

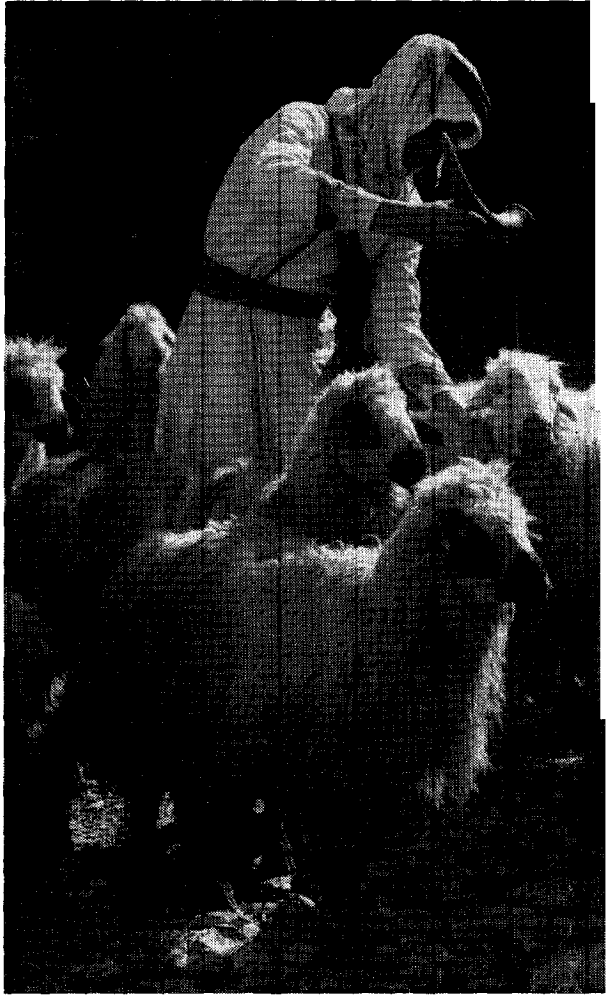
Food ^{FOR} THE Flock

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 6

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A MONTHLY PUBLICATION FOR THE
SUSTENANCE OF THE FLOCK OF GOD

FOOD for the FLOCK

A monthly publication designed to promote the careful study of the Scriptures, to edify and instruct the Church, to comfort and encourage the people of God, and above all, to bring glory to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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The interest in the efforts of Food for the Flock manifested by responsible Christians not only has been gratifying, but has been most encouraging. We do appreciate their kind words of cheer and counsel.

At the last meeting of the Committee it was decided, because of suggestions by others, to develop an earlier exercise and to open a new section entitled "Lambs of The Flock." This title indicates the purpose of this department. We would solicit the constant prayers of God's beloved people for our brother Ernest B. Sprunt who has undertaken this ministry, and for our brother Aubrey Delandrea who is to assist him, that they may be used in the feeding and leading of the lambs of Christ's pasture.

The more matured among the flock are asked to encourage younger Christians to follow this particular monthly feature, as well as to study the entire contents of each issue. Bible Class leaders among young believers definitely should induce their scholars to subscribe for Food for The Flock.

At a recent conference in a large city, it was discovered that one of the modern religious cults had entered the community in which the con-



DEVOTIONAL



Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Phil. 1:20b, 21a.

The Memorial Feast

David Craig

"And this day shall be unto you for a memorial, and ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord, throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out of the land of Egypt; this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generation," (Ex. 12: 14-42).

At an earlier date in Food for The Flock, I wrote on the subject, "The Memorial Name." Let me now suggest to you certain thoughts relative to "The Memorial Feast."

For a clearer understanding of the facts we are dealing with, it would be better to read the entire portion suggested at the close of the above quotation, for in this passage there is a nation-wide call. No one dares to ignore this call; all are expected to respond. Every one is invited to a feast, and this feast is to be a perpetual ordinance to be handed down through all succeeding generations. This feast cries, remember, remember, remember! Remember deliverance, emancipation, and freedom, all wrought by Israel's covenant-keeping God. Let us in imagination go back to that

night. The air is heavy with excitement and anticipation. The Divine stroke through the plagues has fallen nine times. Fear and consternation grips the Egyptians. A haughty and hardened monarch sits in wicked defiance of the Divine command, and is determined not to let Israel go. The zero hour approaches. God is about to strike again. His hand is poised. What a sickening blow is about to fall, a blow that will plunge Egypt into extreme grief, for it will affect every one from the palace of Pharaoh to the dungeon of the captive. Little do they dream of the aftermath that is to follow the sweeping death-stroke of Jehovah's sword. Glance at Israel for a moment. How are they feeling? For days they have been watching God's wonder-working hand plaguing their enemies, and putting to confusion the subtle skill of the magicians. They are waiting to see what God will do next. They know little of the final act that will mark the grand hour of deliverance from slavery and bondage. Hear them exclaim, "Is this the end of the iron furnace? Are we about really to be delivered from the biting lash of

the oppressor? Shall we be no longer the objects of his un pitying hate?" It seemed too good to be true, but it was true on that night much to be remembered by means of a memorial feast.

Fellow saint, does this remind you of anything? Does it not recall for you the time when you were Satan's slave? Does it not bring back to mind those heavy chains, the misery, the sorrow, the despair of sin? Listen! If I could but call you together, I would ask you to sing with me out of a glad heart, "My chains are snapt, the bonds of sin are broken, and I am free; O let the triumph of His grace be spoken, Who died for me." His ancient people were ever to remember their deliverance; let us do likewise.

How was this feast of the Lord to be observed? All was by Divine arrangement, for this was to mark their new beginnings. The previous six months were to be dropped from memory. Do you remember YOUR NEW BEGINNING, and the fragrant and blessed words, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more"?

As we look into Exodus chapter 12, what is it that holds our attention with an irresistible magnetism? Is it not "a lamb," "the lamb," and "your lamb"? As the significance of these words grip our hearts, we cry, "Behold, the Lamb of God," for surely here we have a foreshadowing of the adorable Lord Jesus.

Notice in the passage the seven outstanding verbs, "take," "keep," "kill," "strike," "eat," "roast," and "burn." They display the seven rays of Messiah's glory which throw their beams into the New Testament, and show us:

First, He was taken; foreordained before the foundation of the world but manifest in these last times for you, (1 Pet. 1:20).

Second, He was kept before the eye of heaven, earth, and hell, and during this test was proved to be without blemish and without spot, (1 Pet. 1: 19).

Third, He was killed, and yet He gave His life a ransom for all, (1 Tim. 2:6).

Fourth, His blood avails, for being justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him, (Rom. 5:9).

Fifth, He satisfies our souls, for Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, and we keep the feast, (1 Cor. 5:7).

Sixth, He paid the penalty of our sins, and endured the heat of wrath Divine, "Christ also has once suffered for sins," (1 Pet. 3:18).

Seventh, He saw no corruption, for there was nothing left over to decay, but which was burned with fire, even so, "He, whom God raised saw no corruption," (Acts 13: 37).

What a galaxy of glory! As we read, and ponder; we worship, and join with Rutherford singing, "The Lamb is all the glory of Emmanuel's

Land.”

Pass behind the blood stained door. See what peace prevails there; what joy abounds! The judgment is passed! The first-born lives! A complete family sits at the festal board spread with the roast lamb portioned without the breaking of a bone. What rich fare! They are eating of the head, the legs, and the purtenance, things which typify, the mind of Christ, the motions of Christ, and the motives of Christ; He Who did not sin, Who knew no sin, in Whom there was no sin. As we look we see **JESUS IN THE MIDST.**

At this feast there is also unleavened bread. Of what does this remind us? Surely this, that **THEY ONLY FEAST ON CHRIST WHOSE LIVES ARE HOLY.** Leaven is always typical of evil. As all leaven was excluded from that first passover supper, even so, we must, “Purge out the old leaven, that we may be a new lump . . . Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth,” (1 Cor. 5: 7-8).

There is another item on the paschal menu, bitter herbs. God would have them recall how bitter the bondage had been which had brought about the pangs of the slain lamb. As the firstborn would gaze at his cold lifeless substitute on the ground, as he would watch it roast-

ed throughly with the fire, he might have said, “What a price for my redemption.” Fellow-believer, journey by faith to Calvary, fix your eye upon the form hanging on the tree, and even although there is a deep-dyed blush of shame for that guilty past, the past that would have sunk you down to hell, look upon Christ’s sorrow; see His dreadful agony; watch Him die, and tell me this. Can you look, and not feel **THE ARMS OF YOUR AFFECTIONS** reach out, and wrap themselves around that bruised and bleeding form of your substitute? Do you blame the old English farmer who stood motionless, with tear stained face, in the great Art Galleries of London, gazing long at the reproduction of the crucifixion, for crying out, “Bless Him; I love Him.” Do you blame the others in the group, for joining their hands and repeating with him in unison, “Bless Him, I love Him”?

Outside the blood sheltered door, the dark dark night has passed. As the morning breaks, we sense the change. We listen to the woeful cries which fill the morning air. Poor bereaved Egypt! Grief indescribable is seen everywhere. There is not a house where there is no one dead. What a lesson we have here! Let us **WARN FELLOW TRAVELLERS TO ETERNITY OF IMPENDING JUDGMENT.** Let us tell them to hasten within the blood procured shelter. Let us make them

understand that all outside must perish in the eternal fires of God's judgment.

This memorial feast was to be observed by Israel when they had entered into the Land of Promise. Their great deliverance was never to be forgotten. Yearly they were to appear before the Lord, and none were to appear before Him empty. **THEY WERE TO GIVE TO THE LORD** as He had prospered them. (Deut. 15).

Israel's memorial feast reveals also that this remembrance of the first Passover was intended to provide incentives to a **KINDER AND A MORE LIBERAL TREATMENT** of their poor brethren.

Let us gather up the threads of

this great object lesson, so that we may apply its teaching to ourselves, "Who have known redemption from bondage worse than theirs by far." May we display our appreciation to the Lord; first, by showing a greater devotion to Christ in our service; second, by manifesting a more practical generosity in our returns to the Lord; and, in third place, by a more literal openness of hand and heart to our dear fellow believers against whom the winds of adversity have blown.

May the lessons of the memorial feast of Israel ever remain with us, and may there ever be to Him, the blessed Antetype, praise, honour, and glory. Amen.



DOCTRINAL



Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee. I Tim. 4:16.

Behold the Man

David Leathem

Jesus came forth from the Praetorium—wounded by the scourge, smitten by the soldiers, pierced by the thorns (John 19: 1-5). The Word, Who was God, had become flesh (John 1:14). He Who was in the form of God appeared in the form of man, (Phil. 2: 6-8). As a Man, He was about to suffer death on a cross. **BEHOLD THE MAN!**

The realization that Jesus the Christ can help those who are tried

rests upon an appreciation of Him as One Who has already entered into the experiences of human life, (Heb. 2:18), including those of injury and death.

The purpose of the incarnation of the Word of God is amply detailed in the Epistle to the Hebrews. "Since then the children are sharers (koinonoe) in blood and flesh, He also Himself in like manner partook (metecho) of the same." (Heb. 2:

14. R.V.). (While the common lot of the children is to share blood and flesh, the historic fact of the incarnation is implied in the statement that Jesus "partook" of the same.) He was made lower than the angels with a view to the death of suffering and shame, but has been crowned with glory and honor as a Man whose work has been achieved with triumph. (Heb. 2: 7-9).

He partook of human nature that He might die; that He might destroy the devil; that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest; that He might help those that are tempted, (Heb. 2: 14-18). He is a great High Priest Who is able to sympathize with our infirmities, because He has been tempted in every respect as we are, apart from sin, (Heb. 4: 14-16), for He knew no sin, (2 Cor. 5:21).

The apostle John also refers to the purpose of the incarnation: He came to declare the Father. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth," (John 1:14). "No man hath seen God at any time; the Only Begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared," (John 1:18).

In his first epistle, John states that "The Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil," (3:8). Through Satan,

Eve had been beguiled (2 Cor. 11: 3), with the result that the human race had become engulfed in sin and death. Man has been unable to meet God's claims and to rid himself of guilt. He cannot effect His own redemption and must turn to One who Himself is free from the condemnation of sin and death. In this Man—the Man Christ Jesus—God has found all that His heart desired. Finally God accepted this Man's sacrifice on the cross, a sacrifice whereby sin was dealt with for Eternity. Not only, therefore, "Hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself," (Heb. 9:26) but also, that the sinner might be justified (cleared from every charge) through faith in the Son of God, (Rom. 5:1). Hence, Christ plays the role of Daysman (Job 9: 33) that could lay His hand upon both God and man. "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, Himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all," (1 Tim. 2: 5-6. R.V.).

The Old Testament anticipated the incarnation of Jesus Christ. As the Seed of the woman (not of the man), He was promised after the fall in the garden of Eden, (Gen. 3: 15). Isaiah prophesied of His birth, indicating that a virgin would conceive and bring forth a son whose name would be Immanuel; i.e., God with us, (Isa. 7:10-14).

The New Testament records the fulfilment of these prophecies and

confirms the fact of the incarnation of God's Son; for example, Matthew refers to the prophecy of Isaiah in chapter 1:23, following (1) the genealogy of Jesus which links Him with the children of Abraham, and (2) the statement of the angel to Joseph which declares Him to be conceived of the Holy Ghost, to be the born Son of Mary, the Saviour of the world. Matthew also records the wise Men's question, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" (Matt. 2:2), and the fulfilment of the prophecy that "He shall be called a Nazarene," (Matt. 2:23). Following the message of John the forerunner, and the baptism of Jesus, Matthew chapter 3 closes with the testimony from heaven of God the Father. The experiences of the Lord in His temptation (Matt. 4) constitute a further witness to the humanity of God the Son.

Other New Testament writers also make reference to His human birth. Luke in his narrative states that Mary, "Brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger." (Luke 2:7). The conception and birth of Christ were the result of the Holy Spirit coming upon Mary; thus, by the power of the Highest overshadowing her, Christ was born, (Luke 1:35). Paul states that, "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman," (Gal. 4:4).

The writers of both Testaments thus declare the essential humanity

of Jesus the Christ, God's Son, and His complete identity with our race.

That Christ was human is further indicated in some of the Scriptural titles accorded Him. The title "Son of Man" occurs about eighty times in the Gospels alone; first of all in Matt. 8:20, "The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." The final New Testament reference portrays "The Son of Man" having on His head a golden crown of victory, (Rev. 14:14). We see His humiliation followed by His glorification, and all as the Son of Man.

His humanity is also indicated by the link with David's throne which is implied in the title "Son of David." God promised David, "That of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne." (Acts 2:30; Psa. 132: 11; 2 Sam. 7: 8-17). Christ's genealogy is traced through David in Matt. 1:6; the throne of David is therefore His, (Luke 1:32). Furthermore, Luke records graphically how the birth of Jesus took place in Bethlehem, the city of David, (Luke 2).

Jesus is also called "The Son of Abraham" (Matt. 1:1). The promises were made to Abraham and his seed, (Gal. 3; 16) including the land which his seed should possess, (Gen. 13:15) and which Christ, as the Seed and the Son of Abraham, will inevitably possess in a day to come, (Zech. 9:10).

The language of Scripture indi-

cates the extent to which He became identified with the human race. He was hungry, tired, and often wearied. Privation, loneliness, and untold sorrow were His earthly lot. He even wept tears as He entered into the perplexities of others. He was maligned, misunderstood, and misinterpreted by men. Finally He suffered the ignominy of dying on the cross. No wonder He can sympathize with His people in their trials!

The purpose of God will find its fulfilment in Christ glorified. He is presently the Head of the Church

(Eph. 1:22), and in the administration of the fulness of times, all things will be headed up in Him, (Eph. 1:10). Paul tells of Christ's subjection to Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all (1 Cor. 15:28), indicating that our blessed Lord will retain His perfect manhood for ever.

We, His people, enjoy in the present the benefits of His High Priestly work. It will be our joyous experience throughout eternal ages of bliss to BEHOLD THE MAN.

BIBLE STUDY

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. II Tim. 2:15.

Manuals and Time

James Gunn

“Reading maketh a full man; writing maketh an accurate man; and, thinking maketh a cautious man.” Such was the adaptation of a well known maxim made by a Christian to his son. Although impressed the youth felt that in its three parts it carried a suggestion of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Later, under the mellowing influence of experience, these rules became to him the methods of knowledge, proficiency, and sagacity.

In the study of the Scriptures these rules are invaluable. We learn to read prayerfully, to write exactly,

and to think deeply. Actually we read first, then think, and finally we preserve our thoughts in writing.

MANUALS :

For Bible study two books are necessary, the Bible and a note book, and for the sake of convenience two note-books may be suggested, one for temporary jottings, and, maybe, a loose-leaf one for more permanent work. As we read the Word of God we find precious things. Perchance in one chapter we read the name and the activity of a person, or we discover a certain theme, such

as "prayer," or "faith," or, it may be, we find revealed a certain attitude to man on the part of God. These things which attract our attention we note in our scribbler. Later, in reading elsewhere, we may find the same person named, but engaged in another activity. This we note comparing it with our former entry. At a still later date, we encounter the same person again. Immediately we turn to our scribbler and compare what we have discovered with our former findings. To illustrate; let us assume that we are reading through the epistle to the Colossians. First, we raise our hearts in brief prayer; then, we open our Bibles and notebooks. We do not read many verses until we see the name, "Epaphras," and we note it in our book under Colossians Chapter One. At the same time we notice what Paul calls him, "a fellowservant," and "a faithful minister." We also add that Paul declares that the Colossians had learned the grace of God through this brother. Sometime later, we are studying chapter four, and once more we see the name, "Epaphras." This time he is engaged in prayer because of his anxiety over the saints at Colosse. This we enter in our book. It may be a considerable time before we reach the epistle to Philemon, but on doing so, once again we find this same brother, "Epaphras." In our scribbler we write that on this occasion he is in

prison. With all this material about one man, we decide to condense and transfer it to our permanent records. We therefore put down the statements:

Epaphras: Col. 1:7: A preacher of the grace of God.

Col. 4:12: A shepherd anxious for the sheep.

Phil. 23: A prisoner of the Lord.

A little more effort will clarify each thought, thus;

Epaphras: An Evangelist of the gospel of Christ. (Col. 1:7).

A Pastor of the Church of Christ. (Col. 4: 12).

A Sufferer for the testimony of Christ. (Phil. 23). Here in this brother, we have an example to follow, and plenty of material for further meditation.

TIME:

An old cannon stands in Major's Hill Park, Ottawa, Canada. For more than a hundred years this veteran has been booming out the time signal exactly on the second of noon. Hundreds of persons check daily their watches by its thunderous roar, for correct time is priceless.

In Bible study time is a mighty factor. It has been well said, "Use your time well, and you will have ample time to use."

The Making Of Time :

"I am waiting for the time when I shall be able to study my Bible more intensively," is the vain hope expressed by many. Why should

we wait for time; time that never waits for us? We must make time. An inventory of each 24 hours will reveal shocking wastes of valuable time. The majority work 8 hours a day, and rest 8 hours in every 24, this leaves another 8 hours for the more personal affairs of life. In one week we are particularly responsible for 56 hours. How are we using these hours? Is it not possible to arrange these 56 hours to give at least 3½ hours a week to the study of God's Word? 30 minutes a day is surely the minimum. By rising earlier, by taking less time for dressing, by curtailing the unsavoury gossip, by the judicious control of the Daily Press, by the elimination of unprofitable radio and television programs, by the forsaking of aimless pursuits, and by the re-arrangement of domestic duties, minutes can be saved, and minutes mean hours. Let us make time for Bible study.

The Amount Of Time :

It would be improper to state how much time each should give in the day to this study. Some need more, because all minds do not acquire knowledge as quickly as do others. Each must determine how much, not how little, time he can use profitably. Then again, some work longer hours than do others, they spend more time travelling to and from their employment. Others have families of small children, and must assume time-consuming re-

sponsibilities. Each Christian must decide in God's presence the amount of time to use every day in the examination of the Scriptures.

The Appropriate Time :

Circumstance must determine the best period of the day which makes Bible study pleasant and fruitful. There are those who do not have to appear in their office too early in the morning; for them, Bible study might well be the first item of the day. Others who start work early in the morning find the evening more appropriate, and there are others who with a longer lunch-time can select a quiet period following their noon meal. The most suitable period of the day, like the amount of time to be used, must be decided in the presence of the Lord.

The Time Table:

In many cases, the lives of God's people would be greatly improved in quality and largely expanded in usefulness if they adopted a time table, but if the entire day cannot be methodically planned a study schedule should be prepared. This need not be elaborate, but it should be fixed, and strictly adhered to. If it be possible to spend only 30 minutes a day, the time can be divided; for example, thus: 18 minutes for the careful reading of the passage; 4 minutes to observe the different paragraphs or sections, with their respective themes; 3 min-



LAMBS of the FLOCK



He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, Isa. 40:11a

Personal Salvation

Ernest B. Sprunt

When asked if she were saved, a young woman replied, "Well, I know that I am not going to be in Hell, anyway, because I see that the Lord Jesus paid my debt of sin when He died on the Cross." She had just accepted Him as her own personal Saviour, but knew only a little of all that such a decision meant to her.

Yes, it is indeed true that such an one is delivered from Hell, according to John 3:16, for God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Also, Romans 5:9 confirms this thought by stating that, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

If we think of sin as a debt, then the Son of God Himself settled that account forever by His suffering upon the Tree, as the young lady discovered. The word which Paul wrote to Philemon concerning Onesimus (verse 18), is virtually the language of the Man of Calvary on behalf of the guilty, penitent sinner, "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account; I will repay it."

If we regard sin as a deep-dyed stain that has appeared indelible,

1 John 1:7 declares that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's son, cleanseth us from all sin. There is not a spot or trace remaining to meet the eye of a holy God.

Moreover, sin is found to be a barrier which separates between the sinner and God, barring the way into the eternal glories of Heaven. The answer to this obstacle is found in Hebrews 9:26, where we are told that He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all," says Isaiah 53:6, while New Testament confirmation of this is found in 1 Peter 2:24, where we are directed to the One Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree. How wonderful, and withal, how comforting to know that God, in His foreknowledge, removed all our sins from us and placed them upon His own Son. Then, by His suffering and death, Jesus put those sins away so that they will be remembered no more forever.

Ever keep in mind, young believer, that the whole work of salvation depends upon that which Another has done for you and not upon your own experiences or feelings. Your acceptance with God, and the forgiveness and pardon which you

enjoy, are based entirely upon the worth of the sacrifice. God has been so well pleased with this that He has raised His Son again from the dead, giving Him a place at His own right hand in the eternal glory.

Always remember, too, that your assurance comes through unwavering belief in the Word of God. Do not try to follow the pattern of some other person's experience but ever keep your faith resting upon the solid foundation of the Scripture of Truth. Romans 15:13 says, "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." Joy, peace and hope are all the fruits of believing faith.

In John 1:12 we learn that as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name. Then, from Galatians 4:7, we find that, being sons, we are also heirs of God through Christ. Now, an added thought comes from 1 Peter 1:4, assuring us that ours is an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in Heaven for us, who are kept by the power of God through faith.

To know the riches of this inheritance, and the fulness of the blessing of salvation, you must read your Bible carefully and with the prayer that the Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth. Thus you will uncover many priceless pearls and a

wealth of exceeding great and precious promises.

You will be enlightened also as to your responsibility as a Christian. In 1 Corinthians 6:20, you will read, "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." In 1 Peter 2:9, we have brought before us that we are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people (or, as the margin says, a purchased people); that we should show forth the praises (the virtues, or things worthy of praise) of Him Who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. His purpose in saving us is summarized in Ephesians 1: 12, "That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ."

Seeing He has purchased us with His own blood, thus bringing us into the divine family of eternal grace, we enjoy an abundance of privileges. However, let us never be content to receive all the blessings while giving Him nothing in return. Let us each one, from this day forward, seek to live our lives for His glory and, as we learn His will for us, determine to be obedient children. Such service will not be drudgery, as though we were slaves, but rather it will be delightful because of love for Him Who first loved us.



And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. Luke 24:27.

The Mystery Of Christ

T. Ernest Wilson

The last decade of the first century A.D. was critical for the infant Church. Its doctrinal foundations were being under-mined by heretical teachers with pagan ideas. As Paul had foretold, the wolf from without and the false teachers from within were doing their nefarious work. Chief among these were the Gnostics. Their name means "knowledge," and they professed to have specialized information that the ordinary believers did not possess. Of these there were two parties. The leader of one was Cerinthus, who taught that Jesus was the natural son of Joseph and Mary, and that the Divine Spirit took hold of Him only after His baptism, but forsook Him on the cross. Another party, the Docetists, denied the reality of His manhood and of His human body. They linked evil with the flesh; therefore, they claimed His body was merely a phantom.

The Apostle John, last survivor of the Apostolic Band, lived at Ephesus where Cerinthus also lived and taught. In these adverse circumstances, toward the end of his life, John wrote two books to com-

bat these teachings and to restate for all time the truth concerning the person of Christ.

History frequently repeats itself and today the same ideas are being taught by heretical cults. The vital centre of Christianity is Christ, and as Carlyle has said, "If this doctrine of the divinity of Christ had been lost, Christianity would have vanished like a dream."

The key to John's doctrinal books hangs by the door. His Gospel defends the essential Deity of the Son of God, and in the first paragraph four pregnant sentences clearly state this fact. In a similar arrangement, his First Epistle has in the opening paragraph four verbs which specifically describe His perfect humanity. The two passages are parallel and should be studied together.

THE DEITY OF CHRIST

In the four clauses of John 1: 1-2, are four walls guarding the person of Christ from external attack. Throughout this chapter John uses four titles of Christ, "The Word," "The Lamb of God," "The Son of God," and "The King of Israel." These give four phases of His character and work. For the present

we are concerned with "The Word." The term reveals our Lord Jesus Christ as the Spokesman of the Godhead. He is the visible interpreter in time of the mind and purposes of God. Critics would like to tell us that John copied this word from Philo the Alexandrian, but it is more likely that John is using an Old Testament term and is thinking of how God spoke to men in the past, and of how these revelations are now concentrated and consummated in His Son. Let us look at John's four opening clauses.

"IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD:" This takes us back to creation. The statement runs parallel to the first sentence in the Bible, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." These simple words have survived all the attacks of evolutionists, pantheists, and atheists. Astronomers quote fantastic figures in terms of light years for the birth of the suns, planets, and island universes. Their theories change with years, but we can put complete confidence in the inspired statement of the Word of God. At the origin of all things "The Word" was already there. John's first proposition is the **Eternal Pre-existence of The Word.**

"AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD": This implies, first, a distinct personality, and in second place, fellowship between at least two persons.

The doctrine of the Trinity is

denied today, but while Scripture does not use the word, the doctrine is woven into its warp and woof. God, the Father, purposes; God, the Son, redeems; God, the Spirit, proceeds from and executes the purposes of the Godhead. St. Patrick's object lesson of the shamrock, the three leaves on the one stem, plainly illustrates this truth.

"AND THE WORD WAS GOD": Here is the great essential statement. John Trapp the Puritan divine said, "This whole Gospel is a continue demonstration of Christ's Deity, which began to be denied, while the Evangelist lived, by Ebion, Cerinthus, and other antichrists." We may also add, by many in our day. John goes on to demonstrate that while here on earth, Christ possessed all the Divine attributes, yet at the same time He was in complete subjection to the Father's will.

"THE SAME WAS IN THE BEGINNING WITH GOD." Here the three previous statements are summarized and emphasized. The four expressions give us the length, breadth, depth, and height of the essential Deity of Christ. They set forth "The Word" as being Eternal, as being a Person holding communion with God, and as being in Himself Divine. "John does not stop to define his terms, but at the end of his prologue identifies this Eternal, Personal, and Divine Word as his own Lord and Master." (A. Mac-

laren). The remainder of his Gospel is the marshalling of the witnesses to His Deity, climaxed by the confession of the erstwhile skeptical Thomas as he saw Christ in resurrection, "My Lord and my God."

THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST

John's first epistle was written at the close of his life. In it there is a change of emphasis from his Gospel. While the Gospel was written to prove that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God (John 20: 31), the epistle was written to show that Jesus Christ came in flesh, (1 John 4: 1-4).

His introduction (1 John 1: 1-3) gives us four verbs which clearly describe the historic Christ and His manifestation among men. This first paragraph refutes the Gnostic Doctetic teachings prevalent in John's latter years which denied the true corporeal humanity of Christ. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon (contemplated), which our hands have handled of the Word of Life." The four words, "heard," "seen," "contemplated," "handled," show that He was audible, visible, intelligible, and tangible. They give a progression in the intimacy with, and in the revelation of the Perfect Man, Christ Jesus, in the same bodily senses of other men. He was manifested to the ears, eyes, minds, and hands,

of the people. Note how he begins.

"**THAT WHICH WAS FROM THE BEGINNING**": The beginning here is different from that in the Gospel. There it was the beginning of all things, the creation of the Universe; here it is the beginning of Christianity, i.e. from Bethlehem. The prepositions in the two passages are different and make clear this distinction. As far as Deity is concerned He was in (en) the beginning, but as touching His humanity He was from (apo) the beginning, i.e. from His manifestation among men. Then again the tenses of the verbs are different. The first two, "heard" and "seen" are perfect tenses and describe a series of experiences retained as a permanent possession; the latter two, "contemplated" and "handled" are aorist point tenses and indicate a definite incident in the writers mind. Let us look at them.

"**THAT WHICH WE HAVE HEARD**": First at the Jordan, and then for about three years under His incomparable teaching. After 60 years the words were still a part of John himself. In this Epistle he quotes many expressions from the teaching of the Lord in the upper-room, "Abide," "Love one another," "Eternal life," "The Word," etc. This truly is the manifestation of Christ to ears and hearts. "Faith cometh by hearing." The testimony of those sent to arrest Him was, "Never man spake like this Man."

"THAT WHICH WE HAVE SEEN WITH OUR EYES": Here the Lord is manifested visibly to sight. John's Gospel begins with, "Behold, the Lamb of God," (John 1:29), and ends with Pilate's statements, "Behold the Man," "Behold your King," (John 19:5 and 14). John is careful to assert that he himself was an eye-witness. He says, "We beheld His glory, glory as of an only begotten from a Father, full of grace and truth," (John 1:14 R.V.) He saw the scenes in Pilate's Judgment Hall, (chap. 18:15), at the cross of the piercing of His side from which flowed blood and water, (chap. 19:35). Repeatedly he refers to the evidence of his eyes. It was no optical illusion but something which a sensible fisherman, a reliable witness, saw and understood.

"WHICH HAVE LOOKED UPON (Contemplated)": The Greek word, "etheasametha", indicates a spectacle which broke upon John's vision, says David Smith. It is a point tense looking back to a specific incident in his life. This might be invertly illustrated by the occasion when John and Peter stood in the tomb. As the two men looked at the disposition of the grave clothes, and the head-cloth lying wound around (entulisso) in the place where the head had lain, it evinced to them that a miracle had taken place. The body had passed from the clothes leaving them collapsed in the shape and position of how and where the body had been, "And they saw and believed," (John

20: 3:8).

"AND OUR HANDS HAVE HANDLED": The physical body of the Lord had been made real to their sense of touch. John here employs the very word used by the Lord on Easter Day, "Handle Me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me have," (Luke 24:39). This was the tangible evidence that Thomas wanted. Thank God! Even skeptical Thomas was completely satisfied, and he reached the highest point of adoration in this Gospel when he cried, "My Lord, and my God."

Thus the prefaces to John's Gospel and to his First Epistle are complimentary, and give us the complete truth as to the glorious Person of our Lord. Another has expressed it: "The Eternal Son, equal in power, majesty, and glory with the Eternal Father, possessing all the attributes of essential Deity, in incarnation became what He never was before. He took into unity with His Deity, perfect, sinless, holy, humanity, never more to be divided or separated. In Manhood He still possessed the full plenitude of the attributes, the outward manifestation of glory being veiled or covered. While on earth He emptied not Himself of these Divine attributes but of their independent use. He was voluntary subject to the Father's will."

As we think of these tremendous truths, let us bow the knee and acknowledge Him as Lord of all.



THE FORUM



Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. I Thess. 5:21

Special:

Certain questions and answers from the Belmar conference:

Question: What is the meaning of the seven stars mentioned in Revelation 1: 20?

Answer: It was readily admitted by those who took part that there were numerous interpretations of the seven stars, stretching, on the one hand, from the claims of Christendom that they represent the bishops over each diocese, and on the other hand, to the suggestion by some among the assemblies of God's people, that they symbolize the leading brother in each local church, possibly the correspondent.

A closer scrutiny of the context of the passage revealed the following facts: First, there is a perfect antithesis between the seven stars and the seven candlesticks (lampstands). While these may be compared in as much as they both are to give light in the night, yet, they actually stand in contrast the one to the other. The seven stars are in the heavens, and are similar to those who turn many to righteousness (Dan. 12:3), but the seven lampstands are on earth. The seven stars are in the hand of Christ; first, in their security (John 10: 28-29), and second, in their preservation, for there they are unlike the wandering stars of which we read (Jude 13).

The seven lamps give light and are maintained by human responsibility, (For a parallel see Zech 4.).

In second place it was noticed that in each church among the seven there were two groups; first, that there were those who had ears to hear; second, that there apparently were those who had no spiritual hearing. Here again we have an antithesis that corresponds to the first one.

In third place, there are those who are overcomers in the midst of gross failure and declension, and in this a third antithesis was noticed. It was therefore concluded that the stars correspond to those who have ears to hear, the overcomers, and that the lampstands correspond to those who have no spiritual hearing, and who are not among the overcomers, and consequently must be among the fearful and the unbelieving, (See Rev. 21: 7-8).

It therefore became obvious that the seven stars represent that which is real and genuine, those who are truly the Lord's in the midst of profession on earth as seen in the seven lampstands; that is, the seven stars represent the spirit of real and genuine Christianity in the midst of the pretention and hypocrisy of Christendom.

In as much as the seven stars

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ference was being held, and had freely distributed its heretical literature. On their leaflets such bold anti-Christian statements as the following appeared: "The Trinity a Myth," "Jesus is not Jehovah," "Jesus is not co-equal with God." In our own day the apostolic prediction surely is being realized, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own hearts shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables," (2 Tim. 4: 3-4). It is therefore with much spiritual pleasure, and with profound thanksgiving to God, that we insert, in this issue, the excellent article by our esteemed brother Ernest Wilson, Angola, Africa, entitled, "The Mystery of Christ." This helpful exposition of the nature and personality of Christ deserves the closest perusal.

Words of sweet comfort as well as of instruction will be found in the doctrinal section by David Leathem, "Behold The Man." Read this article carefully and learn what the sinless humanity of our blessed Lord means to you.

Another heart warming devotional paper by David Craig, Ireland, will be found full of inspiration. "The Memorial Feast" is actually a supplement to his former contribution, "The Memorial Name." We hope to have others in this series from our beloved brother.

It has been thought proper to share with the readers of The Forum, the investigations into the purport of certain Scriptures as conducted at the Belmar, New Jersey, Bible Study Conference, March, 1955. The subject intensively studied was The Seven Letters to The Seven Churches of Asia, (Rev. 2-3). During the first session the subject was considered from the view point of its historical setting; during the second, from the angle of its prophetic application; and, during the third, from the appropriateness of its practical principles.

Some of the questions raised during the discussion periods of this conference will be given in The Forum along with a summarization of the answers submitted by various brethren.

If you have enjoyed this number, please take an interest in your fellow-believer, and introduce to him Food for The Flock.

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are stated to be the seven angels of the seven churches, it was suggested that, since the word angel is the Greek word for messenger, only the true and genuine, real believers in the Lord Jesus, could be characterized as God's messengers either to the professing Church, or through the professing Church to the world.

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utes for the entering of these in the day-book; and the 5 minutes that remain can be used to profit by reviewing this work, and the memorizing of the various themes found in each part of the reading. With these headings firmly established in the mind, meditation, during the remainder of the busy day, becomes a blessed possibility and a source of spiritual pleasure.

QUIET REST

Near to God's heart is quiet rest,
A place of love's sweet peace,
Where doubts and fears cannot molest
And mercies never cease.
A place where sin is cast aside,
No carnal race is run;
A place where we can e'er abide
In God's Eternal Son.

We there content do rest in Him,
Whate'er our lot may be.
And though our vision oft is dim,
We know that we shall see
The Blessed Saviour of the world,
As He in beauty stands,
With healing in His wings unfurled
And blessing in His hands.

For He shall come as lightning flash
With bliss this earth to grace;
With trumpet sound and cymbal clash
He'll manifest His face.
Before Him then all men shall fall,
And every knee shall bend;
They'll own Him Christ, the Lord of all,
Through earth from end to end.

Jack Donor.
