

THE SOUL'S FOOD AND DRINK

NO. 3192

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 1910
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 5, 1873

“For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.”
John 6:55

IT was our Lord Jesus Christ who uttered these words and some of those who heard Him misunderstood His meaning, for they asked, “How can this man give us His flesh to eat?” This is not altogether surprising, for there are still millions of persons upon the earth who will persist in understanding literally what our Lord intended to be understood spiritually.

To us who know the meaning of Christ's words it seems monstrous that anyone could have supposed that Jesus meant men to eat His real, literal flesh and to drink His actual blood. I must confess that, to me, it seems an instance both of the utter depravity of human nature and of the absolute insanity to which sin has driven mankind, that there are still so many persons existing in what we call this enlightened age who actually believe that we can eat the flesh of Christ and drink His blood.

This is a cannibal notion which only needs to be mentioned to be denounced. Instead of having anything sacred about it, such teaching is utterly detestable, it is inconceivably idiotic and blasphemous. Idiocy and blasphemy seem to be blended together in it in about equal proportions. It is strange that such blessed words from such blessed lips should have been so shamefully misunderstood and misrepresented.

Beloved friends, as many of you as have been taught of God know the spiritual meaning of these words. You know that the doctrine of the incarnation of Christ is meat to your soul, and you know that the great truth of the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, which is expressed by His blood, is the most nourishing cordial to your heart. You know that, in this sense, Christ's words are full of deep spiritual teaching, “My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.”

That word “indeed” seems to contrast this spiritual nourishment with all ordinary food and drink. The best of literal food only feeds the body for a time, for that body ultimately decays. It is not in the power of food so to repair the waste that is continually going on that the physical system shall forever abide firm and strong. This food is meat, but it is not “meat *indeed*.”

There are also various kinds of drink that refresh and invigorate the body, and by means of these we are enabled to continue from day to day, but where is the water, where is the crystal fount that can give immortality, where is the juice expressed from any fruit that grows beneath the sky that can rid the body of all disease and pain, and cause it to live on without end? You all know that, among all the many kinds of literal food and drink, there is not any meat that is worthy to be called meat indeed, nor any drink that is worthy to be called drink indeed.

That word “indeed” also implies the contrast between this spiritual nourishment and all mere mental food and drink. Our soul needs food, and the proper food for it is truth, wisdom, knowledge. Solomon said, “That the soul be without knowledge, it is not good.” No disciple of Christ, who has the spirit of his Master, is opposed to the spread of wisdom. The “children of light” wish to have every kind of light disseminated as widely as possible. “Every one that doeth evil hateth the light,” but he that doeth good loveth the light, and says, “The more light there is, the better.”

But there is no mental food save that of which I am about to speak which is meat indeed and drink indeed. Paul truly says, “Knowledge puffeth up,” and so it does if it is not kept under proper control.

When a man has fed on the most profound knowledge, the spirit produced by such food has often been a proud and arrogant one, which has led him to rebel against the infinite wisdom of God, and set up his own opinion in opposition to the truths revealed in the Scriptures. What earthly knowledge is there that can afford suitable food to our entire manhood?

Suppose I could compass the whole range of science—if I could thread the spheres as on a string, if I could bore the rocks, and read the whole of their ancient history, if there were no secret of science left unrevealed to me—yet, if I had an aching heart, all my knowledge would not satisfy my soul or give rest to my affections.

In fact, the very acquisition of knowledge has often led to an increase of care. Solomon said, “Much study is a weariness of the flesh,” and many have found it to be so. It certainly is not meat indeed or drink indeed. Poets have drunk at the Castalian fount, and their verses have astonished whole nations, yet they have gone to their graves unsatisfied and despairing. Mathematicians, with wondrous minds, have mapped out the heavens, studied the stars, laid down the laws that govern the planets, and traced the pathways of comets for thousands of years, yet their verdict has been the same as Solomon's, “Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.”

But I have to speak to you concerning knowledge which is satisfying, concerning truth which does content the spirit, and in doing so, I must draw a clear, hard and fast line. No one knows the flavor or effect of meat and drink who has not tasted them. It is no use for me to speak to anyone about meat which he has never seen, or handled, or tasted, if he is to appreciate my testimony concerning it, he must have partaken of it, or if my testimony is concerning a certain drink, he must at least have sipped of it, otherwise, let me speak as earnestly as I may, he will be unable to comprehend what I am saying.

Now, my Lord Jesus is meat indeed, but the soul must feed upon him if it is to know how He nourishes it, He is drink indeed, but unless this drink enters into the soul, it will be a stranger to the spiritual power which Jesus always imparts when He is received into the heart by faith. If you have really received Christ Jesus the Lord, if He is “in you the hope of glory,” then He is the food of your soul, and you can, from your own experience, confirm His declaration, “My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.”

I. While I am speaking, let us each one try to feed spiritually upon the two great doctrines to which the words “flesh” and “blood” may be taken to refer, namely, the incarnation of the Son of God, and His death as His people's Substitute, and first, let me say that **THESE DOCTRINES ARE MOST COMFORTING FOOD TO THE SOUL.**

Where will you find any other doctrines so comforting as these? I, a sinner, have broken God's righteous law, and so offended Him that I am driven from His presence, and am shut off from all true joy and peace. But, *in order to redeem man, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Himself, became man.* “The Word was made flesh.” Why, it makes the joy-bells ring in my heart as I tell you again the old familiar story. The angels, when they were sent to tell men that unto them was born a Savior, proclaimed with joyous songs the glad message that God had come down to earth.

What joyful news it is for you, O men and women, that God has taken humanity into union with the deity, that the infinite became an infant, that He who made the heavens and the earth was wrapped in swaddling clothes just as you and your own babes have been! Surely, now that God has thus become one with us, there may well be peace on earth, and good will toward men, He cannot be unwilling to bless those who have that human nature which He has Himself assumed.

Even as I talk of this great truth, I feel in my heart a joy that comforts me, and so Christ's flesh is meat indeed to my soul, and when I think that, in that flesh, Jesus lived here on earth for over thirty years, and knew all the weakness, and temptation, and suffering, to which that flesh is liable, when I think how He proved Himself to be bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, then I understand how He sympathizes with the weak, and tempted, and suffering sons of men, and this makes the sad heart glad, and so again Christ's flesh is meat indeed.

Then, beloved, when you think that He, at whose girdle hang the keys of hell and of death, once toiled, and suffered, and at last died, just as you have to toil, and suffer, and die, and when you remember that, from the heights of glory, Jesus looks down both as the Son of God and the Son of Mary, does not this feed you with true soul-comforting food?

Remember, also, that *whatever Jesus did as man, He did as the great representative man*, who was all the while been acting on behalf of His people. Adam was a representative man, but I get no food for my soul from him. He took my bread away, he took my life away, for “in Adam all died,” but when Christ came here as the representative of His people, what did He do? He kept the law of God perfectly, and His obedience was reckoned as the obedience of all who were in Him. As Adam's sin was imputed to all who were in him as their federal head, so Christ's obedience was imputed to all who were in Him as their federal Head.

The condemnation of our Surety and Substitute was our condemnation too, and when He was taken away, and put to death, we were crucified in Him, and when He was laid in the grave, we were buried with Him, and blessed be God, when He rose from the dead, we rose with Him, and we were justified by His resurrection. He could never have come out of the prison of the grave if He had not paid all His people's debts, and when He was set free, they were set free, His resurrection was the guarantee of their resurrection. Is there not most comforting food for your soul in this great truth? Is not Christ's flesh meat indeed when you look at it as the representative body of your Substitute and Surety?

Best of all, Christ, has gone back to glory as the Representative of His people. He did not take His soul alone when He ascended to His Father, leaving His body in the tomb, but that very flesh which was pierced by the nails, that very flesh through which the soldier's spear went to His heart, He carried right up to the throne of God, and in so doing, He carried us who are in Him up there, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Him. What joy it gives us to remember that—

*“There sitteth in our flesh,
Upon a throne of light,
One of a human mother born,
In perfect Godhead bright!”*

II. Changing the direction of our thought, yet still keeping to the same main track, let us turn to the second clause of the text, “My blood is drink indeed.” That is to say, CHRIST'S REDEEMING SACRIFICE IS MOST SOUL-SATISFYING. It is not merely soul-comforting, but soul-satisfying.

We have stated the case hundreds of times in this place, but must state it yet again. Man had sinned, and God was willing to forgive, but the inflexible law of the universe is that sin must entail punishment, and it is so good and righteous a law that to alter it would be ruinous. Therefore punishment for sin there must be, but Jesus endured the punishment due to all His people.

In order that He might be able to do so, He took upon Him our flesh, and that flesh was made to bleed even unto death in the accomplishment of that purpose. We believe in the real, literal substitution of Christ in the room, and place, and stead of all whom He had covenanted to save, and as many as believe in Him may know assuredly that their sins were transferred from them, and laid upon Him. Then, when their sins were laid upon Christ—

“JEHOVAH bade His sword awake”—

against the Sin-bearer, and He smote Christ instead of His people, and His flowing blood brings peace and pardon to them as He dies, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring them to God. I cannot help saying that this doctrine fills my soul with an indescribable content, I am satisfied to the full when this truth enters my heart, and so, Christ's blood is drink indeed to me.

For see, beloved, God's justice is satisfied. How could it be otherwise when God Himself makes the atonement? When Jesus Christ, the Son of God, made Himself liable for His people's guilt, what a

complete vindication of the justice of God was there! More than that, the great covenant of grace was ratified by the blood of Christ's atoning sacrifice. No testament is valid so long as the testator lives, but Jesus has died, and therefore every legacy of His love is made sure to all those to whom He has willed it.

The covenant made with Adam fell through because Adam could not keep it, but the covenant made with the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, stands fast as the everlasting hills, for Christ has kept it in every particular, offering to God complete obedience, both active and passive, in His life of holiness and in His death of agony.

O then, my soul, God is satisfied, your sin is pardoned, covenant blessings are secured to you, so is not Christ's blood drink indeed to you? As we think that the Son of God became the Son of Mary in order that He might die for us, that He might take our place, and die in our stead, what can we want more to chase away our fears, to fulfill our hopes, and to confirm our faith? If any of you want more than that, it is not possible for us to present it to you, or even to imagine it. What the Son of God said was finished must have been finished, and therein our souls may rest, and rest forever.

III. But beloved friends, we not only need spiritual food to comfort and to satisfy our souls, but we also need **SPIRITUAL FOOD TO STRENGTHEN OUR SOULS**, and here again Christ's flesh is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed.

How strong are they who live upon the truth of an incarnate God, and of that incarnate God dying in the room, and place, and stead of His people! What strength it gives to *faith*! I have seen weak faith, and I have seen strong faith, but I have generally found weak faith associated with dependence upon frames and feelings, but I have never known strong faith existing anywhere except in connection with Emmanuel, God with us, living and dying in our stead.

I have seen poor humble men and women, who knew little more than that they were lost through sin, and that Christ had come to save them, yet they have lived and died strong in faith, giving glory to God, for their faith had been nourished upon this meat indeed and drink indeed of the incarnation and substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ the Son of God and the Son of Mary.

And fervent *love* is produced by the same spiritual meat and drink. If Christ is to you merely some historic person who once appeared upon the earth, and is now gone forever, your love for Him will be very faint if it exists at all, but if He is your own personal Savior, your ever-present Friend, your living Brother, bone of your bone and flesh of your flesh, your Surety and Substitute who bore your sins in His own body on the tree, then your love goes out to Him in a vehement flame.

I do not wonder that Mary Magdalene was among the holy women who were last at the cross, and first at the tomb, for Christ had done so much for her that she loved Him much, and in proportion as you realize what His incarnation and His death have done for you, your love will feed upon that meat indeed and drink indeed until it shall become stronger even than death itself.

This spiritual meat and drink will also make us strong for *service*. There was a man—you will all recognize his portrait by the bare outline—who was at first a great enemy of Christ, but who, after his conversion, lived upon the food of which I have been speaking, and you know what an untiring servant of Christ he became. He went from city to city preaching the Word. He was stoned, and left for dead, but he rose to his feet, and went on preaching. His very dreams were full of service for his Master, for in a night vision, there stood by him a man of Macedonia who said to him, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us," and immediately he obeyed the Spirit's call.

The Lord blessed the Word, but His servant was arrested, beaten, and thrust into prison, yet he and his companion made the prison cell ring with their joyful songs of praise unto their God. This man preached the Word throughout a great part of the then known world. We read of him at Damascus, Jerusalem, Ephesus, Athens, Corinth, Rome, and it is probable that he even came as far as these islands of the West, and wherever he went he preached Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and all the while he was sustained by the meat indeed and drink indeed of the incarnation and the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God.

If I had the time, I might tell you of other great workers for the Lord Jesus Christ, whose lives were crowded with holy service, and all of whom derived their strength from this same meat indeed and drink indeed of which I have been speaking.

But beloved, if you need further proof that the flesh of Christ is meat indeed, and His blood is drink indeed, let me remind you of the many who have been made strong for *suffering* through this spiritual nourishment. You are all more or less familiar with the wonderful story of the persecution of the early Christians, and of their heroic endurance even unto death, what was it that sustained them but this meat indeed and drink indeed?

Then, all along the ages, and in almost all lands, there have been brave men and women, and even boys and girls, who counted not their lives dear unto them, but gladly gave them up rather than deny their Lord and Savior. *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* has preserved the record of many notable instances that I need not now repeat, but you will do well to keep the story in mind, and to teach it to your children, that they also may learn what suffering can be endured by those who have had such food for their souls as our text describes.

No doubt there were many brave utterances like that historic saying of Latimer, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out." Surely these men had food to eat of which the poor puny professors of these days seem not to have tasted. They were made strong for suffering through partaking of this meat indeed and drink indeed, whereof, if a man eat and drink abundantly, he shall be fitted to perform such exploits as were wrought by the heroes of faith of whom Paul wrote in his Epistle to the Hebrews.

O sirs, if you want to be strong to live, or work, or suffer for Jesus, you must feed upon Jesus! It is only in the strength of this meat and this drink that one can, in these days, live an honest and upright life. It is only in the force derived from this meat and this drink that anyone can bear a bold and faithful testimony for Jesus. And mark you, it is only by feeding upon such meat and such drink as this that one will be able to face death with an unblenching countenance, and look forward to the unseen world with an eye undimmed.

Ay, I have seen weak women, with the hectic flush of consumption on their cheeks, and with the unnatural brightness which that disease imparts to the eyes, and I have heard them talk of dying as calmly as if they were speaking of going out for a day's excursion. I have even heard them singing as though their death day had been their wedding day, so glad were they at the prospect of soon being where the day breaks and the shadows flee away forever.

Joan of Arc was never such a heroine as these women have been, for they have vanquished even death itself, and waved the banner of the cross all through the valley of death shade. It was this meat indeed and this drink indeed that helped them thus to die—nay, that prevented them from dying, for to them death was but a translation from a world of mortals to a world of immortal spirits around the throne of God on high.

IV. I want now to say something that cannot often be said in a great promiscuous congregation, lest it should be misunderstood, but it is a fact that certain kinds of meat and drink produce EXHILARATION in those who partake of them, so that men become joyous and excited after they have been sitting long at a festival.

There is often much evil in the excitement which results from these earthly feasts, but there is one kind of meat and drink which gives an exhilaration which is not only harmless, but is truly blessed, and that is the meat indeed and drink indeed of which I have been speaking to you. Have you experienced that exhilaration, my brother? Do you know what this holy excitement is, my sister?

Have you, beloved friends, ever thought of Christ dying on the cross for you until you felt that you must sing for very joy of heart? Have you ever realized that your sins were washed right away in the Red Sea of your Savior's blood, and that there was not even one of them left to oppress you? Then you

must have felt that Dr. Watts was not in the least exaggerating when he wrote those lines that we have often sung—

*“Yes, we will praise Thee, dearest Lord,
Our souls are all on flame,
Hosanna round the spacious earth,
To Thine adored name.*

*Angels, assist our mighty joys,
Strike all your harps of gold;
But when you raise your highest notes,
His love can ne'er be told.”*

Yes, I am quite sure that you have felt so glad that you have wanted all the angels to assist your mighty joys. When you have realized all that Christ's incarnation and death have meant for you, when you have in a measure comprehended the transcendent grace that made Him stoop so low as to become near of kin to you, your heart must surely have danced at the sound of His name. I feel persuaded that there must have been times in this Tabernacle, when you were so joyful that you could hardly remain in your seats, when you have almost wished that, like David, you might see the ark of the Lord come along, and that you might dance before the Lord even as David did.

You know that there is no other joy that is even for a moment worthy to be compared with the joy which comes to us through Jesus Christ, and the man who has once had a sip from that well wants to lie down beside it, and drink it dry. He knows he can never do that, but he wishes that his soul could be so enlarged that he could take in all the love of his incarnate God, the wondrous heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths of that love which must forever surpass our knowledge.

O you who want to find the highest joy that can be found on earth, here it is! Jesu's wounds are the fountains whence heavenly bliss is distilled. In Emmanuel, God with us, born at Bethlehem, and dying on Calvary—in His incarnation and His atoning sacrifice, you will find that meat indeed and drink indeed which shall give the loftiest spiritual exhilaration to all who feed upon them.

V. Now I close my discourse by reminding you that **WHOEVER EATS THIS SPIRITUAL FOOD SHALL LIVE FOREVER.**

Just before our Lord uttered the words of our text, He had said to the Jews, “Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eats of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

If you had lived with the children of Israel in the wilderness, and you had eaten manna as they did, you would have died as they did. If you come to the communion table, and merely eat bread, “not discerning the Lord's body,” you will die, or if you go to a so-called priest, and he gives you a “consecrated” wafer, and you eat it, you will die.

But whoever spiritually feeds upon Jesus, whoever feeds his soul upon the great central truth that God in human flesh was made the Substitute for all who believe in Him, shall never die. His body may pass through the change that we call death, but his spirit shall live forever, and in due time, his body and soul shall be reunited, and his complete manhood shall be “for ever with the Lord.”

O sinners, unless you feed upon Christ, there is nothing but death eternal before you! But if you receive Him into your soul even as you receive food into your body, you shall never die, and the bliss of heaven shall be your everlasting portion. I have preached to you in very simple language, but there is in my theme a mystery that excels all the wisdom of the sages, let me try to put it before you once more before I close.

It is a fact that the Word, who was God, and who made heaven and earth, and without whom was not anything made that was made—it is a fact that this Word was made flesh, and dwelt among men. In

other words, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, did come into this world, was here born of a virgin, here lived and labored as a man, and here died for those who believe in Him, “for God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life...he that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

After Jesus had died in the room and place and stead of all who believe in Him, and after He had risen from the grave as the sure sign that His redeeming work had been accomplished, and that His people were forever free, He returned to His Father's right hand in glory, and there He sits as the Representative of all His chosen until the appointed time for Him to come again to this earth, “to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.” “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

There is the Gospel as Paul preached it. May the Spirit of God enable you to receive it by faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the Son of Mary, and so you will find that His flesh will become to you meat indeed, and His blood drink indeed. God grant it, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

JOHN 6:22-59

Verses 22-24. *The day following, when the people which stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone;(Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after the Lord had given thanks:) when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.* [See sermon #947, “Seeking for Jesus”].

Everything looked very favorable, did it not? These people put themselves to considerable trouble in order to get where the Savior was, they were not satisfied to be away from Him, they were “seeking for Jesus.”

25-26. *And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.*

He did not gratify their curiosity by telling them how or when He came there, for that was no concern of theirs. Neither is it the business of Christ's preachers to spin ingenious theories about the Gospel, or to tell pretty tales to amuse their hearers. Their business is to deal faithfully with men's hearts and consciences as their Master did when He said to these people, “Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles.”

They did that at first, no doubt. Christ's miracles dazzled them, so they sought Him in order to see more miracles wrought by Him. This was not the highest motive for seeking the Savior, but they had found a still lower one, they were now following Him because they “did eat of the loaves, and were filled.” Yet the Master did not repel them, and thus He teaches us that it is better to follow Him from the lowest motive than not to follow Him at all.

Perhaps some of us have been too severe upon certain people. We have said that they come to our place of worship out of mere curiosity. What if they do? It is well that they come at all, so let us not cut even the spider's web that links a man in any sense with Christ. That web may grow into a thread, that thread into a cord, that cord into a cable, and there may yet be an unbreakable union between that man and Christ. That which begins in an inferior way may lead to something higher and better. Still, it is wise to let people know that they are not deceiving Christ, even though they deceive themselves as to their motive in seeking Him. So He said to them—

27. *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.*

They labored hard in order to get the bread that perishes, so Christ bade them devote their energies to a better objective. This is a very extraordinary verse if we regard the letter of it, and not the spirit. Christ told these people not to labor for that which they could only get by labor, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth." Yet few men get their daily bread or meat without laboring for it.

And then Christ told them to labor for that which nobody ever does get by laboring, "Labour for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life." This is an instance of how the mere letter of the Word kills. We must take the spirit of it, and then we understand that what the Savior meant was this, "Do not be spending all your energies to get that which will melt away when you get it, but spend your time and strength in seeking after that which will last through all time, and be yours to all eternity."

28. *Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?*

They wanted to do the greatest of all works, for by "the works of God" they evidently meant the most important, the most sublime, the greatest of all works, "What shall we do in order to work such works as these?"

29. *Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*

This is a wonderful statement, which is just as true now as when Christ uttered it in Capernaum. The greatest and best work that any of you can do is to believe on Jesus Christ, though, in another sense, this is not a work at all, but ceasing from your own works, and resting in the finished work of Jesus Christ. But if any man would do that which is most acceptable to the thrice holy God, let him believe on Jesus Christ whom God has sent.

30. *They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? What dost thou work?*

This was a shameful question to put to Christ when they had so recently been miraculously fed by Him, and so had received the best sign of His divine power in the multiplication of the loaves and fishes.

31-34. *Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.*

This would have been a good prayer if they had understood the meaning of the Savior's words, but as it was, it was a blind prayer. They did not know what Jesus meant when He spoke of the bread of God, which cometh down from heaven. They were thinking about the bread that perisheth, the bread for the body, so they prayed blindly when they said, "Lord, evermore give us this bread."

Do you not think that many a prayer which children are taught in their childhood, and which men and women continue to pray for years, may be as blind a prayer as this one was? They know not what they ask, and the question very naturally arises as to whether it is a prayer at all.

35. *And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.* [See sermon #1112, Soul-Satisfying Bread].

"I will take away his need by removing his hunger, I will take away his pain by removing his thirst."

36. *But I said unto you, That ye also have seen me, and believe not.*

See, then, how little there was of advantage in the mere sight of Christ. Many seem to think that it must have been much easier for people to believe in Christ if they had actually seen Him, but it was not so. Here were multitudes that saw Him, and saw His miracles, and even ate the bread which came from His wonder-working hand, yet they believed not. Faith does not come in that way, for it does not come by sight, but sight comes by faith. Seeing is not believing, but believing is often seeing, it opens the eyes so that they are able to see what before was hidden from them.

37. *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me;*

God's own elect shall surely come to Christ, they shall all believe in Him, and be saved by Him.

37. *And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.* [See sermons #1762, High Doctrine and Broad Doctrine, #2349, All Comers to Christ Welcomed, #2954, The Big Gates Wide Open, and #3000, "No. 3000, or Come and Welcome"].

"Whoever he is that comes, I will never reject him. Whoever he may be that accepts Me, and believes in Me, he is Mine, and I will never cast him away from Me."

38-44. *For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draws him:* [See sermons #182, Human Inability, and #2386, The Drawings of Divine Love].

"I did not expect that you would receive Me, I did not imagine that you would believe Me. You have not yet been drawn to Me by the Father, so I knew that you would not come unto Me."

But he who is drawn by the Father will come to Christ, and Christ tells us what will be his future lot—

44-46. *And I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.*

He corrects the notion into which they might have fallen that they could ever see the Father as He Himself had seen Him. Into that vision none of us can ever enter, for there is a peculiar divine relationship between Jesus and the Father which we cannot know.

47. *Verily, verily, I say unto you,—*

Jesus uttered this great truth with very special emphasis, "Verily, verily, I say unto you,"—

47. *He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.* [See sermons #1642, "Verily, Verily," and #2706, Feeding on the Bread of Life—].

That text is worthy to be printed in letters of gold, but even then the letters would be far inferior to the message itself. If it be written on all your hearts by the Holy Spirit, you will not need any other sermon than this divine text, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

48-51. *I am that bread of life. Your Fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*

Here we have the doctrine of the great atoning sacrifice by which sin is put away, and that is not merely Christ incarnate, but Christ yielding up His life, dying in the room and place and stead of guilty sinners. That is the food, whereof, if any man eat, he shall live forever.

52. *The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?*

These Jews were still stumbling at the letter of Christ's words, still in their blind carnality misunderstanding Christ.

53-56. *Then Jesus said unto them, 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. 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.* [See sermon #1288, Truly Eating the Flesh of Jesus].

Do not any of you interpret this teaching of Christ as the Jews did, after a carnal fashion, and fancy that we literally eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ when we come to the communion table. The

Lord's supper was not instituted at the time that our Savior spoke these words, and He was speaking of quite another matter, the spiritual reception of Christ, the real and true feeding by faith with our spirit upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

57-59. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

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