

My Flesh Is Meat Indeed

"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting Life"
—John 6:27

WE DO well to come here this morning to remember Christ. There is nothing to remind us of him in our daily surroundings: very much on the contrary, everything tends to hide him from our view. If we were to look at the matter only through the blindness of human nature, we would see all around us the busy crowds of people rushing to and fro, home to office and home again, going to the market, the bank, the shops; always busy tending to things which have nothing to do with Christ.

Where must we go in order to find him? To find Christ we must seek him where he is to be found and where, at present God has appointed he should only be found. It hath pleased God by the foolishness (so esteemed of men) of preaching to save them that believe. Christ is presented to us in that preaching, and the preaching takes a variety of forms. The apostles are dead, but they preach to us in the words they have written, and in these words they preach Christ. That is, they speak of one of whom we should otherwise know nothing, and that one "the heir of all things" and disposer of all destiny on earth.

That mighty personage was once on earth himself, expounding all "the things concerning himself" out of "Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms." Christ is now absent "for a little while," and we hear not his voice, but he preaches to us in the ordinance delivered unto us, which we have met this morning to keep, and by which we "show forth his death until he come."

The result of the preaching is to create in the mind a perception of his reality, from which comes "the conviction of things hoped for;" and this is faith, without which it is impossible to please God. This faith is accounted to us for righteousness; God is pleased with it, and therefore recognizes it as righteousness in us, for Christ's sake, in whom His righteousness hath been declared in the condemnation of sin in the likeness of sinful flesh.

The imputing of our faith for righteousness is justification by faith, in which we have "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," and are become "joint heirs with Christ" of "the glory to be revealed."

As we know, the mere naturalist has no access to this faith, in which we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. He is but a beholder, and very possibly an admirer, of the beautiful features of Nature as God has organized it, but without knowing God Himself or sympathizing with the purpose of which Nature is but the platform or raw material.

He is therefore, a mere passing object of nature himself, like the creatures of the forest. He is of the world of which John says, that it passeth away; in contrast to which he adds—

"But he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

The sons of God, who are not mere admirers of the works of God, but do His pleasure, will live forever.

This is God's purpose with the earth and man whom He created. Not that they should die and remain in the dust forever, but that they should obey His commandments, and do His will at all times, and believe on the things which were taught by Christ and the prophets—and in the end receive eternal life which is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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OUR largest concern at this time is that we should belong to that most privileged class of people. In the promotion of this concern we must have our guard up at all times against the naturalist. For we too, possess that nature which tends to draw us away from spiritual things and to seek those things which war against it: the lust of the eye; the pride of life; and the lust of the flesh.

Men who possess these qualities tend to seek after their own pleasures and completely leave out the things which be of God. In Luke 12 we read of the final end which will come upon the unfruitful servant which has spent his days toiling after things which be of the flesh. There Jesus says—

"The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

"And that servant, which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes."

We know that we must all stand before the judgment seat in the final day, that is, the final day of our probation upon this earth. And that we will all be judged according to the works we did in this mortal body.

As we know, many are called but few are chosen. Some will stand on the right hand, but the largest class will be put on the left. There shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth for those wicked and slothful servants which did not the will of the Father, neither harkened to His Word. They will say to the mountains, Fall upon us, but they can not die until their allotted time of punishment or their total number of stripes shall be completed.

But the greatest punishment no doubt will be when we see others going into everlasting glory and we ourselves being cast out. This should not be the case at all for we have every opportunity to work out our salvation. We are commanded:

"Seek ye FIRST the Kingdom of God and all things will be added unto you."

This of course is speaking of temporal things which we must have in order to sustain our bodies. We must at all times keep before our minds the things which we are commanded to do.

We cannot leave the natural mind to its own tendencies and resources. This is where the war must be fought. The natural mind must be brought into subjection to the will of God, for it is written that the natural man is at enmity with God, and that they therefore are of the flesh, and cannot please God (Rom. 8:5-8).

The mind of the Spirit is shown to us through chosen men in ancient times, which Word hath been written for our learning. Therefore, our aim must be to learn that mind, and to be subject to it in all things. To be subject to the Word is to be subject to the Spirit. To have the spirit of the Word is to have the mind of the Spirit. If we fail to obtain this mind, we fail in attaining the end of the Gospel, and our salvation is not possible.

It would be better not to ever have known the way of life, than to receive it and not live by its precepts. It is the object of the commandments to create a separate and holy people. In some of us this is accomplished, in others it is not. The difference is clearly stated by Paul—

"They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit."

One class is occupied with the world which chokes the Word and renders it unfruitful; the other class submits to the plan which God has set forth in the Holy Scriptures. Paul says—

"Let the Word dwell in you RICHLY."

This will keep our mind in the place where it should be at all times, tending to the things which in the end will bring glory and everlasting life.

In our readings this morning in John 6 we read from the words of Jesus where he says—

"Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life."

And again Jesus says—

"I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

We know, brothers and sisters, that we have all been purchased for a price; and that price was the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was through the great and abundant mercies of God and through the sufferings of Christ that we have been called to be sons and daughters of His. Therefore we must repay Him in the only way which is possible, that being through obedience, lest we should render the shedding of Christ's blood in vain.

Again from John 6 we read—

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

And Jesus says further—

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

the "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

"For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."

Therefore we see the importance of keeping this ordinance every week which was set before us to do. We should partake of this memorial each week to keep in mind the sufferings which Jesus went through in order that we may have a way to eternal redemption.

In this we see the principle which God has appointed for bringing about the indwelling of the Word which is based upon the fact of human forgetfulness. We know that the mind has to be refreshed over and over again, otherwise it will forget the things which it has learned. How much more then should it be reminded of the things which be of the Spirit?

We can see what a great mistake it would be to give a half-hearted effort on our part, to only give a part of our time to the study of the Scriptures, and the other numerous writings which we have to help us attain to a full understanding of the Bible. This would put us into the lukewarm class, of which Christ says that he will spue them out of his mouth, for we know anything of this nature is very distasteful.

We indeed need all the helps we can get in our struggle with this tendency that draws to death. We should have no fear at all of going to the extreme, for the danger of this is remote. We will be able to see from doing our daily readings that there are many other things which we can do besides studying the Truth and prayer, although these are very important.

We will see that there are duties in many things pertaining to this life which require attention, and which yet may be so performed as to be as much a doing of the will of God as any act in which we can engage. It is written that we should let our lights so shine before men, that they should see our good works, and that glory might be given unto the Father which is in heaven.

Now we look at the other case of going to the extreme which is contrary to the former. This would be the man who goes to the extreme in saving money, in developing a business, or anything which tends toward self-gratification. We see that this type would be devoting their time and efforts toward their own gains and therefore would be sinking into spiritual darkness.

All their energy would be put to use in self-gain and self-glory. Therefore their heart would be where their treasure is. That is, their heart would be on temporal things where rust doth corrupt and

thieves do break through and steal. But it is written that we should lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven that we may receive the crown of righteousness prepared for those that love God and His commandments.

One of our greatest helps, as we know, is the breaking of bread. It is Christ's own appointment. Let us never neglect it. Let us never make the mistake of supposing we can do without it. We ourselves don't really know what we need. He who appointed this knows all things.

People who stay at home do not know what they lose. The going through the acts connected with the remembrance of Christ, the meeting with the brethren, are all beneficial to an extent not known at the time. We can compare this to the difference between sunshine and rain on crops, compared to drought and heat; the act is very slow and the change gradual and unnoticeable but makes a great difference in the end. Let us be found walking diligently in this commandment as in all others, blameless before the Lord.

The day is near at hand when it will be apparent to all men that such a course "hath great recompense of reward." For we shall see at that time the sitting down of the friends of God with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the prophets into the portion of their inheritance in the Kingdom. We will also see the power and the unbelief of men brought unto the dust.

God will be exalted in all the earth, and in this exaltation every friend of His will participate with gladness and great joy. The terms of our friendship are stated very clearly. We must hold steadfast unto the end, unmoveable, **always abounding in good works**. Then shall we be among the number to whom Christ will say—

"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

— R.J.