

Spiritual Nourishment

by A.W. Pink

Spiritual nourishment requires a healthy appetite, suitable and wholesome food, proper mastication, and the Divine blessing to be effective.

Scripture: Matthew 5:20, Matthew 7:29, Matthew 23:2, Mark 1:22, Luke 11:52

Topics: "Hypocrisy", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

The preacher delves into the significance of Scribes, known as grammateus in Greek, who were experts in Jewish law and Scripture, serving as teachers, copyists, and interpreters. They were part of a learned class from ancient Israel through New Testament times, often associated with the Pharisees and chief priests. Despite their knowledge, they were reproved by Jesus for their hypocrisy and misuse of religious laws, focusing on external formalism rather than true piety and spiritual life.

Transcript

"Nourished up in the Words of Faith" (1 Tim. 4:6). We are living in a day when more and more attention is being paid to dietetics; foods are scientifically analyzed, the various grades of vitamins classified, and a serious effort made to obtain a well-balanced menu. With many the feeding of the body has become a regular fad; alas that so few evidence any concern about the feeding of their souls--that which returns to the dust is pampered, whereas that which returns to God is utterly neglected. Multitudes are filling their minds with trash, while their spirits are being starved. However, it is not to those who ignore their eternal interests that we now address ourselves; rather is it to the professing people of God we desire to offer a few words of instruction.

"Nourished up in the Words of Faith." The taking of nourishment does not necessarily produce nutrition. Nor is the fault always in what has been eaten--sometimes the most wholesome food yields no good effect because of the condition of the one who consumes it. Various factors enter into real benefit being received from what is eaten. In developing our present theme let us point out, then, four of the things which are essential to nourishment --true alike both in the natural and the spiritual. First there must be a hearty appetite. Second, there must be suitable and wholesome food. Third, there must be proper mastication. Fourth, there must be the blessing of God thereon. No doubt other things are contributing agents, but these four are the primary ones.

First, there must be a healthy appetite. One cannot eat to profit when he is sick; nay, at such times, food is usually repulsive. A good appetite is a mark of good health. Now it is true that we cannot bestow upon

ourselves a hearty appetite, but we can do much to injure and destroy it. A child who is surfeited with candy has little relish for more wholesome diet; and a child of God who absorbs newspapers and novels, no longer finds the Word sweet to his taste. A person who gives way to strong drink loses his desire for solid food, and the believer who drinks into the spirit of this world will disdain the Heavenly Manna. Many a millionaire, through using up his nervous energy in his hectic quest for wealth, is quite unable to enjoy his meals or even partake of solids; and many a Christian has become so occupied with "service" that his own soul goes unnourished. What a tragedy when we lose our appetite for spiritual food.

Second, there must be suitable food: "Desire the sincere milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2). That is why the Holy Scriptures are given to us--that we may grow in love and reverence for them, increase in the knowledge of them, be more and more regulated by them. It is only by feeding on this Heavenly Manna that strength is obtained for our pilgrim walk, for our warfare with sin and Satan, and for our service unto God and our fellows. To deprive ourselves of food issues in unfitness, weakness, sickness--true alike in the natural and the spiritual. How diligent most of us are in seeing to it that our bodies do not go without their needed food; are we as careful about the nourishment of our souls? Is it not at this very point we discover the explanation as to why so many believers fail to "grow in grace"? and why so many are feeble and useless? Not only are we diligent in the feeding of our bodies, but most of us are very particular in what we eat. We know that poisons are dangerous, that tainted food is harmful, and that many of the patented specialties are but catch-pennies. Alas that so few are equally particular about their mental and spiritual food. Error has the same effect on the soul as poison does on the body, yet thousands of professing Christians will hear and read heretical men and suppose it will not harm them. And how many substitute the writings of good men for the Word itself? The very best writings of men are but the milk of the Word diluted. Milk direct from the cow is rich and pure; milk from the retailer is often skimmed, and sometimes watered down.

Third, there must be proper mastication. Meals which are hurriedly consumed and swallowed almost whole do us little good, and often much harm. A little food well chewed will prove far more beneficial than a larger quantity that is bolted. Our teeth are given us to use. The same is true spiritually; a few verses that are thoughtfully and prayerfully pondered will advantage us far more than two or three whole chapters skimmed through. Meditation stands to reading as mastication (chewing) does to eating. Regularity is also essential; we have too much common sense to try and eat enough on the Sabbath to suffice our bodies for the remainder of the week; then why be so foolish in adopting this device to the soul? Time must be found for communion with God even though it means an hour less in bed each night.

In proper mastication the food is duly mixed with our saliva, which is a provision of nature for aiding digestion, and it is the hurried gulping down of our food which prevents this. Now the counterpart of this in connection with spiritual nourishment is, that in order for the Word of God to do us good it must be mixed with faith. It was to this fact the Apostle referred when he pointed out how the Gospel was sent unto the Jews of old "but the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard" (Heb. 4:2). It is for this reason that in our text the Scriptures are termed "the Word of Faith," for faith is their chief requirement.

Fourth, there must be the Divine blessing. No matter how healthy be our appetite, how wholesome the food we take, how carefully it be masticated--without the smile of God thereon it will profit us nothing. Food does not automatically nourish, any more than seed planted in the ground automatically grows of itself; the one as much as the other is entirely dependent on the Creator's blessing. If we are in the habit of asking God's blessing on the material food we eat (and a meal ought never to be taken without so doing), equally

essential is it that we beg Him to sanctify unto us our spiritual food. What an example the Saviour has left us--"And looking up to Heaven, He blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to His disciples" (Matt. 14:19). Then let us fail not to definitely ask God to bless unto us the Bread of Life--the reading of and meditation upon the Scriptures should ever be preceded by and followed with prayer for God to apply them in power to our hearts.

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