

## “We Are What We Eat”

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by Bill Crews

In our time no small number of people is health-conscious and weight-conscious. It is no marvel, then, that the same people are diet-conscious. We have been told by nutritionists on every hand that, to a large extent, “we are what we eat.” To be sure, other factors enter into the picture — heredity, personality, constitution, habit, schedule, rest, exercise, but diet does play a major role in what we are and become physically. What is true in the physical realm is even more so in the spiritual realm. In that realm truly “we are what we eat.” We are told that over half of the world’s population goes to bed hungry, but it is a fact that far more than half goes day in and day out without any of the sustenance needed for the soul. Through Amos God said to ancient Israel, *“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord Jehovah, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of Jehovah”* (Amos 8: 11). What God said to Israel through Hosea, a contemporary of Amos, is equally appropriate in our day: *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee”* (Hosea 4:6).

The Bible contains the only food that can nourish and sustain the soul. Jesus said, *“It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”* (Matthew 4:4; Deuteronomy 8:3). The Scriptures are designed to furnish *“the man of God” “completely unto every good work”* (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Therein is found the water of life (John 4) and the bread of life (John 6). Both spiritual milk for the new and immature and solid food for the more fully developed are abundantly provided (Hebrews 5:12-14; 6:1-3; 1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Ephesians 4:11-15; 1 Peter 2: 1-2). It is the gospel that is the power of God unto salvation to those who will believe it (Romans 1:16). It is the word of God that is able to save our souls (James 1 :21). It is the truth that will make men free from the shackles of sin if they will come to know it (John 8:32). Only He who has the power to bring souls into eternal existence has the wisdom to quicken and uphold them.

The souls of men do not need and cannot survive on human wisdom, human philosophy, and human theology. What they must have to live and grow is not to be found in the religions or the religious creeds of men, in encyclopedias, in college textbooks, in the classics, in newspapers, in magazines, in best-sellers, in famous quotations, or in anthologies. The crying need of our day is for men and women, boys and girls, who will cultivate a proper spiritual appetite by hungering and thirsting after God's righteousness (Matthew 5:6), be willing to do the will of God (John 7:17), by delighting in the law of God (Psalm 1 :1-2), by longing for the spiritual milk of God's word even as newborn babes long for their mothers' milk (1 Peter 2:1-2), by loving Christ more than father or mother, son or daughter (Matthew 10:37), by seeking first God's kingdom and righteousness (Matthew 6:33).

An equally-pressing need of our day is for men who profess to be teachers and preachers of God's word to be precisely what they profess to be. James warned, *“Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive heavier judgment”* (James 3:1). Precious souls attend what are supposed to be Bible classes, and, over a period of many years, learn very little from the Bible. Immortal souls sit and listen to what should be declarations of what the Bible teaches and hear, instead, what mere mortals declare. The average member of the average denomination rarely reads his Bible and learns little of its contents after years of exposure to “Sunday School” and “Church.” Children attend many sessions of “Vacation Bible Schools” and learn a lot about crafts, games, entertainment and refreshments, but hardly anything about the Book by which their lives need to be directed.

In many, many churches that profess to be churches of Christ it is becoming more and more like this. In their longing to be accepted, in their embarrassment over the stigma of being labeled narrow and exclusivistic, many preachers and elders have decided that the Bible does not contain a binding pattern after all. Men who should be shepherds of souls are placing the charge allotted to them and for which they will give an account (1 Peter 5:2-4; Hebrews 13: 17) on starvation diets. From the pulpits and in the classrooms less and less of God's word and more and more of human wisdom is being taught. More and more time is given in worship assemblies and Bible classes to the discussion of social festivities. More and more space is occupied in weekly bulletins by the announcement of parties, showers, birthdays, anniversaries and get togethers. Surely there are brethren who have been in the Lord's church long enough to remember when preachers preached the gospel and sermons were filled with Scripture readings or quotations, when Bible class teachers filled their precious moments with information and lessons from the Scriptures, and when local churches were not committed to activities which are no part of the work of the church. There are still some churches that are striving to be like the New Testament pattern. We are trying to be one, and readers in this area are urged to come to our classes and assemblies and measure us by the Scriptures.

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