

FLESH AND BLOOD.

"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." "The words that I speak unto you are spirit and are life." "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." Jno. 6:53,54,63.

It was a custom with Jesus to express truth under cover, in "dark sayings," and to many this is one of the darkest. When they heard it the Jews wondered, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" and many of the disciples murmured, and said, "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" And to-day, while it is generally recognized that Jesus did not mean that they were to eat his literal flesh, few have a clear idea of what he did mean.

Some have hastily concluded that because the Master said his words were spirit or spiritual, that therefore to appreciate them they must seek the very opposite of the literal meaning of the words; and such have concluded that the expression "flesh and blood" means a spiritual nature. They overlook the fact that Jesus did not say that the flesh was spiritual, but the words.

That the Lord did not refer to a spiritual nature when he used the words "flesh and blood," is easily seen when all of his words are remembered. Did he not say, "My flesh...I will give for the life of the world"? (ver. 51.) Did he mean that he would give his spiritual nature? If so, if he gave that for us, then he has not a spiritual nature now; for we remember that he "gave all that he had." (Matt. 13:44.) It cannot be that he gave away all that he had of the divine nature for the life of the world. Speaking of the same thing again he said, "This is my body broken for you...and my blood shed for many for the remission of sins." Who can for a

moment suppose that the divine nature is here meant? Was it the spiritual that was broken and shed, or was it the human – the "body prepared" for sacrifice (Heb. 10:5) and taken for the suffering of death (Heb. 2:9)? Which think you?

In view of these and other statements of Scripture, let none interpret these words of Jesus to mean that his spiritual nature was broken, and that all are to eat it. Better far confess as did some of the Jews, "We cannot tell what he saith" [meaneth].

But some one else suggests that, possibly "flesh and blood" here is used as referring to MORAL PERFECTION, and that all must eat or receive moral perfection from Jesus or they have no life. This is as far from the import of Jesus' words as the other suggestion, for while it is true that to have everlasting life all must have moral quality, yet such is not the meaning of the words of our Lord now under consideration. Let us test it and see. Was Jesus' MORAL PERFECTION "laid down," "given," or "broken" for us? Assuredly not; to "break," or give up, or lay down moral perfection, would be to become MORALLY IMPERFECT. Hence it is clear that the "spirit" or MEANING of Jesus' words was not that we are to eat his divine nature nor yet his moral qualities.

What, then, is the spirit or import of the words "blood and flesh" here used? We answer, The same spirit or significance should be attached to these words here as elsewhere. Flesh and blood uniformly represents HUMAN NATURE as many Scriptures prove.*

*Matt. 16:17; Jno. 1:14; Col. 1:22; Phn. 16; 1 Cor. 15:50; 1 Pet. 1:24, and 3:18, and 4:1.

Now, let us try this definition of "flesh and blood," and see whether it will fit and fill all the conditions. Was Jesus' human nature "laid down," "given" and "broken" for the life of the world?

Yes, verily; he took our human nature, which is a "little lower" than the nature of angels, that he might give it as a ransom for all. He gave his human nature as a ransom for our human nature; he bought us with his own precious blood; he "gave all that he had" (Matt. 13:44) for us. And thus "as by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead." (1 Cor. 15:21.) It was the man Christ Jesus that became our substitute or representative, giving his human nature a ransom for ours.

If, then, this definition is found to meet all the conditions under which the expression is used, it is thus proved to be the correct meaning or spirit of the Master's teaching.

But we inquire: In what sense can we eat Jesus' human nature? We must still remember to look for the spirit or meaning of the words, for the EATING is as much a symbol as the flesh and blood. To eat is to appropriate to one's self the life-giving properties of the thing eaten. Now, let us see, how does it harmonize to say, Unless you appropriate to yourself Jesus' human nature given, broken, and laid down for that very purpose, you have no life in you. This is in perfect harmony. Humanity lost all right to life through Adam, hence are now dying and dead, having in them no right to life; and though the ransom has been given, though the body has been broken, it is a part of God's plan that no man shall ever reach human perfection (life) again, except by a full recognition of the ransom price and an appropriation by faith of those rights which the man Christ Jesus secured by giving his flesh (human nature) for all. And as fast as we appropriate, God imputes; and thus the righteousness of Christ, and its right of life everlasting, are imputed to us.

Thus by faith we eat or appropriate to ourselves that which was sacrificed for us. Unless we thus eat or appropriate to ourselves the rights and merits of the man Christ Jesus, who was

sacrificed FOR us, it is evident that we would have no life, nor right to life in us. It is in or by or through him that we obtain back again the life lost for us by the first Adam – neither is there salvation (life) in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved [from death]. Acts 4:12. How dangerous, then, is the position of those who deny the ransom and its necessity and value as the life-restoring power given for the whole world. Neither they nor any shall ever have life until they do eat or appropriate that which was sacrificed. Hence the Apostle marks as one of the most serious offences any attempt to depreciate that sacrifice, or deny its necessity, saying, "Of how much sorer punishment suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an UNHOLY [common or ordinary] thing."

So, then, the eating or appropriating to ourselves of the "flesh and blood" [human nature] of Jesus, JUSTIFIES us from sin and its penalty death – justifies us to human life and its privileges. (Rom. 5:18,19.) This is the "common," that is to say, general salvation. (Jude 3.) But to the "little flock" being selected or elected out from among the saved world – called to be saints, joint-heirs of God with Jesus Christ, there is a special salvation mentioned by the Apostle. (1 Tim. 4:10.)

These called to this "high calling," and to become "partakers of the divine nature," not only eat or appropriate life by appropriating the value of Jesus' sacrifice, but THEY do more. Having been justified to life as men, i.e., having obtained back again (in faith) the rights lost for them by Adam, the call or privilege of this class during THIS AGE is that they may sacrifice or "break themselves, laying down their lives as Jesus did, thus becoming "dead with him" in hope that thereby they shall be

accounted worthy of the promise made to them, that they shall live with him, and partake of the divine nature bestowed on him as a reward for the sacrifice of the human nature.

It is thus that the Apostle refers to this class, not only as having eaten or appropriated Jesus' sacrifice to themselves, but also as having become associated with him in the sacrifice. He says of the Lord's Supper: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion [sharing] of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion [sharing] of the body of Christ? [Is it not thus that we illustrate the "filling up of the afflictions of Christ"? Col. 1:24.] "For we being many are one bread [loaf] and one body [the body anointed] 1 Cor. 10:16,17.

So, then, in a word – one loaf of life-giving bread has been provided from heaven for all mankind, and during the Gospel age an opportunity has been offered to some of joining the body of Christ and sharing with him in sacrificing the human nature and inheriting with him the divine nature.

Thus we see that while to have eaten Jesus' flesh literally would have profited nothing, yet to appropriate the rights which he possessed and laid down for men, is to have a right to perfect human life and all its privileges. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."
