

# A Holy Taste

By Rev. Geo. D. Watson, D.D.

There is a deep meaning in the old Methodist interrogation. "Do you enjoy religion?"

It means a great deal more than being a Church member, or being a Christian in the ordinary sense of that term. It suggests a state in which religion has become a seraphic passion in the heart, that the stream of grace has so swollen and filled the channel of the soul, that its onward rolling tide is a luxury. One of the blessings attached to a pure heart is that the vitiated tastes of the soul are so corrected that the service of God becomes our highest, keenest, sweetest joy, and Divine things have a perpetually increasing charm to our tastes. Some one has triflingly said that "this thing of religion is a mere matter of taste." Very true; but this thing of taste lies at the root and centre of every moral being in existence. As the taste of our mouth decides what kind of food is eaten, so the inner taste of the heart decides the moral pabulum on which the soul feeds. It is impossible to deeply enjoy that for which we have not a keen relish, so that to serve God joyously we must serve Him in agreement with the keenest tastes of heart and mind.

Diseased organs will impair the taste, and all moral disease must be washed away from the soul in order to render the spiritual taste strong, united and heavenly. When the heart is in a mixed moral state, grace and depravity warring against each other in the soul, then there is a division in the tastes of the mind. The voice of conscience and the proclivities of taste are often opposed to each other. In such a state we have some taste for worldly things, for wordly emoluments, literature, honors, &c., and yet would feel shocked to go to the full length of sinners; and on the other hand we have a taste for religion, its pursuits and future glories, but our taste is not sufficiently strong to make us yield ourselves completely and enthusiastically to the pursuit of holiness. How many thousands of Christians, both preachers and people, are living along this miserable line of moral mixtures; they would feel disgraced to go as far as sinners in earthly things, and (shall I say it:) they would feel nearly as equally disgraced to go as far as the entirely sanctified in the triumphant zeal for heavenly things. You have a taste for eloquent preaching of a general character, but you cannot endure the full orb'd blaze of definite holiness preaching. You have some taste for a quiet, orderly, indefinite prayer-meeting, but your diseased moral appetite is disgusted with the pentecostal fire and glory of a holiness prayer-meeting. You have a taste for a little religious conversation, but you fairly nauseate a scriptural testimony to full salvation. What you need is a perfectly healthy religious taste, so that you can relish the deep things of the Spirit, and relish them all the time. When the will is sweetly united to God and the heart made pure, it puts an end to this disagreeable division of soul tastes. The appetite for liquor and tobacco in any form is utterly extirpated. The secret lingering taste for jewelry, gaudy dress, light literature, gay society and earthly amusements is utterly washed away; so much so that they are disgusting to the pure soul. On the other hand, everything in the service of God becomes a perennial joy. The tastes of the intellect, the perceptions of reason, the dictates of conscience, the choice of will, and the appetites of the heart flow like a crystal stream towards the heavenly and Divine. Now that the sanctifying Spirit has cured the moral palate, how it weeds on the pure word and prayer! The Sabbath, the Church, the holy hymns, the gathering of God's people, are all filled with a supernatural charm. Then everything is beautiful only in so far as it gives the soul gleams of its precious Lord,

and all the so called fine things of earth grow unlovely that lack the mark of the Lamb. In holiness, the series of religious duties are transformed into a series of religious delights. The old duties are performed with a new and delicious zest. Ah, here is the only panacea for all the vitiated tastes that corrupt and blind the Church.

This is not all. When our tastes are thoroughly cleaned and renewed by the Spirit, they are far more intense toward Divine things than they ever were toward earthly things. Nothing is normal in the soul until it is brought in union with God; hence when our taste is restored to the pure taste of God, it acts with an energy and zest surpassing its former relish for sin. A real saint has an intense taste for heaven and holiness greater than any sinner has for things of earth. It is only as our faculties are brought in blissful union with Jesus that they act up to their maximum of strength. The heart which has become the habitation of the Sanctifier, will often have a sweetly distressing thirst for God and a taste for Infinite Love, that is utterly inexpressible, and exceeding any sinner's craving for evil things. Who will believe these things, and then who will prove their reality? These seraphic ardors can be raised only upon the utter spoliation of our earthly and semi-earthly tastes. It is God's plan to spoil us for this world, that He may fit us for heaven. Only a question of taste verily! yet heaven and hell revolve on that pivot of taste. The vulture and the dove are divided only by their taste; so are demons and seraphs. When all the tastes are perfectly holy, the soul will be spoiled for all worlds except heaven, into which it will appropriately and inevitably gravitate.

## SURRENDER - - BUT HOW FAR?

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Some of us are mostly surrendered to our Lord, but there is that control over our money which we must retain instead of letting Him have it. Peter Mallow was a twenty-one-year-old Englishman who came to Norman Grubb for instruction on the Christian experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Grubb said, among other things, "You must realize that the Spirit's fullness means much more than the meeting of your personal satisfaction in joy, peace, and holiness. It means that all you are and have will be made available to God for His use in carrying out His purpose in saving His world."

Peter had come into a considerable fortune. A week after he made the full surrender and experienced release from the self-centeredness which had held him, he sent a check for \$30,000 to the headquarters of Mr. Grubb's mission, the World-Wide Evangelization Crusade. They sent the check back, saying they felt he had acted rashly. He replied that he had done nothing of the kind. "God," he said, "told me to give \$25,000. I was so overjoyed to think that He had taken me at my word when I told Him I was entirely His that I added \$5,000 for good measure!" For him that was victory at the very point where he had been hung up—his determination to control his money in his own way.

Some of us are mostly surrendered to our Lord, but there is that idol of friendship we are not prepared to give up. You have one set of Christian convictions and he has another. And if you had been living a life of absolute surrender to Christ, you would have put the idol away before it grew into its present emotional size. Or, you are called, to a field of Christian service to which she is not called, for which indeed she has no liking. I beg you, for Christ's sake, make the full surrender to Him, who once so painstakingly said, "And whosoever doth not

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