

ONLY TRUE SOURCE OF LIFE ETERNAL

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Christ's Human Life-Rights Imputed to the Church, Given to the World—Divine Method of Selecting the Church. Deep Spiritual Truths a Cause of Separation—How We Eat Our Lord's Flesh—The Class That Drink His Blood—Our Lord's Life Laid Down at Calvary—The Merit of His Sacrifice to Be Given to the World Soon.

Hershey, Pa., Sept. 12.—Speaking before the Bible Students Convention in session at Hershey Park, Pastor Russell delivered an able discourse today, from the text, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." (John 6:68) He said:

The most of us probably remember the connection of our text. Jesus had been stating a very deep truth; and many of those who had followed Him seemed unable to comprehend it or receive it. We read that they were perplexed, offended, and walked no more with Him. Then Jesus said to The Twelve, "Will ye also go away?" Simon Peter, speaking for The Twelve, said, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

It would seem as though God has put His Message in such a way that whoever accepts it and becomes a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ has at any time the opportunity of withdrawing. In the various churches, sects and systems, there is a kind of bondage, as there is to some extent in certain secret orders—a sort of obligation from which one cannot easily get away after having entered it. But no one is under obligation to remain a Christian; and should one desire to withdraw, the Lord would not hold him back. Apparently there is much misunderstanding of the Lord's method. We find some of God's dear people, contrary to the Scriptures, urging and threatening people, trying to drive them to the Lord. But we never heard of Jesus doing this, or His Apostles.

To some the Gospel is an attractive Message; to others it has no attraction. Some are drawn just as a piece of steel is drawn to a magnet. Others have "hated Him without a cause." To some the Lord's Message is a savor of life unto life. It has a sweet odor; it tells them about the everlasting life which God has provided. To others it is a savor of death unto death. They do not care for it. This same thought is brought out in Daniel's interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The stone cut out of the mountain without hands represented the true Church. All followers of Christ are fragments of that Stone. It is being made up from all nations and denominations.—Daniel 2:36-45.

The Stone Cut Out "Without Hands"

For nearly nineteen centuries God has been gathering this Church, which altogether is only a "little flock." (Luke 12:32) With the close of the Age these faithful ones shall be

made joint-heirs with Jesus, shall be the Kingdom class, shall be His Bride, shall be on the spirit plane, and with Jesus shall be given great power for the blessing of all the families of the earth, bringing mankind back to perfection and to a world-wide Eden.

But this class, this Stone, is taken out of the mountain without hands. In symbolic language a hand means power. "Without hands" means that God did not exercise force to take the Church out. Yet, the Apostle says, "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." (Eph. 2:10) God works in this class by His promises. As St. Peter says, "God hath given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might become partakers of the Divine nature." (2 Peter 1:4) Not by pushing, not by thunderings or imprecations, but by these promises does God work in us. He does not pull; He does not push. He merely draws us, as the magnet draws the piece of steel.

The Class Now Sought

When Jesus gave that dark saying which offended some of His followers, He knew what effect it would have. He knew that some would not be able to appreciate what He was saying. This was equivalent to inviting them to leave. It is the Father's will to separate every individual from that elect class that can be separated. He wishes to put away any not of the right character, so that all who remain will be of the right sort. In every Christian's life there have been opportunities to take an easier way. If any are merely seeking easy paths, and rejecting the paths which the Lord has marked out, then He wishes all such to take that easier path.

In the Dark Ages, when eternal torment was invented, people got to thinking that God would do nothing to hinder anybody, lest that one fall into eternal torment. But no one was ever in danger of eternal torment. The class that fall away merely fail to measure up to their privileges. So the Great Company, the antitypical Levites, have had the privilege of being Priests. They all made consecration. They all belong to the class "passed over" during this Age. They had the privilege of becoming members of the Royal Priesthood, but they have not sufficiently valued the honors held out to them, of enlisting all of life's energies in the service of the King of kings; and He lets them take their course. He seeks those who delight to do His will, not those who must be compelled to do so.

During the Millennial Age, all will be compelled to do God's will or be destroyed; but even though for a while they must do that will under compulsion, yet they will be expected to learn to love that will when they perceive its desirability. At the conclusion of that Age any human being who has not a love of righteousness and a hatred of iniquity, a sympathy for the things which are good, will not be counted worthy of eternal life. Such will have no life beyond the Millennial reign of Christ.

At the time of our Lord's consecration, He came voluntarily to do the Father's will, although that will was more or less hidden. Jesus did not understand it fully at His consecration; but His thought was that, whatever it should be, it would be His will. So it is with His followers. At the time you gave yourself up to be a child of God and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ our Lord, you agreed to do whatever God's providence might mark out for you. There is a great deal in having that fact in mind; for the changing affairs of life are bound to test us. The Lord is gathering a people who not only make a covenant at the beginning, but keep that covenant. If they cannot do it fully according to the flesh, they will at least do it in the spirit of their minds. If there be fleshly weaknesses which they cannot wholly overcome, the Lord makes provision for these. He looks at the heart, the New Creature.

The Hard Saying—Who Can Hear It?

The dark clause which the disciples did not understand was, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." These were mysterious words. They said, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat? This is a hard saying. Who can understand it?" It requires the Holy Spirit to understand these words. Even The Twelve could not understand such deep things of the Spirit until after Pentecost; then they began to understand. But they knew that they were expected to hold on even when they did not comprehend. (John 14:26) So it is with us. God expects us to hold on to certain parts of His Word when we do not understand. We know about our Savior and the great Divine Plan. It is the most wonderful thing in the world; and if there are a few texts that we do not understand, it will still be our duty and privilege to remain loyal.

We are helped when we see that there is One who will teach us and that we are to receive as we are able. Thank God for the assurance that He is keeping close watch-care over us! We are glad to have a Teacher who is so considerate of us. We are glad to know that He has this arrangement by which our minds open more and more to see greater lengths, breadths, heights and depths of the Love of God. These "dark sayings" are stumbling blocks still to many.

Eating the Flesh of the Son of Man

It is just as true today as when Jesus said it, that unless we eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man we have no life in us. The eating of His flesh signifies the appropriating of the merit of His flesh. Mentally we appropriate the merit of His flesh, His human nature, which He sacrificed for Adam and all of Adam's family. Adam's life was forfeited: his future life was forfeited. All the children of Adam thus lost their rights to the earthly life. Jesus laid down His flesh for the whole world, that all the Adamic race might have the right to this earthly life. Jesus' new life is not earthly, not fleshly; He has a spiritual body now. Therefore He has this fleshly life to give to the world—to Adam

and all his children. Our Lord never forfeited His life; He was not a sinner. He still has the right to a human life and organism. But now He is glorified on the Divine plane and He will give away the merit of His human life. He has not yet done so.

The Bible tells us that He will give the merit of His human life to Adam and his race at the end of the present Age. When the Church shall be glorified, Jesus will pray the Father on behalf of the world. (John 17:9; Psa. 2:8) God having these two parts in His Plan, Christ has already secured blessings for the Church, and during His Second Presence He will do His work for the recovery of the world. As He said, "My flesh I will give for the life of the world." He will give it to the Father; for it was the Father who was the great Judge, and who, dealing with Adam, condemned him to death—"Dying, thou shalt die." Unless a provision would be made that a perfect human being would take the place of the fallen human being, Adam, there would be no opportunity for a future life for either Adam or his race.

This is what Jesus has done; He has given His life for Adam's life, His human nature for Adam's human nature. Over eighteen centuries ago Jesus laid down His life, but did not give it. He still has the right to it; but He is to give it up forever, as the offset for Adam. Then Jehovah will turn over Adam and all his race to Jesus, who will then take His great power and reign. Then He will have the right to bless the world. Why is not the world turned over now? How inappropriate it would be if Jesus should give the purchase-price for the world, have them turned over to Him, and then do nothing for them! But the world will not be *purchased* until after the Church is glorified with the Lord, after He has added the Church to Himself.

In one picture the Church is counted as members of Christ's Body; in another, He is the Bridegroom and the Church the Bride. The marriage of the Lamb comes, after which He enters upon His glorious work for the world. All the accounts on the books of Justice against Adam and his race will be canceled; and the great work will begin of blessing the world of mankind. During that time Jesus will be giving them His flesh to eat, the merits of His sacrifice, that they may take on all those perfect human qualities which He laid down, sacrificed, for them. They will eat His flesh throughout the Millennial Age.

Drinking the Blood of the Son of Man

Having seen what the world is to get, let us see what the Church will receive. To the Church Jesus said, "Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, ye have no life in you." The Church is not only to eat the flesh, but also to drink the blood, of the Son of Man. We do not eat the flesh in the same way that the world does. Those blessings that are coming to the world by and by, we appropriate now by faith. We accept the Call of this Age, to be the followers of Jesus our Savior, to sacrifice our earthly life. It is an invitation to leave the world and its ambitions, hopes and relationships, and

become New Creatures in Christ Jesus, to be begotten to the spirit nature, and finally to be born of the Spirit—higher than angels, principalities, powers and every name save that of Jesus and the Father. This is the invitation, and we have accepted it.

We are to do as Jesus did. But first His merit is imputed to us. To impute is to reckon. There is a difference between reckoning and giving. He is actually to give these blessings to the world during the Millennium. Mankind will be getting more health, more power, more moral energy; they will get back actually what they lost. To the Church these things are imputed, or counted, by faith. To illustrate: If you had not chosen this High Calling, you would have had the right to the earthly restitution provided for all mankind. But in this arrangement of this present Age the Lord imputes to you whatever you lack of perfection. This means that to whoever has only twenty-five per cent of perfection of character, Jesus will impute seventy-five per cent., etc. Instead of actually *giving* you what you lack, lifting you up to perfection, He *imputes* it to you.

Thus the Church are feeding upon His flesh. We realize that God is giving us now, in this imputation, a great blessing in the forgiveness of our sins, a compensation for all our weaknesses. But this would only make us on a parity with the world in the Age to come. We are to do more. It is for the Church to drink His blood; it is for us to give up our life with His life. The world will not make a sacrifice of their earthly life. But we who become joint-sacrificers with Jesus sacrifice our earthly lives—the blood, in figure. We give up all our rights to earthly life and nature, even as our Lord gave up His earthly rights. And as the Father gave Him the higher life, so He has promised to give us that life if we will do the same.

That is our Covenant, the agreement to drink of His blood, to share with Him in His sufferings and death. That is the special Covenant that brings us now into the family of God. It was Jesus' cup, because for Him primarily the Father poured it. He drank of it gladly, in full submission to the Father's will. We have heard that we have the privilege of coming in with Him and laying down our lives; and here we are. We have laid our all at the Lord's feet, that He might give us the new life, the new nature, the spiritual life, the Divine nature, far above angels, principalities and powers.

Christ's Members to Have Immortality

At the beginning of your Christian experience, you did not understand all about this, any more than did the twelve Apostles and those others. But now we see that we cannot get eternal life except we eat Jesus' flesh and drink His blood. This means something more than merely everlasting life. Adam had life, but not "life in himself," inherent life. He did not have *immortality*. The angels have not life in themselves; God makes provision for their necessities. And so He will provide for the necessities of the whole human family. When Adam was perfect, God made provision for his maintenance.

“As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself.” (John 5:26) He is to give it to His Body members. Great as will be the privileges and honors of the angels, and great as will be the blessings of perfected mankind, yet to the Church of God, because they have eaten the flesh and drunk the blood of the Son of Man, will be the superlative glory and honor—immortality, the sharing of the Divine nature.

Nevertheless, the conditions imposed upon those who would make sure their calling and election to this exalted position are exacting, though a “reasonable service.” They shall share in their Redeemer’s exaltation if they share His ignominy by walking in His steps—following His example in this present time when evil is permitted to triumph. The Master was despised and rejected of men, and finally was crucified by those who professed to love and follow righteousness. Similarly, throughout the Gospel Age whoever has faithfully performed his Covenant of Sacrifice has speedily known something of the sufferings of Christ.—Col. 1:24; Rom. 8:17; 2 Tim. 2:11, 12.

Some one has called this the LADDER OF SUCCESS. Study it over and see if it doesn’t indicate exactly how a man will succeed or fail, according as he views the task before him.

100%—I will.
90%—I can.
80%—I think I can.
70%—I might.
60%—I think I might.
50%—It’s possible.
40%—I’ll think it over:
30%—I wish I could.
20%—I don’t know how.
10%—I can’t.
0%—I won’t.