

FROM WHERE WE STAND

How Long Has It Been Since You...?

Hold on there! Let's not rush pell-mell into this new year without sitting down and reflecting on the old one just a little.

We are not going to ask you to make any new resolutions. Everyone else will be doing that; and besides, you probably wouldn't keep them and then we would be a party to broken promises and we have enough trouble with our own conscience without having to worry about yours.

But we would like you to do a little "How long has it been —" type of thinking.

For instance—how long has it been since you called an old friend on the phone just to say, "Hello, how are you?"

How long has it been since you paid someone a sincere compliment? I mean a sincere compliment—not the kind you use when you hope to gain something, but just a word of appreciation to someone who can be of no material gain to you.

How long has it been since you told your wife her hair-do looks nice?

How long has it been since you expressed appreciation and satisfaction with a job one of the kids has done?

How long has it been since you just sat down and did nothing? Just sat and stared. And how long before that did your conscience start to bother you when you just sat and stared for a few minutes?

How long since you had a good belly laugh? How long since you just let loose and roared at something funny without worrying if someone would think you were a square?

When was the last time you tried to see yourself as others see you? If you weren't 100 per cent pleased with what you saw, when was the last time you tried to do something about it? If you were 100 per cent pleased, how long will it be until you look once again?

How long has it been since Mother

had a day free of dishwashing? When was the last time you treated her to a meal someone else cooked?

When did you last write a letter to the Editor on something you felt strongly about? How long has it been since you went directly to the source when you didn't agree with a written editorial?

How long since you read any literature deeper than Alley. Oop or the T.V. Guide? Shakespeare is still just as fresh as he was a hundred years ago, and you can understand him much better now than you could in high school.

When did you last take time to savor the aroma of coffee or food before you bolted it down in the mad rush to get on with the business of this world before your neighbors beat you to it?

How long since you fed the birds? They don't sing much right now and there are no bugs destroying crops right now, but next spring they will sing and eat insect pests if they live through the winter.

How long since you called Johnnie's or Suzie's teacher and told her how much you appreciate what she is trying to do for your children?

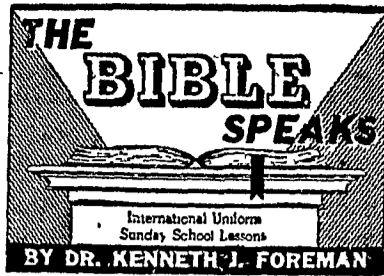
When did you last go to see for yourself what happens in the classroom? We like the story of the teacher who wrote a note to the parents of her students saying, "If you promise not to believe all your child tells you happens in school, I promise not to believe all he tells me happens at home."

How long has it been since you have earnestly and fervently said, "Thank you, God, for bringing me safely thus far on my journey through life?"

There is one more "how long" we ought to consider.

How long till we have a big black smudge on the year page of 1961?

At least that's how it looks from where we stand.



Bible Material: John 1; 20:30-31.
Devotional Reading: 1 John 1:1-8.

God Down Here

Lesson for January 1, 1961

WHEN a man writes a new book on a well-known subject he should have a good reason for breaking into print. The Gospel of John, which is going to be the object of study in the church and in this column for 14 weeks now, was such a late-coming book. By the time it was written, not only had our three Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke been circulating for some time, but as we learn from Luke, there were others besides these three. Now a new book is justified if it brings out new facts, it is also justified if it brings out a new point of view... provided, of course, that the author can show some solid reasons for his special point of view. John has both reasons. He has stories about Jesus to tell which had never been told—that is, told in a book, before; and he has a viewpoint which does not contradict the first three Gospels yet is strikingly different from theirs.



Dr. Foreman

The Word Became Flesh

Readers of the other Gospels may surmise that more is here than meets the eye. They read the story of a great man, a teacher, a prophet, one endowed with strange powers. Strangest of all was his power over death. Not only could he wrestle death to a fall when that dread visitor came to others, he threw off death's chains when they had been wrapped about his own life. You might say that the first three Gospels give us wonderful stories but very little explanation. John's Gospel flashes the explanation in the reader's eye with his very first page. Mark gives no background for Jesus at all. Matthew really begins his story of Jesus with Abraham. Luke begins his story with the first man in the world. But John—He goes back

before there was a human world, before this world began, before the beginning of the world, back to THE BEGINNING, the beginning of which we hear in the Bible's first chapter of time into Eternity's far past. And there he finds—not a carpenter waiting to be born, whom he mysteriously calls the Word of God, the Word that was with God and was God." Why does he explain Jesus? His Jewish family, you might think, was reading Matthew. His men in the human race, you might think from reading Luke. These are part of the story, yet the heart and the height. What explains Jesus? "The Word became flesh," John writes. A more important sentence in the Bible? This is God-with-us is God on two feet. This heavenly Glory walking the earth.

Stories and Signs

"Flesh is a Bible expression." "The Word became man," at the least of it, the vine became human. John says that the Word looked like flesh, or the Word dressed like flesh, but that the word was flesh. He says here "We have seen his glory." Now all we know something about the God. But what would the God be like if it came to a human being? John's witness is devoted to answering this question. He just proceeds to tell stories about Jesus—just only seven before the story of his death. The amazing thing about those stories is how simple they are. You (if you were in the stories) would surely have thought up something similar; but these were not ordinary stories. When God comes to earth, he comes all the way to where we live.

That You May Believe

Every book in the Bible has some purpose in mind. John's Gospel is one of those that tell exactly what the author intended his book to do. "I have written these things," he says at the end, "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name." What short sentence John brings some of the great truths to come more clear to those who themselves to study of the

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Davidson

THIS WEEK

—In Washington
With Clinton Davidson
Political Influence

Dr. Sherman E. Johnson is a veteran U. S. Department of Agriculture economist whose job includes an annual attempt to foretell what lies ahead for farmers.

He has been doing that now for nearly 25 years with a remarkable record of being better than 90% accurate. It is a highly risky business, but he has a "batting average" that is highly respected among agricultural economists.

His forecast for the 1960s was one of the highlights of the meeting in Washington this fall of some 200 economists from colleges and state departments of agriculture at the 38th Annual Agricultural

Outlook Conference.

Like most of the other economists at the meeting Dr. Johnson qualified his forecasts with a big "if" . . . in congress makes no major changes in present farm programs, and if there is no world war in the next few years.

A Dim Crystal Ball

"Although we are fully aware of the dimness of our 'crystal ball,' " he said, "we have tried to visualize what lies ahead for farmers in the next five years."

Total farm production, he thinks, will continue to increase at the rate of 3 percent to 4 percent a year, while the number of farms declines by about 100,000 a year.

By 1965 farmers will have approximately 200 million people in this country to feed. That would be an increase of about 10 percent. Fewer and fewer people on farms will be feeding more and more

people in cities.

Dr. Johnson doesn't expect that consumers will be eating more food in 1965, but he does expect them to be eating about 15 percent more meat, milk, eggs, poultry, fresh fruits and vegetables per capita. They will eat, he thinks, fewer cereals, potatoes and beans.

Fewer Farmers in 1965

If present trends continue, Dr. Johnson predicts, production per farm worker will increase by about 30 percent in the next five years. Since '40 total farm production has increased by 50 percent while the number of farm workers declined by the same percentage.

With a decrease in the number of farms and an increase in the average size of farms, gross income per farm may increase as much as 20 percent in the next five years. But production costs also will increase. Dr. Johnson predicted, at a rate that likely will keep income per farm at about present levels.

Farmers will increase their purchases of oil products and pesticides by as much as 20 percent in the next five years. They will be spending, Dr. Johnson thinks, 10 percent to 15 percent more for fertilizer, machinery and motor vehicles. but substantially less for hired labor.

RURAL RHYTHMS

THE NEW YEAR

By: Carol Dean Huber

Out goes the old year as in comes the new,
Cast off and gone like a worn out shoe.
Forget the old hurts; forget the old woes;
Wear the new year like a new suit of clothes,
Keeping it free from all blemish and spot;
Let it be all that the old year was not.
In each book of life, whatever the age,
Every year starts with a clean new page.

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