

SPIRITUAL VISION PROPORTIONATE TO HEART PURITY

"Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord." – Isa. 52:11.

THE VESSELS of the Lord in the Tabernacle, and also in the Temple, were those vessels which were connected with the holy services – in the Court, in the Holy and the Most Holy. They consisted of hooks, censer, pans snuffers, cups, bowls – a variety of precious vessels. Those used in the Holy and the Most Holy were of gold, and those used in the Court were of copper.

The only ones who were allowed to handle these vessels at all were the consecrated class. The priests handled these in the Holy and the Most Holy in certain parts of the service, and in less important services they were covered up and borne in the hands of the Levites. So the vessels were handled only by the priests and the Levites. They required a cleansing before being used, and so were washed. Every bearer of these was required to be cleansed, typically washed free from sin.

In the antitype, our Lord is the great High Priest. The most faithful of His followers are those who are counted as the Priesthood in God's sight, on trial now to see whether they will constitute the Priests in glory. But all who have made consecration have the Robe of Christ's Righteousness. Whoever is not thus clothed upon by the righteousness of Christ, whoever is not thus justified in God's sight, can have neither part nor lot in handling the holy things – the precious truths.

The antitypical significance of the Prophet's exhortation in our text is that as in the type God required that everything should be clean, so *we* must be clean, pure of heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart." We have not perfection of flesh at the present time. When

we have come into Christ, this imperfection of the flesh is said to be covered by a clean, white robe, representing the righteousness, the merit, of Christ. We must abide in Him. So long as we are in the flesh, we must have the Robe of Christ's Righteousness, in order to be clean.

Moreover, as it was required of the priests that they keep their robes clean, so we are exhorted to put away all filthiness of the flesh and to keep our robes clean. We are told that the Church will be without spot, and clean. (Eph. 5:26,27.) And if we marvel how this could be, the Scriptures show us how it is. We were cleansed from sins of the past when the robe was given us, and this means also a provision on God's part for the continued cleansing of all the sins that are ours through weakness, through temptation, through unavoidable failures. But nothing in this provision indicates a cleansing from wilful sin.

PURITY OF HEART ESSENTIAL

We as New Creatures could not have wilful sin and still remain New Creatures; for the New Creature represents the mind of Christ, which is holy. Whatever weaknesses and imperfections there may be are attached to the flesh; and all these are covered by the Robe of Christ's Righteousness. We approach the Throne of Heavenly Grace and find grace to help in every time of need.

The context seems to make the text applicable in the present time. It was applicable in our Lord's day. He was holy, harmless, undefiled. It was applicable in the Apostles' day. All these must be clean. One, who was unclean, Judas, went to his own destruction. We believe that he went into the Second Death because he failed to use the opportunities that had been given to him.

As it was possible for Judas to fail, it is also possible for us to fail – to a greater or a less extent. As he was put out of the Divine service because of impurity of heart, love of money, etc., so we may

be sure that all not *pure in heart* will be put out of this service. Just as none would be placed in this service if not pure in heart, so if any become impure they will be put out of it.

This is illustrated by the case of Ananias and Sapphira, who were put out of their affiliation with the Priesthood because of their love of money and their attempt to deceive. [R5259 : page 184] We remember this also in the case of Simon Magus and others mentioned in the New Testament. There might be some defiled of heart and other people not know of it. As the Scriptures intimate, there might be some highly esteemed among men, and not highly esteemed in God's sight. And there might be some not much esteemed among men, but highly esteemed of God. "The world knoweth us not, even as it knew Him not." – I John 3:1.

PRESENT-DAY OPPONENTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

No doubt there are those occupying pulpits who may esteem themselves as really the ministers of God, and be thus esteemed of others, who do not honor His Word. We are told that some of the ministers of Satan are thought to be ministers of God. (2 Cor. 11:13-15; Rev. 2:2; 3:9.) Some of them confess that they have no faith, no God at all. Some of them say that God is simply the god of nature. And others, again, say that they believe in God, but do not believe in the Scriptures.

We cannot suppose that these are bearing the vessels of the Lord's House in any sense of the word. Probably they never did bear these vessels. Or possibly they might have done so, and then gone into error, gone out of the Court condition altogether, become enemies of the cross of Christ. (Philippians 3:18.) The Apostle speaks of some such who hold *down* (Greek *katecho*) the Truth in unrighteousness. In this text the word *hold* is used, not in the sense of *retaining* the Truth, but of *oppressing* it. – Romans 1:18.

In another Epistle the Apostle speaks of some who preach Christ with contention (Phil. 1:15,16.); but he is not in any way here referring to those bearing the vessels of the Lord's House. He seems to refer to those who have not known Christ, but who nevertheless were drawing attention to the fact that there is a Christ; that they had heard that there was such a claim put forth – that there is a Christ – just as there are some today who are more or less calling attention to certain features of the Truth. We would not think that these in any sense of the word are bearing the vessels of the Lord's House, but rather that they are opponents.

The passage from which our text is taken seems to indicate that those who bear the vessels of the Lord's House would have a special force and influence at the present time. This is shown in the statement, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him who bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (Isaiah 52:7.) This seems to be applicable now in a sense that it never was previously; for the time for the Kingdom reign is practically here, the time for this Message of God is at hand. We believe that the Kingdom of God is in process of erection, and the gathering of the saints now in process of completion. With the completion of this class will come the inauguration of the Kingdom.

The context also shows that the time is near when the Message shall be preached to every creature. We believe that this is even now being fulfilled. Many are seeing the Restitution of all things and the glorious outcome of the Divine Plan. All who would be thus engaged in proclaiming the Message are exhorted to be clean. **[R5259 : page 185]**

THE PURE IN HEART THE TARGET OF THE ENEMY

The intimation of the Scriptures everywhere is that there are adverse influences at work in the world, tending to defile the people

of God. They all have, of course, through the weaknesses of their own flesh, a sufficiency of temptation, we might say, to overcome. But the Scriptures say that this is not all they have to contend against. There are fallen angels that operate through occult influences and that are intent upon defiling especially the saintly class. But they are intent upon defiling all.

The purer the person, the more surely will he be the target. You notice that the speckled birds are more a mark for the huntsman than are the others. Thus all who are bearing the vessels of the Lord's House are special targets for the fiery darts of the Wicked One. So we must contend against the world, the flesh and the Adversary. Those who are in the right condition of heart, the pure in heart, earnest as the Lord's children, watch to keep their garments clean. Unless they watch, they will surely get their garments defiled. Satan is specially endeavoring to touch them; and we know that wherever he would touch there is defilement. Whoever the Wicked One touches receives a measure of injury. And there is a measure of culpability in the individual before he is touched.

The suggestion is that to whatever extent one becomes defiled, unclean, in that proportion he would not be fit to be entrusted with the vessels of the Lord's House. Perhaps all of God's people can say from experience that they know something of what this means. Doubtless it is the experience of all of the Lord's children that in proportion as their hearts are clean their spiritual vision is clear. And in proportion as they depart from this purity, in that proportion they would have less and less opportunity for service – for bearing the vessels of the Truth.

