

long before that era. For example, the fish symbol was used to represent Seva, in the Hindu religion, and also Oannes, who in Mesopotamian mythology was an amphibious being who taught mankind wisdom. The fish is also in use as a representative of Pisces in astrology. Finally, Darwinists also use the fish symbol, but their symbol has little feet attached in a direct attack on the Christian symbol!

With this in mind, I think we should exercise caution when using this symbol and other symbolism and gimmicks used by modern-day Christians. The Bible is quite clear when it talks about identity: "Ye shall know them by their fruits [works]" (Mt. 7:16). Therefore "let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay" (Jas. 5:12), and leave the modern day 'Christian' to his badges and emblems.

Tim Evans  
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### The bread of life

I would like to comment on the article by Brother Bernard Skinner entitled "[The bread of life](#)" ([Oct. 2002, p. 358](#)). I thoroughly enjoyed the article, but feel that Brother Skinner may have missed the point when he came to the 'climax' of the chapter, the paragraph titled "Associating with Jesus".

Brother Skinner beautifully illustrates the fact that the bread, as representative of Christ, speaks of his life of service to God, culminating in his offering of himself as "a perfect loaf" as a sacrifice. However, his conclusion that to observe the saying, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood" (Jno. 6:56), means to attend the breaking of bread service does not do justice to the rest of the chapter. The word 'flesh' is never, to my knowledge, used in the context of the breaking of bread.

Of course, partaking of the bread and the wine is firstly essential to keeping the commandments of Christ and secondly a memorial of Christ's life of service (in the bread) and sacrifice for our sins (in the wine). This, however, does not fit into the context of Christ's words, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life" (v. 54). Surely to eat of the flesh and drink of the blood of Christ is to offer our lives in service to God in the manner in which he did and to offer ourselves as living sacrifices to our Father (Rom. 12:1,2). To do this is to dwell in

him, and he in us, as John 6:56 goes on to say. As John says in his epistle, "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" (1 Jno. 2:6).

I would also like to comment on the remark in the Publishing Editor's column in the same issue with respect to the tax avoidance. I appreciate that no opinion is expressed on whether tax avoidance by ecclesias or organisations is right or wrong, but the example was not the best issue to have been raised, given the government's latest scheme for donating money, Give As You Earn (GAYE). Under this, donations made from gross salary to charities are exempt from tax payments, and the government guidelines themselves suggest church collections as one possible use for this. Suggesting that such donations are a form of legal tax avoidance or contrary to the principles of the tax office and its employees may raise an unnecessary issue for those readers who have not considered it before.

However, I agreed with Brother Benson's sentiments on brethren's tendency to apply skills learned at work inappropriately in the ecclesia. Indeed, why do we not hear exhortations encouraging us to apply principles learned in Scripture directly in our work environment?

Andrew Walding  
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Brother Bernard Skinner's article "[The bread of life](#)" provides much exhortation and much food for thought as we consider our Lord's statement, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (Jno. 6:35). However, it was somewhat disappointing to read his exposition of verse 53: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you". Surely this statement by the Lord Jesus Christ has nothing whatsoever to do with the fact that Jews would not literally "drink the blood of a sacrificial animal, or, for that matter, of any animal".

In *Phanerosis* Brother Thomas comments: "they [the Jews] did not understand that it was an intellectual eating and drinking of the Spirit-and-life words, or teaching . . . When a man marks, reads and inwardly digests the subject-matter of the Father's doctrine, he eats and drinks it, and is 'taught of God' (John 6:45)" (Logos edition, p. 84). As Brother Thomas said elsewhere: "a man hath just so much of the Spirit of God in him as he hath of the truth intelligently and affection-

ately believed” (cited by Brother Alfred Nicholls in *The Spirit of God*, p. 110, 1976 edition).

H. D. Bartholomew  
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The letters by brethren Walding and Bartholomew both express some disquiet that I should have so closely identified Jesus’s words in John 6, relating to his flesh and blood, with the bread and wine of our Lord’s Table. Rather they prefer to think of the words used by Jesus, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you”, as the imbibing of his words. With that aspect I have no argument, and when I partake of the emblems I rehearse those thoughts in my own mind.

It seems strange to me that there should be any problem here. Jesus stated, “the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” (v. 51), and clearly he spoke of his death upon the cross, which he was in a short time to accomplish. Why then should there be any doubt that, when a little later Jesus instituted this memorial using the bread and wine as symbols of his body and blood, he intended them to relate back to his earlier words?

Jesus was our Passover Lamb offered once for all. But compare with his offering the Passover lambs offered year by year under the Law, which had the prohibition attached to the eating of the animal’s blood. And why was the blood forbidden them? It must have been to tell them of the inadequacy of their offering, which could not bring for them eternal redemption. But the blood of Jesus’s offering, or, we might say, the life which Jesus gave, did provide eternal redemption. It seems to me for it to be right, therefore, as we share in the memorial of our Passover Lamb, that we see in the bread and wine symbols of the flesh and blood of Jesus as described in this sixth chapter of John.—*B.G.S.*

### The catacombs

Brother Dennis Elliott’s letter (Dec. 2002, p. 451) has confirmed my own studies of the matter, which I have converted into a slide lecture.

In order to help sceptical friends who have difficulty in accepting the reliability of the Bible, we often point to the remarkable accuracy of Bible prophecy and the way it has been fulfilled, presenting archaeological evidence to prove the point. Typical examples would be Jeremiah’s

prophecies concerning Babylon, Ezekiel’s words about Tyre or, even more dramatically, Nahum’s prophecies concerning Nineveh and Assyria.

In dealing with the latter subject, for example, we first set the historical context from the Second Book of Kings, then move to the explicit prophecies of Isaiah and Nahum. Having shown what God said *would* happen, we proceed to show visually what *did* happen by means of photographs of the site of Nineveh today, the sketches and records of the Victorian diplomat-archaeologist Sir Austen Henry Layard, and the burnt wall slabs from Nineveh on display at the British Museum.

We can apply the same process to Babylon, showing the historical background from the Bible, then the fulfilment of the prophecies of Jeremiah 50 and 51, as dramatically confirmed by pictures from the Pergamon Museum in Berlin, or, perhaps even more dramatically, by the failed, futile attempts of Saddam Hussein, in his self-delusionary role as Nebuchadnezzar Mark II, to rebuild the city of Babylon, a failure which confirms the truth of Jeremiah 51:64. Again, Ezekiel’s prophecies concerning Tyre can likewise be set in historic context before showing photographs of nothing more than the waves breaking on the submerged offshore ruins of the ancient city, showing the fulfilment of Ezekiel 26:19-21.

But can we demonstrate with the aid of archaeology what the early Christians believed if our friends are reluctant to believe the Bible records? One way of doing this is to visit the catacombs on the outskirts of Rome, as my wife and I did a year or two ago. There one learns that the early Christians thought much as the brethren and sisters today. If you visit your local cemetery you will find headstones featuring angels with wings, inscriptions about how the deceased has gone to heaven or has ‘yielded to the home call from above’, whereas Christadelphian headstones will often refer to the grave’s occupant being asleep in the Lord, awaiting resurrection at the return of Christ.

Likewise, among the 600 miles of underground catacombs, one will come across crude sketches bearing evidence of belief in the covenants of promise, the hope of redemption or the promises of salvation. Photographing such pictures is extremely difficult, but from certain nineteenth-century books on the subject it is possible to get pictures of, for example, Jacob crossing his arms and blessing Ephraim and Manasseh, Moses crossing the Red Sea and later striking the rock,