

A CURE FOR UNSAVORY MEATS—OR, SALT FOR THE WHITE OF AN EGG NO. 1730

DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, JULY 5, 1883,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Can that which is unsavory be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?”
Job 6:6.*

THIS is a question which Job asked of his friends who turned out to be so unfriendly. Thus he battles with those “miserable comforters” who inflamed his wounds by pouring in salt and vinegar instead of oil and wine. The first of them had just opened fire upon him and Job, by this question, was firing a return shot. He wanted the three stern watchers to understand that he did not complain without cause. If he had spoken bitterly, it was because he suffered grievously. He was in great bodily pain; he was enduring great mental depression and, at the same time, he had been smitten with poverty and bereavement. He had, therefore, reason for his sorrow. He had no comforts left and every arrow of grief was sticking in his flesh. If he groaned, he had reason to groan.

His were not sorrows which he had imagined. They were real and true and, therefore, he asks this question first, “Does the wild ass bray when he has grass? Or bellows the ox over his fodder?” If these creatures lift up their notes of complaint, it is when they are starving. When the wild ass cannot find a mouthful of grass, anywhere, then his complaint is heard far and near. When the ox at the stall has no fodder—when he is fastened there and no farmer brings him provision—then he lows and there is good reason for his bellowing. Job seems to say, “I do not complain without cause. If I still enjoyed my former comforts, or even a tithe of them, you should hear no voice of murmuring from me. But I am tried to the utmost. I am grievously afflicted and there is overflowing cause for my moaning.”

He had lost all care to breathe. The zest of life was gone. No joy remained to make existence worth the having. He was like one who finds no flavor in his food and loathes the morsel which he swallows. That which was left to him was tasteless as the white of an egg—it yielded him no kind of comfort. In fact, it was disgusting to him. He was fed, he says, upon meat which yielded him no solace. “The things that my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat.” Therefore, he virtually asks his friends, “How can you expect me to eat such meat as this without sighs and tears? Can that which is unsavory be eaten without salt? Is there any taste in the white of an egg?”

He means that everything about him had lost its flavor and life had become dull and dreary to him and, therefore, they must not wonder that he uttered words of complaint. The speech, also, to which Job had listened from Eliphaz the Temanite, did not put much sweetness into his mouth, for it was devoid of sympathy and consolation. If you read it at home you will see that it was worthy to be the first of a singular selection of galling utterances. Job, we must admit, was sufficiently acid, himself, and abundantly sarcastic, but his friends produced the irritation and took care to always repay him double for all his wormwood. For every hard speech of his, they returned compound interest. They grieved and vexed his upright soul till he said no more than the truth when he cried, “Miserable comforters are you all.”

Here he tells them that Eliphaz had administered unto him unsavory meat without salt—mere whites of eggs without taste. Not a word of love, pity, or fellow feeling had the Temanite uttered. He had spoken as harshly and severely as if he were a judge addressing a criminal who was suffering no more than he deserved. Looking at the speech—and looking at all his surroundings—poor Job feels that he has very unsavory meat to eat and he asks them whether they expect him to eat it without salt. They have given him something that is no more gratifying to him than the white of an egg and he enquires if they really think that he can accept this at their hands and thank them for their treatment.

We may now forget the much-tortured Patriarch, Job, and apply this text to ourselves. “Can that which is unsavory be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?” Three thoughts arise out of it.

I. The first point will be this—A LACK OF SAVOR IS A VERY GREAT NEED in anything that is meant for food. I am not going to deliver a cookery lecture and so I shall not enlarge upon the passage so far as it refers to the bread upon our table, or the food which we eat and drink. Everybody knows that all kinds of animal life delight in food that has a

flavor in it—and even “dumb driven cattle” will turn away from dry, flavorless food and will go a long way to find something that has a juice and a taste in it which suits the palate which God has created in them.

It is exactly the same with regard to the food of our *souls*. It is a very great fault with a sermon when there is no savor in it. It is a killing fault to the people of God when a book contains a good deal of what may be true, but yet lacks holy savor—or what, in other words, we call, “unction.” Somebody says, “Tell us what unction is.” I can much more easily tell you what it is not! You know a discourse when there is savor in it—and you also know when a sermon is dry, sapless, marrowless. And yet you could not state the difference in words. Some sermons could not even be suspected of anything like unction—their authors would sneer at you if you accused them of it!

But salt is still to be had. The fat things, full of marrow, are not quite out of the market yet. But what kind of savor is that which we expect in a sermon? I answer, first, it is a savor of the Lord Jesus Christ. Years ago, before ministers grew so wise as to question the Divine Inspiration of Scripture and renounce the Doctrine of Atonement, there used to be men in the country whose ministry was full of savor to the people of God. There were numbers of Christians in London who would go to the north, or go to the south, or go to the east, or go to the west to hear such preachers—and count it a great feast to listen to them! What was there about them? Were they great critics? I do not suppose that the good men ever *read* a work on criticism.

Were they profoundly learned? Assuredly they were not! Profoundly learned brothers were preaching in churches and chapels where there were more spiders than people! Those who displayed their learning and rhetoric had empty places—but these men were followed by multitudes! Wherever they spoke, the places were too small for them. Those who did not know the reason said, one to another, “What is there about these men? We do not see any peculiar talent.” And there was not much. “We do not see any profound learning.” And there was none to see. “We do not hear anything of advanced thought and liberal ideas.” No, these good men were innocent of these modern diseases!

Yet there are people of God tonight, now gray-headed, who remember the happy hours they spent, and the joyful seasons they knew while hearing these men, and how they journeyed home, perhaps, seven or eight or 10 miles from such a sermon and only wished they could go again the next night, when their labor was done, to be fed again! What was it that made this preaching so attractive, so edifying? What drew the Lord’s people so far? What evoked such enthusiasm? Why, it was that the preacher spoke of his Lord and never wandered from the Cross! When we were children we learned Dr. Watts’ Catechism of the Bible and I remember one question—“Who was Isaiah?” and the answer was, “He was that Prophet who spoke more of Jesus Christ than all the rest.”

Who were these men, then, that were followed by God’s people so earnestly? They were men that spoke more of Jesus Christ than all the rest! You have read Dr. Hawker’s Morning and Evening Portions, perhaps? I do not suppose that you have learned much of fresh exposition from them, or that you have been struck with any great originality of idea in them. But if you have read them profitably you have said to yourself, “Well, there is this one point in Hawker, his subject is Christ on the first of January, Christ on the last of December and Christ all the other days of the year.” He speaks of nothing else but Christ! He seems to bring forth the Lord Jesus in his portions every day as a matter of course, just as your maid always puts the bread on the table, whatever else she does *not* place there.

So it was with Hawker and men like he—Christ Crucified was their All in All. Their dear Lord and Master was never long absent from their discourses. If they preached doctrine, it was “the Truth of God as it is in Jesus.” If they preached experience, it was “to know Him and the fellowship of His suffering.” And if they went into practice, as they did, their idea of holiness was to be made like Jesus and to follow Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. Now, I do not believe a sermon can have savor in it unless it has Christ in it, for He has the savor of all good ointments and there is no sweetness without Him!

What shall we say of Him? “Your name is as ointment poured forth; therefore the virgins love You.” His name is so fragrant that it perfumes Heaven itself! Jehovah smells a savor of rest in the name, Person and work of His well-beloved Son. Therefore an essential to savory meat is that it shall have Christ in it! He has said, “My flesh is meat, indeed, and My blood is drink, indeed.” And there is no meat and no drink that has such savor in it as this! Oh, that we might hear more of a crucified Christ in all our places of assembly!

The next necessity to secure savor is a devout spirit in the preacher—a savor of devotion. I am trying to explain savor by not attempting a definition, but by noticing its accompaniments. Why, those men who have now gone to Heaven,

whom you used to hear, seemed to be praying while they preached! Their sermons were devotions as well as discourses! Their rhetoric was rapture, their oratory was emotion. Their preaching came from the heart, but it came also from “the deep that lies under,” that secret reservoir of the everlasting Truth of God which is opened up by the Spirit to those who know the Lord, and to none else! They could say, “All my fresh springs are in You.” They drew up the Truth of God, which they preached out of this deep—out of the very heart of God!

They preached the Gospel of Grace as men that knew it, loved it, lived on it! It was no irksome task to them to speak of Christ and Grace, and pardon and Covenant faithfulness. You could not always see traces of elaboration or even of preparation about their utterances—you could see something better—the sparkling salt of Divine Grace! If the midnight oil had not smeared their sermons, the unction of the Spirit had anointed them! Their heart was inditing a good matter, for they spoke the things which they had learned touching the King! They spoke with such cheerfulness and reverence that it was good to hear them! They spoke with profound belief that what they said was Infallibly true, for had they not received it fresh from the Spirit of God?

Coming from *their* heart, it went to *your* heart—and by *their* realizing faith *you* were helped to believe it joyfully! It is an evil sign when a teacher of the Truth of God does not, himself, believe it, for thus he becomes a virtual spreader of error. David said, “I believed: therefore have I spoken.” Do you not believe, Brother? Then go home and be quiet till you do! At least, do not come into the pulpit until you know what your Lord would have you say. Woe to the man who lets the smoke of undried wood come from off his hearth and blow into poor seekers’ eyes! We need live coals from off the altar—and the less doubt-smoke the better!

Where a man has evidently been with God to learn His Truth and has been baptized into the everlasting spirit of that truth and, therefore, speaks what he knows and testifies what he has seen in the fear of the living God, there is a savor about his witness and the saints discern it gladly. This holy savor cannot be imitated or borrowed! It must come of personal assurance. It is a holy thing and the composition thereof is known only to the great Giver of all spiritual gifts, the Lord, Himself. It is a holy anointing oil which comes not of man’s flesh and is far removed from all carnality. It never comes on any man except as it descends from Him who is “the Head,” and so drops even to the skirts of His garments. From Christ, alone, the true anointing comes, and blessed is he who is made partaker with Him.

Very well, then, as food without savor is an evil and undesirable sort of food, so is all Christian teaching unacceptable if it lack the savor of Christ and of devotion. Another matter goes to make up sweet savor in a discourse, and that is a savor of *experience*. You used to delight in those men because they had tasted and tested the doctrines which they preached. The younger Brothers were somewhat at a discount because, you said, “That good Brother speaks fluently, but he cannot have experienced so much as the man of God under whom I have now sat for many years.” You prefer to have the Truth of God spoken to you by one who has felt for *himself* the renewing, upholding and comforting power of Divine Grace.

And I cannot blame you for your liking. If the preacher has done business on great waters, in deep soul trouble, or personal affliction, so much the better for you. If he is one who loves much because much has been forgiven him, so much the better for you. If he is a man conscious of his own infirmity and weakness, who speaks humbly of himself as out of the very dust, though he speaks confidently the word from Heaven, so much the better for you! Such experience puts a kind of spice into the food which he presents to you. It is so in all our communications one to another. We do not speak with certainty of edification unless we speak of what we have, ourselves, enjoyed.

I have been greatly benefited by hearing an aged blind man stand up and tell of the faithfulness of God to himself. I have been much encouraged, at times, by hearing a poor but gracious woman near to the gates of death telling with tears in her eyes of the goodness of the Lord to her. Testimonies from such people have weight in them. These people do not play at religion! Poor and tried people; people with aches and pains; people who have none of this world’s comforts; people on the borders of the grave tell us of the great Father’s love—and when they do so, there is great force of conviction in their testimony. We attach weight to every word they say because their *experience* is taken into consideration.

I never heard a man who spoke more to my soul than dear Mr. George Mueller. The sermon that I heard from him was like an address to a Sunday school, it was so simple and unadorned. But then there was the man behind it—that simple-hearted child of God who has believed the promises and has gone on doing wonders such as astonish all beholders! That man has no more doubt about God’s answering his prayers than he has about two times two making four—why

should he have? He acts out the Truth of God which he has received—why shouldn't he? Entertaining no modern questions and no ancient questions, either, he triumphs by *knowing* the Truth of God and *living* the Truth of God, and *rejoicing* in the Truth of God! Such a man is a pattern and example to us all. And there is a precious savor in what he utters because he speaks experimentally of Truths which he has carried out in his own life.

Thus three things help to make up savor in sermons—*Christ* as the doctrine, *devotion* as the spirit and *experience* as adding weight to testimony. But these three things are not the whole of it. There is a sacred something—it is not nameless, for I will name it, by-and-by—it is a heavenly influence which comes into man, but which has no name among the things that belong to men. This sacred influence pervades the speaker, flavoring his matter and governing his spirit—while, at the same time, it rests upon the hearer so that he finds his mind awake, his faculties attentive, his heart stirred. Under this mysterious influence the hearer's spirit is in a receptive condition and, as he hears the Truth of God, it sinks into his soul as snowflakes drop into the sea. He finds himself warmed, cheered, comforted and stirred up as fainting men are apt to be when refreshed after a long fast.

Now, what is this? From where comes this savor? In a word, it comes of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit bears witness with the Word of God upon the quickened heart and conscience of the people of God—and that Word of God becomes life, light and power to them. All this we greatly need! And if we have it not, what shall we do? I have often trembled as I have come to preach here lest I should have to speak among you without the help of the Divine Spirit. It would be much better to be silent. I could almost wish that we had the liberty of our Quaker friends just to sit still until we feel that we are moved to speak, for sometimes we might do better to wait without a spoken word for the hour and a half rather than for one of us to talk without the guidance of the Spirit of God!

Pray much, Beloved, that there may be a great deal of dew about—that heavenly showers may fall on us and on all the Churches of God! Let our belief in the Holy Spirit never become a mere compliment which we feel bound to pay Him, but in deep and reverent sincerity may we acknowledge that He is the great Worker in the Church—the real actor and doer of the wondrous works of quickening, saving and comforting! Let us wait upon Him with lowly spirits, feeling that we can do nothing without Him, but that if He is with us then all is well. Take away from any preaching or any teaching Christ as the subject, devotion as the spirit, experience as the strength of testimony—and the Holy Spirit as being All in All—and you have removed all the savor!

And what is left? What can we do with a savorless Gospel? “Can that which is unsavory be eaten without salt? Is there any taste in the white of an egg?” They said of a Brother, the other day, that he liked savory doctrine. “He had a sweet tooth,” they said. It was said in scorn, but if there is anything to be scoffed at in *that* matter, I desire to be a partaker in the reproach, for I have a sweet tooth, myself! I like such books as have savor in them and I declare to you that whatever scorn it brings upon me, I think that the majority of modern books seem to me to be fit for nothing but to be burned! The old theology has the sweetness and the savor in it which the people of God delight in and I, for one, mean to stick to it, for I cannot eat the white of your eggs—I cannot endure your unsavory meat!

I must hear of the electing love and Covenant purpose of the Father—this is savory meat such as my soul loves! I must have teaching that is full of Christ, the Doctrines of Grace and the Holy Spirit, or my soul will die of famine! This is my first head.

II. Our second remark is this. I find a rendering given to the text, which, if it is not absolutely accurate, nevertheless states an important truth, namely, that THAT WHICH IS UNSAVORY FROM NEED OF SALT MUST NOT BE EATEN. I shall only mention this second head as a note of caution. A word to the wise suffices. There is a great deal in this world which is unsavory for lack of salt. I mean in common conversation. Alas, it is easy to meet with people—even people wearing the Christian name—whose conversation has not a particle of salt in it. Nothing that tends to edification is spoken by them. Their talk has an abundance of gaiety, but no Grace in it. They exhibit any amount of frivolity, but no godliness.

In other conversation there is weighty information and solid upon common matters, but there is a lack of that spirit which God's people desire to live in, for the Lord Jesus is forgotten. Someone said to me, the other day, “When we were young people, we knew many good old folk who used to meet together and talk about the Lord Jesus Christ by the hour together. And we used to sit and wonder whether we should ever join in such talk as that. But where do you hear it now?” So I said to him, “I hope that we can hear it in a great many places.” He said, “I do not meet with it. I find that

the ordinary talk among professors has not much in it for the helping of souls onward towards Heaven.” I do not profess to form a judgment on this matter, but I will say this—it is a great pity if holy conversation is a scarce commodity—and it is well for you and for me to get away from that conversation which does not benefit us. If there is no salt in conversation, it will be unsavory to a true Christian spirit, and the less he has of it, the better.

Again, there is some talk in the world—I hope not among professors—which has no salt in it even of common morality and, consequently, it corrupts and becomes impure and obnoxious. Old Trapp says, somewhat roughly, that it is full of maggots and that is, perhaps, what Job meant. That is to say, many persons use coarse allusions and evil suggestions—to such things shut your ears! Things are often said which sparkle, but the flash is born of decay. The wit which owes its pungency to sin is of the devil. The brilliance which comes of corruption is not for holy eyes. Oh, child of God, never tolerate it in your company! If it is not in your power to stop evil communications, remove yourself out of their reach. It is not for us to associate with those whose lips are cankered with lascivious words.

We have enough within these gunpowder hearts to make us afraid to go near the forge when the sparks are flying about. Let us keep ourselves from ever permitting corrupt communication to proceed out of our own lips—that would be horrible, indeed. Let us avoid all company in which the purity of a renewed heart would be in danger of taint. Yet I fear that in our daily avocations we shall have grave cause to watch against the things which are unsavory and corrupt, for the preserving salt is not so abundantly used in these days as it ought to be.

Now, the same thing is true, not only of common conversation, but of a great deal of modern teaching. Have nothing to do with teaching that is tainted with heresy, Brothers and Sisters! If a man’s discourse has not salt enough in it to keep false doctrine out of it, it is not the kind of food for you. Clean provender is not so scarce that you need to eat carrion. Some like their meat rather high and there are hearers who are inclined to a preacher who has a sniff of heresy about him. But, as for us, our taste conducts us where salt is found. Where Grace is lacking we are not eager to be feeding! The banquets of the Truth of God need not be supplemented by the tables of error. But I shall not dwell upon this because I require all my time for the third head.

III. The third point is that **THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS IN THE WORLD WHICH NEED SOMETHING ELSE WITH THEM.** “Can that which is unsavory be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?” There are many things in this world which we cannot tolerate by themselves—they need seasoning. One of the first of these may read us a lesson of prudence, that is, reproof. It is a Christian duty to reprove a Brother who is in a sin—we should speak to him with all gentleness and quietness—that we may prevent his going farther into evil and lead him back to the right way.

But will you please remember, Brothers and Sisters, that the giving of reproofs is delicate work and needs a delicate hand. It was said of good Andrew Fuller that frequently he gave a rebuke so severely that it reminded you of one who saw a fly upon his Brother’s forehead and seized a sledge hammer to knock it off. It is the habit of some Brethren to do everything forcibly. But in this case one needs more love than vigor, more prudence than warmth, more Grace than energy. Some persons have a very quick eye for the faults of others and they have a ready tongue to descant upon them when they perceive them—to all which they add a tendency to exaggerate the importance of the fault.

Now, these Brethren always reprove in a wrong way. Listen. One of them cries—“Come here, Brother! Come here. Let me take that beam out of your eye.” The aforesaid “beam” is really only a gnat and the Brother who is addressed becomes indignant at such injustice and will not have his eye touched at all. Why destroy your own influence by such un wisdom? If the gnat can be removed, well and good. But if you will ruin the eye in the process, would it not be better to leave it alone? We have known persons who, to spread the Truth of God, have killed love, which is the Truth of God’s life. They wish to set a Brother right in doctrine and, in order that his sight may be clearer, they knock his eyes out and call it “controversy.”

It is one thing to be “valiant for the truth,” and quite another thing to be bitter for your own opinion. Rebuke, however kindly you put it, and however prudently you administer it, will always be an unsavory thing! Therefore, salt it well. Think over it. Pray over it. Mix kindness with it. Rub the salt of brotherly love into it. Speak with much deference to your erring friend and use much tenderness, because you are not faultless yourself. Speak acknowledging all the excellences and virtues of your Brother which may, after all, be greater than your own. And try, if you can, to wrap up what you have to say in gentle words of praise for something else in which the friend excels. Express the rebuke in one of your

Master's sentences, if you can find one that will exactly fit. Give your patient the pill silver-coated with gentleness—it will be received the more willingly and have none the less efficacy.

If you speak unkindly, the reprov'd one may turn round upon you in anger. And if you ask him why he is angry, he may answer, "Can that which is unsavory be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?" Do not expect your neighbor to eat your eggs without salt! Do not expect him to receive your words of rebuke without the true kindness of voice and spirit which will act as salt. Be not silent about sin, but be not harsh in your rebuke of it. Savor your admonitions with affection and may the Lord make them acceptable to those who need them.

Now, for other matters which many people do not like by themselves. I mean the Doctrines of the Gospel. The true Doctrines of the Gospel never were popular and never will be, but there is no need for any of us to make them more distasteful than they naturally are. The human heart especially revolts at the Sovereignty of Divine Grace. Man is a king, so he thinks, and when he hears of another King, he straightway grows rebellious. Man would have God bound hand and foot to give His mercy as *man* likes—and when the Lord defies the bond and declares, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion," man burns with wrath!

When the Lord says, "It is not of him that wills or of him that runs, but of God who shows mercy," man is up in arms! He will not tolerate the Divine prerogative. It becomes us who preach this doctrine to take care that we do not add needless offensiveness to it. Not one of the Doctrines of Grace is palatable to natural man. He does not like the truth of Total Depravity. Over that he grows exceedingly angry. He calls it a libel upon the nobility of human nature. I have often read of human nature as a noble thing, but I am sorry to say that I have never *seen* it in that aspect. I am told that our fallen nature is sublime and that we defame mankind when we speak of them as altogether fallen and say, "There is none that does good, no, not one." It is little wonder that this is unsavory to carnal pride!

As to the doctrine of Justification by Faith Alone, Mrs. Toogood stamps her foot at such teaching—is she to be none the better for all her good works? Mr. Good-Enough gnashes his teeth at the idea that human merits cannot save! He cannot endure to hear that we must be saved by faith in Jesus Christ and that the most moral and excellent need Christ just as much as the most depraved and abandoned! Carnal minds have no taste for the Gospel—they rave against the system of theology that glorifies God! Man wants to be the great MAN and he would have God to be the little god and then he will be satisfied. But if God is set on high as being All in All, then straightway many are offended.

Brothers and Sisters, since we need people to receive these doctrines, what must we do? We must mix an abundance of salt with them! If the Gospel is distasteful, we must add flavoring to it. What shall it be? We cannot do better than flavor it with *holiness*! Where there is a holy life, men cannot easily doubt the principles out of which it springs. If it is so that men and women are kindly, generous, tender, affectionate, upright, truthful, Christ-like because of the doctrines they hold, then the world begins to think that there must be truth in those doctrines! The evangelical school must always draw its strongest arguments, first, from the Gospel and, next, from the lives of its believers—and if we cannot point to those who profess this faith as being famous for holiness—what will the world say?

In former ages, holy living has been our battle-ax and weapons of war. Look at the Puritan age. To this day it is the stumbling-block of infidelity! In these times it is very common to laugh at the Puritans and to say that their faith is worn out and that we have got beyond their teaching. And yet the very same men who say this cannot read Carlyle's writings without marveling at Oliver Cromwell and the great men who trooped around him. Do they never say to themselves, "Upon what meat did these men feed that they have grown so great?" They cannot turn to the lives of the Puritans without reading how they saturated all England with godliness, till, as you passed down Cheapside in the morning, you would have noticed that there was scarcely a single house in which the blinds were not drawn down because the inhabitants were at family prayer!

The whole land felt the force of the Truth of God and righteousness through these men—these poor, benighted, foolish Puritans whom our boys fresh from college call by names. In their contests for the Truth of God, the Puritans were as mighty as Cromwell's Ironsides in the days of battle when they drove the foe before them like chaff before the wind! Then there followed an age of driveling in which our Non-conformity existed—but gradually dwindled down, first into Arminianism and then into Unitarianism—until it almost ceased to be. Men know that it was so and yet they would act it all over again! They read history and yet demand that the old Doctrines of Grace should again be given

up—and the experiment be tried again of starving our churches with human philosophies. Oh, fools and slow of heart! Will not history teach them?

No, it will not if the Bible does not. If they hear not Christ and His Apostles, neither will they believe even though another Unitarian ghost should pass before their eyes. Surely evil days are near unless the Church shall again clasp the Truths of God to her heart! But I diverge. The point I had in hand was this—that in the case of the Puritans, their doctrines were rendered respectable and forceful by their glorious lives—and it must be so now. Holy *living* must salt our doctrines! We must be like Christ that men may believe what we have to say about Christ!

Now, a third egg which cannot be eaten without salt is affliction. Afflictions are very unsavory things. I think I hear one say, “I should not mind any affliction except the one which now oppresses me.” Brother, you speak as other foolish Brethren have done before you! This has been my language in *my* turn! Somebody sitting next to you would not mind your affliction at all—at least that is what he thinks! He thinks it is his own cross which is so galling. The loads borne by people in yonder street have no great weight for you. But if you had to carry a sack of flour, yourself, the sack would prove very heavy. We all know the weight of our own burden and we underestimate that of others. People in trouble know where their own shoe pinches—yet other people’s shoes pinch, too—and other people’s crosses are weighty. “No affliction for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous.”

Afflictions are unsavory meat. What is to be done with them, then? Why, let us salt them, if we can. Salt your affliction with patience and it will make a royal dish! By Grace, like the Apostle, we shall, “glory in tribulations also.” Look at those who endure constant infirmities. Do you know any? I do. A dear Sister has been blind many years and yet I do not know a happier woman than she. She has more visions of joy than the most of us, though her eyes are closed to the light of the sun. I know a Brother in the ministry who has lost his sight almost entirely, but he preaches more sweetly than he ever did! He has become a seer in our Israel, enjoying a depth of insight into the Truths of God which few possess. Truly the lame take the prey!

Some that are deaf hear the voice of their Master better than others. And so infirmities become things to glory in, since more of Christ’s power rests upon us. It is so when the Lord gives Grace to the poor man and he becomes content with his lot. Has he not far greater joy than the rich man who still craves for more? Many of God’s poor prisoners in the martyr days were happier in prison than they ever were out of it. In the days of the Covenanters, when they worshipped God on the bleak hill or by the moss side, the Lord was specially near to them. When those times had passed away and they went to plenty and sat with the congregation undisturbed, they said, “Ah, man, the Lord was not here today as He was out on the brae and on the hillside.” The Master was transfigured before His disciples among the mists of the glens. Then He wore no veil over His face, but He revealed Himself so clearly that the sanctuary among the hills was none other than the House of God and the very gate of Heaven!

The Lord salted their afflictions with His Presence and with the abundant power of the Holy Spirit—and so they enjoyed a sweet savor in them. It is even thus with you and me—

*“I can do all things, or can bear
All sufferings if my Lord is there.
Sweet pleasures mingle with the pains,
While His left hand my head sustains.”*

There now, Brother, do not go on eating that egg without salt! No longer say to yourself, “Here is nothing but the white, with no taste in it. I cannot bear to eat such loathsome food.” Put the salt in, Brother! Put the salt in, Sister! Have you been forgetting that salt? Have you failed to ask the Lord for Grace equal to your day? Grace to see that “all things work together for good to them that love God”? Be forgetful no longer, but throw in a pinch of salt! Then the tasteless thing will go down comfortably enough and you will bless the name of the Lord for it.

I will not detain you longer to speak about persecution, though that is another unsavory article with which salt of consolation is much to be desired. But, lastly, there is the thought of death. Is not death an unsavory thing in itself? The body dreads dissolution and corruption and the mind starts back from the prospect of quitting the warm precincts of this house of clay and going into what seems a cold, rarefied region where the shivering spirit flits naked into untried mystery. Who likes to sit down and think of his last hour—the corpse, the coffin and the shroud? The spade, the mattock and the falling clods make poor music for happy minds! Who cares for morgues?

Oh, but dear Friends, thoughts of death, when they are salted, are among the richest, daintiest things that ever come to the Believer's table! What is it to die? Is it not to end our pilgrimage and come to the place where the many mansions are? Is it not to quit the storm-tossed seas for the Fair Havens where all is forever bliss? Death strips the soul of its garments and, by itself, this seems a trying process—but season it well and you will long for evening in order to undress that you may rest with God! Salt it well and you will almost grow impatient of your length of days and look for your last hours as children do for their holidays when they may go home!. Salt it well and your heart will grow like hers whose husband tarries away and she reckons how long it will be before he will come home, again, to her house and to her heart!

You will cry, “Why are His chariots so long in coming?” I have known saints to salt their thoughts of death until they were transfigured into visions of Heaven and they began to drink of that wine of the Kingdom which the Beloved will drink new with us in the day of His appearing! Oh, happy spirits who can do this! “What salt,” you ask, “shall I mingle with my thoughts of death?” Why the thought that you cannot die! Because He lives, you shall live, also! Add to it the persuasion that though you are dead, you shall yet live. Thoughts of the Resurrection and the swinging open of the pearly gates and of your entrance there! Thoughts of the vision of the Well-Beloved's face! Thoughts of the glory that shall be yours forever and ever at His own right hand! These are the things with which to savor your meditations among the tombs.

As for you that are not in Christ, you must eat this unsavory meat and there will be no salt with it. I see you put it away from you. You say, “No, I do not mean to think of death.” Oh, Man, but you will *have* to die, and it may be soon. Oh, Woman, you will have to die—the seeds of death are now in your bosom. As surely as you live, you will have to die! And after death, the judgment. This is the meat which will be laid in your dish and there will be no leaving it. This is the white of the egg and you must even down with it, whether you will or not! It has no taste which your palate can enjoy. It has no savor about it but that of fear. Ah, when your conscience awakes, what will you do with the burning thought that, dying, you must go where hope can never come?

O Soul, if you pass out of this world as you are, you can never see the face of God with joy! You will be driven from His Presence and from the glory of His power to experience what it means—“Where their worm dies not and their fire is not quenched.” They say that everlasting does not mean everlasting. What then? Are the righteous to perish after a while? In these two sentences the same word must mean the same thing—“These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.” If eternal life lasts forever, so must eternal punishment!

When the righteous cease to be, the wicked will cease to be. When the godly cease their joy, the ungodly will cease their misery—but not till then! That is unsavory meat for you. The Lord help you to salt it, even now, by believing in Jesus and so finding eternal salvation. Amen.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307