

THE PRIESTS . . . who were told to stay on a strict diet
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(LEVITICUS 11:29-31)

Leviticus is the Book of the Priests; its teaching is devoted to the laws regulating the conduct of those who served in the temple. If we remember that a standard of holiness was required of all who ministered within the sanctuary, we shall easily understand the importance of the commands contained in this strange book. If we consider these things, we may find glimmerings of truth relating to a later generation of priests -those who through faith in the Saviour have been made kings and priests unto God. "These also shall be unclean unto you among the creeping things that creep upon the earth. . . ."

The Weasel

This little animal has never been popular. It is one of the most merciless and vicious trackers in the bush, and belies the beauty of its furry coat. When this creature gets on the trail of an innocent victim, it follows to the end. When the hunted one is cornered and cries out in fear, the weasel gloats over the prey and moves in for the kill. There are people of this type. They do not know the meaning of mercy.

The Mouse

There is not a great deal which may be said of the mouse, except that it lives in the dark, often gets into a hole, and is easily poisoned! It is more a nuisance than a danger, and seems to be gifted at upsetting old ladies! Its gnawing behind the scenes, and its habit of putting teeth into another's property, make it an outlaw.

The Tortoise

This creature lives in a house of armour. Ordinary weapons would only bounce from its back. They wander all over the place, and seem to have no settled home. Every night in certain countries motorists run over them, and yet seldom is one really hurt. They are errant knights in armour, and are very hard to reach. The tortoise is very slow, and has a habit of sticking its neck out!

The Ferret

This is the nastiest member of the family. It resembles a rat, and needs to be handled carefully. Its teeth are very sharp, and are capable of biting friend or foe. The ferret is never really happy unless it is hunting others; in this respect, it is closely related to the weasel. In the box or in the field, at work or in leisure moments, the ferret snaps, cannot be trusted, and its odor is never pleasant. The animal is prone to run wild, and may easily be lost forever.

The Chameleon

This is the most changeable creature in the world. It is difficult to see the animal, for its camouflage is perfect. On a green leaf, the chameleon turns green; on red leaves, it turns red. The chameleon likes to be in harmony with its environment. It has no abiding principles, except to be changeable as often as is necessary. Alas, this feature is one of the best-known characteristics of a]J people who have no convictions.

The Lizard

This is one of the smallest animals, but its tongue is

THE PRIESTS . . . who were told to stay on a strict diet deadly! This is most dangerous, and is often forked. When the lizard strikes, it does so with venom and accuracy. It has neither strong body nor powerful limbs; it is very timid, and runs away at the first sound of danger. Its tongue, however, is a rapier! It is doubtful whether this is ever used except to hurt, to capture, to destroy. Against such tendencies in human beings, Paul uttered his strongest warnings.

The Snail

This is a slimy creature! There are many parts of the world where snail shells are extremely beautiful; but all snails are slimy! They have never been known to do a good turn, they damage everything they touch, and can always be traced by their trails. Even if they possess an ornate palace in which to live, "they are wolves in sheep's clothing." Some people cat them; but there is no accounting for a man's taste!

The Mole

This small creature loves to burrow in the earth, and is always dirty. It hates the light, and lives in tiny tunnels in the ground. Farmers hate it; hunters trap it; none like it. A most unpopular and unfriendly creature, famous for spoiling fields.

The ancient priests were required to be fastidious; their's was a strict diet. There is a sense in which all Christians should emulate their example!

The Dead Seagulls

During my stay in Western Canada, I knew the pleasure of working with the Rev. Elgar Roberts, the Baptist Radio Padre; and from him I heard the following story. We were discussing the disappointing state of certain churches, when Mr. Roberts casually recalled a story he had heard a Welsh minister telling some years earlier. His friend had recently returned from a tour of Great Britain, and was describing how he had watched certain villagers removing dead seagulls from a sandy beach. The unfortunate birds had in some way been killed, and their bodies were scattered all over the sea shore. The visitor asked one of the workmen why the birds had died, and the following explanation was given.

"Sir, during the season, we get thousands of tourists here, and they feed our birds with sweets and candy, and other things harmful to sea birds. These gulls did not have the sense to know what was good for them. Month after month they fed on this unnatural food, and as a result lost their taste for their natural food. Then when the tourists went away, our seagulls had nothing to eat, and died of starvation. It was a pity, sir, but we couldn't do anything about it."

A similar tragedy has overtaken certain sections of the church. People have been fed so long with the pleasurable items of worldly food, that they have now lost their spiritual appetite. Then in times of stress and strain, when worldliness is unobtainable, the church members seem to weaken and die. Probably the best way to decide the ideal diet for the church is to discover what she ate during the days of her triumphs. There have been times when the challenge and power of the church enthralled a world; when every service was crowded; when thousands of people hurried to hear her preachers. The following details stand out as beacons on a dark night. The authority and love for the Word of God; the popularity of the prayer meetings as a means of grace; the desire

THE PRIESTS . . . who were told to stay on a strict diet for personal consecration; the increasing urge to win souls for Christ. When these things were in a place of priority, the wings of the assembly were sufficiently strong to carry the church into the very presence of God. Alas, the authority of the Bible has been questioned by leaders who suggested that the ancient records were only legends. Prayer meetings have been removed in favor of church dances. Personal consecration is often considered a fanatical unnecessary. Sundays present a great opportunity to play golf with business associates-if we are to win our friends, we must be like them! It is true to state that many people have lost their taste for spiritual things, and are dying.

The Sleeping Monkey

Petticoat-lane is one of London's street markets, and every Sunday morning, visitors see sights which beggar description. It has been said that a man may steal your watch at one end of the lane, and offer to sell it back to you at the other end. The most fabulous bargains are offered to gullible customers at ridiculous prices, and most visitors come away wondering how and why they were persuaded to spend their money. I shall always remember my first visit to Petticoat-lane. I had an hour to spare before my departure for Italy, and knowing I was close to this world-famous centre, I decided to go and see what I had often imagined. The crowds, the stalls, the bargains, were all as I expected; but one small animal seemed more attractive than all else.

An ex-service man was slowly moving along the street playing his barrel organ, but there was nothing very musical about the tunes which came from the old instrument. Round and round went the handle, and out came the saddening music. Yet the man never lacked an audience, for he possessed the cutest little monkey I had ever seen. The tiny animal held a bag, and each time a coin was offered, the proud young monkey looked at it, and then gave an immaculate salute to the donor. I watched for a considerable time, and felt my visit was worth while if only to see this delightful act. When opportunity occurred I spoke to the organ man, and was somewhat amused by his complaint. " Yes, sir, the other day a barrow boy came along and offered Joe a sweet. My monkey loves sweets, and as you can see, readily takes them from his admirers. That barrow boy gave him a sleeping pill, and Joe slept from Sunday morning until Thursday. Aye, sir, it was a dirty trick."

I have often thought about that monkey, and have wondered how often a similar occurrence has happened to Christians. The evil one seems to have mastered the art of putting sleeping pills into the tasty sweet-meats upon which we like to indulge. Perhaps if we were as fastidious as were the ancient priests, our spiritual health would improve tremendously .

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