



The **WATCHTOWER**

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**

FEBRUARY 15, 1969

Semimonthly

LOOK TO THE BIBLE AS
OUR GUIDE IN LIFE

KEEP MAKING STRAIGHT PATHS
FOR YOUR FEET

THE LAST DAYS OF THIS WICKED
SYSTEM OF THINGS

ASSEMBLIES ARE FOR CHILDREN TOO!

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

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

Every watchtower has its purpose. It serves as an elevated place for a wide-awake person with sharp vision. It enables him to see far ahead into the distance and tell those below for whom he is a watchman what is drawing near, whether it is a danger against which to prepare or it is something good over which to be glad with strong faith and hope.

Because of having the name "The Watchtower" this magazine justly has to render a similar useful service to the people of all nations. This is an international magazine and makes no racial distinctions, for we are all facing a common world danger; we are all hoping for a common good.

Ever since "The Watchtower" began to be published in July of 1879 it has looked ahead into the future, always striving to aid its readers to advance in knowledge and to gain a clearer picture of the glorious new order of things that is in store for righteous mankind. No, "The Watchtower" is no inspired prophet, but it follows and explains a Book of prophecy the predictions in which have proved to be unerring and unfailing till now. "The Watchtower" is therefore under safe guidance. It may be read with confidence, for its statements may be checked against that prophetic Book.

Among the many nations of today there are hundreds of differing religions. Which one does this magazine present? Not the confused religions of Christendom, but the religion of the oldest sacred Book on earth. Which Book? The Sacred Bible of the Holy Scriptures, written by inspiration in the name of the Creator of heaven and earth, the only living and true God.

The sacred, nonpolitical purpose of "The Watchtower" is accordingly to encourage and promote study of the Holy Bible and to give our many readers the needed unsectarian help to understand that Book of true religion and infallible prophecy. Thus this magazine will be helping them to prove worthy of perfect life and happiness in God's promised new order under His everlasting kingdom of righteousness.



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

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WHEN YOUTHS
HAVE

SOMETHING FOR WHICH TO LIVE

IT HAS been estimated that the second-greatest cause of death among students from the ages of fifteen to twenty-four is suicide. College students in particular seem subject to it, the suicide rate among them being 50 percent higher than among non-college students in a similar age-group. Why do so many young people with life just beginning for them decide that they have nothing for which to live?

One young girl said that there is no meaning to life. A student in Harvard claims that he has no values to believe in. A fourteen-year-old boy that was caught after holding up a grocery store said: "I am tired of home, sick of school and bored with life."

In many instances parents are to blame because of thinking more of material possessions and of being successful in business than of the need to give their children a system of worthwhile values, something to make life meaningful. One young girl said: "I deeply feel the inadequacy of the values I learned while growing up. Categories of social worth; drive for possession of things and people . . . —all of these break down in

the search for what is really important, and for a style of life that has dignity."

On the other hand there are parents who have given their children a fine system of values. Those young people have found something really worth living for. One such is a young man from Central America. He was offered a scholarship to study music in Austria; this could have led to a promising career in music. Another offer gave him the opportunity to study optics in Germany, with a good-paying job waiting for him. But he turned both offers down because he did not feel that they would make life really meaningful. Having been reared by parents who taught him the fine values of God's Word and the hope it holds out of a peaceful new system of things on earth he chose the service of God as one of Jehovah's witnesses. He remarked that "there is no other occupation that can produce so much satisfaction, tranquillity and reason to live as this service." It channels a person's energies into helping others.

He had good reason to conclude this. The benefits deeply influence both one's present life and his future. The very things many young people want to see—peace, justice and honest rulers—are assured by God to become a reality earth

wide. (Isa. 2:4; 32:1) This gave the youth a sure hope for the future toward which he could work and plan.

He could also see that the values taught by the Bible are practical now. For example, it teaches one to love one's neighbor as oneself. Is this not a sensible way to gain peaceful relations among peoples? If such love were practiced by everyone, how could there be war? How could there be murders, rapes and thievery? Is this not something that youths who cry for love instead of war can believe in? It is a fundamental command of the Bible.
—Matt. 22:39.

The Bible also commands: "Do not be lying to one another." (Col. 3:9) Is this not a sensible command that would make it possible for people to trust one another and to live together harmoniously? Such Biblical commands are practical for everyday living and they give meaning to a person's life. They give him a system of values to guide him.

This proved true for a youth who was once a member of teen-age gangs in New York city. During the time he roamed the streets, getting into trouble with the police, he lived each day as it came. He had no plans for the future and nothing for which to live. His life was patterned according to the dog-eat-dog attitude of the neighborhood.

He had no real friends with whom he could talk and from whom to receive counsel as to what is good and what is bad. He needed love, as do all teen-agers, but it did not exist in his world. It was not until he came into contact with Jehovah's witnesses and attended one of their assemblies that he saw a way of life as different from his own as day and night. He found them to be warm and loving. They took an interest in him and were willing to teach him right principles, which no other adults with whom he

had had contact made any effort to do.

By means of the Bible studies they conducted with him he learned the fine principles contained in God's Word. These provided him with a system of values that gave meaning to his life. He also acquired for the first time a goal in life because of the new system of things that God has purposed for the earth. Now this young man is helping others to have something for which to live.

Another youth with something to live for became disturbed at the utterly materialistic viewpoint of the students and teachers in the college that he was attending. The students had no real hope for the future, but took the attitude of "living it up" today, for tomorrow they might die. This and the organized cheating on examinations convinced him that what he had been learning from Bible studies with Jehovah's witnesses was of greater value than college. He quit college and progressed in his Bible studies to the point where he was able to devote his full time to helping others learn about God's purposes. The Bible had given him values to believe in and a meaning to life.

There is also the experience of a seventeen-year-old "hippie." By associating with Jehovah's witnesses she began learning about the practical principles of God's Word and the new system of things God has purposed for the earth. This changed her life. She said: "I realize that all this 'hippie' world, with its drugs, was just Satan's trap to destroy us kids." Now, instead of floating aimlessly and hopelessly about, she has a goal for which to live.

Thus we see that there are young people who have found something for which to live, something that gives meaning to their lives and a system of values they can believe in. Now they have fine guiding principles, loving friends and a glowing future.

THE Bible speaks of the time in which we are living as the "last days" or the "time of the end." (2 Tim. 3:1; Dan. 11:40) The facts show that this is a limited period that has a definite beginning and a definite end. It began in 1914 when Jesus Christ was enthroned as king in the heavens. It will end when God destroys this present wicked system of things. What a relief it will be when the organizations and persons that cheat and oppress, and all who endanger the security of their fellowmen, are gone!

How soon will that be? God's own Son, Jesus Christ, gives the answer. After drawing attention to the many things that mark the period from 1914 onward as the "time of the end," Jesus said: "This generation will by no means pass away until all these things occur." (Matt. 24:34) Which generation did he mean?

Jesus had just referred to persons who would "see all these things." "These things" are the events that have taken place since 1914 and those yet to occur down to the end of this wicked system. (Matt. 24:33) Persons born even as much as fifty years ago could not see "all these things." They came on the scene after the foretold events were already under way.

However, there are people still living who were alive in 1914 and saw what was happening then and who were old enough

The Last Days

of This Wicked System of Things

that they still remember those events. This generation is getting up in years now. A great number of them have already passed away in death. Yet Jesus very pointedly said: "This generation will by no means pass away

until all these things occur." Some of them will still be alive to see the end of this wicked system. This means that only a short time is left before the end comes! (Ps. 90:10) So now is the time to take urgent action if you do not want to be swept away with this wicked system.

WHY A "TIME OF THE END"

Although the Kingdom came to power in 1914, Jehovah did not immediately destroy those who were not serving him. How glad we can be of that! For God's long-suffering has afforded us the opportunity to take a firm stand for his kingdom, and so escape destruction. The Bible helps us to view this matter in the proper light, saying: "Jehovah is not slow respecting his promise, as some people consider slowness, but he is patient with you because he does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentence."—2 Pet. 3:9; see also Matthew 24:21, 22 and Romans 2:4.

To this end, Jehovah God has allowed time for a separating work during these "last days." In his description of the "conclusion of the system of things,"



Jesus foretold this activity, saying: "When the Son of man [Jesus Christ] 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. Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who have my Father's blessing, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world.' . . . Then he will say, in turn, to those on his left, 'Be on your way from me, you who have been cursed, into the everlasting fire [of destruction] prepared for the Devil and his angels.' . . . And these will depart into everlasting cutting-off, but the righteous ones into everlasting life."—Matt. 25: 31-46.

When judgment is executed at the conclusion of these "last days," the ones destroyed will go into "everlasting cutting-off." There will be no return to life by a resurrection for them. (2 Thess. 1:7-9) So, now, during these "last days," God has graciously given men everywhere opportunity to choose the side of his kingdom and live.

How does God do this? How is the separating work accomplished? Under angelic direction God's loyal servants throughout the earth proclaim the message of God's kingdom so that honest-hearted persons can hear and act upon it. This is the work that Jesus foretold as part of the "sign" indicating the nearness of the end, saying: "Also, in all the nations the good news has to be preached first."—Mark 13:10; see also Matthew 24:14 and Revelation 14:6, 7.

On the basis of their response to this message, and of their attitude toward those whom Jehovah uses as his mes-

sengers, the people are judged as to whether they will be preserved alive or not. (Matt. 25:40, 45) If you want life under the kingdom of God, it is vital to show it now by responding favorably to the Kingdom message and urging others to do the same. In the near future this preaching work will be finished. The door of opportunity will be closed. Then it will be too late!—Ezek. 33:8, 9.

WHO WILL BE DESTROYED?

In frank terms the Scriptures reveal that, when this wicked system comes to its end, "those slain by Jehovah will certainly come to be . . . from one end of the earth clear to the other end of the earth." (Jer. 25:33) But you do not have to be among the slain. In his Word the Bible God clearly states what kind of persons, systems and organizations will be destroyed. Being forewarned, persons who love life, and who sincerely want to do what is right in the eyes of God, can get out of the danger zone.

That Jehovah God will see that his servants have a place of security when this system of things comes to its end is indicated by his prophetic invitation: "Go, my people, enter into your interior rooms, and shut your doors behind you. Hide yourself for but a moment until the denunciation passes over. For, look! Jehovah is coming forth from his place to call to account the error of the inhabitant of the land against him."—Isa. 26:20, 21.

So, then, who does God say will be destroyed? As we might expect, it is the wicked. "When the wicked ones sprout as the vegetation and all the practitioners of what is hurtful blossom forth, it is that they may be annihilated forever." (Ps. 92:7) But let us not be misled by adopting the world's viewpoint as to what is righteous and what is wicked. God plainly tells us that much of what this world

views as commonplace is wicked in his eyes.

For example, fornication, adultery and homosexuality may be tolerated by modern-day society, but those who practice such things will not be spared alive by God at the end of this system of things. Likewise, those who are liars, thieves, drunkards and murderers will be barred from the realm of God's kingdom. (1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Rev. 21:8) Some may have become involved in such practices because of bad associations. But now, knowing what God says, it is vital for these to change their ways if they want to avoid destruction. In God's new system there will be no place for persons who corrupt and cheat and who endanger the lives of their fellowmen.

Nor will there be any organizations that mislead the people, and that includes false religious organizations. The Bible clearly shows that not all religion is approved by God. Jesus Christ forcefully said to certain religious leaders in his day: "Why is it you also overstep the commandment of God because of your tradition?" Then Jesus applied to these men God's own words from Isaiah 29:13, saying: "It is in vain that they keep worshiping me, because they teach commands of men as doctrines." (Matt. 15:3-9) So it should not surprise us that religion built on falsehood will become a thing of the past.

A religious organization may have beautiful buildings and colorful rituals, but if it does not teach the truth about God it really serves the purpose of the enemy of God, Satan the Devil. (1 Cor. 10:20; 2 Cor. 11:13-15) It may make some use of God's Word, but if it seeks to be a part of the world by having a say in worldly affairs, then it is not obeying Jesus' instruction to his followers: "You are no part of the world." Therefore, as the Bible declares, that religious organization

becomes "an enemy of God."—John 15:19; Jas. 4:4.

Do we want to be numbered among God's enemies? If not, it is up to us to prove to God now that we are not in sympathy with them, that we find pleasure only in the truth and that we ourselves practice worship that is "clean and undefiled from the standpoint of our God and Father."—Jas. 1:27.

Also in line for destruction is the political system that has so cruelly oppressed mankind. As any study of history reveals, this system has a record of bloodshed and greedy grasping for power. Fittingly, God's Word compares the entire political arrangement on earth to a "wild beast," and it explains why the governments have manifested beastly qualities. It tells us that Satan the Devil, "the dragon," has given the worldly governments their power and that they operate under his control.—Rev. 13:2; Dan. 8:20, 21; Luke 4:5-8.

God makes this information available to us so that we can decide intelligently as to whether we will have anything to do with the political affairs of the world or not. God also informs us what *he* will do. In Daniel 2:44 he speaks of the time when "the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin." The evidence shows that the setting up of the kingdom of God took place in the heavens in 1914 C.E. But, as to the action that God's kingdom will take in the near future, in the war of Armageddon or Har-Magedon, God goes on to say: "It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms [existing at the time of the end], and it itself will stand to times indefinite."—See also Revelation 16:14, 16; 19:17-21.

After Satan's entire visible system has been crushed, Jehovah will next turn his attention to Satan the Devil, the one whom the Bible calls "the god of this system

of things." He will crush Satan, and he will do this soon. (2 Cor. 4:4; Rom. 16:20) At the time the Devil was ousted from heaven following the establishment of the Kingdom in 1914, Satan knew that he had only "a short period of time." (Rev. 12:12) Now that time is even shorter.

Soon the prophetic vision recorded at Revelation 20:1-3 will be fulfilled: "I saw an angel coming down out of heaven with the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he seized the dragon, the original serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, . . . And he hurled him into the abyss and shut it and sealed it over him." So Satan, together with his demons, will be taken out of the way. Their influence will be gone. This present wicked system of things will have come to its end.

True Christians here on earth will have no part in that destruction. It is God's war. He will use angelic forces under Christ to carry out the execution. He will also cause one part of Satan's visible organization to turn on the other in violent hatred. But Jehovah's servants on earth are not to join the violence, for the Bible shows that the warfare of Christians is spiritual, not physical. "We do not wage warfare according to what we are in the flesh," wrote the Christian apostle Paul. "For the weapons of our warfare are not fleshly."—2 Cor. 10:3, 4.

Even when persecution is directed against them, Christians must not retaliate by seeking revenge against the rulers or trying to overthrow the government. They wait on God. "Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but yield place to the wrath; for it is written: 'Vengeance is mine; I will repay,' says Jehovah."—Rom. 12:19.

WHAT WILL NEVER END
The end of this system of things will not be the end for this planet earth. God's

own Word guarantees: "The earth abideth for ever." "He has founded the earth upon its established places; it will not be made to totter to time indefinite, or forever." (Eccl. 1:4, AV; Ps. 104:5) It is not the earth that is at fault, but the wicked system upon it.

Furthermore, not all human life will come to an end. "Ungodly men" will be destroyed. (2 Pet. 3:7) The people who made up the unbelieving world will be gone. But, after stating this, 1 John 2:17 adds: "He that does the will of God remains forever." It was to make this possible that Jesus Christ gave his life on behalf of mankind. Concerning that, Hebrews 5:9 says: "After he had been made perfect he became responsible for everlasting salvation to all those obeying him."

The marvelous prospect of eternal life under the righteous kingdom of God awaits the survivors of the end of this wicked system of things. Will you be one of them? You may well be. But, if so, you must keep close in mind these words of inspired counsel: "There are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to his promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell. Hence, beloved ones, since you are awaiting these things, do your utmost to be found finally by him spotless and unblemished and in peace." (2 Pet. 3:13, 14) Yes, you must "do your utmost" now, so that God's Word will deeply influence your entire life. "Quit being fashioned after this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over, that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Rom. 12:1, 2) Doing so leads to survival. How thankful we can be that Jehovah, in his love and mercy, has made provision for survival!

Look to the BIBLE as Our GUIDE in Life



"Keep making straight paths for your feet,
that what is lame may not be put out of
joint, but rather that it may be healed."

—Heb. 12:13.

FOR forty years the Israelites had wandered about in the wilderness, without home, without land, without association with any other peoples. For forty years they had been guided and sustained entirely by the hand of God. He had supplied their food, miraculous manna from heaven. He had even brought water out of the rocks by his mediator, Moses. Now this chosen people of God stood on the desert plains of Moab across the Jordan from Jericho, over six hundred thousand able-bodied men, their wives and their children. They were a strong and virile nation of young men and women, no more than a small minority being past the age of sixty. Many of them, perhaps even the majority, had been born in the wilderness. They had known nothing but tent life and desert bleakness, but across the Jordan was a rich and fertile land, a land of milk and honey, of wheat and barley, of fruit trees and flowers, a land of song and laughter, a land of peacefulness—a Land of Promise.

1. Under what conditions had the Israelites depended upon Jehovah for forty years, and what prospect awaited them?

² But they were surrounded by enemies: men, women and children who did not worship Jehovah, who would rather see Israel destroyed than to see their own way of life disturbed; enemies who would use every means they had to prevent this young nation from entering the land and from inheriting its possession promised by God. So it was that Balak, the king of Moab, hired the prophet Balaam to curse Jehovah's people. Three times he tried to curse the Israelites, but each time the Almighty God controlled Balaam's tongue to turn the intended curse into a blessing upon Israel, making it clear that "there is no unlucky spell against Jacob, nor any divination against Israel."—Num. 23:23.

³ Then Balaam found the only way to break the invincibility of this strong people. He enticed them away from their God, Jehovah, their Protector and Source of strength. He advised the king of Moab to bring Jehovah's own curse upon his

2. Against what did they need to be on guard, and how did Balak fail in his designs against Israel?
3. (a) What means did Balaam find to break the invincibility of Israel, and what resulted? (b) What prompt and positive action caused Jehovah to stop the plague?

people by luring them into idolatry through fornication with female idol worshipers. The Bible record reads (Num. 25:1-3): "Then the people started to have immoral relations with the daughters of Moab. And the women came calling the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people began to eat and to bow down to their gods. So Israel attached itself to the Baal of Peor; and the anger of Jehovah began to blaze against Israel." Hence the judges of Israel were ordered to kill the men who had had an attachment with this false god, Baal of Peor. But even while the elders were at the entrance of the tent of meeting mourning Israel's defection, an Israelite chieftain's son named Zimri brazenly brought a Midianite woman into the camp before the eyes of Moses and all the assembly. Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest, in a prompt and positive action, took a lance in his hand, followed them into the vaulted tent and pierced them both through. "At that the scourge was halted from upon the sons of Israel. And those who died from the scourge amounted to twenty-four thousand." (Num. 25:8, 9) Twenty-four thousand offenders died at Jehovah's hand. They failed to enter the Promised Land when they stood at its brink. They had yielded to selfish passion and had forsaken their God Jehovah as their Guide in life.

⁴ But that was not all. One man who had not succumbed to the bawdy sex orgies of the Baal of Peor was still not invulnerable. He too fell victim to selfish passion, but his was greed and avarice, the subtle snare of materialism. And his self-indulgence cost the lives of thirty-six of his brother Israelites.

⁵ It was after the city of Jericho had been miraculously delivered into the hands

of God's people and they had gone up against the city of Ai to take it. Joshua, their leader, had sent only three thousand armed men, expecting an easy victory in view of the inferior forces of the enemy. However, the men of Ai poured out of the city and completely routed them, killing thirty-six of the men of Israel. Joshua and the older men fell on their faces before Jehovah in an earnest appeal to determine the cause of this disaster. Jehovah told them why: "Israel has sinned, and they have also overstepped my covenant that I laid as a command upon them; and they have also taken some of the thing devoted to destruction and have also stolen and also kept it secret and have also put it among their own articles." The very next morning, as Jehovah directed, Joshua gathered the entire nation together and, by elimination, finally singled out Achan as the man who was guilty before Jehovah. Under pressure of questioning, Achan admitted that he had appropriated to himself some of the spoil from the city of Jericho that Jehovah had set apart as sacred to his own service. Achan was thereby condemned and, along with his whole family who apparently condoned his action, he was stoned to death.—Josh. 7:1-25.

WARNING THE UNWARY

⁶ Today God's people stand at the brink of a new order administered in righteousness, with everlasting life in view. And every curse that has been brought against this people by Satan's world has been turned into a blessing by Jehovah. But, just like Balaam and the people of Moab, the present wicked system holds out the enticing and seductive influence of sex worship and many other immoral practices such as lying, cheating and stealing.

4. How were the Israelites to be tested further?

5. (a) Why did Jehovah remove his favor from Israel, and how was this brought to light? (b) What penalty was imposed upon the wrongdoer, and why?

6. (a) In what parallel position do God's people stand today as compared with the Israelites on the plains of Moab? (b) What protection do we have?

Are we immune? The record says No! Every year several thousand are disfellowshipped from God's organization because they forsake Jehovah and his righteous principles, because they *fail to look to the Bible as their guide in life*. Only a few of these will realize what they have lost, repent, and correct their bad course of conduct. All the rest will never enter into the marvelous blessings of the new system of things. How can *we* avoid this tragedy?

⁷ The action taken by both Zimri and Achan was deliberate. They knew their respective courses were contrary to Jehovah's express commandments. But it is unlikely that in either case the specific acts that caused them to lose their lives were prompted by desires they had never entertained before. James, the brother of Jesus, describes willful transgression as the result of progressive wrong thinking: "Each one is tried by being drawn out and enticed by his own desire. Then the desire, when it has become fertile, gives birth to sin; in turn, sin, when it has been

accomplished, brings forth death." (Jas. 1:14, 15) Both of these men were under the Law of God mediated by Moses and were subject to its sanctions. Today we are under the law of Christ, and the sanction of that law is the spirit of God motivating us to righteousness. (Rom. 6: 18, 19; 7:6; Gal. 5:16-18) But it is the same spirit that is operating on the Christian congregation and its overseers who are appointed by God's spirit. (Acts 20: 28) Therefore, if we are moved by God's spirit, if we allow God's spirit through his Word and his organization to guide our lives, then there is no reason why we cannot know in advance when wrong desire is likely to cause us to fall into the snare that entrapped Zimri and Achan and avoid it. The question is, Are we genuinely and sincerely interested in being guided by God's spirit, or do we really prefer to follow the inclinations of our own desires and, in order to indulge ourselves, prefer to gamble on the consequences for whatever outcome may befall us?

⁸ The overseers and ministerial assistants in the congregation are gifts in men, given by Christ with a view to the edifying and strengthening of the members of the Christian congregations throughout the earth. (Eph. 4:8, 11, 12) They are

7. (a) According to James, what causes willful transgression of God's law? (b) In what two directions can we be led, and what is the directing force in each?



Christians need to look to the Bible as their guide in life if they are to avoid falling victim to immoral practices as did Achan, whose greed cost the lives of thirty-six fellow Israelites

8. How do the servants in the congregation provide a protection, and why do they feel a responsibility?

men who have grown to maturity in the observance of God's law and who have, through experience and training in God's righteous requirements, learned what is needed to measure up to God's requirements and to keep his law. They are constantly alert, therefore, to the condition of the congregation and its members under their care and are quick to recognize symptoms of spiritual weakness that could cause serious spiritual sickness or lead to a fatal transgression of God's law. Being deeply concerned for the flock of God, knowing that they must render an account (Heb. 13:17), they readily accept their responsibility to follow the admonition of the apostle Paul to the Galatians (Gal. 6:1, 2): "Brothers, even though a man takes some false step before he is aware of it, you who have spiritual qualifications try to restore such a man in a spirit of mildness, as you each keep an eye on yourself, for fear you also may be tempted. Go on carrying the burdens of one another, and thus fulfill the law of the Christ."

THE SERIOUSNESS OF DEFLECTION

⁹ When such symptoms are observed and called to a brother's attention, what should his attitude be? Obviously it should be one of appreciation for this provision that Jehovah has made within his organization. He should recognize that the counsel is from God's Word and be willing to follow it as his guide. If, on the other hand, he becomes offended, or persistently tries to justify a wrong course of action, would it not all the more indicate the wisdom of the counsel and the serious need to call the misdeed to his attention? Might it not indicate that his inclination may al-

ready be so strong that the appeal of the worldly course of wrongdoing outweighs the motivating spirit of God toward conformity with the theocratic Scriptural viewpoint? Might it not strongly suggest that the offender has already been led to a dangerous point in his deflection, perhaps already beyond the reach of God's Word? What is to prevent him now from going farther toward transgression that can produce death? "Do not be misled: God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap; because he who is sowing with a view to his flesh will reap corruption from his flesh, but he who is sowing with a view to the spirit will reap everlasting life from the spirit."—Gal. 6:7, 8.

¹⁰ Never, then, should we minimize the seriousness of deflection, even in a minor way. Because, what does deflection mean? It means a deviation, a bending or turning aside from a true course. And any deviation, no matter how slight, causes an ever widening gap the farther it is pursued. The only way the deviator can ever be brought back on course is to change his direction again, and when you look back over the zigzag trail such a one has left behind him, what a difficult road it has been! How much simpler it is to "keep making straight paths for your feet, that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather that it may be healed."—Heb. 12:13.

¹¹ The influence of Satan's system of things is very strong on all of us. Sometimes we may not appreciate how much or in just what ways. It is possible to get caught up in a pattern of thinking or acting that may seem innocent enough at

10. Why should we not minimize even a minor deflection from Jehovah's requirements? What is really a simpler course, and why?

11. How is it possible to take a false step without realizing it, and what safeguard should we be thankful for?

9. What attitude should we take when counseled, and what might failure to do so strongly suggest?

the start, but, in time, it may lead into serious trouble. This viewpoint or course of action may actually lead into the taking of a false step, a deviation from a Scriptural standard or in violation of a Scriptural principle, yet go unnoticed by the one adopting it because of ignorance of the standard or principle, because of being unaware of the extent to which it can lead or because of momentarily relaxing one's guard. Whatever the circumstance that has allowed it, how thankful we should be that Jehovah through his Word or his organization, as represented in the servants of the congregation, is on the watch, does observe the false step and call it to our attention.

¹² The servants of the congregation may not always know just what the real problem is, but become aware that something is wrong by certain observable trends or attitudes. It may be a tendency to miss meetings, to turn back assignments in the Theocratic Ministry School, or a growing air of independence, a lessening spiritual quality in conversation, an increasing "style consciousness" in dress. Whatever it might be, the servants are concerned because of the indication that the spiritual welfare of the individual is endangered. But their concern goes even farther because they know that what affects an individual will also affect the entire congregation. The apostle Paul said: "We have become a theatrical spectacle to the world" (1 Cor. 4:9), indicating that the course we take is observed by those outside the congregation. If a false step is pursued until transgression occurs, the reflection is on the entire congregation. It is not always necessary either for absolute wrongdoing to occur before reproach

is brought on the organization. The observation of one public schoolteacher illustrates this: "I used to admire the children of Jehovah's witnesses. They were always so well mannered and clean looking. I hate to say this, but I just can't see the difference in some of them anymore. Their clothes and their hairdos, they look and act just like all the rest of the children." Anyone visiting the congregational meetings of Jehovah's witnesses would know that this observation is the exception rather than the rule, but the fact that such a statement could be made is cause for concern, and those servants in congregations where such trends are noted would like to help correct them so that "what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather that it may be healed."

¹³ Some might argue that the cause of truth would be helped along if we were to appear as "progressive" and "up-to-date" as the most modern ones of the world, meeting them on their own terms, as it were. But that is reasoning from a false premise. The end does not justify the means. Jehovah does not want people associating with his organization because it is popular and modern. He wants individuals who love righteousness and who are willing to live by principle. An example of this is to be found in the early Corinthian congregation. Some of those associated thought notoriety would bring fame to the congregation. When the apostle Paul heard of it he wrote: "Actually fornication is reported among you, and such fornication as is not even among the nations, that a wife a certain man has of his father. And are you puffed up, and did you not rather mourn, in order that the

12. (a) How can the congregation's servants know when a false step has been taken? (b) For what two-fold reason are they concerned to the point of taking appropriate action?

13. (a) What is wrong in thinking that we can win people by meeting them on their own terms, and how was this point proved in the Corinthian congregation? (b) What dangers lie in the fear of being different in appearance from worldly associates?

man that committed this deed should be taken away from your midst? Your cause for boasting is not fine. Do you not know that a little leaven ferments the whole lump? Clear away the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, according as you are free from ferment." (1 Cor. 5:1, 2, 6, 7) Paul found it necessary to take immediate and drastic action to cleanse this congregation. This he did by disfellowshipping the transgressors of God's law and by straightening out the wrong thinking of others who condoned the wrongdoing. Just as leaven of sin ferments the whole congregation, so a wrong inclination toward copying the styles, customs and manners of this world will contaminate the thinking ability and theocratic viewpoint. If we are afraid to present a different appearance than that of our associates in the world, what is to prevent us from going a step farther and compromising our Christian principles so as not to be too different? Or what is to prevent us from adopting worldly reasoning in handling our problems? This will not produce in us the fruitage of God's spirit, but rather the fruitage of the spirit of this world, which can eventually lead to transgression of God's law. (Gal. 5:16-18) As indicated by James, acts of immorality seldom come without warning. Wrong desire seldom springs suddenly into full bloom. Usually two ingredients are necessary, inclination and opportunity. If we look to the Bible as our guide in life, we will endeavor to eliminate both from our lives as completely as possible.

THE DANGER OF BAD ASSOCIATIONS

¹⁴ Bad associations, because of their contaminating influence, provide all the ingredients for slipping into immorality.

14. In what way do bad associations provide all the ingredients for slipping into immorality, and how can this be illustrated?

Principles are weakened, which tends to encourage wrong inclinations. Besides, the opportunity for wrongdoing is always present, enabling one to be stampeded easily into an unwise course either through ignorance or fear of ridicule. Also the transgression of anyone in the group brings guilt upon all as accessories. One young brother was making fine progress in the ministry, but he chose also to associate with schoolmates who cared nothing about Bible principles. One day, for excitement, they decided to take a few bottles of soda from a delivery truck. To them it seemed like a harmless prank, but the driver saw them and came running out to teach the youngsters a lesson. Before anyone knew what was going on, one of the boys pulled out a switchblade knife and stabbed the driver in the stomach. It killed him. The young minister who was with the gang was disfellowshipped from his congregation and is now in a reform school. Achan, too, brought disaster upon the entire nation and paid for it with his own life. Nor was the nation free of guilt until he was purged from their midst.—Josh. 7:20-25.

¹⁵ No one holding to Christian principles would voluntarily commit fornication. But prudence would dictate also avoiding circumstances that could lead to being raped. Dinah overlooked this possibility in her association with the young daughters of the Canaanites. The amorous son of Hamor saw her and violated her. Had she not been in association with those who did not fear the true God, she would have been spared this degrading experience. (Gen. 34:1, 2) In our own time, similar precautions should be taken. The wise course is to avoid immodest dress, travel-

15. (a) What mistake did Dinah make, and how can its result to her serve as a warning to us? (b) What opposite course did Joseph take, and how can it be an example to us?

ing alone in unfrequented or isolated places or in dangerous neighborhoods. Take a proper escort and avoid the company of those who are not restrained by dedication to Jehovah and a love of right principles. Joseph, Dinah's brother, chose the wise course

while he was enslaved in Egypt. When the wife of his master, Potiphar, tried repeatedly to seduce him, he consistently

refused to turn aside from what he knew was right and pleasing to God. He tried, as far as his enslaved condition would permit it, to avoid being exposed to this temptation, and when this brazen woman finally tried to force him into immoral relations with her, he turned and ran from her room, leaving his coat behind in her hand. He would rather take whatever punishment she could devise against him than displease Jehovah by transgressing his law. Joseph was blessed by the true God for his firm resolve.

—Gen. 39:7-23.

¹⁶ If we love Jehovah sincerely with a genuine desire to do his will, no problem we may face is so deep-rooted that it cannot be solved by a proper application of Bible principles. Anyone who is indifferent to responsibility and is reluctant to pull away completely from worldly standards will, in time, become so ingrained in this way of thinking that disaster will certainly strike in some way or another. We are no different today, in this respect, than God's people have been in times past. Achan's materialistic viewpoint and his wrong desire led him to steal from God, thereby contaminating the whole congre-

16. (a) What is the danger to anyone reluctant to pull away completely from worldly standards? (b) How is this illustrated in the case of Achan, the Corinthian congregation and Dinah? (c) What solution does Jehovah hold out to us, and what part does the congregation as a whole have in it?

gation and bringing death to thirty-six of his fellow Israelites as well as his own family. Some in the Corinthian congregation were so anxious to please their wicked neighbors that they even condoned incest, thinking fame might come through notoriety.

Only Paul's strong discipline of the congregation, applying Bible principles and disfellowshipping the wrongdoer, saved the spirit of the con-

gregation. Dinah thought she could associate with unbelievers with immunity. She lost her virginity and brought death to all the males of Shechem. Her brother, Joseph, on the other hand, refused to compromise his principles, even though he was far from home and in a strange land, separated from his family. He proved that God loves and protects those who love him and keep his righteous requirements. So, are you one of a family that embraces the truth, or do you stand alone? It makes no difference. We have these problems in common. They belong to the entire congregation. The congregation through its appointed servants must take an active interest in them. There is one solution for all. It is found in the Bible. As the psalmist wrote: "Your word is a lamp to my foot, and a light to my roadway." (Ps. 119:105) Yes, we have God's promise that the Bible will lead us unerringly through the wilderness of Satan's system of things, it will protect us in the presence and from the influence of immoral men and women who practice the worship of the modern Baal of Peor and it will make us ever stronger in God's love and bring us safely and unscathed into the new order of righteousness just ahead—if we look to the Bible as our guide in life.

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- Laying a Foundation for the Right Kind of Ministers.
- 'Sounding Down' the Truth into Minds and Hearts of Believers.
- How God Will Free Mankind from Sickness and Death.

KEEP MAKING STRAIGHT PATHS FOR YOUR FEET

IN THE year 1914 the most radical change in man's history began. Even when viewed apart from Bible prophecy, which marks it as the beginning of the end of this present system of things, the era of events that began in that year is unprecedented. It has properly been called "the age of violence."

² In ancient times, customs changed little from generation to generation, so that for hundreds, even thousands of years, the sons lived much like the fathers. But beginning about the time of the so-called Reformation, each successive generation wanted to build, to go beyond what had already been done, so that real progress resulted from that time forward until 1914. But from 1914 everything started to go into reverse, so much so that one news editor was forced to admit: "The last completely 'normal' year in history was 1913, the year before World War I began." Not that great strides have not been made scientifically. But the progress in development of social relations on individual as well as international levels exploded in 1914 into the worst war the world had yet known and has degenerated since then to what is commonly viewed as near anarchy at the present time.

³ One outstanding prophecy foretelling

this "age of violence" and its widespread moral decay is that found in Paul's second letter to Timothy: "But know this, that in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power"; and then Paul adds: "and from these turn away." (2 Tim. 3:1-5) In this age of violence there are many who desire to "turn away" from such associations and who do find security and peace. But there are others who find it difficult to realize that standards have sunk so low. Having had no other association, they have accepted these conditions as 'normal,' proper, because everyone lives that way. On the other hand, some recoil from the full impact of the insecurity and futility of the modern way of life but look for refuge in the many youth cults that have sprung up around the world, or seek escape through various forms of drugs and dope. Even adults express their dissatisfaction with present conditions by movements of "civil disobedience," which often end in riots,

1. What has the period of time since 1914 been called?
2. What difference can be seen in successive generations since 1914 as compared with former times?
3. (a) What conditions did Paul foretell for this present time, and what admonition did he add? (b) What different reactions are there to these conditions?

looting and murderous sniping at civilians and law-enforcement officers.

RECOGNIZING THE SOURCE

⁴ Paul calls these times "critical" and "hard to deal with." But why should they present such a problem to those who know we are living in the "last days"? One reason is that these conditions, rapidly as they have developed, have been subtly introduced by the "god of this system of things" to make them appear as a natural sequence of events that have no more significance in themselves than troublesome times in the past. As a result, the radical changes in customs and disintegrating moral standards are viewed by the unwary as of no real significance and as nothing against which to be on guard. For example, when dances like the "twist" and all its later developments are introduced, the young accept them eagerly and without question, while their parents raise their eyebrows or smile indulgently for a while and then take them up with almost equal fervor, ostensibly in order to project the youthful image themselves. What they fail to realize is that such dances have their origin in pagan fertility dances that were performed in times past as a part of immoral religious rites. And just as they were designed to arouse the sexual emotions of the participants in the religious orgies, so their modern-day counterparts contribute to the loosening of moral inhibitions. Those who subscribe to the modern morality that allows for premarital sex relations have no objection to this. But what of those who have no such end in view, who may be indulging themselves simply because it is the custom? Such ones should not deceive themselves. They are still affected emotionally in the same way. Stimulation of

this sort inevitably leads to improper inclinations, and those who entertain wrong desires can be just as completely overtaken as the twenty-four thousand were in succumbing to the Baal of Peor in the days of Israel.—Num. 25:1-9.

⁵ The growing acceptance of the standard allowing free premarital sex relations, and even adultery under certain circumstances, has weakened the moral perception of some who make a pretext of holding onto Bible principles. Such ones assume that as long as they refrain from the act of fornication itself, anything else is permissible. On the basis of such fallacious reasoning they indulge themselves in the most extreme forms of petting. This is making a mockery of the law of Christ requiring cleanliness and sanctity on the part of anyone professing to be a Christian. Paul said: "Therefore, since we have these promises, beloved ones, let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear." (2 Cor. 7:1) How can those tantalizing themselves with such wrong desires harmonize their course with Jesus' words in his Sermon on the Mount: "You heard that it was said, 'You must not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone that keeps on looking at a woman so as to have a passion for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart"? (Matt. 5:27, 28) Not only is this kind of conduct a violation of righteous principles but it opens the door wide for transgression that can lead to death. Not only is the inclination to wrongdoing present in the strong desire, but the opportunity is also present. It is a proved reality: anyone putting himself in a compromising position often enough or long enough will eventually succumb. The proverb says: "Can a man rake together fire

4. (a) Why do these conditions prove hard to deal with? (b) How can one be overcome by following such customs as modern dancing?

5. How do some try to justify a wrong course of action, but how is their course a mockery of the law of Christ? What inherent dangers are present?

into his bosom and yet his very garments not be burned?"—Prov. 6:27.

⁶ Those "desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus" therefore should view the customs and practices of modern society with close scrutiny, evaluating them, not according to personal desire or preference, but in the light of God's revealed Word for us. (2 Tim. 3:12) They can be just as damaging, just as detrimental to developing the "new personality" as the more obvious contamination with the world empire of false religion, Babylon the Great, from which we have been admonished to flee. We are clearly shown that association with any form of false worship means to be guilty of the same sins that will soon cause the downfall of this great empire. (Rev. 18:4) But what we may not realize is that we can become just as fatally a part of this doomed system of things by adopting its customs and practices and thereby diverting our thinking and eventually our interests into its way of life. Religious traditions and even the demands of Caesar are age-old, but the way of life, the customs, the mode of dress, the manners, these all belong to the generation. In times past, these centered around and were influenced in large measure by the religious life of the people. Today, the world is rapidly turning into a godless civilization, but its customs and way of life are no less influenced by its thinking. To become a part of the way of life of this system, then, is to become a part of its thinking. Sharing its sins means to share in its end.

PERSONAL PREFERENCE VERSUS DISCRETION

⁷ Today, style of dress is largely a mat-

6. Adopting the customs and practices of modern society can be just as damaging as what other forms of contamination? Why?

7. (a) What freedoms, yet what restrictions, should be recognized in the matter of style of dress? (b) What can be the result for failing to recognize this proper balance?

ter of personal taste, and tastes and customs vary throughout the world. But for the dedicated Christian, personal preference should not be the only determining factor. Consideration must also be given to how that choice will affect one's ministry, others inside and outside the congregation and one's own thinking and viewpoints. The "miniskirt" is nothing new to the Scotsman, yet its popularity among women today is causing much concern and now its advent in England among young men is an innovation, one to stare at. In medieval times boys and even men wore shoulder-length hair. But the youth who appears in public today with unshorn locks is definitely typed as different. Those who observe him do not pass it off as just a personal preference of his. To them he is marked as a young man who subscribes to a certain point of view, a viewpoint that is at odds with the rest of the world. Now, a Christian youth may like long hair on boys, just as a young Christian girl may view the miniskirt as attractive. But if they were to indulge their personal tastes without considering the effect on their ministry, they would undoubtedly lose many privileges of service. One congregation finally had to remove a youthful minister from its list of available speakers because each time he was assigned to conduct a public meeting in a neighboring congregation, a complaint came back about his unusually long hair. Repeated admonition had failed to correct the young man's viewpoint.

⁸ Some, especially youngsters, may feel this is an unwarranted encroachment on their personal liberties. But Paul said, even "if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat flesh at all, that I may not make my brother stumble." (1 Cor. 8:13) What was his reasoning

8. (a) Why are certain restrictions in the matter of dress not an unwarranted encroachment on personal liberty? (b) What is Jehovah's view of dress?

for this conclusion? He said: "But food will not commend us to God; if we do not eat, we do not fall short, and, if we eat, we have no credit to ourselves. But keep watching that this authority of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to those who are weak. For if anyone should see you, the one having knowledge, reclining at a meal in an idol temple, will not the conscience of that one who is weak be built up to the point of eating foods offered to idols?" (Vss. 8-10) As it is with food, so it is with fashions in dress. Long or short hair, long or short dresses, are certainly in themselves of no concern to Jehovah in the way of salvation because both have been acceptable to him in different time periods. But any custom or practice that causes someone to stumble and fall out of the way of life is definitely of concern to him. As Paul put it: "Really, by your knowledge, the man that is weak is being ruined, your brother for whose sake Christ died. But when you people thus sin against your brothers and wound their conscience that is weak, you are sinning against Christ." (Vss. 11, 12) Will Jehovah allow such a sin to go by unnoticed and unpunished?

⁹ But why should the matter of styles in dress be a cause for stumbling? And how far must one be influenced by the opinions of others in personal choice of style and fashion? Has Jehovah given us as Christians specific laws on this matter? Yes, but since they are spiritually discerned, they are not so easily identified. Paul's admonition against stumbling a brother holds out a Christian requirement, and it is binding upon us in more than the eating of food because Paul is arguing for a principle, and his application of it in this specific instance simply serves to illus-

9. (a) Why might someone be stumbled because of the manner of dress of someone who claims to be a minister? (b) When might it be better to yield to others' opinions in the matter of style and fashion?

trate our obligation to Jehovah in any matter that is a cause for stumbling. This would certainly include some styles and fashions of dress today because of the close association of these styles with individuals who subscribe to a specific way of life, individuals whose viewpoints are not according to Bible principles. As one woman writer on the subject of modern women's fashions said in a radio interview recently: "Clothes should be a mirror of your way of life." And certainly in modern times, in most countries, no one associates long hair on a man or a miniskirt on a woman with the Christian minister. In fact, this same young woman writer said, in answer to a direct question, "If a woman wearing such clothes is accosted on the street, she has every reason to expect it."^{*} A fashion designer who was dubbed "mother of the miniskirt" was quoted in *Newsweek* (November 13, 1967) as saying: "Any law-abiding female, it used to be thought, waits until dark" to have extramarital sex relations. Then she adds: "Well, there are lots of girls who don't want to wait. Mini-clothes are symbolic of them."

¹⁰ It is true, of course, that what one person may call extreme may appear conservative to another. This is true even among those who set the styles, some differing widely from others as to what is in good taste and what is bad. But there have always been those who incline toward the sensational, and particularly in this age of violence are they influenced in designs that keep pace with the downward trend in thinking and moral standards. What, then, should be the standard? Who can decide? James said: "But the wisdom from above is first of all

* Radio Station WNEW in New York city, June 8, 1967, "Jim Lowe's New York."

10. (a) Who must decide as to what is right and proper in dress, and where can a reliable standard be found? (b) Why is the opinion of fashion designers not necessarily a safe guide?

chaste, then peaceable, reasonable, ready to obey." (Jas. 3:17) Jehovah has set the proper standard for Christians in his Word. Are we willing and ready to follow it? No one can lay down rules as to what is right and proper in dress, except parents with minor children. But even children can be wholehearted in doing Jehovah's will and can learn to determine what is right when questionable instances arise. If there is a question, why lean in the direction of the standards set by this system? For example, you who are dedicated Christian women, if a choice must be made between something that is known to be acceptable from the standpoint of your ministry and something that the latest fashion magazines hold out as the ultimate in feminine beauty, why accept the opinion of those whose whole purpose is to mold viewpoints and make them conform to the way of life of this dying system of things? It is biased thinking. It is designed specifically to expose susceptible minds to a false standard, the product of a time and a people. If you were born during this system's time of the end, never forget that the only standard you have ever seen held out by this world is one of a degenerating people. It may be beautiful to you because it is the only one you have known. But in by far the majority of cases, it is not the picture of vibrant health and life that is portrayed in Jehovah's Book of Life. Include in your instruction for life an accurate picture of the beauty that is pleasing to God.

PUTTING APPEARANCE IN PROPER PERSPECTIVE

¹¹ The apostle Peter painted a particularly pleasing portrait of the Christian woman, the wife of an unbelieving mate. At the same time he pictured the quality

of beauty that sets her apart, that makes it unnecessary for her to enter into competition with the women of this system for the attention of her husband, the quality that can cause him to be "won without a word." He wrote: "And do not let your adornment be that of the external braiding of the hair and of the putting on of gold ornaments or the wearing of outer garments, but let it be the secret person of the heart in the incorruptible apparel of the quiet and mild spirit, which is of great value in the eyes of God." (1 Pet. 3:1-4) Customs have changed completely since Peter penned those words, but the principles upon which his portrait rests are timeless. If you are ever in doubt as to what pattern in dress you should follow, take another look at Peter's picture of the Christian woman and ask yourself, Which will survive Armageddon, a style of hair braiding or the quiet and mild spirit?

¹² Peter's words, too, lay the emphasis on the motive for being overly concerned with personal appearance. Those who are inclined to want to wear the latest fashion, to be "in," whether male or female, young or old, should examine their motives very carefully. Are they depending upon personal appearance to make them acceptable? Do they want to be noticed, to have a reputation for being particularly style conscious? Is their manner of dress one that easily classifies them with a type? Is this what they want? How will those who observe us react to what they see? If our clothes and appearance are a mirror of our way of life, what will they expect of us? Are we giving others the impression that we really want to give? One very sincere young Christian woman who thought that fashion models were the ideal image for young womanhood, and

11. What picture of the Christian woman did Peter paint, and how can it serve as a pattern?

12. What motives should be considered in the matter of choice of style, and how can we deceive ourselves?

yet who really wanted to be a minister, was approached by a man who wanted her to pose for pornographic photographs. What a shock this was! But would he have approached her if she had mirrored the image of a young minister? Even with such experiences as this, it required a real struggle and much soul searching for her to change over her thinking and her perspective, but now this young Christian is faithfully serving as a missionary in a foreign assignment and is happily cultivating a "quiet and mild spirit, which is of great value in the eyes of God." Why should we deceive ourselves? Those who observe us are going to view us according to what our appearance and our course of conduct truly reflect. We should always keep in mind the words of Paul: "All things are lawful; but not all things are advantageous. All things are lawful; but not all things build up. Let each one keep seeking, not his own advantage, but that of the other person."—1 Cor. 10:23, 24.

¹³ Our only concern, however, is not with others and their viewpoint. A major concern should be with our own way of thinking and what prompts it. Perhaps you are newly associated with Jehovah's witnesses. If so, and you are accustomed to conforming to the current style trends, perhaps to the very limit, you certainly need not feel unwelcome in the Kingdom Hall. No one who really is sincere will be turned aside in his effort to serve God. But as you grow in knowledge of God and his purpose, you will recognize a change in your thinking. You will begin to realize that we cannot go on imitating the customs and manners of this system without remaining in some measure a part of it.

¹⁴ On the other hand, if you have been associated for some time and still are

strongly attracted by the image this system has erected, seriously consider the real reasons. What motivates your desire to copy this image? Why is your thinking inclined in that direction? Are you fully aware of the dangers of becoming infected with the thinking of this system, or those you would like to copy, if you dress, act and look like them? Remember the counsel of James. (Jas. 1:14, 15) Consistently entertaining wrong desire is one of the surest ways to fall into transgression.

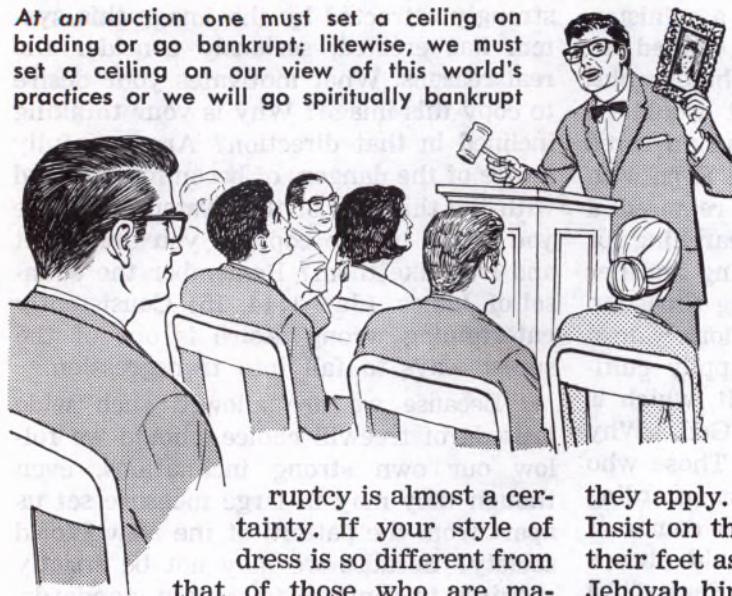
¹⁵ Because we are allowed such wide latitude of freewill choice, should we follow our own strong inclinations, even though they may in large measure set us apart from the pattern of the New World society? Because we may not be strictly required to conform to certain standards, should we feel free to ignore the Scripturally trained consciences of those who are mature in Jehovah's service? If you are inclined to be limping along because of having one foot still planted in this system of things, then consider seriously Paul's admonition to "keep making straight paths for your feet, that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather that it may be healed." (Heb. 12:13) How do we know to what extremes the customs and fashions of this system of things will go before the end? How far can we go along with them without compromising principles of Christian decency and good taste? We must start setting our own pattern of thinking right so that we will not go beyond the standards set in the Scriptures. It is like a man at an auction. If he does not set a ceiling on his bidding, he will go bankrupt. We must start setting a ceiling on our view of the customs and practices of this system of things. Without a proper guard, spiritual bank-

13. How should a newly associated person view the matter of dress?

14. Why should personal viewpoint in this matter be of real concern?

15. What is the sensible and reasonable view to take in the matter of personal appearance?

At an auction one must set a ceiling on bidding or go bankrupt; likewise, we must set a ceiling on our view of this world's practices or we will go spiritually bankrupt



ruptcy is almost a certainty. If your style of dress is so different from that of those who are mature in the New World society that it is a constant cause for comment, think seriously of what it is doing to your ministry and those outside the organization who are observing you. Why persist in marking yourself? Is what you think you are gaining really worth it?

¹⁶ Anyone who is inclined toward the thinking of this world may keep telling himself, "Nothing will happen to me." But we cannot afford to become complacent. We must not think we are immune. It has happened so many times that it would be the exception if that one did not

16. Why must we not become complacent in our attitude, and why should parents particularly be resolute in making straight paths for their feet?

get involved in some way. Those of you who are parents, look at yourselves and look at your children. Are you setting a proper example in dress and conduct? If you are, do you insist that these youngsters who are your responsibility follow it? Jesus did not pray to Jehovah to take us out of this world. He prayed that we might not become a part of it. Get a clear understanding of Bible principles and how

they apply. Teach them to your children. Insist on their making straight paths for their feet as long as they are in your care. Jehovah himself set us the right example when he said through his prophet Ezekiel: "Turn back, yes, cause a turning back from all your transgressions, and let nothing prove to be for you people a stumbling block causing error. Throw off from yourselves all your transgressions in which you have transgressed and make for yourselves a new heart and a new spirit, for why should you die, O house of Israel? For I do not take any delight in the death of someone dying," is the utterance of the Lord Jehovah. 'So cause a turning back and keep living, O you people.'"—Ezek. 18:30-32; Amos 5:14.

EMPLOYMENT OF EARLY CHRISTIANS

✓ In his book *The Horizon History of Christianity*, Roland H. Bainton tells how the early Christians were restricted with regard to employment. They did not want to get involved with idolatry or false religion in any respect. Bainton, who was Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Yale University, writes:

"Not only must the Christian not practice idolatry, he must not contribute to idolatry by assisting in any way in the making of idols. He might be a sculptor, but he must not carve images of the gods. He was restricted, therefore, to the decorative aspects of tombs or monuments, but even here might not carve a lion, a whale, or a bull—or gild any figure—if it represented a god."—P. 64.

ASSEMBLIES

ARE FOR

Children Too!

"**A**SIGHT beyond description" is how one reporter spoke of it. "Children with their beaming faces, youth, and gladness of heart." The occasion was a special session of the St. Louis, Missouri, international convention of Jehovah's witnesses in 1941, when some 15,000 young people between the ages of five and eighteen stood up in their places at the forefront of a large audience and agreed to share in the spread of the Kingdom message to others. They each received a free copy of the book *Children*.

Do you realize that that group are now in the thirty-two to forty-five age bracket, many of them fathers and mothers with family responsibility? And besides these, there is a multitude more of fathers and mothers in this same age-group who have helped swell the grand total of Kingdom ministers world wide to a figure that is now almost eleven times the 1941 total of 106,137. One way that this throng of responsible, Christian parents demonstrate their maturity is by giving loving attention to the spiritual welfare of their children.

That special attention and godly concern might well include attendance at the 1969 assembly of their choice—attendance as an unbroken family group. Why not? Is it not a fact that the assembly

programs are delightfully planned to be of benefit to young and old? And is it not well known that the Bible dramas enacted on the platform at these assemblies have had a tremendous impact on children and youths?

BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN

Attendance at the assemblies always proves to be most beneficial to young people. They find out that serving Jehovah God is no monopoly of adults, that there are, in fact, multitudes of children taking a keen interest in Kingdom Hall meetings, in Bible study and in the field ministry from house to house. The effects from their observing and hearing what is done and said on the platform are often far-reaching. Take, for instance, the case of the woman who came asking for someone to conduct a Bible study in her home. Why? Well, one of her little girls, moved by curiosity, attended one of the sessions of the 1966 Panama assembly, and came home so filled to overflowing with what she had seen and heard that the mother just had to find out what it was all about.

Another thing: children meet other young people at the assembly who have already embarked in the full-time ministry as pioneers. They hear their experiences firsthand, they thrill to accounts of finding sheeplike ones and shepherding them lovingly into the Lord's fold or organization. Their young minds begin to turn toward that most worthwhile vocation, the pioneer ministry. Surely it is worth while to expose children to such fine associates!

Some parents may feel that their teenage or younger children are not showing enough interest in the Bible's message to warrant taking them to an assembly. But an assembly may be just what they need! In one instance, a teen-age daughter would not sit in on the Bible study being con-

ducted with her mother. However, she was invited to go along to an assembly. She accepted and was so surprised at what she saw and heard that she immediately became interested in study and in Kingdom Hall meetings. After only six months she got started in the preaching service from door to door. She also now witnesses effectively to her schoolmates.

ALL MUST PLAN

For your family to enjoy the blessings of the assembly together, there is need for planning. Choice of assembly site must be made, in line with assembly dates and the available vacation times for both parents and children. Arrangements have to be made in advance with employers. But, perhaps more important, the family finances have to be budgeted so as to provide for the cost of the trip. Setting aside the funds that will be needed certainly will be less of a burden if commenced well in advance and faithfully adhered to, despite the temptations of a materialistic world.

Children, too, can help in this matter. Indeed, it would show real appreciation on their part to have some concern over how the family can manage financially. Worldly children do not have this appreciation and are continually asking more and more of their parents without any real gratitude. Godly youngsters have a different attitude. They have a balanced outlook. They think about what is involved, and they strive to lessen the burden on loving parents.

Among reports from Australia, for instance, came that about a young lad of eleven who rose at five o'clock each morning to collect bottles before school, and who sold papers in the evenings, cut lawns and did other odd jobs for the neighbors in order to earn his fare to the convention city. Not to be outdone, his sister, aged

nine, grew flowers and sold them, and performed various jobs for the neighbors. These youngsters knew that there were blessings in store for them at the assembly, and they did not take it for granted that their parents would be able to take on full responsibility for the costs of the trip.

Then, too, in Panama in 1966 one little fellow of five began picking beans months in advance so as to be able to relieve his parents of some of the burden of his fare to the convention city. Surely that is wonderful evidence of youthful appreciation!

There was also the experience of the young girl in Surinam who was eager to get to the assembly. But how? She worked for a lady, but had to take all of her earnings home to help out with the family's current expenses. The lady asked her to get someone to wash her car. The girl offered to do it herself, and so the lady offered her 25c for the job. She did it so thoroughly that the lady not only gave her this job regularly but also doubled her usual wage. And, when the employer learned why the girl wanted the extra money, she even consented to hold the funds for the girl so they would be safe and available when the time came to pay for assembly travel.

Another example of the effect of assembly attendance on young people is the case of the third-year law student at Tokyo University. He was contacted by Witnesses engaged in magazine distribution, and happened to learn about an upcoming assembly. Since he was on vacation at the time, he decided to attend. Deeply impressed by the experience, he privately studied several of the Society's publications, arranged for a Bible study to be conducted with him and then started attending meetings regularly. Two months after the first contact he was baptized. On graduation he became, not a lawyer,

but a full-time preacher of the "good news."

FAMILY TOGETHERNESS

When attendance at an assembly is tied in with vacation for the whole family, what an unforgettable occasion for all it can turn out to be! Amid new associations and new surroundings the members of the family are drawn closer together. Each day members have so much to tell each other about the day's proceedings, the people they have met, the experiences they have heard, and, above all, the sessions of the convention from which they have benefited. And this goes on day after day even after they have settled back to their routine of life at home.

Then, too, such a family vacation could include other joys shared together. Perhaps there might be an opportunity for a few days of camping in the country, exploring the beauties of God's creation. Or there may be a possibility of spending

some time by the sea, if the home of the family is inland. Or the family might visit historic spots where lessons in history can be so easily impressed. It may even be possible to arrange for the family to witness in some territory that is altogether different from the home territory.

Attendance at the district assembly as a family group can have many fine results. Young and old find that their appreciation for their place in the theocratic organization is deepened. Each one is helped to see more clearly his responsibilities toward others—be it to one's parents, to one's children, to the congregation of God, or to Jehovah himself. Children and youths as well as adults can benefit from the broadening influence on the mind, coming to know people from other lands and getting a feel of the truly global extent of the preaching of the "good news" now being done.

Is it not a fact that assemblies are for children too?

FOLLOWING

'Your Light and Truth'

As told by Calvin Prosser

"SEND out your light and your truth. May these themselves lead me." Those words of the psalmist have been my prayer for some sixty years now. Not only that, but Jehovah God in his undeserved kindness has all these years answered my prayer by 'leading me in the tracks of righteousness for his name's sake.'—Ps. 43:3; 23:3.

My grandfather was a geologist from Wales and homesteaded near Johnstown, Pennsylvania. This city is some seventy-five miles from Allegheny, where the *Watch Tower* magazine was published for thirty years, from 1879 until 1909. Grandfather was among the first to begin the mining of coal in this area. It was on this homestead in a coal-mining village called

Prosser's Hollow, adjoining Johnstown, that I was born March 20, 1896; about seven years after the famed Johnstown flood in which more than 2,200 persons lost their lives when a dam burst.

I was the third in a family of seven boys and attended a small one-room schoolhouse that served this coal-mining community. The instructor lived with my parents, who were very religious. Following the Welsh tradition, they were Presbyterian, and my father was an elder in the local church. During my early childhood considerable disturbance developed due to the industrial revolution of the Pittsburgh-Johnstown area, which brought in a lot of European laborers. Up till then Johnstown had been a calm religious city, but now things started to change. These Europeans were accustomed to drinking a lot of beer, and so in a short time within an area of five miles from our home ten breweries were built. Saloons sprang up all over and did a thriving business.

FIRST CONTACT WITH 'LIGHT AND TRUTH'

We lived in a very nice home that was surrounded by a white picket fence. Along the edge of our four-acre holdings was a small stream, and across the stream was one of these saloons, a large one. I can well remember how my parents and other religious families were vexed because of the rowdiness of many of the beer drinkers in those saloons. It was during these times that one day there appeared at our door a man who said he was a minister of the International Bible Students Association. He offered us six books that were written by Pastor Russell, president of the Watch Tower Society.

He was immediately given a good audience by our family, for we were very interested in anything having to do with God and the Bible. We soon discovered

that this devout minister did not believe in a burning hell nor in most of the other orthodox teachings of the Presbyterian Church. The thought occurred to my father that this devout man might be able to persuade the saloonkeeper across the creek to mend his ways and become a Christian. He suggested this to the minister, who accepted the challenge. He called on the saloonkeeper and, interestingly enough, his words fell on good soil. Soon the saloonkeeper became a believer in the Bible as taught by the International Bible Students and began preaching what he was learning to the people that came to his saloon. Being a man of strong convictions, he soon became very active in spreading the "good news."

Then one day this saloonkeeper came across the bridge to our home. When we saw him coming we were reluctant to respond when he knocked on our door, we not knowing that he had had a change of heart and was now one of the "Bible Students," as Jehovah's witnesses were then known. Very much to our surprise he gave us a tract dealing with "No Hell." It flamed into quite an argument in our home as my father was more familiar with the Scriptures than he was, although not understanding them as well. However, he kept bringing us tracts and we kept reading them.

Soon this man became known as "the former saloonkeeper," for he sold his saloon with the stipulation that it would not be used as a saloon but for some other purpose. In order to provide for his family he now went to work as a laborer at a steel mill, which was quite difficult for him, as he never before had worked with his hands. From then on he was a welcome guest in our home and we obtained from him the six volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*. This led to a marked change for a very devout and very staunch

Presbyterian family. Yes, we left the Presbyterian Church, my mother in particular being very enthusiastic about the truth these volumes contained. She and I spent many hours reading and studying this new Watch Tower literature. Jehovah was indeed answering our prayers by leading us with his 'light and truth.'

SPREADING 'LIGHT AND TRUTH' IN MIAMI

Then in 1909 we moved from Johnstown, Pennsylvania, to Miami, Florida, more than a thousand miles south. There was good reasoning behind this move. We seven boys were growing up in a deteriorating community that was looking less and less like the white fence that surrounded our nice home, that is, morally speaking. Not only were the schools inadequate, but now it was becoming time for some of us boys to go to high school, and there was none nearby. Besides, the large steel mills and coal mines were filling the air with soot and smoke as well as bringing about other unpleasant living conditions. In contrast to all this, Miami was a paradise with its white streets, coral rock, palm trees and beautiful waterfront. Furthermore, mother had developed a throat condition because of the air pollution. All of this was good reason for our making this long move.

Miami then was a city of about 10,000 people who were practically isolated in southern Florida and encircled by the Everglades and swamps. Only one railroad and one road crossed this jungle-like area. It was this area that came to be my new territory for spreading the good news of God's kingdom. Having now gained a knowledge of God's Word and purposes, I realized how important it was to make these truths known to others. So in the fall of 1910 I symbolized my dedication to do Jehovah's will and to follow his 'light and truth' as a lifetime career.

I took courage and confidence in Jehovah's promise as recorded in Psalm 43:3: "Send out your light and your truth. May these themselves lead me. May they bring me to your holy mountain and to your grand tabernacle."

Two years later, at the age of sixteen, I quit school and took a job working for a local newspaper, the *Miami Herald*. This I did so as to be able to buy from the Watch Tower Society literature that I could distribute throughout the community. In those days there were very few automobiles, and not having the means to buy one, I did all my traveling by bicycle. I worked for the *Herald* in the morning, and in the afternoon I would ride my bicycle out from Miami for half of the afternoon, witnessing as I went. Then I would take another route, witnessing to people on the way back for the remainder of the afternoon.

The closest meeting place was in Palm Beach, about 65 miles away, so our home was opened up as a place to meet and to study *The Watch Tower*. At first there were just a handful of us. But in my efforts of distributing the literature, I was able to interest others in attending the meetings, and so our attendance grew. I was too young at the time to conduct the *Watch Tower* studies, and so my father consented to do this. Wanting to have our meetings as complete as possible, I felt concern as there was no one to play the piano so that we might sing songs. Because of this I took lessons and learned to play all our hymns. But that was just as far as my musical education went, as I had no particular talent for music.

So that I could devote all my time to preaching the good news of God's kingdom I quit the part-time job I had with the *Herald*, entering the colporteur work. Frequently my mother went with me in the house-to-house preaching activity,

which was a great support to me in those early days of my full-time ministry. She faithfully encouraged me as much as she could until her death in 1921.

By then our congregation had grown large enough to rent a hall on Flagler Street in downtown Miami. I never felt that I had the qualities of leadership, nor did I feel equal to giving public talks. However, because I had a great desire for the truth of God's Word and read and studied very extensively, I was frequently consulted and so was very happy to be able to help those in my congregation to obtain clearer understanding of the truth, which kept on growing ever lighter and lighter.—Prov. 4:18.

SERVING WITH THE WATCH TOWER HEADQUARTERS

Among those who were an inspiration to me were the traveling representatives of the Watch Tower Society, known as pilgrims. While in Miami they were always entertained at our home, and I treasured very much the conversations and the association I had with them. It was one of these pilgrims that stimulated my interest in the privileges of service available at the Watch Tower headquarters in Brooklyn, New York. So I made application and shortly was called, becoming a member of the Brooklyn Bethel family on May 15, 1922. I will always be grateful for the encouragement that was given to me to apply for Bethel service, as it has now been my "home, sweet home" for forty-six years.

The Society had just started to publish some of its own books, and my first ten years at Bethel were spent working on a machine sewing the parts of the books together. In those days we had only four of these sewing machines. Today we have thirty-seven, not to say anything of more sewing machines in other printing plants

throughout the world. After those ten years it was my privilege to transport produce from the Society's farms to the Brooklyn Bethel home, also for ten years. Although this work was hard, I enjoyed it very much. There was also food to be trucked from a shipping line that was used to transport citrus fruits from a farm that the Society operated in Florida. I also enjoyed supplying the Bethel family with various kinds of melons. To procure these I would go to the areas where they were grown and make profitable 'deals' with farmers who had surplus crops. But the aspect of this assignment that I enjoyed the most was the opportunities it afforded me for conversations with Brother Rutherford, the president of the Society in those years. He frequently spent time at one or the other of these farms, as it provided him with an ideal atmosphere in which to meditate and write.

Then in 1942 I had the privilege of again working at the making of books, helping for five years on a machine that trimmed the three sides of the books. In 1947 I was transferred to the shipping department, where I spent the next eight years of joyful service in having part in sending out the printed literature. It was always a source of real satisfaction to me to realize that this literature I was having a share in producing and shipping out is really the way in which Jehovah God today is answering the prayer of his servants to "send out your light and your truth."

To see how Jehovah God has led his people and prospered his organization all these years has been very strengthening to my faith. When I first arrived at the Brooklyn headquarters, our publishing plant consisted of just a small area of rented space. Then in 1926 the Society built its own eight-story publishing plant consisting of 70,000 square feet of floor

space. In 1949 a nine-story addition was constructed as an integral part of the original factory, adding 72,000 more square feet. It was only six years later that an undertaking thrilled us all again, namely, when the Society started construction of a thirteen-story building just across the street from our factory and which consists of 192,000 square feet of floor space.

This building was to be used primarily for printing and mailing out the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines. As soon as this building was ready for use, I was assigned to the mailing department in this building where, at the time of this writing, it is still my privilege to be working. And how the distribution of these magazines, which play such a prominent role in Jehovah's sending out 'his light and truth,' has grown! In the year 1922, when I first came to the Brooklyn headquarters, the Society produced 3,250,000 magazines. And what is the production figure now? Well, last year the Brooklyn plant alone produced more than fifty times that many, or as many magazines each

week as we did in 1922 in a whole year!

Now in my years of physical decline my heart swells in gratitude and joy for the many blessings I have experienced in these fifty-eight years that I have followed the 'light and truth' of Jehovah's Word, and in particular for the forty-six years I have been privileged to serve full time at His earthly headquarters.

Since writing his life story Calvin Prosser finished his earthly course—he being of the remnant of the heirs of the heavenly kingdom—dying December 13, 1968. Funeral services were held on Staten Island on December 16, the service being conducted by Max Larson, factory servant and a longtime personal friend as well as one of the directors of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. Among those present were friends and relatives from Florida and Delaware, as well as a score or more from the Brooklyn Bethel home, most of whom had known Calvin Prosser for upward of forty years. While his friends mourn his passing, they rejoice that now to him too the words apply: "Happy are the dead who die in union with the Lord from this time onward. Yes, says the spirit, let them rest from their labors, for the things they did go right with them."—Rev. 14:13.

BETHEL'S CHRISTIAN ATMOSPHERE

RECENTLY a married couple living at the Brooklyn Bethel headquarters of the Watch Tower Society had guests for dinner. Shortly afterward, their guests sent them a "thank you" letter. What they wrote shows how deeply the Christian atmosphere of the Bethel home had impressed them:

"Dear Mr. and Mrs. G——,

"It is difficult to put into words our thanks and appreciation for the time you spent with us last Wednesday. We all flatter ourselves by believing we are thinking people, with the ability to solve, not only our problems, but if given the opportunity, the problems of the world.

"This Wednesday, however, we were shocked out of our complacency. Any ideas

we may have had about religion, love of fellow man, politics, work, the U.N. and the future of mankind were completely shattered. At the Jehovah's witnesses' headquarters, we were privileged to see religion at work and what very well can be the solution to the future of mankind.

"During an ordinary work day, we sat down with about six hundred people at lunch [in one of Bethel's largest dining rooms], each of whom was well behaved, courteous to his neighbor, soft spoken, at peace with himself and thankful to God for his daily bread. The gathering of about six hundred people of all ages, colors and varied upbringing at any other place under different circumstances would be a mass of confusion, boisterousness, group segregation, group disagreements, and

at least one drunken brawl. Just to get order in such a group would take the efforts of Jehovah. On Wednesday it was just the opposite, it was the belief in Jehovah that made the difference. Perhaps this is the solution to everything.

"We three were all profoundly impressed by everything we saw and, although a few days have gone by since Wednesday, we find ourselves recalling to mind what we saw and heard and felt. Religion heretofore

was something relegated to Saturday or Sunday, at a birth or a few words said at a funeral. It just wasn't part of our everyday life. After all our years of schooling and independent thought, could we be completely wrong? Such a prospect is not very encouraging, but if the facts prove differently, and the truth is obvious, can logic refute it? . . .

"We wish to thank you for the privilege of visiting you and seeing religion at work."

Sincerely, [Signed]"



- What is the attitude of Jehovah's witnesses toward the use of tobacco?—J. G., U.S.A.

The Bible does not comment directly on the view that God's servants should have concerning the use of tobacco. This is understandable, since, according to one encyclopedia, tobacco was not used in Biblical lands until more than fifteen centuries after the Bible was completed. Yet, from what we read in God's Word, it is easy to see that the use of tobacco, whether one is smoking, chewing or snuffing it, is an unclean habit that goes contrary to Bible principles. So Jehovah's witnesses strongly discourage its use, and they view as spiritually immature any Christians who continue to use tobacco.

The most common use of tobacco is in smoking, whether in cigarettes, cigars or pipes. That smoking contributes to cancer, heart disease and many other debilitating and fatal diseases, needs no documentation here. An abundance of evidence is public knowledge. In fact, the health hazard is so great that a number of major nations have put restrictions on cigarette advertising. Less information is available on the use of chewing tobacco and snuff. Yet, studies indicate that these habits contribute to a higher incidence of cancer than among nonusers and affect the nerves and the sense of smell.

It is, of course, only reasonable to avoid something that poses such a threat to one's health and life. And this is especially important

to the Christian, since his worship of God is involved. How? Well, Romans 12:1 mentions that a Christian must present his body as "a sacrifice living, holy, acceptable to God." If he were to follow the harmful tobacco habit, he would be withdrawing some of what he dedicated to God by shortening his life and impairing his health. Do you think God would be pleased with that?

Additionally, mature Christians strive to apply the counsel: "Let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear." (2 Cor. 7:1) The use of tobacco plainly runs counter to that inspired advice. Think of the scars and stains on the hands and mouths of many of those who smoke or chew tobacco. What about the "defilement of flesh" in the nostrils and lungs resulting from smoking or using snuff? And the uncleanliness from tobacco even spreads to one's surroundings, including ashes, stains and burns. Do you think Jesus would have disregarded purity by following a practice as unclean as the tobacco habit? Remember, Christians are to follow his example.—1 Pet. 2:21.

Smoking is also contrary to the principle: "You must love your neighbor as yourself." (Jas. 2:8) Why so? Commenting on this guiding principle for Christians, the apostle Paul wrote: "Love does not work evil to one's neighbor; therefore love is the law's fulfillment." (Rom. 13:9, 10) Have you ever seen a smoker speaking with another person and at the same time enveloping both of them in noxious smoke, or someone smoking in a car, bus or train but completely oblivious to the discomfort he is causing those near him who have to breathe the unwanted irritant he is blowing out? Is that the course of neighbor love? To the contrary, Christians are urged: "Let each one keep seeking, not his own advantage, but that of the other person."—1 Cor. 10:24.

When one comes right down to it, why does a person use tobacco, such as by smoking it? Maybe years ago he began smoking on a "dare" or to appear more grown up and "one of the crowd," but does he continue because he enjoys it? Probably not. True, a cigarette might calm or satisfy him. Yet the fact that he becomes nervous and uncomfortable when deprived of tobacco only proves that it has become an enslaving habit. Such a person is not fully manifesting the self-control encouraged in the Bible.—1 Cor. 9:25-27.

Whether a smoker is a "chain smoker" or not, the fact that it is difficult to break the habit shows that a problem with self-control exists. This is also noted in that many feel compelled to smoke even though they might have no place to put the ashes, cannot afford it or have to borrow cigarettes from others. Without doubt, such persons need to apply the counsel: "Supply to your faith virtue, to your virtue knowledge, to your knowledge self-control."—2 Pet. 1:5, 6.

Since the use of tobacco violates so much of the counsel provided for Christians, one who had not yet overcome this habit would not have the blameless reputation that an appointed servant in the Christian congregation should have. Those privileged to be overseers and ministerial servants are to be examples of Christian maturity. (1 Tim. 3:2, 10) Consequently, in addition to the aforementioned reasons for overcoming the unclean habit, one should strive to conquer the habit so as to be available for special privileges in the congregation, such as being an appointed servant or a full-time pioneer minister.

Since the occasion of one's water baptism is such a significant point in his life, that is an excellent time to break the tobacco habit if it has persisted up to that point. But what if that step is already past and you still use tobacco? The situation is not hopeless. Others have quit, and you can too. Obviously, more self-control is needed. This quality is a fruit of God's spirit, so one seeking more self-control needs more of God's holy spirit. And that is available if you will but ask Jehovah for it and work to obtain it. (Luke 11:13) Seek association with Christians at meetings where the spirit is in evidence. Regularly read God's inspired Word. Instead of thinking about satisfying a craving for tobacco, talk about Jehovah and the clean new order he has promised.

Probably the best way to break the tobacco habit is to stop abruptly. Instead of doing it

secretly, tell your friends and family, so they can support and encourage you. Arrange to be in the company of mature Christians at times that you know you will desire to use tobacco, when the habit is most pronounced. Do not hesitate to telephone or visit a Christian companion if you feel yourself weakening. And, above all, seek Jehovah's strength and holy spirit. Be like Paul, who said: "For all things I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me."—Phil. 4:13.

Thus, to those dedicated Christians who have not yet broken the tobacco habit, the full import of God's Word is: Do not let this unclean habit become more firmly entrenched; seek to overcome it with more self-control. Think of your present health and life. Think of those around you. Think also of your dedication to Jehovah, upon which your eternal life depends. Thousands of others have gained freedom from enslavement to tobacco, and you too can do it. Do not put it off!

● Will Satan be dead when he is in the abyss for one thousand years?—R. G., U.S.A.

The limited information from the Bible on which this question is based appears at Revelation 20:1-3. We read: "I saw an angel coming down out of heaven with the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he seized the dragon, the original serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. And he hurled him into the abyss and shut it and sealed it over him, that he might not mislead the nations any more until the thousand years were ended. After these things he must be let loose for a little while."

Now, what will be Satan's state when he is in that abyss? Well, we cannot say anything that is based on personal experience, for we are not and never have been spirits. Furthermore, the Bible does not indicate that any spirit creatures have been put in that abyss in the past. Neither does it describe in detail what Satan's condition there will be.

There is only one indication that we have as to his condition: When the man Jesus died, he was put into a tomb. While dead he was in Hades or the common grave of dead mankind. The apostle Peter pointed that out at Acts 2:31. Yet over in Romans 10:7 the apostle Paul wrote under inspiration: "Who will descend into the abyss?" that is, to bring Christ up from the dead." Note that the word "abyss" is

used, and not "Hades" or mankind's common grave, where Jesus was.

When Satan is in that abyss mentioned in Revelation chapter 20, he will definitely not be in Hades, for he is not a human and he will not be assigned to the common grave of dead mankind. But in view of Jesus' dead condition while he was in an abyss, we can conclude that during the "thousand years" Satan will be in a state of deathlike inactivity; he will have no conscious existence anywhere, and so will be unable to "mislead the nations."

Apparently Satan will be temporarily revived or resuscitated after the thousand years, for the Bible says that he will "be let loose for a little while." He will not be resurrected as if he had a potential to act righteously and live forever. To the contrary, the Scriptures indicate

that after he is allowed to test mankind briefly he will be eternally destroyed by being cast into the lake of fire, which "means the second death."—Rev. 20:10, 14.

'But,' some may query, 'does that mean that when Satan is in that abyss he will be "dead" exactly the same as when a human is dead in the grave?' We simply cannot say. The above is based on a parallel between Jesus' condition while he was dead in an abyss for parts of three days and the fact that Satan will be in an "abyss" for one thousand years. Remember that Jesus was a human with a body of flesh, while Satan, as a spirit, does not have a body of flesh. So, since at present we lack any additional information from experience or the Bible, all we can say is that evidently while Satan is in that abyss he will be in a condition of deathlike inactivity and unconscious as was Jesus.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS



FIELD MINISTRY

There is no greater comfort in the world today than that which comes from the Holy Scriptures. In fact, the Bible makes it plain that it is through the comfort and encouragement drawn from the Scriptures that true Christians have a glorious hope. (Rom. 15:4) Having gained this hope-inspiring comfort from God's Word, Jehovah's witnesses unselfishly want to share it with others. They want others to come to know "the God of all comfort," Jehovah, so that they also may gain the precious hope of life everlasting. (2 Cor. 1:3, 4) During February these Christian witnesses will share the comfort from the Scriptures by offering in their house-to-house ministry a year's subscription for *The Watchtower*, for just \$1.

LORD'S EVENING MEAL

On Tuesday, April 1, 1969, after 6 p.m. Standard Time, all congregations of Jehovah's witnesses earth wide will assemble to celebrate the Lord's Evening Meal. This they do in obedience to Jesus' instructions. (Luke 22:19, 20) All readers of *The Watchtower* are invited to be present for this most important occasion. Those of the remnant of Christ's anointed followers will partake of the emblematic bread and wine, while those of the "other sheep" will be present as respectful and obedient observers. Your presence will enable you to benefit richly from the Scriptural matters considered at that time.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

March 9: Look to the Bible as Our Guide in Life. Page 105. Songs to Be Used: 41, 66.

March 16: Keep Making Straight Paths for Your Feet. Page 112. Songs to Be Used: 118, 60.