# Articles by F. W. Schwartz

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## The Problem of Today (January–February 1972)

From Ministry in Focus, January–February 1972.

The activities of the so-called "Jesus people" (sometimes referred to as "Jesus Freaks") are receiving considerable publicity, and it seems that some Christians known to us are quite impressed by their propaganda.

Doubtless some - we hope many - of these people have really come to know the Lord. Among other things it is said that some among them who had been drug addicts have been happily delivered from their bondage. God has ways of His own of reaching people, and the means and agencies He uses are not always in harmony with accepted practice. He is SOVEREIGN, and can use and does use what He will and whom He will. And it is not to be wondered at that some who profess to have been converted exhibit unusual and sometimes bizarre types of behaviour and thought patterns. These, usually, are simply a reflection of what their previous training or associations have predisposed them to. One encouraging thing about these people is their apparent acceptance of the Bible as the Word of God, with some desire on the part of at least some of them to study it. It is to be hoped that many of them will learn to fully acknowledge the Lordship of Christ and bow to the authority of the Word - making it their endeavor to conform their lives and practice to its teaching. Some, perhaps, can be helped in this. But unfortunately many seem imbued with the idea that nothing can be right that was known and accepted before their "movement" came upon the scene.

These people seem to have a language and approach all their own. Some of their literature is certainly not of a kind that one would feel free to give publicity to, especially when there is so much sound, clear and attractively produced Christian literature available - and waiting to be distributed. I have before me a copy of the "Hollywood Free Paper," put out by the "Jesus People." It is Vol. 3, Issue 16. In large type on the front page there is the caption "STOKED ON JESUS!" This may mean something to the initiated, but certainly to the average person, familiar only with current English usage, it conveys nothing with any degree of clarity.

Further down on page one we read, "2 will be on the sand, one will be taken . . . the other left! 2 soakin' up rays . . . one will be taken the other left!" Are we at liberty to quote the Word of GOD in such a garbled fashion?

On page two is an article entitled "Soakin' in the SON." The writer says "we'd like to lay some heavy vibes down on what 'soakin' in the 'Son' is really all about." A little further on we read "it's the inside dimension of man that made a dude hip to where it's at. Dig?" Further, again, "You can soak in the Son all in one shot; that is, if you know what to turn on to." All this appears to be the language of a new sub-culture, and certainly does not clearly present the Gospel, which ALONE is "the power of God unto salvation."

There are three or four pages of rather mysterious cartoons, one of them asking "Want to know how to receive living water?" The cartoons are crude. One of them represents "Jesus" pouring huge volumes of water

into the open mouth and over the body of an individual whose appearance is rather sub-human.

It all seems rather frivolous, and certainly is not a worthy presentation of the truth of God. There are few, if any, references to Christ such as to draw attention to His Lordship and glory, though many references to "Jesus." There seems to be no lofty conception of God, no sense of His majesty or justice.

It is to be sincerely hoped that these people, if sincere in their desire to know the truth, will consult the Word of God with unbiased minds, and learn more of the ways of the Lord. As matters stand they unnecessarily invite ridicule, and alienate thinking people.

Certainly one would wish to see them helped, if possible, to a better knowledge of God's truth, and of His purpose for their lives. But to suggest, as some seem to, that others should join with them, adopt their mannerisms and help to spread their propaganda, is evidence of a strange lack of discernment.

Let the world call you a bigot - I would not give much for Christianity if the world had nothing to say against it.

## The Lordship of Christ (Mar 1957)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 3 No. 3, Mar 1957.

A day is coming when Christ will be universally acknowledge as Lord. Not one dissenting voice will be heard. To the farthest reaches of the universe the confession will be completely unanimous. Without a single exception EVERY tongue shall then “confess that Jesus Christ is Lord!” (Phil. 2:11). Alas that many are so slow in our own day to acknowledge Him at all.

Much of to-day’s thinking, even among true Christians, is much too vague as to the Lordship of Christ—His absolute sovereignty. The very title “Lord,” it has been remarked,” has become one of the most lifeless in the Christian vocabulary, whereas it really declares the true character and dignity of Jesus Christ” (Kennedy, quoted by Robertson). We cannot afford to be hazy about this truth. It is important beyond calculation, and upon our proper apprehension of it a great deal depends. No subject is more truly fundamental in Christian doctrine or to Christian living.

The acknowledgment of Christ as Lord is

Closely Interwoven With Saving Faith and is utterly indispensable to a life that is pleasing to God. An adequate conception of His dignity as Lord would revolutionize our thinking, our living, our church relationships, and our witnessing. A lack of emphasis upon it is probably responsible for much of the listlessness and lack of depth so frequently met with, and perhaps also for the deplorable number of empty professions that grieve and perplex us.

This truth is of

The Very Essence of New Testament Teaching

Among the outstanding features of the New Testament are:

1. Its proclamation of the supreme glory of Christ's Person as the Son of God.

2. Its insistence upon the supremacy of the claims of Christ.

3. Its appeal for the acknowledgment of His authority everywhere and in all things.

The Lordship of Christ is

A Leading Note in Apostolic Preaching

Peter, at Pentecost, emphatically assures his hearers that "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both LORD and Christ" (Acts 2:36). Later, at Caesarea, in a reference to "the word which God sent to the children of Israel" he asserts unequivocally that "He is Lord of all" (Acts 10:36). Paul is equally forceful when he says, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord" (2 Cor. 4:5), and when he writes of the exaltation of Christ "that in all things He might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18; cf. 1 Cor. 8:6).

The Ordinary Phraseology of The New Testament

This is permeated with the thought of the sovereignty of Christ. In references to Him the title "Lord" is quite frequent. Generally the Greek word is "KURIOS," which in many instances is used as the equivalent of the Old Testament "Jehovah" — distinctly a Divine title. "KURIOS" was the term used by Caesar when proclaiming himself God. Early readers of the New

Testament, by the application of that august title to Christ, could not but be impressed with a sense of His sovereignty, as Divine and therefore absolute.

His Lordship is, in the New Testament, assumed to be

Acknowledged (Normally) By All Believers

They are designated as those who “call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:2). He, as the Object of faith, is presented as LORD. In Acts 16:31, for instance, it is “believe on the LORD Jesus Christ.” (How forcibly the use of “KURIOS” as applied to Him would strike the Philippian jailor, who knew well what Caesar meant when he arrogated the same title to himself!) In Rom. 10:9 the confession called for is that of “the LORD Jesus,” or rather, as later versions have it, “Jesus as Lord” or “that Jesus is Lord.” Compare with this Romans 6:23, where eternal life is through (or in) “Jesus Christ our Lord” (See also Rom. 5:21; 1 Cor. 15:57; 16:22).

In the light of what we have just pointed out, one cannot but wonder if we have not been mistaken in urging people, as we often have done, to “receive Christ as Saviour.” The One glorious Person is LORD and Saviour. He cannot be dissected. One is not at liberty to say “I will have Him in the one character but not in the other.” It is THE PERSON Who is received, in the fulness of all that He is; therefore not merely “as Saviour” but equally “as Lord.” This implies that submission and obedience are expected. Consistent with this we find reference made to OBEYING the Gospel (Rom. 10:16; 1 Pet. 4:17) — the term being used, evidently, as an alternative to “believing.” Such expressions as “obedience to the faith” and “the obedience of faith” (Acts 6:7; Romans 1:5; Romans 16:26) are evidence that saving faith, as viewed

in the New Testament, includes obedience as an essential element.

The question will, however, be asked: “Are we to understand that there must be an intelligent recognition of the Lordship of Christ before a person can be saved?” We answer: “It is the LORD Who is presented as Saviour, and normally it is to be expected that He will be owned as such by all who come to Him.” Salvation, however, is not made to depend upon a person’s having a comprehensive knowledge as Christ’s Person and dignity, or understanding all that is ultimately involved in receiving Him. To truly trust Christ is to be saved, however little spiritual intelligence there may as yet be. But to be saved is to have been brought to Christ, and that means to have entered into a vital relationship with Him. Such a relationship, surely, cannot exist without one’s soon apprehending, at least in some measure, Who and What He is. If then there is continued in-subjection to Him or, in other words, if His claims as Lord are set aside by a refusal to do His will, especially after clear instruction has been received, would it not seem probable that He is not yet really known at all and that the individual is still unsaved?

## The Normal Attitude Of The Christian

From the moment Christ is received it is one of obedience. That obedience is, primarily, to a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. The believer is “not without law to God, but under law to Christ” (1 Cor. 9:21). Alford would render this “not being an outlaw from God but a subject of-the-law of Christ.” Darby’s translation is “not as without law to God, but as legitimately subject to Christ.” He is, as Jude puts it, “our only Master and

Lord" (Jude 4, RV). His commandments are to be kept; as a matter of fact the keeping or not keeping of them is evidence as to whether or not we are in a right relationship with Him (See John 14:15, 21; 15:10-12; 1 John 2:4,- 5; 3:24; 2 John 6).

## His Authority Is All-Embracing

1. It applies to each believer individually. He does not claim the loyalty of a certain few while exempting others. He is Lord, I am His subject—the one is the corollary of the other. So Paul understood the matter, and that is why he refers to himself as "the bond-slave of Jesus Christ."

2. It applies to every detail of the life. We are not at liberty to say, "This, but not that." ALL is to be submitted to His authority. In reference not only to the great transactions of life, but seeming trivialities as well, the only question should be, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

3. It applies always and everywhere. At any time, in any place, in any circumstances, the believer is "under authority."

Some may think they see in what has been said a denial of the believer's being "not under the law but under grace" (Rom. 6:14). They may feel that it conflicts with "the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free" (Gal. 5:1). There is no conflict, but, rather, when the matter is really understood, all is seen to be perfect harmony. The law (of Moses) made demands which it enforced by threats and penalties. It brought people under a "yoke of bondage." Faith, in contrast with this, "worketh by love" (or "through love," Gal. 5:6). The obedience

expected by the Lord Jesus is a result of love to Himself (John 14:15, 21). That love exists in believers as a sequel to Christ's own love to them (1 John 4:19). Certainly there is none more worthy, and no one more sure to kindle in our hearts the truest affection for Him, than He Whose love to us took Him even to the cross of shame. Now, it is ever love's fondest aim to give pleasure to the one who is loved. True love to Christ. therefore, produces spontaneous, unforced, willing obedience to His commandments. Thus we have liberty and obedience in a perfect combination. This, apparently, is what James has in mind when he speaks of the "law of liberty" (James 1:25). It would be wholly impossible, of course, apart from the enabling which only the Spirit of God can (and does) impart. It is He Who transforms the affections; it is He Who implants Christ-honoring desires; it is He Who prompts the soul "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 3:13). May He increasingly enable each of us to so enthrone Christ in our hearts that we shall gladly, enthusiastically, own Him "King of kings and Lord of lords," in anticipation of that glad day when universal homage and submission shall be His!

# The Forum (May 1958)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 4 No. 5, May 1958.

The Salvation of Infants

In reply to our request that others contribute to the discussion of the salvation of infants commenced in the March issue, our brother F. W. Schwartz has submitted the following paper. Everyone may not endorse all that he has written, but his suggestions are weighty and worthy of earnest consideration.

By most of those who are likely to read this article, the eternal safety of those who die in infancy is usually taken for granted. Our reference here is, of course, to all young children who have not reached the stage in their development at which they can be thought of as responsible beings, answerable for their attitude toward God and His claims. Just when that stage is reached in the case of any particular individual, it is impossible to determine exactly.

While we are satisfied that a young child is safe, it is but natural that we should wish to be certain that our belief is well grounded. Some of the inferences that have been drawn from certain passages of Scripture do not appear, on closer examination, to be conclusive. For instance, it is sometimes pointed out that in Matthew 18:11, where reference is made to children, there is no reference to seeking: such as is found in Luke 19:10. It is argued, on the basis of this omission, that children, not having actively strayed, do not need to be sought and are therefore in a different category from sinners in general. But one needs only to read the context in Matthew 18 to

see that there, too, seeking is definitely in view, so that the supposed difference between the passages disappears, and the argument based upon it loses its force. Another passage often appealed to is Matthew 19:14, but this cannot be properly interpreted as a statement that young children are safe, —nor can other passages sometimes referred to in this connection.

So far as the present writer is aware, it is nowhere in Scripture stated specifically that infants are saved. God, it would seem, does not usually reveal what is not of immediate and definite importance as indicating either the way of salvation or the path in which His people should walk. As to some matters His desire for us may be that we trust His character rather than that we be fully informed. Faith willingly leaves the unknown to Him, saying with Abraham “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Gen. 18:25). However, Scripture in many passages testifies to God’s gracious interest in children. The Lord Jesus said plainly, “it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish” (Matt. 18:14). There are facts, too, from which legitimate deductions can be made, and the evidence, even if “presumptive,” is very satisfying.

God, in His Word, addresses Himself to responsible beings. If the heathen are viewed in the first chapter of Romans as without excuse, it is because they have received a certain measure of light, and are for that reason responsible. Infants cannot be thought of in that way. They have no developed conscience, and cannot be thought of as having either received or rejected light. Where the light of the Gospel has entered, it is said that “he that believeth … hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not … shall not see life; but the wrath of God

abideth on him" (John 3:36 et al). Infants cannot be logically or fairly thought of as capable of either believing or not believing. The ground of condemnation is stated to be that "light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light…" (John 3:19). Are infants able to make the choice indicated in such a statement? If not, then surely they will not be held accountable. Furthermore, there is nothing in Scripture to suggest that young children are condemned, nor is there anything said in them that seems, even remotely, to require their perdition. On the contrary it appears that they are subjects of special mercy. When, for instance, God decreed that the people of Israel should not enter Canaan because of their rebellions in the wilderness, He made the provision that "your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, shall go in thither…" (Deut. 1:39). Why were the children not subjected to the condemnation suffered by their parents? Because they had not, we take it, at the time of their parents' rebellion arrived at a point in their young lives when they could be viewed as in any way morally accountable for that rebellion. Likewise, we are told, "the children of Korah died not" when judgment fell on their parents (Num. 26:11). If, elsewhere in Scripture, we meet with incidents that seem to suggest an opposite principle, the explanation probably is that the removal of the children was necessary in order to eradicate the idolatry or rebellion which they might have tended to perpetuate. In such a case their removal would be merciful, for they would be "taken away from the evil to come" (Isa. 57:1), and not left to continue in the guilty ways of their parents and suffer severe judgment for their sins.

Judgment is ever on the ground of works (“deeds” — Romans 2:5,6). That being the case, it would seem clear that infants will be exempted. Would a parent punish a mere babe who throws down a valuable article and ruins it? Would we call the police if we found some babe making away with a sum of money or goods? (We might give him a light slap as part of our teaching process, but would not think of that as punishment!) Surely that same babe will obtain mercy of God for the same reason that we spare him — he has no knowledge of right or wrong, and therefore is not to be held responsible. In Luke 12:47,48, we have a further illustration which may help us. The Lord there speaks of one servant who knew his Lord’s will, but did not do it, and of another who did not know his lord’s will and did things worthy of stripes. The first would receive many stripes, the other few. The treatment of these two men illustrates a principle which the Lord immediately states: “Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.” That is, the responsibility of any individual is determined by the measure of light and privilege he has or has not enjoyed. As to mere babes, it cannot be said that they have received either much or little. Consequently, on the principle stated, they would not be considered responsible. The same principle is further illustrated in the Lord’s prayer for those who took part in the crucifixion, “Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). It was, of course, not an inclusive and complete forgiveness of all their sins that he was asking for, but simply forgiveness for what they were doing at that moment. The act was, in itself, the greatest crime ever committed, and, had they known what they were doing, they would have merited their

being consigned to perdition at once. But they acted in ignorance of the real nature of their deed. Similarly, we find Paul saying concerning himself “I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief” (1 Tim. 1:13). “Blasphemer …persecutor and injurious” as he admitted himself to have been, he was nevertheless shown mercy because he was ignorant of the real nature of his sin — in fact was doing what he thought at the time he “ought to do” (Acts 26:9). The mercy shown him took the form of a temporary respite until the opportunity was later given him to face the issues involved. Now, if those who surrounded the Cross, and Saul of Tarsus, the arch-persecutor, were not immediately held to account for what they did in ignorance, surely infants, who are completely unable to understand what they do, will not be held accountable.

We have yet to speak of the marvellous scope of the work of redemption accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ. John the Baptist spoke of Him as “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). We are told that “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them …” (2 Cor. 55:19). The work of reconciliation is a completed work, the benefits of which sinners are invited to enter into by “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” The reconciliation, in itself, is sufficient for the need of all mankind; the payment made at Calvary was more than enough to satisfy every claim against each and every human being. True, no benefit accrues to those who will not receive it, but must we conclude that infants (or the mentally deficient or retarded) are therefore excluded from those benefits? We believe not: they have not the ability to

either receive or refuse, and we may be sure that God, Who delights in mercy, will credit to them the full value of the sacrifice of His Son. It is, of course, only through the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ that there can be salvation for any human being. Children are not exempted because they are “innocent.” They inherit a sinful nature; they are “conceived in sin” (Psa. 51:5); they “go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies” (Psa. 58:3); their disposition to sin manifests itself at a very early age indeed, proving that “that which is born of the flesh is flesh” (John 3:6). Death claims infants as well as older people, and since death is plainly stated to be a consequence of sin, it is clear that sin exists in infants, even though there is not any moral consciousness of it.

Let it be clearly understood that the benefits of the work of Christ extend to ALL infants, not merely to those of a special class. Some would limit salvation to “elect infants dying in infancy,” others to those only who are the children of Christian parents, considered to be “under the covenant” or eligible for a similar reason. Others would rule out children who are not baptized or “christened.” Roman Catholic teaching has a special place to which unbaptized children are said to go — the “lim-bus infantum.” It cannot be too emphatically stated that parentage and ordinances have no bearing whatever on the salvation of either infants or adults. For one and all salvation depends entirely on Christ and His precious blood.

It may be pointed out that there is nowhere in Scripture any reference to concern or anxiety for infants who have died. On the contrary we find David ceasing to fast or

weep for his child when it had died, and expressing the hope of a reunion (2 Sam. 12:23).

And now just a word of caution. Children should never be given an assurance that salvation is already theirs just because they are young. For all who are able to understand it, God has only one Gospel. Children should be impressed with the facts of their sin, need and danger. They should be taught what are the results of sin that is not repented of, and should be shown the sufficiency of the work of Christ and invited to trust Him. While the “age of accountability” cannot be determined exactly, it is evidently possible for children to believe in the Lord Jesus at an early age, for the Lord Himself referred to “these little ones who believe in Me” (Matt. 18:6). But too many have been led to think they are saved, just because they were able to parrot some easy formula, or assent to a statement of Gospel facts. Salvation is the work of the Spirit of God, in a child as much as in an adult. It is a revelation of Christ to the soul. To pretend to “save” a child (!!) or to have a child make a profession of salvation before there has been a real work of God in the soul, is CRIMINAL FOLLY. Yet it is to be feared that many of the statistics of child conversion that come to our attention are based on nothing better.

It goes without saying, of course, that Christian parents, as their children grow toward maturity, may properly look to the Lord for the salvation of those children. They are encouraged to do so, in the hope that in due course the children will intelligently grasp the truth of the Gospel, trust Christ and be saved.

Lack of space compels us to close. We do so with the sincere hope and prayer that what has been said will be truly helpful to all concerned.

* * *

God is infinitely patient with wrong doing. Have you learned to take things as God takes them?

## A Modern “Inquisition” (Dec 1958)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 4 No. 12, Dec 1958.

This article reminds us of the holy injunction to which few pay much attention, “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice” (Eph. 4:31).

Every now and then, in certain quarters, there is a surge of rash amid irresponsible criticism. Some who engage in it may at first have been sincere in their motives. But as they give themselves increasingly to it, they become warped in their thinking and eventually are utterly unreasonable in their fault-finding. The results, to themselves as well as to others, are disastrous: fellowship is marred, progress hindered and the Lord dishonoured.

True, the “critical faculty” has a proper use. We are exhorted to “prove all things …” (1 Thess. 5:21). And the wisdom of doing so was never more apparent than in the present day, when so many ancient errors are being revived in modern dress, and when a “new approach” is being attempted to almost every truth and problem. Moral and doctrinal evils, false principles and methods, as well as doubtful associations, must not go unchallenged. Those to whom God has given responsibility in the churches of the saints must protect the flock from false teaching and deception. And when cases of immorality or doctrinal evil come to light they must be dealt with. This is sound procedure, and is what Scripture calls for.

Then, too, we all need to be called upon at times to "consider our ways." Our practices need to be scrutinized in the light of the Word of God. We should therefore be thankful for any criticism which is really fair, intelligent, and constructive. And even when criticism is given in an improper spirit, we can still afford to ask ourselves if it does not bring a challenge that we should take notice of, however difficult it may be to appreciate it. As someone has said "the largest room in the world is the room for improvement," and we should welcome anything that helps us to recognize and correct our deficiencies. Business institutions realize this and are often willing to pay huge sums to experts for their criticisms. If based on accurate knowledge and wide experience, these can be of great value.

But we need to consider carefully our manner of dealing with the faults (real or imagined) of fellow-Christians. It seems to be very easy for some of us to become cynical — given to chronic fault-finding and judging of others. Our niceties and exactnesses may really indicate, not so much a tender conscience as a spirit of censoriousness and a lack of that consideration for the thoughts and feelings of others which is one earmark of a healthy Christianity. And what we think to be a superior discernment in ourselves may be simply conceit, and our supposed infallible standards may be nothing more than a deep-seated prejudice.

Proper and needed care is one thing; censoriousness is quite another. The one brings matters to the test of the Word of God. "To the law and to the testimony" is its watchword. Faithfully and affectionately it points out the dangers of by-paths and endeavours to lead in the way of righteousness. It realizes the need, at times, to

“reprove, rebuke, exhort,” but seeks to do so “with all long-suffering and doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:2).
Censoriousness, on the other hand, is ever ready to belittle or disparage. Not satisfied to confine itself to the calm and dispassionate discussion of principles, it proceeds to the heartless slaughter of reputations. It is on the alert for the slightest evidence of departure or failure (in others!). It is given to exaggeration, and will “use a sledge-hammer to kill a fly!” It is ready to villify and defame anyone who dares to express a thought not in keeping with its pronouncements, whether or not these have any basis in truth or in logic. Blinded by prejudice, it sneeringly asks, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” And, sure that there can be no virtue in the one it suspects, it proceeds unmercifully to “eliminate” him. It does not hesitate to attribute to its victim ideas that no sane man could entertain, and motives that no person of any decency could have. It can only think of one who does not completely agree with it as a hypocrite and a knave, though his only offence may be that, as W. B. Riley puts it, “he has jostled the comfortables out of their easy-going gait and changed the course of the rut in which they had run for forty years!” Too often it seems to be without feeling or conscience, and may even pride itself on “operating without anaesthetic.” Its strictures may have in them elements of truth, but, as someone has put it:

“A truth that’s told with bad intent

Beats all the lies you can invent!”

Italian criminalists are reported to have said long ago: “Give me two lines, ever so trivial or commonplace lines written by any one, and I undertake to bring the writer

to the gallows." That was in the days of the Inquisition. Today no officer of the law would think of making such a statement. In modern courts mere suspicions are completely ruled out as evidence. No mere POSSIBILITY of guilt can be accepted as a ground for judgment. But the cynic knows nothing of the fairness of the courts. What they will not resort to in dealing with even the lowest criminal, he may be found using to incriminate even his brethren! A rumor or insinuation, however far-fetched, is enough ground for condemnation. The guilt of the victim has been taken for granted from the outset, perhaps without the least effort to find out what really are the FACTS. The Lord's injunction "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" is completely forgotten (John 7:24). Said Henry Ward Beecher, "The cynic is one who never sees a good quality in a man, and never fails to see a bad one. He is the human owl, vigilant in darkness and blind to light, mousing for vermin, and never seeing noble game. The cynic puts all human actions into two classes — openly bad and secretly bad." Certainly the one who is hypercritical will find it very hard to be JUST!

One cannot help wondering what may be the motive for much of the censoriousness that is practised. Is the cynic's object to pull the other fellow down to his own level, so that he himiself will be seen in a more favourable light? Is the demand for perfection in others intended to divert attention from the far from perfect lives of the critics themselves? Do they, perhaps, "Excuse the sins they are inclined to, By damning those they have no mind to?" The Psalmist prayed, "Search ME … try ME … see if there be any wicked way in ME … lead ME …" Well may we ALL pray a similar prayer!

Spurgeon somewhere speaks of “Mrs. Grundys, who drink tea and talk vitriol … who practise vivisection upon the characters of her neighbours.” Let us give a wide berth to such evil practices! Let us not lend our ears to those who engage in them!

## God in Daily Experience (Feb 1960)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 6 No. 2, Feb 1960.

Vol 6:2 (Feb 1960)

God in Daily Experience

F. W. Schwartz

A tourist in the East, awed by the magnificence of a temple he was visiting, remarked to his guide that those who had built such an ornate structure in tribute to their god must have been a very devout people. Much to his surprise he was told that he had completely misunderstood the purpose of the building. Those who erected it, said the guide, had no thought of paying tribute to their god. Their purpose was rather to enclose him! They did not want him to interfere with their lives, so they put up this splendid edifice to shut him in. It was an effective way, they thought, to guard against the inconvenience of a too active deity!

The attitude of those temple-builders strikes us as quite strange. But is not that of many around us very much like it? Their thought seems to be “Let God keep His place. Let Him not assert Himself too freely. We may need Him to account for the phenomena of existence, but let Him remain back in the shadows. There may come a time when we shall want His help, but meanwhile let Him not intrude.” And they wonder why God—the God Whom they have bowed out of their lives—does not stop their wars, end their distresses, and smooth their pillows. How inconsistent humans can be!

Just now, however, we are thinking particularly about the attitudes of those who, through a genuine faith in God's beloved Son, have been brought into a vital and saving relationship with Him. Certainly some of us, at times, give the impression by our conduct that our concept of God has little effect upon the character of our lives. Is it possible that we have enshrined Him— enclosed Him— if not in marble, in a framework of doctrine which we have taken no pains to understand?

Are we satisfied to have formulated clear definitions of His character and attributes, while our knowledge of Him seems to make little impression upon our daily thinking and behaviour? Doctrine has tremendous value, and a clear knowledge of it is of great importance. But it should lead to a knowledge of God Himself to an acquaintance that is vital, experimental, intimate. And that knowledge will affect one's life; it will issue in suitable conduct (See John 13:17. Col. 1: 9-10. 2 Pet. 1:8. James 3:13).

## The Omniscience of God.

He "knoweth all things." His wisdom is infinite. "There is no searching of His understanding." All our doings are fully known to Him (1 John 3:20. Psalm 147:5. Prov. 15:3; 5:21). He is fully informed as to our every thought and motive (Psalm 139:2. Heb. 4:12-13). Through Jeremiah He poses the question, "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him?" (Jer. 23:24). How distressing such thoughts as these can be to an awakened sinner! But what shall be said of us who are believers? Can we be aware of all this and live carelessly? Should it not have a formative and restraining effect upon our every thought, word and

action? Should we not search our hearts and challenge each motive as to whether or not it is pleasing to the ALL-Seeing One?

There is also, in the fact of God's omniscience, much to reassure the Christian in need of comfort. God's knowledge not only extends to the farthest reaches of the universe; it not only includes the millions of mighty orbs moving in limitless space. It condescends to the "way" of the feeblest believer (Isa. 40:26, 27). Omniscience has numbered the very hairs of the believer's head, the Lord Jesus tells us, and He adds, "Fear ye not …" (Matt. 10:3031). If, then, the remembrance of God's omniscience would cause us to walk carefully, it can also be a source of truest encouragement.

## The Omnipotence of God

too, has a message for us. His POWER is without bound or limitation, "With God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26). Nothing is too hard for Him (Gen. 18:14). And He is OUR God — OUR Father! Is this not full of meaning for us as we meet with difficulties and perplexities from time to time — some of which defy solution? Should we not face them as Daniel's three friends did, with a triumphant "Our God is able …" (Dan. 3:17). He IS "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think …" (Eph. 3:20). What a shame that we so frequently are overcome when, through our God, we might be over-corners!

## The Omnipresence of God

is another of His attributes. He is everywhere. He fills all space. The Psalmist, in Psalm 139, cannot conceive of

the possibility of evading Him. Wherever he might think of fleeing — even at the farthest reaches of the universe — God would still be present. Is this frightening? To one treading the paths of sin it may well be! But to one who knows God and loves Him it is not so. The Psalmist, in fact, finds in it an occasion for joyful praise. To him it was a reason for the greatest encouragement, for, he says, God "is nigh unto all them that call upon Him … in truth!" (Psalm 145:18).

It needs to be pointed out, however, that while God is everywhere present, to many of us His presence is a matter of doctrine only — doctrine that is very poorly apprehended — and not a fact of present, joyful experience. God loves to reveal Himself to the trusting, obedient soul. And when He does so He sets the life aglow with a reflection of His own glory (2 Cor. 3:18). It was this kind of revelation of Himself that the Psalmist was longing for when he said, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God" (Psalm 42:1). His manifest, realized presence is something we may well covet. Let us be satisfied with nothing less!

### The Holiness of God

is another facet of His character that greatly needs re-emphasizing in our day. It was the remembrance of this that brought from Job long ago the humble confession, "Behold I am vile … I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 40:4; 42:6), and that wrung from Isaiah's lips the cry, "I am undone …" (Isa. 6:5). In more recent days, too, it spoke loudly to the consciences of men and women, impressing them with a sense of the awfulness of their sin and warning them of certain

judgment. But today there is a tendency to think of God as a sort of indulgent patron, Whose wishes may be disregarded and Whose claims may be flouted at one's pleasure. Little wonder that true repentance seems to be so rare an occurrence.

And what shall we say of the impact of God's holiness upon the thinking and conduct of the child of God? Is it realized as it needs to be that a holy God has "called us unto holiness?" (1 Thess. 4:7). Have we appreciated the need to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God"? (2 Cor. 7:1). Are we noted for "holy conversation (conduct) and godliness?" (2 Pet. 3:11). Or have we forgotten the injunction, "Be ye holy, for I am holy?" (1 Pet. 1:15-16).

A proper appreciation of God's holiness will inevitably lead to reverence. It is said of a celebrated scientist that he removed his hat each time he heard God's name mentioned. That was a wholesome gesture, but one which would, in days like the present, be considered out of place and much too sanctimonious. There is today, even among Christians, a great lack of the spirit of reverence. It is noticeable in our manner of speaking, in the lightness and even frivolity too often seen in some of our gatherings, and even in the language of some of our modern hymns and choruses. A proper sense of what is due to a holy God would correct all this. Is it not time that we gave serious thought to the matter? Can true spirituality survive, or can any measure of Christian decency be maintained, where there is not due recognition of what the character and presence of God demand?

for our present purpose, need not be too critically distinguished from His holiness. (Generally speaking, His holiness is an expression of His character, while His righteousness marks His dealings with His creatures.) “The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works” (Psa. 145:17). He is “a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He” (Deut. 32:4). “He will judge the world in righteousness” (Acts 17:31). To that judgment every individual is exposed who does not know Christ as Lord and Saviour. To the believer, however, amid the perplexities and turmoil of life in this topsy-turvy world, the remembrance of God’s righteousness brings reassurance and hope. Confronted by situations he is unable to understand he echoes Abraham’s confident exclamation: “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Gen. 18:25). Misunderstood and perhaps misused he can look forward to a time when “the Lord, the righteous Judge” will put right all that is now so wrong (2 Tim. 4:8). Meanwhile, like his Lord before him, he can commit himself in confident trust to “Him that judgeth righteously” (1 Pet. 2:23).

We close with only a brief reference to

## The Love and the Faithfulness of God

His love had its fullest expression when He “sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10). In not sparing Him, God made it clear that He was ready to “with Him also freely give us all things” — meaning, we take it, “all things that pertain to life and godliness” (Rom. 8:32. 2 Pet. 1:3). How fully the Christian is provided for! Loved as Christ Himself is loved! (John 17:23). “Blessed with all spiritual blessings

…” (Eph. 1:3). And let us remember that the God from Whom all this comes is a faithful God! His Word can never fail (Titus 1:2. Heb. 6:18. Isa. 40:8). His promises can never be voided (Neh. 9:7,8. 2 Cor. 1:20). His covenants can never be broken (Psa. 89:34. Num. 23:19). What wonderful grounds of encouragement, comfort, and assurance! And what a challenge to faith!

Goodness, mercy, loving kindness, and many others of God’s perfections we have not space to deal with. May the Holy Spirit create in each one of us a deepening desire to “walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Col. 1:10).

## Time Is Running Out (Aug 1961)

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

Time Flies! How often, and how I forcibly, we are reminded of the fact! Some of us have actually shuddered as its urgency was, in one way or another, impressed upon us. Because “the time is short” Scripture exhorts us to hold lightly the things that might entangle us and divert our thoughts from the things that matter most (1 Cor. 7:29). It tells us that “the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:18). Yet how ready we are, in our thinking, to magnify the “temporal”, the passing, the vanishing; while eternal things are, if not quite shelved, given but little thought. And meanwhile Time is Running Out!

Some years ago there appeared a “Bulletin of Atomic Scientists.” It had as its cover design a clock, the hands of which pointed to two minutes to midnight. Two Minutes to Midnight! — that is what the world scene suggested to those scientists. And what a midnight of unspeakable horror this world could at any moment be plunged into by the weapons those same scientists helped to produce, and whose deadliness is constantly being increased by the “refinements” being added to them! For this poor deluded world, all too evidently, Time is Running Out!

Obstacles to the preaching of the Gospel and to individual Christian testimony daily increase in number. Behind the so-called Iron Curtain witness for the Lord is possible only under great difficulties, and rank atheism is the official creed. In China the government aims to

extirpate every remaining vestige of Christianity. In India missionary activity is more and more restricted. In parts of Africa upheavals have led to a forced withdrawal of missionaries, and no one knows how soon similar things may take place in other parts of that great continent. Much to the same effect might be said of other areas of the globe. Truly, in mission fields, Time is Running Out!

And what shall we say of the home lands? Everywhere iniquity abounds. Society, in its every department, is saturated with immorality and injustice. The literature of the day has, to an appalling extent, become a cess-pool of filth, contaminating the minds of the masses. Other means of communications are adding their quota of perversion. As the result of these and other influences, juvenile delinquency has become an increasingly difficult problem; criminal elements are becoming more and more brazen in their contempt for life and property and, on every hand, laws are being callously flouted. Under such conditions men's hearts become increasingly hard and inaccessible; it becomes more and more difficult to reach consciences with the convicting Word of God, and the Gospel preacher is often at a loss to know how to effectively contact men and women with the message of life. True, we must not despair. God still can work, and does work, as many can testify. But certainly there is room for concern! There is great need of an awakening among the people of God. There is need to lay hold of God in earnest, believing prayer, that He may break down the strongholds of sin, that His Word may penetrate hardened hearts, and that a harvest of souls may quickly be gathered.

Too long have some of us been blind to the need around us! Too often have we been deaf to the world's cry of despair! At this very moment, it is to be feared, many of us are fast asleep while multitudes around us perish in their sins. "It is high time to awake out of sleep!" Time is Running Out!

There is a divine claim upon the life of every child of God. Christ "died … that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but Unto Him which died for them and rose again" (2 Cor. 5:15). That claim applies to all the "henceforth" of our lives — to all the days, hours, moments; to every detail of those lives. Shall we not seek grace to respond to it, and that in a glad surrender?

We desperately need a truer sense of values. Do we estimate the worth of things in the light of eternity? Summerfield, on his death-bed, was heard to say, "I have taken a look into eternity; if I could only come back, how differently I would preach!" And how differently some of us would live if eternity's values were kept in full view! At the end of the road it will be no satisfaction to be able to say, "I dressed well, I ate well, I earned a lot of money, I lived graciously, I was well thought of, I had many friends!" Those are not the things that Really matter —they belong to the passing moment. Someone has said — and it is a wise observation — "The only things worth spending life for are the things of more value than life itself." Think it over!

Time lost is lost forever! Lost wealth may be regained, wrecked health may sometimes be recovered, forgotten knowledge may be restored through study, alienated friendships may be renewed, even a forfeited reputation

may be re-established. But vanished hours can never be recaptured — Never! Let us then not fail to realize the possibilities of this moment! “The time is short!” The challenges come down to us through the centuries, “Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the Lord?” Who … Who is willing? Are you? Am I? If we are going to do it, we must do it “This Day!” For Time is Running Out!

# The Bible (Sept 1961)

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

W.F. Schwartz

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of the Word of God in the life of the believer, whether old or young.

## It is Important Because

It is the Food of the Soul. There can be no normal growth of progress apart from it (I Pet. 2:2), and the neglect of it can only result in a stunted, backward condition (Heb. 5:11-12). It must be allowed to enter into the very warp and woof of the Christian's life, as food enters into the structure of the body.

It is the Channel by which God communicates strength, comfort, and sustenance. Trials and temptations are sure to cross the path, and it will be well if one is able to meet each onslaught with an "It is written." It was thus that the Lord Jesus Christ resisted the tempter. If you will look up the passages of Scripture (in Deuteronomy) which He quoted on that occasion, you will find that they are quite close together. Were they, as someone has suggested, part of the Lord's morning reading that day? It seems not unlikely that they were. At any rate, we know that the Word of God had a very large place in His life.

It is the Believer's Equipment for service: only by means of it can he be "throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:17). If you are looking forward, as you should be and as I trust you are, to a life of useful

service for God, you will find a practical knowledge of the Word of God indispensable.

Let me lovingly and urgently plead with you, therefore, to give it the supreme place in your life. Allow nothing to hinder your frequent reading of it. “Read it copiously, continuously, consecutively, repeatedly, independently, and prayerfully” (Anstey). Let your soul be steeped in it; not in certain favorite parts of it, but in the Whole. Make it your practice to:

“Search” (John 5:39). The truths of the Bible are not spread upon the surface where the careless reader will find them. It is a mine that will reward careful exploration.

“Meditate” (Ps. 104:34). Dwell prayerfully upon its precepts. Make a personal application of what you read. Endeavour to discover the leading ideas, as well as the “drift.” Ponder over striking words and phrases.

“Compare” (1 Cor. 2:13). By taking one passage in connection with others you will see truth in its proper relations.

## Several Things are Indispensable

for progress in true acquaintance with the Word of God.

The New Birth. The Bible is a sealed book to all by nature (Isa. 29:10-13). No amount of natural ability will enable one to understand it (1 Cor. 2:14).

A True Estimate of its Character. Never give place for a moment to any doubt or question regarding the fact that “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Tim. 3:16). In it God — the Living God — speaks to you — to you directly — to You personally. Earnestly ponder this

fact, and let it appear from your life that you really believe it.

A Real Love for the Word of God. “Desire the sincere milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby,” writes the Apostle Peter (1 Pet. 2:2). The word he uses is a very strong one, and is translated elsewhere “to earnestly desire,” “to long after greatly.” God’s word is “more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold” (Psalm 19:10).

Reverence and Submission. Shun all habits of joking and jesting upon it. Read to obey. The real value of the Book can only be known by a practical acquaintance with it. “Only to think well, and not to do well, amounts to no more than to dream well.” Obedience has been called an “organ of knowledge”: the more readily the Word is submitted to, the greater will be the progress in the knowledge of it. Not scholarship, but surrender, is the primary qualification it demands of its readers.

Prayerfulness. We are dependent entirely upon the Holy Spirit of God to teach and direct us. The realization of this should cause us to adopt a prayerful attitude in approaching the Book. It is well to dwell prayerfully on what we read, endeavouring to find an application to our own ways and needs. And having seen this application, one will be well advised to look to God for grace to reproduce in the life what has been read.

Regularity and Perseverance. Haphazard, aimless work will not produce results in Bible study any more than they do in other lines of effort. Do not be discouraged because, perhaps, you find yourself to be a poor scholar. “Much food is in the tillage of the poor” (Prov. 13:23), and prayerful perseverance will be rewarded. Do not

allow difficulties to slacken your interest. You will meet them in such a Book! — indeed it would be strange if, in a Book which is “God-breathed,” there were no difficulties. Be patient, humble, and teachable, and you will surely, even if slowly, attain to higher degrees of useful knowledge. Concentrate upon the portion before you. “The weakest living creature, by concentrating his powers upon a single object, can accomplish something; the strongest, by dispersing his over many, may fail to accomplish anything.” (Compare 1 Tim. 4:15).

## How to Proceed

There is no known method that meets the need of all, but most can profit by the use of some method. A study which is not systematic is likely to result in a fragmentary knowledge of the Word — as some of us have discovered to our sorrow. The method adopted, however, need not be cumbersome — indeed the simpler it is, the better. Several methods may be mentioned: The Topical Method — or study by topics, The Synthetic Method — or study by books, The Typical Method — or the study of the types, The “Microscopic” Method — or the study of words, etc., The “Telescopic” Method — or the study of the periods or dispensations of Scripture. All these have their value and place, as have others which we have not mentioned. For a beginner, however, the Topical Method will perhaps prove the best. A great deal of truth will be found to centre about certain words, such as the following:

God, Christ, The Holy Spirit, Man, Sin, Salvation, Forgiveness, Regeneration, Redemption, Eternal Life, Justification, Sanctification, Faith, Worship, Prayer, Separation, etc.

These will, therefore, prove a profitable study, but one must guard against making a hobby of a few subjects. Many helps are available, and these should not be despised. Some supplementary reading is helpful. It is important, however, that it should be recognized as supplementary — ever and always. It tends to encroach upon the reading and study, first of all and above all, of the Bible, and it is nothing short of a calamity when a believer's appetite is so perverted that he must have his commentary or exposition, while he finds less and less time for the direct study of the Word of God itself.

In the study of any topic or portion of Scripture, therefore, it cannot be too strongly urged that you aim to get your first and principal impressions directly from God's Book. Do your own searching, with the help of a good concordance. Having done that, you are in a position to appreciate and profit by what some gifted expositor has to say about it — in fact it will more than double the value of the exposition to you to have first made an original study of your own. Expositions, however, while useful at times, are never indispensable. The Word of God is indipensable.

Do a liberal amount of memory work. Nothing can take the place of this. At least the outstanding verses of Scripture should be committed to memory as far as possible. Thus will the Word of Christ dwell in you richly (Col. 3:16). It is a good practice to copy in writing portions of one's Bible. This is a very useful aid to memory.

As to equipment for study little need be said. Have a good Bible, with type of such size that you can read it comfortably. "Helps" in a Bible frequently tend only to

make a book cumbersome in size, but a concordance takes very little room and is useful to have in the same binding as one's Bible. Such a concordance, however, should not be relied upon for serious study. For this it is too much abridged.

Cruden's Clear Type Concordance is a useful work, and for ordinary purposes sufficient. If, however, you can afford something more expensive, you will find Strong's Exhaustive Concordance a very satisfactory one-volume work. Many consider it the best — personally I like it well. Young's Concordance is also very useful.

Another useful book is the New Topical Text Book. It will be found helpful for Topical study, but one should guard against the slavish use of it, as of any other human production. All books, other than the Bible, should be kept, as one has expressed it "Only in their place and for their purpose. Put first, they become crutches that prevent vigorous exercise, and lead to spiritual senility." If you have any, let them be the best. Give no time to authors who are not definitely loyal to the Word of God, and test every man's words by what you find in your Bible.

## His Association (Aug 1962)

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

Every normal being craves the company of others of his own kind. The desire is as natural as breathing. Instinctively we feel that we must have companionship with others whose interests and aims are similar to our own, and in whose activities we can share. We seek contact of mind with mind and of heart with heart.

Another tendency which is strong in us all is that of imitation. Willingly or unwillingly we become like those with whom we associate. For better or for worse they influence our thought patterns and give shape to our characters. Says A. T. Pierson: “The very idea of companionship implies interchange of thought and feeling; and the closer the bond of intimacy, the more perfect is the interchange; so that what dominates and controls our chosen intimates will more or less come to influence ourselves …”

It is next to impossible to have any kind of suggestion continually before us and not be swayed by it in one direction or another. And just as the contagion of disease is carried from one person to another, so moral impurity, whether in thought or act, will contaminate any who are in habitual contact with it.

It is well to pause occasionally and ask oneself “In what direction, morally and spiritually, am I going?” The answer will often be determined by the character of one’s companion’s. The habitual company of Christians (that is of practising Christians) cannot be otherwise than helpful and elevating. Companions of another kind

are bound to be hurtful in their tendency. “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed” (Prov. 13:20). It follows that carelessness in the forming of friendships can be disastrous. Yet, how many are entered into with little thought — in fact are simply drifted into. Anyone who is not upright, clean and godly is not a safe companion. He may be clever and attractive, but cannot be a really helpful friend.

Let none of us think that we are immune to the influence of evil surroundings. Experience has proved that few have the moral stamina to resist suggestions of evil to which they have been exposed for any length of time. Of the man referred to in Psalm one, it is said that he “walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.” He refuses to expose himself in any way to the influence of evil around him. On the other hand, the Psalmist is able to say “I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts” (Psalm 119:63). Wise is the young Christian who cultivates the companionship of truly worthy and devout people. They will enrich his life and help greatly in giving suitable direction to it.

We do well, as Christians, to remind ourselves frequently of the relationship in which we stand to the Lord Jesus Christ. We have been brought into union with Him in His risen life. This being the case, it is to be expected that we will “seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.” We are to “set our affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:1-3).Surely, if we are at all loyal to Him, we shall not wish to be found in

associations or taking part in activities such as the children of this world would lead us into! That would be to slight Him! And if we are realizing and enjoying the rich portion we have in Him, we shall not be hankering after the empty trifles that the world has to offer.

Let us remember that the Holy Spirit is with us and in us. We take Him wherever we go (1 Cor. 6:19). The presence of a human friend would tend to make us careful as to where we go and with whom we are found. How much more should HIS presence cause us to avoid anything that would be a grief to Him (Eph. 4:30)!

The world unceasingly makes its bid for our friendship. How ready we can sometimes be to adopt its view-points and learn its ways! Are we ignorant of its real character? Its hands are stained with the blood of the Son of God. It still rejects Him. It is a system in which man is attempting to make the greatest possible progress in complete disregard of God. Covetousness, self-pleasing and pretense are among its guiding principles. Its whole atmosphere is polluted. Its influence is contaminating. It is controlled by the devil (John 14:30; Eph. 2:2, etc.). It is heading for eternal perdition. Our only safety is to avoid its ways, refuse its blandishments, and “keep ourselves unspotted” from it (James 1:27). Remember, though IN the world we are not OF it (John 17:11, 14, 16). And the “friendship of the world is enmity with God” (James 4:4).

Some will be quick to remind us that since we are in the world, we must do business with it, and that of course it true. What should be our attitude toward those around us? In all our dealings with them let there be true humility and no suggestion of a “holier- than-thou”

attitude. We can claim no superiority in or of ourselves. Conceit and haughtiness have no place in true Christian conduct. Therefore, while ever walking in separation, let our conduct be characterized by honesty, courtesy and a healthy winsomeness. Misunderstood we will be. Worldlings will frown upon us for avoiding their ways. But what matters their frown, if our path is pleasing to God?

Something needs to be said about the “unequal yoke,” the dangers of which many do not realize. By it is meant anything by which saved and unsaved are united in the pursuit of a common object. The “yoke” may be social, commercial, matrimonial or religious. The principle remains the same, whatever the object. The command is clear: “Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers...” (2 Cor. 6:14). The one who ignores it is treading a dangerous path, and invites disaster. He places himself in a position where the guidance of the Lord cannot be expected, and cannot rightly expect to be prospered spiritually, for God will not accommodate Himself to his disobedience.

In the sphere of matrimony the unequal yoke is nothing short of a tragedy. It is a union which can be expected to bring nothing but unhappiness for both partners. And yet, because it sometimes appears very attractive to nature, it is only too easy to become involved.

## Arriving at Conclusions (Oct 1963)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 9 No. 10, Oct 1963.

My mind is made up. Please do not confuse me with facts! The words were displayed above an office desk. The first time they were seen they left little impression. They were merely someone's attempt at pleasantry, and were quickly dismissed. But seen again in several places they seemed to clamour for attention, until we found ourselves asking "Do they actually represent the attitude of some people?" We concluded that they DO! And recent observations confirm the fear that some Christians, too often, display exactly that attitude, even where matters of considerable importance are involved.

Disparaging rumors reach them regarding someone in whom they had had confidence. Without investigation they are believed. A few FACTS, easily obtained, might show the rumors to be entirely false, or at least "colored." But their minds are made up! and, convinced themselves, they set about to convince others. Unfair whisperings and cynical detractions are given added publicity. And so the defilement spreads. As Christians, do we not need to be constantly on our guard against a too ready acceptance of what we hear? And should we not be scrupulously careful as to what and how much we repeat?

Again, questions every now and then arise as to the rightness or wrongness of certain courses of action. A simple appeal to Scripture is suggested, that the FACTS as to its teaching may be ascertained. But we are told that "We don't need any Scripture!" (Yes, to our personal knowledge that has more than once been said,

and that by men who supposedly are “standing for the truth!”) Their minds are made up — in a sadly regrettable way — prior to and apart from any real study or investigation.

Too often decisions are made to depend on anything but facts, or on facts insufficiently considered. Meagre information, shallow reasoning, ill-conceived interpretations, and even suspicions or prejudices, are allowed to determine the course of action. The results are deplorable. God is dishonoured, His people are grieved and the world looks on in perplexity, if not in actual scorn.

There is a real need for each of us to ask himself, “How do I arrive at my conclusions?” Are they squarely based on facts, clearly established and properly understood? If Christian principles or practices are involved, is due consideration given to the teaching of the Word of God? And have we considered that teaching in its context and determined what is its clear intention? Suppositions and half-truths are no material for sound decisions. A mind “made up” on such a flimsy basis is a mind in a fog. If it succeeds in imposing its views on other minds it produces nothing but perplexity, confusion and strife. Have we not had enough of these?

## The Great Contradiction (Nov 1963)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 9 No. 11, Nov 1963.

Today's Christian finds himself confronted by a variety of forces that threaten to defeat his testimony for God. Cold indifference is widespread. We all encounter it. Subtle denials of the truth abound on every hand. Especially are the Deity of Christ and His blood atonement subjects for attack. Materialism is rampant, inviting men to find their welfare and satisfactions in mere things, and casting doubt upon the value of everything spiritual. Atheistic communism everywhere raises its ugly head, threatening nation after nation, and doing its best to undermine all Christian institutions. Through these and other agencies the world, the flesh and the devil aim to bring about the downfall of the Christian. Together they present a tremendous challenge.

But none of the things we have referred to, nor all of them together, are as serious a threat to the Christian's influence among men as something we have yet to name. We refer to the inconsistencies too often seen in the Christian's own life. Too often there is a marked disparity between doctrine and life, between profession and practice.

This "Great Contradiction," as someone has named it — this glaring inconsistency — has tragic results. Hungry souls are disappointed. They say (as some did in James' day) "Show me!" but look in vain for a practical demonstration of our faith, and soon lose interest. Onlookers too often are given the impression that Christianity is a visionary thing, unrelated to the

realities of life. The Gospel, they conclude, is not worthy of serious consideration, for it does not seem to work in the lives of its advocates. And, too, truths that we would like to see meeting with interest among Christians generally, meet with neglect. The reason? Like Scribes and Pharisees of old we too often “say and do not” (Matt. 23:3). We present doctrine without example.

This contradiction is sometimes seen even in the attitude displayed toward the Lord Himself. His are sovereign rights in the lives of His people. He is LORD, and the purpose of every child of God should be that implied in Paul’s question at the beginning of His Christian career: “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” But do not many of us tend to be like the son who, when told to go work in the vineyard, replied “I go, Sir, and went not?” Do we profess allegiance to Christ, while in practice we fail to give effect to certain facets of His will? Would He have to say to us today what He said to some long ago: “Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46).

The same contradiction is too often to be observed in the dealings of Christians with one another. The Lord expects that His people will “love one another” (John 15:12). They are, in fact, “taught of God” to do so (1 Thess. 4:9) — love is an instinct implanted in every born-again soul, And we are to “not love in word,… but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:18). Our love is to be real (“in truth”) and not a mere pretense (“without dissimulation” —Rom. 12:9). It is to be love “unfeigned,” issuing from a “pure heart” (1 Pet. 1:22). And it is to be active love (“in deed”). It may express itself in encouraging words, but will not be confined to words when the occasion calls for action. To say, however

piously, “be warmed and filled” does not meet the need of the destitute (James 2:16). In our relations with fellow-Christians, if we are not “kindly affectioned… in honour preferring one another” (Rom. 12:10), our professions of love will deserve to be looked upon as mere sanctimonious cant. In the light of both Scripture and experience it must be admitted that, in the area we refer to, much remains to be desired. May the Lord stir our hearts, and by His grace enable us to put an end to this phase of “the great contradiction!”

Much more could be said but we limit ourselves to a few remarks as to the tenor of much that passes for Christian living today. For our “text” we quote, in part, from Rev. 3:17: “…Thou SAYEST, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou ART wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked… Note the inconsistency suggested by the words “thou sayest... thou art … “ Here are extravagant claims, accompanied by a glaring lack of genuine Christian virtue. The contradiction is full-blown and plain for all to see. Does the description seem overdrawn and harsh? The condition described certainly exists today — in fact it is widespread, and no unbiased person whose eyes are at all open to what goes on, can fail to see it.

The Lord Jesus, in His teaching and in His life among men, made it very clear that there is a close connection between saying and doing —with a definite emphasis on the doing (see, e.g., Acts 1:1). Let us see to it that we are not found making high claims while exhibiting low practice. Such a contradiction, the Lord tells us, is to Him simply nauseating. And to people around us who witness it, it is a stench and a stumbling-block.

## The Lord Is Risen Indeed (Mar 1967)

From Food for the Flock, Vol. 13 No. 3, Mar 1967.

A group of dejected men were huddled together behind closed doors. A dismal gloom had settled upon them. Theirs was an agonizing sorrow, a deep mourning. Tears flowed freely.

Recent events had left these men completely stunned. They were greatly perplexed. What did it all mean? The One who, they had thought, “should have redeemed Israel,” had not many hours ago been seized by His enemies, subjected to inhuman indignities, and put to a shameful death. They had expected Him to establish a kingdom, but now His body lay in a borrowed tomb, sealed and guarded. His enemies were elated. He would, they were saying, give them no more trouble —they at last had Him out of their way. And to these sorrowing men, who had been His followers, it all looked like a resounding defeat, a death-blow to their fondest hopes.

But suddenly they were startled, electrified. Some women of their acquaintance broke in on them, highly excited, breathless. “We’ve been at the sepulchre,” said one, “the stone has been rolled from it! It’s empty! Angels are there. They say the Lord has risen … RISEN!”

No news should have been more cheering. But, strange as it seems, they did not believe it. The report was fantastic. They could not imagine the possibility of a resurrection. So the good news, even when confirmed by other witnesses, was dismissed as incredible.

But these men were soon to be convinced, and that most effectively. The One whom they had been mourning suddenly appeared (Locked doors did not bar Him). He terrified them, for they took Him for a ghost. But they were quickly assured. “Why are ye troubled?” He said, “Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I myself: handle Me and see… !” Then He called for food, and ate before them. Eight days later they were together again. Present this time was a disciple who had missed the first meeting. He was most adamant in his refusal to believe what the others told him. But he was soon persuaded, and gave vent to his joyful conviction in the exclamation “My Lord and my God!”

For forty days the risen Lord “showed Himself alive” to His Apostles “by many infallible proofs” (Acts 1:3). About a dozen appearances are on record. The body in which He appeared was in the truest sense a REAL body — the same body in which He had previously walked in Galilee and Judea. It was substantial (“flesh and bones,” Luke 24:3940). It could be seen (John 20:20). It was tangible — could be handled (Matt. 28:9; Luke 24:39; John 20:17). True, it had characteristics not previously exhibited — locked doors, for instance, were no barrier to it — but it was positively recognizable, among other things by the wounds in hands, feet and side received at Calvary.

It is surprising that the apostles had been so slow to accept the evidence of the resurrection. They had long been in intimate contact with the Lord. They had listened in wonder at His teaching, and had witnessed His many works of power. The Scriptures had intimated that He would rise from the dead (Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:27, 31, 13:35). He Himself had predicted it (John

2:19-21; 10:18; Matt. 12:40; 16:21; 20:19). He had, before His death, even made an appointment to meet them in Galilee after His resurrection (Matt. 26:32; 28:16; Mark 14:28; 16:7). Yet when assured that He HAD risen they did not believe it. Is it any wonder that He "upbraided them?" (Mark 16:14).

If these men were biased, as some say they were, it is surely clear that their bias, far from being in favor of the idea of a resurrection, was definitely AGAINST it. They had found the idea very hard to accept and, when finally convinced, it was only because the evidence was overwhelming, and such as must satisfy the most skeptical minds. In any court it is men such as these whose testimony is considered the most weighty.

These are the men who were to be the first witnesses to the world of the resurrection of Christ. They were competent witnesses, well able to identify the Lord, and had had opportunity to do so in the most conclusive manner. They were, too, men of good character — this no one has questioned.

## "The Lord Is Risen Indeed!"

They were completely sincere, willing to suffer and even to die for their testimony. And they were by no means alone, for the resurrected Lord, on one occasion, "was seen of above five hundred brethren at once" (1 Cor. 15:6).

Soon the resurrection was being publicly proclaimed, at first not many yards from where the crucifixion and burial had taken place. Had enemies merely produced the body, the resurrection story would have been forever discredited, and Christianity would never again have

been heard of. But they did not produce it, for the very simple reason that they were not able to do so. Rage and persecution were their only “argument,” — the kind of argument that men resort to when they realize that no other “defence” is left to them!

The public would want to know how the tomb came to be empty. Foreseeing this, the rulers had invented an explanation. They bribed the soldiers who had guarded the sepulchre, and had them say that the Lord’s disciples had come by night, and stolen the body while they slept. Totally unbelievable and self-contradictory! Roman soldiers did not sleep on duty, — for such neglect they would have expected to pay with their lives. Had they really been asleep, the breaking of the seal and the moving of the stone (it was “very great,” Mark 16:4), would certainly have awakened them. And if asleep how would they have known who, if anyone, had taken the body? Many later theories have been brought forward in the attempt to disprove the resurrection. Space does not permit of examining them here. Others have ably disposed of them.

Christ arose! — just as He had plainly said He would! “It was not possible that He should be holden” of death (Acts 2:24). We sing joyfully and without reservation of any kind:

He arose a Victor from the dark domain,

And He lives forever with His saints to reign!

He arose! He arose!

HALLELUJAH! CHRIST AROSE!”

As has often been pointed out, it is only as we admit, without question, the resurrection of Christ, that we are able to account for certain facts. Among these are:

1. The transformation of the apostles from unbelieving cowards, into bold and powerful witnesses. Such an effect presupposes a cause sufficient to account for it. The apostles themselves attributed it to the LIVING Christ.

2. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus. He had been an avowed, raging enemy (Acts 26:10, etc.), but suddenly became the foremost herald of the faith he had done his best to destroy. He attributed his conversion to a meeting with Christ ALIVE and glorified.

3. The triumphs of the Gospel, not only in the distant past but in our own day. To millions there has come the knowledge of salvation, a marvellous transformation in their lives, and a hope of eternal blessedness. They would unite in giving all the credit to a risen and exalted Saviour.

Of all “Christian Evidences” the resurrection is the most convincing. By it every claim of Christ is fully confirmed, and the truth of Christianity firmly established. Opponents have recognized that if it is proved no question can remain as to the possibility of any other miracle. Said one “Prove the resurrection and everything is proved.”

The resurrection attests in a most conclusive way the Deity of Christ (Rom. 1:4; Matt. 12: 38-40; John 2:18-22).

It marks His complete victory over death and the grave and over all enemies human and infernal (Romans 6:9; Acts 3:12, 15).

It demonstrates in a convincing way the great power of God (Eph. 1:19-20).

It evidences the complete sufficiency of the sacrifice of Christ for our sins, and testifies to God's complete satisfaction with that sacrifice as settling once for all every question that sin had raised.

It is the assurance to the believer of his full justification (Romans 4:25).

It guarantees the eventual resurrection of all who are Christ's. The order is "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. 15:23; cf. 2 Cor. 4:14; Romans 8:11; 1 Thess. 4:14).

It is basic to all the Christian's hopes — everything is involved with it. Apart from it the death of Christ would have no value; for if death had finally prevailed against Him His dying would mean absolutely nothing in salvation for men. Apart from the resurrection apostolic testimony concerning Him can only be considered a deception; the faith of believers is idle and not worth a straw; all of us are yet in our sins; and the case of believers who have died is eternally hopeless, — they have perished. Says Wm. Hoste "Had Christ not risen there would be no dispute today about Christianity; the thing itself would have perished in oblivion." (See 1 Corinthians 15 for some of these conclusions.)

Enough has been said, we trust, to show that the resurrection of Christ is a vital element of the Christian faith (Romans 4:23, 24; 10:9). It lies at the very heart of the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:4) (2 Tim. 2:8). For this reason it had a very prominent place, together with the Cross, in apostolic preaching and writing. The whole framework of Christian doctrine is involved with it. Much is said in

the New Testament regarding the activities and functions of the Lord Jesus after His crucifixion. We list some of them. Not one of them would be possible apart from the resurrection. Consider the list:

· His ascension and exaltation (Luke 24:44-53; Acts 1:3-9; Eph. 1:20-21; Rev. 3:21).

· His sovereignty and saviourhood (Acts 5:31; Romans 5:8-10).

· His giving of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33; John 7:39; 15:26; 16:7).

· His priesthood and advocacy (1 Tim. 2: 5, 6; Heb. 7:17, 24).

· His headship of the Church (Eph. 1:22-23).

· His Second Coming and the "rapture" of His people (Heb. 9:28; 1 Thess. 4:16, etc.).

· His kingship and universal sovereignty (Luke 1:33; Isa. 9:7).

· His sitting in judgment (Acts 10:42; 17:31; John 5:22, 23).

Of all that has ever happened in this world nothing is more significant than the Resurrection. And no event of history is more completely authenticated. The fact is inescapable. "THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED!" Let believers rejoice. Let unbelievers be warned, for God "hath appointed a day, in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained, whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts 17:31).