

THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS.

CHAPTER I.

Leviticus iv, vi.

22 When a ruler hath sinned and somewhat through ignorance, *against* any of the commandments of the Lord his God *concerning things* which should not be done, and is guilty.

23 Or if his sin, wherein he hath sinned, come to his knowledge; he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a male without blemish:

27 ¶ And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he doeth *some-what against* any of the commandments of the Lord *concerning things* which ought not to be done, and be guilty;

28 Then he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin.

14 ¶ And this is the law of the meat offering: the sons of Aaron shall offer it before the Lord, before the altar.

15 And he shall take of it his handful, of the flour of the meat offering, and of the oil thereof, and all the frankincense which is upon the meat offering, and shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savour, *even* the memorial of it, unto the Lord.

18 All the males among the children of Aaron shall eat of it. It shall be a statute for ever in your generations concerning the offerings of the Lord made by fire: every one that toucheth them shall be holy.

THERE seems to have been some distinction of sex even in the offerings of male and female animals. For rulers, priests and people of distinction male animals were required, but for the common people a female lamb or goat would do. There is a difference of opinion among writers as to the reason of this custom, some say because all female animals were considered unclean, others that the females were too valuable for wholesale slaughter. Farmers use the male fowls for the table because the hens are too valuable producing eggs and chickens. The fact has some significance, though Adam Clarke throws no light on it, he says "the whole sacrificial system in this book refers to the coming sacrifice of Christ; without this spiritual reference, the general reader can feel no spiritual interest in this book." For burnt offerings males were required, but for peace offerings and minor sins the female would answer.

As the idea of sacrifice to unknown gods, was the custom with all nations and religions, why should the Jewish have more significance than that of any other people. For swearing, an offence to ears polite, rather than eternal justice, a female creature or turtle dove might be offered.

The meat so delicately cooked by the priests, with wood and coals in the altar, in clean linen, no woman was permitted to taste, only the males among the children of Aaron. Seeing that the holy men were the cooks, it seems like a work of super-erogation to direct them to clean themselves and their cooking utensils. Perhaps the daughters of Israel were utilized for that work.

It is clearly shown that child-bearing among the Jews was not considered a sacred office and that offerings to the Lord were necessary for their purification, and that double the time was necessary after the birth of a daughter.

In several of the following chapters the sins of men and women are treated on equal grounds, hence they need no special comments. In reading many of these chapters we wonder that an expurgated edition of these books was not issued long ago. We trust the volume we propose to issue may suggest to the next Revising Committee of gentlemen the propriety of omitting many texts that are gross and obscene, especially if the Bible is to be read in our public schools.

Leviticus x.

12 ¶ And Moses spake unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar, his sons that were left, Take the meat offering that remaineth of the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and eat it without leaven beside the altar: for it is most holy.

13 And ye shall eat it in the *holy place*, because it is thy due, and thy sons' due, of the

sacrifices of the Lord made by fire: for so I am commanded.

14 And the wave breast and heave shoulder shall ye eat in a *clean place*; thou, and thy sons, and thy daughters with thee: for *they be thy due*, and thy sons' due, *which* are given out of the sacrifices of peace offerings of the children of Israel.

Why the daughters cannot eat with the sons in the thirteenth verse and may in the fourteenth we cannot conjecture. We notice, however, that where the sons eat alone is called a "holy place," where the daughters eat with them it is called simply a "clean place." We are thankful, however, that in the distribu-

tion of meats the women come in occasionally for a substantial meal in a clean place.

All the directions given in the eighteenth chapter are for men and women alike, for all nations and all periods of human development. The social habits and sanitary conditions prescribed are equally good for our times as when given by Moses to the children of Israel. The virtue of cleanliness so sedulously taught cannot be too highly commended. E. C. S.

CHAPTER II.

Leviticus xix.

3 ¶ Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I *am* the Lord your God.

20 ¶ And whosoever cohabits with a bondmaid, betrothed to a husband, and not at all redeemed, nor freedom given her; she shall be scourged: they shall not be put to death, because she was not free.

21 And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the Lord, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, *even* a ram for a trespass offering.

22 And the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering before the Lord for his sin which he hath done: and the sin which he hath done shall be forgiven him.

BY what possible chance the mother is mentioned first here, it is difficult to conjecture, but we do see the cruel injustice of the comparative severity of the punishment for man and woman for the same offence. The woman is scourged, the man presents the priest with a ram and is forgiven.

Leviticus xx.

9 ¶ For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood *shall be* upon him.

21 And if a man shall take his brother's wife, it *is* an unclean thing: he hath uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless.

27 ¶ A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones; their blood *shall be* upon them.

Clarke remarks that all language that tends to lessen respect for father or mother, is included in this judgment. In this chapter we have still further directions for race and family purity. I suppose in the 21st verse we have that stumbling-block in the British Parliament whenever the deceased wife's sister's bill comes up for passage. Here, too, those who in times past have persecuted witches, will find justification for their cruelties. The actors in one of the blackest pages in human history, claim Scripture authority for their infernal deeds. Far into the eighteenth century in England, the clergy dragged innocent women into the courts as witches, and learned judges pronounced on them the sentence of torture and death. The chapter on witchcraft in Lecky's History of Rationalism,

contains the most heartrending facts in human history. It is unsafe to put unquestioned confidence in all the vagaries of mortal man. While women were tortured, drowned and burned by the thousands, scarce one wizard to a hundred was ever condemned. The marked distinction in the treatment of the sexes, all through the Jewish dispensation, is curious and depressing, especially as we see the trail of the serpent all through history, wherever their form of religion has made its impress. In the old common law of our Saxon fathers, the Jewish code is essentially reproduced. This same distinction of sex appears in our own day. One code of morals for men, another for women. All the opportunities and advantages of life for education, self-support and self-development freely accorded boys, have, in a small measure, been reluctantly conceded to women after long and persevering struggles.

Leviticus xxii.

12 If the priest's daughter also be *married* unto a stranger, she may not eat of an offering of the holy things.

13 But if the priest's daughter be a widow, or

divorced, and have no child, and is returned unto her father's house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her father's meat : but there shall no stranger eat thereof.

These restrictions on the priests' daughters would never be tolerated by the priests' sons should they marry strangers. The individuality of a woman, the little she ever possessed, is obliterated by marriage.

Leviticus xxiv.

10 ¶ And the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father *was* an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel : and this son of the Israelitish *woman* and a man of Israel strove together in the camp ;

11 And the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name *of the LORD*, and cursed. And they brought him unto Moses : (and his mother's name *was* Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan :)

The interesting fact here is that a woman is dignified by a name, the only one so mentioned in the book of Leviticus. This is probably due to the fact that the son's character was so disreputable that he would reflect no lustre on his father's family, and so on his maternal ancestors rested his disgrace. If there had been anything good to tell of him, reference would no doubt have been made to his male progenitors.

Leviticus xxvi.

26 *And* when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver *you* your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied.

29 And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat.

There could be no greater punishment in ordinary life than for ten women to bake in one oven. As every woman would necessarily look at her pies and cakes two or three times, that would involve a frequent looking in, which might make the contents heavy as lead. A current of cold air rushing in too often, would wreck the most perfect compound. But perhaps heavy bread was intended as part of the punishment of the people for their sins. Some commentators say that the labors of the ten women are symbolical of the poverty of the family. When people are in fortunate circumstances, the women are supposed, like the lilies of the valley, to neither toil nor spin, but when the adverse winds blow they suddenly find themselves compelled to use their own brains and hands or perish.

The 29th verse at last gives us one touch of absolute equality, the right to be eaten. This Josephus tells us really did occur in the sieges of Samaria by Benhadad, of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, and also in the last siege of Jerusalem by the Romans.

E. C. S.

Amid the long list of directions for sacrifices and injunctions against forbidden actions, chapter xii gives the law of purification, not only degrading motherhood by the observance of certain ceremonies and exclusion from the sanctuary, but by discriminating against sex, honoring the birth of a son above that of a daughter.

According to the Levitical law, the ewe lambs were not used for sacrifices as offerings to the Lord, because they were unclean. This was an idea put forth by the priests and Levites. But there was a better and more rational reason. To sacrifice the ewes was to speedily deplete the flocks, but beyond a cer-

tain number needed as sires for the coming generation, the males could be put to no better use than to feed the priests, the refuse of the animal, the skin, feet, etc., constituted the sacrifice to the Lord.

Bishop Colenso, in his remarkable work on the Pentateuch, gives the enormous number of lambs annually sacrificed by the Hebrews. A certain portion of the flocks were assigned to the priests, who were continually provided with the best mutton.

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