

## A WORD OF PASTORAL COUNSEL

WE NOTE a strong similarity in some respects between our spiritual and our natural experiences. We must partake of food if we would have strength. For the New Creature in Christ, God's Word has provided this necessary food--milk for babes, strong meat for those of greater development. As we feed upon the gracious promises of God's Word, they strengthen our hearts and nerve our energies for patient endurance and active service for the glory of our King, for the blessing of the brethren, and for our own spiritual upbuilding. We perceive that one great lack amongst Christian people in general is that very many have ceased to partake of the spiritual food which the Heavenly Father has provided for the nourishment of His people. Many, therefore, are weak and sickly spiritually; and many have fallen asleep in respect to spiritual matters, having become overcharged with the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches, money-lust, and the excitement of business and pleasure.--Mark 4:18,19.

Since we have come to a knowledge of Present Truth we find our spiritual appetite sharpening more and more. We are growing day by day by means of the nourishment supplied. We love the strong meat. We take delight in masticating it. A work of Bible study is progressing all over the world, the like of which was never before known. The Classes of the I.B.S.A. are becoming known for their knowledge of the Word of God, collectively and individually. The world, especially the "Christian world," is taking knowledge of them.

But here we need to note dangers threatening these Bible Students. And these dangers we especially call to the attention of the Class leaders. The first is that it is true in respect to spiritual feasting as in respect to natural feasting, that we need liquids as well as solids. By solids we refer to those spiritual foods which require mastication, mental assimilation, investigation, etc. From these we derive our strength. The liquid refreshments correspond more particularly to our spiritual fellowship which is non-doctrinal; namely, exhortation, praise, worship, testimony respecting the Lord, our personal relationship with Him, His gracious providential care over us, etc. The Class that neglects the liquid refreshments is sure to feel the loss. As the physical system requires the liquids to carry the nutriment properly to all parts, so the spiritual organism requires the liquid refreshments to carry the strength of the nutriment of the doctrines of Christ to every member for the mutual refreshment of all.

Again, it is noticed that while both solids and liquids are needed, it is preferable not to use the two at the same time. He who washes his solid food down with liquid refreshment fails to get all the nutriment out of it, because he masticates less. As the process of digestion is begun in the mouth, where the saliva is mixed thoroughly with the food, the washing of the food down with liquids interferes with an important part of digestion. Therefore, all physicians advise that little liquid be taken with the solids, but that at appropriate times a sufficiency of liquids be supplied to the system. So we advise in the spiritual eating--that the solids, the doctrines of the Word of God, be thoroughly masticated, with comparatively little of testimony or exhortation intermingled--just a little of praise and worship to give a proper setting. Then let the spiritual liquids be appropriated in full measure at suitable seasons.

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