

# Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

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THE BEST BREAD.

## A Sermon

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DELIVERED BY

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“I am that bread of life.”—John vi. 48.

You will observe that our Lord here speaks concerning himself. He speaks not of his words merely, nor of his offices, nor of his work, but of himself. “I am that bread of life.” And herein he teaches us all to fix our eye mainly upon his blessed person, and to think of himself first and foremost. He is the centre and soul of all. There is a tendency about us all to get away from Jesus, and to look rather to the streams than to the Fountain-head. Why are we more taken up with bits of glass that sparkle in the light than with the sun himself? That tree of life, in the midst of the Paradise of God—we forget to eat of that; and we wander to the borders of the garden, to pluck the fruit of the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil. I wish that our ministry—that mine especially—might be tied and tethered to the cross. I would have no other subject to set before you but Jesus only. Moses and Elias are well enough in their places; but when they disappear, and Jesus is the better seen, we are gainers by their loss. If I might dig for copper, silver, and gold, I should think it no deprivation to be obliged to find gold only. It is no loss to lose all but Jesus. You may wander from Dan to Beersheba, and you may not sin, for it is all holy ground between the two places; but he is wisest who does not ramble even there, but keeps to Calvary, and is content to speak only of Jesus crucified.

“God forbid,” said one who was a great and a wise man—“God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Paul would have considered it a terrible calamity if he had become fascinated, or even influenced, by the speculations of the cultured men of his period: he felt that the atoning sacrifice deserved all his admiration, and he had none to spare for anything else.

You know how he fell among certain wise people who were fond of philosophical disquisitions; and to them he said, “I determined not to know anything *among you* save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” He did

not endeavour to please his audience by agreeing with them, but the further they went in one direction, the further he went in the other, the more surely to counteract their error. Because they were so broad he would narrow himself to the one theme of the cross. In these times, when the world has run mad upon its idols of human thought, it may be wise to be more strict than ever, and to stand steadfast in Paul's determination—"I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

It was *himself*, my brethren, that our Lord set before his hearers as the bread of life; he did not mention anything of doctrine, or of precept, or of ordinance, but himself. He says "I am that bread of life." Of him, therefore, let us think.

It is of the utmost importance to those of you who have spiritual life that you should feed upon the Lord Jesus. It is well to know everything that is revealed, for every word of God is good, and has its uses, and all Scripture is profitable; but the daily household bread, the substantial meat on which we must be nourished if we would grow strong for God and holiness, is Christ himself. "I am that bread of life." We do not get bread anywhere else save in Jesus our Lord. We may find certain minor things apart from him: flavourings, ornaments, and furniture of the table we may get from some other hand; but the bread, the real solid meat, the essence of the festival, is Christ himself. So let us begin with him in our discourse, and continue with him till we close our meditation.

But now, when I have to preach upon a subject like this, I find it necessary to begin a little way from the text. "I am that bread of life." Bread, brethren—bread is for living men and women, but bread is of no use in the tomb. Bread—shall we bring it to a sepulchre? Shall we roll away the stone? Shall we draw out the bodies swathed in linen? Shall we set them upright in ghastly posture, and shall we put bread upon the table before them? To what purpose would it be? It would be a ghastly mockery. If you leave the bread there, and visit again that loathsome banqueting chamber in twelve months' time, the bread will remain untouched; for until there is life, there is no use for bread. And so, at the opening of my discourse, some of you might say, "Bread is intended for living persons; it is for men and women who are quickened. How can we feed upon Christ, for we are dead in trespasses and sins?" You speak most truly; but yet I have a marvel to relate which meets the case. Harken! That would be a strange kind of bread, would it not, which being put into a dead man's mouth, would make him live? Yet such is the bread that came down from heaven, whereof if a man eat he shall live for ever.

The Lord Jesus Christ is living bread. Bread such as we get from the baker is in itself dead; and if you put it to dead lips, there are two dead things together, and nothing can come of the contact. But our Lord Jesus Christ is living bread; and, when he touches the dead lip of an unregenerate sinner, life comes into it. He brings life even to those who are dead in sin. He says, "Young man, arise," and he sits up upon the bier. He takes a little girl by her hand, and says, "Talitha cumi—Maid, arise," and she sits up in her bed. He calls to Lazarus, who by this time stinketh, and he says, "Lazarus, come forth," and he

comes forth, wearing his grave-clothes. He has shuffled down from the niche in the cave, and he has made his way out of the damp of the cold sepulchre. Oh, what a wonderful Christ this is, who is not only bread for the living, but life for the dead! Pray, you who can pray, that he would come here just now, and be life to those who are in the darkness of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, that they may live. When they live, then how gladsome will my text be to them, for life needs bread whereby it may be sustained! The first thing that we want, if we have life, is something for that life to feed upon; and here comes in the text—"I am that bread of life." Your newly-discovered necessities Jesus can meet. Your newly-begotten wants Jesus can supply. Your hunger and your thirst can all be met, not by fifty things, but by one thing, by Jesus Christ himself, in whom there dwells in fulness all that the spiritual life can possibly require.

I. With that to start with, I now make the first observation upon the text itself, which is this—JESUS CHRIST EXACTLY MEETS ALL THE WANTS OF THE NEW LIFE. When a man is born again to God, and gets a new life, he has new wants, new desires, new pains, new longings. He enters upon a novel condition, full of new needs and cravings; the Lord Jesus Christ exactly meets the new case. As the key fits the wards of the lock, so does Christ fit the new heart and the right spirit. He knows how to touch the secrets of our soul, and supply our most mysterious necessities.

According to the text, *the Lord Jesus Christ is the ideal bread*—the ideal supply of man's soul-hunger. Grateful Israelites truthfully judged that there never was such bread in all the world as that which fell in the wilderness in the form of manna. It was very wonderful bread, was it not? Men did eat angels' food, and found it good for them. They went out in the morning, and they gathered manna, and they found it most marvellous meat to sustain them. It was the ideal meat for persons travelling through the great and terrible wilderness. There are different theories of what we ought to eat. One person tells us that, if anybody suffers from rheumatism, he must eat so many pounds of meat in a day. Other doctors have vehemently said, "You must not touch meat. It will heat you if you do. You must keep to a strictly vegetable diet." I believe that these learned persons know one as much as the other about it; and probably the whole of them put together know so little that a very small round nought might encompass all their certain knowledge as to health and disease. But there is one thing we do know, that the bread which the Israelites ate in the wilderness, the manna, was the best sort of food. It was God's own invention; and he who created man best knew what nutriment his life would require. It was not aerated bread, but it was celestial bread which had never been soured with earthly leaven, but had dropped immediately from the sky: the best food that men could eat if they would be healthy, active, and able to endure a hard and toilsome life.

Well now, what that manna was to their bodies—the ideal food of man, which had nothing in it injurious—that our Lord Jesus is to the soul. In him is life for men, and no disease or death. In the manna there was no adulteration, *it was a perfectly pure food*: such food is the Lord Jesus Christ to the spiritual life. He is the bread that came

down from heaven, he is the true meat. If our souls live upon Christ, and nothing else but Christ, he will breed no disease within the heart; he will not distort the judgment; he will not inflame the imagination; he will not excite the passions. He would be a perfect man who lived on nothing but this perfect bread. Brethren, if you aspire after holiness of the highest type and order, remember that a man is made by that which he feeds upon, and for the best manhood you need the best food. As certain silk-worms have their silk coloured by the leaves on which they feed, so if we were to feed on Christ, and nothing else but Christ, we should become pure, holy, lowly, meek, gentle, humble; in a word, we should be perfect even as he is. What wonderful meat this must be! O my brethren, if you have ever tried the flesh and blood of Jesus as your souls' diet, you will know that I am not speaking vain words! There is no such sustenance for faith, love, patience, joy, as living daily upon Jesus, our Saviour. You who have never tasted of this heavenly bread, had better listen to the word, "O taste and see that the Lord is good!"

The Lord Jesus Christ is not only the ideal bread, but *he is in himself a sufficient bread*. That manna which the Israelites ate in the wilderness was all that they really wanted. They began a-lusting, and they cried after flesh, and they sighed for the leeks, and the garlic, and the onions, which had charmed their degenerate palates when they dwelt among the Egyptians. Wretched was their taste. They must have been of a coarse mould to grow weary of the food of angels, and sigh for something more rank, more tasty, more heavy. Something injurious they wanted; yet had they but been wise and right they would have known that within the manna there was everything that was sufficient and suitable for them; for the God that made man made manna, and he knew exactly what man wanted. Out of the ovens of heaven he sent man down bread, fresh and hot, each morning, that he might eat to the full, and yet never be surfeited, nor filled with evil humours. They called the manna "light bread"; but what should the food be for those who were always on the march but light, and easy of digestion? Our Lord Jesus is simple in doctrine; but what else do we wish for, even we who are wayfaring men, and all too apt to err?

My brethren, if we do but get a hold of Jesus Christ, and feed on him, he is sufficient for us—sufficient for gigantic labours, sufficient for anguish, and grief, and sorrow; sufficient for the weakest of the babes, for he is the unadulterated milk; sufficient for the full-grown men among us, for he is the strong meat of the kingdom. His flesh is meat indeed. For your spiritual manhood there is bone, gristle, muscle, brain, everything that you want, in Christ. If you feed on him, he will build you up, not in one direction only, but in all ways; for ye are complete in him—thoroughly furnished unto all necessities. Christ Jesus meets all the wants of all his people with a divine sufficiency.

And then there is in Christ what there is in manna—a *sweetness all its own*. I cannot tell you exactly how the manna tasted. Some of them said that it tasted like wafers made with honey. The Jewish notion is that it tasted according to every man's own taste; so that, if he preferred this flavour or that, the manna had that flavour to him, and thus it was to each one a personal and peculiar delicacy. This I

know—that there is a sweetness about my Lord which is precisely that which delights *me*. I cannot communicate it to you, for you must each one taste for himself. I believe that our Lord has a flavour to me different from that which he could have to you, because our circumstances and desires somewhat differ. Though there is in the great church of God a sweet community of delight in the Lord, yet each believer has his own special delight. All Israel could claim all Canaan, and yet every Israelite had a little plot of land that was his own; and so all believers can claim all Christ, and yet each believer has a special portion which is altogether his own. Oh, the sweetness that there is in the bread that came down from heaven! Do you not know it? I trust you do, and if so, you do not need me to say more. If you love Jesus, you wish for nothing new. Modern gospels are forthcoming on all sides. You have heard about them, I dare say; but the preachers of them cannot have the delight in preaching their new gospels that I have in preaching the old one. “Oh,” I say to myself, “they may preach better than I can; they may be a world more clever; but they have not such a subject to preach of as I have.” When I get preaching up Christ, and his precious blood, and eternal love, and covenant securities, there I beat them all. With such a theme I can compete with the most renowned of the world’s orators. When I speak on these themes, my lips drop pearls and diamonds. Brethren, when we declare unto you the Lord Jesus we sail upon a sea of sweetness. The novelties of “modern thought” are a Dead Sea, but our gospel is an ocean of living water. He that has Christ to preach has such a subject that angels might envy him, and cry one to another, “Let us go down below, and tell mankind of Jesus and his love.” Brethren, to me the pulpit is a throne, and when I am in full swing, with the Lord Jesus Christ as my subject, I would not change places with the seraphim. It is a celestial joy to tell our fellow-men of such a Saviour as Jesus; for all sorts of joys are wrapped up in his thrice-blessed name. When Jesus said, “I am that bread of life,” he meant, “I am that choice bread, that satisfying bread, that delicious bread, the like of which was never found elsewhere.”

Furthermore, it was bread *suitable for the wilderness*. When they were in the wilderness, it was much better for the tribes to eat what they called “light bread” than for them to be filled with the meat that they had in Egypt, or even the old corn which they enjoyed when they came into Canaan. Manna was suitable food for the climate, and for their condition; and the Lord knew it. So the most suitable meat for us in this vale of tears is Christ Jesus. I believe that there is no meat like it in heaven; but for this world, with its work and its weeping, with its toils and its troubles, its cares and its changes, its wars and its woes, its fears and its frets, there is nothing so suitable as the Lord Jesus.

“Jesus, thou joy of loving hearts!  
 Thou Fount of life! Thou Light of men!  
 From the best bliss that earth imparts  
 We turn unfill’d to thee again.

We taste thee, O thou living Bread,  
 And long to feast upon thee still!  
 We drink of thee, the Fountain-head,  
 And thirst our souls from thee to fill.”

Jesus is all the bread that you need while you are on your way to heaven and God.

What I have to say on this point further is—Try it, dear friends. I would be very practical on this point, and say earnestly, *taste and test*. If you wish to know this bread that came down from heaven, and how satisfying, how suitable, how sweet it is—try it.

Let me hand you out a portion of it. The Lord Jesus, the everlasting Son of God, is also man—man, like ourselves. “In all our affliction he was afflicted.” He his own self bare our infirmities, and he is at this moment “a Brother born for adversity.” Is not this a loaf of nourishing bread for a soul to feed on? I am a man, tried, troubled, burdened, and so is my Redeemer; so is he who sits upon the throne of God. I have to bow in prayer, and agonize in supplication: so did he. I have to endure slander and rebuke: so did he—“He endured such contradiction of sinners against himself.” Brothers, sisters, you cannot be in any plight wherein he has never been; you cannot suffer any want so severe, but he also suffered the like. Even if you have not a home, or a lodging, or a bed for the night—“The Son of man had not where to lay his head.” He is a partaker with us of the bitter cup of affliction. Now, is not this choice nourishment?

“Why should I complain of want or distress,  
Temptation or pain? He told me no less;  
The heirs of salvation, I know from his Word!  
Through much tribulation must follow their Lord.

“How bitter that cup no heart can conceive,  
Which he drank quite up, that sinners might live!  
His way was much rougher and darker than mine;  
Did Christ, my Lord, suffer, and shall I repine?”

The sympathy of Jesus, our Brother, is living bread for sorrowing men.

Now for another slice from the same loaf. He died: he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. It was for sin and sinners that he died. “He his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” “The chastisement of our peace was upon him.” He has put away our sin by making full atonement to divine justice. Sin has ceased to be so far as those are concerned who believe in him, for he was punished in our stead, and so ended our debt. God will not punish those for whom Christ was punished. He cannot exact the same debt twice, first of the Surety, and then of the sinner. That cannot be. Substitutionary sacrifice is the finest of the wheat. A real atonement is the most satisfactory food for the soul. I know it is so of a truth.

Poor sinner, if you can eat this bread you will not be hungry any more! Feeding upon the glorious doctrine of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ you will find that his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed.

I might continue thus to set forth my Lord as bread for you in his resurrection, in his glorious ascension, in his session at the right hand of God even the Father, where he maketh intercession for transgressors, and in the glory of his Second Advent; but time would fail me. I might cut a slice from this loaf, and speak to you upon our communion with

him, upon our acceptance in the Beloved, upon the glory which he wears as our Representative, and wears for us ; but I will not : it is enough for me to introduce the text, and let Jesus say for himself, "I am that bread of life." Certainly there never was such a fruitful and satisfying subject as this of Jesus, our Lord. Oh, that all ministers were shut up to this ! Why leave this bread of heaven for the unsatisfying husks afforded by other topics ?

Very well : that is the first truth we are to remember, namely, that Jesus Christ fully meets all the wants of the new life.

II. But, secondly, IN ORDER THAT JESUS MAY MEET ALL OUR SOUL'S WANTS WE MUST RECEIVE HIM. Bread cannot possibly sustain the body unless it be eaten. You know, dear friends, you might be hungry to-night, and hear about bread, and then be doomed to wait till to-morrow evening without having any of it to eat : that would be a tantalizing business, would it not ? I might then preach again, and tell you about bread, and you might go without all through Saturday, and come here on Sunday, and hear two more sermons about bread, and yet all the while have none of it to eat. It would be trying work. None would like it, unless it were those people who are attempting to fast for forty days, and are likely to die in the process. What good would it do you to keep on hearing of the bread, and never eat of it ? I cannot see any result. Unless it tended to increase your hunger, I do not know what would come of the wisest discourse on bread if you did not eat. Suppose that you should go to a baker's window, and stand there for an hour, and stare at the bread, I do not think that the sight would fill you much. No, you must eat, or else there might be tons of bread within reach, and yet you would die of famine. You might be buried in a grave of bread, and it would be of no use to you. Even manna would not nourish you unless you ate it. You must receive food into yourself, or it is not food to you. The Saviour himself, if you do not receive him by faith, will be no Saviour to you. Mark that.

Here is a brother who never eats bread, but instead of eating he studies the theory of nutrition, and he is ready to discuss with any one the whole system of digestion and assimilation. He has a theory that bread should always be baked in a certain way, and he feels bound to discuss, and discuss, and discuss, till all is mouldy. My dear friend, you may discuss if you like, but I want to eat ; and I think that, if you intend to live, and not to drop down dead in your discussion, you had better eat a bit yourself, and not put discussion into the place of eating. Some of you have been hearing the gospel for years, and you have never fed upon Christ yet ; but you have a great liking for religious controversy. Why, perhaps, this very afternoon you have been discussing this "ism" and that "ism." Wherefore all this chopping of logic ? Why do you not eat, friend ? Why do you not eat ? What is the use of talking about bread when your fainting body pines for a substantial meal ? You are at this time ready to fight anybody about the shape that the portions of bread ought to take when they are cut up for a feast. No, no, I am not going to accept your challenge ! I am hungry, and want food, and to me the form of it does not matter much. Bread is nothing to anybody till he eats it ; and even our Lord Jesus is nothing to any man until he believes in him, until he receives

him, until he takes him into himself. That is the one thing that is wanted; and the Lord Jesus Christ silently hints as much when he says, "I am that bread of life." When he calls himself bread, he does in effect say, "Partake of me; eat me; feed upon me."

Here comes in the enquiry—How do we receive Christ into us as we take bread into our bodies?

First, by *believing everything that is revealed about him*. The Father's witness, and the Holy Ghost's witness, and his own witness concerning himself—we have all these in God's most holy Word. Take the Book, and read it. Augustine, after years of tossing to and fro, found peace with God by hearing a little child say, "Take, and read." I suppose that the child was singing to itself, and hardly knew what it was saying as it repeated to itself the two words—"Tolle, lege; tolle, lege; tolle, lege." "Take up, and read." That voice struck the ear of the perplexed thinker as though it were the voice of God, and he took the Scripture, and read the Scripture, and no sooner had he read it than he found Christ. I would entreat each one of you to do this, in order that you may find rest for your soul. Believe what is revealed in Holy Scripture. Ye search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Christ; but ye will do well if ye go to Christ himself, and find life. To believe in him, think of him. As the look of faith which saves is *to* Jesus, so is it *from* Jesus. By looking we learn to look. As we know of him we believe in him. Believe what is spoken about Christ, and so feed on him.

Then, next, *trust him for yourself*. That is *the* point—the hinge of the whole business. He is a Saviour. I believe *that*: but I go further, and resolve—he shall be *my* Saviour. May I say that? Yes, for I am permitted to do so, inasmuch as he says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Scripture saith that he is exalted on high to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins. Therefore, I look to him to give me repentance and remission of sins. I trust to him in that respect, and he is mine. He has said, "It is finished." The atonement is finished, and I believe that it is finished for me. A prominent point about the offering under the old law was that the person who came with the sacrifice laid his hands on it, and said, "This is mine." You must do the same with Jesus. Lay your hands on him, and say, "This is mine. This sacrificial death is for me." "Oh, but," says one, "suppose he is not mine. What if I were to take him to myself without warrant?" Suppose such a thing for one moment; yet he would be yours. If I was hungry, and I ate a bit of bread, and after I had eaten it somebody said, "It is not yours," I should reply, "Perhaps not, but how will you take it from me? It has nourished me, and refreshed me; it is mine, and none can deprive me of it." There is the point, you see: if you take Christ Jesus into yourself, the devil himself may say you had no right to him, but he cannot take away that which you have eaten. Jesus himself will not quarrel with you, nor blame you for taking him, for he has said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." You may summon a poor man before the magistrate, and say, "He is a thief, for he stole bread from my counter." You may put him in prison for the theft, though I hope you would not if hunger drove him to the act; but you cannot get your

bread away from him if he has eaten it. So, if you come to Christ, and take him into yourself, he is yours, and you shall live by him. Jesus says, "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me." Nor death, nor hell, nor time, nor eternity, can take Jesus away when once you have him within you. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Swallow, then, the divine truth. Let it go down quickly, for fear anybody should come before it has fully entered into your soul. Once there, it is yours! They say that possession is nine points of the law; and I should think in the case of eating that it is the whole ten points, or any other number of points, for there is no getting re-possession of that which a man has actually eaten. Get Christ, and Christ is yours—yours by a kind of possession, which will never be disputed before the courts of heaven.

This, then, is to feed upon Christ—to believe that which is revealed about him, and then to appropriate him to yourself by personal faith.

Furthermore, to feed upon Christ means to meditate much upon him—to think much of him. Brothers, there are many sweet doctrines in the Bible which I delight to make my own by reading, marking, learning, and inwardly digesting them; for they are parts of the great circle of truth which is revealed of God. But I find that I am never so comforted, strengthened, and sustained, as by deliberately considering Jesus Christ's precious death and atoning sacrifice. His sacrifice is the centre of the circle, the focus of the light. There is a charm, a divine fascination, about his wounds.

O sacred head, once wounded! O dear eyes, so red with weeping! O cheeks, with spittle all bestained! I could for ever gaze, admire, and adore! There is no beauty in all the world like that which is seen in the countenance "more marred than that of any man." This one vision is enough for all eyes for all time. There is no sustenance to the heart like the sustenance that comes of his flesh and his blood, given up in anguish and in death to work out our redemption. Beloved, this is the bread of heaven. "Take, eat," says he, "this is my body, which is broken for you." What food is this! What life ought that to be which is nourished by such bread!

But time flies so quickly that I cannot dwell upon these points as they deserve to be dwelt upon. Oh, live near the cross! Build your house on Calvary! Frequent Gethsemane! Listen to the groans of your pleading Lord! Be much with a dying Christ. Be much with a risen Christ. Be much with a reigning Christ. Be much in anticipation of a coming Christ. For the more you are with him, the more will your soul be filled with satisfaction, and influenced to sanctification. He shall satiate your soul as with marrow and with fatness, and your mouth shall praise him with joyful lips, for he can say, and none other, "I am that bread of life." Receive him, then, and you shall find it so.

III. Now thirdly—and this shall be but a word or two—notice this solemn fact: **NOT TO FEED UPON CHRIST IS THE SURE MARK OF DEATH.** Terrible fact. The Lord Jesus Christ has said it—"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." A great preacher, but he does not feed on Christ! You have no life in you. A forward professor, but he does not feed on Christ!

You have no life in you. A very knowing theologian, and a clever controversialist; but he does not feed upon the incarnate God! There is no life in you. A daring speculator in modern thought, but he does not care, he says, for the blood of Christ: he even sneers at the mention of it! You have no life in you. Hard words! Hard words! Hard words, if they be true, are better than soft words if they be false. But this is the sure test: "What think ye of Christ?" If he is not bread to your souls, you have no life in you. If anybody were to say to me, "I have a man at home who stands in my hall, and has stood there for years, but he has never eaten a mouthful of bread all the time, nor cost me a penny for food," I should say to myself, "Oh, yes, that is a bronze man, I know, or a plaster cast of a man. He has no life in him, I am sure; for if he had life in him, he would have needed bread." If we could live without eating, it would be a cheap method of existence, but I have never found out the secret, and I do not mean to make experiments. If you are trying it, and have succeeded in it so far that you can live without Christ, the bread of life, I fear your life is not that of God's people, for they all hunger and thirst after Jesus, the bread of heaven. O my dear hearer, once a professor, once a church-member, if you have given up Christ, and you get on well without him, you have no life in you! The dead can do without bread, but the living cannot. Jesus tells us, "I am that bread of life," and if you are doing without him you are doing without the bread of life, and the reason is that you are without life itself.

IV. Next, and the fourth head, shall be with equal brevity—THOSE WHO FEED UPON CHRIST ARE SUPREMELY BLESSED. They shall never hunger. They shall hunger after more of Jesus, but not after anything else besides Jesus. I was greatly pleased some time ago to hear a gentleman say, who had tried to preach another doctrine, that a certain neighbourhood which he spoke of was so impregnated with what was called "the gospel" that he could not succeed with his speculations. He said that if men once drank this gospel doctrine it made them so bigoted in their love for it that the most clever person could not get them out of it. I thought to myself, "This witness is true." An enemy declared it, and it was therefore all the more striking. The subtlest deceivers may try as long as they please, but when we have once fed upon Christ they cannot get us off from him. They call us away from him; they proffer us all manner of novelties; but in vain: "Try our thought! Try our science! Try our purgatory! Try our larger hope!" But we hear the pails rattle, and we hear the swine clamouring, and we are not anxious to taste the mixture, or unite in the festival. We are not so selfish as to steal this new wash from those whom it delights. Let those have it who can feed on it; but as for ourselves, we mean to feed on the bread of heaven. The gospel is to us such satisfying bread that all the rest is draff.

Should all the forms that men devise  
Assault my soul with treacherous art;  
I'd call them vanity and lies,  
And bind the gospel to my heart.

Every true child of God is so far a bigot that he prefers the bread of his Father's house to the husks of the far country. He cannot give up

the gospel, and he will not, for it satisfies his whole being. What more does he want? Why should he make a change?

Moreover, he has in Christ food that he can never exhaust. He may feed, and feed, and yet he shall never find that he lacks for meat. I have many an old book in my library in which there have been book-worms, and I have sometimes amused myself with tracing a worm. I do not know how he gets to the volume originally, but being there he eats his way into it. He bores a hole in a direct line, and sometimes I find that he dies before he gets half-way through the tome. Now and then a worm has eaten his way right through from one wooden cover to another; yes, and through the cover also. This was a most successful book-worm. Few of us can eat our way quite so far. I am one of the book-worms that have not got half-way into my Bible yet; but I am eating my way as fast as I can. This one thing I have proved to myself beyond all question: I shall never, never exhaust this precious Book; much less shall I exhaust the wondrous person of my divinely-blessed Lord. He is that bread which came down from heaven. He is utterly inexhaustible.

Brethren, feeding upon Jesus we have an immortal blessedness: we shall never die. If we have fed on Christ, we shall fall asleep, but it will be in Jesus. Some whom we love have lately fallen asleep: they will awake with him in the morning. But we shall never die. We shall only pass into a higher stage of life: for that food on which we feed shall be in us the pledge of an immortality equal to the immortality of the Christ who has become our bread.

V. I had much more to say to you, but the time has gone. All that I will say further is this. If any of you desire to have Christ, you may depend upon it that you may have him, because bread is meant to be eaten: **JESUS IS PROVIDED TO BE RECEIVED.** What is the use of bread if it is never eaten? If you go to the Orphanage, you will see a large batch of bread there kept upon the shelves. It must not be eaten the first day, you know, it would go too fast, and would not be very wholesome for the youngsters. It must get rather staler by being kept a little while. Now suppose that I were to go down there, and say to the baker, "Lock that door: I want to keep that bread. I am going away to Mentone, and I shall take the key with me, that I may save that bread." Suppose I were to do so, and come back in a couple of months' time. Should I say to myself, "I have saved that batch of bread"? I am afraid that it would turn out to be very bad economy. Let us go and look at the loaves which we have kept from use! Come away at once! The sight is not pleasant. Decay and corruption have fallen upon what we have hoarded. It would be a poor matter for the bread. Why, it is the very end of bread, the object of bread, the portion of bread, to be eaten. It is honoured in being eaten: it would be degraded by being left to grow stale and mouldy. Now the Lord Jesus Christ is never so famous a Christ as when sinners come and feed upon him. This precious bread must be eaten, or it has not answered its design. What say you to a doctor who has no patients? What say you to a Saviour who never saves anybody? The honour of a physician lies in the persons that he heals; and the honour of a Saviour lies in the persons that he saves. Christ has become the bread of heaven

on purpose for you to have him, and for me to have him. He came into the world to save sinners, and if he does not save sinners he has come for nothing. It is his business to save sinners. Now, if a man sets up in business, and never does any business, his undertaking is a failure. "Poor man!" you say, "he has made a great mistake."

I know a brother here who wanted to take a certain shop in a wide street, but his wiser friends said, "Do not take that shop for a baker's. It is not in a good eating locality. You must open a shop in one of the streets where there are plenty of poor people, who will buy the bread every morning. Make it good and cheap, and it will not stop long on the shelves." I noticed in the newspaper that a certain drink-shop was "in a good drinking locality." I am sorry that there are such localities. But, assuredly, a good eating locality must be the very place for vending bread. I think that this Tabernacle stands in a good eating locality. Many are here now who are hungry after Christ, and it is a blessed fact that they may have him, and feed upon him without stint. And what is the price? The price? The difficulty with all other traders is to get you up to their price; but my difficulty is to get you down to mine—for the bread of heaven is *without price*. Even if you offer a farthing, I cannot take your bid. You may have all for nothing, and have it at once; but not a penny can be accepted from you. The gospel provides a full Christ for empty sinners, pardon on earth and bliss in heaven, and all for nothing. Take it as a free gift, and it is yours. What would you pay? What could you pay? Did Israel pay for the manna? It would have been an insult to God to imagine it. Go your way, and bless the name of the Lord, for this is the gospel—"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

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PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—John vi. 24—58.

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HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—386, 151, 488.

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#### LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON.

DEAR FRIENDS,—The severe weather of England has breathed upon this happier region, and chilled the air day after day. This will render it all the easier to return without experiencing too great a change. My dear friends at the Tabernacle have sent me many a kind telegraphic message, and the last which I sent to them in return shall be my word for this week to my Sermon-Readers:—

"And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen."—Romans xv. 29, 33.

I ask for the prayers of each reader, that these verses may be true to the full to me and to all my flock.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

Mentone, January 8, 1887.

C. H. SPURGEON.