

religion which fills a man with bile.' Then comes that most difficult of all the accessories to a great sermon, the touch of humour. 'We remember seeing a South African journal which contained an advertisement for a lady help: "A Christian preferred; cheerful, if possible." So it has come to that!'

But character is combination of characteristics. And the sermon ends with a quotation from the diary of Andrew Bonar: 'In prayer in the wood for some time, having set apart three hours for devotion; felt drawn out much to pray for that peculiar fragrance which believers have about them who are very much in fellowship with God. It is like an aroma, unseen but felt. Other Christians have the beauty of the Rose of Sharon; these have the fragrance too.'

### Ⓐ Study in Old English.

WHAT does the uneducated Englishman make of the phrase, 'Woe worth the day!' in Ezk 30<sup>2</sup>? The Scotsman understands it instinctively; for it is used freely in Scots to this day. But how many Englishmen catch the meaning of it as they read; or how many of them have it explained from the pulpit?

It comes from Coverdale. It was accepted by Cranmer and the Bishops, and so passed into the Authorized Version and is retained by the Revisers. Even Toy in the Polychrome Bible keeps the Authorized phrase, although he begins his introduction by saying: 'The present rendering of the Old Testament is not a revision of the Authorized Version, but a new translation from the Hebrew in Modern English.'

The Hebrew is וָאֵיךְ הַיּוֹם, *hah layyom*; the Greek ὀδυμῆρα; the Latin 'vae, vae, diei.' From the Vulgate comes Wyclif's 'Woo! woo! to the dai'; and the Douai, 'wo, wo to the day.' The same

exclamation in the Hebrew in Joel 1<sup>15</sup> was rendered by Coverdale, 'Alas, alas for this daye,' and has come through all the later Versions in the form 'Alas for the day!' except the Douai, which has the singular expression, 'A a a, for the day,' following literally, as Wyclif had already done, the Vulgate, 'A a a, diei.'

'Worth' as a verb meant in Old English to *become* or to *be*. In the *Legends of the Saints* (ed. W. M. Metcalfe, Scot. Text Soc., ii. 11) it is said of St. Machor that

Growand ay furth he wes  
In vertu and in gudnes,  
And for he doutyt for to fal,  
Til abstinens he gef hym al,  
And held his flesch undirlout,  
For dred it suld worth stout  
A-gane the saul.

It is still in use in modern Scots. Hogg (*Tales*, 1838) says, 'I was . . . considering what could be wort of a' the sheep.'

Accordingly, 'woe worth the day' means 'evil happen to the day.' Blind Harry has the phrase in *Schir William Wallace* (ed. J. Moir, Scot. Text Soc., iv. 744)—

Than wepyt scho, and said full oft, 'Allace  
That I was maide, wa worthe the coursit cas!

Spenser has 'Woe worth the man,' in the *Faerie Queene*, vi. xxxii. 7—

Wo worth the man,  
That first did teach the cursd steele to bight  
In his owne flesh, and make way to the living spright,

And Chaucer, in *Troilus and Criseyde*, ii. 345, uses the phrase four times in successive lines—

Wo worth the faire gemme vertulees!  
Wo worth that herbe also that dooth no bote!  
Wo worth that beautee that is routhelees!  
Wo worth that wight that tret ech under fote!

## The Law of Purification in Mark vii. 1-23.<sup>1</sup>

BY THE RABBI A. BÜCHLER, PH.D., PRINCIPAL OF THE JEWS' COLLEGE, LONDON.

THE difficulties in Mark's report of the incident of the washing of the hands before eating bread, and in his remarks on the Jewish laws of purification, are so well known that it is hardly necessary

<sup>1</sup>Lecture read before the Cambridge Theological Society on May 13th.

to enumerate them. On the other hand, the explanations of the passage offered by commentators are either unsatisfactory or do not do justice to the rules of purification as preserved in the early Jewish literature. In most cases the commentaries give criticisms of the

Jewish law instead of trying to understand them ; for the rules, though not very involved, are yet such as fail to attract sympathy. Yet only information derived directly from the Talmudic sources about the laws of purification can afford the clue to the puzzles of Mark's long, but incomplete report.

#### I. THE COMPOSITION OF MARK 7<sup>1-23</sup>.

This chapter falls into four parts: 1. The statement of the Pharisees that some of Jesus' disciples neglected the usage of washing before meals, and their reproach (vv. 1-2, 5), interrupted by Mark's explanation of (a) the custom of washing the hands before a meal, and (b) of another custom of purification before eating, consisting in bathing (vv. 3, 4), and (c) of dipping vessels (v. 4). The addition of b and c was not required as explanation of the incident, but is due to v. 8<sup>b</sup> (see below). In part two (vv. 6-8) Jesus returns the reproach instead of giving an answer, and says that the Pharisees lay aside the commandment of God and hold the tradition of men, and he refers to Is 29<sup>13</sup>. In the third part (vv. 9-13) Jesus gives the instance of vows in which the observance of the tradition supersedes a Biblical law. In part four Jesus explains first to the people, and afterwards more fully to His disciples, that food which according to the Pharisees defiled man, in fact defiled nobody, but that only wrong actions defiled.

Now part two, Jesus' reproach, strangely refers to the washing of pots and cups, as though the instance by which Jesus is about to illustrate His general reproach of the neglect of the Pharisees, were concerned with washing vessels or furniture. This is all the more strange, as in His following speeches to the people and to the disciples, Jesus only deals with food that defiles man, but makes no reference to vessels, although food could be defiled either by hands levitically unclean or by impure vessels. In addition to this, Jesus did not explain which commandment of God, in His view, the Pharisees neglected on account of washing the hands before meals. The third difficulty in this reproach is the supposition that unwashed hands could defile food to such a degree that the food could in its turn defile the body of him who ate it. Such a degree of uncleanness of unwashed hands is contrary to rabbinical law. Even more difficult is Mark's statement that the Jews, when coming from the

market, had to bathe before eating. All efforts to prove this a custom, even of the strictest Jew, must fail. No rule at all similar is preserved in the vast rabbinical code of clean and unclean, or can be derived from any of its minute prescriptions about levitical purity. There seems to me to be only one possible way of explaining all this which is not forced, namely, that the reproaches and statements refer to priests, Aaronites. This granted, every detail is borne out by rabbinical law in the Talmudic literature.

2. The parallel in Mt 15<sup>1-20</sup> shows the same divisions: (1) The reproach of the Pharisees (vv. 1, 2); (2) Jesus' stricture on the Pharisees that they transgress God's commandments because of their tradition (v. 3); (3) the instance of this (vv. 4-6) and after it the reference to Is 29<sup>13</sup>; and (4) the statement to the people (vv. 10, 11) and to the disciples (vv. 12-20), with the additional conclusion: 'These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man.' The first difficulty in Mark's statement does not exist here, since Jesus' reproach that the Pharisees neglect God's commandments because of their tradition, refers in Matthew not to washing the hands, but to vows only; and further, there is no reference at all to the purification of vessels. Therefore it seems to be in Mark some later detail. How did it come in?

Lk 11<sup>37-54</sup> knows more fully an incident that occasioned the whole discussion on the washing of the hands. A Pharisee invited Jesus to a meal, and when Jesus sat down to the meal without having bathed (*ἐβαπτίσθη*), his host wondered at His neglect.<sup>1</sup> Jesus' attack there on the Pharisees is not a general one, as in Mark and Matthew, but He says instead (v. 39): 'Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. (40) Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within also? (41) But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and behold, all things are clean unto you.' The difficulties of this answer may be best looked up in the commentaries. As the reply stands at present, the meaning seems to be: You clean the vessel, the body, outside, but inside it is full of

<sup>1</sup> It is more probable that the original report related the attack of the Pharisees to have been directed against Jesus, and that Matthew and Mark from respect for Jesus substituted the disciples, and not *vice versa*.

dishonesty and injustice. But the corresponding passage in Mt 23<sup>25</sup> runs: 'For ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. (26) Blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and the platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.'<sup>1</sup> It is extremely difficult to see what it was that suggested to Jesus the reference to cleansing vessels. If He meant to say: You wash your hands, in order to keep the vessel clean, it would have been all well; but there is in the description of the incident and of the meal no reference to vessels, and, as a matter of fact, there were no vessels to mention, since the bread was eaten with the hands. We would have to assume that when sitting down to the table, Jesus noticed that some vessels were just being purified for some momentary use at the meal, and that this gave Him the occasion for His remark on the vessels. His reproach, caused by the criticism of the Pharisee, must therefore have originally included two points, the washing of the hands and the purification of vessels, as is suggested by Matthew's report. Matthew and Luke reported from their source one of the reproaches, namely, that on the vessels; Mark, from his, reported the other, namely, that on the hands. Mark's editor wanted to be complete, and for this purpose inserted in his source the reproach contained in the other source. This made it then necessary that Jesus should refer to the cleansing of pots and cups, and for that Mark had to explain to his readers not only the custom of washing the hands before a meal, but also that of dipping vessels for purification. His reference to the bathing or sprinkling of the body on coming from the market suggests that he knew a third report in which Jesus reproached the Pharisees for their bathing when coming from the market. The commandment of God which the Pharisees neglected on account of their purifications was, according to Matthew and Luke, that which forbids rapacity and excess. The editor of Mark probably intended to insert this too, and for this purpose arranged the sentences of his separate sources in such a way as to obtain room for this insertion; but ultimately forgot to add the few words on the dishonesty of the Pharisees.

3. Now, as to the actual conditions underlying

<sup>1</sup> See Wellhausen on Lk 11<sup>39</sup>.

the severe strictures of rapacity, apart from the fact that Luke clearly distinguishes between scholar and Pharisee, the rabbis, as far as I know their poor conditions and their wretched lives, had no opportunity for exhibiting rapacity and excess. It can only have been the wealthy landowner or merchant who happened to be a Pharisee, and who, by his dealings with the poorer class, incurred the reproach pronounced by Jesus. Their ways were not strictly honest, and were in other respects open to blame, and they did not give them up when nominally and outwardly they joined the ranks of the Pharisees. They seem, according to the passages quoted, to have undertaken two things of the law especially: to give all tithes and priestly dues properly, and besides this to observe some of the laws of levitical purity. For in Lk 11<sup>42</sup> Jesus on the same occasion, when He blamed the Pharisee with whom He dined, reproached the Pharisees generally that they tithed even herbs but neglected judgment and the love of God (in Mt 23<sup>23</sup> judgment, mercy, and faith). It is quite possible, as it is suggested by some commentaries, that this passage is merely a collection of various reproaches once separate, but now ascribed to one occasion; and in support of this it may be noticed that Matthew connects the same attack with another occasion. But if in point of fact an actual occurrence does underlie this report, then it must be assumed that the Pharisee carefully tithed the food in the presence of Jesus. Or he may have said to Jesus that He or His disciples ought to have washed their hands for the bread, and all the more so as it was made of corn properly tithed and prepared in strict levitical purity. And it must be added that Pharisees deserving such scathing strictures were not the rule, since the wealthy Pharisee in Lk 18<sup>11</sup> could boast of not being as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. He is not represented as an exception among the Pharisees, nor did Jesus question that the Pharisee was justified in stating this.

## 2. THE LAWS OF PURIFICATION.

1. Mark states three rules of levitical purification as generally observed by all Jews: (1) Washing the hands before meals; (2) sprinkling or bathing when coming from the market; (3) washing cups, wooden and brazen vessels, and beds.<sup>2</sup> It is strange

<sup>2</sup> The last word is omitted in some manuscripts.

that in the case of the vessels Mark failed to mention the occasion on which the washing had to be done; but from the references in the first two points it can be inferred that besides the ordinary purification dipping had to be applied to a vessel before its use at a meal. The commentaries refer to Edersheim, 'who shows that the Jewish ordinance required immersions (*βαπτισμοίς*) of the vessels.' What vessels and in what case, is not explained; obviously the commentators assume that every vessel in every case had to be immersed before being used. Edersheim<sup>1</sup> gives eight lines on the purification of vessels, and the information which they afford is poor and misleading. I know only of two occasions when vessels of a lay Israelite had to be purified: either when they have been obtained from a non-Jew, even if he had not used them,<sup>2</sup> or when actually defiled by a levitical impurity.<sup>3</sup> But the context in Mark does not suggest that the vessels have just been bought in the market from a non-Jew, nor that they had been defiled in some way or other, but Mark states the purification as a usual procedure recurring frequently in the house of a Pharisee. And if the word *κλιῶν* is correct, even a part of the furniture would have been included in the frequent purifications which, in spite of the repeated assertions of most of the commentators of the passage in Mark and of recent historians of the period, was never in vogue among non-priests.

2. The form in which Mt 23<sup>25</sup> and Lk 11<sup>89</sup> present the same reproach of Jesus against the Pharisees, only enhances the difficulty; for both speak of the cleansing of the outside of vessels, and no mention is made of immersing them. Here, again, I am unable to find any clear case in which a vessel had levitically to be purified outside and not at the same time inside, except when levitically unclean liquids caused a lighter defilement of a vessel of wood or of metal.<sup>4</sup> Although the principle of distinguishing between the outside and the inside of the vessel in reference to levitical defilement can be traced to R. Gamaliel I., the

<sup>1</sup> *The Life and Times of Jesus*, ii. 9-15.

<sup>2</sup> *Aboda Zara* v. 12 and the *Baraitha* in b. *Aboda Zara* 75<sup>b</sup>, *Sifre Num* 158, *Sifre Zuta* in *Jew. Quart. Review*, vi. 657 ff.

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, *Beša* ii. 2, 3, and the *Baraithas* in b. *Beša* 18<sup>a</sup>, 19<sup>a</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> *Kelim* xxv. 6: a vessel the exterior of which has been defiled by liquids, its exterior only is defiled, but its inside

contemporary of Jesus,<sup>5</sup> and followed up from that time onwards,<sup>6</sup> it is expressly stated that such impurity applied to priestly due only as opposed to holy things;<sup>7</sup> in no case did it apply to the ordinary food of even the strictest lay Jew. It is true that a *Baraitha*, quoted by R. Bibi in the *Babylonian* schools of the fourth century, deals with the distinction mentioned in reference to holy things of the temple, as well as to holy things in the provinces, and R. Bibi interpreted the second point to refer to food of a lay Jew, handled by him as a thing of the levitical purity of holy things.<sup>8</sup> Consequently Matthew and Luke's report could be understood as referring to vessels of lay Jews. But even if this passage were of an earlier date than it actually is, it would show that only the vessels of such lay persons as observed the highest degree of purity in their food, were liable to be defiled outside and not at the same time inside, and only food of that purity could be defiled by such vessels. It accordingly must refer to priests or lay Jews during their stay in Jerusalem for the purpose of partaking of sacrificial meals, or those priests and those very few laymen in the provinces who kept their food in the highest degree of purity. Since Matthew and Luke make Jesus refer to such purification as an everyday occurrence, there is only one way of explaining it, namely, that Jesus described the procedure observed by priests and not by laymen.

The wooden and brazen vessels and beds which Mark enumerates, when defiled by an unclean liquid, required purification from outside only; when defiled by an impurity of a higher degree, they had to be immersed. But such purifications were required only in the case of priests, for their meals of priestly dues or of ordinary food kept in the same degree of purity. And we must therefore assume that Jesus entered the house of an Aaronite, and saw how diligently and carefully the vessels and the beds to be used at the meal were cleansed from the outside only. Of course, vessels and beds were usually clean and pure; but the doubt lest

and all its handles are pure. If its inside is defiled, the whole vessel is unclean (*Pesah.* 17<sup>b</sup>).

<sup>5</sup> *Baraitha* in *Bekhor.* 38<sup>a</sup>, *Sifra* on *Lev* 11, p. 53<sup>d</sup> § 4.

<sup>6</sup> R. Tarfon and R. Akiba discuss it in *Kelim* xxv. 7, R. Eliezer and R. Joshua in *Tos. Yadayim* i. 8, Simon, Azarya's brother in i. 9, *Mishna Tohar.* viii. 7, anonymous scholars in *Kelim* xxv. 4, R. Jehuda in *Pesah.* 17<sup>b</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> *Hagiga* ii. 1.

<sup>8</sup> b. *Hagiga* 22<sup>b</sup>.

some defilement even of a slight degree might possibly have reached them, necessitated the purification. Not even the average priest in Galilee observed these very minute laws, and cared little for possible defilement of slight impurity. Only priests of strict observance who cared to handle their priestly dues in levitical purity, learned and observed those rules. All the abuses advanced by Schürer instead of argument against this interpretation of the laws of levitical purifications derived from rabbinical sources, will not remove the proofs, unless a refutation from sources is offered. In conclusion it may be stated that a point similar to the purification of beds incidentally reported confirms the view just expounded. In Tos. Kelim 3. iii. 4 we read: 'If (unclean) liquids fall upon a part of a table, the whole table is defiled; if they fall upon its exterior, only its exterior is defiled. If the liquids fall upon its leg, the leg has to be wiped and it is pure. R. Jehuda said: I shall quote a practical occurrence (הלכה): the priests never refrained from putting the leg of a table upon unclean liquids, for they said, the leg has only to be wiped to become pure.' R. Jehuda, in order to illustrate the law of this impurity, expressly quoted the procedure observed by priests, but could not adduce one of Pharisaic rabbis, who certainly were stricter in their observance of laws applying to them, but did not observe such rules of levitical purification.

3. In the second part of Mark's report the texts vary between *ῥαντίσονται* and *βαπτίσονται*. If the first reading is correct, the statement that Jews coming from the market had to be sprinkled, is extremely difficult. Sprinkling with ashes of purification was applied to men or vessels only in case of defilement by a dead human body, brought about either by being under the same roof with, or by touching in the open air, a dead human body or a bone of it or a grave (Nu 19<sup>14-16</sup> 31<sup>23</sup>). According to rabbinical law, also a grave hidden or supposed to be hidden under the surface of the earth necessitated the purification by sprinkling. The fact that Luke in the same connexion (11<sup>44</sup>) and Matthew immediately after the washing of vessels (23<sup>27</sup>) compare the Pharisees to graves, would suggest that the defilement referred to in the reports underlying Matthew's and Luke's, and used by Mark's ultimate editor, was a defilement by graves. Perhaps the discussion took place in a town or village of the levitical character of

Tiberias,<sup>1</sup> where the market was once a cemetery. However, there are also decisive objections to this interpretation. In Mark this sprinkling is represented as an everyday occurrence, and no reference is made to graves. And secondly, 'on coming from the market' is quite incorrect in reference to sprinkling, since such purification could take place only on the third and seventh days after the defilement (Nu 19<sup>10</sup>), and in no case immediately on coming from the place of actual or assumed impurity. And even apart from this great difficulty sprinkling was applied to lay Jews, as a rule, only shortly before the festivals of pilgrimage, in order to purify the Jew for partaking of sacrificial meals in Jerusalem and for visiting the temple. Priests, however, who had to be pure for eating their dues, had to be cleansed whenever they had incurred the defilement by stepping on graves in the ground of the market. If, therefore, *ῥαντίσονται* is correct, Mark can only have referred to purifications of Aaronites in a place where the market was considered to have been a cemetery. But the other objections prove *ῥαντίσονται* untenable.

If, therefore, *βαπτίσονται* was the original reading, the question arises whether people coming from the market actually used to bathe for levitical purification and what the occasion for such a bath was? It may be stated at once that even the strictest observance of levitical purity knows nothing in rabbinical law of such a custom. Edersheim's note on this matter is utterly baseless in which he says: 'Any contact with the heathen, even the touch of his dress, might involve such defilement that on coming from the market the orthodox Jew would have to immerse.'<sup>2</sup> Since he gives no references, it is difficult to say whence he derived his erroneous statements.<sup>3</sup> Schürer

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Ant.* xviii. 2, 3, Sabb. 33<sup>b</sup>, Jer. Šebi'ith ix. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Life and Times of Jesus*, ii. 9-15.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps he had in mind Epiphanius' note on the Samaritan observance of purity in *Hæres.* ix. 3, where he reports: 'The Samaritans, on coming from abroad, purify themselves from the defilement by applying urine; when they touched a stranger or a non-Samaritan, they bathe in their garments, and they detest a dead body.' But Edersheim certainly knew that the Samaritans, owing to their living on the Mount of Gerizim and in its close neighbourhood, observed constant levitical purity, and that their laws of purity were much stricter than the rules of the rabbis. Another case for immersing after coming from the market could be when one is afraid that a non-Jew, has, when speaking, spit upon him. R. Joshua b. Hananya asked his disciples after his visit at the house of a non-Jewish lady:

notes<sup>1</sup> the Mishna Ḥagiga ii. 5 : He who is about to eat ordinary (non-holy) food or tithe or priestly dues has to wash his hands ; for a sacrificial meal he has to immerse them ; for the sin-offering, if his hands are defiled, his body is defiled. And to this Schürer adds : 'Bathing of the whole body before a meal cannot be found as general prescription in rabbinical literature ; the interpretation of the New Testament passages is uncertain.' From this one thing can be inferred cogently : Mark's statement cannot possibly have described a practice of lay Pharisees, not even of those of the strictest observance. It cannot have referred even to Aaronites, since according to the Mishna quoted even they had to wash only their hands for eating priestly dues, not the whole body. There were no sacrificial meals in Galilee for which lay Jews would have had even to immerse the hands, nor were their sin-offerings of any kind, for which Aaronites would have had to bathe ; so that there seems no way of substantiating Mark's statement that the Jews, when coming from the market, bathed. Here even the assumption does not help us, as in the case of purifying vessels, that it referred to lay Jews who observed in their food the levitical purity of sacrificial meals, for in this case only immersing the hands was required. Only if they observed in their food the levitical purity of sin-offerings, would bathing have been required. But only very few instances of laymen of such strictness are known, and those are as rare exceptions specially reported. Joḥanan b. Gudgeda in Ḥagiga ii. 7 a Levite, Josê b. Joëzer a very pious priest and the proselyte Akylas in Tos. Ḥagiga iii. 3 are especially mentioned, although the degree of purity which they observed was not as high as to impose upon them bathing before meals. No doubt, some very strict priests may have observed the same high purity even in Galilee in order to prepare themselves at home for the service in Jerusalem. But Mark clearly reports that the Jews bathe when coming from the market, and he does not seem to refer to exceptions of great rarity.

4. The only solution, it seems to me, is suggested by the following report, which is incidentally preserved in the Talmudic literature, and which teaches When you saw me taking a bath, of what did you suspect me? They answered : We thought a stream of spittle from her mouth may have flown upon your garments. Then he said, I assure you, it was so (Confer jer. Joma i. 38<sup>d</sup> ; Tos. Nidda v. 3 ; b. 33<sup>a</sup>, where the same happened to a high priest on the day of Atonement).

<sup>1</sup> Geschichte ii., 3rd edition, 577, note 7.

three points in the clearest possible manner : (1) Bathing because of defilement was required immediately on coming home, (2) from the market, (3) by laymen about to partake of a sacrificial meal in Jerusalem, or for Aaronites in the provinces of Palestine about to eat their priestly dues. In Tos. 'Ahiloth xviii. 21 we read : 'Rabbi, R. Ismael b. R. Josê and R. Eliezer ha Kappâr once spent a Sabbath in the shop of Pazzi in Lydda. On that occasion they asked R. Pinḥas b. Yair, who sat in front of them : What is your (school's) view about Ashkalon's position (is it a part of Palestine or abroad)? He replied : People sell wheat in their basilikas, immerse and eat in the evening their Pascha. Then they asked him : In what does it differ from abroad? He replied : In the fact that only after the non-Jew has stayed there for forty days, is the basilika considered defiling as is the case abroad.' To understand this, we must remember that owing to the suspicion that a body may be buried in the dwelling-place of a non-Jew, any Jew visiting such a house was considered defiled by a dead body and had to bathe in order to be permitted to partake the same night of the Passover meal. Since the defilement was only assumed as possible, the rabbis allowed the purifying bath to be taken immediately without any preceding sprinkling of ashes. Now in the parallel Baraitha in Jer. Shebi'ith vi. 36<sup>o</sup> 35 the report of the same incident differs in an essential point. The answer of R. Pinḥas b. Yair is this : 'We used to go down to the provision market of Ashkalon and to buy wheat, then we came up to our place, bathed, and ate our priestly dues.' Whereas in the first report R. Pinḥas related, no doubt from a reliable source, an incident of the times before the destruction of the temple ; according to the parallel, the Aaronites of his own time, himself among them, required an immersion after having been in the market of Ashkalon, in order to be allowed to eat priestly due. Mark's report could therefore have referred only to Aaronites, and not to lay Jews. This only confirms the explanation given of the other details of jurisdiction in Mark. The place where he noticed the practice was a town inhabited partly by non-Jews, either Sepphoris or Tiberias or some other city of Galilee, and at the same time a place inhabited by a great number of Aaronites practising the strict rules of levitical purification.

5. Reverting now to Jesus' objection to the

Pharisaic law of defilement, it is obvious from his words against the defilement caused by food taken in, and from his emphasis of impurity coming from within, that the Pharisees taught that unwashed hands defiled the food, and the food in turn defiled the body inside. If this inference is correct, it is contrary to early rabbinical law. The assumed impurity of unwashed hands is of a slight force, and though it can be transferred to food touched, the food defiled cannot in its turn transfer the impurity to the body of him who eats it. This rule is clearly laid down in the Mishna (Zabim v. 12), and in all the passages dealing with assumed impurity of the hands. Everywhere the technical term פוסלִין is used for this impurity, which can be transferred once and no further, as opposed to מטמאין. At the same time it is stated that the impurity of the hands applies only to priestly dues.<sup>1</sup> And Ilfa, a rabbi of the beginning of the third century, points out (Sabb. 14<sup>b</sup>) that when this assumed impurity of the hands was first introduced by Hillel and Shammai, it was instituted to apply to priestly dues only. And the same is repeated in other Baraithas quoted in the discussion there. This, again, leads to the conclusion that Mark's statement about the defiling force of the unwashed hands applied only to Aaronites on account of their priestly dues, and not to the lay Jew and his food. And secondly, since the impurity of the hands is described as defiling food to such a degree that the food in turn defiles a man, the hands must have been not only unwashed, but also actually defiled by some real levitical impurity.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This rule remained unaltered even in the second century, when the school of R. Meir extended the laws of purification to laymen. For we find in Tos. Tohar. i. 6, הרים מטמאות אחר ופוסלות אחר בקורש ופוסלות את התרומה ואין ידים לחולין. רבי שמעון בן אלעזר אומר משום רבי מאיר הדיים תחלה לקרש ושנית לתרומה. . . . the hands defile with a transferable defilement when holy things of the temple are concerned, but defile with an untransferable defilement, when priestly due is concerned; the hands, however, defile no ordinary food. In a more general form in Para xi. 5: כל הפעון ביאת מים מוכרי סופרים מטמא: את הקורש ופוסל את התרומה ומותר בחולין דברי רבי מאיר והכסבים תניא אין ידים תחלות: In Hullin 33<sup>b</sup> in a Baraitha: לחולין, רבי שמעון בן אלעזר אומר משום רבי מאיר ידים תחלות לחולין ושנית לתרומה. Here the hands are actually defiled by some impurity of serious nature which does not at the same time defile the whole body. Such impurity of the hands according to R. Meir in R. Simon b. Eleazar's tradition applies to ordinary food. In Jer. Hagiga ii. 78<sup>b</sup> 18: תני רבי שמעון בן אלעזר אומר משום רבי מאיר, הדיים תחלה לחולין ושנית לתרומה.

<sup>2</sup> It is very improbable that Jesus was an Aaronite; for otherwise the Pharisees would not have failed to blame Him

In fact Mark's wording clearly confirms this inference. His source in 7<sup>2</sup> reported: The Pharisees saw some of Jesus' disciples eat bread *κοινὰς χερσίν*, and a later editor interpreted this by *τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἀνόμοις*. Was he correct in this interpretation? *Κοινός* is used in this chapter several times (though only as verb *κοινώω*), in vv. 15, 18, 20, 23, and in all these cases it means 'defile' and not 'to be unwashed.'<sup>3</sup> Consequently the adjective in the source must have meant the same: 'defiled hands' and not 'unwashed hands.' When the wrong interpretation was inserted in Mark's report, the usage of considering unwashed hands as defiling had developed among the Jews, and the author of that insertion simply attributed to an earlier generation the usage of his own times.

To sum up. By comparing with the earliest material about the laws and practices of levitical purification in rabbinical literature, the several details in Mark's report in chap. vii. about the different kinds of purification practised in Galilee, we arrive at the following results. The practice described by Mark can only have been that of priests, and not of lay Jews. The Pharisees in the report of Mark must have meant priests who had recently joined the ranks of the Pharisees and had adopted the strict rules of purification instituted by the rabbis for the priests in order to safeguard the levitical purity of the priestly dues. The rabbis were the authors and expounders of these laws, but they had no occasion to observe them themselves. It is due only to Mark's generalizing statement about the actual and not at all general observance of the laws of purification that scholars have formed an utterly erroneous view of the extent to which the rules of purification were observed, in Galilee and in Judæa in the times of Jesus. Although this is only a very small detail of religious observance, historical truth, not measuring and not weighing the importance of facts, requires us to correct our views of the observance of the laws of purification.

for defiling Himself intentionally by touching a dead body or by entering a house in which a dead body lay. Then the incident about the washing of the hands happened as Luke reported it, namely, at the house of a Pharisee, who, as priest, observed the washing of the hands before meals himself and expected everybody partaking of his meal at his table to do the same.

<sup>3</sup> See Merx on Mark, p. 67 ff.