

WHAT IS MEAT?

„Who then, is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.”

Matt. 24:45,46

We understand these words to have been spoken to the disciples originally, but were for the instruction of the church throughout the Gospel age, but especially at its close.

As some of the times and events spoken of by our Lord have come and gone, and as Christians have marked these passing events with careful anxiety, because they gave corresponding indication of the ending of trial and trouble to the children of God, many of them, for some reason, seem to have come to think that the *exact* knowledge of the time of our Lord's coming was the most essential thing to attend to.

Far be it from us, in this connection to throw cold water upon the expectations of any who are watching for the revelation of the world's coming King; and far be it from us to join in the cry of objection so often urged: „O, we don't know *anything* about it; Jesus said, ‚no man knoweth the day nor the hour;’ I don't think we ought to pry into such things,” etc. But, while we would do neither of these, let us carefully consider the words of our Saviour in the text quoted. In the preceding verse he says, „In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.” Notice he is not speaking to the *world* now, but to the disciples, and doubtless to all those who should afterward „believe on him through their word.” As much as to say, I have now answered your questions regarding these important events; you and the succeeding members of the body of Christ, the little flock, can mark by the fulfillment of these signs at different points in this good-news age, *something near* the time of my coming and presence. (They had been asking *when* there should not be „one stone left upon another” of these magnificent buildings, and what should be the sign of his presence, and of the end of the age.) See vss. 2,3. Though they were not to be overtaken as a thief (the world would be), nor to be in darkness regarding it (1 Thes. 5:4), yet they were not to know the *hour*, *i.e.*, the exact time of his coming, yet if they were to watch *closely* they would not mistake the signs of his *presence*, *viz.*, that it would be with the world as it was in

the days of Noah, careless and thoughtless, the whole attention given to fleshly desires, not understanding nor caring for the spiritual; verses 37,38,39, and saying „*where* is the *promise* of his coming.” 2 Peter 3:4. But a very *striking* sign of his presence would be that the evil servant would be smiting his fellow servants and saying, „My Lord *delayeth* his coming” (presence).

The nominal church is now doing this, and it is cause for regret that it is not confined to it. But, while he charged them to watch that they might not be like Jerusalem, ignorant of the time of their visitation, and as a consequence unprepared, he follows it up with a question which embodies an exhortation to a still *more important* duty, which, while being done, should *not leave the other undone*, viz., „Who is a wise and faithful servant” ... giving „meat in due season” to the household? What household? The household of faith. Then it is *spiritual* things he is speaking of, similar to those spoken of in the sixth chapter of John, 53d to 63d verse inclusive. Please read those words, „they are spirit and they are life.” Take them in at the expense of being called a spiritualist. If it is spiritual things that are spoken of, what must be the nature of the meat given to the household of faith by the faithful and wise servant? Jesus says 55th verse, „My flesh is meat indeed.” But the words which he is speaking *are* spirit. Then he does not mean that his *physical body* is the thing spoken of; no, for „the flesh profiteth nothing” (O, that we could keep this in *mind* when studying the nature of Christ’s coming, and his dealings with the household of faith), and yet just before—53d verse he says, „Except ye eat the *flesh* of the Son of man and drink his blood ye have no life in you.” Then the faithful and wise servant will be feeding the household of faith with the body and blood of Christ. Then, as this is a figure, it must be that somehow we take in, and take on, the *nature*, the *character*, and the *life* of Christ; if we „eat his flesh,” is it not a strong mode of saying that we assimilate the essential principles that made up the Christ, and thus become *like* him?

Let us consider, then, the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, that we may find what those principles are.

What was the great work which he proposed to accomplish?

„To save a world of sinners lost.”

How did he begin that work?

By *laying aside the glory* which he had with the Father. „Though he was rich, yet for *your sakes* he became poor.” Humility, then, was the first blade that shot forth from the seed which was to become a tree, the *leaves* of which should be for the *healing of the nations*.

The „mighty” came down to man’s estate, but the wondrous stoop was within sight, and so far as we have anything to sacrifice we are to imitate him. Then the faithful and wise servant will have the household *partake* of the *humility* of Christ. He will not be offering them bones of contention, nor setting them examples of arrogance and self-sufficiency; he will not by example nor precept have them partake of the spirit which on one occasion caused certain ones to contend „who should be greatest,” and certain ones at a later date, who should be „leaders.” If any are leaders, and Christ appointed, they will be partaking of this humility, and by every means causing the household to partake of it also.

After humbling himself by taking the body prepared for him, his first act (when the body was mature) was to *formally* deliver it up to death; and this he signified by making a living picture (his baptism) of his submission to death and consequent sufferings preceding it, and of his resurrection. Here is an *important* element, that the faithful servant will be giving to the members of the household, though some may think that they can live without it.

His next act was to submit to be led (but of the *spirit*) into the wilderness to be tempted, to be brought directly in contact with the powers of darkness. To stand as a *man* alone in the presence of the ruler of the darkness of this world to be tempted. But *why* was he tempted? It would not make him any purer nor better surely; he was without sin already.

He came down to the condition of the perfect man; he was the *second* Adam. The first Adam with no preference for evil, but having *no knowledge* of its terrible nature, was tempted and *fell*, the second Adam, with no preference for evil, but *with a knowledge* of its *awful* results, and of the power of God (By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many. Isaiah 53:11), was as *really* tempted, and triumphed. He evidently was free and *could* have yielded; in fact, he was *tempted TO* yield, but gloriously resisted and vanquished his foe.

Now again we ask, why did he pass through this ordeal? *To show us how* to overcome. Being the Captain of our salvation, the Leader of a little band of conquerors, his example was necessary, for through them „all the families of the earth” are to be blessed. „Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made” ... and that *seed* „is Christ.” Gal. 3:16. Now, if we „be Christ’s (if we feed on him and partake of his life), then are we Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Gal. 3:29.

Then here is a choice principle for the household to feed on; the *knowledge of Christ*, or Christ’s knowledge. But, says one, his knowledge was divine, and though he was tempted, he *knew* he would not be overcome. That is just the point we wish to make prominent right here. He has opened for us the way to the same source of knowledge, divine word and spirit, and Christ’s

example to feed on. But, says one, if I could *know*, as he did, that I would come out of the conflict all right I could endure it too. But you *would* know that *just as surely as he*, if you would feed on his knowledge. Here is a bit of it, take it and let it *strengthen* thine heart when trial comes, as it did his: „God is faithful who *will not suffer* you to be tempted above that you are able, but will with the temptation also *make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear* it.“ 1 Cor. 10:13. This is divine knowledge, and just the knowledge that *he had*. If you *believe* it and appropriate it, (feed on it) you will triumph just as he did.

But there are many other portions of knowledge that strengthened him for his labor of love and life of suffering, terminating with death, and the same knowledge will so strengthen and support us.

These portions may be summarized under the general term of God's *plan* for the salvation of the *world*. O, how it fired him with love and zeal, and by parable and figure he held it up to the view of those whom he wished to have see it.

But, says one, did he not wish to have *all* see it? No, not *then*; he only wished to have those see it who would *accept* the blessed truth. See Matt. 13:13,14,15, and Matt. 7:6. It was for those referred to by Paul (Acts 13:26), when he said, „Whosoever among you *feareth* God, to you is the word of *this* salvation sent.“ There are yet many persons whose ears are dull of hearing, and such ones would and do trample upon these pearls. This bread of life they reject. Like the Pharisees of old, publicans and harlots will enter the kingdom before them.

This knowledge which so supported him will so support us. Modern Pharisees would withhold from us this love-begotten plan of God; but let the faithful servant give it plentifully to the household of faith.

We said he passed through this ordeal of temptation and suffering to show us *how* to overcome, giving us the *same facilities for overcoming, i.e.*, knowledge of God's will and plan, and his Spirit to give us an *understanding* and to *support* us.

But was this *example* for all the world? O, no, not directly; comparatively few of the world know, or *ever* knew of it, and but few of those who *do*, care much about it.

But his mission was twofold, to redeem the *whole human race* from death by his *death* (the forfeit of sin), and to be the Leader of a „*peculiar people*“ by his *life*, and through this „*peculiar people*“ in the „*ages to come*,“ he is to show to the *world* „the *exceeding* riches of his grace.“ (Eph. 2:7.) His death for the *world* (including those who became heirs) entitles them *all* to life; the *same kind* of life lost in Adam; this is the „*common salvation*,“ Jude 1:3, and 1 Cor. 15:22, and his *life*

vitalizes and raises to a high and glorious condition those who *hear* and *believe* (the little flock), those who *feed* on him, those who appropriate the divine which was in him, and thus are „made partakers of the divine *nature*.” 2 Peter 1:3,4; Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 4:11.

We apprehend that the life of Christ *by which we are saved* (have life MORE *abundantly*) is the life principle which manifested itself in a series of loving labors and sacrifices for the good of others, that such a life taken in, lived (eaten), is the begetting (through the spirit) of a higher life—the *pledge* of immortality. This we understand to be „the faith once delivered to the *saints*.” Jude 1:3. This is „the meat that *endureth*.” Jesus said, John 4:34, „My meat is to *do the will* of him that sent me.” That was his *life*, and if we partake of his life on earth, we shall be partakers of his resurrection life—made „like unto Christ’s glorious body.”

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Then let the *humility*, the *sufferings*, the *trials*, the *labors*, and the *knowledge*, which, by the spirit, supported him—in short, the CHRIST be our daily food; and the faithful and wise servant will be found giving it to the household in *due season*, and receive the approval of his Lord.

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