

To Feed Upon Christ

9/8/2024

In a lesson from a few weeks ago on John chapter 6 I included a short portion from Matthew Henry's commentary on that chapter. There when Mr. Henry was specifically commenting on - '**What is meant by eating this flesh and drinking this blood**' spoken of in John 6:54 Mr Henry brought up 4 points for consideration. Here once again are those 4 points -

1. Having an Appetite for Christ
2. Application of Christ to our lives
3. A delight in Christ and his salvation
4. To feed upon Christ is to do all in his name

In today's lesson our focus will be on the 4th of these items. 'To feed upon Christ is to do all in his name' of which Mr Henry comments -

'A derivation of nourishment from him and a dependence upon him for the support and comfort of our spiritual life, and the strength, growth, and vigour of the new man. To feed upon Christ is to do all in his name, in union with him, and by virtue drawn from him; it is to live upon him as we do upon our meat. How our bodies are nourished by our food we cannot describe, but that they are so we know and find; so it is with this spiritual nourishment. Our Saviour was so well pleased with this metaphor (as very significant and expressive) that, when afterwards he would institute some outward sensible signs, by which to represent our communicating of the benefits of his death, he chose those of eating and drinking, and made them sacramental actions.'

Matthew Henry then continues with these words which sum up the 4 points he has made concerning the passage in question - John 6:54.

Note * In Mr Henry's commentary he often simply makes reference to a verse about which he speaks, such as John 6:54. I took the liberty to include the verse itself from the KJV in the following section of Mr Henry's commentary.

Thus Mr Henry's words with my additions -

'Having thus explained the general meaning of this part of Christ's discourse, the particulars are reducible to two heads:—

[1.] The necessity of our feeding upon Christ (John 6:53): **Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you.** That is, *First*, "It is a certain sign that you *have no spiritual life* in you if you have no *desire* towards Christ, nor *delight* in him." If the soul does not *hunger* and *thirst*, certainly it does not *live*: it is a sign that we are dead indeed if we are dead to such meat and drink as this. When *artificial* bees, that by curious springs were made to move to and fro, were to be

distinguished from *natural* ones (they say), it was done by putting honey among them, which the natural bees only flocked to, but the artificial ones minded not, for *they had no life in them*. Secondly, "It is certain that you *can have* no spiritual life, unless you derive it from Christ by faith; separated from him you can do nothing." Faith in Christ is the *primum vivens*—*the first living principle* of grace; without it we have not the *truth* of *spiritual* life, nor any title to eternal life: our bodies may as well live without meat as our souls without Christ.

[2.] The *benefit* and *advantage* of it, in two things:—

First, We shall be *one with Christ*, as our bodies are with our food when it is digested (John 6:56) : **He that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood**, that lives by faith in Christ crucified (it is spoken of as a continued act), he **dwelleth in me, and I in him**. By faith we have a close and intimate union with Christ; he is *in us*, and we *in him*, (John 17:21-23) **"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."** 1st John 3:24 **"And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us."**

Believers dwell in Christ as their stronghold or city of refuge; Christ dwells in them as the master of the house, to rule it and provide for it. Such is the union between Christ and believers that he shares in their griefs, and they share in his graces and joys; he *supps* with them upon their bitter herbs, and *they with him* upon his *rich dainties*. It is an inseparable union, like that between the body and digested food, (Romans 8:35) **"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"** (1st John 4:13) **"Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit."**

Secondly, We shall *live*, shall live eternally, *by him*, as our bodies live by our food.

a. We shall *live by him* (John 6:57): **"As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me."** We have here the series and order of the divine life. (a.) God is the *living Father*, hath life in and of himself. *I am that I am* is his name for ever. (b.) Jesus Christ, as Mediator, lives *by the Father*; he has life *in himself* (John 5:26) **"For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;"**, but he has it of the Father. He that sent him, not only qualified him with that life which was necessary to so great an undertaking, but constituted him the treasury of divine life to us; he breathed into the second Adam the breath of spiritual lives, as into the first Adam the breath of natural lives. (c.) True believers receive this divine life by virtue of their union with Christ, which is inferred

from the union between the Father and the Son, as it is compared to it, (John 17:21)
“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”

For therefore *he that eateth me*, or feeds on me, *even he shall live by me*: those that live upon Christ shall live *by him*. The life of believers is *had from Christ* (John 1:16) ***“And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.”*** ; it is *hid with Christ* Colossians 3:4 ***“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.”***, we live by *him* as the members by the head, the branches by the root; because he lives, we shall live also.

b. We shall live *eternally* by him (John 6:54) ***“Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”*** : *Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood*, as prepared in the gospel to be the food of souls, he *hath eternal life*, he hath it now, as (John 6:40)

“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.”

He has that in him which is eternal life begun; he has the earnest and foretaste of it, and the hope of it; he shall live *for ever*,

(John 6:58) ***“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.”***

His happiness shall run parallel with the longest line of eternity itself.’

Mr Henry wrote his commentary about 300 years ago. Yet I think you will agree with me that the words Mr Henry used to describe what Our Lord had to say on this subject are as fitting today as they were back then. The first part of Scripture that came to my mind what reading this section of Mr Henry’s commentary was Colossians 3:17 ***“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”***

This passage from Paul’s letter to the Colossians was written nearly 2,000 years ago and is about how we as Christians are to respond to God’s Grace. About things we need to consider, do and not do in response to such Grace from God. Here are Paul’s words from His letter to the Colossians. As we read this let us consider how many of these things are still applicable today for Christians - Colossians 3:1-25

1. Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.

8 But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices

10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

11 Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

16 Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

18 Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

21 Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

22 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.

23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters,

24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

25 Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism.

*In closing let us consider a few more words from Scripture -
Hebrews 4:12-13*

12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Deuteronomy 8:3, or from perhaps where we know it best, Matthew 4:4, when the devil is tempting Jesus -

“But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

Let us feed upon the Word of God for it is more than just words in a book.

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” (John 1:14)