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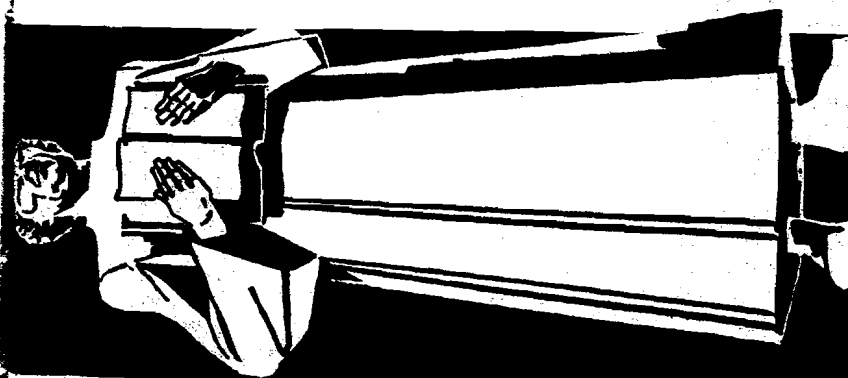
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the springfielder

VOL. XXXIV • NO. 4

MARCH, 1971



As New-Born Babes

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IT'S NO SECRET that people try to whitewash their own sins and, at the same time, call other people hypocrites. And it's no secret that this is not limited to people outside the Church. A lot of the world's troubles are caused by hypocrisy. And we have trouble with this in the Church too. Even the person reading this is guilty of hypocrisy.

Peter says so in the second chapter of his first Epistle: "Lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil-speakings." Wherever the Word is read until the end of time, the reader will be told that he is guilty of hypocrisy and should lay it aside.

The word "guile" means what the word "phoniness" means today. The Christian knows that the heart of man is exceedingly deceitful and treacherous. Even Christians are careful with each other for they know the human heart. They fear that what looks like the kiss of the father in the parable of the Prodigal Son may turn out to be the kiss of Judas. And they know too that their own kisses might be just as untrustworthy.

And so Peter tells them to be like new-born babies. The Christian is to desire the sincere milk of the Word. In the original the words for "sincere" and "guile" have the same root. We've translated the word "guile" with "phoniness". Likewise we translate the word "sincere" with the adjective "unphony". The reader of the Word who is guilty of phoniness is told to desire the "unphony" milk of the Word. And he is to desire it as a new-born baby desires milk. There's nothing quite so zestful as the nursing of a new-born baby. It nurses as if it had done so for ten years. Other little children are fascinated with the desire of the new-born baby.

Obviously the Christian should meditate on this analogy. He can't imagine a baby refusing to nurse because it fears that the milk is contaminated or because the baby cannot comprehend the chemical content of the milk. Ridiculous, you say. But there are people, even in the visible church today, who have thrown doubt on the spiritual milk of the Word. They say that it is contaminated and not genuine. For example, they argue about whether the translations or the original monographs are inspired. How can you explain that to the uneducated layman? Surely this passage reminds us that it is man, not the spiritual food, that is deceitful. Peter says elsewhere that the Word is incorruptible seed which caused our rebirth. He says that we will fade as do flowers but the Word of the Lord will endure forever and that this is the Word which brings us the good news.

And then there are those people in the visible church who tell us that the Lord loves us but that His Word cannot be trusted. Can you imagine a mother saying to her baby: "Baby I love you,

but my milk, well, that's something else." This does actually happen of course. There are mothers who cannot nurse their babies because their milk is not good for the babies. But that's not part of this analogy. Peter says that man is guilty of guile but the milk of the Word is genuine. Or who would invite someone to dinner and say to the guest as he sits down at the table: "I love you but the food you're getting is not the best." But that is exactly what goes on at times in the Church today. God loves us, we are told, but His Word is contaminated and is not to be trusted.

Another observation: Christians who truly desire the sincere milk of the Word are sometimes accused of a sin, Bibliolatry, making an idol of the Bible. Do you think a new-born baby would worry if, because of its zest, it would be accused of "milkolatry"? Stop, stop, you'll say. How ridiculous can you get? Exactly. And just that ridiculous, diabolical and dangerous is the charge of Bibliolatry.

The analogy concludes by stating the purpose for the desire. Babies desire milk so that they might grow. The desire for milk is a God-given desire for the baby's good. And it is very difficult to distract the baby from its nursing for the baby somehow knows what is good for it. It must grow. And without the milk it will not grow. But with the milk the baby will experience phenomenal growth.

Likewise with Christians. The Holy Spirit gives the child of God the desire for the sincere milk of the Word. "In his law doth he meditate day and night". But there are Satanic forces at work today, even in the Church, which are trying very hard to distract Christians from the Word. For example, Satan can misuse textual criticism so that the theological student, pastor or professor is given the impression that the Word is contaminated. Or, the multiplicity of translations can be a burden for us all. It might give us the impression that Scripture errs and that we need many translations to rid ourselves of contamination. But this kind of thinking leads to lack of desire and that leads to starvation. No danger today in the Church is quite so great as the suspicion which has been cast on the Word, not by infidels but by self-styled authorities who have the effrontery to tell the Lord that the milk of the Word is no longer sincere.

The passage in Peter continues: "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." This verse causes the reader to examine himself. Have I learned by my own blessed experience that the Lord Jesus is full of grace and truth FOR ME? If I have, I must admit that I know Him only through the sincere milk of the Word. That Word is by no means phony, contaminated or untrustworthy for it centers in the Saviour and about Him Peter continues thus:

"To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up

spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner-stone, elect precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling at the word, being disobedient."

The meaning is so clear. The passage hardly needs further comment. "He who believes on him shall not be confounded." And that is true because the milk of the Word is sincere.