

promised, for without this He cannot really give us rest. It is as our heart takes in this truth that, when He says, "Abide in me," "Learn of me," He really means it, and that it is His own work to keep us abiding when we yield ourselves to Him, that we shall venture to cast ourselves into the arms of His love, and abandon ourselves to His blessed keeping. It is not the yoke, but resistance to the yoke, that makes the difficulty; the whole-hearted surrender to Jesus, as at once our Master and our Keeper, finds and secures the rest.

Come, my brother, and let us this very day commence to accept the word of Jesus in all simplicity. It is a distinct command this: "Take my yoke and learn of me," "Abide in me." A command has to be obeyed. The obedient scholar asks no questions about possibilities or results; he accepts every order in the confidence that his teacher has provided for all that is needed. The power and the perseverance to abide in the rest and the blessing in abiding,—it belongs to the Saviour to see to thee; 'tis mine to obey, 'tis His to provide. Let us this day in immediate obedience accept the command, and answer boldly, "Saviour, I abide in Thee. At Thy bidding, I take Thy yoke; I undertake the duty without delay; I abide in Thee." Let each consciousness of failure only give new urgency to the command, and teach us to listen more earnestly than ever till the Spirit again give us to hear the voice of Jesus saying, with a love and authority that inspire both hope and obedience, "Child, abide in me." That word, listened to as coming from Himself, will be an end of all doubting,—a Divine promise of what shall surely be granted. And with ever-increasing simplicity its meaning will be interpreted. Abiding in Jesus is nothing but the giving up of oneself to be ruled and taught and led, and so resting in the arms of Everlasting Love.

Blessed rest! the fruit and the foretaste and the fellowship of God's own rest! found of them who thus come to Jesus to abide in Him. It is the peace of God, the great calm of the eternal world, that passeth all understanding, and that keeps the heart and mind. With this grace secured, we have strength for every duty, courage for every struggle, a blessing in every cross, and the joy of life eternal in death itself.

O my Saviour! if ever my heart should doubt or fear again, as if the blessing were too great to expect, or too high to attain, let me hear Thy voice to quicken my faith and obedience: "Abide in me;" "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; ye shall find rest to your souls."

HOW TO FEED UPON THE WORD.

BY REV. J. MONRO GIBSON, D.D.

My dear friends, I have been asked to speak to-night, about the Bible, to those who have taken the first step in the Christian course—who have come to Christ, and accepted His gift of life. This is the first and most important step of all; and, if there are any here who have not taken that step, I call upon you to take it now. The Lord Jesus is waiting to bestow upon you His gift of eternal life. Will you not have it now?

Next in importance to life comes something to eat. Everything that lives eats; and, though life is more than meat, it is not much without it. When our Lord said, "Is not the life more than meat?" He did not mean us to think little of meat, but He meant to assure us that, having given the life, He would also give that which supports it. God does this for all His creatures in nature. He does it also for His children in the kingdom of grace. He has provided plenty for us to eat. Here it is (*holding up the Bible*); and right good food it is. Jeremiah said: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart."

There are other books besides the Bible that have spiritual food in them; but this is the great storehouse. This is the original joint, and it is a

great deal better to do your own carving than to depend upon made-up dishes, however good they may be. The Bible itself, then, ought to be the main support of our spiritual life; and therefore I hope nothing more is necessary in order to show the immense importance of using it rightly. Your growth, your comfort, your health, your very life itself, depends on the use you make of it. May God teach us all how to feed upon His Word, so as to grow steadily and become glad and strong and useful Christians.

Spiritual Appetite.

The first advice I have to give you is this:—**BE SURE YOU KEEP UP YOUR APPETITE.** A good appetite for breakfast is a grand thing. How it sets you up for the day! And it is just as grand a thing to have a good spiritual appetite. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness." Make sure of that blessedness; for you can make sure of it. You cannot always make sure of the other appetite, and He must keep it up. But, then, we must be in earnest ourselves, or else we shall soon stop praying as well as reading. So the great thing is how to keep up our earnestness. Just a word about that.

Your appetite for the Bible will not keep up unless you find it interesting. You may read a chapter day by day as a matter of duty for awhile, but that will not continue long. You will never get the good of it, nor will you keep at it unless you find it interesting. Well, when is a book interesting? Sometimes because of its subject. See how everybody keeps reading about General Gordon. Why? Because of the interest of the subject. Now, the subjects of the Bible are the most interesting of all subjects. There is a whole gallery of heroes in it, more or less like General Gordon, and in the centre of it there is the life of the great Hero of all history, with whom no one can be compared—"Jesus of Nazareth."

The First of Books.

Sometimes it is the style which makes a book interesting, not so much what is said as how it is said; and we like to read such books for the same reason that we like to look at beautiful pictures, because they are works of art. Here, too, the Bible is not one whit behind. Its general style is a model of beautiful straightforward simplicity, and then, all through it, you will find passages of exceeding beauty and grandeur; so much so, that if they were in any other book than the Bible, our literary men would never be done admiring them.

Other books, again, are read for the interest of the object. Here, for example, is a medical book. There is no interest in the subject except for a professional man. It is very dry; there is nothing attractive in the style. But if you have some terrible disease, and you believe that by reading this book you will find the way to get rid of it, nothing could be more interesting to you. Or, to take a commoner illustration, a bill of fare is very poor reading—very poor reading for the subject or for the style, especially if it be in French; but it is very interesting, notwithstanding, when you are hungry and waiting for dinner. That is the interest of the object. Now, it is this last interest that we have mainly to depend upon. I do hope you will all get more and more interested in the different subjects of the Bible. I hope you will all see more and more of its grandeur and beauty. But what we have to depend upon to bring us back and back to it is the interest of the object, our longing to get good from it, to get healing for our spiritual diseases, comfort in our troubles, help in our difficulties, and grace to go on from strength to strength, until at last we appear before God perfect in the heavenly Zion. And, remember, if we seek we find, and when we find, we are eager to seek again. That is the way to keep up the interest. But if ever your appetite begin to fail be alarmed. Betake yourself at once to earnest prayer, and give yourself no rest until it come back as keen as ever. May God give us each day not only our daily bread, but a great hunger for it.

Wise Reading.

The next advice I would give you is:—**CHOOSE THAT WHICH AGREES WITH YOU.** We all do it for our bodies, if we have sense; and why not for our souls? There is "milk" for babes, and "strong meat" for men, in the Word. If you were to feed a baby with beefsteak, and keep at it, the baby would die. But that would not prove that beefsteak was not good to eat. Do not be astonished, then, if you find a good deal in Scripture that you cannot yet digest.

There are hard things in the Bible, many of them; but why should you seek them out? That is what the infidels make it their business to do. They know the hard, dark parts, and nothing else. What would you think of the man that had a good sole or haddock set before him for his breakfast, and, instead of eating that which was good for him, insisted upon choking himself with the bones, and then said, "That fish is not good to eat?" You show them a fine ripe peach hanging on the Bible tree, and they stick their fingers into it, and scatter all the juices, until they get at the stone; and then they say to you, "There, is that good to eat?" Never you mind them. Eat you the peach, and let the stone alone. You may depend upon it, it is of some use, or it would not be there. The great Pascal, in his "Thoughts," says, "There is as much light in the Scriptures as will satisfy those who love the light, and there is as much darkness as will satisfy those who love the darkness." See that you love the light, and you will get plenty of it. Begin with that which you can digest; and by and by you will be ready for the rest.

Then there is plain fare in the Bible, and there is what may be called fancy fare. Make sure of plenty of the substantial. Do not go into very minute details about the Tabernacle and its types, nor dive into the mysteries of the Song of Solomon, until you are well acquainted with Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Necessaries first, luxuries afterwards. It is all good; but plain substantial fare, good bread and butter, is what we need first.

How to Read.

This brings up the *order* of reading. What shall it be? Some people have no order at all. They open the Bible just where it will open, and take any passage that turns up; which is just as if a man were to blindfold himself when he sat down to dinner, and help himself to whatever came first, a spoonful of salt, perhaps, or a mouthful of vinegar. No, no; we must have some order.

Shall it be, then, right on from Genesis to Revelation? That is a very good way to study the Bible; but not the best way to feed on it. Some people think that it does not matter where you are reading so long as it is the Bible. They think a chapter of names in Chronicles is as good as the fifth or twenty-fifth of Matthew. But you may be sure they are mistaken. It is perfectly true that you may sometimes get very sweet picking off a bone; and you may learn very beautiful lessons in some of these chapters of names; but then they are somewhat hard to discover, and certainly you cannot get in such a place what the Americans call "a good square meal;" and that is what we want.

"Topical" Study.

Shall it be what is called the "topical" method, taking some topic, such as faith, righteousness, and so forth, and searching out, by means of a Concordance, the passages that bear on it? This is a very good way for preparing a Bible reading, and for studying particular subjects; but it requires one well versed in the Scriptures to do it safely. It is very apt to mislead those who do not know much about the Bible. One day my boy came home from school in great glee, saying to me, "Papa, I have got into miscellaneous!" "What does that mean?" I said; "I do not understand it." So he brought his book to me, and he showed me how he had gone through addition,