

The WATCHTOWER

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**

JULY 1, 1963

Semimonthly

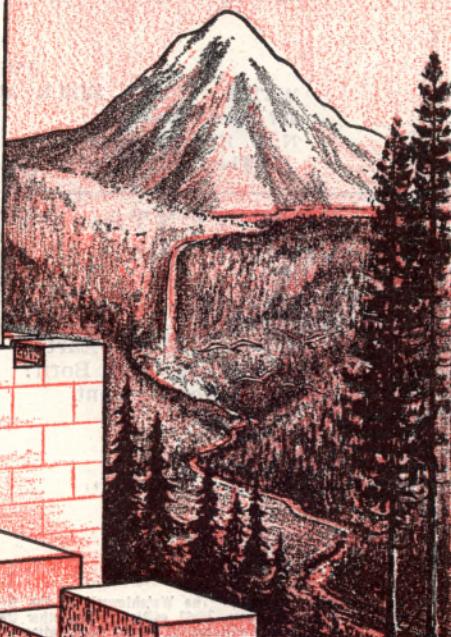
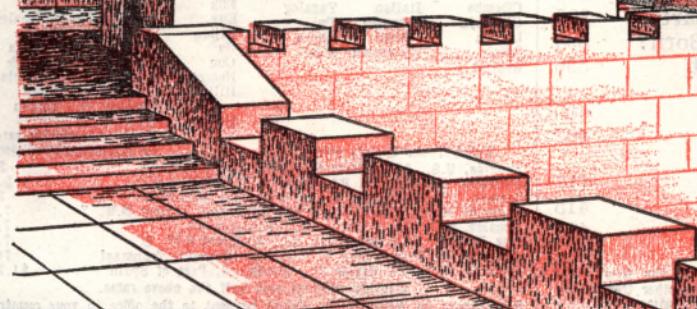
MATURITY,
A CHRISTIAN REQUIREMENT

SEEKING Maturity IN THE
NEW WORLD SOCIETY

DOES GOD FAVOR A UNION
OF ALL RELIGIONS?

WHAT DISFELLOWSHIPING MEANS

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"YOU ARE MY WITNESSES," SAYS JEHOVAH.—Isa. 43:12

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

Literal towers in Bible times were elevated vantage points from which watchmen could observe happenings, warn of danger, or announce good news. Our magazine figuratively occupies such a vantage point, for it is founded on the very pinnacle of wisdom, God's Word. That elevates it above racial, national and political propagandas and prejudices, frees it from selfish bias. It is not bound by any traditional creed, but its message advances as the light on God's purposes and works increases.—Habakkuk 2:1-3.

It sees things Scripturally. When it observes this generation afflicted with greed, delinquency, hypocrisy, atheism, war, famine, pestilence, perplexity and fear, and persecution of unpopular minorities, it does not parrot the old fable about history repeating itself. Informed by Bible prophecy, it sees in these things the sign of the world's time of the end. But with bright hope it also sees opening up for us just beyond these woes the portals of a new world.

Thus viewed, "The Watchtower" stands as a watchman atop a tower, alert to what is going on, awake to note signs of danger, faithful to point out the way of escape. It announces Jehovah's kingdom established by Christ's enthronement in heaven, feeds his kingdom joint-heirs with spiritual food, cheers men of good will with glorious prospects of eternal life in a paradise earth, comforts us with the resurrection promise for the dead.

It is not dogmatic, but has a confident ring in its voice, because it is based on God's Word. It does not privately interpret prophecy, but calls attention to physical facts, sets them alongside prophecy, and you see for yourself how well the two match, how accurately Jehovah interprets his own prophecy. In the interests of our salvation, it keeps sharp and faithful focus on Bible truth, and views religious news generally.

"Be watchful in these perilous times," God admonishes. So keep on the watch by regularly reading "The Watchtower".

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"They will all be taught by Jehovah."—John 6:45; Isaiah 54:13

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Announcing
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Putting Yourself IN THE OTHER FELLOW'S Place

DUE to gross carelessness a great fire broke out on a gigantic United States airplane carrier under construction. That fire cost the government upward of \$50 million and took scores of lives. The wife of one of the victims heard with anxiety the news about the fire over the radio. When her husband failed to come home at the usual time, she feared the worst. Then the doorbell rang, and how she hurried to answer it! As she opened it, there stood two policemen. Words failed them, but words were not necessary. The kind expression of sympathy upon their faces spoke plainly enough. Yes, her husband was among those that had lost their lives in that fire.

Those policemen knew full well how that woman felt, for they could well imagine how their own wives would have felt in her place. On such occasions a kind facial expression, a gesture or a few words spoken with warm understanding, may be all that is needed to show that we understand, that we can put ourselves in the other fellow's place.

The Bible takes note of this need, for it tells us: "Rejoice with people who rejoice; weep with people who weep." It shows that

"a singer with songs upon a gloomy heart" is simply out of place and that there is "a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to wail and a time to skip about." If we are able to put ourselves in the other fellow's place we will know when it is the time to weep and wail and when to laugh and skip about.—Rom. 12:15; Prov. 25:20; Eccl. 3:4.

This matter of putting ourselves in the other fellow's place applies to all our relations with others. In particular is there need of it in the family circle. How much better parents and children would get along with each other if each were able to put himself in the other's place! Not that parents are to abdicate their authority, but understanding is vital. And how much friction there is between husbands and wives for lack of such understanding! This principle applies even to such minor items as wanting to watch television or listen to the radio when another needs quiet for rest or study. It also applies to being on time for meals and being ready to go out at an agreed time.

Did you ever borrow money and then neglect to return it when you said you would? Did you view your thoughtlessness as something trivial? But what about the other fellow? He may begin wondering if you have forgotten all about it. If you

promised to pay back a sum on a certain date and are unable to do so, could you not at least make an explanation as to why you are unable to keep your promise, instead of ignoring the matter as though you had no obligation? Your creditor doubtless will be only too glad to give you more time, just so long as you do not get the idea that the loan was a gift! It is hardly fair to wheedle out a gift under the pretext of a loan, is it?

How much strife, confusion and needless suffering there are in industry because men do not put themselves in the other fellow's place! Because either labor or management or both fail to do so, strikes at times stretch out for weeks and months. Why, there would be no racial or religious discrimination whatever if people were able to put themselves in the places of others who are different in these respects.

Whether you have a request to make or a rebuke to administer, you will be far more effective if you are able to put yourself in the other fellow's place. How well Jesus was able to do this! That is why, after Peter had denied him three times, he did not scold Peter. All that was needed was a look: "And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter, and Peter recalled the utterance of the Lord," about his betraying him. Then Peter "went outside and wept bitterly." Yes, at times a reproving look, at times a pleading tone—how often Jehovah God pleaded with his people!—at times just gentle reasoning with an erring one will do more good than landing upon him with all your weight.—Luke 22:60-62; Gal. 6:1.

The apostle Paul imitated his Master in this respect also. He knew that if he were indifferent to the way others thought and felt he would needlessly offend them, for it is very easy to imply that others, whom

you believe to be mistaken, are either lacking in sincerity or in intelligence. He made himself, as it were, "the slave to all," that he might gain the most persons. "And so," he said, "to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; . . . To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak. I have become all things to people of all sorts, that I might by all means save some." No question about it, the apostle Paul knew how to put himself in the other fellow's place.—1 Cor. 9:19-22.

Being able to put yourself in the other fellow's place not only keeps you from offending others needlessly but also protects you from gross selfishness or sins. One of the chief causes of immorality and crime is covetousness, that is, greedily desiring that which belongs to another. But if you can put yourself in the other fellow's place you simply will not covet his auto, job, wife or some other possession. You would not want to lose such things yourself, if you had them, would you?—Deut. 5:21.

Of course, putting yourself in the other fellow's place does not mean you will let yourself be unduly swayed by sentiment when dealing with others who are not deserving. Neither does it mean that you would not give stern reproof at times when it is your duty and it is for the best that you do so. You should be concerned with what is best for the other fellow even as you would want what is the best for yourself, would you not?

In brief, putting yourself in the other fellow's place can do, oh, so much in making relations friendly with others as well as helping you to do what is right. It is just what Jesus meant when he said: "All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them; this, in fact, is what the Law and the Prophets mean."—Matt. 7:12.

Does God Favor A Union of All Religions?

THE Roman Catholic Ecumenical Council has caused quite a stir among Christendom's clergymen. The Council "may have an effect as profound as anything since the days of Martin Luther," said a spokesman for the Presbyterian Church.¹ "If we should pray for anyone in the world today," says Protestant theologian Paul Tillich, "we should pray for Pope John."² And just before the first session of the Council ended, a noted Catholic theologian, Dr. Hans Küng, said that far more important than promulgating formal decrees has been the development of a new "theology of union."³

With the Roman Catholics speaking of a "theology of union" and the Protestants excited about the Council and the pope's talk of unity, the question arises: Does God favor a union of all religions?

Much would depend upon what the objective is. Is it a movement to get back to the pure teachings and practices of the early Christians? Or is it a movement to have unity of headquarters and an easy tolerance of conflicting religious teachings? The apostle Paul wrote to the early Christians in Corinth: "I exhort you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you should all speak in agreement, and that there should not be divisions among you, but that you may be fitly united in the same mind and in the same line of thought." (1 Cor. 1:10) Is this the objective of Christendom's unity movement?

To see whether the rooting out of falsehoods and traditions and the going back to the unspotted worship of the early Christians are the objectives of the so-called ecumenical or unity movement, let us take a brief look at the movement's history.

THE MOVE TOWARD RELIGIOUS UNITY

One of the major early efforts to promote religious union was the World Parliament of Religions, held in the American city of Chicago, Illinois, in 1893. The theme on the last day of that clerical convention was "The Religious Union of the Whole Human Family." Cleric T. Chalmers of the Disciples Church said:

"The first Parliament of Religions seems to be the harbinger of a still larger fraternity that will combine into one world-religion what is best, not in one alone, but in all of the great historic faiths. It may be that, under the guidance of this larger hope, we shall need to revise our phraseology and speak more of Religious unity, than of Christian unity."⁴

Note that the emphasis was on all religions getting together rather than on Christians going back to the unified teaching of the early Christians. The idea was for Christians not only to put up with conflicting doctrines but also to put up with pagan religions, for a newspaper report said of that gathering in Chicago: "The creeds of Christendom, Buddhist and Baptist, Mohammedan and Methodist, Catholic and Confucian, Brahmin and Unitarian, Shinto and Episcopalian, Presbyterian and

Pantheist, Monotheist and Polytheist, representing all shades of thought and conditions of men, have at last met together.”^a

How would those religious leaders go about uniting such a colossal hodgepodge of religions? The formula for such a union was discussed back there in 1893 by cleric J. H. Barrows, who said:

“Those churches which are most nearly on common ground of faith and doctrine must unite—the various branches of Methodism and Presbyterianism, for instance. Then when the sects are united among themselves Protestantism in general will draw together. In the progress of education Catholics and Protestants will discover that the differences between them are not really cardinal, and will broach reunion. This accomplished, the union with other different religions [pagan] is only a question of time.”^b

How has this “theology of union” fared since 1893? The progress, clergymen admit, has been slow. In 1908, the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America came into being. Then followed a number of conferences, such as the 1927 Lausanne Conference on Faith and Order, which spurred churches to try to understand one another despite their conflicting teachings. Then at Amsterdam, in 1948, the World Council of Churches came into formal existence.

The World Council of Churches has since spearheaded the ecumenical movement among Protestants and non-Roman churches. Since its formation, this council has met twice in general assembly. It met in 1954 at Evanston, Illinois, the Protestant clergymen being somewhat elated because the Roman Catholic Church sent unofficial observers. Then in 1961 the World Council of Churches met in New Delhi, India; this time there were official tag-wearing Catholic observers, the Catholics even marching in the opening ecclesiasti-

cal procession, rubbing shoulders with Orthodox, Baptist and Pentecostal participants.

With the urge to merge being made more and more prominent, a number of mergers have followed, as in India, where the Episcopal, Congregational and Presbyterian churches were molded into a single Church of South India, which draws on the theologies of each. Also in the United States, for instance, the Reformed, Christian, Congregational and Evangelical Churches merged to form the United Church of Christ.

Besides some actual mergers there have been many expressions of the growing urge to merge; for example, between Britain’s Anglican and Methodist churches. In America Presbyterian leader Eugene Carson Blake dramatically proposed a merger of his denomination with the Episcopal, Methodist and United Church of Christ groups.

What has especially stimulated the merger movement, of course, has been Pope John XXIII’s call for an ecumenical conference—not a conference with Protestants but an assembly for Catholic leaders, with Protestants attending only as observers. This Catholic conference has come to be known as Vatican II, since it is only the second Catholic Council to have met in the Vatican itself. (Previous Councils met at other locations; the first one to meet at the Vatican was in 1869.) One purpose of the Council, declared Pope John XXIII, is to help “clear away some of the roadblocks” to reunion of religions.

VIEWS OF THE CATHOLIC COUNCIL
In the minds of some clergymen the Catholic Council had an auspicious background in the fact that Pope John XXIII had had a private meeting with the archbishop of Canterbury, the first archbishop of Canterbury to call on a pope since the

Church of England separated from Rome in 1534.

Enthusiastic and glowing accounts of the Catholic Council have appeared even in nonreligious magazines. Typical of many are the words of *The Saturday Evening Post*, which said: "The Ecumenical council of Pope John XXIII . . . is still one of the most significant events in religious history. It is a move toward unity, in the slow tradition of the Church, as evidenced by invitations to the Eastern Orthodox Churches, and to observers from the Church of England, the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, and the World Presbyterian Alliance, groups which effectively represent 351 non-Catholic churches in more than eighty countries."⁴

Catching the spirit of the theology of union, the religious journal *The Christian Century*, which had called itself "An Undenominational Weekly," changed over to calling itself "An Ecumenical Weekly," saying: "The council may prove to be the most important religious event of our time. . . . The Second Vatican Council extended the ecumenical movement. . . . The success of the World Council [of Churches] has made it possible for the pope to bring a Catholic council into existence much earlier than would have been possible otherwise."⁵

Illustrating the keen Protestant interest in the Catholic Council is the fact that leaders of the Episcopal, United Presbyterian, Lutheran, Greek Orthodox and other churches have urged prayers by their members in the council's behalf. For example, Anglican Bishop E. S. Reed of Canada urged his group: "Will you, a loyal Anglican, pray for the Pope's Ecumenical Conference that God may use it for His glory?"

So, as religious leaders talk about religious unity and urge prayers for the pope's

conference, it is timely for true Christians to go to God's Word, the Holy Bible, to see what the divine will is concerning a union of all religions.

GOD'S VIEW OF A RELIGIOUS UNION

Since the Israelites were God's people in ancient times, it is well to ask: Did God direct the Israelites to merge with other religions? The Bible account shows that instead of fusing them with other religions, God separated them. He freed his people from Egypt and the idolatrous worship there. When the Israelites entered the Promised Land, Almighty God instructed them to stay away from the Canaanite religion of the people; hence the Bible record says:

"Jehovah continued to speak to Moses, saying: 'Speak to the sons of Israel, and you must say to them, "I am Jehovah your God. The way the land of Egypt does, in which you dwelt, you must not do; and the way the land of Canaan does, into which I am bringing you, you must not do; and in their statutes you must not walk. My judicial decisions you should carry out, and my statutes you should keep so as to walk in them. I am Jehovah your God."'" —Lev. 18:1-4.

When the Israelites disobeyed that divine command and started to mix with the pagan religions, God's anger was aroused: "So I, in turn, have said, 'I shall not drive them away from before you, and they must become snares to you, and their gods will serve as a lure to you.''" —Judg. 2:3.

God's will was no different with the early Christians; they were to shun union with any false religions, which all other groups were. Jesus Christ made it clear that true Christians were not to unite with other groups, not even with groups such as the Pharisees who professed to worship the same true God, Jehovah. Declared the Son of God: "Every plant that my heav-

only Father did not plant will be uprooted. Let them be. Blind guides is what they are. If, then, a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit." Jesus explained that the traditions of those religious leaders had made "the word of God invalid," so true Christians must shun such religions; for as Christ's apostle Paul was later to state: "A little leaven ferments the whole lump."—Matt. 15:13, 14, 6; Gal. 5:9.

So true Christians cannot condone traditions of men that invalidate God's Word. Yet the present unity movement in Christendom would require Christians to be tolerant of conflicting doctrines, many of which must be false. Said Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert, recently retired as executive secretary of the New York office of the World Council of Churches: "The question is whether we can find a united church where there is enough room for differences." The assumption, then, is that God would put up with falsehood, even a little falsehood. But on the contrary, Christ's apostle declared: "Do you not know that a little leaven ferments the whole lump?"—1 Cor. 5:6.

GOD IS DIVIDING PEOPLE

Moreover, how can religious leaders expect God to favor a union of all religions when God through his King Jesus Christ is dividing people?

Yes, Jesus Christ foretold a great dividing work for these last days in his illustrative parable of the sheep and goats: "When the Son of man arrives in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit down on his glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will put the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left."—Matt. 25:31-33.

Hence people of all nations are being separated, some into the sheep class, some into the goat class. From Jesus' statement that "broad and spacious is the road leading off into destruction, and many are the ones going in through it," it is clear that the majority of people are being separated into the goat class. (Matt. 7:13) How, then, could those truly of the sheep class even think of union with those who give evident manifestation of being of the goat class? Can man unite what God is dividing?

Not that God does not favor true Christian unity; he does, but not at the expense of purity of doctrine. God favors unity of Christians in one true religion—worship that centers around the pure religion as practiced by early Christians before it became corrupted with conflicting doctrines and corrupting traditions. God favors true Christianity, which is based on his Holy Word and which centers around the kingdom of God. That is God's way to religious unity, and it is the way the New World society of Jehovah's witnesses has chosen. For details see the special *Awake!* of April 22, 1962, entitled "Early Christianity and Modern-Day Religion," available from the Watch Tower Society. Therein are presented the facts of early Christian worship and who measure up to it today.

Since God is dividing people, he could never favor a union of all religions. What God favors is one true religion and the uprooting, not the uniting, of all the rest. This will take place at God's war of Armageddon when 'every plant that the heavenly Father did not plant will be uprooted.'

—Matt. 15:13.

REFERENCES

¹ *Time*, January 4, 1963.

² *New York Times*, December 6, 1962.

³ *Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. IV, pp. 181-183.

⁴ Issue of October 6, 1962.

⁵ Issue of January 2, 1963.

When God Is King over All the Earth

THIS is the title of a public lecture that all persons rightly disposed toward God will keenly want to hear. How can you hear it? By attending the "Everlasting Good News" Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses, which will travel around the world this summer, making it possible for hundreds of thousands of persons to hear the inspiring lecture "When God Is King over All the Earth."

Clearly the title rings with good news—the kind people need today when so many are sighing over world conditions. Indeed, as the Holy Bible says: "When the righteous become many, the people rejoice; but when anyone wicked bears rule, the people sigh." (Prov. 29:2) What cause for rejoicing, then, is reflected by the title "When God Is King over All the Earth"!

You are invited to attend the assembly and hear this public talk, to be delivered by the president of the Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society, N. H. Knorr, or other Society official, as this international assembly travels from city to city.

You may have heard one or more of the public lectures given at previous international assemblies of Jehovah's witnesses, such as the one held in New York city, July 30-August 6, 1950—the Theocracy's Increase Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses. At that assembly, on New World Living Day, Sunday, August 6, a large crowd assembled to hear the talk "Can You Live Forever in Happiness on Earth?" At Yankee Stadium and at overflow areas the throng heard the president of the Society ask: "Could you live happily on an earth so peaceful and secure that there was never any need of military preparedness to forestall or meet the threat of war? Could you live happily on an earth on which human society was not kept in a constant friction by racial divisions, by international boundaries, jealousies, rivalries and hatreds, by commercial monopolies and selfish competition, or by religious prejudices, crusades, inquisitions, bigotry, intolerance and conflict?" A total number of at least 123,707 persons heard the speaker conclusively answer the question that there is hope of living forever in happiness on earth.

Also in 1953, many readers of this journal

were present at Yankee Stadium during the New World Society Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses. On Sunday, July 26, 1953, President Knorr addressed the convention on the absorbing subject "After Armageddon—God's New World." Those who attended can still remember those thrilling opening words: "Armageddon will be the worst thing ever to hit the earth within the history of man. God's new world will be the best thing ever to come to distressed mankind and will never pass away." Filling the stadium and overflow areas was a crowd of 165,829 persons who heard that stirring talk.

Then in 1958 there was still a more memorable assembly, the Divine Will International Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses, July 27-August 3, at which both the Polo Grounds and Yankee Stadium in New York city were used. Yet on God's Kingdom Day, Sunday, August 3, a vast crowd totaling more than a quarter of a million persons filled not only the stands but also the playing fields, corridors, overflow tents and adjoining streets to hear the public lecture "God's Kingdom Rules—Is the World's End Near?"

Now 1963's long-awaited "Everlasting Good News" Assembly is at hand, an assembly that travels around the world, stopping at twenty-four different cities. This will make it possible for many more to hear the public lecture this year than on those previous occasions in 1950, 1953 and 1958. Among the many cities where the Around-the-World Assembly will stop are Milwaukee, Wisconsin (June 30-July 7); New York (July 7-14); London, England (July 14-21); Melbourne, Australia (August 16-20); Auckland, New Zealand (August 21-25); Honolulu, Hawaii (August 28-September 1), and Pasadena, California (September 1-8).

If you are truly conscious of your spiritual need and can possibly travel to one of the convention cities, plan now to do so. Of course, if you are living in one of the convention cities or its suburbs, you will, by all means, want to keep the assembly dates in mind and plan to attend each day's program. Invite your friends and relatives to the public lecture that will inspire all lovers of righteousness with hope, cheer, courage and confidence. Do not miss "When God Is King over All the Earth."

DID YOU LIVE BEFORE YOU WERE BORN?

THE idea that a person has had a previous existence has held a particular fascination for many Western writers. The English novelist Sir Henry Rider Haggard frequently had characters in his novels who philosophized on reincarnation. Just a few years ago a book by another author that dwelt on the subject soared to the top of the best-seller list for books in the United States. Its title was "The Search for Bridey Murphy." The author relates how a housewife under hypnotism describes the life she claimed to have lived as Bridey Murphy from 1798 to 1864. Investigators who checked the information she gave found so many discrepancies that they concluded that she was drawing upon her imagination.

Some persons in the West have made the idea an article of their religious faith. Mormons, for example, contend that they existed before they were born. On this point one of their leaders, Heber J. Grant, stated: "We have been placed upon this earth because of our faithfulness in having kept our first estate. The labors that we performed in the sphere that we left before we came here have had a certain effect upon our lives here, and to a certain extent they govern and control the lives that we lead here, just the same as the labors that we do here will control and govern our lives when we pass from this stage of existence."

In the Far East belief in a preexistence is centered around karma. This is the view

that the fate of the soul in the present life is determined by what it did in its previous existence. Everything a person does in this life, it is thought, will inexorably affect his position in the next life and so on for innumerable rebirths. The Hindu Laws of Manu state: "In consequence of many sinful acts committed with his body, a man becomes in the next birth something inanimate, in consequence of sins committed by speech, a bird, and in consequence of mental sins he is reborn in a low caste. . . . A Brahmin who steals the gold of a Brahmin shall pass a thousand times through the bodies of spiders, snakes, lizards, of aquatic animals and of destructive Pukhas. . . . For stealing grain a man becomes a rat; . . . for stealing fruits and roots, a monkey."

The Law of Karma has no provision for mercy or for forgiveness. It presents a despairing future of possibly a billion rebirths for a transmigrating soul. The prospect is so discouraging that the Maitri Upanishad of Hinduism states: "In this sort of cycle of existence what is the good of enjoyment of desires, when after a man has fed on them there is seen repeatedly his return here to earth? Be pleased to deliver me. In this cycle of existence I am like a frog in a waterless well."

The doctrine of the transmigration of souls, known in India as samsara, presents such a disheartening prospect for the future that the keen desire of believers in karma is to get out of this seemingly end-

less cycle of rebirths that Hindus call "The Wheel" and be freed from the power of karma. Their desire is to be in a state where misery will no longer exist.

What people who believe themselves to be under the power of karma seek is what the Holy Bible shows man how to attain without rebirths. It reveals man to be the product of a Creator who is forgiving and merciful. Instead of putting man under the power of an unrelenting, impersonal law that requires sins to be expiated by rebirths, he lovingly provided a means for man to be forgiven of his sins and to be freed from miseries. An endless life in joy, peace and security is what he has promised to give as a free gift to all who obey him and worship him in the manner he wants to be worshiped.

By the sin-atoning sacrifice of a perfect man, Jehovah provided the means by which humans can be forgiven their sins. Regarding that One the Bible states: "To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone putting faith in him gets forgiveness of sins through his name." (Acts 10:43) No matter what their past may have been, that sacrifice makes forgiveness possible if they are repentant. Jehovah does not require them to suffer through multitudinous rebirths to be purified of their sins. "Though the sins of you people should prove to be as scarlet, they will be made white just like snow; though they should be red like crimson cloth, they will become even like wool."—Isa. 1:18.

The idea that the soul transmigrates or that a person had a previous existence before he was born into this one hinges upon the belief that the human soul is immortal and survives the death of the body. The

soul usually is regarded as something that continues the conscious existence of a person separate from the body. Although this belief is widely accepted among the religions of the world, including many that profess to be Christian, the Creator of man does not confirm it as being so.

Very plainly the Bible states that when a man dies his conscious awareness of things ceases. "His spirit goes out, he goes back to his ground; in that day his thoughts do perish."

(Ps. 146:4) His spirit or life force cannot be regarded as that intangible thing that makes a person the individual that he is any more than the

electrical force that operates many types of machines has any connection with the distinctive differences of those machines. The fact that his thoughts perish indicates a cessation of conscious existence. Instead of conveying the thought that the soul is something in man that is immortal, the Bible states that the soul dies. "The soul that is sinning—it itself will die."—Ezek. 18:4.

With nothing in man that can preserve his conscious existence apart from his body, the life he has now is the only existence he has had. His hope for the future is in the provision the loving Creator of man has made for awakening the dead by resurrection. What he does while he is living is a determining factor as to whether he will be remembered and resurrected or forgotten and left in the unconscious state of death. To all who receive the approval of Jehovah will go the gift of eternal life. "For God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life."

—John 3:16.

ARTICLES IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- Strength Imparted Through Encouragement.
- Giving Encouragement to Others.
- The Forgiveness of a Loving Father.
- Family Responsibilities in Keeping Jehovah's Worship Pure.

MATURITY a Christian Requirement

"He gave . . . with a view to the training of the holy ones, for ministerial work, for the building up of the body of the Christ, until we all attain to the oneness in the faith and in the accurate knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown man, to the measure of growth that belongs to the fullness of the Christ."

—Eph. 4:11-13.

MATURITY means, basically, perfection or completeness, full growth. On occasion Paul referred to those possessing it as "older men," that is, older in the comprehension of God's Word, having the quality of mature judgment. Such maturity is not a naturally inherited quality in an individual, but it is one that must be achieved.

² A physical maturing goes hand in hand with time and progresses according to time, normally taking about twenty years. During this entire period the body is developing and growing until it reaches its full-grown stature. Then this type of maturing physically has been accomplished.

³ Physical maturity, however, is not a quality imperative to spiritual maturity, nor the most important in life. In fact, Paul told the young man Timothy: "Bodily training is beneficial for a little." It is help-

1. What is the basic meaning of maturity?
2. How is physical maturity attained?
3. (a) Of what value is physical maturity to the Christian? (b) Why is spiritual maturity of greater value than physical maturity? (c) What may hasten spiritual development?

ful to a degree, but notice where he placed the emphasis, continuing in the same verse: "but godly devotion is beneficial for all things, as it holds promise of the life now and that which is to come." Spiritual maturity is, therefore, all-important, as it involves, not only our present life, but our future destiny. It requires the nurturing of the mind on proper spiritual food so as to develop proper motives, in order that one can develop the desired qualities that measure this maturity, such as devotion, loyalty, perspective, faith, dependability and spirituality or spiritual discernment. In order to proceed toward this goal, Jehovah has a wonderful, salutary program designed for these days. It contributes to the individual's ability to stay alert to the dissimilarity between Jehovah's life-sustaining program and the Devil's death-dealing propaganda. It is not something that is obtained or received automatically with the passing of time, as physical growth, but it can be hastened and improved by using time wisely and profitably.

—1 Tim. 4:8.

PROGRESS TO MATURITY, A CHRISTIAN REQUIREMENT

⁴ It is interesting to notice what sterling counsel Paul gave to the Hebrews when he advised them not to go over the primary doctrines continually, but directed

4. What is required if one expects to attain the position of being "full-grown" in powers of understanding?

them to solid food that could be accrued through the training of perceptive powers. To train means work, and it is unquestionable that Paul's intent was the disciplinary training of the mind to fill it with right thoughts so it could distinguish between right and wrong. He then urges: "Let us press on to maturity." It is definite that the bent of mind and effort should be ever forward toward the goal of being "full-grown in powers of understanding."—Heb. 6:1; 1 Cor. 14:20.

⁵ It is true that immaturity is a normal starting point, whether this be in physical life, where the individual goes through infancy, a period of adolescence, then finally matures; or be from the spiritual aspect. Milk is the first food for the child, and then he begins to take more substantial food to build the body as time progresses. A similar situation exists where spiritual growth and discernment are concerned. In the beginning everyone naturally partakes of the milk of the Word, and is, of course, a babe. But he does not continue to partake of milk alone for very long, considering only the fundamental doctrines; he soon partakes of solid food such as belongs to mature people, after progressing to where such nourishment can be digested and made a part of his reservoir of spiritual information. Spiritually, just as physically, the younger person has a higher goal and a desire to "grow up." As one goes through the adolescent or maturing period, it is fortunate when he can view it as Jesus stated: "Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need." This naturally is a healthy spiritual outlook for future progress.—Matt. 5:3.

⁶ The converse is true, too, and it could well indicate a deficiency in devotion when

5. (a) What is the food for the "babe" physically and spiritually? (b) Why must a milk diet be forsaken for solid food?

6. (a) What impeded spiritual maturity in the congregation at Corinth? Why? (b) Why must Christians be extremely vigilant of their course of action to avoid retrograding to immaturity?

one is deterred by other things in life that would impede progress of spiritual growth. Recall how Paul established the congregation in Corinth on his second missionary journey, when he abode there a year and a half. Later he received a report from the 'house of Chloe, that dissensions existed among them.' Then in his counsel he mentioned: "Let no one be boasting in men," so that all would look to God with honor and not to men. The spirit of excessive bitterness and faction was present. Later he calls attention to the fornication existing there and gave them counsel as to corrective measures. When they lost sight of the 'spiritual man' and became overreached by the 'physical man,' they lost their mature status before Jehovah and again became babes. On this Paul commented: "Brothers, I was not able to speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to fleshly men, as to babes in Christ. I fed you milk, not something to eat, for you were not yet strong enough. In fact, neither are you strong enough now, for you are yet fleshly. For whereas there are jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly and are you not walking as men do? . . . let no one be boasting in men." "Let a man so appraise us as being subordinates of Christ and stewards of sacred secrets of God. . . . what is looked for in stewards is for a man to be found faithful." How vigilant Christians must be so as not to be overcome by the deceitful course of looking to men, that is, to compare one with another and follow men rather than our perfect example, Christ Jesus! Never be overcome by materialism, desires of the flesh and other enticements of this old world! These bad things can make cancerous inroads on the spiritual man if permitted, and reduce even the spiritually full-grown Christian to spiritual infancy. The question may well be asked, What are the evidences of having

maturity or at least working toward it?
—1 Cor. 1:11; 3:21; 5:1; 3:1-3, 21; 4:1, 2.

**EVIDENCES OF MATURITY
—DO YOU HAVE THEM?**

⁷ Christ Jesus was the very essence of maturity, possessing all the characteristics of a mature Son of God. Not only did he always speak truth, but he demonstrated loyalty and truth in his actions and deeds. (Rev. 3:7; Acts 4:27) The ever-present quality of righteousness was exhibited by him, as recorded at Hebrews 1:9, where it states: "You loved righteousness, and you hated lawlessness. That is why God, your God, anointed you with the oil of exultation."

⁸ He certainly possessed the qualities of truth, as stated further: "He was full of undeserved kindness and truth." (John 1:14) He was unselfish in every respect because he never sought his own glory but sought the glory of the one who sent him, and he was unequivocally loyal and there was not an unrighteous thought in him. (John 7:18) He was without guile or fault, regardless of what happened to him or what charge was placed against him. He was harmless as well. (Isa. 53:9; 1 Pet. 2:22; Heb. 7:26) He was fully obedient to Almighty God in every respect, because he said he loved to do his Father's will. He was the perfect example of love because he was willing to lay down his life for his friends, as stated at John 15:13, 14: "No one has love greater than this, that someone should surrender his soul in behalf of his friends. You are my friends if you do what I am commanding you." He performed an act of unequaled undeserved kindness, above that of every other creature that ever lived. Paul mentioned that, though he (Jesus) was rich, he became

poor for your sake so you might become rich through his poverty. (2 Cor. 8:9) In addition to these qualities, he displayed patience, long-suffering, compassion, benevolence and was self-denying.—Heb. 2:17; Isa. 53:7; 1 Tim. 1:16; Luke 19:41; Matt. 4:23, 24.

⁹ The way to maturity is made plain by Bible writer Solomon, when he shows some primary requisites and attitudes for making progress toward maturity. He advises: "Listen, O sons, to the discipline of a father and pay attention, so as to know understanding. . . . Keep my commandments and continue living. Acquire wisdom, acquire understanding. Do not forget, and do not turn aside from the sayings of my mouth. Do not leave it, and it will keep you. Love it, and it will safeguard you. Wisdom is the prime thing. Acquire wisdom; and with all that you acquire, acquire understanding. . . . and it will exalt you. . . . To your head it will give a wreath of charm." (Prov. 4:1-9) We recognize immediately in those words the forward and progressive attitude toward maturity and what is necessary to gain possession of it. Bringing it down to a personal basis, we may ask ourselves, Are we diligently enhancing our knowledge of Jehovah's Word, doing so progressively? Are we taking in accurate knowledge, pressing on to the goal of being a full-grown man? Are we heeding the caution of Paul when he warns against the resulting weaknesses if we neglect a forward course? "In order that we should no longer be babes, tossed about as by waves and carried hither and thither by every wind of teaching by means of the trickery of men, by means of cunning in contriving error."—Eph. 4:13, 14.

7. What mature quality did Jesus exhibit for which his Father anointed him?

8. Discuss characteristics of Jesus manifesting the "full-grown man."

9. (a) What course did Solomon recommend that would be profitable for the Christian to pursue? (b) What questions could we ask ourselves in this regard? (c) What warning did Paul give so as not to neglect a forward course?

¹⁰ It is this new information that we take in continually that activates our minds and enables us to put on the "new personality," which is actually a creation of God's will, through his Word. (Col. 3:10) We can see from the apostle Paul's expression that spiritual strength is essential. Therefore, nothing should deter us from the progressive course, ever mindful of the goal of maturity. We notice how apropos are Paul's words when he states: "But speaking the truth, let us by love grow up in all things." Paul in this statement is urging the Ephesians to stimulate growth and to let their course ever be forward.—Eph. 4:15.

EXAMINING OURSELVES

¹¹ Many questions arise in our minds regarding spirituality. Are we pursuing toward the goal of maturity, which leads to everlasting life? Are we constantly aroused with the heartfelt desire to improve our ministry? Do Kingdom interests dominate our thinking and activity? Is our field ministry productive and are we assisting others toward being productive ministers of Jehovah God? Can we say as did the apostle Paul concerning persons he helped see the truth: "You yourselves are our letter, inscribed on our hearts and known and being read by all mankind. . . . a letter . . . inscribed not with ink but with spirit . . . on fleshly . . . hearts"?—2 Cor. 3:2, 3.

¹² What about our personal study? Do we allot a certain amount of time to adequately cover all the articles in *The Watchtower*? Do we ever overlook or skip some articles of this main organ of communication that Jehovah God is using today? Do

we recognize that the instructions given through this channel are so vital that our very lives depend upon our heeding them?

¹³ Another way in which we can prove to ourselves whether we are augmenting our maturity is if we can find and work out answers to problems. Can we reason on principles and arrive at right conclusions? When asked questions, can we give Scriptural answers to them? Can we and do we work out problems of our own and those in connection with our ministerial duties? If so, we come within the proper understanding of 1 Corinthians 14:20: "Do not become young children in powers of understanding, but be babes as to badness; yet become full-grown in powers of understanding."

¹⁴ Are we patient and slow to wrath? Are we free from complaint about our fellow Christians? Are we kind to some and not to others? Are our discussions about others or with others upbuilding, that is, discussions with those of our families, members of the congregation, and newly interested ones? Are we of a good, cheerful disposition? Are we not readily depressed? When talking to people in our ministry are we easily offended and slow to forgive? Do we heed the admonition of the apostle Paul where he states: "Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely if anyone has a cause for complaint against another. Even as Jehovah freely forgave you, so do you also"?—Col. 3:13.

¹⁵ Do we easily succumb to temptations, or are we able to resist them? Do we recognize that it is advisable to watch the pathway of our feet so as not to be ensnared? We must keep in mind that Satan

10. Why is the "new personality" so valuable to a Christian, and how may we grow up?

11. What questions may we ponder upon regarding our spirituality?

12. (a) Why is *The Watchtower* of so much value to Christian ministers and others? (b) What should not be neglected?

13. How can we determine whether we are maturing or not?

14. What characteristics should we manifest in our relationship with our fellow Christians?

15. (a) Why is it necessary for a Christian to guard his course carefully? (b) What should a Christian minister work to attain?

is ever aware of the weaknesses of the flesh and ever a foe, walking up and down to see whom he can devour. The course of wisdom concurs with Proverbs 4:14, 15: "Into the path of the wicked ones do not enter, and do not walk straight on into the way of the bad ones. Shun it, do not pass along by it; turn aside from it, and pass along." It is readily discernible that the

pathway of the mature Christian is straight, and deviation from it might lead to lamentable consequences. Avoid temptations by exercising good, strong judgment, that of a mature mind. When we thus continually examine ourselves (not others), we can observe what a wonderful thing it is for a Christian to have maturity, the stature of a full-grown man.

SEEKING MATURITY

in the New World Society

"Do your utmost to present yourself approved to God, a workman with nothing to be ashamed of, handling the word of the truth aright."

—2 Tim. 2:15.

TO SEEK means application of effort to achieve an ultimate goal. On the part of a Christian minister, the objective is to receive Jehovah's approval, and there is nothing else that compares with it. To assure success in this respect we are invited by God's Word: "Do your utmost." Of course, the development to maturity constitutes the avenue that must be traveled during our Christian life. Its value in contrast with other things in life was vividly portrayed in Paul's words: "I do indeed also consider all things to be loss on account of the excelling value of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." We should esteem just as highly the procuring of wisdom and maturity in our life course today.—Phil. 3:8.

1, 2. (a) What should be a Christian's desire in life, and what should he do to attain it? (b) What is involved, and what will result to the individual?

² Much is involved. Study; yes, a great deal of it, requiring time and mental effort. In fact, more than study is necessary, because the mature Christian minister desires to attain the stature of the "full-grown man," having an overall comprehension so he will be able to convey valuable life-giving instruction to others. The greater the knowledge possessed, the greater will be the faith as well as the conviction and joy, and responsibility.

³ Study is work, and as physical exercise and labor develop the body, so does activity of the mind enlarge the mental faculties. Regularity of application is the most fruitful, following the routine of school-patterned education. Obviously, devoting of time is essential. In this curriculum the source of material is equally important. Recall the counsel: "Wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." After Paul had advised that Christians should do their utmost to serve Jehovah, he went

3. In a study course, what source of information should be deleted?

on to admonish them to shun sources of information that violate what is righteous with things of this old world: "Shun empty speeches that violate what is holy; for they will advance to more and more ungodliness." This is adequate reason to delete such information from one's specific and guarded course, because one's prime interest is concerning the source of eternal life and requirements for such life so it will be possible to handle "the word of the truth aright."—1 Cor. 3:19; 2 Tim. 2:16, 15.

⁴ During an instruction period, knowledge and wisdom are built up in a way somewhat comparable to when a pre-medical student goes to college and learns the art of medicine through a thorough study course established on a methodical basis for steady advancement. Up to this point the acquisition of knowledge is of a theoretical pattern, largely from books and lectures, and must be followed by practical application before the individual becomes a practicing physician or surgeon. Just to finish a course would not in itself qualify him to be a doctor, because practical experience is still essential. So it is with a minister of Jehovah, since through His word he invites all to "become doers of the word, and not hearers only."—Jas. 1:22.

⁵ While it is true that careful study and preparation are desirable for taking in good instructive material, good training is still a requisite, just as the intern does not perform an operation as soon as he receives his diploma. Rather, he would work with a mature doctor for a considerable length of time so as to learn to make application of this theoretical knowledge that he had acquired through earlier study. So it is with a minister. He receives training by accompanying mature minis-

ters, and in that way makes progress, so he can become an efficient doer of the word. He will soon develop in his door-to-door ministry just like the first-century Christians did, and then he will be able to follow through and carry out the next aspect of the ministry, calling on people in their homes where interest has been found, and ultimately develop home Bible studies.

⁶ In his pursuit of maturity, the new minister should have good balance in his ministerial work. When such development has been gained, the individual does not stop at this point, because, as he matures to the extent that he can assist others, he will gladly share in the maturing process of others as well. He will be alert, then, examining his teaching ability in regard to the new person that he is assisting or training, to be assured that he is setting the proper example and gives adequate counsel to the other person so that, in turn, he can likewise gain maturity. It brings satisfaction and joy to one's heart when he can help others and observe the molding of the new minister as clay in the potter's hand. This genuinely mature minister and teacher, then, when he has attained that point, will go out of his way to assist new ones in field ministry, in study, in answering Bible questions, and every other way that he can that will be upbuilding. There is nothing so rewarding and gratifying as to observe the bond of love that develops between the one instructing and the one receiving such assistance. It is this closeness of brotherhood that has a ring of permanency in it.

MATURITY IN MEN

⁷ Cultivated maturity in Christian brothers or ministers is spoken of commendably

6. (a) How may one measure one's own maturing progress? (b) What will the mature minister continue to do?

7. (a) What does the Bible have to say about maturity? (b) How will the "full-grown man" guard his conduct?

4. (a) What kind of information do we obtain from study? (b) Is study alone sufficient?
5. Why will not study alone make one a minister?

in the Bible. "Let older [mature] men who preside in a fine way be reckoned worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard in speaking and teaching." Truly, the full-grown man today is required to keep on speaking and preaching this good news of the Kingdom and to assist others who may be desirous of doing the same thing, because, when the man pays constant attention to himself and his ministry, it will be of great value to him. When the mature man's conduct befits these thoughts expressed, he is handling the word of truth aright.—1 Tim. 5:17; 4:16; 2 Tim. 2:15.

⁸ The Christian minister also has a responsibility assigned to him in caring for the spiritual welfare of perhaps his wife or other women of his household. Just as Christ Jesus looks after his body members, so the man must safeguard the woman who is one flesh with him, as well as the children of his household, and the Christian men and women in the congregation.

MATURITY IN WOMEN

⁹ Christian women or sisters must recognize their head so they can fully understand the position and course of conduct that results in maturity for them. The married women are admonished to love their husbands; this is a meritorious course.

¹⁰ The women in the early Christian congregation were given kind consideration and came in for commendation. One so noted was Phoebe, of whom the apostle Paul was very considerate. "I recommend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a minister of the congregation that is in Cenchreæ, that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the holy ones, and that you may assist her in any matter

where she may need you, for she herself also proved to be a defender of many, yes, of me myself." (Rom. 16:1, 2) These remarks show that Phoebe was a mature minister in the congregation, thoughtful of those around her and those who worked diligently in the service of Jehovah.

¹¹ The four daughters of Philip, who were virgins, conducted themselves properly, having full appreciation of Jehovah's Word, because it states that they prophesied or ministered. (Acts 21:9) Other praiseworthy qualities of a woman who manifests mature conduct are set forth by Paul in his first letter to Timothy, as those of a "wife of one husband, having a witness borne to her for fine works, if she reared children, if she entertained strangers, if she washed the feet of holy ones, if she relieved those in tribulation, if she diligently followed every good work." Adhering to such fine principles, an elderly woman or widow, having lived her course of life in an approved manner, shows herself to be worthy of consideration. Qualities not commendable, but brought to our attention by the apostle Paul so as not to do them, are such as "being unoccupied, gadding about to the houses; yes, not only unoccupied, but also gossipers and meddlers in other people's affairs, talking of things they ought not."—1 Tim. 5:9-13.

¹² Women whose course of conduct has been such as to receive Jehovah's approval have been devoted to the pleasing of their household head; they have done good to their husbands, their families, and those around them. Among other things, a Christian wife is one that her husband can trust explicitly. She rewards him with good, she prepares food for her household, she takes care of the necessary household duties to

8. What are some of the obligations of the Christian minister?
9. What do Christian women recognize in the household?
10. What consideration was extended to Phoebe, and why?

11. (a) What praiseworthy qualities do mature sisters possess? (b) Against what conduct did Paul give warning?
12. What are some additional qualities of a mature woman?

see that everything is in order as a Christian home should be. One of the fine compliments paid to a Christian woman possessing these desirable qualities is found in the thirty-first chapter of Proverbs, verse 26: "Her mouth she has opened in wisdom, and the law of loving-kindness is upon her tongue." This shows that maturity goes beyond her home duties in that she has acquired wisdom and knows Jehovah's Word relative to her position in the congregation. She is a woman who 'fears Jehovah and procures praise for herself.' When she fears Jehovah she will not go contrary to what is required of a mature woman in God's organization. She will be thought well of by those who know her and will be admired for her Christian personality and for carrying out ministerial duties too.

MATURITY IN YOUTH

¹³ The young man Timothy was given excellent instruction by his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois. Yet it was necessary for him, even when very young, to be willing to learn and accept instruction. This is commendable in young people today and brings approval. In this regard Paul spoke approvingly of Timothy, saying: "From infancy you have known the holy writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through the faith in connection with Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. 3:15) The same humility and desire to be instructed are required on the part of young individuals as well as on the part of adults. Jesus said that *all* must be childlike in order to be taught. That means to be yielding before instruction. It is always pleasing to see children accept the counsel and instructions of their parents and allow themselves to be molded by good parental training, and even lend themselves to it of

13, 14. (a) What examples of good parental training do we have? (b) How should Christian children respond to instructions?

their own accord. They, too, can keep in mind the instruction that they should remember the Creator from the days of their youth. (Eccl. 12:1) Here again, in his very young years, our Lord Jesus Christ manifested a fine spirit, showing himself a proper example, when he was first of all concerned about his Father's business, stating: "I must be in the house of my Father."

¹⁴ While it is an obligation on the part of the parents to teach their children the truth of God's Word and train them to be young ministers, it is also the duty of children to respond and accept the training of their parents, to move forward toward maturity, and not rebel.—Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3: 20, 21.

ALL CULTIVATE THE FRUITS

OF THE SPIRIT

¹⁵ Of cardinal importance to gaining maturity and spiritual well-being is the acquiring of the fruits of the spirit. Cultivating these fruits of the spirit, therefore, should be an integral part of our life as expressed in our daily conduct. What are these fruits or qualities? They are faith, virtue, self-control, endurance, godly devotion, brotherly affection, love. "For if these things exist in you and overflow, they will prevent you from being either inactive or unfruitful regarding the accurate knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 1:5-8) Herein lies the complete outline of the progression to maturity that can be embodied in a Christian's life, irrespective of age or sex. These beautiful garments of the heart and disposition of the individual are spoken of by the apostle Paul in this way: "Clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion, kindness, lowliness of mind, mildness, and long-suffering. Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one

15. What qualities should a Christian minister develop?

another freely . . . clothe yourselves with love, for it is a perfect bond of union." (Col. 3:12-14) Much more is embraced in these words than just the clothing we wear; it is the maturity of a true Christian that is developed. Herein are described the perfect qualities possessed by Christ Jesus and the spotless example that he set for us.

¹⁶ According to the standards of this world, an individual may have followed an exemplary course, equivalent to that of the young man that came to Jesus and that had kept all the Law, and who undoubtedly was looked to as an example by some, even being loved by our Lord Jesus Christ. "Jesus looked upon him and felt love for him and said to him: 'One thing is missing about you: Go, sell what things you have and give to the poor, . . . and come be my follower.' But he grew sad at the saying and went off grieved, for he was holding many possessions." (Mark 10:21-23) What did he lack? That important uniting quality, love. The equivalent of keeping the Law or just listening to and believing the good word does not in itself bring Jehovah's approval. More is needed! In the case of this rich man, what proved to be lacking in him was love, and he did not see the need to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

RESULTS OF STRIVING FOR MATURITY

¹⁷ If we are constantly applying our minds and striving for the mature status, what will our aim or career be? The true, dedicated servant of Almighty God will with assuredness and emphasis say: THE MINISTRY. This course tolerates no variation, such as veering to the left or right, even temporarily. One must continue to move objectively forward. It leaves no room for slacking off or treating one's dedication to God in a lackadaisical manner.

16. Is it sufficient for a Christian just to have a good disposition, or what more is necessary?

17. What course must one pursue and to what must one be constantly alert? What will be the reward?

One might say that the development of such an attitude is unthinkable! Some may reason, 'That can never happen to me,'—that maturity just cannot be lost after one has spent so much time developing the attributes of a true Christian, filling one's mind with the Word of Jehovah God. Rather than reasoning this way, we should be of the same mind as the apostle Paul when he stated: "I do not yet consider myself as having laid hold on it; but there is one thing about it: . . . I am pursuing down toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God." We will fully appreciate that there is no such guarantee as 'once saved, always saved,' but our course will be marked by a continuous forward effort until the fulfillment of the Christian course, either in death for those of the little flock of God's anointed remnant and then immortality in God's heavenly kingdom, or the approval of the "other sheep" to life on earth after Armageddon.—Phil. 3:13, 14.

¹⁸ In our confident, advancing course toward the stature of a full-grown man, we will remember the lesson set forth in the course of the Israelite nation, who were in covenant relationship with Jehovah. From time to time the nation of Israel deviated from a course of faithfulness and devotion to God to idolatry and covetousness, the desire for material gain. One individual who did this was the man Achan. In his longing for material gain and his resulting course of covetousness, he reached out for that which did not belong to him and actually took it, in fact, seized that which was forbidden. He appropriated to himself 200 shekels of silver and a gold bar weighing 50 shekels. The lure of these so overreached him that he sneakingly hid them in his tent. What a price he paid for this short-time possession of wealth! His wrongdoing was ferreted out, and he was stoned to death. (Josh. 7:1-25)

18. What lesson can we learn from Achan's course?

out by faithful Joshua, and then Achan and his entire family were, not only stoned to death, but burned with fire.—Josh. 7: 16-26.

¹⁹ We should ever keep in mind too that one of the kings of Israel at one time possessed great wisdom and had the unique privilege of building the temple of Jehovah. Even after all the wonderful blessings that Jehovah bestowed upon Solomon, he became selfish and deflected from the true worship of Jehovah to the extent that he served the gods of his foreign wives. Such a course could lead only to death. That was the adverse judgment of Jehovah against Solomon, who will have no future life. (1 Kings, chapter 11) This was true not only on the part of those under the Law covenant but we find, too, that it occurred in the days of the early Christian congregation.

²⁰ There were those who undoubtedly were considered as mature Christians at one time in the days of the early Christian congregation and who then deviated, being overreached by other attractions. Because of reviling and digressing from the truth, Hymenaeus and Philetus, who were talking about the resurrection as having already occurred and thus subverting the faith of some, were disfellowshiped from the congregation because of taking a rebellious course. (2 Tim. 2:17-19) Materialism proved to be very attractive and subtle, and was a means by which one of Paul's companions was overreached. He stated: "Demas has forsaken me because he loved the present system of things." (2 Tim. 4:10) After forsaking the things of the world he was unwilling to keep separate from the world in loyal dedicated service to Almighty God.

19. Does position alone in Jehovah's organization assure approval?
20. What temptations must be guarded against? Cite examples.

²¹ Probably one of the most noteworthy manifestations of rebelliousness was on the part of the unfaithful apostle that betrayed Christ Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. (Matt. 26:15) Obviously the thinking on the part of Judas Iscariot as well as others like him indicates a total loss of maturity or disregard for it. Such traitorous action is despicable, considering that such ones had escaped defilement of the world and then became involved again. We need to be ever aware of the fact that such a course is worse than not to have known the truth, as Peter states: "It would have been better for them not to have accurately known the path of righteousness than after knowing it accurately to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them. The saying of the true proverb has happened to them: 'The dog has returned to its own vomit, and the sow that was bathed to rolling in the mire.'" (2 Pet. 2: 21, 22) The erring ones failed to be vigilantly on guard by being guided by accurate knowledge, so as not to be led away by the sin of law-defying people and thus fall from steadfastness.—2 Pet. 3:17.

²² Those who are steadfastly striving for maturity realize that digression was not a condition peculiar to the early Christian congregation only, because in recent years we have witnessed the deflection of the "evil slave" class, besides the many others individually who have gone back to the old world by reason of selfishness, reviling, unwillingness to undergo persecution, return to a course of adultery, idolatry and many other subtle schemes promulgated by Satan, the god of this world.—Matt. 24: 48-51.

²³ Just as a regular daily diet of physical food is necessary to sustain the body, so

21. (a) What happened to one of the apostles? (b) How does Peter refer to such a course?
22. Was digression or falling away peculiar to the early Christians only?
23. (a) As good food is essential to good health, what does the mind require to mature? (b) What suggestion does the Society advertise?

must there be a steady and daily intake of God's Word for the nurturing of the mind. Not merely reading, but study is essential, because it calls for diligent application of the mind with the thought of acquiring knowledge. When spiritual discernment is the individual's objective, his efforts will be pointed toward God's Word. It is recalled at Joshua 1:8 that it was a requirement to read the book of the law day and night, and that not idly, but with a definite purpose. It was to direct the reader so he could make his way successful and act wisely. Yes, a diligent study of the Bible daily is very important. The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society has written across its eight- and nine-story buildings (located in Brooklyn where most of the printing of Bibles and Bible-study aids by the Society is accomplished), in large bold letters so all passersby can readily see, the all-important words, "Read God's Word the Bible Daily." This is a directive for all people of the world; how much more so, then, for all Christians!

²⁴ The New World society has been using the printed page for many years in the publication of the *Watchtower* magazine as well as books and booklets for study aids to enhance the understanding of the Bible. Many people will retort, 'Well, I have the Bible; I read it.' But even though there are over a billion Bibles in the world, look at the deplorable conditions prevailing. This shows that more than just private Bible reading is essential. It is recalled that, during the days of the early Christian congregation, when a searcher for truth was found reading the scroll of Isaiah by a minister of God who came along, he asked him if he understood what he was reading. He responded: "Really, how could I ever do so [that is, under-

stand], unless someone guided me?" Philip used this opportunity to assist this interested man by explaining the prophecy of Isaiah to him understandably, and then he was baptized. Here is a splendid illustration of how the maturity of Philip was displayed in presenting the prophecy in a comprehensive manner to this interested person. Philip did not have opportunity to study or to turn to references, but ably drew upon the fund of knowledge that he had already acquired—an evidence of maturity.—Acts 8:30-39.

²⁵ Saul of Tarsus who later became Paul had to come in contact with a minister of Jehovah for instruction before he became full-grown in the ministry. It was recalled that he was directed to Damascus, where he was assisted and taught the fundamentals by Ananias. Ananias took advantage of the opportunity, demonstrating his maturity, in giving Paul proper tutelage on that occasion.—Acts 9:17-19.

MATURING WITH THE CONGREGATION

²⁶ Today there are more than 22,000 congregations of Jehovah's ministers worldwide. These are provisions by Almighty God for sustaining the maturity of those who have already attained that position, as well as for nurturing others toward it. Like anything else, deriving benefit depends, not only upon the congregation, but upon the individual as well.

²⁷ Believers even from the days of the early Christians, immediately, on the day of Pentecost, were informed: "Repent, and let each one of you be baptized." And with many other words Peter exhorted them, "and they continued devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to shar-

25. How did another mature minister assist a new believer?

26. What provision of Jehovah do we have to sustain maturity?

27, 28. (a) What advice has been given to Christians about the importance of attending congregational meetings? (b) What meeting arrangements has the New World society made, and for what purpose?

24. (a) What other provision does the Society use to assist people even though they "have their Bibles"? (b) How did Philip demonstrate his maturity when he met a searcher for truth?

ing with one another, to taking of meals and to prayers." The significance of meeting together was immediately emphasized. Of course, Paul, in writing to the Hebrews, complemented this when he admonished them: "Let us consider one another to incite to love and fine works, not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another, and all the more so as you behold the day drawing near." At this time, over twenty-five years after Pentecost, some must have become negligent in attending meetings and were losing the maturity maintained by regularly meeting together. (Acts 2:38, 40, 42; Heb. 10:24, 25) What about Christian ministers living in the twentieth century, 1,900 years after this counsel was initially written? Are we negligent and do we show disregard for this Christian requirement of assembling together for spiritual sustenance?

²⁸ Ample arrangements have been provided for us through the New World society. So the questions arise, Do we attend all the meetings, that is, the weekly *Watchtower* study, the greatest aid the Society has for helping believers in God's Word? the weekly service meeting, where ministers receive practical training for their ministry? the weekly theocratic ministry school, where instruction in speaking and preparing sermons for teaching are stressed? the weekly book study, where one of the leading books of the Society on a Bible subject is utilized? and the weekly Sunday public meetings, where timely topics are discussed?

²⁹ Unfortunately, some have taken the attitude, after dedication and after their having been baptized, that nothing more is required. Remember, dedication marks only the beginning. Are you under the impression that it is not necessary to attend

29. (a) Is dedication all that is necessary? (b) Of what value are the congregation and its meetings to Christians?

meetings regularly? Such would indicate that you are of the opinion that the congregation is not necessarily the lifeline of a Christian. Rather than such a lackadaisical and immature attitude, why not ask the question, How can I attend *every* meeting? The congregation is truly the arrangement that Jehovah has established in order for each one to progress to maturity. Just consider how fundamentally appropriate it is to be present at these five one-hour meetings weekly. They keep Christian ministers alive to their relationship with Almighty God; up-to-date on fulfillment of prophecy, and alert to the ministry we share in regularly. Yes, each meeting attended makes a contribution to our maturity and may assist in adding to the stature of our brothers' spiritual adulthood.

PRAYER

³⁰ Opportunities present themselves for us to talk to God daily. Yes, we can commune with him regularly in prayer. In coming to Jehovah in prayer, to the one who is the Great King of eternity, we should be certain that our words indicate proper respect. Paul states that we should "persevere in prayer." In this communion with God we think not only of ourselves but also of others. Indicative of this, we are also informed by Paul: "I continue mentioning you in my prayers," and his thoughts in this respect were "that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the accurate knowledge of him; the eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he called you." Here again we see the tying in of the spirit of wisdom with the acquisition of accurate knowledge. From this we see how urgent

30. (a) What intimate privilege is helpful to maturity? (b) How is it thus helpful to acquiring maturity?

it is that we pay strict attention and listen when God talks to us through His Word. How thankful we should be to Jehovah that he has consented and invited us to pray to him. Without question, prayer is a channel through which to press on to maturity as well.—Rom. 12:12; Eph. 1:16-18.

OVERSEERSHIP, AN AWARD BESTOWED UPON MATURITY

³¹ As an individual acquires knowledge, dedicates his life, has close association with Jehovah's organization and continues to mature, additional privileges await him. Of course, everything one does should be done whole-souled as to Jehovah and not to be seen of men. (Col. 3:23) Positions of oversight in a congregation are not given as an inducement for an individual to press on to maturity, but they, rather, are rewards for the mature one desiring to serve willingly and with lowliness of mind, humbling himself under the mighty hand of God. (1 Pet. 5:2, 5, 6) As a Christian minister continues to press on to becoming a "full-grown man," he may become a minister who is appointed to teach a few Christians who meet in private homes. Herein lies a grand opportunity of assisting and training new ministers in the door-to-door service, conducting home Bible studies, as well as calling back on others with the good news of the Kingdom. Then one may be favored by an assignment as a ministerial servant in a congregation. Perhaps ultimately one may become the overseer or presiding minister over a congregation, assuming all the responsibilities that go with it and always trusting in Jehovah and recognizing that it is Jehovah's congregation of sheeplike ones.

31. What additional privileges of service may be the rewards for the mature minister?

³² Beyond this, one may have the opportunity of sharing in the full-time ministry; going where the "need is great" to serve, often under difficult circumstances, in aiding God's other sheep. Perhaps one could serve as a circuit overseer where one visits a number of congregations, and then even a district overseer. In addition to all these privileges of ministerial service, others are available to one, such as missionary work, going into foreign territories, and even, perhaps, becoming a member of one of the main offices of supervision known as Bethel in whatever country one resides.

³³ This might be termed a progression of cultivating and gaining maturity. Such a course is not easy and one cannot coast, nor is it a miraculous accomplishment. It is the result of constant application of the mind, studying, thinking, doing, preaching, manifesting the fruits of the spirit, and love toward others. It means constant giving, unselfishly. As one becomes mature one has the opportunity of carrying the burdens of others, which is a Christian responsibility and manifestation of love.—Gal. 6:2.

³⁴ Certainly marvelous blessings accompany Christian maturity. Paul showed this when he progressed to the point where he could invite others to follow him as he followed Christ. Truly, he was a genuine full-grown man in the faith, and it was well stated by him with confidence when he was about to finish his course: "For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the due time for my releasing is imminent. I have fought the fine fight, I have run the course to the finish, I have observed the faith. From this time on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righ-

32, 33. (a) What special opportunities may be open for the maturing minister? (b) What will aid one to qualify for these selective services?

34. How did Paul demonstrate his maturity?

teous judge, will give me as a reward in that day, yet not only to me, but also to all those who have loved his manifestation.”—2 Tim. 4:6-8; 1 Cor. 11:1.

³⁵ Maturity must be the Christian goal for everyone, and it brings superb satisfaction and joy in the ministry. Strive for Christian maturity, because the greatest rejoicing emanates from the recognition of one's close relationship with others and with Jehovah. With maturity we will always be conscious of Jehovah's blessings. So, therefore, permit nothing to jeopardize

35. How should we look upon the pursuit of maturity in the New World society?

the pursuit of becoming a “full-grown man” in Jehovah's New World society. May our gaining maturity be with the objective of praising Jehovah and the great and sovereign name both by deed and by example, so others too can observe the fine course to follow that is illustrated in Paul's well-chosen words to the Philippians: “Let us, then, as many of us as are mature, be of this mental attitude; and if you are mentally inclined otherwise in any respect, God will reveal the above attitude to you. At any rate, to what extent we have made progress, let us go on walking orderly in this same routine.”—Phil. 3: 15, 16.

What

DISFELLOWSHIPING

MEANS

A LOVING father takes a keen interest in his children. He guides them in the right way and, when necessary, disciplines them to correct errors.

Jehovah has great love for his children, his servants. He guides them in a way that will be pleasing to Him and that will bring them the greatest happiness. As the Great Father, Jehovah also provides for the discipline of his servants who err. This he does, not because he hates them, but because he loves them and wants to keep them on the way to everlasting life. “My son, do not belittle the discipline from Jehovah, neither give out when you are corrected by him; for whom Jehovah loves he disciplines.”—Heb. 12:5, 6.

Jehovah administers correction to the wrongdoer through his visible organization. (Isa. 32:1; Matt. 24:45-47) The disciplinary measures taken depend upon the

enormity of the sin and upon the attitude of the offender.

However, minor offenses that one individual may commit against another are often resolved by overlooking the trespasses of another. As the apostle Peter said: “Love covers a multitude of sins.” (1 Pet. 4:8) Repeated forgiveness is necessary due to human imperfection, and this was emphasized by Jesus in response to Peter's question of how often one was to forgive. Jesus said: “Not, Up to seven times, but, Up to seventy-seven times.”—Matt. 18:22.

If a person feels he cannot overlook the difficulty caused by another's offense, then he can resolve it by lovingly discussing it with the one he feels has given offense. This is the first step to take; as Jesus said:

"If your brother commits a sin, go lay bare his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother." (Matt. 18:15) If the matter cannot so be resolved, then other mature servants of God may be asked to give counsel. Jesus gave this as the second step: "Take along with you one or two more, in order that at the mouth of two or three witnesses every matter may be established." (Matt. 18:16) Where this does not solve the difficulty, or when the sin is of a very serious nature, then "speak to the congregation," Jesus advised; that is, bring it before those in authority in the congregation.—Matt. 18:17.

If the attitude of the violator is one of heartfelt repentance, Jehovah even extends mercy to one who commits violations of his righteous principles that are serious enough to be called to the attention of the congregation. An act of wrongdoing, an indiscretion committed in a moment of weakness, while reprehensible, does not make a person a hardened sinner. Those who stumble into serious wrongs but who are truly repentant and confess their sins of their own free will may receive undeserved kindness and loving assistance from Jehovah's organization. As Peter told men of Israel: "Repent, therefore, and turn around so as to get your sins blotted out, that seasons of refreshing may come from the person of Jehovah." (Acts 3:19) So today when wrongdoers have not *practiced* sin, but show they are cut to the heart and pledge not to continue in a course of sin, they are dealt with very mercifully by Jehovah and need not be cut off from the congregation. If the sin has not caused public notoriety and does not endanger the congregation, the one involved may be placed on probation. The terms of the discipline would be made clear and the one under such surveillance would report to the overseer once each month for the spec-

ified period as a loving arrangement to assist the individual to regain himself.

DISFELLOWSHIPING

However, there are times when offenses against God and man cannot be overlooked, nor settled by asking for counsel, nor resolved by placing the offender on probation. There are offenses that call for more drastic action on the part of God's visible organization.

In ancient Israel the laws given by God governed the correction. Offenders who went beyond the atoning provisions of the law were to be cut off from the congregation of Israel. How? By being put to death. Later, in the Christian congregation, those who persisted in transgressing against Jehovah's merciful provisions and who failed to show evidence of proper repentance were likewise cut off, though not being put to death. This was done by their being disfellowshiped, or excommunicated, from the Christian congregation. The requirement of adherence to righteousness was binding on both ancient Israel and the early Christian congregation. For Israel the injunction was: "Clear out what is bad from your midst." (Deut. 17:7) For the Christian congregation the principle was reaffirmed: "Remove the wicked man from among yourselves."—1 Cor. 5:13.

Therefore, the ones who are hardened in wrongdoing are the ones who are disfellowshiped. It is where serious violations of Jehovah's righteous requirements have become a practice that this measure is taken. First John 3:4 states: "Everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness." So dedicated Christians who become practitioners of lawlessness in the Christian congregation today are disfellowshiped.

What kind of offenses are regarded as disfellowshiping offenses? These include persistence in sexual offenses, stealing, lying, dishonest business practices, rebel-

lion against Jehovah's organization, slandering, drunkenness, apostasy, teaching of false doctrine and other wrongs. As the apostle Paul warned: "Do not be misled. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men, nor thieves, nor greedy persons, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit God's kingdom."—1 Cor. 6:9, 10.

PURPOSE

What is the purpose of this cutting off from God's congregation? The most important purpose is the preservation of Jehovah's pure worship. No corrupting influence is allowed to remain. The one who practices wrongdoing must be taken out for the protection and purity of the congregation, since "a little leaven ferments the whole lump." (Gal. 5:9) If not cleared out, this corruption can block the free flow of Jehovah's spirit to the entire congregation. Jehovah will not bless that which is impure, as was evidenced in the case of Achan. (Josh. 7:1-26) These serious derelictions can be compared to a cancer. If a body member is cancerous, the entire body is in danger. If necessary, the diseased member is amputated in order to save the rest of the body.

Another benefit derived is that others in the congregation will have their confidence in God's visible organization strengthened by observing its firm stand for righteous principles. Also, it serves as a powerful warning example to those in the congregation, since they will be able to see the disastrous consequences of ignoring Jehovah's laws. Paul said: "Reprove before all onlookers persons who practice sin, that the rest also may have fear."—1 Tim. 5:20.

In the Christian congregation there is yet another important benefit, this time to the one disfellowshiped. Under the Chris-

tian system of things, the offender is not put to death. Through this drastic disfellowshiping action, the offender might be shaken and shocked to his senses and become ashamed of his bad course of action. This, in turn, could produce proper repentance and he could then take steps to turn from his bad course and begin to walk in the way that Jehovah approves. "For sadness in a godly way makes for repentance to salvation." (2 Cor. 7:10) Thus in time the one cut off would have hopes of becoming reconciled to God and to his visible organization and be forgiven. As the apostle Paul counseled: "This rebuke given by the majority is sufficient for such a man, so that, on the contrary now, you should kindly forgive and comfort him, that somehow such a man may not be swallowed up by his being overly sad."—2 Cor. 2:6, 7.

Truly, under the Christian system of things, this is indeed a marvelous display of undeserved kindness on God's part. "You are not under law but under undeserved kindness."—Rom. 6:14.

MEANING FOR THOSE DISFELLOWSHIPPED

It is a great tragedy for one to be disfellowshiped. For this means a cutting off, not just from God's visible organization on earth, but it means a cutting off from Jehovah and his favor. The disfellowshiping action taken by the congregation is merely the confirmation of what has already taken place in the heavens. These visible agents of God merely acknowledge what Jehovah has already done in heaven. As Jesus stated: "Whatever things you may bind on earth will be things bound in heaven."—Matt. 18:18.

A disfellowshiped person is cut off from the congregation, and the congregation has nothing to do with him. Those in the congregation will not extend the hand of fellowship to this one, nor will they so much

as say "Hello" or "Good-bye" to him. He is not welcome in their private homes, even if such home serves as a center of worship for a local group of Jehovah's witnesses. This is in harmony with Scriptural principles. Second John 9, 10 says: "Everyone that pushes ahead and does not remain in the teaching of the Christ does not have God. He that does remain in this teaching is the one that has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, never receive him into your homes or say a greeting to him." Romans 16:17 also counsels: "Now I exhort you, brothers, to keep your eye on those who cause divisions and occasions for stumbling contrary to the teaching that you have learned, and avoid them."

The transgressor loses other precious privileges in addition. He is removed from any positions of special service in the congregation. While he may attend all meetings at the Kingdom Hall that are open to the public, he will not be permitted to talk to individuals, address the congregation from the platform, nor contribute to discussions by offering comments from his seat. As long as he behaves properly he may come and sit, but if he becomes obstreperous he will be asked to leave. Additionally, he will no longer represent Jehovah's organization in the field ministry. His activity will not be recognized by the congregation, and if he turns in a report of any activity, it will not be accepted or recorded.

The disfellowshiped person may purchase literature as any of the public can, but he will not be given the monthly *Kingdom Ministry*, since he is no longer a minister of the good news of the Kingdom. Neither can he feel that by moving to another congregation he will be freed from the sanctions placed upon him. The local congregation will be notified and public

announcement made of his disfellowshipping for the protection of the congregation there.

However, one who is disfellowshiped can become reconciled to Jehovah and to his organization in time and be reinstated as a brother, provided he repents, changes his course, manifests a humble attitude and proves over a period of time that he earnestly desires to live in harmony with God's Word. However, even after reinstatement, his position will never again be quite the same. He has broken a precious trust and cannot be given oversight in the congregation. Hence, he suffers the loss of servants' privileges on earth irrevocably.

The principle here is similar to the case of Jacob's firstborn, Reuben. Because Reuben committed incestuous immorality with his father's concubine, he lost the right of firstborn. He was not to be enrolled genealogically as such, nor would the tribe of Reuben exercise the privileges of overseership in the nation of Israel, either as governors or as priests. (Gen. 49:3, 4; 1 Chron. 5:1) Similarly today, servants excommunicated from Jehovah's visible organization are disqualified from ever again taking a position of oversight among Jehovah's people. If a reinstated person has been conducting Bible studies with an isolated group, and this group is then organized into a congregation, another dedicated brother will be appointed as servant. However, until the congregation is formed and servants are needed, he may continue to conduct studies with the group, since he may share in the field ministry, publishing the good news of the Kingdom.

ATTITUDE OF THOSE IN CONGREGATION

Under Jehovah's law arrangement for ancient Israel, the people in the congregation executed the death sentence on those deserving it. At Deuteronomy 17:6, 7 we read: "At the mouth of two witnesses or

of three witnesses the one dying should be put to death. He will not be put to death at the mouth of one witness. The hand of the witnesses first of all should come upon him to put him to death, and the hand of all the people afterward; and you must clear out what is bad from your midst."

In the Christian congregation a like principle of cooperation and participation is found. While the erring one is not put to death, his excommunication is observed and acted upon by all in the congregation. This Scriptural procedure is described at 1 Corinthians 5:11: "I am writing you to quit mixing in company with anyone called a brother that is a fornicator or a greedy person or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner, not even eating with such a man."

Therefore the members of the congregation will not associate with the disfellowshiped one, either in the Kingdom Hall or elsewhere. They will not converse with such one or show him recognition in any way. If the disfellowshiped person attempts to talk to others in the congregation, they should walk away from him. In this way he will feel the full import of his sin. Otherwise, if all communicated freely with the offender, he would be tempted to feel that his transgression was not such a terrible thing. If it occurs that someone visiting in the congregation or at a larger assembly is not aware that a person has been disfellowshiped and attempts to talk to that one, other brothers observing will tactfully inform him of the situation. Also, the disfellowshiped person who wants to do what is right should inform any approaching him in innocence that he is disfellowshiped and they should not be conversing with him.

There is another aspect to the need for those in the congregation to cooperate with the committee responsible for taking

the disfellowshiping action. What this is 2 John 11 makes clear: "For he that says a greeting to him is a sharer in his wicked works." Yes, one's attitude toward a person cut off from the congregation shows his attitude toward Jehovah's righteous principles. When one ignores the disfellowshiping action and continues his association with the disfellowshiped person, then it shows a bad attitude toward Jehovah's laws. He, in effect, is showing that he upholds the offender and thinks Jehovah's righteous laws are of no account. The seriousness of not abiding by the disfellowshiping procedure can be seen when he is called "a sharer" in the wicked works of the one disfellowshiped. Actually, the one who deliberately does not abide by the congregation's decision puts himself in line to be disfellowshiped for continuing to associate with such one. Since he is classified the same as the one disfellowshiped, "a sharer," then it is reasonable for the same action to be taken against this dissenter. He too can be cut off from Jehovah's favor and from his visible organization.

What if a disfellowshiped person and a member of the congregation both work at the same place of secular employment? Could they have association then, since their work may require them to have communication with one another? Here again, it is a matter of recognizing the changed status of the one who is disfellowshiped. While it is permissible to converse to the extent necessary for carrying out the functions of the work, it would not be proper to associate in the sense of communicating freely, without regard for his status. Only the necessary business would be discussed, never spiritual matters or any other matter that does not come under the category of necessary business related to the secular employment. If the contact required is

too frequent and intimate, the Christian could consider changing his employment so as not to violate his conscience.

However, what is the position of those who are related by blood ties to the one disfellowshiped? What principles are involved regarding headship and the instructing of children in the home? How is reinstatement in time possible? Addition-

ally, with such serious consequences involved, should one be tempted not to confess his wrongdoing if no one would have known otherwise? And, finally, how can one guard against a course that will lead to being disfellowshiped? For information on these vital matters, we look forward to succeeding issues of the *Watchtower* magazine.

PRESERVING OUR SOULS ALIVE BY FAITHFULNESS

WHAT benefit will it be to a man if he gains the whole world but forfeits his soul [life]? or what will a man give in exchange for his soul" or life? (Matt. 16:26) Why did Jesus ask these questions? To underscore the value of one's soul or life. Without life we could enjoy nothing else; all material possessions would be useless. He who is wise, therefore, will not only recognize the truth of Jesus' words but will act in harmony with them. He will be among those who "have faith to the preserving alive of the soul"—Heb. 10:39.*

It would be impossible to be faithful, to be true and constant, without faith. Thus we find that the men listed at Hebrews chapter 11 as men of faith were also, one and all, faithful. In particular did such men as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua and David prove faithful over many, many years. Of course, the greatest example of all, the one who underwent the severest test as to faithfulness, was none other than Jesus Christ, "the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith," who "for the joy that was set before him," that of vindicating his Father's name, "endured a torture stake, despising shame." Fittingly he has received the title "Faithful and True."—Heb. 12:2; Rev. 19:11.

Such examples of faith and faithfulness give us confidence that we too can have faith and keep faithful to the preserving alive of our souls. Not in our own strength or wisdom, but with the help of Jehovah God, who is faithful, even as the apostle Peter assures us: "Let those who are suffering in harmony with the will of God keep on commanding their souls to a faithful Creator while they are doing good." Jehovah's promise to Joshua also

applies to his servants today: "I shall neither desert you nor leave you entirely."—1 Pet. 4:19; Josh. 1:5.

A first step toward proving unfaithful is one's shrinking back. This shrinking back may begin very subtly, and therein lies the danger. We can start on the road leading to unfaithfulness and eventual destruction without hardly being aware of it. How so? Simply by slowing down or by refusing to make progress, by refusing to meet the challenge that new truths or added privileges of service or change in methods of work presents. This shrinking back may be due to laziness, because of the effort involved, or it may be due to materialism, because of the self-denial involved.

Preserving our souls alive by faithfulness is by no means a matter of following the lines of least resistance. On the contrary, we must fight the fine fight of faith and as fine soldiers endure the suffering of evil. And, as the facts already are indicating, we can expect our way to become ever more difficult until the final assault of Gog of Magog on the spiritually prosperous New World society. We must begin now to steel ourselves for what the future may bring.—1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 2:3.

However, for our faith to ensure our faithfulness it must be far more than merely a belief, a wish or a hope. It must be an "assured expectation of things hoped for." That means being so sure of what we hope for that it spurs us to act in harmony with our hope. This faith is also said to be "the evident demonstration of realities though not beheld." Our grasp of evidence giving reason for conviction is so strong that it is said to be faith. Such faith moves one to perform works of faith.—Heb. 11:1.

Of what do these works consist? On the one

* For details see *The Watchtower*, December 15, 1962.

hand, they consist of right conduct, keeping strict watch that how you walk is as a wise person, so that instead of bringing forth the works of the flesh you will be bringing forth the fruitage of the spirit, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control." And on the other hand, these works consist of activity in fulfillment of the Christian's preaching commission by your preaching the good news of God's kingdom, buying out the opportune time to do so.—Gal. 5:22, 23; Eph. 5:15, 16.

During the month of July the Christian

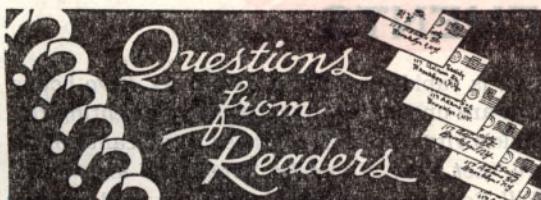
witnesses of Jehovah will have many opportunities to demonstrate their faith by faithfulness in their preaching commission, to the preserving alive of their souls. Among these will be offering Bible-study aids in preaching from house to house, even doing some of this witnessing in territories where there are no Witnesses organized into congregations. Also, for many in the United States and in Europe July will afford opportunity to attend the round-the-world convention of Jehovah's witnesses before it moves on to the Orient. Will you be among those present?

Water-witching and ESP

AFTER reading the article "Protection from Wicked Spirit Forces," in *The Watchtower* of November 15, 1962, the president of The American Society of Dowsers, Inc., wrote a letter taking exception to the conclusion reached in the article; namely, that because of the link to extrasensory perception or spiritism Christians do well to abstain from water-witching or divining for water or minerals. Nonetheless, the president of The American Society of Dowsers, Inc., does give that society's view as to how dowsing works. He writes: "The point of the article is, perhaps, well taken. We agree with the theory that dowsing is a form of ESP and that engaging in any form of ESP can lead to 'possession' or the involvement with 'wicked spirit

forces' unless proper precautions are taken. . . . We prefer the positive approach of warning people interested in dowsing of the dangers."

Even though the American dowsing society sincerely believes that dowsers can take precautions to avoid "possession" and that much good can be accomplished through forms of ESP, the thing that Christians must keep in mind is that any form of divination or spiritism is condemned by God because of its very nature. It is not holy angels that are behind this ESP but wicked angels or evil spirit creatures whose objective is to mislead mankind. Abstaining from ESP in all its forms is not only proper Scriptural precaution but it is also obedience to God.—Rev. 21:8.



• Would it be correct to say that the "royal priesthood" refers only to the anointed Christians but that the term "general priesthood" includes both the remnant of anointed Christians and the "great crowd" of praisers to Jehovah?—V. K., United States.

The teaching concerning a "general priesthood" is a doctrine in Christendom and as such it is also called "the priesthood of all believers."

It is defined by Webster's *Third New International Dictionary* as "a doctrine of the Protestant Christian Church: every individual has direct access to God without ecclesiastical mediation and each individual shares the responsibility of ministering to the other members of the community of believers." The term basically carries the thought that every Christian should tell others about God's Word and purposes and not leave the responsibility up to a "clergy" class. "This doctrine," says *The Interpreter's Bible*, "is a declaration not so much of right as of responsibility." (Vol. 11, p. 619) Viewed from this standpoint—every Christian's taking on the responsibility of preaching—it can be said that this principle, implied by the term "general priesthood," has application to all Christians.

However, if one were to say that both the anointed remnant and the "great crowd" are in the "general priesthood," this would not be Biblically correct. Why? Christendom's belief is that "all Christians are priests before God." (*Theology Today*, October, 1958, p. 303) Actually what the Scriptures teach is that every spirit-begotten Christian is a priest. Hence, viewed Scripturally, the terms priest and priesthood apply solely to the 144,000 members of the "holy priesthood" or "royal priesthood." —1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 14:1-4.

To those spirit-anointed or spirit-begotten Christians of the "holy priesthood" Peter's words about offering up "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" particularly apply. However, since the year 1931, a "great crowd" of sheeplike worshipers of Jehovah God out of all nations and languages have associated themselves with the remnant of the "holy priesthood." (Rev. 7:9-15) Though not of the "holy priesthood," this "great crowd" who have earthly hopes are precious in God's eyes and He fills his house with glory by reason of the fact that so many of these sheeplike worshipers become associated with the priestly class. (Hag. 2:7) Because of all this close contact with the priestly remnant, this "great

crowd" have the same obligation that the remnant have; that is, to declare abroad the excellencies of Jehovah God. This the "great crowd" are doing. In their assisting the remnant of the "royal priesthood," the "great crowd" are compared, not to priests or Levites, but to the Nethinim and Gibeonites who were loyal adherents to the remnant of the faithful Jews, the ancient witnesses of Jehovah. The anti-typical Nethinim and Gibeonites have associated with the priestly remnant in worshiping Jehovah alone as God, willingly becoming temple assistants in support of the remnant of "living stones" of the spiritual temple.

Thus it is in the New World society of Jehovah's witnesses, not in Christendom, that we really find the "general priesthood"—not only the successful application of what is implied by that term but also the existence of a remnant of the "royal priesthood," whose priesthood is truly general because each and every one of them offers up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 2:5) Because the Scriptures themselves limit the words priest and priesthood to anointed Christians, it is Biblically accurate to say that the general priesthood embraces only the spirit-begotten Christians.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

FIELD MINISTRY

In their ministry during July Jehovah's witnesses will continue to manifest faith, to the preserving alive of their souls and to the blessing of men of goodwill. To that end, they will joyfully embrace the opportunity of presenting everywhere the fine Bible-study aids "*Let Your Name Be Sanctified*" and "*Your Will Be Done on Earth*," with two booklets, on a contribution of \$1.

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"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

- August 4: Maturity, a Christian Requirement, and Seeking Maturity in the New World Society, ¶1-8. Page 396.
- August 11: Seeking Maturity in the New World Society, ¶9-35. Page 402.