saying, if one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No." That is, could holiness and purity be transmitted to others by association? The answer is but one, as given here. No. To follow the same principle further; if you put one drop of pure water into a bucket of poison, will it cleanse it? Surely not.

"Then said Haggai, If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these, shall it be unclean? And the priests answered, It shall be unclean. Then answered Haggai, and said, So is this people, and so is this nation; before me, &c." How God's standard of purity as given in Num.19 abides ever the same, be it in the wilderness - the beginning of their history, or among the remnant in Haggai. This passage is the insisting upon this weighty truth, that association with evil defiles. Hence, if in ch.1, we get a revival of work, in ch.2 we learn of God's desire for a revival of walk and association according to His Word. We will not dwell further upon this defilement by the dead, having done so in the previous pages on Num.19.

Fifth Message; vs.20-23, give us the closing message. Now the prophet seeks to revive their interest in the future, when every enemy would be overthrown. Yet in that day, God's people (as Zerubbabel), would have a sure abiding-place. This will all be fully realized at the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We will now turn to a few passages in the NEW TEST. which require a word, although reference has been made to them again and again in the former pages.

In 1 Cor.5 we get moral evils pointed out, and how such are to be dealt with; but here it is not one overtaken in a fault, that requires to be restored (as Gal.4:1) nor yet one simply "unruly" needing a warning as 1 Thess. v.14; but one known to have pursued a wicked course whom God's holiness requires to be "put away;" and here the Apostle refers to a weighty principle, drawn from "leaven," as in Exod.12 and elsewhere, "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Efforts have been made to weaken the force of this, and to say Corinth was not leavened. How could such evils be there and known - "puffed up," "glorying," and yet not defiled? What does the language mean, "purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump," if they had not already become leavened, defiled? Yet this does not imply all were fornicators, but permitting such among them, they, as we have learnt from the Old Testament lessons, were defiled. "That ye may be a new lump," is a clear proof. During this time Apollos refused to go there even to minister (ch.16:12); and the Apostle keeps apart until they not only put the man away, but repent and judge their whole condition, and so clear themselves. What exercise this gave the Apostle, yea, what prayers and tears were poured out on their behalf. They eventually acted, and cleared themselves, and the Assembly was spared, as was the city. 2 Sam.12.

But What is the meaning of "Ye are unleavened?" (verse 7.) Does it mean, that though those evils were there, yet they were not so serious as to leaven the others? Surely every other line in the chapter would witness against such an explanation. "As ye are unleavened," has a far different meaning, surely; it is the Apostle giving God's view of them from the top of the rocks, as Israel in Num.23:21. By virtue of their acceptance through Christ, and His work, they were perfect; He beheld no iniquity in them; and hence drawing their attention to this, was calculated to humble them, because their practice, their conduct was the opposite. We fail, yea we all fail; let us own this, confess it freely, yet never lower God's standard of purity and holiness, and the far reaching effect of association with evil "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." But there is even a more dangerous character of "leaven" than this we have pointed out in 1 Cor.5 - that of teaching. In the second epistle of John, we get instruction as to this, and also the same care as to association a system of teaching, in which we see the craft of Satan, to mar the glories of the person of the Lord Jesus. It may be that those he uses to do his work, are those in position and wealth, men of culture and learning, and much to attract the natural man; and this shews us the subtilty of the enemy all the more - to deceive the unwary. Concerning those, the apostle urges the elect lady - "receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." All Christians, true to the Lord, ought to understand receive him not"; yet what follows, is what we would here insist upon - "He that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." If even a Christian has so little concern about what is due to Christ, we learn that the slightest link of association renders him a "partaker of his evil deeds." The words do not say, by bidding him "God speed," that he is also a false teacher, nor that he has yet imbibed his false teaching, but is "partaker of his evil deeds" - the same as touching a "leper," "running issue," or even a "dead man," defiled, and unfitted a person for the worship of the Lord, and the company of the Lord's people. So also, would this person have to be treated. Now, I close. Let each reader ponder well the lines of thought pursued in these pages, and pray earnestly over every reference to the Word of the Lord. May it lead both reader and writer more into the power and reality of those lessons of righteousness and holiness, needed in these closing days, to sanctify from all evil.

"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy. To the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power,

both now and ever. Amen."

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