From Food for the Flock, 1955–1967

J. Boyd Nicholson Sr.

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The Shepherd of the Sheep (July 1955)

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The driver on the footplate, the captain at the nerve centre of the mighty ship, the pilot at the controls of the aircraft, each enjoys a place of honour in the eyes of ordinary folk. Because of the complexity of the mighty machines they control, they earn this place in the respect of those whose safety depends so largely on their skill.

There is also another person who is often a source of wonder to the onlooker. See him as he stands, his restless eyes sweeping the panorama before him; now peering into the dark shadows; now shielding his eyes from the brilliant sunshine. As we look at him, we cannot help but realize that he feels a great responsibility and a deep affection for those in his charge. He is a shepherd, covering his flock with the mantle of ceaseless vigil, listening for the slightest cry of pain or alarm from his beloved sheep.

Let us elevate our thoughts to the right hand of the Majesty on High, to the Blessed Person who fills all Heaven with His glory and beauty, the Great Shepherd of the Sheep. How complex are the needs of His flock, how vastly different their experiences, their desires and their capabilities, yet there is not one sheep or lamb that can raise a cry the Shepherd will not hear.

Such a cry as this went up long ago from one who longed for a closer walk with the Shepherd. This one was lonely, her very own flesh and blood had turned

against her and in the anguish of her heart she turns for comfort and help to the One whom she loves above all others. Listen to her cry; “Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon; for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?” (Song of Solomon 1:7). In this cry she reveals the character of her love for the Shepherd; it is personal and individual, “… my soul…” It is no fleeting fancy, but a profound affection, the love of the soul, and it is a present affection, “whom my soul loveth.” In her cry she also reveals a knowledge of the character of the Shepherd Himself.

The very fact that she directs her cry as a lonely, needy sheep to Him, reveals that she knew HIS OCCUPATION; He is a shepherd. O weary soul, discouraged, lonely, the butt of unkind words, lift your feeble cry to this One; He is no cruel, angry overlord, but a shepherd. He is the Good Shepherd in John 10:11, giving His life for the sheep. He is the Great Shepherd in Heb. 13:20, imparting His life to the sheep. He is the Chief Shepherd in 1 Pet. 5:4, reviewing the life of the sheep.

Furthermore, we see in her cry that she knew HIS POSSESSION. He has, not many flocks, but only one. There are other folds in that flock (John 10:16), but all the sheep of the flock are recognized by the fact that they know Him and they follow Him (John 10:27). How apt we are to forget the blessed truth that, though the wolf has scattered the sheep and they are to be found in many places, since they truly know Him, they are His.

Still more can be seen in her cry; she knew HIS PROVISION for He feeds them. What volumes have

been, and could yet be penned on the provision of the Shepherd for His flock. Israel's shepherd has given us a glimpse of this provision in the sparkling language of Psalm 23. In verse 2 of the Psalm we find the Shepherd supplies proper food, suitable to the nature of the sheep. In verse 5 it is prepared by the Shepherd Himself. What a blessed thought! Moreover, it is not only proper food, well prepared, but the supply is ample. In verse 5 we notice there is plenty of food, it is running over. O the bounty of His provision! Well might the wandering sheep cry out, "Why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?"

Yet another characteristic of the Shepherd is intimated by her cry, HIS CONSIDERATION. He makes them to rest. How often in the rush of life when, like the disciples in Mark 6:31, we have hardly time to eat, the Shepherd gently but firmly "maketh" us to lie down. That unexpected illness, that has caused the hot questions to flash to the mind, may be but the gentle consideration of the Shepherd for His sheep who does not seem to have either the opportunity or the sense to rest. So when the sun is high, the heat greatest, and the fever of life at a pitch ,"He maketh… to lie down."

Not only does she know there is consideration for the sheep, but she knows there is HIS CHOICE LOCATION where His sheep can rest, and this place she wants to find. In Psalm 23:2 we see He has a place of sweetness, the pastures of tender grass for restoration; a place of stillness beside the waters of quietness for meditation; and in Mark 6:31, He has a place of sparseness, a desert place, for separation to Himself from the rush and confusion of life. This is the place where Moses learned the mind of God for Israel (Exod. 3:1), the place where

the disciples learned the compassion of Christ for the lost (Mark 6:34), and the place where Paul learned the mind of God for himself (Gal. 1:17). Whatever the need may be, the Shepherd has a place to which His weary sheep can repair:

"There is a place where Jesus sheds
The oil of gladness on our heads;
A place, than all beside more sweet,
It is the blood-stained Mercy-seat."

Not only does she manifest a knowledge of the person and work of her Shepherd, but she recognizes that HE HAS COMPANIONS. Companions? Yet they do not keep Him company. They are under-shepherds, but they do not seem to be subject to His directions. Leaders they are, yet they do not lead her to their Master. They do not follow Him, since to be with them she would have to turn aside, nor are they united, for they have many flocks. Let us be wary of such professed companions, who attract to themselves rather than to the Shepherd.

The poor, needy sheep has raised her plaintive cry; will her Shepherd hear? Indeed He will. Will He heed? Immediately! Ah, how tenderly He thinks of her. Listen to HIS DESCRIPTION OF HER. "O thou fairest among women." "Can it be," she may ask, "that He sees some beauty in me, burned black with the sun?" Yea, He sees great beauty in her and calls her the fairest among women. Should not this cause our hearts to well up in gratitude and wonder, that in the eye of our loving Shepherd there is imprinted a beauty upon our souls, a beauty excelling all others, the very beauty of Christ.

He does not only encourage her but He also exhorts her. Hear HIS DIRECTION. "Go… by the footsteps of the

flock.” The first part of His direction to her demands action, “Go… go… and keep on going.” No relaxing of spiritual exercise will do, tomorrow’s progress cannot be made by today’s exercise. If “go” demands action, then “by the footsteps of the flock” demands selection of the path. It may be narrow, it may be contrary to reason and nature, but go we must. Then, let us select the path that is well trodden down by the feet of the countless followers of the Shepherd. This is no uncharted route, for the way is measured by the footsteps of the Good Shepherd and by those that have followed Him down through the years. Walking this path, we can sing:

“Sometimes ‘mid scenes of deepest gloom, Sometimes where Eden’s bowers bloom, By waters still, o’er troubled sea, Still ‘tis His hand that leadeth me.”

We could well imagine the narrative now at an end. She has cried, He has heard, heeded, and answered her, and sent her back into the way.

However, in the heart of the Shepherd there is still HIS DESIRE FOR HER; that she should feed her lambs beside the shepherd’s tents. The lambs must be looked after. Yes, but more than that, His desire is to develop in her the shepherd character, so that she will in degree reflect not only His beauty to His own eye, but also His love to those around her until the day when there shall be one fold and one Shepherd.

In view of that day then, let us take heart from this precious scripture, and lift our feeble cry to Him, our Shepherd. Let us forget the eloquence, the phraseology and the refinements of theological expression, and simply cry out our need to Him, like lonely David’s

“Help, Lord,” or sinking Peter’s “Lord, save me,” and we may be assured of this:

“His sleepless eye guards over thee,
His listening ear doth hear,
His mighty hand enfolds thee,
Then thou hast nought to fear.”

The Potter’s Portrait (January 1958)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 4 No. 1, January 1958.

Scripture Reading — Jer. 18:1-6; Isa. 64:8.

God in His wondrous grace, fully knowing our inability to comprehend infinity, has painted pictures for us in His Word. By these we are enabled by the Spirit of God Himself to learn something of His supernal character and glorious works.

In the 23rd. Psalm there is pictured the Shepherd. In bold relief this masterpiece has been before the eyes of the saints these many centuries, yet it’s full depth, its mysterious shadows never fail to draw the soul to that Majestic Figure Who is the focal point of that incomparable word picture.

Many other pictures spring to mind, each with its own peculiar value. As we scan these masterpieces, there is one that might not halt our gaze, perhaps because it seems to be rather plain, a little drab, with few objects of interest in it. Stay a while, and before long we shall see a rare beauty we would have missed had we hurried by.

Three things capture our gaze: a lump of clay, an instrument, and a potter. Our eyes are soon led to the able, strong, yet gentle hands of the potter, and we see the whole scene is portrayed within the confines of the potters house.

In a moment we discern the substance of this striking picture: The clay in the potter’s house, the instrument

under the potter’s hand, and the potter with a potter’s heart.

We think of the clay and notice three things characterize this lump.

Its locality: it was in the potter’s house. It was not always there. Not long before it had been part of all the clay in the miry pit. It had the same creation and the same character as the rest, and would have had the same end too, but the potter came, came right down to where the clay was, dug it up and made it his own, taking it into his house. No fragrance from it fills the potter’s house, no beauty of it ornaments that house, yet there it was separated from the clay in the pit, and brought right into the house and set nearby the potter himself. Thus we see in our picture, not just clay, but ourselves. We look to the hole of the pit from whence we have been digged. Unlovely, unworthy, and unable to do anything but remain in the mire of sin until the day the Potter came, dug us out, made us His own, and put us in His house. Let us never forget the Potter’s labours on our behalf; it might have been, not the Potter’s house, but Hell.

Having noticed the locality of the clay, we think of its availability to the potter’s hand. It is not enough to be in the house; it must be near his hand. Again we discern ourselves. It is not enough to be made comfortable; we must be available.

Our thoughts develop. Locality, availability, is that enough for the clay? No, for it may be in the house, be near the potter’s hand, but if it is not workable it is worthless. Pliability is a prime requisite if the clay is going to be made into a vessel fit for use.

Pliability can be expressed best in the words of the Lord Jesus, “Not My will, but Thine be done.” How are we made pliable? How is the clay made pliable? It is by the application of water. The constant application of the water of the Word by the Spirit of God will produce in us that desirable characteristic, pliability.

We shift our attention from the clay to the instrument on which the potter works. It makes us think of the circumstances of life that whirl around the frightened soul. We often wonder what will happen next.

This is the instrument on which the clay is placed, that by its movements, and the skill of the potter, it will appear a thing of beauty and usefulness.

This instrument is a constructive instrument. Could it be that the reader is seemingly being whirled around by circumstance; Perhaps being forced into a situation over which he has no control? It may be you are called upon to pull up well-fastened stakes and move far from friends and the environment that seems a part of your very life. The question arises, Why? The wheel of circumstance is the very instrument the Divine Potter has placed you on, that He might fashion you into a vessel for His service and satisfaction.

As we ponder this picture, we notice that all the time the clay is on the wheel, the potter’s hand in on the clay. Those hands, though gentle are strong and marked by the hard labour of digging the clay. No easy task that! Already our minds think of other hands. The hands of the Great Potter that show forever the marks of His labour and love. Trust those hands and do not fear the whirl of circumstance, for though they work, they work together for good, to them that love God.

As we look at the instrument, we see it is a constraining-instrument. The clay does not determine the movements of the wheel. No, it is the wheel that moves the clay. Thus it is with us. It seems that circumstances carry us along in spite of our efforts to reverse them. Let us submit to them peaceably and find a rest of spirit and mind that possibly we have not experienced before.

Says one, how do I know that my circumstances are the will of God for me? Remember, we are not considering the condition of the clay, but the circumstances of the clay. For the answer to this question, we look at the instrument. Did it control itself? Did the clay control it? No. It is controlled by the potter.

What does he control? Both the direction and the speed. How much more the Divine Potter controls every turn of circumstance. He controls the direction, that is the "where," and He controls the speed, that is the "when." Did not Job know this? "He knoweth the way I take." Was not David confident of this? "My times are in Thy hands." What solid comfort this is to the worried saint, confused and fearful! Take heart, you are being wrought upon the Potter's wheel for a specific purpose, perhaps known only to the Potter Himself.

As we stand and direct our attention to the potter, we are impressed with his depth of character. The confidence with which he works proves his skill, that he is able: able to discern the great possibilities in the rude lump of clay, able to design a vessel for a great purpose and able to display the finished vessel to the praise of his glory. This one is no apprentice; he is an artificer who can begin with the shapeless clay and produce his own design as a tangible expression of his own thoughts.

How wonderful to think of our Blessed Lord able to save, able to keep, able to present us … (“us” mind you) faultless! When He does, I am persuaded that He will receive the homage and adoration He so rightly deserves.

Our eyes leave his face to look at his tools. We learn not only He is able, but He is gentle. No anvil stands by, nor do we see an axe with its destructive blade, nor is there an awl to pierce. Where are his tools? What are they? His hands! How gently he moulds the spinning clay into shape! Under tender pressure the vessel takes shape. How gentle, how tender are the Master Potter’s hands. We can all testify to that. How gentle have the Potter’s hands been upon us! Desiring no hurt, tenderly He works, that we may be usable some day.

By a careful scrutiny we discern another quality in the potter himself. He is patient. The vessel that he had planned, suddenly was marred. Perhaps as we consider this, our minds are already thinking of our own experience. The Divine Potter has wrought upon us, all seemed to be going well, when suddenly … marred. Perhaps the grit of self-will did it, perhaps, the bubble of pride. It may be that the mar was a mark of impurity. Whatever it may have been is of secondary importance. The fact is the vessel was marred. How thankful we all should be for the patience of the Potter! Instead of casting the marred vessel aside, He made it again.

Let me leave this word in your ear. Do you feel that you have missed God’s plan for your life? Do you feel that there has been so little for God? Now your little day is almost gone and you feel discouraged. Then hear this, He is patient and is both able and willing to make

something even yet out of your life that will still be for His glory … if … you will just get back to the beginning again. Remember, you are nothing in yourselves but unlovely clay. Make yourselves available to Him. Be pliable in His hand, and He will make you again another vessel as seemeth good to Him.

You may be faced with the problem of a career. Remember, He is able to make you a vessel for His use. Perhaps you are older, in the whirling circumstances of life, and you wonder at His dealings with you. He is gentle and will not allow you to remain on the wheel a moment longer than is necessary for His design to be wrought into your character. It may be that the reader is in the evening of life and retrospect brings to mind much uselessness and failure.

Here is the message for you, He is patient. He can, yes, make of you, a useful vessel through which He can bless many.

We are about to turn from the picture when, as though in the distance through a little window of the potter's house, a little patch of colour catches our eye. What can this be? It is the potter's field, the place where the hard unyielding clay is cast, the place that later is bought "to bury strangers in," at once a place of disuse, dishonour, and of death. The thought is solemn, we cannot play fast and loose with the will of God. There comes a time if the clay is unyielding and hard it must be cast aside into the place of uselessness.

Let us face it, it is either His will or ours, a submitting to His design or a rebelling against it. It is the Potter's wheel or the pleasures of the world, the Potter's hand or the world's fist. It is to revel in the enjoyment of that full

love from the Potter’s heart or languish in the potter’s field.

May it be “that He might make known of His glory on the vessels of mercy … even us, whom He hath called.”

Three Young Scientists (October 1958)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 4 No. 10, October 1958.

After the war, they found themselves taken prisoner to a foreign country. Not knowing the language there, they kept closely in touch with one another. No doubt, another reason for their intimate association was the fact that they had much in common. True, they were taken prisoner together and so they shared a common lot; they were also much the same physically, being strong and well, and the glow of health upon the cheek intensified the clearness of their eyes.

They were well educated young men, having graduated in science. Their enquiring minds, keen and hungry for knowledge, had driven them into many related fields of study, and as we come in contact with them, we are impressed by the quiet superiority of their personalities. These men were outstanding. Endowed with an abundance of natural ability, the young scientists also displayed an unusual degree of wisdom, a quality not found too frequently in young men.

Where are they now? Still alive? No, I am afraid we are not going to have the privilege of meeting them on this earth. They are dead.

As a matter of fact, they have been dead for some thousands of years, yet being dead their lives speak out one of the most challenging messages that young men, especially, in this day and hour could hear.

Young man! if you are interested in a soft life, an easy-going existence, a Sunday-morning-only religion that opiates the conscience, I am afraid you are not going to enjoy this article. It may be, however, that the young reader of this article is exercised about the will of God for his, or her, life. If so, read on and let each of us see how our lives compare with the experience of the three young scientists.

Their names were Hananiah, which means “Jehovah hath been gracious”, Mishael, which means “Who is what God is”, and Azariah, which means “Whom Jehovah aids”. Since we know that names are of great significance in the Scriptures, in discerning the character of the person named, we can learn that Hananiah was a man who knew something of the GRACE OF GOD, Mishael was a man who knew something of the GLORY OF GOD, and Azariah was a man who knew something of the POWER OF GOD (Dan. 3).

Here is a three-fold picture of the believer. Saved by the grace of God; kept by the power of God to behold the glory of God.

These young men excelled in three things; PURITY, for in Daniel 1:4 we read they were “children in whom was no blemish”. The lesson is obvious. If your life, and mine, is going to count for God it must be pure. Another wrote to a young man whom he loved and whose life he coveted for God and said, “Keep thyself pure.” There is no alternative for a clean life. We may preach or try to teach. We may talk, but if our walk is not according to the Book, the world will LOOK and smile and pass along.

They excelled in INTELLIGENCE according to the same verse 4, they were “skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in

knowledge, and understanding science," in fact in v.20 we read that the king found them "ten times better" than all his own men. Spiritual intelligence is a necessity if God is going to use a young man today. How is this arrived at? By getting to know the Word of God, burning the midnight oil, if need be, in the diligent search for the wisdom of the Most High. There is no easy way; time must be spent with the divine Teacher.

They excelled in DIGNITY, for we read that they "had ability in them to stand in the King's palace". Today, it seems we are plagued with a lack of this ability among us. Perhaps it is because we fail to discern the Imperial Majesty of the King before whom we live. Our conversation is salted with the jargon of the day, and our demeanour is sadly lacking the regality that should distinguish the young believer as a child of the King. A word of warning here … note the ability was "in them". It was not a "put on" thing. There are few things more obnoxious than "put on" attitudes, the plaintive intonation of a "religious voice", a pretended spirituality put on for the benefit of a visiting preacher. No, make sure it is the real thing, produced "in" the life by much experience in the Royal Presence.

Furthermore, they exercised three things: SELF-DENIAL, in chapter 1, verse 12 we read "give us pulse to eat, and water to drink". That is, they did without those things that were perfectly right and legal for them to have, things that were easily available to them. Now we know that as believers there is no specific injunction compelling us, in our day, to abstain from food. Yet there is much that teaches us to deny self even lawful things for the furtherance of the will of God in our lives. "All

things are lawful unto me", said Paul, "but all things are not profitable".

They also exercised SELF-DISCIPLINE, desiring that they be "proved" (ch. 1:12) for "ten days". After the allotted time, what beauty, what growth was in evidence! Would my life stand the test of scrutiny? Even for ten days? Would yours? Or would the keen eye of the "prover" find much untidiness of living, much irreplaceable time unscheduled and frittered away in useless pastimes? Keen young minds coasting along unoccupied save by the fruitless chatterings of small talk? How about it now, young Christian, are we really living disciplined lives? A disciplined life is not one that is imprisoned and bound by the chains of legality, rather it is a life facing the claims of reality, and one in which every vibrant throb of energy is harnessed and directed into the channels that will affect the greatest number of lives for God.

Such lives as these are marked by God for His glory, and just as the High Priest in Israel, anointed for special service, became the one most closely associated with sacrifice, so these young men exercised SELF-SACRIFICE. Do we catch the picture? Three men, their lives before them, intelligent, well-educated, strong in body and strong in faith are willing to give their very lives for the God they love and serve. Say, young man, have you noticed how many young women have gone to the mission field and how few young men? Could it be? No I had better not say it. Perhaps you know the answer.

Let me say here, lest some should misunderstand; God is not looking for an army of young men who are willing to go to the mission field. He is looking for the handful who

are willing for HIS WILL, whatever it is, and say in the language of Mdm. Guyon—

"While place we seek, or place we shun,
The soul finds happiness in none:
But with our God to guide the way,
'Tis equal joy to go or stay."

Thus the young men were called to experience three things: FIRE was the first thing, and what a fire! Heated seven times its normal heat. Mark you, they did not KNOW that they were GOING to be delivered, but one thing they did know … . their God was ABLE to deliver them. Thus yielding themselves to the will of God, they were thrown into the fire.

Next, they experienced FREEDOM for as we read the record in Daniel 3:25, the only thing the fire burned was their bonds. Oh, what liberty do those souls enjoy who abandon themselves to the will of God! Again Mdm. Guyon expresses this so beautifully—

"My cage confines me round, abroad I cannot fly,
But though my wing is closely bound, my heart's at liberty,
My prison walls cannot control,
The flight, the freedom of the soul."

Their next experience was FELLOWSHIP with One Like the Son of God. So it must be, those who follow the path those young men followed will enjoy the sense of the divine Presence, for His promise holds good "Lo I am WITH YOU even unto the end…"

"Well," says some young person, "that is all very good, but I could never be like them, I am just ordinary, they

were different, I could not possibly do what they did." You think not, young believer?

I agree that there is a secret to their victorious life. It is contained in three words left on record for us. Words that sound almost as though Paul had written them. They are found in Chapter 3:28 …these young men "YIELDED THEIR BODIES" to the God they loved. That was the secret of their stature, their exercise and their victory. The question is now WAS IT WORTH IT?

The OUTCOME of it all was threefold. God got THE GLORY for the king said, "Blessed be the God of … (the men)". Secondly, the world got THE MESSAGE, for the king sent his decree concerning this thing to "every people and language". Lastly, the three young men got a BLESSING, being given a greater sphere of service.

Is your life going to be the same as it has been, young friend? Or are you going to determine, right now, that your brief, oh so brief! life is going to count for God and for the Glory of His Royal Son?

"I BESEECH YOU THEREFORE, BRETHREN, BY THE MERCIES OF GOD, THAT YOU PRESENT YOUR BODIES A LIVING SACRIFICE, HOLY, ACCEPTABLE UNTO GOD, WHICH IS YOUR REASONABLE (INTELLIGENT) SERVICE (Rom. 12:1).

The Lesson (November 1958)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 4 No. 11, November 1958.

Boyd Nicholson, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada, has provided a very practical paper on a very important and difficult aspect of Sunday School work. His manuscript impresses one with the fact that the expenditure of time and energy behind the scenes is far more important than some imagine. From Mr. Nicholson's observations, the success of any teacher in the class is dependent upon his own private preparation.

The writer approached a few young persons sometime ago with a view to encouraging them to teach a Sunday School class. Almost without exception they expressed the fear that they would not be able to get a lesson every week for their classes. This is a very real difficulty, not only to those who would like to assume the responsibility of a class, but for those who have been teaching over a considerable period of time.

Here are a few thoughts that may prove helpful to some, transforming their time of preparation from one of mental drudgery into one of weekly refreshing.

There are two things to be considered, the message and the method. In the first place, we shall look at three things relative to the message, and then, we shall consider the development of these points. The three things that we must bear in mind regarding the lesson are: first, getting it; second, gleaning it; and, finally, giving it.

The first, and by far the most difficult, is, of course, the laying hold of the material to teach the children. There

is no quick and easy way to do this, and the selection comes best after the regular reading of the Scriptures and prayer. There are, of course, commendable helps available, and these can be used, provided they are, at all times, considered as helps and not as alternatives to private study. The Spirit of God is always ready to instruct those who are willing to spend the time in His presence seeking a message.

When once the topic or incident, by divine illumination, has been decided, then the message is gleaned by meditation. A careful reading and rereading of the Scriptures involved is of primary importance to the teacher. This he must do in order to secure a clear idea of the meaning of the language in which the topic or incident is couched. The teacher should use a dictionary to do this if necessary. When the significance of the words and the phrases used by the Spirit of God has been grasped, the next step is to find out the meaning of the entire passage. This is best done by four simple but time consuming steps. First, notice every word; second, notice every reference. If you do not have a marginal reference Bible try and get one as soon as possible. In third place, write down, in a handy note book, every word, phrase, or thought that may arrest your attention. Lastly, take each of these notes and think them through, or, to use the word that we are not so afraid of, meditate upon them. It is possible that after some experience and time in preparatory work, the teacher will gather in advance plenty of material for two or three lessons.

Now comes the important exercise of communicating this material to the children. There are two vital points in giving out the lesson; first, attention, and then, application. Hours of study may be wasted, as far as the

class is concerned, if, right at the beginning, one fails to catch the undivided attention of the scholars. Of course, this is a perpetual problem in some Sunday Schools, and may rise largely from lack of proper discipline; however, assuming the class to be composed of a group of normal lively boys, there are ways and means of securing and holding their attention.

A most effective way is to begin with an interesting story, preferably a personal experience, and the more thrilling, the more effective. Begin possibly this way, “Say boys, the other day I was down at the old canal watching a boy, about your age, fishing, when….” and so on. Be sure to speak in a voice just loud enough for them to hear and no louder, this will draw the little heads close to yours, and the gazers, seeing the other heads close, will not want to miss anything.

No doubt, as the lesson progresses, there will be at least one who will lose interest. A pointed question, in a different tone of voice will often be sufficient to pull in the wandering mind. For instance, if Johnny is gazing at the teacher in the next class, flash him a question such as, “Johnny, how many sins do you think it takes to make a sinner?” “Yes, that is correct, Johnny, now as I was telling the other boys,” …and right back into your lesson. It is imperative that you have attention.

There must also be an application to the class as a whole, rather than to any individual in the class. Make it as personal as you can, and do not be afraid to point to one or two as you press home the claims of the gospel.

Some will be asking, what about the method? Which method is best? Well, I suggest that there is no “best” method. Much depends on the class, and much depends

on the personality and the ability of the teacher. Whatever method is used, there are three things to keep in mind. The method must be suitable for the class, depending on their age and number. It must be simple, not only for the child, but for the teacher as well. It must also be successful in getting the message across to the scholars. Let it ever be remembered that a delivery man only profits by what he leaves with the people, and not by what he carries around.

Here are three suggestions that the writer and many other teachers of experience have found to be a great assistance in the presentation of a Sunday School lesson: first, use simple language, and explain the terms you use. The words “eternal life” mean nothing to some adults, how much less do they mean anything to some children; this is likewise true of expressions such as “washed in the blood.” Many other phrases that are doctrinally accurate are most confusing to the young minds unless qualified or explained.

In second place, learn to use illustrations, either verbal or visual; preferably the latter. The “Flannel-graph” is good, but the hand drawn sketch is better if you have the knack. Newspapers provide a fund of first class illustrations and photographs. Get the cut-out habit, and you will be surprised at how quickly you will build up a stock of material that can be used to illustrate your points.

Lastly, use alliteration of words in the presentation of your message; mostly, as a help to yourself. This is an aid to your memory, and besides, it will help you to keep your thoughts and points in order.

Let all keep in mind that there is no real mechanical way of carrying out this service for the Lord. It is spiritual power and help upon which we must depend. The foregoing suggestions are merely helps which have assisted and encouraged others. It is hoped that they will exercise some to take on a Sunday School class for the Master, and to carry on with this good work until fruit crowns the effort.

There is no substitute for time employed in the presence of the Lord, over the word of God, with the mind submissive to the leading of the Spirit of God. Above everything else, do not be discouraged; keep at this excellent work, and eventually, God will bless your efforts, and no doubt, if you sow in patience, you will be an instrument in His hand to bring boys or girls to the Lord Jesus.

The Divine Presence with Us (Part 1) (January 1959)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 5 No. 1, January 1959.

Scripture readings Matt. 28:20, Heb. 9:24, and Col. 1:27.

It was a beautiful day, back in ‘43; the sun was shining brilliantly on a sea of clouds that spread softly beneath the three planes that flew in close formation, six thousand feet over the Solway Firth.

The war seemed far away and so unreal to the young pilots, little more than lads, who were practising an intricate formation manoeuvre. Only the military markings on the sides of their craft were grim reminders that nations were at war.

All was going well, signals passed between them, and again they began the manoeuvre. Down into a dive, fingers tensed on the controls—the little planes snuggled close together—then the signal, and up, up-up and over. Suddenly at the crucial point, something went wrong. The pilot in the lead panicked and in his endeavour to pull out of the formation, collided with the other two.

It all happened in a flash, but in that split second of time, one young man at least underwent a complete change in his sense of values. The throbbing power of the engine was not now half so sweet as the rippling of the parachute overhead. The beauty of the billowy carpet of clouds was nothing compared to the beauty of

that canopy of silk that gently and almost silently lowered its precious cargo earthward.

Why now was the parachute so wonderful? Had this young pilot not always believed in it? In itself, the parachute had no more intrinsic value now than when he had strapped it on his back in the flight hut. Ah, yes! But now he was DEPENDING on it; now he was APPRECIATING its vital qualities to the full.

There are truths in the Blessed Old Book that as "believers" we can hardly remember when we did not believe them. The question is, have I, have you, APPROPRIATED their value in our daily lives? Are they verses to be quoted, or are they truths that we EXPERIENCE?

The truth of the presence of Christ is just a truth, always believed, but could it be, seldom enjoyed?

In the Scriptures referred to above, there is a three-fold aspect of the presence of the Lord. In Matthew 28, it is the presence of the Lord WITH us; in Hebrews 9, it is His presence FOR us; and in Colossians 1, it is His presence IN us. Let us consider these truths in a practical way, for it is the appreciation of these things that will affect our lives in the Church, the home, and at work.

CHRIST WITH US: Let me suggest that there are four main realms of experience in the believer's life. There is the MOUNTAIN experience; when we are spiritually prosperous prayer is sweet, the Bible our constant companion, and service is attended with power and fruit for God.

How precious is the sense of His presence with us on the mountain top! Thank God that He does not leave us when He gets us there! What fools we would make of ourselves; with what pride would we gather the glory to ourselves. How easily would we be distracted from the Person to the experience and say as one did, “It is good for us to be here.” Yes, on the mountain top He is WITH US. For an illustration of this, read Matthew 17:8. The three, that day, saw Christ transfigured before them, and so for them, the appreciation of the presence of Christ with them on the mountain top meant THEIR VISION FILLED.

How we as the people of God need this in our day! When there is so much to distract from the Person, we surely need our vision filled with a glorified Christ. Decisions would be easier to make. What we consider “sacrifice” would be renamed “privilege”, and the souls of men and the comfort of saints would become a prime consideration in all our planning.

It is very significant, however, that the very next verse begins, “And when they came down from the mountain…”. As surely as the land of promise is a land “of mountains and of valleys” so surely is the believer’s experience. It seems that for every mountain experience there is its corresponding valley, the valley with its deep shadows, its chilling blasts, and cruel enemies, the valley with its loneliness, for oft-times we must leave our closest friends and loved ones and enter the valley alone. ALONE did I say? Ah, no! not alone, the promise was “I am WITH YOU ALWAY”. David knew that, for in the pearl of Psalms did he not say “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for THOU ART WITH ME…”?

If the appreciation of the presence of the Lord with us on the mountain means our vision filled, then the appreciation of His presence with us in the valley will mean OUR FEARS DISPELLED. Are you in the valley, dear reader? Oh, depend upon it! HE IS WITH YOU; He will see you “through” to the very end.

Perhaps you are not experiencing the exhilaration of the mountain top

or the darkness of the valley. Everything is “just ordinary”, the common round and task. This, I suggest, is the third realm of experience. THE ROAD. Just a step by step existence: a plodding on down the road of life with its interminable stretches, its long dragging hills, and perplexing cross-roads. Is He with me on the road? What was the promise?… “WITH YOU ALWAY”.

Step by step, dear fellow-saint, you walk the road in company with our beloved Lord who paces out the path with imperial dignity and human sympathy. “But,” someone objects, “I cannot feel His presence, I do not sense His nearness.” Did you say you were a “believer”? Then, though you feel Him not, just BELIEVE that He is there, depend upon it, and it will lighten your step, brighten your outlook, heighten your hopes and strengthen your heart. We turn to Luke 24 for the illustration of this. He was with the disciples on the road that day, even though they did not recognize His presence, yet afterward confessed, “Did not our heart burn within us…”

So we learn that the appreciation of His Presence WITH US on the road will mean OUR HEARTS REVIVED.

There are experiences in the lives of some of God’s people that can only be classed as the FURNACE—when

the fire of affliction seems to be heated seven times and its hot blasts even sear the onlooker. We are caused to wonder how some of the dear saints have been preserved in those fierce flames. The answer can be found in Daniel chapter 3, where we read of those three valiant young men who had said “Our God is able to deliver us FROM the burning fiery furnace”. God did NOT deliver them from it. Were they mistaken, deluded, confused? No indeed, HE DID MUCH MORE, HE DELIVERED THEM IN IT by the very presence of one like unto the Son of God; undoubtedly, the Lord Himself.

Dear reader, are you tasting of those fires that so few of us can understand? We cannot sympathize with you, but, BELIEVE THIS, there is One WITH YOU in the furnace of Whom it could be said “In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the Angel of His presence saved them” (Isa 63:9). Thus, the appreciation of the presence of the Lord in the FURNACE will mean for those thus suffering, THEMSELVES PRESERVED.

Whether, then, we scale the pure clear altitudes of spiritual exultation; advance with much apprehension into the valley’s gloom; plod onwards on the daily path, or find ourselves cast headlong into a fiery furnace, depend upon the promise of One whose word has never been loosed from the rock of eternal verity: He said it, — “LO I AM WITH YOU ALWAY, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD”.

The Divine Presence With Us (Part 2) (February 1959)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 5 No. 2, February 1959.

Five thousand troops packed every available space on board the old Steam Ship, Thomas H. Barry, as she, along with four other troopships, slipped moorings, and under cover of night edged her way out of the Firth of Clyde and set course for the North Atlantic. It was during the height of the war, and the Atlantic was a vast gray chess board where many a fatal game was being played between the painfully slow convoys and the packs of German U-boats.

The dawn slowly spread its pale light over the cold gray ocean, and it seemed that the brighter the day became, the slower went the convoy. At last word was passed around that all the men would be allowed on deck by shifts. The atmosphere was tense as no doubt many of those men were thinking of the hungry wolf-packs of U-boats that scoured the high seas in search of just such a target as their slow moving convoy.

What a sense of relief! Enough to make a man shout for joy, when getting up on the deck, there, only a few hundred yards away, rolling on the Atlantic swell was a mighty battle wagon of the United States Navy. Beside her and a little to the stern, plunging through the waves, followed a battle cruiser, and dotted around the slow moving troopships, like sheep dogs herding a flock, were fifteen of Uncle Sam’s destroyers.

“Sure nice to have them along,” one man remarked. He was just putting into words the sigh of relief that

seemed to waft through the ship. Yes, it was nice to have them with us, but better still, it was wonderful to have them for us. The might of the United States Navy was there represented to protect those comparatively defenceless ships.

In our previous consideration of the Divine Presence, we tried to appreciate the joys which fill our souls in any circumstance when we truly believe that the Lord Jesus is with us. Now, in Hebrews 9:24, we learn the further and fuller truth that Christ is for us every day, every step of the way.

The appreciation of this truth daily would mean at least a fourfold victory in our Christian experience.

It would mean that we would not be discouraged with ourselves because Christ is for us as our Representative. In 1 John 4:17, we read, “As He is, so are we in this world.” In Ephesians 1:6, we read, “He hath made us accepted in the Beloved.”

Can you visualize the high priest Aaron standing before the Presence of God in the holy place? Upon his breast gleams the breastplate, and on his shoulders appear the onyx stones on which are inscribed the names of the tribes of Israel. Reuben’s is the first upon the shoulder. Reuben, … “unstable as water, thou shalt not excel,” so said old Jacob. Outside of the holy place, out there on the borders of the camp perhaps there was a Reuben, so unstable, so unpredictable, alas, so failing, never seeming to do well among the people of God, and, yet, as far as God was concerned, Reuben’s name shone forth first on the onyx shoulder stone, and he was accepted in all the worth and value of his representative, Aaron the high priest.

Yes, I fail, here is a Reuben, so unstable betimes; yet, oh, blessed truth! there stands One in the Holy Place with this poor name upon His shoulders and upon His breast; consequently, I learn the truth of those words, “Accepted in the Beloved.”

When I read the Scriptures and pray and try to preach, He does not love me more; and when I fail and falter and grieve His Spirit, He does not love me less. His love for me is constant and I stand accepted in all the worth and the virtue of my Representative.

“When Satan tempts me to despair,
Telling of evil yet within,
Upward I look and see Him there
Who made an end of all my sin.”

When the fact that Christ is for us is believed and enjoyed we no longer have doubts about our salvation, because He is for us as our Forerunner.

There are few sadder sights than a believer who once had served His Lord and His people well, falling into doubts about his salvation. If such an one is reading these words, take fresh hope, here are the very words of God, “We have an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec” (Heb. 6:19-20). His presence there for us is the guarantee that not one saint, be he ever so failing, feeble, or fearful will be missing on that great day when through the starry halls will echo the shout, the voice, and the trumpet call. No, not even you, dear saint in doubts.

“For this I shall find,
For this is His mind,
He’ll not be in Heaven
And leave me behind.”

If only we could appreciate His presence for us it would also mean that we would not be defeated by the enemy, because He is for us as our Intercessor.

What the words of the Lord Jesus must have meant to Peter on that fateful day, I suppose we never shall know, but those same recorded words have been sweet to many a tried saint down through the years, “I have prayed for thee.” Oh! what we owe to the prayers of Him of Whom it is written, “He ever liveth to make intercession for them”. What wickedness have we been spared from committing, what wanderings of heart have been arrested all because our Lord could say to us, “I have prayed for thee”!

Then we would not remain defiled by our sins because He is for us as our Advocate. The devil, having been robbed of the soul of the saint, nevertheless, is not going to leave him alone. This cruel enemy will seek by devious means to rob the saint of his joy and peace. He often accomplishes this by reminding the believer of his sins, even after there has been an honest and humble confession in the presence of God. Again, the Holy Scriptures meet our need. In 1 John 2:1, it is recorded, “… sin not, and if any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. The righteousness of this One will not allow Him to pass over one slightest fault in the life of a child of God, and His faithfulness demands that it be dealt with at once. That being so, we must take up the language of the Apostle Paul,

“Forgetting those things which are behind, … I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil 3:13-14).

Though circumstances would seem to suggest differently at times, and the flesh and the devil would concur to cast aspersions on our beloved Lord, believe this, He is for us. Though friend or brother turn against us; yes, and even if children or parent lift up the heel against us, the sun will never rise upon the day when He, our Representative, our Forerunner, and our Advocate is not for us every moment, every breath, yea, throughout all the way.

The Divine Presence with Us (Part 3) (May 1959)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 5 No. 5, May 1959.

The Presence of Christ Within Us

The day was dreary; rain splashed in the streets of the great metropolis as hundreds of workers, dressed to match the dull and colourless weather, made their way past the palace into the throbbing heart of the city to begin work for another day.

It was war-time, and London was being sorely blitzed. The strain of wakeful and terrifying nights of noise and fear left its mark on the drawn faces of the people.

Buckingham Palace stood out severe against the low clouds scudding across the sky, and as the busses rattled past, not a few of the passengers lifted their heads out of the morning edition to glance at the stern grey walls and the guards in battle-dress blended into the dreary scene. A grey war-time sight indeed, yet, it had about it a speck of colour. The Londoners seeing it, knowingly nodded to one another with an expression of satisfaction. A little patch of colour fluttered bravely in the blustery wind. It was the royal standard which meant only one thing, the king was in residence.

Our two previous considerations of the Divine Presence, portrayed the Lord Jesus Christ in His ministry as prophet and priest. In the text, “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 2:27), the Lord is seen as the royal resident, King of our lives.

Three essential qualities for a fruitful Christian life are faith, hope, and love. The degree in which these are manifested in the life will govern the measure of our fruitfulness and usefulness to God and His people.

A richer and more experiential appreciation of the truth of the Divine Presence in us will assist us in the development of these three facets of our spiritual life.

The Life of Faith

The Apostle who penned these words in Colossians knew the value of this and wrote to the Galatians, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

Paul appropriated for himself the faith of the Indwelling Christ; therefore, he could say with exuberance, “The life which I now live.” The life which he thus lived was vibrant with the faith of the Son of God.

He well knew the words from Habbakkuk, “The just shall live by his faith.” Moreover, he knew that little faith meant a narrow life and that much faith meant an abundant life. “According to thy faith,” was often the measure of blessing from the Lord while He was here on earth.

“But”, says someone, “My faith is so weak and small.” The advice then is to appropriate the faith of the Son of God, the Indwelling Christ, until you too can say, “I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”

The Life of Hope

Our verse in Colossians reads, “Christ in you the hope of glory.” The hope of glory for whom? Glory for Christ. The fact of the indwelling of Christ in the believer is the guarantee that Christ will be admired in everyone of them.

That glorious day will surely dawn with a brilliance that shall never wane, for the countless hosts of angels, cherubim, and seraphim will turn to see the Church as she appears in His glory. There the one time scoffers, rebels, and rejectors who have been redeemed will shine forth with immortal glory, the very glory of Christ. Those celestial beings will gaze on us and admire Christ in us, and He will receive all the glory.

Yes, glory for Christ, but, furthermore, Christ in us is the guarantee that we shall be glorified with Him; for whom He justified, them He also glorified. Weary today? Discouraged because of the way? Then fasten on this blessed truth, that within the framework of your being there dwells in all His imperial majesty the King of Kings, the Sovereign of the skies, your life and your hope of glory.

Take a look at your hands, those fingers, those very same only changed will handle the fruit of the Tree of Life. Look in the mirror, into those eyes of yours from which has tumbled many a tear; those very eyes — transformed — will gaze at length on the Fairest of all and see Him as He is. Well might we burst into the strains of the old song, “Oh that will be glory for me!”

More, Christ in you is the hope of glory for the unsaved! What was that? Yes, the fact that within that temple of your body there deigns to dwell the royal Son of God is

hope that others too may be saved and one day glorified. When we think of the years of rebellion during which we preferred to scatter our love on a thankless joyless world and to leave God's lovely Son outside, our hearts are humbled within us. Thank God, He still knocked and waited until at long and weary last, sick of sin and filled with fear, we threw open the long-shut door and found Him still there waiting. We bade Him enter and He came in. If He then will stoop to dwell in such sinners as we, then there is hope of glory for that long prayed for soul, unsaved as yet. Do not give up, for Christ in you is hope of glory.

The Life of Love

How we need this eternal virtue to saturate, to fill, to overflow our lives! What battles would not be fought! What hearts would not be broken! What power would be displayed, if only we knew more of a life of love!

Well might we long for the answer in our lives of the Lord's prayer, "That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them" (John 17:26).

If this great love was appropriated and unleashed by Christians in the world today, God would be worshipped as He ought, and our worthy Lord would enjoy greater devotion from His people. Furthermore, perishing prisoners of Satan in devil-ridden villages and iniquitous cities would hear the gospel from the lips of loving men who would fill up the great gaps on the mission fields. Embattled saints would be comforted and encouraged, and the pettiness and the paltriness which are seen among many of God's people would be gone. Our eyes would be lifted up from our tiny circumstances to behold the fields white and ready to harvest, and the love of

Christ would constrain us to accomplish great things for God.

“The veil, that is to day, His flesh” (Heb. 10:20), are words which explain the humanity of Christ. How thin betimes did that veil appear! Even the enemies of Christ seemed to catch a glimpse through it of His glory. His disciples certainly did when they were with Him on the mount.

Now think of our flesh; different, of course, in nature and meaning, for our flesh is that evil force that opposes the Spirit. What a veil our flesh can become! If there was less of this fleshly veil about us, the world would see more of Christ and His glory when they looked at us. They would peer through the veil, and see, “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

That Fragrant Name (July 1959)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 5 No. 7, July 1959.

The Song of Solomon is a song of superlatives. It is the finest of the thousand and five songs which Solomon penned.

What wonderful compositions he produced from the treasure store of his God-given wisdom! He could sing of the cedars of Lebanon in their regal majesty and of the lowly hyssop on the dry stone wall. The monarch of the forest crouching in his lair and the swift gazelle bounding over hedge and dyke gave him the inspiration for a joyous melody. How could he ever be at a loss for a subject? The secrets of the soaring heights were known to him, and the thunderous deeps of the ocean with its denizens of scaley monsters were not strangers in his thoughts.

Yet for all this, the other thousand and four songs he wrote have disappeared, and only this one remains. Superlative indeed is this Song of Songs for its theme is not the leafy might of Lebanon, or the lion, or the roe, or the brilliant plumage of the peacock; but, rather, the highest emotion of the human heart, true love. Since love has one supreme object, we are directed by this Song to that person, and of him we read, “Thy name is as ointment poured forth.”

Our minds at once fly to the supreme object of our love, the Lord Jesus, and we think of His name, Jesus. His name, truly, is as ointment poured forth.

“Jesus!” Oh, how sweet the name!
“Jesus!” ev’ry day the same!

"Jesus!" let all saints proclaim
Its worthy praise for ever.

Yet, what does it really mean? How can a name be "as ointment poured forth"?

Among the pourings forth of ointment in the Bible, two references stand out. The first, when Moses sanctified Aaron by pouring ointment upon him; and, the second, when the woman broke the alabaster box and poured its contents on the head of the Lord Jesus.

Detailed instructions were given to Moses in regard to the holy ointment (Ex. 30:22-33). These details suggest the six ways in which the name of Jesus is "as" this ointment. It remains, however, for the records of the New Testament to provide us with the seventh point of comparison, there the ointment is poured forth.

The ointment in Exodus 30 was COSTLY. Dear saint, what did it cost the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, to take the name of Jesus? To take that name, cost Him the comforts of the Father's bosom which He exchanged for the mountain side. It cost Him the sound of the music of heaven; moreover, He became "the song of the drunkard." It cost Him Gabbatha. See Him there, scourged and bleeding, thorn-crowned and garbed in the robe of mockery. Oh, foolish men, could they not see that He Who stood before them with strange dignity was Jesus? No, they did not see that beneath the thorny crown there dwelt the thunders and the lightnings of infinite holiness. To them He was only Jesus of Nazareth. Yes, it cost Him Gabbatha.

It cost Him Gethsemane, the oil-press. The binding ingredients of the holy ointment were myrrh, cinnamon calamus, and cassia. How these remind us of the

sufferings of Calvary!!! Myrrh, obtained from the reddish exuding tears of the tree makes us think of the precious blood that flowed from Immanuel's veins. It cost Him all that. Cinnamon, that tender bark left to dry in the sun points us to that gentle One Who hung on the middle tree under the burning sun from the third to the sixth hour. Calamus; the word intimates a reed or spear. In this we see the mockery of Herod and his men. What poor heroes they were that day as they struck the lovely Son of God upon the head! We see the soldier with a spear pierce His side and draw forth the blood that saves. Cassia, cut off the tree in long strips leaving the tree torn and scarred, reminds us of the prophetic cry of Psalm 129, "The plowers plowed upon My back: they made long their furrows." It cost Him all of these; yea, and infinitely more.

By faith we see Him lifted up, On the cross.
He drinks for us the bitter cup, On the cross.
The rocks do rend, the mountains quake,
While Jesus doth atonement make,
While Jesus suffers for our sake, On the cross!

Well might we say to the Lord Jesus, "Thy name is as ointment poured forth."

The ointment in Exodus 30 was HOLY. How infinitely holy is that precious name! It is holy because God gave it, because it belonged to the Son of God, and because it was given to Him Who would save His people from their sins. That name belongs to the only Man Who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. In the words of the hymn we would address our blessed Lord:

We worship and adore Thy name,
Precious holy name;

Thy matchless name
Through eternal years the same.

The holy ointment in Exodus was to be PERPETUAL. God asserted, “This shall be a holy anointing oil unto Me throughout your generations.” Thus it is with the name of Jesus. Over nineteen hundred years have rolled this sphere in orbit round the sun. Kingdoms and their kings have risen and dropped into obscurity, but the holy name of Jesus lives on in its mighty power, and thus will it endure throughout all generations (Rev. 22:4).

Think of this, dear child of God; you will be anointed eternally as a king and priest with that holy name, the name that you have sought to honour down here. “And they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads” (J.N.D.).

Further, the ointment was NOT ASSOCIATED WITH THE FLESH. We read, “Upon man’s flesh shall it not be poured.” How many things are done supposedly in that name, and if the records were seen there would be only one word over them, flesh. Ah, no, dear saint, that name will not endorse that which is done in the flesh. May the Lord help us to be wary of the deceitfulness of the flesh, lest we be guilty of trying to cover fleshly activities with that precious holy name.

The ointment was UNIQUE: “Neither shall ye make any other like it,” were the divine instructions. In the French translation of John 3:16, the words, “His only begotten Son,” are written, “His unique Son.” No other like Him! He is not just better; He is unique. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Moreover, “God hath highly exalted

Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11).

Then it was PARTICULAR. It was not to be put upon a stranger (V. 33). The holy name of Christ is reserved for the family of God. Only those who have been born again bear that name, and are thus sealed and protected. On what do you trust for Eternity, dear reader? Do you bear that name? If you have doubts, flee to the Man Who died for you, the Man Who bears that precious name, and bears in His body the battle-scars of Calvary. Do not be a stranger on that day when you will bow the knee! Be among the redeemed in glory! Settle it now, before you read another line!

The Apostle John records that the ointment was poured forth upon Christ (John 12:3). The striking thing about the pouring forth of that ointment is, "The house was filled with the odour of the ointment." The name of the Lord Jesus is as ointment poured forth; it is fragrant. The servants of the Lamb in heaven are all anointed with that name; consequently, the atmosphere of the celestial city is laden with its sweet fragrance. How is it with us now? Do we carry with us the savour of His good ointment? Fragrance is silent, so also is the fragrance of a Christ-like life. Is it possible that of any of us it might be said as it was of Esau, "The smell … is as the smell of a field"?

May the Lord help us to be like the high priest of old, who, as he walked about, the holy ointment upon his

head provided the atmosphere in which he moved, and also by its fragrance indicated his presence. May we indeed be more like Him in order that others discern the company of one of the Lord's anointed.

Jesus! the name I love so well,
The name I love to hear;
No saint on earth its worth can tell,
No heart conceive how dear.
This name shall shed its fragrance still
Along life's thorny road,
Shall sweetly smooth the rugged hill
That leads me up to God.

* * *

He may let earthly comforters fail you, that, by turning to Him, you shall have everlasting consolation.

The Principles of Spiritual Flight (October 1959)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 5 No. 10, October 1959.

The author is a licensed pilot of much experience. He has flown hundreds of hours over mountains, deserts, and oceans. —Ed.”

“This article is submitted with apologies to those who know much more about these principles than the writer, and who will realize that the terms used are in their simplest form, in the hopes that they will help to illustrate spiritual values.”

It is not so long ago since the cry of a boy’s voice “Aeroplane” would bring other children, and perhaps a few adults, out into the street to watch a machine that looked like a few crates fastened together, with a fan on the front.

Nowadays those sleek silver machines that thunder overhead scarcely cause a pedestrian to raise a head unless the noise is unusually loud or different.

Yet, whether it is a motivated crate or a delta wing Jet, these machines fly by obeying the same laws of flight.

Aeroplanes are built to fly. They are ungainly and unhandy while on the ground, and that is what makes us think of the similarities between those flying machines and Christians.

Young man, young woman, you may sing with all your heart, “I am not under law, I’m under grace,” yet there are laws to which you must give obedience if you are going to soar the heights of spiritual attainment.

Remember, you were made to fly." It was never God's intention that you should be "grounded".

These laws of life are irrevocable, not laws of "Thou shalt not…" or "Thou shalt …" so much, but the obtaining of certain results by obeying certain known laws. For instance, if the result you wish to arrive at is to have many friends, then here is a law. "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly." Or, if the desired result is that you be loved, then here is a law, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall be also reap."

Now, if the desired result in my Christian life is spiritual "altitude" then I must obey the laws of spiritual flight.

There are two "couples" of forces that apply to every conventional aeroplane. They are weight and lift, and thrust and drag. The progress of the aeroplane depends on the relationship of these two couples.

So it is with the Christian. By understanding the forces that affect us and by putting them in their proper relation one to the other, the Christian's "altitude" and progress are determined. Let us see how these principles of flight illustrate the forces in the life of the Believer.

WEIGHT exerts its force DOWNWARDS, and is twofold, that which is INHERENT in the design and that which is ADDED.

Are we not all too conscious of the inherent DOWNWARD pull of the old nature, pulling us ever and always earthward? The natural tendency is to submit to the "gravity" of the world and if no overcoming force is utilized, DOWN we go. Our ambitions go down, our spirits go down, and our testimony goes down. Yes! the

inherent weight of the old nature will pull us down. Let us not be deceived into thinking now we are saved, that the old nature is changed. Not a bit; it is capable, young man, young woman, of dragging you DOWN and smashing your testimony in a fearful way.

Added weight is obviously that which is put on over and above inherent weight. This too can be most distressing if not disastrous.

How then is this weight to be overcome? Again, there are two ways: one, by simply UNLOADING the excess weight. So it is in our spiritual “flight”. We are exhorted to “lay aside every weight … which doth so easily beset us.” To lay aside this weight it is needful to RECOGNIZE what it is, LOCATE it and TAKE HOLD of it and by a definite act of the will, LAY IT ASIDE. How do we recognize it? Is it a sin in the life? Not necessarily. It may be perfectly legal but just not conducive to spiritual progress. Anything that holds me down and tends to make me earthbound is a WEIGHT and should be laid aside.

The INHERENT WEIGHT, the old nature, cannot yet be laid aside, but it can be OVERCOME, just as weight is overcome by LIFT. How is LIFT in an aircraft produced? By a proper relationship to the airflow which sustains the aircraft in flight. So with us, the down-pulling weight of the old nature is only overcome by a proper relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ Whose presence is always available to sustain us.

How is this “LIFT” cultivated? “They that wait upon the Lord … shall mount up with wings as eagles”. By being in the proper environment and in proper relationship to it, an aircraft obtains the force that overcomes the

downward pull of gravity. So with the Christian, young or old, time spent in the presence of the Lord in proper relationship to Him, will provide the power that overcomes the world.

Drag in the language of the airman is that force which resists the forward motion of the aircraft and tends to hold back.

How many things are there in our lives that can be called DRAG in the sense that they hold us back? Our full potential is never realized and our progress is slowed. How is DRAG overcome? By another force acting in opposition to it, called THRUST and this is provided by the POWER PLANT. Thrust is that force that drives the aircraft forward through the air, without which sustained flight is not possible.

Thank God! the POWER of the Holy Spirit in the life — when applied — is able to provide that mighty dynamic to drive the Christian onward in his spiritual experience. I say “when applied”, of course, for just as the mighty power of the latest Jet engine would be of no avail unless the pilot opened the throttle and applied the power, so the mighty overcoming power of the Holy Spirit is likewise as good as useless until it is appropriated and applied by simple faith. The pilot does not produce the power; it is all there; he simply has to use it. Oh, that we all could know more of this Power, effective in our daily lives, overcoming, driving us onward and upward into the clear blue sky of a victorious life!

There is a strange phenomena (indeed many) in the world of flight. This is, as lift increases so does drag increase. Think not, young Christian, that the day will

come when, flying high and fast you will overcome the discouraging effects of “drag” and “weight”. Strange as it may seem, the greater your spiritual stature, the greater also becomes the sense of “weight and drag”.

As you grow in grace, so also grows your perception of evil within and without. The great and godly Apostle could cry “For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do.” and “I find then a law, that, when I would do good evil is present with me.”

But we must go on and up; the alternative is to go down, down to the environment where you and I were never meant to spend our lives, down to where the gravity of this old world would anchor us to gaze wistfully up at others gaining altitude above us.

Altitude is a wonderful thing! It is an awesome thing! You cannot see the weeds in your neighbour’s lawn from the heights. Your vision is multiplied, your horizon more vast. You look down and see the pattern in things that look so confusing from ground level. You see, not the work of the sweeper, but the plan of the architect. It is the realm of the sunshine, and the air is clear, and there is a stillness unknown to the earth-dweller …

… and … alas!

there are not

many…

there.

“Lord help us soar
Into the high and open vaults,
And nevermore
Consume our lives on others’ faults.
O’ Power, do lift

Above these transient darkened things,
And thus to shift
Our gaze, and soar on eagles' wings."

—J.B.N.

Visible Light (November 1959)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 5 No. 11, November 1959.

It is raining outside as I write the opening sentence of this article. It is Wednesday evening; nothing extraordinary has happened today within my particular orbit. I suppose that if I were to ask the young fellow across the road or the girl up the street, “Well, what happened today?” I would get an answer like … “Oh nuth’n much”. Strange, is it not, that all of us with sight have been privileged to “see” that which is ETERNAL. We have had actual contact with that which is INCORRUPTIBLE and at the same time perceived something that is entirely UNIQUE, and yet generally seem to be quite unimpressed? What is this strange thing? you ask. It is that form of energy that gives everything form, beauty and colour, without which these eyes would be comparatively useless, LIGHT.

In John 8; 12 the Lord Jesus utters seven one-syllable words. The longest has no more than five letters in our language and yet they reach out beyond the macrocosm of the wheeling galaxies. The full essence of these simple words can never be fully appreciated by the greatest mind on earth, for when He said, “I am the light of the world”, He invites us to launch our thinking out, out into the vast drowned depths of space and time, where LIGHT swims through a billion years from star to star. The vastness of it, the solitary grandeur of it is almost frightening, but that “simple” phrase points to the magnitude, the greatness of our beloved Lord.

Consider light in three aspects. The character of light and our perception of it; the components of light and our

reflection of it; and the claims of light and our reaction to it.

The character of LIGHT is threefold, it is ETERNAL. Light was not created, for God is Light. When His mighty fiat went forth, Light … be," forth from Himself sped the outshinings of His own glory and chased the darkness far. So the ETERNAL character of the Lord Jesus is seen in those words "I AM .. . the light …"

To the godly opened eye the LIGHT of the world came from above. "The dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death (Lk. 1:78-79). To the darkened, blinded eye of the unbeliever this LIGHT came UP. "The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death LIGHT is sprung up" (Matt. 4:16). Just as the ancients thought that the sun came out of the earth in the morning and sank into the earth at night, so the darkened mind looked on the Lord Jesus as a man who began on earth and ended on earth. In our day we know that the sunrise is but a continuation of the journey of the sun, and it's setting is but a passing beyond where we dwell. It's light is not dimmed nor are its rays shortened. The flaming orb rolls on in its endless path, spreading its glories in realms beyond our vision. So the Lord, the LIGHT of the world, may not be within the range of our physical sight, yet, at the right hand of. the Majesty on high, the outshining of His glory lightens all that glorious place. LIGHT is UNIQUE: There is nothing like it, nothing to which it can be compared, (How could you describe it to a blind person?) So when the Lord Jesus said, "I am THE light of the world" He gave testimony to the fact that HE IS THE ONLY ONE OF HIS KIND, there is NO OTHER

like Him, Absolute God and Perfect Man. The French Bible puts John 3:16 this way, “For God so loved the world that He gave His UNIQUE Son …”

LIGHT is INCORRUPTIBLE. This was also conveyed in those words, “I am the Light …” The light that passes through a dirty window does not gather up any of the dirt, but what passes through is as bright as it was before. Our blessed Lord touched the leper, took the corpse by the hand, rubbed shoulders with the profligate and the sinner, and such is His intrinsic purity nothing could defile Him. He is Holy, Harmless and Undefiled. He is THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

The “COMPONENTS” of light, for want of a better word, though strictly speaking light is “composed” only of itself, however for our purposes, let us consider what makes up the “white” light that we “see”.

If we were to thrust a glass prism into a beam of sunlight, the spectrum that would appear, would range in colour from violet to red. So then, we find that “white” light is really composed of RED light, GREEN light and BLUE light. We have all seen those purest of colours in the familiar rainbow when the sunlight is broken up by tiny water droplets. How beautiful are the glories of Christ, the LIGHT of the world when seen through the water of the Word!

We see the pure RED that speaks of His perfect sacrifice, and for Him to be the LIGHT of the world meant the pouring out of His precious ruby blood to put away our sin. How wonderful to know that we shall for ever bask in the eternal glow of this LIGHT, for in that place of pure delight it is the LAMB that is the LIGHT thereof (Rev. 21;23).

The question rises now, do I reflect this light down here? The red light of sacrifice? Does my Christian life COST me anything in the yielding of my personal will, my time, my few possessions myself?

The GREEN LIGHT shines forth and speaks of ABUNDANT LIFE, and for the Lord to be able to say, “I am the light of the world,” it meant the bringing of this kind of life within the reach of the earth-dwellers. We read about it in John 14, “In Him was LIFE and the LIFE was the LIGHT of men”. In some small degree do I reflect THIS light? Am I known as one who possesses this everlasting life, the very life of Christ Himself, fresh, verdant, fragrant and fruitful?

The BLUE LIGHT is the light of the Heavens, and it draws our gaze away from the haze of earth to behold the things of Infinity and Eternity. “I am the light of the world” reveals the Deity of our blessed Lord, the Son of God, or as we read it in the Hebrew Epistle, “His Son … Whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds. Who being the (SHINING FORTH) of His glory and the express image of His Person”. Here indeed is the BLUE light, and just as the light that comes from the sun enables us to know the nature and character of the sun, so the Lord Jesus, the Light of the world reveals the very nature and character of God.

This light has a claim upon us, collectively as a Church, for the Lord has commanded us saying “I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth” (Acts 13:47). It has a claim upon us individually as Christians, “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good

works and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). Note that the ministry of light is a silent ministry. The injunction is not, "Hear your good words" but "SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS". Once the unsaved have seen your good works (and your good WORKMANSHIP in the office or plant) then will your good words have some power behind them. The unsaved too have a responsibility to the light. In John 3:19 it is recorded, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil".

"I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD." What magnitude! What infinity! What glory! These are bound up in that seemingly simple statement. When we think of the light of our sun with its vast circumference emitting incredible "volumes" of light, then think of this tiny speck of stellar dust we call the earth, and consider how miscroscopic in comparison are the few rays of light that reach us here, and of those, how few you and I perceive. Does it not make us think of the infinitude, the boundlessness of our wonderful Lord Jesus, and humbles us when we consider how little, how little, we know of Him, how tiny are our grandest thoughts of Him, and yet He condescends from His full-orbed glory to lighten our darkness, to shine upon the way we take, and at the last to lift us into the full blaze of His presence forevermore.

Sun and Stars (December 1959)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 5 No. 12, December 1959.

Ever been lost — in the darkness — on the sea — in a storm? Not exactly the kind of experience we would choose. I am glad that Paul was. Not for Paul's sake, but for little people like you and me. You see, if he had never gone through that fearful storm, the twenty-seventh chapter of Acts would not have been written.

The twentieth verse of that thrilling sea story written by Luke reads, "And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away."

The wind howled through the rigging of the ship, and tore at the sails. The ropes complained noisily as they were pulled taut, and the timbers groaned at the merciless pounding of the mountainous waves. The mariners reeled as the tiny container of two hundred and seventy-six souls was tossed like a shell on the mighty, roaring waves. It was dark, fearfully dark. The sun had long since disappeared from view and the pale light of the stars was hidden behind dense, black, boiling clouds which poured out their wrath on the tiny vessel. No wonder the writer of the record says, "All hope … was then taken away."

Three things robbed them of hope: no sun, no stars, and no small tempest. You know, it is much like that with you and me; is it not? We get down and discouraged from time to time; it seems that there is no hope that we will ever rise again. Why is this? We go down when we lose

sight of the sun and the stars, and when the storms of life blast their merciless way across our souls.

What about Paul? Great Paul; what a giant he was! He was in the very same ship, in the very same storm, in the very same darkness. “What about it, Paul,” we might ask, “are you discouraged?” Listen to his reply, “I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me” (V. 25). What makes the difference in these two men, Luke and Paul? Well, one had fear in the storm, and the other had faith in the storm.

The sun was still shining in all its brilliance, the stars had not been extinguished, but the mariners had lost sight of them, and the darkness had entered into their very souls, and hope had fled.

It is just so with us when we lose sight of Him concerning Whom the sun and stars speak. The very same reaction takes place in our souls.

The Person of Christ

The sun would speak of the Lord Jesus, for we read of Him as the Sun of Righteousness arising with healing in His wings (Mal. 4:2). It is when we lose the sense of the presence of Christ with us that hope flags. When we feel that He is taken up with some other young Christian’s problem, or looking after some other needy saint in some other town, we lose the sense of His nearness and feel like saying, “Oh! What is the use?” Then, just then, is the time for faith, faith in a storm. Say it, say it out loud if you must, but say it, “I believe God,” for He has said in His Word, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5). Says someone, “I still do not feel that He is near.” No, neither did Paul feel the warm rays of

the sun, but that did not mean that the sun had gone out. Paul believed God.

The Righteousness of Christ

The sun speaks also of the righteousness of Christ, and when we lose sight of this and become taken up with the darkness of our old and sinful nature, we get discouraged. Again we must just believe God, and rest upon what He says about “the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe” (Rom. 3:22). What a wonderful truth of which to lay hold!

The Love of Christ

The warm and genial rays of the sun likewise remind us of the love of Christ, shining out in full force upon the strong and the weak alike. Lose the sense of that personal love that the Lord Jesus has for you, and down you will go. He loves you personally. Believe that, even when you cannot feel it, for He has said, “As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you” (John 15:9). He loves you passionately, for we read, “The Son of God Who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20). He loves you constantly. Get that truth! Fasten it firmly somewhere in the very centre of your being! His love never changes, even when we fail, sin, and grieve Him. In spite of such behaviour, He loves you with an infinite love; He cannot love you more. There is a proverb that says, “A friend loveth at all times” (Prov. 17:17). The Friend of sinners has that love that is unchangeable and unshakeable; it is always and ever the same. He loves you right now with an infinite passionate love. Believe it even in the darkness and in the storm.

The Guidance of God

The lack of a star is a serious handicap to the mariner who depends on the celestial map for guidance. The young Christian who has lost

his sense of the guidance of God in his life is very apt to become discouraged, and to lose hope just as did those sailors (Acts 27). What do we do when we lose the sense of God's leading? Just believe Him in the darkness, for if we are willing to know His will, we can depend upon His promise, "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way that thou shalt go; I will guide thee with Mine eye" (Psa. 32:8).

The Power of God

The stars in like manner speak to us of the power of God, for we read that majestic phrase of five words, "He made the stars also" (Gen. 1:16). When men make a satellite, they write millions of words about it. God fills the ether with stars of such magnitude that our minds reel in an endeavour to encompass their measurements, and with simple dignity it is recorded, "He made the stars also."

Lose sight of the power of our great God, young Christian, and it will not be long until life will become too big for you, and down you will go. God can do anything! He has the power to meet your need. He can take the deepest longings of your heart and give them form and substance. He can take the feeblest, most hesitant prayer and make it into a mighty reality. Believe it! He can do it!

The Wisdom of God

We learn from the Psalmist that our God “telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by name” (Psa. 147:4). When next you look up into the high vault of Heaven and see the starry dust that fills that place, remember, they speak of the omnisience of God; He knows everything! He knows your need right now. He knows your desires; there are no secrets with Him. Next time you pray, tell Him all your heart; you will not surprise Him; He knows it all. Moreover, He knows how to meet the need you have today. If you lose sight of this fact, darkness will descend upon the soul and hope of help will fade.

On the Beam (March 1960)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 6 No. 3, March 1960.

Twenty thousand feet of cloud lay between them and terra firma.

The moon shone its white luminescence on the whipped creamy toppings of cumulus that spread below. It was breathtakingly beautiful! At least, beautiful from the top looking down, but from underneath it was bleak. Scudding rain threw its wetness over everything. The merciless jagged peaks of the mountains pierced their way upwards and hid their treachery within the folds of those same innocent looking clouds, their sharp teeth bared for destruction.

Then came the calculated time to begin the descent. Somehow that night, the young pilot felt a strange tightness in his throat as he eased back on the four throttles. Afraid? Well no, he wouldn't admit that. Perhaps there was a better word. Whatever it was called, he had it; a strange feeling that there was something not just right … Perhaps this was it … the overcast, the granite peaks, thirty tons of aeroplane, and flesh and blood; young flesh and blood, too young to die. Johnny, up front must have lied about his age, he was just eighteen now. Tom the navigator, had turned twenty, the other crew members were as young, and the pilot was just old enough to get the key to the house.

They plunged into the cloud, and as the white mist enveloped everything and the flashing of the exhaust flames glowed eerily in the semidarkness, the pilot

realized his hands were too tight on the controls, and clammy.

The wireless operator came up with a weather report from base, “Cloud base 300 feet … “ Not much room, thought the pilot and reaching forward flicked a switch. Crackling through his earphones he heard music, sweet music. No, not an orchestra exactly, for no violin could sound so sweet, no organ so melodious as the sound that young aviator heard. It was just a plaintive, hesitant monotone, “daaah-dit … daaah-dit … daaah-dit,” it went, never changing. Oh, how sweet it sounded that night! It was “the beam”, a signal sent out from base to guide the aircraft home without sight.

The beam was only two degrees wide, the signal to one side of that narrow beam sounded, “daaah-dit … daaah-dit… daah-dit,” and on the other side it sang, “dit-daaah … dit-daaah … dit-daaah.” Only down the centre of that narrow path in the clouds did the signal merge and become one clear solid note … “daaaaaah”. The moment the plane began to wander off the beam it entered a twilight zone where underneath the solid note the broken signal could be detected. At once the pilot would adjust his course to bring himself back “on the beam.”

Ever flown “blind” in your Christian experience? Ever been afraid? The writer has, and many others of God’s people have too. Then, when it seemed as though the mists of uncertainty must completely envelop the soul, there came the beam … “This is the way, walk ye in it.”

When, above the interference of other voices, another Voice is heard, faintly, perhaps at first, but as we discern it, sending out its signal from the pages of Holy Writ, we

adjust our lives to bring them “on course,” and the indications become clearer and the course obvious.

Should we, because of the winds of opposition or adversity, begin to leave the appointed path, if our ear is attuned, we shall soon catch the gentle undertone of the broken signal, our peace of mind will be disturbed and we shall know again that adjustments must be made to keep “on the beam.”

It is a narrow beam, only two degrees wide. That is, one mile wide sixty miles from home and gradually narrowing until at last the main marker tells us we have arrived.

In the Christian life, it seems, if we are excercised to stay “on course” at all, we are called to a closer adherence to the things eternal as we travel on.

One of the problems a pilot had in those days when he switched on the beam, was to discover whether he was flying towards or away from the main marker. He found this out by “measuring the beam.” He would cross the beam and measure the time it took to fly through it. Then he would fly parallel to the beam, and after a time recross measuring the time again. This way he found out whether it was wider or narrower, and could thus tell which direction was right.

It is a good thing to “measure the beam” now and again. Is it wider or narrower? Do we allow things in our lives today that would have brought conviction a few years ago? Let writer and reader alike measure our lives now and again by the insistent signal out of the Word. If we do, it may indicate to us whether we are getting closer to the mark or farther away. Do not, however, confuse a narrow walk with a narrow mind. A narrow walk is

circumscribed by the bounds of propriety, whereas a narrow mind is a wrinkled, withered up thing, bound by the littleness of its own pygmy outlook.

Sometimes the direction of the beam seemed contrary to reason and intelligence; not what was expected. If the flight was to be safe, then the beam had to be believed and obeyed, even against feelings.

The storm may lash the traveller, the winds may be adverse blowing him far off course, but the beam never moves. It sends out its signal, steadily, day and night, and all the puzzled soul has to do is tune in and it is there.

Sometimes, of course, we may pick up no clear signal right away. All we can do then is to travel quietly on, but all the time keep in touch and soonor or later, be it weeks or even months in the Christian's life, depend upon it, the signal will come and we will know by its quiet insistence,

"This is the way ..."
Prone to wander, Lord I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love,
Here's my heart, Lord,
Take and seal it,

* * *

"Who can believe that the man lives by faith who lives without prayer which is the natural expression of faith? Prayer is as natural an expression of faith as breathing is of life. To say a man lives a life of faith, and yet lives a prayerless life, is every whit as inconsistent and incredible, as to say, that a man lives without breathing." —Edwards

Bloodshot Eyes (April 1960)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 6 No. 4, April 1960.

I don't think I shall ever forget those eyes! I saw them in Poona, not far from Bombay. We were sauntering in the sun towards the centre of the city, not taking too much notice of anything, since the East had lost some of it's exotic quality under the influence of the burning sun and the not too exotic aromas. Our attention was suddenly drawn to a cluster of people, who seemed to be more than normally curious. We crossed over to see the centre of their interest.

He was lean, perhaps thirty, perhaps forty years old, it was difficult to tell exactly. He stood astraddle a heavy iron weight, and from his hand there dangled a soft cord. He was calling out that if he could collect one rupee (about thirty cents) he would then lift the weight. "Not much to that", I thought, "that weight is just a tidy one-arm lift" … He managed to collect his rupee in small coins … and then I saw what he was going to do. He was about to lift the weight right enough, but with HIS EYEBALLS!

The piece of rope he had in his hand had two metal suction cups on the ends. He passed this rope under the handle of the iron weight and with studied showmanship, licked the suction cups, lifted his eyelids, and gently pressed the cups against his eyes until they were firmly in position.

He was stooped over now and with much groaning and hard breathing, he began to lift the weight. Slowly it left the ground until it was dangling a good twelve inches in

the air. “An utter fake, it just can’t be done,” I thought, but there it was right in front of my eyes. If I doubted him, my doubts soon fled when I saw those eyes. He lowered the weight to the ground and removed the cups from his eyes and looked up. Blood red they were! Not a speck of white remained, just blood red … and all for one miserable rupee! “What foolishness, ruining his eyes for such paltry returns,” I thought.

Yes! but I wonder if I am not just as foolish. For the doubtful benefits of a fleeting present moment, I allow “weights” in my life to so easily beset me. Weights that not only impede my progress but that also affect my vision.

Today, we live in a world that is reaching for the moon. Gigantic telescopes are piercing the far distances. Scientists envision things today that the minds of men have never before encompassed.

In the meantime, so many of us who profess to possess eternal life, have lowered our gaze until our horizon barely extends beyond the limits of our own tiny orbit. The weights of circumstances and unprofitable pastimes (not necessarily sinful in themselves) have pulled our vision inwards until the happenings of an hour are of greater moment to us than the Plan of the Ages. We seem to have lost sight of the fact that outside there is a world filled with breaking hearts that groan for the very comforts that you and I could carry to them, and at this very moment the silent tear is coursing down the drawn face of many a weary saint. While we tangle with the trivial, there are multitudes who have never tasted the sweetness of the comforts of Christ. Little wonder the

Lord left this stirring word on the Sacred page, “LIFT UP YOUR EYES AND LOOK …”

If I take one long, clear, sane look, out … out beyond the microcosm of my tiny experience, on a confused and reeling world filled with hearts hungering for they know not what, and if this look leaves me cold and unmoved, then it is time for some mighty heartsearchings in the presence of the God who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Editorial: The Cover (January 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 1, January 1961.

The cover of this volume pictured a hammer crushing an egg.

Crushed! Helpless and so fragile. What potential it had for life. Now it lies crushed.

So rudely, so clumsily attacked. Yet it does prove something. It proves that the cold hammer is so much stronger than the brittle shell. It proves that it is so easy to destroy — if the hammer is big enough and the blow is hard enough.

Yet, can the hammer, or the hand that clenched it, pick up that shattered object and restore its symmetry? Can an instrument of any kind be found that will gather together that life potential, and replace it as it was?

No, now it is too late. The hammer is the victor, rough and crude. A tender new life has suffered a crushing blow. It can never be the same again.

Surely no one would be so senseless as to unleash such blunt destructive power against such a fragile object.

Yet, do you, do I, engage in this very folly with the saints of God? Am I always ready with the big hammer, the crushing rebuke, the subtle implication, the unkind word of criticism that smashes down upon some fragile soul packed with potential for God, and leave it dazed, broken, shattered?

I win the dubious victory of words and lose Christian character. Worse; do fearful damage to some gentle or guileless soul to such an extent, that it will take a

Greater Hand than mine to mend the broken life, the crushed aspirations and to heal that which my clumsy cruelty caused.

Editorial: The Cover (February 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 2, February 1961.

The cover of this volume pictured a hand holding a silver dollar.

Wonder where that silver dollar will be when the elements shall melt with fervent heat and the earth and its works consigned to the fiery flame.

I wonder what it will have bought by then. A little food for a hungry body, a magazine, a ticket for the show, a pack of cigarettes? A Bible, some tracts? Bandages for the missionary doctor in the Congo or some penecillin to combat that old native's disease? One dollar to be invested either in "this present world" or in "the world to come".

It is the symbol of materialism yet on its surface is inscribed a testimony to faith in God. Associated only with time, yet its perimeter is

As a Christian is it my master or my servant? Do I hold it lightly for God or does it hold me in its grasp.

Yes one day that dollar will be a part of that flaming ocean of the elements, the question burns within the soul today. Will its value also be endless. For it men slave that they may be free. A paradox in your pocket. burned up, or will it have gained eternal interest in heaven's treasure store?

Editorial: The Cover (March 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 3, March 1961.

The cover of this volume pictured a closed door and a vine holding it shut.

It was not always like that. For years it had remained open, bidding the visitor welcome. Often had the Master entered through that door and into the garden.

Then one day it was found shut. At the first gentle knock, it swung open and again the Master entered. Morning and evening, often through the day, the door was opened to admit the knocker.

As the time passed, the opening of the door became less and less. Now look at it. The storms of years have etched their story upon it. The winds and rains have driven into the hinges and the lock. The brier and the rust are a mute testimony of sloth and carelessness.

Can this be a picture of your devotional life, or mine? In the days of the first love, communion with the Master was a moment-by-moment experience. Then as the cares of this life sent out their thorny tendrils and the storms swept across the soul, little by little the door began to close. Now it is shut, overgrown and disused. Dear reader, are you out of touch with the Master? Is he denied entrance into the garden of your soul?

Still standing outside, knocking, waiting, He longs to come in and enjoy His pleasant fruit … “But oh the weeds …” you say … “What a mess things are in now, I could never let Him in just now … I must get things cleaned up first…”

No, that’s not His way. Listen to all that He asks. Between the patient knocking we hear Him say, “Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice and Open the Door, I will come in to him and will sup with him and he with me.” All He asks is for the door to be opened. He’ll do the weeding. He is the Master gardener. Forget the failure of the past, and now, right now, before you read another page, decisively throw open the long shut door. With contrite spirit bid Him enter and His unbreakable word is “… I will come in…

Editorial: The Cover (April 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 4, April 1961.

The cover of this volume pictured a lighthouse beside the water.

It cost much to build that beacon on the harbour wall, but it was well worth it. As daylight faded and night came, or when the waves were whipped into furious foam by a storm, the gloom would be pierced by the shaft of the beacon's light. It scoured the sea incessantly as though longing to sweep the troubled mariners into the outstretched arms of the harbour.

This day however, something is wrong. The tension of a gathering storm spreads like a sinister mantle across the rising waters; but where is the light? Why is it not beckoning the vessels home? Why no finger of light to point the way? Is there no power? Is the mechanism broken? Has there been carlessness somewhere?

How about it brother? Sister? Is it not a fact that your Lord and Master has left instructions that the light of your testimony must never be quenched? Was it not a very costly thing for Him to make it possible for you to be a light in the gathering gloom? Is it not so that all the power you'll ever need to shine is available and that the Source of Power has never been known to fail — nor can it ever fail.

It IS getting dark. The storm IS coming. There ARE travellers out there on that fitful sea of life. Yes, some are careless, some are thoughtless, but there are some anxiously looking for the entrance to the Harbour of

Safety, the Shelter in the time of storm. They are looking for the way … but the light is OUT!

The Captain of Salvation has given His command, for He knows what it is like to be in a storm. He knows the terrors of being alone in the darkness…in the deep. He knows the agony of soul and body when the waters compassed Him about and all the waves and billows went over Him and He went down to the bottom. His voice mingles compassion and great urgency as He cries out with penetrating power to you brother, sister, young or old. To you He calls, whose light of testimony is dim or well nigh extinguished. For the sake of poor perishing souls, your fellow travellers to Eternity, and for the glory of God … "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify God."

Back to the power-house, down on your knees,
Back to the Bible, your Master to please.
Back to the days when your shining was bright,
The billows toss high, too soon 'twill be night.
Sinners, they tremble and call out in fright
Send out the light — Send out the light. —J.B.N.

Editorial: The Cover (May 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 5, May 1961.

The cover of this volume pictured the words, “Depth of Focus,” with a face behind it.

Depth of focus is almost a subhuman eye pulls into sharp image conscious thing. The healthy that upon which it looks.

However, focus is also an act of the will. For instance, the eye looks through a glass window to the scene outside, or by an act of the will, pulls back the focus and looks at the glass itself.

Read again the words on the cover, “Depth of Focus”. Now look “through” the words to the “man beyond.”

This ability to penetrate beyond gift. A gift that must be often exercised the surface of things is a grand if it is to be developed.

How often do we hear (perhaps from our own lips) sharp criticism of the actions or attitudes of a fellow believer or an assembly, without the slightest effort to penetrate the externals and see beyond.

How often is a believer or assembly categorized according to certain externals instead of the Christ likeness of character.

We measure the methods instead of the man, the movements instead of the motives. We shake his hand and fail to reach his heart, point the finger at what we think he does and fail to see what he is.

Far too often our focus is out, away out. Instead of getting on our knees and thanking God for the measure of Christ and His grace in the man or assembly, we climb on our high horse, peer with narrow vision and shallow focus through our tinted lenses and say (under our breath, of course) “I am not as this man.”

No doubt we are right in what we say, but like the proud utterer of those words in the temple, perhaps, if we only realized it, it would be better if we were more like the one we disdain.

There’s an old saying that “hindsight is better than foresight”. We could add “… but insight is the best sight”.

Insight as to what we really are in ourselves, is an insight as to true values in the light of the Judgment Seat of Christ, an insight that, though seeing the external, focusses, not upon it, but upon the pure gold within.

Hast thou dove’s eyes
To see both sharp and clear;
And soaring high o’er mists that rise
Extend thy view beyond the near
And close at hand?
Or is thy view so close
That vision doubles?
Occupied not with the rose,
But with the thorny troubles
That pierce and tear.
Man looketh on the outward show,
But God, the true:
And should I long His will to know
Externals won’t distract the view

From that within.
“Lord, that I may receive Thy sight”
Should be my prayer.
Not just to see, but see aright,
Discerning, not what seemeth there,
But what is real.

J.B.N.

Editorial: The Cover (June 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 6, June 1961.

The front cover of this volume pictured a railroad track which split off into two different directions.

The trouble with being “switched”, is that you hardly notice it at first.

It happens so gradually. One minute you’re rolling grandly down the main line, really making progress, performing a timely service, carrying someone’s load with ease, lots of power — keeping on the straight and narrow … then it happens; so-o-o gently, so-o-o easily, with hardly a quiver — you’re switched!!

Oh, you still look the same, still lots of action and all that, but every moment takes you on a divergent course. Then you notice that things begin to look different. There’s a strangeness, and you wonder what’s wrong.

SWITCHED!! and by that wily enemy, the devil. His lever is the flesh and his well polished sidetrack leads into the world. Slowly and so subtly he works. The moment of departure from the track is hardly perceptible at first. Then, like the railway car in the cover picture, soon there is disuse, emptiness, rust and a sense of loneliness.

How many of us have this experience in our Christian lives. Somewhere back down the line we were “side-tracked.” Perhaps some of us have travelled a long way down the side-line. Perhaps you fell this way — at a dead end, confused and discouraged.

Well, what's the matter? How to get back on the track? Well, most likely it means getting back to where we got off.

Perhaps at some sin, wilful or inadvertant.

Perhaps at some decision in life. Perhaps it is something brought into the life that does not assist you in your life of faith.

Whatever it is, we must meet God at that point. Have it out before Him in the light of our eternal destination and purpose.

Lay hold, by faith on His power to restore, the Blood to cleanse and His love to assure.

God alone knows what great things you may yet accomplish, by His Grace, what exploits you may yet do in His Name.

The hour may be late and the way may be dark, but all is not lost, even though the Enemy would tell you that you are of no further use to God.

Put God to the test. Get back on the track. Our God is a God of recovery and many a wandering saint has cause to thank Him for truth recorded by David — "He restoreth my soul."

God longs to restore
And bless you the more,
And use you as never, as never before.
Oh rise, like the prodigal
Return to the God who will
Pour out upon you His bountiful store.

—JBN

Editorial: The Cover (July 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 7, July 1961.

The front cover of this volume pictured two men making a deal with each other.

“Big Deal”. Everything about it spells importance. The noises of the big city outside, the immense soaring structures; they look so permanent, so immovable, so secure. Inside is the crisp atmosphere of big business. The fever of the buyer is only matched by the anxiety of the seller.

At last the two parties get together. For this breathless moment, The Big Deal eclipses everything else. Oblivious to all around, nothing is more important … and the deal is made. What was sold? What was the profit? Who bought it? For how much? Was there any loss?

Well, I don’t know about the Big Deal on the cover, but I suppose that somewhere, someone is making a deal. Not for dollars, but a deal for life. A deal with the world and it’s pleasures perhaps. And the price? … a life for God.

The Bible asks the question, “For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? Or what can a man give in exchange for his life?”

It is a striking fact that we all lose our life somehow. Jesus said “Whosoever will save his life shall lose it but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel’s the same shall save it”. That is, whoever saves his life for himself and his own pleasure, will lose it for God and His purposes, but whoever loses his life for

himself, for the Saviour's sake and the Gospel's, he shall save it for God.

Perhaps the reader is not saved. What is your "Big Deal"? You GET, the pleasures of this "present world" (ever tried to measure the present? Why! the word "present" you just read has already gone into the past … forever). You LOSE a life for God down here, and the whole reason for your existence is to glorify God. You LOSE your precious soul in eternity. Above all you LOSE the Lord Jesus Christ. You LOSE His companionship, His rich blessings, NOW and FOREVER.

"Big Deal" ??? How can you be so utterly unwise?

Perhaps the reader is a Christian trying to get the best out of both worlds. Well, honestly now, are you really enjoying it? Are you satisfied, dabbling in the world and at the same time trying to enjoy the "fringe benefits" of salvation? Is the unequal yoke really more comfortable than the easy yoke of the Divine Carpenter? Honestly now, before the Lord, what do you really profit, and how great is the loss?

On the beach of the Curary River in Ecuador, fell a man under the spears of the Aucas, whom he loved for Christ's sake and whom he sought to win for his Master. His appraisal of profit and loss was masterly. He said, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, that he may obtain that which he cannot lose."

What do I gain
As I seek in the world
It's portion of pleasure to taste?
What do I gain?
Just a heart pain,
And years that are counted as waste.

What do I lose
As I turn from the Lord
His portion and treasures to spurn?
What do I lose?
All I could choose
And my life, for such meagre return.

J.B.N.

The Family Bible Hour and Old John (July 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 7, July 1961.

I passed by his hospital room every day. He looked to be in his seventies, lonely and miserable. Perhaps he had reason to be unhappy. As he sat in the wheel chair in the corner of his room watching the leaves falling outside, I noticed that one leg had been amputated below the knee. He was always alone. My heart went out to him, and I felt that I should try to make contact with him. For a few days, as I passed his room, I waved and called, “Good morning.” There was no response, unless you would call a scowl a response.

Then, one day I walked into his room, and as cheerfully as I could, I said, “How are you today?” “Terrible,” he growled, “‘n you’d feel terrible too, if you had lost your limb.” “I’m sure I would,” I replied. I was searching in my mind for a positive approach with which to cheer this unhappy old man. “I remember reading of a war-time pilot, by the name of Bader,” I ventured, “who lost both of his legs in a crash. He overcame his handicap and became a famous pilot in the Air Force, and rose to a high rank before the end of the war.”

The old fellow did not even raise his eyes. “Yes,” he spat out the word, “everybody tells me about him.” I could see that I was making no headway, so bidding him good day, I left him to his lonely room and his bitterness.

I asked one of the nurses who the old gentleman was. “Oh,” she replied, “That’s old John M., don’t go near him, he’ll bite off your head.”

Well, I had not lost my head, but I had lost heart a bit at the rebuff I had received; nevertheless, I determined to try again the next day. When I reached his room, I found it empty; the old fellow had gone home, where ever that might be.

The winter came; Christmas time, New Year, and finally another year rolled by until the following December and the Christmas cards began to arrive. There was one addressed to me in large and shaky handwriting. I tore open the envelope and found a very ordinary little card. Opening it, I saw a note written by the same shaky hand. It read, “I often think of the ray of sunshine that came into my hospital room.” It was signed, “John M.” His address was on the envelope so I lost no time in making my way to the street where he lived.

I found the number on an old rambling home. I climbed the steps and rang the bell. It sounded far into the house, like an echo in a cave. It seemed a long time before I heard footsteps approach the door. It opened a crack and an elderly lady peered out. “Is Mr. M. at home?” I asked. “Er, yes,” she replied hesitantly. “May I see him?” I asked. I was shown into a large room hung with old tapestries and filled with antique furniture, heavy and sombre. I sat down on a horsehair couch, the kind my grandmother had, and looked around. Everything seemed to whisper of a past, a wealthy past. My thoughts were interrupted by the re-appearance of the elderly lady. She showed me up a long creaking stairway to the top floor. I was ushered along the hallway to the room at the end. The door was shut, and the lady called, “John, here is Mr. N. to see you”. “Come in,” I heard again the old familiar bark. I went in, and there sat old John, still miserable, and still scowling.

Finally, he barked, “Sit down.” I sat down, and tried to break down the wall that seemed to stand between us. This time it seemed a little different. I felt that somewhere in that soul there was a hunger, a hunger that I knew could be satisfied by the One who had met my own personal need, the Lord Jesus Christ.

I tried my best to turn the conversation in the direction of eternal things. Each time I did, old John would cut me off mercilessly. I looked around the room. It was full of old furniture. One standard lamp behind old John gave him the only light in the room. There were no newspapers, magazines, or books beside him; the only speck of cheer was a little bird in a cage at the other corner. It occasionally let out a little chirp. “Poor bird,” I thought.

I rose to leave, and with merely a grunt from old John, I let myself out into the dark hallway.

As I drove home, I felt discouraged at my inability to get the Gospel into this poor empty heart. Then I realized that I had not even left a Gospel tract to read; my mission seemed a failure.

Weeks passed, and then one day the telephone rang. I answered and was surprised to hear the gruff voice of old John inquiring when I would be up to see him again. That evening found me standing on the doorstep of the old home, ringing the bell. I was shown once more into the dull domain of the unhappy old man. This time, however, I had brought some good Gospel tracts which I intended to leave with him, in the hope that if he would not listen to the Gospel, he would be willing to read it.

The visit again was short, as short as old John’s temper. As I rose to leave, I offered him the Gospel tracts

hopefully, only to be rebuffed with this rejoinder, “Never read, it makes my eyes bleed.” He just would not allow me to leave the Gospel leaflets anywhere in his room. My heart was heavy as I went down the long creaking stairway, through the cold hall to the heavy door. I was shown out by the old lady, who, I had learned, was John’s sister. She bade me a thin “good-night.” I went out into the street again defeated.

How I prayed that somehow, sometime, somewhere, the transforming Gospel of the grace of God might reach into that poor, empty, hungry bitter soul before it was forever too late. How this was going to be accomplished, I did not know. His mind seemed impregnable to the influences of the sweetest story ever told.

I visited him from time to time, and each visit seemed to end the same way. One evening I again called. There were the same faraway bell, the musty parlour, the long creaking stairway, the dark hall, and the gruff “Come in.” I listened to more of his grumbling, his criticism and self-pity until at last, turning quickly, he patted an old-fashioned radio at his elbow, and said, “Do you know this McIntee fellow?” He took me by surprise. “Which one do you mean?” I asked him. “You know, the radio program fellow. I listen to him every week on the Family Bible Hour.” I gasped with surprise. For years now I had been endeavouring to bring the old man the message of hope, when unknown to me, into that dark and dismal room, uncheered by the laughter of a child, untouched by the warmth of genuine friends, had come the fragrance of the name of Jesus, the Light of the glorious Gospel of the grace of God, the melody of the sweetest sound in Heaven or on Earth, that God loved old John, and that He waited and longed to save him.

Old John M. is dead. Suddenly he was called to leave the dark corridors of his old home for the endless halls of Eternity; but will we meet old John in Heaven? This we do not know.

We do know, however, that where the personal touch failed, and where Gospel tracts were not read, the radio ministry pierced through the barrier to bring an old unhappy man the message that could meet his deepest need and satisfy the hunger of his empty heart.

How many other homes like this are entered every week by The Family Bible Hour? How many weary souls find the answer to their need through the message of this program? These questions will be answered some day, but not now. This we do know, however, that the Christians who sponsor these programs have a part in the great work of reaching into the darkness, not only of heathen lands through the missionary, but of weary hearts right in our own districts, through the radio ministry.

—J.B.N.

Editorial: The Cover (August 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 8, August 1961.

The front cover of this volume pictured a man deep in thought.

IT IS TIME TO THINK!

The night is settling fast upon us. it seems that the last few rays of the setting sun have spread across this old rebellious world like a silent farewell, and soon they too will be extinguished. The day of God's grace will be gone forever.

We who live in these momentous hours in the evening of the age, are called upon to bear a tremendous responsibility.

We look out on a world reeling with excesses and sleepy with opulence on the one hand, and on the other, crushed with oppression and burdened with sorrow.

We see a Church shattered with division, separated not so much from the world as from one another, experts in tradition and babes in doctrine, loud in preaching and mumbling in ethics. Like Solomon's sixty, expert in warring; all holding swords, but wouldn't quite know how to handle a trowel.

It is indeed TIME to THINK … Time to make an appraisal of things, time to take stock. Time to find a quiet spot, beyond the influences of other men, and with the pale light of the evening of the day of grace upon us … THINK … clearly, objectively … what is the sum total of my life? What are the motives that drive me on? Am I labouring so earnestly just to extend the sphere of my

personal influence? Or to more firmly entrench in the minds of the impressionable, my personal convictions and points of view? Has all of this activity produced any real fruit in my own life, or the lives of others? Have the multitude of my words accomplished anything, or are they “idle”… unemployed, neither doing nor earning?

Soon, so very soon it would seem, the day will be over and it is high time to think, clearly and sanely of life’s abiding values. It is time to think greater thoughts, grander thoughts of God, of Christ, of His people. It is time to lift our thinking out of the microcosmic tracks it so readily pursues. It is time to gather up our pygmy points of view and launch our thoughts out, out into these realms of contemplation where the magnitude of God’s eternal plan of the ages overwhelms us; where the majesty and regal splendour of an exalted Christ eclipses utterly the pettiness of time and its troubles.

If we are content to be little in spiritual stature and influence, then let us think little thoughts. If we aspire to be great for God, then we must have great thoughts of God and His purposes, for it is recorded … “as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.”

J.B.N.

Editorial: The Cover (September 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 9, September 1961.

Heads Or Tails

The front cover of this volume pictured a pile of coins.

At the toss of a coin, the worlding can make his decision. At least, a minor one. Many times, I suppose the puzzled Christian wishes he could as easily find out the answer to his dilemma.

How to make the right decision is probably the Christian's most constant problem over the years.

How many books and papers have been written on this subject .. . "How to know the will of God?"

When the decision is between that which is right and that which is wrong,

according to Scriptural principle or precedent, then the problem is really one of obedience or disobedience; of my will or God's will.

What is so confusing to many of us is when the choice is between two "right" things. Neither course of action contravenes a Scriptural principle and the only concern is whether the outcome will be for God's glory, the good of others and ourselves.

It has been said that there are three things which will show the way to take. 1) scriptural principle, 2) inward conviction, and 3)the force of circumstance.

But what if all is darkness? Seemingly no scriptural principle is involved. The believer has no clear exercise

or stubborn will in the matter and circumstances are at a standstill? . . . and you must decide TODAY.

Perhaps that is where the reader is right now. Oh, the dilemma of deadline decisions!

In such a case it is surely a test of faith. You must ACT . . . believingly. “Believe what?” you ask. Believe in the over-ruling power and overshadowing tender love of your Heavenly Father,

This may be a strange thought, but in the final analysis it is not vital that we KNOW God’s will. It is vital only that we DO it.

How can we do it if do not know it?

God is absolute, and He will control the outcome of any decision made in the darkness by one whose will is malleable and yielded to His sovereignty.

“If any man WILL DO His will, he shall know . . .” is a scripture that indicates at once that the knowledge of the mind of God must be preceded by the willingness to do it, without necessarily first knowing what it is.

Take the step! God will honour your faith be it ever so feeble and He will give you what you long for right now, peace of mind and further light on the path for the next step.

Editorial: The Cover (October 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 10, October 1961.

But Where Will it All End?

The front cover of this volume pictured a rocket ready to launch.

Vaster power, more involved mechanisms, more intricate devices, more intense thinking, calculations in the most frightening proportions, are already being coordinated that will result in cataclysmic “progress” and events never thought possible a few years ago.

In the city of Vancouver one evening, I was asking the Lord to put me in contact with some weary soul. I went to a restaurant for supper. The place was full, so I was asked to share a table with an intelligent looking man. He was representative for a well known aircraft company and travelled the world as a special technician. He was weary all right, and as we talked of eternal things he told me in strictest confidence, though unwisely, of a device that was already on the drawing boards of his company. It was simply frightening… and that was three years ago!

His worry was just this, “Where will it all end?” I opened the Bible and was able to show him that … “the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up … Nevertheless we (who are saved) according to His promise look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

To the Christian it will end at a new beginning. For the unsaved it will end in the fearful and eternal protraction of the second death.

Reader, where will it all end for you? If you are a Christian, “Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved what manner of persons ought (we) to be in all holy conversation and godliness?”

If unsaved, “The Lord … is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

The day will come and God will say “This far and no farther” and man will have to withdraw his defiling footstep from the gateway to the stars and the Lord, who knows their number and calls them all by their names, will take a hand again in the affairs of the nations.

How will it be with you then, on that great day?

Editorial: The Cover (November 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 11, November 1961.

The front cover of this volume pictured a head of wheat.

A beautiful head of wheat! And all from one single grain, hopefully sown.

There are few things guaranteed to the farmer. He sows in hope and IF the seed is good, IF there is rain, IF there is no blight, IF . . . IF .. then he will reap some kind of a harvest.

How much more certain are the eternal things. We read an unconditional guarantee which says, “We SHALL reap . .. if we faint not”. The only thing that prevents a harvest is FAINTING in SOWING.

Now what would cause us to faint in sowing? There could be many reasons. Here are three. We faint in sowing because we fail to reap the fruit we expected. “One soweth and another reapeth”, said Jesus. Sunday School teachers in particular are sometimes discouraged and ready to faint for this reason. Years of sowing, then along comes another and does the reaping.

Failing to rejoice when there is fruit can be a factor that leads to fainting. “. . . He that soweth and he that reapeth MAY rejoice together . . .” Since the joy of the Lord is your strength, it behoves us to be ready to rejoice when there is a time of reaping.

Some times we fail to recognize the fruit when it appears. “Thou sowest not that body that shall be”. For instance the fruit of tribulation is patience. The fruit of suffering for Christ, glory.

So keep at the sowing. “Blessed are ye that sow beside ALL waters” says Isaiah. Little sowing, little fruit. Much sowing inevitably means much fruit. Don’t faint but keep sowing. Dig your hands deeply into the good seed and prayerfully, hopefully, faithfully SOW. Keep at it, for the guarantee stands .. . “We SHALL reap . . . if we faint not”.

Editorial: The Cover (December 1961)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 7 No. 12, December 1961.

The front cover of this volume pictured a man's forehead.

The mind, that citadel of the personality is under attack! While governments encourage the building of shelters to preserve a percentage of the population from the devastation of atomic warfare; the great enemy of mankind, the devil is already in the process of using a more subtle and terrifying form of destruction. It is slow. It is sinister, and in so many cases, tragically effective. It is for the control of the MIND.

There was a time when it was the body he attacked. The lions, the rack, the stake and the sword all took their toll of faithful saints. Yet the voice of the martyrs' blood called saints to greater godliness and ready sacrifice.

Now, it is different. The enemy knows that if he can embattle the mind 'til it wearies in the fray, he will have reduced a saint to a place of uselessness and discouragement. Doubts and fears will pervade the personality and the impact of a life for God will be well nigh lost.

How does the enemy accomplish this? What are his devices? His means are legion but his aim is simple - PRE-OCCUPATION.

He plans to step up his attack on the already too busy saint. The PRESSURE of BUSINESS, the PROBLEMS of LIFE, and should there be a respite from these, he will

endeavour to fill up the rest with the PLEASURES of the WORLD.

He knows that the long stress of conflict is infinitely more devastating than the flash and crash of a frontal attack.

A drop by drop of molten poison, pound by pound of crushing pressure, inch by inch of occupation he overwhelms the mind as it reels and staggers, scarcely realizing what is taking place.

What then is the answer? (“if there is an answer” the fainting soul whispers.) How can this wily enemy be dealt with? How can the mind be preserved?

Again, the principle is simple, but the practice of it is often difficult. It is indeed a warfare.

The answer is the driving of the mind to CONTEMPLATE CHRIST. When the insidious effects of the enemy’s wiles are felt, when the fever of life is at a pitch, when it seems that the “last straw” has long since been buried by a dozen more and the mind has reached the limits of endurance — “Consider HIM . . . lest ye be wearied and faint . . .”

The occupation of the mind with Jesus Christ is the balm that heals, the Divine “sedative” that soothes, the “diversion” that loosens the bands of tension and refreshes the mind for its rightful duties and contemplation.

Think on Him;
His Name, His fame,
His sufferings and shame
And all the beauties of His countenance.
His majesty, His excellence,

His glory and the story
Of His matchless
Boundless
Love!
Think on Him.

Lift Off (March 1962)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 8 No. 3, March 1962.

“5—4—3—2—1—zero—Ignition — LIFT OFF —” and with it’s unique roar, the eleven storey-high rocket, streaming liquid oxygen and belching fire, kicks itself free from the dust and gravity of earth, with it’s capsule “Friendship 7” and it’s precious living payload … a man, bound for space.

Let us, ordinary folk, to whom apogee and perigee, quantum physics and the wonders of telemetry mean next to nothing, be careful lest among our pygmy thoughts there should be found a pride of ignorance. Let us never treat lightly the courage and ability of those men, such as Colonel Glenn who pioneer at the risk of a flaming death.

Yet as we think of the experience of this brave man, it is hard not to make comparison, or rather, find a contrast between him and the humblest child of God.

Another “Zero” hour will surely come, when there will be a “lift-off,” the likes of which, no technician has ever seen nor scientist calculated.

At the sound of a trumpet, a shout, a voice, likely unheard by all except those who are heaven-bound, that lowly and unknown saint, with all believers will leave the earth.

The Astronaut leaves, driven by the flaming power of propulsion. The saint will leave, caught up by the mighty power of attraction.

As Colonel Glenn hurled skyward, he remained the same, but that lowly saint will be changed. His body will now be a spiritual body, independent of the blood and breath of life. Untrammeled by the chains of gravity it will soar heavenwards.

The Astronaut looked out his capsule window, and was heard to say “The view is beautiful.” What will it be for that simple believer in Jesus, caught up, when for the very first time, with eyes from which the mote of mortality has been removed, he will look into the face of the Man of Calvary?

Perhaps he will use those words, as never before, “Yea He IS altogether lovely.”

The weather will not delay that event. World politics will not affect it. There is no doubt that it shall take place …

“The trumpet SHALL sound . .”

“The dead SHALL be raised …”

“We SHALL all be changed …”

“So SHALL we ever be with the Lord …”

“BE YE ALSO … READY …”

Christians in Conflict (August 1962)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 8 No. 8, August 1962.

On different occasions three young people have approached me, each in a state of spiritual distress. Now as I look back I see in those three cases, something representative of the conflict of Christian, young or old.

One was a young married person, one a young person at work, and the other a high school student. The distress was the result of a threefold strategy of the enemy against the heart in one case; against the mind in another; against the soul in the third. This, too, is representative of the conflict in every Christian's life. Each had one thing in common: the inability to discern where the attack was taking place.

If my little fellow were to complain of a sore throat, it would be ridiculous to put a bandage on his big toe. If he cut himself, to offer a gargle would be utter stupidity. First, I must locate the trouble and apply the appropriate corrective. We are all aware that spiritual distress is a more complex thing, and in many cases it is not the work of a moment to repair the damage caused by the enemy.

The Lord left on record, however, means to identify that strategy of the enemy, the appropriate means of defence.

A lawyer, trying to trick the Lord, asked Him what was the first and great commandment of the law. The Lord Jesus answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind …" In these words, the Lord reveals what is becoming a

rather popular subject for modern writers, “the personality of man.”

Now, it is the objective of the devil to rob the Christian. Since it is impossible for him to rob the saint of eternal life in Christ, he is determined to rob him, or her, of peace, joy and usefulness.

The arch-enemy of saints is cruel and merciless. He will use any means within his power to obtain his objective. He will seek to defile the body, to derange the mind and degrade the character. He will endeavour to set on fire of hell the lusts and passions of the flesh until some unwary soul finds his testimony consumed on the flaming pyre of self-gratification. He will do his utmost to fill a saint with the form of religious living to the extent that his life will be darkened with the shadow of things, and well-nigh empty of the substance.

The basic tactics of this enemy have been stated in the Word of God, the “Manual for Warriors.”

To capture the vantage point of the heart, it is the strategy of the enemy to ATTRACT it’s affections by a place, the glitter, riches, and pleasures of the world. Paul lamented the loss of Demas who had forsaken him “having loved this present world.” There is no use pretending that this present world holds NO attractions. Granted, the beer-parlours, gaudy shows and suggestive literature is abhorrent to the believer in Christ. It have heard and read scathing words of condemnation about television, and the Lord knows it’s subtle influence is poisoning many minds and emptying many prayer meetings, but who will not admit it is ATTRACTIVE at some time or other? So, while one saint loves his TV, another (who condemns the “worldly TV”) loves his new

car. The whole aim of the enemy is to divert AFFECTION from the Saviour. Whatever means he uses, is not the point, it is the PLACE with which it is associated… “this present world.”

Now, what is the defence? What has the Captain of Our Salvation provided to keep the vantage point of the heart from falling into enemy hands?

Place! yes, if the enemy would capture and trouble the heart with a place, the Lord would garrison the heart by attracting it to another PLACE. We read of it in John 14:1-3, “Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a PLACE for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” Again, in Colossions 3:1-2, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your Affection on things above, not on things on the earth.”

To be very practical, if I am finding that something associated with this world is stealing my heart, then I must recognize it for what it is, the tactics of the enemy to rob me of peace, joy, and usefulness, and to rob our Beloved Lord of the love and devotion that is rightfully His. It is time, indeed it is past time, for one to turn, by a definite act of the will, from the thing that troubles, and through the reading of the Word, contemplation and prayer to turn attention to the Place, where our Saviour is, to the things of eternal value, “heavenly things,” as the Lord called them. Then we will come to a more

accurate appraisal of the true value of the things of the world and the relation they should have to our lives.

Some of the Lord's people are not so troubled with this world as are others. Their difficulty may be quite different. It may be that the enemy is after the MIND. It would seem today that the enemy is certainly attacking the minds of God's people as never before. Tensions, nervous breakdowns, ulcers, tempers are but the symptoms in many cases of deeper disorder, the Oppression of the enemy upon the Mind.

To capture the ATTENTION of the mind, the enemy uses a different approach. He engages his "secret service." He has all but perfected sinister processes of subterfuge that can silently and swiftly invade the secret passages of the minds of men. It is not now a place but a POWER. A subtle, silent, hellish power. It distresses the babe in Christ and alarms the patriarch. It is a fearful power, a devastating power, the POWER of the FLESH.

To gain this stronghold, the thinking process of the Christian, his plan is to light long fuses of the flesh that enter the mind through the five entrances, the senses. Unless this power can be overcome and the fuses kept extinguished, it can cause an upheaval with devastating results in the life. The strange thing is that the flesh is not always obnoxious; it may be fair, it may be religious, and in many cases appealing. Whatever it is, the enemy seeks the same end result. To occupy the Attention of the Mind. It is a startling, solemn fact that this obsession can be even over scriptural principles or Christian practices, until the whole thinking process is coloured, and the main channel of thought diverted like

a river which loses itself in the restless sea “whose waters cast up mire and dirt.”

What then is the defence against this fearful and subtle power, how can there be a victory, a deliverance from it’s insidious influence? The Lord has a Power. It is the Power of the Spirit. This is the only Power that can overcome the flesh, fair or foul. Natural courage or determination is not a match for the wiles of the enemy and the power he ignites to engulf the mind with the flames of the flesh, and suffocate the thoughts with the acrid fumes of his diabolic insinuations.

The power of the Spirit is available to every child of God. The Holy Spirit is indeed resident in every believer and is the avowed antagonist of the flesh. “For the flesh constantly has a strong desire to suppress the Spirit, and the Spirit constantly has a strong desire to suppress the flesh, and these are entrenched in an attitude of mutual opposition to one another so that you may not do the things that you desire to do” (tr. Wuest).

If I find myself thoughtfully engaged in any one direction to the exclusion of the Person and work of Christ, it would be well to ask if these thoughts are consummated in Christ or are they indeed a diversion of the devil to rob the mind of tranquility and the Lord of His rightful place on the throne of the thought-life.

The battle grows hotter! First, the heart’s affection; then, the mind’s attention, finally the enemy seeks to attack the citadel of the soul, the centre of the emotions. To so attack this bastion until it becomes weary and faints into helplessness and exhaustion is the master-stroke of the enemy. For this stronghold he calls upon his henchmen, evil spirits. This is the hand to hand

fighting between the Christian and the powers of darkness and wicked spirits. “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12).

If he brings a Place to attract the affection of the heart, and a Power to attack the attentions of the mind, then for this key-point he throws evil, spiritual Personalities into the battle for the purpose of exhausting the energies of the soul. He can never rob the soul of it’s life in Christ, but he can and does weaken and weary the soul, robing it of vitality and the Lord of its service.

Who then can fight against such odds? Who among us can contend with him that is mighty? Thank God, there is a Person, a divine Person, the Conqueror of Calvary, the Lord Himself! He is the Victor, the One who has already judged the Prince of this world and all his henchmen, and the word to the weary soul today is this … “Consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds (Heb. 12:3).

The occupation of the soul with the Person of Christ, is the divine healer, the blessed balm, the refreshing draught that can revive and restore the soul … “He restoreth my soul,” says the Psalmist. This will be the eternal occupation of the soul for the countless aeons.

Weary soul ready to faint, embattled mind ready to fall, troubled heart about to flee … hang on! There is an answer ready to hand, provided by the Father who loves you, the Son who died for you and the Holy Spirit who is committed to land you safe on Heaven’s golden shore.

Union and Unity (November 1962)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 8 No. 11, November 1962.

Uniformity and Unanimity

In these days of alliances, compacts, councils, and affiliations, there would seem to be much confusion of thought and resultant apprehension in the minds of many believers.

There is the fear among some of unwittingly contracting an “unholy alliance” with its inevitable judgment. On the part of others, the fear is that of an “isolationism” that would grieve God.

These two fears lead many to extremes on both sides. Forceful personalities vigorously propounding convictions in this realm have wrought much havoc in the Church.

Much of this heart-rending condition could have been avoided to the glory of God and the comfort of His people. A mightier testimony in the world would have resulted and local churches would be delivered today from much weakness, dissension and its stigma.

This confusion would seem to stem, in a large measure, from a failure to discern the difference between two sets of principles. One, that Union is not synonymous with Unity, and another, that Uniformity is not a prerequisite for Unanimity.

Union does not assure unity. Unity is not the child of union. Union may be oneness of purpose and at the same time diversity of principle. Union can be joined in name while divorced in nature. I nail a piece of lumber

to a cement wall, this is union; but, strictly speaking, not unity. A saved woman may marry an unsaved man. This is union but it is not unity. The much publicised ecumenical movement for world union of “churches,” can never be the producer or the possessor of unity. Unity is oneness in nature. Unity is oneness in the principles of existence, continuance, and culmination.

The compounding of the holy anointing oil in Exodus 30 is the scriptural picture of unity among brethren, as painted for us in the 133rd Psalm. There, the dwelling of brethren together in unity is “like the precious ointment …”

The myrrh, the cinnamon, cassia, and calamus may be put together, stirred and thoroughly mixed. This is union, but not yet unity. The apothecary may still pick out a fragment of myrrh, or a piece of cassia for they have retained their identity. Now he adds the cohesive factor, the oil. The blending of the components together with the oil, makes of one, many particles. Now there is unity; oneness. Every part is characteristic of the whole, and the separate nature of the spices indistinguishable.

Union has to do with position while unity, with condition. Though there cannot be unity without union, it is obvious to all that union without unity is prevalent. It is a sad state of affairs to suppose that union presumes unity and that spiritual position presupposes spiritual condition.

The unity of brethren in the picture of the holy anointing oil has some striking features. It was a Costly thing compounded of the principle spices, pure, sweet, and fragrant. What did it cost the God of Heaven to make it possible for me to shake your hand and call you

“brother”? What did it cost the Son of God to produce in this world a fellowship which surpasses every organization and society in its character? It cost the cross! It cost the sacred currency of the precious blood that flowed from Immanuel’s veins! It cost the blackness of those three terrifying hours, the orphan cry, the utter abandonment of the soul of the Man of Sorrows, our Beloved Lord!

It is little wonder then, that this costly ointment was also a Holy ointment. Little wonder, too, that this costly unity is a holy thing. Holy, because of its cost to God and His blessed Son. Woe betide that man who puts forth his hand to disturb this unity; whether through dullness of discernment, the wretchedness of evil intent, or the fires of zeal for “the truth”. Let us all beware lest we be thus guilty of the iniquity of the holy things.

The ointment was particular. It was not put on the stranger. Work as we may, plan as we can, organize, and burn the midnight oil dry, we can never produce unity between the saint of God and the stranger to His grace. Union; yes, this is possible, but unity, no! It just cannot be.

Just as the cohesive element in the holy ointment was the oil, so the uniting force that blends saint with saint in strange and holy compounding is the Holy Spirit of God. Only those sealed and indwelt by the Spirit of Christ can know the fragrance and fruitfulness of this unity.

However, it is sadly possible to be a partaker of this unity and not live in the spirit of it. It is not alone the fact of unity that is so blessed, but the enjoyment of it. Thus the holy anointing oil was compounded “… after

the art of the perfumer …" The grace to Dwell in this unity is an "art".

The confusion of mind that causes so many of God's people to suppose that unanimity can be produced by uniformity has been the sad cause of not a few good and useful saints reeling from one extreme to another.

It is tragic, in these days when unity and unanimity between the saints of God is so badly needed among other things to indicate to the world our relationship to the divine centre, that uniformity should ever become the "shibboleth" for acceptance. What a sad mistake it is, and with what painful product and many a broken heart, have we come to believe that unanimity and uniformity are, if not exactly synonymous, inseparable.

Unanimity has to do with principles; it is a matter of spirit and feeling. Uniformity has to do with practices, a matter of "things" and "doing".

In the Godhead, there is unvarying and eternal unity and unanimity, yet it is not by uniformity, for the Father is not the Son, and neither is the Spirit; yet, They are One of another, indivisible Unity.

If uniformity of practice is to be an absolute necessity for unanimity of spirit, then where shall it begin and where shall it end? Would it be a provincial uniformity or a national one?

Let Union be the fruit of the Unity of the Spirit, and Unanimity be the flower of Conformity to Christ, till that day when there shall be one fold and one Shepherd. Then we shall wonder perhaps at all the effort, energy, and time expended in seeking uniformity of conditions instead of conformity to Christ.

Biography: George Wilson (February 1963)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 9 No. 2, February 1963.

“… Tomorrow is the new moon; and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty” 1 Samuel 20:18.

Born in Belfast, Ireland, forty seven years ago, George Wilson was led to the Lord as a young man and associated himself with Christians who meet at Victoria Hall in that city. As a carpenter by trade he was employed for some years at the Harland and Wolff shipyards.

Brother George had a lively interest in the work among the children and he, with brother George Gunning now of St. Catharines, Ontario, carried on a children’s work in Old Park Assembly in Belfast. His interest in the young led him into work with the youth of the area. He was greatly interested in a Saturday night meeting for the young where four to five hundred regularly attended.

Though a comparatively young man, his help was sought in the work of the oversight in the large assembly at Victoria Hall. There is no doubt that this training and experience affected his ministry in the years that were to follow.

In 1947, brother George left Ireland for Canada, and through the instrumentality of the late brother Norman Bailey of Niagara Falls, Ontario, settled in that city. His wife, Mary, and family, Valerie, and Edmund, followed him in December of the same year.

The following year, he used his skill as a carpenter to build a home for his family where they resided.

Following his arrival in this country he was in fellowship with the saints at Wilmott Street in Niagara Falls, Ontario, where his help and ministry were deeply appreciated.

For many years brother George had been exercised about devoting his full time to the preaching of the Word. About twelve years ago this exercise became “a divine necessity,” and he sought the fellowship of his brethren in this regard. One of his brethren recalls that there had certainly been a Christ exalting character about his ministry.

The brethren, whose fellowship he had enjoyed in Ireland at Victoria Hall, joined heartily with those at Niagara Falls, and our beloved brother left his secular vocation to serve the Lord and His people in a larger sphere.

As previously mentioned, the early years of experience in Ireland where he sought to shepherd the flock, left their mark upon the man and his ministry. He was indeed a man with the heart of a shepherd. Many were the lonely hearts, and many were the sick and sorrowing who knew the comforting softness of his voice, and the cheer of his ready smile.

His service took him to many parts, but perhaps where he will be missed most for his ministry will be the Manitoulin Island, where he laboured often with brother Robert Booth, and the assemblies in Virginia, where he often visited alone.

There are many places where his comforting and exhortive ministry will be missed, but the test of a man's ministry is often in proportion to his acceptance in his own home area. Niagara Falls, St. Catharines, and the assemblies near at hand will feel the lack of his warm ministry. It was always good to see him appear at a prayer meeting, unexpectedly, when the Lord used His servant to pass on a "wee" word that so often met a felt need.

The writer recalls with pleasure the many times brother George called him, as a standing arrangement, when he was home, and over a bite of lunch share a richer feast, as some fresh truth discovered would be mutually enjoyed.

One such occasion found the writer passing through somewhat of a storm in the life, and on seeking a word of help from our brother, he simply quoted two portions from the 77th Psalm that have never been forgotten, "Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary" (V13), and "Thy way is in the sea…" (V19).

This was typical of our brother for if he excelled in any area of ministry it was in the sick room, the house of mourning and to those in special need.

He was a man of a tender spirit and a man of peace. There is no doubt that he carried to the last, scars inflicted by thoughtless critics who did not know the kind of a heart that beat within.

It is supposed that somewhere in this beloved brother, that by reason of the old nature in which we all share, he also partook of the flaws, failures and faults we all can find so readily within ourselves, but these, whatever

they may have been, are locked in the hearts of those who loved him best.

He took sick while sharing a series of meetings with brother Bob Booth in Philadelphia. God was blessing, but it was obvious that brother George was not at all well. He returned home, and after a brief but tragic and trying time the Lord called His servant from his ambassadorship in a foreign clime, to a place of rest where today he beholds the countenance of the Beloved One he sought to exalt and to serve faithfully here.

At the funeral Brother Bob Booth had the sad but precious privilege of bringing the message from the Scripture in Revelation, “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them” (14:13). It was obvious to all that the Lord was upholding our brother as he brought the message.

On December 12, 1962, the elders of the assembly at Wilmott Street bore the remains to their place, until the trumpet shall sound and we shall all be re-united, garbed in immortality… forever with the Lord… “Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

J. B. N.

The Home Call (December 1965)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 11 No. 10, December 1965.

He was unknown to most. Only those who fellowshipped with him in his home assembly knew him, and then, not as his family did.

He emigrated to Canada from Holland about fifteen years ago, bringing his wife and unmarried children.

The first time I met him was in his farm home. He had sent a note to the correspondent of our assembly, saying, “I come — you come see me.” His address followed.

We found him. He could speak no English; we could speak no Dutch. With the help of a German-speaking neighbour of his, we were able to get the details of his arrival and to express our welcome.

But he was hungry for fellowship in the things that mattered most. So we resorted to the common language of all believers, the language of song.

He had brought from the old country a fine pedal organ. Sitting down at it, he played, as we, with his family gathered round and launched into songs of praise.

They sang “Daar is kracht, kracht, wonderbare kracht, in het bloed, van het Lam”; we sang in English. There is power, power, wonder-working power in the precious blood of the Lamb.” We rejoiced together in our common heritage.

It was hard for him, now in middle life, to master the intricacies of the English language. He would sit in the

Bible class, with an English Bible on one knee and his old Dutch volume on the other, glancing from one to the other.

It was hard for him too, to adjust to the ways of the New World. At home, his house had resounded with the songs of the saints. Living next door to the assembly meeting place, he had an open door to all the Christians, before and after meetings. Now it was so different. Our formal ways and rules of “etiquette” seemed to hinder the “free” fellowship he was so used to. He longed for more of the company of the Lord’s people.

He was an earnest student of the Scriptures and often in those early days, would sit in the meeting literally “bubbling” up with some precious truth he longed to impart, but, tongue-tied with his new and difficult language, he remained silent.

Then he almost gave up. I met him up-town one day and enquired for his health, having missed him at the meetings. He looked at me sadly, and putting his head to one side and shrugging a shoulder, he said in his Dutch-accented English “Ve haf hung our harps on de Villow tree.”

No doubt he felt then, like God’s people long ago who spoke those words and added, “How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land” (Ps137).

His English gradually improved and he began to minister a little now and then.

One thing noticeable about his little messages were their freshness. There were no stereo-typed phrases, no trite cliches. He didn’t know them. Fresh thoughts came

from him that so often turned our eyes to the Lord he loved.

Then some years ago, the blow fell. He learned that a dread disease had touched him and was advanced beyond all hope of recovery.

As a school custodian he witnessed faithfully for his Lord until he could no longer work. In February of this year, life became an intolerable burden as suffering increased.

In all these weary months of severe pain, it was a benediction to visit with him. He was little interested in "the News." His great occupation was Christ and His Word.

He made every preparation for his departure. His desire was to provide every comfort for his loved ones after he would be gone. It was his wish to remain at home until his decease, but his great pain and distress necessitated hospital care.

It was the great privilege of the writer to spend many hours with him during the last week of his life on earth. I shall not easily forget those days of the death-watch.

His pains were intolerable. His agonies in the final conflict seemed beyond endurance. The drugs, though administered kindly and faithfully could not at the last assuage the pain. His time drew near.

The last words of those we love are always of great import. For they are the expressions of absolute reality. They are spoken from that vantage when all of life down here can be surveyed.

Needless to say, we bent the ear to hear the final utterances of this beloved Saint.

“The first thing” — “the first thing,” — he whispered between onslaughts of pain. “What is the First Thing?” I asked, “Worship God —That is first,” was his reply.

We thought he was beyond reach, as we talked of his life and love for Christ. He stirred — “No-No- you must not admire me—only Christ—admire Christ.”

The flame of his life was flickering low. He became restless, I asked him if there was anything he wanted, “Ya, I want to praise the Lord, but I have no strength left.” “Then” I replied, “we’ll praise the Lord together.” I put my hand into the oxygen tent. He held it tightly and breathed a broad though faint “Amen.”

We were all around him now. The months of pain and this final agony had added thirty years to his appearance. Opening his eyes he saw us standing. A weak smile fluttered on his lips and lifting his hands wearily, as though in blessing, he whispered “I love you all, I love you all.”

These and other words that came from this much-battled soul, revealed that, within that mortal cage, emaciated and in the throes of the final great weariness, there was a life the undertaker would not bury and a light the gloom of the grave could not extinguish.

At last the heaving breast faltered, the brave heart stumbled and…

“The combat was over, the conflict was ended.
A chariot of fire from the clouds had descended;
It’s drivers were angels on horses of whiteness;
It’s burning wheels turned on axles of brightness.
A search unfolded the door bright and shining
All dazling like gold of the seventh refining,

And the soul that came up out of great tribulation
Had mounted the chariot and steeds of salvation."

—from "The Translation of the Covenanters"

His life, his hopes, his dreams were now consummated in his first long look into the countenance of the Lord he loved and worshipped and sought to serve, for half a century.

His loved ones stood around the vacant tent of his pilgrimage a while longer to carry out a last request. He had asked, that when at last the home-call came, that they should praise the Lord around his death-bed.

Those who loved him and whom he loved, read the Scriptures at the funeral. His brethren carried his body to it's narrow bed to await the trumpet that will sweep the grave of the precious dust of the saints and call them to eternal reveille, and we shall be changed — raptured — re-united.

What is his name; Who was he? you ask. It would be inappropriate to the memory of our brother, who disdained attention and who considered words of praise as something to be avoided, if his name should appear in this way.

May his example inspire the living to make the principle of his life and the longing in his death their own. "Not I, but Christ." Amen.

Editorial (January 1966)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 12 No. 1, January 1966.

“THESE … shall go away into everlasting fire Prepared for the devil and his angels.”

THESE … Not just these souls, these things, but these people. Real, living walking, busy people. These barbers, these taxi-drivers, these telephone operators, these housewives, these business men, these fathers, sons, mothers, daughters.

THESE … Who feel pain, remorse, sorrow in any day. THESE … With eyes in peril of becoming sightless in the gloom of black darkness to sting with bitter tears. THESE … whose hands will ever grasp and clutch and never find. THESE … with keen minds that will be eternally eaten by the undying worm of memories nothing can erase. THESE … whose hands shall find no work forever, for hope and purpose can no longer be in that awful place … AWAY.

THESE … have feet that shall stumble forever on the dark mountains that will never be tinted with a sunrise. THESE … to be lost forever and to know it. THESE … who will never be found in that unfathomable abyss and their cries drowned in the shatterings of eternal storms.

THESE … are the men I talk to about the weather, the government, the price of gas, the war in Viet Nam or how to barbecue a steak. These are the women I meet in the P.T.A., or the laundromat or the supermarket and chit-chat about soap powder, hair styles, premiums.

THESE … are the kids in my school class I live and joke with, the teachers I meet every day.

THESE … are my milkman, breadman, hairdresser. THESE … are the common folk with common problems and hopes and fears and plans for the future. But the Bible says THESE … are going away. Away from God. Away from His Truth, farther and farther every day. Away from the joyous company of the Son of God, I profess to love.

THESE … don't cost me one tear a day, a sleepless night, or the price of the package of Gospel tracts.

THESE … I live with, I laugh with, I loan them my car, my lawnmower or my snowshovel, my notebook or a cup of sugar.

THESE … I presume will be alive tomorrow. THESE I am sure will "some day" give me the ideal oportunity to tell them about the Saviour.

THESE … I read about one day in the death notices. "So sudden wasn't it, dear fellow, too bad." Yes, too bad … in hell forever.

"O God wake me up,
Melt this heart of solid ice.
Teach me to weep real tears
To pray real prayers,
To show real love
For THESE…my friends
That by my conversation,
Life and lip,
THESE … will see and hear
They can yet be saved."

“He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.” John 3:36.

—J.B.N.

Faith (Part 1) (February 1966)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 12 No. 2, February 1966.

The Examination Of Faith

The immature handwriting looped and spread across the page. It's uncertain forms seemed to betray the feelings of the writer; a teen-ager in trouble. "I don't know whether I believed the right way… perhaps I don't have the right kind of faith …" I fingered the pages of the letter that had just arrived. It was virtually a cry for help.

Another day, another letter, but this time the straight firm handwriting posed a different problem. A mature believer this time had written. "I wonder if we have enough faith…"

These letters made me think. "faith", what is it? What does it actually do? What is it like? Obviously some were having trouble in the realm of their faith. Haven't most Christians been assailed right there at some time in their lives? How many have experienced the siftings of Satan and their faith has well nigh failed? Who can tell how much we owe to the intercession of our Great High Priest, "… but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not"?

Many are the distressed and discouraged these days, whose greatest difficulty is not so much the circumstance in which they find themselves, but rather, their view of that circumstance and the resulting attitudes and actions.

Faith, so often misunderstood, so often misinterpreted, so often attacked, how can it be defined? What does it do? How can it be described? A clear understanding of what the Bible teaches on this vital subject would deliver many of us from fears and insecurities and no doubt assist us in lives of more vital impact in the generation in which we are called to live.

Here then are three questions for which we shall seek an answer from the Scriptures. What is Faith? or The Definition of Faith. What does Faith do? or The Application of Faith. What is Faith Like? or The Description of Faith.

The Definition of Faith

In Hebrews chapter 11, verse 1, there is one definition given to us: “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” We see two main thoughts here, The realm of faith and the elements of faith.

When we read of faith in the Bible, it is of course implicit that this is faith exercised in God, and not just an abstract idea. God gave the capacity for sight, but we must do the seeing. He gave the capacity to hear, but we must do the listening. So too, He gave all the capacity for faith, but we must do the believing, and we are to believe in God. However we will at one point consider it in the general sense, of the ability to believe. Perhaps this distinction might be conveyed by the difference between the words, “faith” and “the faith”.

The realm of faith is two-fold. It operates in the realm of “things hoped for”. That is, in that area of things, at present inaccessible. For instance, the Lord’s return, is

at the moment of writing, beyond our experience, yet it is the great hope of the Church and this hope has impelled, inspired and comforted the Church down the centuries.

The joys of Heaven too are, experientially beyond our reach at this moment of mortality. Rest, release and the reunion of loved ones long gone, cannot at the moment be enjoyed. Yet who can deny the tremendous comfort, especially to the weary which comes by hope of these very joys. One writer puts it… “A veritable pre-libation from the River of Life.”

Faith operates too, in the realm of the things “not seen” or the invisible. There are things invisible now by reason of time,. History has carried the visible impressions of things long past, out into the reaches of space far beyond the scope of physical sight or technical recovery.

The actual sight of the Lonely Man, nailed to a rough cross, crowning the skull-shaped hill outside Jerusalem, though still transported on the ether waves, two thousand light years into the vaults of space, cannot be received now by these eyes of ours. Yet every Lord’s Day, and in every land, and indeed every day, faith leaps the calendar, spans the milleniums and sings, “See from His Head, His hands, His feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down; Did e’er such love and sorrow meet, Or thorns compose so rich a crown.”

There are things invisible too by reason of place. The limitations of visible sight become all too apparent with the onset of age. A few moments travel carries loved ones beyond our view. The Man once slain and buried was raised and is at this moment located at the right hand of the Majesty of God, too far above for us to look

upon. Faith soars above the constellations and leaves the slow wheeling galaxies to their silent corners of the universe. Faith enters the throne room, finds grace to help in time of need.

Lack of the proper sensory equipment too, renders much invisible. Right in the room where I now sit are the pulsations of a myriad impressions. All that I need to make them visible is a piece of electronic equipment, a source of electric power and the ability to switch it on, and there would appear men reading the news, theatricals, documentaries or whatever may be transmitted to the machine. Not having this, these things cannot be visible.

Faith is that sensory equipment that brings into focus the things which God has transmitted to us. Faith can make it possible for a Moses to see “Him who is invisible.”

It would seem however that most difficulties in the realm of faith come about by having only a hazy appreciation of the elements of faith. Not a few of God’s people have been thrown into doubts of their security because of fine distinctions being made between “believing in” and “believing on” or “by faith” and “through faith”.

The elements of faith are threefold. There is an intellectual element. That is, faith as an exercise of the mind. This is faith as distinct from reason and might be expressed by the Scripture in Hebrews 11:3. “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.” Here, faith receives

the facts and accepts them intellectually as being accurate apart from the processes of reasoning or logic.

There is the emotional element of faith. That is, faith as an attitude of the heart. This is faith as distinct from works and could be expressed by the truth in Romans 10:9: “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart…” This is a step further than the intellectual appreciation of the fact. We say, “Christ died” here is the fact, believed. But when we go on to say, “Christ died… for me,” then I become emotionally involved in the death of Christ. I relate myself in some way to that death.

Thirdly, faith has a volitional element. That is faith as distinct from sight and might well be expressed in the words of 1 Peter 1:8: “Whom having not seen, ye love…” This is the “step” of faith which closes off the triangle. Now we not only receive intellectually the fact and find ourselves personally involved, but we move volitionally and say in effect,

“Jesus, I will trust Thee
Trust Thee with my soul.”

So then we can see that it is not a case of having “the right kind of faith” but rather it is completing the process of faith by an act of the will.

The Lord, knowing full well the differences in all our personalities (He made us), presents the gospel in ways that can appeal to all. To one it is “come,” to another “open,” to yet another “receive,” and so on. But whether we came, opened, or received, is not the vital thing; it is the act of the will involved. This is the volitional aspect of faith, and is virtually the act of “obeying the gospel”.

Editorial (February 1966)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 12 No. 2, February 1966.

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF FOOD FOR THE FLOCK INC.

From the Left to Right they are: (1) Norman MacNeil, Moncton, N.B., (2) Ormer G. C. Sprunt, Toronto, Ont., (3) F. W. Schwartz, Detroit, Mich., (4) Dr. James Naismith, Kingston, Ont. Immediately in front, (5) James Gunn, Midland, Ont. (6) Dr. Robert Hazel, Spring Lake, N. J., (7) John Robertson, Toronto, Ont., (8) Sydney Green Houston, Texas, (9) Miss Lillian Telfer, Toronto, Ont., (10) Robert Swatosh, Detroit, Mich., (11) Guy Cesar, Hamilton, Ont., (12) J. Boyd Nicholson, St. Catharines, Ont., (13) Benjamin Bradford, Miami, Florida, (14) Lloyd Wineberg, Washington, D.C.

More than a decade ago now, a number of brethren who had discovered in each other a common exercise, met in Hamilton, Ontario, between sessions of the annual conference there.

The exercise they shared was that of a definite need for a printed ministry that could be a help to all believers and a desire to meet that need.

This exercise naturally assumed that a publication should be made available which would serve the Lord’s people generally. It should provide material mostly from contemporary writers and be relevant to current needs.

Since the needs and interests of believers differ in many ways, depending on capacity and circumstances, the publication should have an appeal to the thinking

serious Bible Student. It should likewise be useful to others who needed help in studying. Also, if possible, it should provide an incentive to those who seemed to be lacking in regular study habits. Thus the necessity for the inclusion of Doctrinal, Expository and Prophetical articles was seen.

However if the heart is cold or in need of comfort — and aching hearts abound — there is always the need for the comforting and encouraging messages of a devotional nature.

The problems of youth and new Christians also were felt, as were the needs of the many Sunday School teachers and workers among children.

The format of the suggested magazine began to take shape in the minds of those present. It's name 'Food for the Flock' seemed to convey the real exercise of those involved, to feed the flock of God.

When these spiritual issues were resolved, as could be, and the mechanics of such a publication begun, the first issues appeared in January, 1955.

The first cover showed a picture taken in Palestine, of a shepherd pouring oil on the head of one of his sheep. If anything has conveyed the exercise of those involved, it is this picture; to seek, under God, to comfort, to nurture "the flock for which the Saviour bled."

During those ten years is was felt necessary to incorporate for legal purposes. Food for the Flock Inc., is a none-profit corporation, chartered under the laws of Ontario, Canada. Dr. Robert Hazel, New Jersey, presides over a board, the members of which are representative of many distant points both in Canada and the U.S.A. Mr.

James Gunn, Midland, Ontario edits with the assistance of John S. Robertson, Toronto, Dr. James Naismith, Kingston, and Mr. Sydney Green, Houston, Texas.

These ‘and others’ seek to provide such ministry in a wider sphere than would otherwise be possible and to extend the influence of the Word of God so ministered to those who feel a need for such.

One of the aspects of the exercise of those involved, has been to avoid any hint of denominationalism, under whatever guise or misnomer, that believers feeling the need for food and instruction, may be helped, wherever they may gather.

So without sacrificing principle, or becoming parochial, or yet avoiding any helpful issue. “Food for the Flock” has sought to minister to “all the flock.” All have sought to look beyond man’s ecumenism and man’s exclusions to that day when “there shall be one flock and one Shepherd,” recalling the words of the King and the principle they convey, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me.”

In this regard, the writer was encouraged the other day while visiting in a hospital, to discover a stranger who was a regular reader of “Food for the Flock”. A believer in one of the denominations, he was given a copy each month by a mutual friend and brother.

Would it be out of the way to encourage the reader to do this also? There are believers known to us all, not gathering with us, and they are hungry and dissatisfied with what they are being given as spiritual food. Pass on your copy, or enter a subscription for such as these.

Or if you know a promising young man of gift he may be helped by the many suggestive outlines and expositions available month by month.

Perhaps you know of a few of the Lord's people "off the beaten track" who do not have oral ministry and who would be helped by subscriptions to Food for the Flock.

"Food for the Flock" was never intended to "light" reading. But with the great lack of Bible students in these days of super-activity, it's main purpose is to provide stimulating helps to a richer and deeper knowledge of the Lord and His Word. —J.B.N.

Faith (Part 2) (March 1966)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 12 No. 3, March 1966.

The Application of Faith

Previously we considered in this series the definition of faith, or what faith is. However, there are many who have no problems in that area. Their problem lies in how to apply this faith, or to discover what faith does.

This application of faith in the daily life may be understood a little better if we look at three aspects of it.

Consider faith intuitively first. This is the germ of faith. Intuition is defined as “direct knowledge,” and touches three fundamentals. By this all men have the knowledge of a God above them, of a self within them, and of a life beyond them. Nowhere in the Scriptures has God written words to prove His existence. Why is this? Because He has inscribed it in the fleshy tables of the heart of every man. We are not born as atheists or agnostics. These diabolic errors are planted in the minds and hearts of men, growing their rank stalk and bearing their bitter fruits. True we are born as sinners, but sinners with the capacity to know God. By the intuition of faith we believe that God is; That is, the existence of God. This enables us to receive right thoughts of God.

Then comes the education of faith, by this we learn what God is. The majesty of creation and the wonders of nature witnessing universally as to the power and wisdom of this God. This is the expression of God and enables us to feel a sense of obligation to God. The Psalmist gives us the language for this aspect of faith,

“When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; What is man that Thou art mindful of him…”

But to discover who God is demands revelation, the revelation of God to the soul. This is the experience of God through faith which enables us to know God, to worship God and to enjoy Him, just for Himself. This is the gracious ministry of the Holy Spirit.

If faith intuitively is the germ of faith, the faith subjectively describes the joys of faith. This is the result within myself.

Subjectively faith receives from God. Just as the women in Hebrews 11 received their dead raised to life again, through faith, so, it is thus we receive the gift of God, even eternal life. Subjectively faith rests in God, depending on His promises to be made good in God’s time and way. Subjectively, faith re-assesses values in the presence of God. Moses evaluated the treasurers of Egypt beside the reproach of Christ and chose the greater riches of eternal reward… by faith.

It might well be that faith has more to do subjectively in the life of the believer, than objectively through the believer. Faith may have more to do with peace than power, rejoicing than results, attitudes of heart than answers to prayer.

However, viewed objectively faith does produce results outside of the believer’s own life. We might think of this aspect as the duties of faith.

The highest exercise of faith is of course worship. As Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice, so it is by

faith, exercised objectively, to go out of ourselves as it were, we too are enabled to respond to God in worship.

The outcome of the first exercise of faith should follow into the next, as in Hebrews 11, Enoch follows Abel with the life that pleases God and seeks to walk with Him. At least this is the spiritual order, tragically with many of us not so often the order of our own lives.

This then is inseparable from the next exercise of faith; obedience to God. Reading on in Hebrews 11, we see this in Noah and in Abraham. Faith exercised objectively for Noah, meant obeying God in matters “not seen as yet.” For Abraham it meant obeying God in matters not known as yet.

So then to summarize, faith enables us intuitively to know God; faith enables us subjectively to enjoy God and the things of God; faith enables us objectively to worship, please and serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

Faith (Part 3) (April 1966)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 12 No. 4, April 1966.

The Description of Faith

Intangibles are best understood by their effects and influences. Think of the excesses of verbosity and imagination that modern “song”-writers have gone to, in their efforts to describe “love”, or at least their insipid counterfeit of it. When it comes to things not only intangible, but also spiritual, the difficulties of description are multiplied.

The only safe way is to keep our thinking within the bounds of the Word of God.

The Lord Jesus has given us words that can help us in our appreciation of what faith is like. He said, “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall be done” (Matt. 17:20). For characteristics of the mustard seed we can also go to the words of the Master (13:31, 32). There, happily alliterated for us by the translators, are three words which give us a clue to the illustration of faith. These words are, “Grain,” “Grown” and “Greatest.” By this we see the dimension of faith, the potential of faith and the power of faith.

Faith as a grain of mustard seed? How often is this phrase used, by some with frantic hope that “this much” faith on their part will accomplish their ends. It is used by others to describe just how tiny their “faith” really is. Now how does the Lord really measure faith? Certainly not as we do. He said to a woman long ago “great is thy

faith" when she had expressed her heart by saying "… the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." To Peter after having stepped out of a ship on to the heaving waters of a stormy sea, and beginning to sink, he heard Jesus say, when safely back in the ship, "O ye of LITTLE faith…" Then to those frantic few in the ship that night He had slept in the storm, He asked, "How is it that ye have NO Faith?"

Our evaluation of faith have been quite different. Yet the striking thing in each case, whether it was "great" faith, "little" faith or "no" faith, is that He met their need anyway, apart from the measure of faith exercised. This further weighs the evidence that as was stated previously, faith may have more to do with peace than power, and with rejoicing rather than results, with attitudes of heart than answers to prayer.

"Grown" is the next word relating to the seed and illustrates for us, the potential of faith. Here perhaps is where we need a slight adjustment in our use of the word "as" in the description of faith. Now if the Lord had wanted to convey the idea of the size of faith, He could have said, "Faith as a grain of sand," but a grain of sand will always be a grain of sand, even diminishing in size by the abrasive effects of time. But it is not size at all He is talking about; but potential. He is not referring to a grit of faith, but to the growth of faith. One mustard seed becomes one mustard plant, one mustard plant bears thousands of seeds, these can produce thousands of plants and so on, ad infinitum.

A word of caution might be fitting here. A grain of mustard seed left in a jar on the shelf is as good as no seed at all. It must be brought into contact with the life-

giving trinity of earth, water and sunshine, to be brought to full fruition. So with faith, it must be brought into proper relationship with the life-giving Trinity of God. Faith misplaced is barren. Faith in the Bible-sense is always faith in God.

Now, how does this faith grow? There are at least three ways by which faith grows. It grows as a fruit of the Spirit-Led life. “The fruit of the Spirit is… faith” (Gal. 5:22). Of the Thessalonian saints, Paul could say, “Your faith groweth exceedingly (out of all bounds).” Faith grows as a result of the Spirit-fed life, fed by the Word of God. Romans 10:17 gives this to us, “So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.” Faith grows as a value of the Spirit-purged life. 1 Peter 1:7 reads, “…the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ…”

We must believe that there are values for which we have no equipment on earth to measure. This is echoed in the bewildering experience of life, especially in the lives of the Godly and of the simple believer seeking to please his God to the best of his understanding, yet finding himself in the midst of bewildering circumstances and asking questions he knows have no answer down here. Those weary sighings, those frightening questions, those impossible situations and seemingly insurmountable problems must wait for the reason to be “found”, and it will be, “unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

The word “Greatest” describing the full fruition of the mustard seed, gives us an inkling as to the power of faith.

The Scriptures are replete and history abounds with proof of this and the best commentary on the power of faith is to read of them for ourselves. Abraham and Moses; the Elijahs and the Daniels, the Peters and the Pauls. In modern times, the faith of George Muller and others in their Great God, stirs the heart of every true believer. It is faith and it’s evidences in the lives of God’s people that can challenge the slaves of materialism and puzzle the disciples of religionism. The faith that works, whether as the distiller of the peace of God in the soul in an agitated world or as the effective agent in portraying the life of God in an evil society, is the great essential for a life that pleases God.

Faith is the keystone that keeps the forces in our life in balance. It is the anchor that grips the Rock. It is the great shield of defense in time of attack. It was the one thing for which the Lord prayed for Peter when the disciple was under the shattering blows and thunderous shocks of Satanic attack, that his “faith fail not.”

So it is today, with silken words to some and shattering sorrows to others, Satan continues his diabolical warfare on God’s beloved people. It behoves us all to have a clear appreciation of the nature and the character of faith and by diligence to add to our faith, seeking to walk humbly with our God that we may be preserved in the evil day and that our faith fail not.

Editorial (April 1966)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 12 No. 4, April 1966.

The Resurrection

A I reflect upon immortality and resurrection, two memories project their images on my mind.

The first carries my thoughts back to the homeland and the mausoleum of the ancient Dukes of Hamilton. The deceptively dull exterior of this grey structure had never beckoned me very near, though born and raised within a few miles of it. Surely this old landmark deserved at least one visit.

I discovered, on the inside, marble beauty gathered from the corners of the earth by native Scots commissioned for the purpose. Great Egytian-like doors, with moulded panels portraying Bible scenes, stood heavily by. A high dome sang back an echo that made our flat rendition of “Crimond” sound amazingly musical.

But of all this, one experience stands out. It is that of standing on a sunken patio and looking back and upward, to three faces carved out of stone. One portrayed a strong man’s countenance, lined and gathered into knots of care. The centre carving was strikingly the same face, but in the slack repose of death. But it was the third which captured my attention; again, unmistakably, the same countenance, strong as ever, indeed stronger. But gone were the care furrows, gone even the laugh wrinkles. The face was clear and smooth as a youth’s yet fully mature in manhood. The eyes uplifted, but not too far, looking up and away, appeared almost liquid and alive. This is Immortality.

But it is really only stone, cold hard stone. A man's best effort, a masterpiece of imagery, but still only well formed rock.

The other memory is in black and white, a newspaper photo in an old issue of our home-town daily. This close-up shows a small clump of crocuses. The winter snows are almost gone and the warm sun has impelled the sleeping life out of it's dark bed. The striking thing is that this little bunch of fragile life has broken through a few inches of black-top driveway to find it's attraction in the clean fresh sunny air above.

Man's representations of the immortal are still but the products of his own frailty. God's manifestations of awakened life laugh at man's impediments and soar irresistably upwards.

It seems that religious reasoners follow a few well-worn paths of ingenuity. Some propound what we might call, "The Swoon Theory." That is, they say Jesus did not die, but swooned, and in the cool of the grave, He revived and came forth. Others follow the oldest fabrication of all on the subject, "The Stealing Theory." That is, Jesus did die, but His disciples stole away His body and said He had risen from the dead. A more modern inventiveness spawns "The Spirit Theory." This asserts that Jesus did die, was buried, but that which rose from the grave was gaseous, spirit, but not body. Still others, looking for any escape from the mighty and eternal involvements of the resurrection suggest a "Supposition Theory." They say, He did die; He did not rise, and that another impersonated Him and all were deceived.

The blasphemous imaginations of man know no bounds. These sad delusions are but the result of denying the veracity and inspiration of the Word of God.

"Oh who would leave the Fountain-head,
To drink the muddy stream,
Where man has mixed what God hath said,
With every dreamers dream".

What then is necessary to establish the reality of the resurrection, is ample proof of two great facts: (1) He actually died on the cross (2) He personally appeared, bodily, alive again.

That He actually died, was assured by none less than His enemies. Those bent on His destruction surely would not leave the scene of execution until He was safely and completely disposed of.

His execution was carried out by a band of the masters of the grisly art, the Roman soldiery.

That He had died so soon by crucifixion was a matter of marvel to Pilate (Mark 15;44), who sought definite confirmation from a responsible eye-witness, the centurion himself.

The Scriptures clearly state the fact of His death as well as the reason for it. The numerous references are easily located by the use of a simple Bible Concordance.

He Himself declared, by revelation, the fact of His death to John on the Isle of Patmos, "I was dead … " (Rev. 1:18).

How much less credible is the "Swoon Theory" than the simple scriptural record of the resurrection. Contemplate, if you can, a man so far gone in a swoon as to be thought dead, bound (not just "wrapped" but

“tied”) in linen clothes and weighted by “about a hundred pound weight” of spices (John 19:39, 40), with a cloth tightly wrapped around His face covering His mouth and nose. Try to imagine this one, stirring from the verge of death and doing what a Samson in his full strength could never have done, breaking free of this weight of solid binding. No, it was not by physical strength or ingenuity that the Lord left the tomb, but as the Scriptures plainly declare “… by the working of (God’s) mighty power…” (Eph. 1:19-20). We cannot but conclude that Jesus died and was buried.

Was then His body stolen and secreted away by His disciples? Who first thought of this possibility? None other than His avowed enemies, the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were thoroughly prepared for this eventuality. On appeal to Pilate, they were given guards and the authority to make the tomb “ … as sure as ye can …” “So,” ads the record of Matthew 27; 62-66, “they went and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone and setting a watch.”

If ever the disciples had thought to remove that precious body, they had neither the power nor the opportunity to do so.

What then rose from the dead? Was it indeed the gases of corrupting flesh? God forbid such blasphemous thoughts. Yet this very lie from hell is propounded widely by those who deny the clear record of Scripture. Hear the Words of the Lord Himself, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up … He spake of the temple of His body. When therefore He was risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this unto them…” (John 2:19-22).

Yes! It was “Jesus Himself” who drew near on the road to Emmaus. He was no impersonator. They had no hallucinations. His was the real presence of the Risen Lord (Luke 24:15). It was “Jesus Himself” who showed them His pierced hands and feet, the unmistakable proof of His identity (Luke 24:39). It was this sight that drove Thomas to exclaim, “My Lord and My God.”

These tangible evidences, some have suggested were hallucinations. Is it conceivable that the disciples could be the victims of frequent hallucinations, in different places, at different hours of the day, all beginning on the same day and ending on the same day over a month later? Could it be that similar hallucinations affected on one occasion more than five hundred people (1 Cor. 15.)

How much more appealing, how much more credible is the clear statement of Scripture! —”And when they had fulfilled all that was written of Him, they took Him down from the tree, and laid Him in a sepulchre. But God raised Him from the dead: and He was seen many days” (Acts 13:29-30).

HALLELUJAH, CHRIST AROSE!!

Editorial (May 1966)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 12 No. 5, May 1966.

“IS GOD DEAD?” The words exploded on the front page of a well-known magazine. The screaming red letters on a solid black background seemed to divulge the extremities of confusion between which the minds of men are reeling.

God … dead! The blasphemous insinuations and blatant dogmatisms of the new theology are sloughed off as being incongruous by the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. To such, the very phraseology is senseless; it is a language of paradox. The immediate reaction is to set the whole mess aside with a sigh, a shake of the head, and a mumble about the “signs of the times.” But wait … just what about it?

Believers cannot escape the implications of secularism, if not in their own lives, in the lives of their children. The hour is upon us when we are being challenged to stand up and be counted. The problem is not whether God is alive, but rather why these religionists, writers, and students have cause to ask the question. What makes them wonder about whether there is a God or not?

We evangelicals say that they cannot find out God because they are dead in sins, and that they cannot see God because their minds have been blinded. We say that because they prefer their own way, they cannot find the way to God. This, of course, is true, all too true, but such assertions still seem somewhat less than adequate.

The ability of this godless ology is terrifying. It is not being aimed at the atheist, but like a flood it is in danger

of oversweeping the minds of ordinary folk, folk who would never have accepted the doctrine of a godless beginning of matter and the origin of life. This perversion is aimed at persons who would not deny that God personally led Israel in the wilderness, persons who would never disbelieve that God had dealings with men of old. It is into the minds of the pious and humble that these noxious seeds of doubt are planted to bear bitter fruits of distress, and ultimately a denial of the God who lives today.

How does this kind of thinking develop? Certainly not in a flash of inspiration. It does not come like the bursting of a bomb, but like the falling of a tree in which years of disease and disintegration have wrought internal havoc.

The thing that becomes evident as one peruses the writings and quotations of authors who believe that God is dead, is the strange confusion of terms. They equate religion with Christianity, at least they use the words interchangeably. One man is quoted as being a "Christian atheist." This simply is an impossible statement. Faith similarly is described as a hope, when we know from the Scriptures that hope is one of the realms in which faith operates. It is like saying the aeroplane is the air, when we know that the aeroplane functions in the realm of the air. The title God and the word church are used synonymously, and the failure of Christians is interpreted as the failure of God. When we see great minds struggling with the terms of doctrine, we realize again the relevancy of the words of the Master, "I thank Thee, O Father Lord of Heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" (Matt. 11:25).

These non-theologians are looking around at the religious world and its empty pews. They are listening to the dull rote of man's religious mumblings. They feel for even a feeble pulse in the frozen entremities of a system that has never really lived. They look out on a world erupting with the putrefying sores of man's own wickedness. Then with a superiority bred of great intellectual attainment, they arrive at the conclusion that this is indeed death. Then, inexplicably, they fill out the death certificate showing the physician as the one who is dead. What stupidity punctures the balloon of man's wisdom!

Now, however, the question is forced upon us. Is it enough for a believer to settle down, having diagnosed the condition of such as propound their dead-god theories? Is this all that is required of the born-again Christian, that he writes off the whole thing as nonsense, blasphemy, sings of the times? Certainly not! The multitudes whose minds are being assailed by this propaganda of hell are still loved by the living God. They are souls for whom the Lord died, and upon whom the Spirit of life seeks to work that they might be made alive forevermore.

How, then, are these to know that God lives on in this very day? Perhaps we can find the answer in the experience of a pagan idolatrous king of whom we read in the Bible, Nebuchadnezzar. This great king had set up his golden image on the plains of Dura to be worshipped. Three young men of Israel refused to bow before it. They were apprehended and brought before the king who asked, "Who is the God that shall deliver you?" God did deliver them, however, and afterward this king declared, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach,

Meshach, and Abednego who… yielded their bodies that they might not serve nor worship any god except their own God… there is no other God … the High God" (Dan. 3:28-29; 4:2).

This idolatrous king was led to this confession as a direct result of the outward display of faith in those young men. The lesson seems obvious. If men and women today are to be led to confessions of faith in the living God, they must see the evidence of His life as it is lived by those who yield themselves to Him.

The Lord Himself gave us another clue; said He, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

In John 14:23, the Lord taught, "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." He also said in verse 17, "The Spirit of Truth … He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." We thus learn that by a love that results in obedience, the believer can know what it is to be possessed by the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

What the confused worldling is looking for is not better buildings, more professional music, convincing arguments, elaborate equipment, these he now has. In spite of his possessions, he still has questions about God. The answer to many of these is found in lives that obviously are animated by the pulse of Eternity. Such lives will bear testimony to the fact that He is never very far from anyone of us. He definitely lives in and through personalities that are completely yielded to Him. Thank God for the many who like the Apostle Paul can

truthfully says, “I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

Editorial (June–July 1966)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 12 No. 6, June–July 1966.

In Fellowship

“In Canada”; “In New York”; “In the Lake”; are phrases allowing of no ambiguity whatever. We know exactly what they mean. The phrase “In Fellowship” however seems to be of a different construction. Whereas Canada, New York and the Lake have defined boundaries that leave us in no doubt as to whether we are in or out, Christian Fellowship seems to many of us, to have a conveniently adjustable perimeter.

To consider oneself to be “in fellowship” in the local church because of having been saved, baptized and openly welcomed “into the fellowship of the assembly” is surely to limit the implications of the communion of saints.

To be “in the meeting” as the saying goes, is not at all synonymous with being in fellowship. One may be in the meeting, that is, at one time or another joining oneself to a company of Christians by mutual reception and yet not entering into the involvements of the fellowship.

In our English Bible, there are eight or nine different words used to convey the idea of the word for fellowship in the original. Basically, they all seem to embrace two main ideas. These are to have a share, and to give a share. One who is actually in fellowship, then, is engaged in this twofold function, PARTICIPATING AND COMMUNICATING.

Christian Fellowship depends primarily on participating in the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). This gives us, then, the capacity to walk in the light of the Divine Presence (1 John 1:7). Thus we are privileged to display the characteristics of the fellowship by loving the brethren (1 John 1:10). So we can see that to be actually, not just nominally, in fellowship involves not only privileges, but the responsibilities of obedience and love.

To absent myself by choice from the gatherings of the church is to indicate that I prefer some other thing for that hour than the fellowship, the participation of the Christians.

Most of the Lord's people have no fear of being read out of fellowship, yet it is sadly possible that we can put OURSELVES out of fellowship by a singular lack of participating in the worship, prayer or service of the local assembly. Thus we can forego HAVING share in the common exercise of the saints.

Again, most of the Lord's people find joy in communicating or GIVING a share of material things. This is all involved in fellowship. The gift thus given is not called fellowship, but is the evidence of a fellowship that exists. Perhaps there are some, however, who have never tasted that special joy of COMMUNICATING. They have no specific exercise, week by week, to lay the Lord's portion by. Are such truly "in fellowship"? It need not be much but it should be regular. It will never be demanded, but it is expected by the Lord, if we have it to give. We will not be enriched by withholding nor impoverished by giving for the Lord is no man's debtor. The Lord does not measure the amount we give to Him, but what we keep back for ourselves.

Who then is in fellowship? It would seem that the Scripture teaches those are in true Christian fellowship who are partakers of the divine nature, obedient in walk and in love to the Lord and to one another. Those who are thus involved in the common interest and exercise of the church by worship, prayer, service and giving according to the varied resources of strength, gift, time and material supply, are in true fellowship.

It might be pertinent for us all, not to look around at others to see if “they” are in or out, but each for himself in the Presence of God to put the question to our own hearts,

AM I IN FELLOWSHIP?

Editorial (November 1966)

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Total Involvement

“Fanaticism”; “Obsession”; These are ugly words indeed. They are filled with connotations of imbalance and of misdirection. Yet the thought of “total involvement” cannot be excluded.

The sports fan, or fanatic, needs no one to exhort his attendance at “the Game.” Those obsessed require no directing of their thought processes towards their obsession. They are involved to the extent that their planning, their thoughts, and it seems at times, even their body chemistry are all keyed and adjusted to the great object of their lives.

Excluding the evil connotations completely, what would happen among the assemblies of the Lord’s people if each member was totally involved in the worship, prayers, service and good works of the local church?

Total Involvement is of course a relative phrase, and is closely allied to capacity. The greater the capacity in the things of God, the greater will be the area for involvement.

This would seem to be one reason why in many local assemblies we can detect two kinds of believers. There are the prayer meeting attenders, who are also the Sunday School workers, and the tract band and the building maintenance crew, and the visitation group etc., etc., and then there are “the others.”

So we have the over-loaded and the under-nourished, the burden-bearers and the back-seaters. We have the compulsive and the complainers, the willing and the wailing. Perhaps the segments cannot be quite so clearly defined as that because there are the irregulars, sometimes involved and sometimes invalid.

It would seem then, that involvement is associated with capacity rather than activity.

Capacity is increased by exercise and exercise is the hand-maiden of involvement. That sounds like the "vicious circle." Yet it really depends upon just where we enter that circle.

Saul of Tarsus got on at the right place. He began with the willingness to be involved. He expressed that in the well-known words, "Lord what wilt Thou have me to do?" We might paraphrase it "Lord how wouldest Thou have me involved." The answer was in effect, totally.

Thus he did not departmentalize his life into work life, home life, church life. Rather, the whole fibre of his experience was totally involved. So whether it was stitching a canvas or teaching a doctrine, it was always his to say, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Total Involvement may be too much to hope for in these days, but even greater involvement would surely make for happier and healthier assemblies. It would ease the workload on our elders, it would spread joy among more saints, perhaps even discover gifts that have lain dormant for years, and generally quicken the pulse in the cold extremities of the local church.

Total Involvement is of course the antitheses of half-heartedness. It is the “reasonable service” for every believer. The New Testament just does not envisage such a thing as a believer any less than involved and that totally.

Editorial (January 1967)

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Hell and the Sugar Cube

LSD used to signify a value in sterling pounds, shillings and pence. Now these three initials identify a tincture with terrifying effects. By this new weapon hell is invading the very minds of men.

LSD is described as a “psychedelic drug,” that is, a “consciousness expanding” drug. Compared with this, the well-known narcotics are like a walk in the park on a Sunday afternoon. One ounce of this drug can make 300,000 doses, each one dropped on a sugar cube is potent enough to derange the mind of the taker for ten hours, and dangerous enough that the mental disorientation thus produced may be permanent.

The disciples of this devilish drug say, “No one has really lived until they have taken a trip via LSD.” It is estimated by some that, this year one million doses will be swallowed by people who just as eagerly swallowed the lie.

The users of this drug have developed into a cult with strong religious overtones. They speak of using “altars,” and of officiating “priests,” and of administering a “host” to the communicants.

If ever there was a “table of devils” this surely must be one. One user, describing his sensations while on a “trip,” said that he felt as though there was a serpent writhing within him. Another “saw” within himself, “hideous shapes … horrible … a flood of bogeymen.”

The hellish origin of this latest craze is undeniable and its dangers terrifying. A few pounds of it dumped into the water supply of a city would be sufficient to mentally disorient a multitude of its inhabitants: men, women and little children.

It is not alone the young set, but also many who feel the limitations of the stiffened muscle, the grey hair, and the not-so-elastic artery are experimenting with the drug. One of these reported after a session in “high… “ “We got in the car … the pavement opened up… the street lights expanded … came to traffic lights … I couldn’t tell what colour they were…” Another, a religious psychologist, talked about his experience that it was “like Moses’ experience of the burning bush.”

The police are virtually helpless even to interrupt the surge of this invasion. The drug is colourless, odourless and tasteless. It is being dropped surreptitiously into the drinks of young girls. It is being fed to children in their orange juice by parents so that the whole family can take a “trip” together.

When the Lord spoke of “perilous days,” He was not overstating the condition of things in these last times. In past eras, the perils may have included being bitten by a mad dog, or falling prey to the black plague, or to some highway robber. Today the secret service of Satan is infiltrating every strata of life, even the very pulsations of the subconscious.

It behooves us as those who have given allegiance to the Lord Christ ever to remember that we are at war. Our own preservation and the safety of our children are at stake. We are at war with a mighty, merciless and subtle foe. It is not simply desirable, but imperative that we lay

hold of the equipment supplied for the conflict, the armour of God (read Ephesians chapter 6).

What folly it is, of which some of us have been verily guilty, that of making expeditions into the enemy's camp; of prancing around unguarded, unprotected and overconfident, our vitals exposed to the fang and the fire. We had thought the armour too heavy, too constricting, too clumsy and left it aside, unburnished and untried. Then while we meandered in by-paths of the enemy's tramping, while we reclined in some cloister of secret sin, we were pounced upon and perhaps carry with us to this day the reddened scars of our folly.

Oh that the young may be warned! Indeed may the Lord help us all to be like Solomon's valiant sixty. They were awake in the night, alert and aware of the danger, armed with swords at hand and all "expert in war."

Then may we stand, not with the raucous voice of fleshly bravado, but with a deep and humble dependence upon "the power of His might" that we may be preserved in the evil day and having done all to stand.

"I need Thee every hour,
Stay Thou nearby;
Temptations lose their power
When Thou art nigh."

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