**“The Sermon. ‘Meats which God Hath Created to Be Received’” The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald 77, 30.**

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***The Present Truth*.**

A friend writes: “I am greatly interested in your articles on food reform, etc., but I should much like your exposition of 1 Timothy 4:1, 3, 6,” and asks us to note particularly the expressions, “commanding to abstain from meats;” “for every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused;” “for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer.” Several have expressed surprise that in our articles on the proper diet for man we have made no mention of this passage, and such others as Romans 14:1-3; but the reason why we have not is because they have no bearing whatever on the subject, and there is no occasion for referring to them. When, however, the question is asked, we are very willing to take time to consider their application. {ARSH July 24, 1900, p. 467.1}

In the first place, we hope that every reader of the *Present Truth* could conscientiously bear witness, that verses 1 and 2 plainly show that we are not among those referred to in this passage. However mistaken any may think us to be, we trust that none get the impression that we are hypocritical liars, and that no one has found anything in the paper which he imagines can be styled “doctrines of devils.” Faith in Christ will be found inculcated on every page, and that is the basis of all our health teaching. {ARSH July 24, 1900, p. 467.2}

As a matter of fact, the text in question needs no exposition, as it explains itself. It tells what certain ones will do in the last days. Who those people are, and just how they will command to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving, we must confess that we do not know. But we do know that the advocates of food reform, and of a return to the diet which God prescribed for man in the beginning, do not come within the range of the warning here given. {ARSH July 24, 1900, p. 467.3}

It should be understood by all that in the Bible the word “meat” does not necessarily mean flesh. It is the old Saxon word for food of any kind, and is not in itself distinctive. Whenever the flesh of animals is referred to in the Bible, the word “flesh,” and not “meat,” is invariably used. For example: “God said, Behold, I have, given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed, to you it shall be for meat. And to every beset of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green, herb for meat; and it was so.” Genesis 1:29, 30. Here we see that the word “meat” excludes all flesh of animals, since flesh was not included in the diet originally designed for any of the lower animals, much less for man. {ARSH July 24, 1900, p. 467.4}

And this, by the way, has a bearing upon 1 Timothy 4:3, since it tells us what the meats are, which “God has created to be received with thanksgiving.” One thing is most certain, that is that they do not include the flesh of any living creature. God did not create any beast, fish, bird, or creeping thing to be eaten; the only things which He created to be eaten are fruits and grains for man, and green herbs and vegetables for the lower animals; and therefore whoever advocates a return to the original, God-given food, is the last person in the world to be charged with commanding to abstain from meats which God has created to be received with thanksgiving. {ARSH July 24, 1900, p. 467.5}

But what about the statement that “every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused”? The connection settles that. The word “for,” which introduces the verse, shows that the statement grows out of the preceding one, and depends upon it. The term “every creature” in this instance is obviously limited to that which God created to be received. The warning is against those who command to abstain from food which God created to be received, which, as we have seen, does not include flesh; and therefore the subsequent remarks must be within the range of that food. The products of the earth have been sanctified by the Word of God-set apart for the use of man; flesh meat has not been thus sanctified, but has been permitted as a concession to man’s lust and hardness of heart. {ARSH July 24, 1900, p. 467.6}

Now that we have given that text all the attention that it seems to demand in connection with the food reform, we will notice one or two remarks that occur in a note accompanying the question. The writer says: “I believe I have in the past made too much of vegetarianism, but I do not do so now. When asked my reasons for abstaining from flesh foods, I simply state that what God first ordained for the food of man I find all-sufficient for me, and the most enjoyable.... I leave the side issues, and avoid contentions.” That is good, and is exactly the position taken in this paper, except that we have never advocated “vegetarianism,” and repudiate the name “vegetarian.” We are Christians, and believe that we are saved by the life of Christ, when we give it free course in us. We know that nothing that we can eat or drink or do can bring Christ into our lives; but we know also that “fleshly lusts” “war against the soul,” and that we may do very many things to keep Christ out of His rightful place in our lives; and inasmuch as every thoughtful physician will admit that flesh and all animal products tend to excite the lower nature, we submit that no one ought to lay this extra burden upon himself. It is not merely a question of health, although that follows right living, but it is one of spiritual-mindedness. {ARSH July 24, 1900, p. 467.7}

We also avoid contentions, for “the servant of God must not strive” about food any more than about anything else. The work of the gospel teacher is simply to set forth truth in all its fullness before people, “whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear,” and leave them to do as they please with it. His responsibility ceases with the faithful delivery of his message. So far are we from “commanding to abstain from meats which God has created to be received,” that we do not presume to command anybody to abstain from that which God has not created to be received. The Lord is our judge, and He is our Lawgiver, and for man to command, after God has commanded, is absurd presumption. God has shown us what is good, and has exhorted us to “eat that which is good;” and we are content with simply declaring His Word. We have no controversy with any. {ARSH July 24, 1900, p. 467.8}

Our correspondent says further, in relating his experience: “I do not drink tea; coffee I may drink once in a year or longer, cocoa no oftener as a rule. I often long for coffee, but very seldom take it, as stated, as I detest stimulants, after the inner man, as I believe they somewhat dull the conception of glorious truths.” {ARSH July 24, 1900, p. 467.9}

That is exactly what they do. But the statement, “I often long for coffee,” shows that our correspondent has not yet come to the Gospel basis of health reform. Healthful living is embraced in the Gospel, and a man’s Christian life is his whole life, including every act, which, whether it be eating or drinking, or anything else, is to be to the glory of God. But the Christian life is not a penance; it is not a continual longing for forbidden things. The Christian does everything that he has a mind to do, yet he does nothing that is contrary to truth and purity, because he has the mind of the Spirit. When God saves us wholly from the guilt of sin, He saves us from the love of it, so that our heart and our flesh cry out for God, and not for anything that will dull our sense of His presence. In Christ is all fullness, and those who dwell with Him in the heavenly places are “abundantly satisfied” with the fatness of the house of God, drinking continually of the river of His pleasures. {ARSH July 24, 1900, p. 467.10}

The true health reform which we advocate, which consists simply in taking into the system nothing except the pure life of the Lord, can no more be a burden than Christ’s life is. The gospel frees us from every yoke of bondage. The last thing in the world that we should think of doing, would be to deprive any person of any real pleasure or enjoyment. On the contrary, we hold out to people a way of life which is full of the joy of the Lord-one continual joy. To be continually longing for something, and to be fighting against that longing, is torture, and the Lord does not call men to the rack. He teaches us what is good, and then puts into our heart such a desire for the good that there is no room for longings after forbidden things. From personal experience in every wrong way of living, and also in recognizing and accepting only the life of the Lord, we can testify that the pleasure derived from the very eating of proper, God-given food, together with the freedom from any anticipation of evil results, the perfect health enjoyed, and the sense of cleanness, and the higher appreciation of spiritual things, are beyond all expression. The soul that has been in the bondage of corruption, cannot, when once freed, easily be brought to long for its old chains. {ARSH July 24, 1900, p. 467.11}