

Jews murmured at what he had said concerning his giving them his flesh to eat, he answered among other things, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." Here we are positively told that the words of Jesus Christ are spirit and life. Hence we plainly perceive the purport of the whole of that language which leads us to consider Christ as the nourishment of men, whether he is called bread or water, or flesh or wine. The meaning of all the passages in which this language is used is the same; namely, that he feeds our souls with knowledge, and saves them by his death.

The text now quoted, we may farther observe, flatly contradicts the doctrine of the Church of Rome respecting the Eucharist. It asserts that the flesh profiteth nothing; but the words of Christ are spirit and life. If the flesh of Christ profiteth nothing, where can be the advantage of eating it literally? If the words of Christ are spirit and life, the means of rising from the death of sin to the life of holiness, what then is our duty but to remember and believe them—to meditate on them, and to reduce them to practice?

It must be admitted, however, that there were some, who were reckoned his disciples, among those who found this saying a hard one, and who therefore went no more with him. But it is to be considered that there were many persons who sometimes associated with our Saviour, who were struck with his miraculous power, and acknowledged him to be a prophet, who yet had by no means correct ideas of the nature and importance of his mission. Of this we have two remarkable instances: one in the desire which they manifested to come and make him a king, another in the reproof which he gave them in these words, "Ye say unto me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I command you;" and again, "Ye seek me not because ye saw the miracle, but because ye did eat of the loaves." These persons must have entertained but a very imperfect idea of our Saviour's character and doctrine. Nor is it any wonder, that they could not understand how he was the bread of life. They must have been very much astonished indeed, to hear him speak as if the happiness of all mankind depended on himself alone. They never could endure so lofty and immoderate pretensions. But the twelve apostles being better instructed in the nature and importance of Christ's doctrine, did not find the same difficulty nor start the same objections. When our Saviour asked if they also would go away: they answered "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou only hast the words of eternal life." This answer clearly demon-

strates the high opinion which they entertained of the importance of his doctrine; since, they asserted that on it depended their everlasting life and happiness. This answer shows also very clearly the sense in which they understood the discourse that they had just heard, concerning his being the bread of life, concerning his giving them his flesh to eat and his blood to drink. They express the highest possible opinion of his doctrine; but do not say one word of the necessity of eating his body. But had the latter sentiment made any part of his discourse, it is impossible to conceive that they would observe a total silence respecting a subject in which he had just been instructing them with so much care; and on account of which so many were on the point of forsaking him. It deserves to be particularly marked, that in these words the apostles expressed the reason why they also did not go away as others were doing. And the reason is, not because his body was really food, but because "he had the words of eternal life."

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To be continued.

PRACTICAL SERMONS.

No. III.

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For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God.—Heb. ix 9 14.

We should be acquainted with all scripture; for "all scripture is profitable." The passage we have read must be an affecting one to all who have been convinced of sin; and yet its force can be but very inadequately felt by those who are not familiar with the rites of divine service under the ancient dispensation. The Apostle is referring to the sacrifices and offerings and ordinances of purifying under the first covenant, and while as the first tabernacle was yet standing. These were all typical in their nature—figures for the time then present, of that coming period of glory when Christ having appeared, "an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, should enter in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for