



The **WATCHTOWER**

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**

AUGUST 1, 1965

Semimonthly

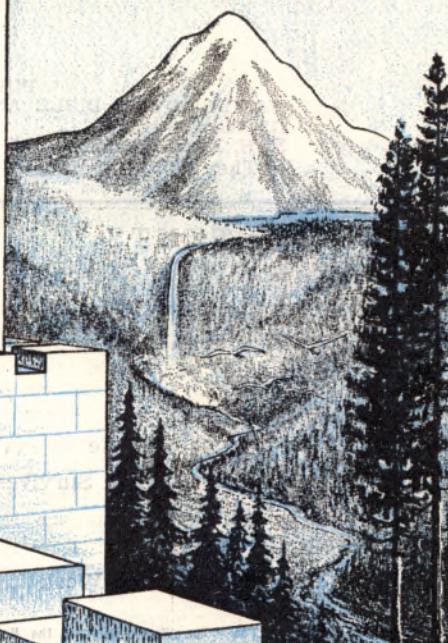
RECOVERY STILL POSSIBLE

A YOUNG MAN GOES ASTRAY

CONSIDERATION FOR THE LOWLY ONES

HAVE YOU TOLD YOUR RELATIVES?

©WTB&TS



"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

CONTENTS

Are You True to Your Word?	451
Consideration for the Lowly Ones	453
Have You Told Your Relatives?	456
Recovery Still Possible	461
A Young Man Goes Astray	467
Vigorous Return to Spiritual Life	473
Babylon Falls, but Her Religion Survives to Dominate the Nations	474
Questions from Readers	479
Maintaining Unity in Faith and Work	480

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AS - American Standard Version	Le - Isaac Leeser's version
AT - An American Translation	Mo - James Moffatt's version
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The WATCHTOWER

Announcing
JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM

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Number 15

Are You

TRUE TO YOUR WORD?

PEOPLE want their associates to be persons of their word. A husband is understandably irritated if his wife promises to meet him at six o'clock, but then unnecessarily keeps him waiting until 6:30. On the other hand, it is disturbing to a wife when her husband promises to take her somewhere but, when the time comes, she finds that he unconcernedly overlooked making the necessary preparations to fulfill his promise. One loses a certain amount of respect for persons who do not keep their word.

Even in small matters one should be true to his word. It may seem an unimportant offense to arrive late for an appointment, to neglect to return borrowed items, or in some other way fail to keep one's word. Yet in these seemingly trivial matters one either builds up a reputation of being reliable or comes to be known as one whose word means very little.

Persons who are not true to their word often make themselves disliked by others. Remember the ancient Pharaoh who would not allow the Israelites led by Moses to leave Egypt. Repeatedly he gave his word that the Israelites could leave to worship

Jehovah God, but then he did not keep his word, and so plagues were sent upon the nation by Jehovah. For example, when Egypt was plagued with thunder and hail, Pharaoh promised:

"I am willing to send you away, and you will not delay any longer." But after that plague had ceased, "he went sinning again and making his heart unresponsive, . . . and he did not send the sons of Israel away." (Ex. 9:28, 34, 35) Again and again he made promises, and yet again and again he failed to keep them. The memory of that Pharaoh remains till today as an infamous example of a man who would not keep his word.

In our day too there are persons who fail to keep their word. Not all do so because of a bad heart, as in the case of Pharaoh. In many cases it is simply evidence of immaturity. They may, for example, agree to work for a firm that, because of the time required to train workers, asks them to stay for a specific period of time. When they give their word they no doubt have every intention of keeping it. However, what if a more enticing attraction turns up before their agreed time of service elapses? Will they pass up this opportunity, closing their eyes to the new attraction because of their previous commitment? Are they really persons of their word? If they are persons

who maturely accept responsibility, they will keep their word.

Unfortunately some persons think more of pleasing themselves than of keeping their word. They are true to their word only up to a point—after which their promises carry less weight than the breath with which they are spoken. A person may accept a dinner invitation to the home of a humble family. But later, for the same evening, he may receive a more pretentious invitation from a family of means and position, perhaps from his boss. With some persons this is the point at which their word no longer carries any weight. Evidently they feel that the prospect of personal advantage invalidates their former commitment. Even Jesus cautioned against leaving one place of hospitality because of a better offer.—Luke 10:7.

Are you true to your word under similar situations? When you say something, do others have confidence that you will do what you say? If you think a moment, persons with different reputations in such matters probably will come to mind. For instance, a particular acquaintance may agree to visit you at eight o'clock Wednesday evening. You feel confident that he will be there, for you know him to be a person of his word. However, if another acquaintance promised the same thing, you might not even plan on his presence, at least not at the prearranged time. From past experience you know that his word means very little.

How fine it is to be known as a person of his word! The reputation is well worth the effort to obtain it. Among other things, it requires that you think before you speak, that you determine in advance what you are *willing* and *able* to do. You can ask yourself: Do I have other commitments? Can I be sure this far in advance? Have I considered my family and all other factors? Then when you promise,

show maturity by remaining true to that promise even though other offers or circumstances arise that make it difficult to do so. It is true that unforeseen emergencies can cause exceptions—a press of important work, sickness or an accident, for instance. But surely those to whom you have given your word will understand, especially if you let them know as soon as possible so adjustments can be made.

If a person makes it a habit to keep his word to fellow humans, it is likely that he will not fail to keep his word to God. This is of utmost importance to a person who has made a dedication to do God's will. In fact, it is a matter of life and death. God's Word says: "In case you vow a vow to Jehovah your God, you must not be slow about paying it, because Jehovah your God will without fail require it of you, and it would indeed become a sin on your part." "Do not allow your mouth to cause your flesh to sin."—Deut. 23:21; Eccl. 5:6.

An ancient judge of Israel named Jephthah set a fine example in remaining true to his word. He promised that, if God would give him victory over the enemy Ammonites, he would give to God's service at the sanctuary the first one to meet him on returning from victory. That one turned out to be his only child, his daughter. What was Jephthah's reaction? Did he go back on his word? No, he kept that difficult promise. (Judg. 11:30-40) But do you think it was worth it? Definitely it was, for we find Jephthah's name listed among those servants of God whose faith assured them of a resurrection and made them examples for Christians to imitate.—Heb. 11:32; 12:1.

If you would win the respect of both God and your fellowmen, you must do the same. Gain the reputation of being a person of your word. Think carefully before you make promises. Then when you do speak, by all means remain true to your word.

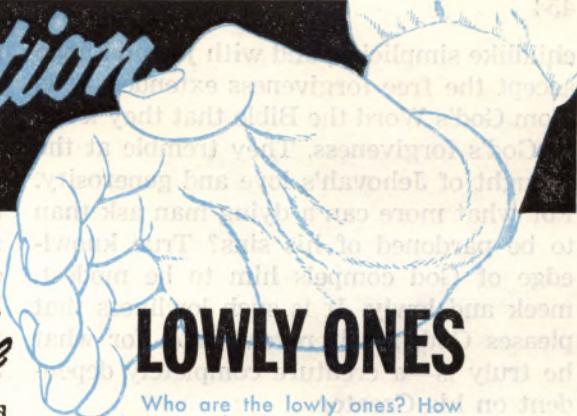
Consideration

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LOFTY things seize man's attention and make a deep impression on his mind. For this reason he has selected high places for the statues of his heroes and gods. For his rulers he has erected thrones. Man is impressed with the lofty, but God is drawn to the lowly ones; "the lofty one he knows only from a distance." (Ps. 138: 6) Jesus Christ said: "What is lofty among men is a disgusting thing in God's sight." (Luke 16:15) Therefore, the Scriptures wisely admonish: "Better is it to be lowly in spirit with the meek ones than to divide spoil with the self-exalted ones." "Do not be minding lofty things, but be led along with the lowly things."—Prov. 16:19; Rom. 12:16.

By showing consideration for the lowly, God our Maker has set an example for us, and it will result in genuine happiness to us if we imitate him. His reason for residing with the crushed and lowly in spirit is to "revive the spirit of the lowly ones and to revive the heart of the ones being crushed." (Isa. 57:15) His consideration is an open concern over their welfare. And this should be our reason for considering lowly ones.

God has been magnanimous in the support of the lowly. He supplies them with his revitalizing spirit and strengthens their hearts with the unfailing promises of his Word. He has ransomed them with the precious lifeblood of his only-begotten Son, thus opening a way for them to gain everlasting life. Such consideration recommends itself to us.—1 John 4:7-16.



LOWLY ONES

Who are the lowly ones? How may consideration be shown them?

Who are these lowly ones? These are not necessarily the poor of the world, for not all the world's poor are lowly. Often the worldly poor are quite smug and haughty creatures. The lowly one worthy of heavenly consideration God himself identifies, saying: "To this one, then, I shall look, to the one afflicted and contrite in spirit and trembling at my word." (Isa. 66:2) Such lowliness, therefore, has no reference to being inferior. It has to do with one's awareness of his littleness before God. The lowly one is the man who knows Jehovah God and trembles at his Word.

Thus true lowliness is seen to spring from a number of things. First, it has its roots in gratitude. One who is acquainted with the majesty of God wonders why God should even consider him. "What is mortal man that you keep him in mind, and the son of earthling man that you take care of him?" (Ps. 8:4) A thinking person is humbled by God's condescension. Lowliness also finds its roots embedded in reverence. How can a sinful man presume to approach the Creator himself? Yet God has made this possible. Aware of his inherent failure, he stands contrite before his Maker. Lowliness also arises from knowledge of the forgiveness of one's sins. The lowly acknowledge their sins with

childlike simplicity, and with joy and hope accept the free forgiveness extended. It is from God's Word the Bible that they learn of God's forgiveness. They tremble at the thought of Jehovah's love and generosity. For what more can a dying man ask than to be pardoned of his sins? True knowledge of God compels him to be modest, meek and lowly. It is such lowness that pleases God, for it reveals man for what he truly is—a creature completely dependent on his Creator.

MAN'S EXEMPLAR

No doubt, the supreme example of lowness among men was the man Jesus Christ. He was God's Son, yet he stooped down and washed the feet of his disciples. (John 13:1-17) Jesus was lowly in that he was not ashamed to do a slave's work. He was lowly because he appreciated his relationship with his Father Jehovah. At one time he said: "The Son cannot do a single thing of his own initiative, but only what he beholds the Father doing." (John 5:19, 30) On another occasion, when he invited people to come to him, Jesus said of himself: "Come to me, . . . for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls." (Matt. 11:28, 29) From Jesus' example we learn that real lowness toward one another rests ultimately upon our being lowly before God.

As Jehovah does not spurn lowly ones, neither did Jesus, nor should we. Sinners are drawn to God in prayer, because he is approachable and because he is available. He who runs the universe is not too busy for the lowliest. In their prayers they pour out their hearts to him, and he listens. His almighty and wisdom do not frighten them, for God does not abuse his power or parade before them his intellect. They rest comfortably in the warmth of his love. (Isa. 55:8, 9) Jesus imitated this wonder-

ful example of his Father. Though he was perfect, lowly people never felt that Jesus was too far above them, nor were they fearful of his power. In fact, people brought their children to him, so that he would bless them. (Mark 10:13-16) Despised persons, prostitutes, tax collectors, the handicapped and the diseased flocked to him. He had time for them. When people objected to his associating with such ones, Jesus replied: "Go, then, and learn what this means, 'I want mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came to call, not righteous people, but sinners." (Matt. 9:13) We all do well to contemplate the meaning of those words and the example set. Do sinners come to you for help? Do they search you out for comfort? It is a good rule for judging the extent of one's own lowness.

Jesus' apostle Paul showed that God did not favor lofty ones to represent him in the earth. "Not many wise in a fleshly way were called, not many powerful, not many of noble birth," wrote Paul. But God chose the foolish things, the weak things, "the ignoble things of the world and the things looked down upon, the things that are not, . . . in order that no flesh might boast in the sight of God." (1 Cor. 1:26-31) Understandably, then, many of these chosen lowly ones would be persons with questionable backgrounds, little or no education and whose personalities might be far from cultured. Yet God has chosen them and showered them with his sacred secrets of truth and life.

There was Zacchaeus. He was a small man who climbed a tree to get a glimpse of Jesus. In the community he was considered a terrible sinner. Jesus come to his home? Unthinkable! He was unworthy of so great an honor. But what did Jesus do? He invited himself to Zacchaeus' house. The account says: "With rejoicing [Zacchaeus] received him as guest." So moved was Zacchaeus with Jesus' visit that he

stood up and said: "Look! The half of my belongings, Lord, I am giving to the poor, and whatever I extorted from anyone by false accusation I am restoring four-fold.' At this Jesus said to him: 'This day salvation has come to this house . . . For the Son of man came to seek and to save what was lost.' " (Luke 19:1-10) How thrilled Zacchaeus was because Jesus took the initiative! Oftentimes, it remains for the strong to make the first step. Lowly ones feel themselves too unworthy to invite prominent personages into their homes, but they would feel eternally grateful if these would invite themselves. Such visits are unforgettable blessings and an encouragement to the lowly ones.

SOME DESERVE SPECIAL ATTENTION

Some lowly ones have a tendency to withdraw. They become introverted. Often these lead capsuled lives. They need help. A lowly widow of Zarephath was visited by the prophet Elijah. (1 Ki. 17:8-24) His visit proved a blessing to her. Widows and widowers often slip into lonely lives. A visit would help to change this.

In old age the mind often takes off and the imagination goes wild. Older people feel themselves left behind. Youth can show them consideration by including them in some of their affairs. Nothing is quite so stimulating as an unexpected knock, a youthful visitor. By showing older persons a little thoughtfulness, you can help them to feel like new assets rather than old liabilities.—Matt. 15:4-6; Ex. 20:12.

Set yourself a simple but organized program for improving your relationship with the physically handicapped, with persons who have little of this world's goods or who may have personality problems. What can you do? Make scheduled dates and appointments with such persons to visit

them. When having a special dinner, the tendency is to entertain prominent guests. Why not invite lowly ones over too who may enjoy such association? Those in high stations of life are constantly feasted and showered with gifts. Here is what Jesus said: "When you spread a dinner or evening meal, do not call your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors. . . . But when you spread a feast, invite poor people, crippled, lame, blind; and you will be happy, because they have nothing with which to repay you. For you will be repaid in the resurrection of the righteous ones." (Luke 14:12-14) Give this thoughtful consideration the next time you prepare a feast.

These lowly ones are generally aware of their weaknesses. No doubt they have been reminded of them dozens of times. So their need is encouragement, consideration, love. They know they need to be better mixers, freer in conversation, but with some this takes time. What you can do is love them and let them love you and your family. You can help them to be doers of things through encouragement, inviting them to work with you at Christian assemblies or in the ministry. You can help them to keep in touch with other people by visiting them, by bringing someone along with you.

None of this effort is wasted. The Bible says: "Happy is anyone acting with consideration toward the lowly one; in the day of calamity Jehovah will provide escape for him." (Ps. 41:1) Happiness is sure to come, and this is no small reward. These lowly ones are sure to remember you in their prayers, which in itself is an unspeakable blessing. But in addition to all of this, Jehovah promises protection to those who show consideration to his lowly ones. What other effort could be more worth while?

HAVE YOU *Told Your Relatives?*

“WE HAVE found the Messiah”! Imagine the joy of Andrew from the city of Bethsaida when he spoke those words to his own brother, Simon Peter. Andrew's first thought was to share this wonderful news with his own brother. Because he did not hold back, Andrew experienced the joy of seeing his brother accept God's truth—and even become an apostle of Jesus Christ.—John 1:41, 44.

Cornelius, a Gentile army officer who lived in Caesarea, was another who found great joy as a result of sharing God's Word with his relatives. After Jehovah arranged for the apostle Peter to visit Cornelius to explain God's way to him, the Bible says, Cornelius “called together his relatives and intimate friends.” When Peter expounded the way of the truth to him, these “relatives and intimate friends” were present. The result? They accepted the truth, and holy spirit “fell upon all those hearing the word.”—Acts 10:24, 44.

The course of action taken by both Andrew and Cornelius is a fine example for all Christians. From what you have learned from the Holy Bible, you know for a certainty that it is “the truth.” To share this truth with your close friends and relatives is a loving thing. Moreover, you may have an opening to witness to your relatives that others do not have. Do you take advantage of these opportunities?

AID THEM TO A FAVORABLE FRAME OF MIND

But how should one go about telling one's relatives? It is usually wise not to

try to tell them everything at once. A few main points, or just one, may be enough the first few times, just as in the door-to-door ministry, to whet their spiritual appetite. But if you begin by giving them what they feel is a big sermon, there may be adverse reaction. On the other hand, if you present only a few truths, you may aid them to manifest a favorable frame of mind, since spiritual babes “need milk, not solid food.” So gradually build up their spiritual appetite and understanding.—Heb. 5:12-14.

Further, it is best not to assume that they will instantly embrace the truths about God's kingdom the first time you talk with them. Many persons have been misinformed about Jehovah's people and have prejudices that need to be removed. So the thing to do is to ask Jehovah's guidance in prayer and then to seek a favorable opportunity.

Tactfully present God's truths, endeavoring not to antagonize them by bluntly telling them that their beliefs are wrong. This requires a loving attitude, not threatening, not being overbearing, but reasoning with them. Jehovah does not force people to accept his truth, so the apostle Paul's words are most apt: “Let your utterance be always with graciousness, seasoned with salt.” “A slave of the Lord does not need to fight, but needs to be gentle toward all, qualified to teach, keeping himself restrained under evil, instructing with mildness those not favorably disposed.”—Col. 4:6; 2 Tim. 2:24, 25.

If you tactfully tell your relatives, and they are not favorably disposed, then what? Keep yourself restrained. Even if rebuffed, endeavor to leave your relatives in the best frame of mind possible, because there will be other opportunities to talk to them. Further, while you are awaiting another opportunity, keep in mind that they may be called on by others of Jehovah's witnesses in their door-to-door ministry. If you leave your relatives in a favorable frame of mind, they may respond to the message of truth. So, though they may not accept what you say from the Bible initially, do what you can to help them to become more receptive.

CONSIDER WHAT INTERESTS THEM

As you seek to share God's truth with your relatives, be alert to what interests them. Are they concerned about world conditions? If so, this will enable you to tell them what you have learned about Bible prophecy and our day. Or they may ask questions, perhaps indirectly, that you can answer from the Bible. Then again, they may have had certain experiences that will open the way for a Bible discussion. By being discerning, you may recognize any special interests they have that will lay the groundwork for presenting the truth.

One of Jehovah's witnesses in Pennsylvania had a relative who had delved deeply into ancient history and archaeology. This Witness had previously tried to interest his brother, with no success. But one day they were talking about ancient history and archaeology, and he realized that here was an ideal opportunity to tell him the truth. He brought out the book "*Babylon the Great Has Fallen!*" *God's Kingdom Rules!* and used it to show how ancient history and archaeology harmonize with Bible prophecies. The book was accepted and also an invitation to come to the con-

gregation book study. Afterward he said: "I was surprised that a Bible study class would go into the facts of history in such detail." He began attending meetings and going in the field ministry. He read every current book of the Watch Tower Society and asked another Witness to have a study with him in the book "*Your Will Be Done on Earth*." He dedicated his life to Jehovah, admitting, "I have been searching for something like this."

The Watchtower and *Awake!* can also help you to use to good advantage any special interests that a relative has, because these magazines cover such a wide variety of subjects. So when articles in *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* discuss topics in which a certain relative is interested, be sure that he receives a copy.

CAN YOU OR SOMEONE ELSE START A STUDY WITH THEM?

If your relatives show interest and they live nearby, why not try to start a home Bible study? This is one of the most effective ways to help favorably disposed relatives. One of Jehovah's witnesses in Michigan reports: "When I first learned the truth my chief desire was to interest my whole family. I started a Bible study with one of my sisters. Then I started another study with another sister, and she, in turn, told me that my niece, who lives next door to her, was occasionally taking *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* We went to see her and she showed some interest. Meanwhile, my oldest sister went to work for a person attending meetings at the Kingdom Hall. He stirred up her interest so much that, when she heard that we were all studying the Bible, she started coming down each week to sit in on our studies. I asked her if I could come and have a study with her. She agreed. My mother is now sitting in too. Also, my teen-age nephew asked for a personal study

with him. Over the past six years the seeds were planted and watered from time to time, but just last year Jehovah has really started them growing. I have twelve nieces, nephews and sisters and my mother—adults and teen-agers—learning the truth." Have you tried to start a study with your relatives?

If you are not making much progress in interesting your relatives, you may wish to elicit the help of other Witnesses. In Brazil one Witness had often told a relative about the truth, with no success. "I have my religion," her brother said. One day when she visited her brother, she discovered that a family of Witnesses had moved into the neighborhood. She asked them to visit her brother now and then, being his neighbors. Some time later the Witness visited her fleshly brother again, and what a surprise! Her brother had become a preacher of Bible truth himself!

MAKING THE MOST OF VISITS

What if your relatives do not live nearby? Would it be possible to visit them? During the visit, an opportunity may arise for you to discuss Bible truths. Even if the trip is very brief, the seeds of truth may be sown. When a Witness in Texas made a visit to his relatives, he had only one day; so he arose early at his father's place and, before leaving the breakfast table, talked to him about the Kingdom. "From there," he reports, "I went to see an uncle and aunt. Several years ago this aunt had given me a Bible, which started my search for the truth. I told her, 'Since you helped me one time by giving me a Bible, I want to help you now.' After giving her a witness, to which she and her husband listened attentively, I went to a cousin and left Bible literature with him. From here I went to see another uncle and aunt. Then I went back to my Dad's home and I had the opportunity to witness to

two of my brothers who were visiting. From here I went to my sister's home and she and her husband also showed interest. By making the most of the time, I was able to obtain thirteen new subscriptions for *The Watchtower* and *Awake!*, helping my relatives regularly to get the words of truth."

Sometimes one's relatives live in a foreign country. Perhaps a trip to their country will be possible. One Witness in the United States made a trip to visit her family in Rome, Italy. Upon arrival, she was greeted by twenty-two relatives and friends. What an opportunity to share the truth! Shortly, she was able to tell many of them about God's kingdom; in fact, the first day her niece and brother accepted the truth. In less than a month's time, her eighty-seven-year-old mother began to show interest. This Witness was able to help nine relatives to come to a knowledge of the truth or, at least, to begin studying.

WITNESSING BY MAIL

But what if your relatives live at a great distance and it does not appear possible to visit them? Then, have you tried witnessing by letter? Also, you could mail them publications that would be especially suitable for them. Special issues of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* mailed to relatives may rouse their interest. Invite them to make comments on what you write or send them. A Witness in Mississippi reports:

"I sent the special issues of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* to several relatives and received a reply from a cousin whom I hadn't seen for about twenty years. She enjoyed the magazines so much that she cut out paragraphs, glued them to her letter and made comments along with questions. Now she gets the magazines by subscription, and she has asked questions on many articles. After reading a special is-

sue, she said: 'I am keeping this intact—it is terrific!' She has made progress by mail."

DO NOT GIVE UP

Just as with witnessing in person, so with witnessing by mail; it may take time. But do not give up. What if they do turn you down a number of times? People do this in the house-to-house ministry too, yet Jehovah's witnesses do not give up but lovingly keep right on calling back every few months, to give them more opportunities. We should give our relatives the same loving consideration.

Moreover, time and change of circumstances may make relatives more favorably disposed; so do not give up. In Mississippi one Witness had a grandmother whom she felt would not listen to Kingdom truths; so for a time she said nothing. But she reports: 'My mother gave my grandmother a Bible tract and in a letter to me my grandmother mentioned this. I wrote her an answer, giving the current sermon. Four months went by. I wrote again. Still no answer. Then, about one month later, we were surprised by my grandmother's visiting us unexpectedly for three days. She came to the Kingdom Hall and requested a copy of the *Babylon* book. We have been corresponding regularly since then, and she subscribed for both magazines. In her last letter she said she finished the *Babylon* book and now wants to study it. She says her reading now is confined to the Bible and Bible literature.' Many have eventually responded to the truth because the Witnesses who were related to them did not give up.

So realize that, whether you witness by word of mouth or by letter to your relatives, it may take time. A Witness in New York state wrote to his family in Czechoslovakia for eight years. After seven years his mother began to grasp the truth and

said in a letter that she would like to have someone help her in a study of the Bible. A local Witness started a Bible study and she progressed rapidly. In a recent letter she wrote: "Dear Son, With continuous thoughts of you and your family I am very happy to write you now that I am also your sister in the truth. Last Sunday I was baptized and now I am very happy that I can be also a servant of Jehovah God." This, after eight years of witnessing by letter!

So tactfully and lovingly persevere in witnessing to your relatives. Help them in every way possible, not giving up. A Witness in California wrote that, when she and her husband learned the truth, they enthusiastically told her family. "We didn't receive the reception we expected. But when I pioneered, they asked many questions. To handle them, I kept the book '*Make Sure of All Things*' next to the telephone, and while talking, I thumbed through it, giving Scriptural answers to their questions. This kept up for some time, and they realized they were learning more on the telephone than in their own church; so they asked that I start studying with them. It was not long before my sister and her husband and children became interested and began going in the field ministry. My sister has been baptized." This took nine years!

HELPING MARRIAGE MATES

Of all persons with whom a Christian wants to share Bible truths, high on the list is the Christian's own marriage mate. To withhold such truth from this person would not be showing love. Yet sometimes wives hold back. Perhaps it is fear that the husband will oppose the Kingdom message. But sometimes this opposition is only in the mind of the wife. A woman in São Paulo, Brazil, showed interest in the Bible, and a Witness arranged to call back on her,

but she warned: "Do not come when my husband is at home. He does not like me to talk about religion to anybody." In the midst of the visit the husband suddenly appeared. Surprised, the Witness continued the Bible discussion, drawing the husband into the conversation. His interest aroused, he asked many questions. At last he said he had a religious book he did not understand. Asked to show the book, he brought out "*Let God Be True.*" The Witness showed him the value of the book and offered to help him understand it. He consented, and a Bible study was started with him and his wife. He has entirely changed his way of thinking about religion.

It has time and again been found that the ideal time to tell one's husband is at the time a Bible study is started, so that the husband may join in the study. Both the Witness and the wife may tactfully encourage the husband to join the study. Even if the husband wishes only to listen, this will be most beneficial to arouse interest and stimulate questions.

If a wife finds that her husband does not listen or opposes when she tries to explain Bible truths, she may find it advisable to ask another Witness to help. In New Caledonia a Bible study was started with a Tahitian woman whose husband opposed the truth. Each time his wife told him about what she learned, he replied: "It is not you who should teach me something." So the wife wisely asked one of the brothers to speak to her husband. He was surprised to receive Scriptural answers to all his questions. A Bible study was started and now he is a regular preacher of God's truths.

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- Jehovah—a God of Love and Patience.
- Turning to Jehovah.
- Fifty Years a Slave to My God.
- What Does God Have in Mind?
- Getting Along with Others.

But what if the husband opposes the Kingdom message and will not listen to anyone? The apostle Peter dealt with this problem when he wrote: "You wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, in order that, if any are not obedient to the word, they may be won without a word through the conduct of their wives, because of having been eyewitnesses of your chaste conduct together with deep respect." (1 Pet. 3:1, 2) Thus your fine conduct can bring about a change of

mind in an unbeliever that, perhaps, no verbal witnessing may accomplish. How important is right conduct for all who want to help their relatives to become true Christians!

Sharing the truth with one's relatives, as did Andrew and Cornelius, opens up the opportunity to unite one's family in God's truth. Above all, with God's war of Armageddon facing this generation, their opportunity for life is at stake. If they are going to survive Armageddon into God's paradise New Order under his kingdom, your help may be vital.

So diligently persevere in sharing the truth, doing so lovingly, tactfully, with gracious words. Do not give up, even if rebuffed repeatedly, just as you never give up with people in your territory. Even if they do not want to listen, you can witness by your Christian conduct. By such loving consideration shown over the years, you may share the happiness of aiding your own relatives to become your spiritual brothers and sisters. What a blessed joy! Have you opened the way for this joy by telling *your* relatives?

RECOVERY

Still Possible

"Return to me, and I will return to you,' Jehovah of armies has said."—Mal. 3:7.

HERE is every reason to believe that the Bible is indeed the Word of God, the divinely inspired record telling us of the purpose and the personality of the true God, Jehovah. There is also every reason to believe that it was primarily written for our day. Why? Because it can be proved from the Scriptures that we are living in the "last days" of the present system of things, with its "critical times hard to deal with." This is the period of judgment concerning which Jesus gave his great prophecy, recorded at Matthew chapter 24, stated in reply to the question: "What will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?" For these two reasons we are keenly interested in ascertaining the Bible's message for our day, and in giving that message utmost respect.—2 Tim. 3:1; Matt. 24:3.

Since the Bible shows that God foresaw this critical time, it is only reasonable to expect that he would give special enlightenment concerning it, partly because of

the many dangers and pressures peculiar to our day, also because of the tremendous witness to be given and work to be done before the complete end. (Matt. 24:14) But we are not left to conjecture about this. The apostle Paul says that "all the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction," and that "they were written for a warning to us upon whom the ends of the systems of things have arrived." There is also the promise that "the path of the righteous ones is like the bright light that is getting lighter and lighter until the day is firmly established." Additionally, when Jesus gave his great prophecy, he rounded this out with three prophetic illustrations, each telling of a work of judgment that he would institute and direct at the time of his return. He tells how he, as the bridegroom, would deal with the virgins who should be ready to meet him on his arrival for the marriage feast. Again, he tells how he, as the master, would, on his return, reckon with those to whom he had given talents with which to trade during his absence. Lastly, he tells how he, on being enthroned as king, would separate the people of all nations "as a shepherd sepa-

1. For what two reasons should we give special heed to God's Word today?

2. (a) What proves that the Bible was written primarily for the "last days"? (b) How did Jesus illustrate the judgment work instituted at his return?

rates the sheep from the goats," meting out a due reward or recompense to each class.—Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11; Prov. 4:18; Matt. 25:1-46.

³ There are other prophetic parables that find their fulfillment in this day, "in the conclusion of the system of things," as Jesus said in explaining the illustration of the weeds being separated from the wheat at the harvesttime. There is also the illustration of the nobleman, picturing Christ Jesus, who travels to a distant land to receive kingly power and then returns and metes out judgment to his slaves to whom he had given silver money (minas), and to the citizens who did not want him to be king over them.—Matt. 13:36-43; Luke 19:12-27.

⁴ All these parables find their fulfillment in "the last days" and all have a common feature. In each case two classes are made manifest, one approved and the other disapproved. Beyond doubt, we are well advanced in these "last days." (2 Tim. 3:1) In fact, it has lasted much longer than we originally anticipated. But that does not mean that our destinies, as individuals, are already fixed, as finally approved or disapproved. For those who become conscious of their spiritual need, recovery is still possible. Of course, as Jesus said, it would be good for all to be ever "conscious of their spiritual need," realizing their dependence on Jehovah and his provisions. (Matt. 5:3) But, apart from that, it is still possible for a person to come to his senses, so to speak, even in this late day, and realize his need to change his course of action radically, at the same time wondering if there is any hope in his case. With this problem in mind, let us search further in

the Scriptures for enlightenment and guidance.

HOPE OF RECOVERY

⁵ Turning to the prophecy of Malachi, we find in chapters three and four one of the most forceful passages concerning the "last days." Like many other prophecies, Malachi had a message for the nation of Israel at the time it was given. It also had a measure of fulfillment when Jesus was on earth, as proved by quotations from it in the Greek Scriptures. (See Malachi 3:1; 4:5, 6, and Matthew 11:10, 14; 17:10-13; Luke 1:76.) But, as with other prophecies, it finds its major fulfillment in this greatest of all critical periods, as shown by the reference to the "coming of the great and fear-inspiring day of Jehovah," with the impending danger of Jehovah's 'actually striking the earth with a devoting of it to destruction.'—Mal. 4:5, 6.

⁶ The message of judgment here is strong and direct. No words are wasted. Jehovah says: "I will come near to you people for the judgment, and I will become a speedy witness" against the various wicked ones mentioned who "have not feared me." (Mal. 3:5) The general tenor throughout this book of Malachi shows that conditions called for such a strong word, revealing the low spiritual ebb that the Jews had reached, specially the priests, who had become self-righteous and indifferent to a marked degree. Was there no hope for anyone? Was it useless for God to make any further appeal? Notice what immediately follows Jehovah's warning:

⁷ "For I am Jehovah; I have not changed. And you are sons of Jacob; you have not come to your finish." (Mal. 3:6) Jehovah is consistent. Because these people were

3. What further illustrations have particular meaning for our day?

4. (a) What feature is common to all of these parables?
(b) Are our individual destinies already fixed, giving rise to what possibility and problem?

5. In what three ways do many prophecies, including Malachi's, find their application or fulfillment?

6. Why was Malachi's judgment message so strong, leading to what questions?

7. (a) How does Malachi 3:6 show Jehovah's consistency? (b) Being God's chosen people entailed what?

the children of their beloved forefathers, he would not hastily cast them off, though deserving it. Yes, they had been deserving it a long time, as Jehovah next reminds them, saying: "From the days of your forefathers you have turned aside from my regulations and have not kept them." (Mal. 3:7) While it was an advantage to be God's chosen people, it also entailed a definite responsibility, as he told them: "You people only have I known out of all the families of the ground. That is why I shall hold an accounting against you for all your errors." (Amos 3:2) So in view of such a bad deflection in Malachi's day, we again ask, Was there any hope of recovery? What does Jehovah next say?

⁸ "Return to me, and I will return to you," Jehovah of armies has said." (Mal. 3:7) What a merciful appeal! Though the nation and its leaders had "turned aside" and lapsed into corrupt practices, yet any who came to their senses were reminded that Jehovah, on his part, was inviting and just waiting for them to return to him. Notice, the appeal was not made to those who had never known God, but to those in covenant relationship with him and who had badly misused their opportunities and wandered far off in sinful indulgence. As Jehovah said to them: "I have spread out my hands all day long to a stubborn people, those who are walking in the way that is not good."—Isa. 65:2.

⁹ Hence, having taken the wrong way, these people had, of course, to make the first move in returning to God. The same is true today. God does not turn his face in favor toward those who persistently reject him. But as regards those who are honest and humble enough to recognize their plight and start making steps in the

right direction, they find a divinely provided means that gives them the necessary incentive to continue retracing their steps until fully restored to God's favor in union with him. It is by making such a merciful provision that Jehovah does his part in the matter of the two-way returning, so that it becomes a mutual approach. (Mal. 3:7) Otherwise, it is to be feared that not many would make it. This merciful provision concerns us all. Hence we are keenly interested to learn what it is, so that we can take advantage of it ourselves and help others to do so. The answer is found in the remaining part of Malachi's prophecy, which we will briefly review.

THE INCENTIVE TO RETURN TO JEHOVAH

¹⁰ As we look through the passage of Scripture from Malachi 3:7 to 4:6, we note a striking series of short, sharp sentences of adverse judgment, but in each case there is added a word of fine promise and encouragement, building up within us a great desire and incentive to share in the good things foretold. First, the people are told how they had robbed and cursed God. This is followed by an invitation to bring all their dues, or tithes, into his storehouse, with the promise of an abundant blessing, "until there is no more want." Such bringers of tithes are additionally promised an unfailing fruitage, and they would be recognized by "all the nations" as a happy people, living under delightful conditions.—Mal. 3:8-12.

¹¹ Next, Jehovah takes issue with those who had spoken strong words against him. In contrast, this criticism is followed by a description of how Jehovah pays close attention to "those in fear of Jehovah" and "those thinking upon his name." He kindly

8. What appeal did Jehovah make to Israel, and on what basis?

9. (a) To whom is Jehovah ready to extend help, and how? (b) Why does he do this, and why should we be interested?

10. (a) What characteristic marks the latter part of Malachi's prophecy? (b) What charge and what invitation and promise are given at Malachi 3:8-12?

11. What contrast is made and what fine promise given at Malachi 3:13-18?

has a "book of remembrance" written up on their behalf. He gives them the fine promise: "They will certainly become mine . . . at the day when I am producing a special property." They are shown compassion, "just as a man shows compassion upon his son who is serving him." A clear distinction is made between those serving God and the wicked who refuse to serve him. That is, one class is manifestly approved and the other disapproved.—Mal. 3:13-18.

¹² Next follows a vivid passage describing what awaits the presumptuous and the wicked ones. However, those who fear Jehovah's name will enjoy the healing benefits of the sunshine of his favor and will stand out as a spiritually strong and prosperous people, triumphant in the face of their enemies.—Mal. 4:1-3.

¹³ The accumulative effect of the passages just considered is to build up in our minds a clear and inviting picture of a people in close union with Jehovah and enjoying his favor, like sons happy in the service of their father. Jehovah causes them to stand out distinct from all others, dwelling in their own land, as it were, in peace and happiness and prosperity. What a grand incentive to return to Jehovah!

¹⁴ Is there such a people to be found in this day of the prophecy's major fulfillment? Yes, indeed. In all the earth there is just the one body of people who are "in fear of Jehovah" and constantly "thinking upon his name." (Mal. 3:16) In fact, they count it the greatest privilege and honor to bear his name as his witnesses, as mentioned at Isaiah 43:10-12. In the spirit of whole-souled devotion and dedication to Jehovah they bring their due support of

12. What judgment and what blessing are pronounced at Malachi 4:1-3?

13. From the foregoing, how can we summarize what Jehovah will do for those who truly fear him?

14. (a) Who today meet these qualifications, and how? (b) How are Jehovah's witnesses being used by him in this Judgment day?

his worship into his storehouse, that is, into his organization and its ministry. As a result, they are enjoying all the good things we have just reviewed, but not in a selfish way. They stand out distinct from Christendom and all the world, but they are not selfishly exclusive. They recognize their commission to preach the message of God's kingdom in all the earth, "publicly and from house to house," including the invitation to those who have wandered far off to return to Jehovah. (Acts 20:20) In this way Jehovah's witnesses are being used to represent him who says: "Return to me, and I will return to you." (Mal. 3:7) Through them he is carrying out his part of the promise in the matter of a mutual return on behalf of those who, for their part, have come to their senses and realize their need to return to him. We might add that the fact that Jehovah becomes a "speedy witness" in this inspection time implies the need for a speedy return on their part, but it is not too late. The appeal to return to Jehovah is still sounding forth.—Mal. 3:5, 7.

¹⁵ It can truly be said that there is much in God's Word that makes a strong appeal, both by direct word and by prophetic dramas and parables, expressed in very moving terms, as we shall see. These appeals abundantly confirm in unmistakable language the Creator's own description of what his name stands for, as when he declared to Moses: "Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth, preserving loving-kindness for thousands, pardoning error and transgression and sin, but [when necessary] by no means will he give exemption from punishment." (Ex. 34:6, 7) These appeals are set forth in the Bible, not only to enlighten and guide those striving to serve God acceptably, but

15. How does God's Word make a strong appeal, for what purpose, and how related to his name?

also to catch the attention of those who have fallen by the way, but who are not beyond hope of recovery.

¹⁶ In this connection there is another aspect worth remembering. Though the Scriptures often deal with God's people collectively, as a nation, or prophetically portray certain classes or groups, yet they always have their appeal to the individual reader. It is important to appreciate this, for though, as in Malachi's day, adverse judgment is pronounced against a *people* persisting in its evil ways, yet that does not prevent an *individual* from coming to his senses and turning his heart to God. This must be backed up by the individual's also turning his feet into the right way, the "path of life." Such a one might well pray, as did David: "The sins of my youth and my revolts O do not remember . . . For your name's sake, O Jehovah, you must even forgive my error, for it is considerable. Who, now, is the man fearful of Jehovah? He will instruct him in the way that he will choose."—Ps. 16:11; 25:7, 11, 12.

¹⁷ You may feel that it is not easy to pray under such circumstances, wondering if your prayer will be heard after you have gone so far in the wrong way. For your encouragement, we invite you to consider the following remarkable provision that exactly meets such a need.

PROVISION FOR PRAYER FORESHADOWED

¹⁸ On completion of the temple and after the Ark, representing Jehovah's presence, had been placed in the Most Holy of the temple, then King Solomon voiced a prayer of inauguration. He mentioned various circumstances under which prayer might be made "toward this place" (the

temple), and asked that Jehovah would hear and answer such prayers. Solomon included the prayers of individuals, and he even mentioned the "foreigner," so that, when he "actually comes and prays toward this house, may you yourself listen from the heavens . . . and you must do according to all that for which the foreigner calls to you."—1 Ki. 6:1; 8:11, 22, 30, 38, 41-43.

¹⁹ In line with our inquiry, Solomon also mentioned what would happen if, following a bad and sinful course, Jehovah became incensed and abandoned the people to captivity to the enemy. He prayed that, if "they indeed come to their senses* . . . and they indeed return to you with all their heart," and they pray in the direction of "the house that I have built to your name; you must also hear . . . their prayer and their request for favor, and you must execute judgment for them." This would lead to the opening of the way for their return to their own land. (1 Ki. 8:46-53) How well this confirms the course of action that is possible for one who has wandered far off in a self-indulgent course and who feels abandoned! If, in his distress, he faces up to his bad situation and comes to appreciate his need, then, without fail, he should call on Jehovah.

²⁰ But, like Israel of old, he must recognize the channel that Jehovah is using for hearing and answering such prayers. The Israelites could not turn to *any* temple. Of course not. There was just the one built to Jehovah's name at his chosen city, Jerusalem. For complying with this requirement, what assurance was given that such prayers would be heard? Notice what Jehovah said to Solomon: "I have heard your prayer and your request for favor . . . I have sanctified this house that you have

* Literally: "they indeed cause a returning to their heart."—NW, margin, 1955 edition.

19. How was Israel to petition Jehovah when in captivity, this teaching what lesson?

20. What conditions were involved, and with what assurance of being heard?

16, 17. (a) How does God's Word apply individually, and why is this important? (b) What prayer is appropriate, and what difficulty might this involve?

18. At the inauguration of the temple, how did Solomon pray to Jehovah?

built by putting my name there to time indefinite; and my eyes and my heart will certainly prove to be there always.”—1 Ki. 9:3.

²¹ How does this apply today? There is no religious building, either at Jerusalem or anywhere else, that is built to Jehovah’s name or is being used by him as a visible link between himself and those who wish to approach him. However, there is a temple that is visible today, though not located at any one spot on earth. The apostle Paul spoke of the Christian congregation as forming this temple, as shown by what he wrote to the congregation at Ephesus: “You have been built up upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, while Christ Jesus himself is the foundation cornerstone. In union with him the whole building . . . is growing into a holy temple for Jehovah . . . a place for God to inhabit by spirit.”—Eph. 2:20-22; see also 1 Pet. 2:4, 5.

²² Yes, Christ Jesus is primarily the channel, as he said: “No one comes to the Father except through me.” He also said that all requests to the Father must be “in my name.” (John 14:6; 16:23, 24) But, on the practical side, in answering such prayers and aiding those who desire to be recovered and restored to his favor and service, Jehovah is using that same temple class today as Paul described. There is still a remnant of that class on earth, forming the nucleus of Jehovah’s witnesses. Closely associated with them now is a “great crowd” who have come into God’s favor, fittingly described as “rendering him [God] sacred service day and night *in his temple*.” (Rev. 7:9, 15) All of these were formerly in need of recovery. If you feel a similar need, you too can join their ranks. They are not a limited company, but an unnumbered great crowd.

21. What corresponds today with Israel’s temple of old?

22. Who now comprise the temple class, and how are they used by Jehovah?

²³ This temple or sanctuary class is identified as being the same as the people in Malachi’s prophecy, who bring all the “tenth parts” or tithes of support into God’s organization in devotion to him and who constantly think upon his name. Can the same be said of this class as Jehovah said of the house built by Solomon: “My eyes and my heart will certainly prove to be there always”? (1 Ki. 9:3) Yes. Of this people Jehovah says: “Owing to the fact that you have been precious in my eyes, you have been considered honorable, and I myself have loved you.” “Jehovah your God is in the midst of you. . . . He will exult over you with rejoicing.”—Isa. 43:4; Zeph. 3:17.

²⁴ As already noted, God’s Word makes a strong appeal to the individual. It is likewise true that in this greatest of all inspection times Jehovah, on his part, is revealing himself more fully as the great Individual who, from his heart, is appealing to our hearts, to our whole-souled love and devotion. He is supremely worthy of it. He is not inaccessible. As Paul said to the men of Athens, God “set limits of the dwelling of men, for them to seek God, if they might grope for him and really find him, although, in fact, he is not far off from each one of us.” As God also said to the Jews when in exile in Babylon: “You will certainly call me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. And you will actually seek me and find me, for you will search for me with all your heart. And I will let myself be found by you . . . and I will bring you back.” Finally, recall Jehovah’s grand word of encouragement, with its matchless appeal to the individual: “In the height and in the holy place is

23. What favored, happy position does this temple class occupy?

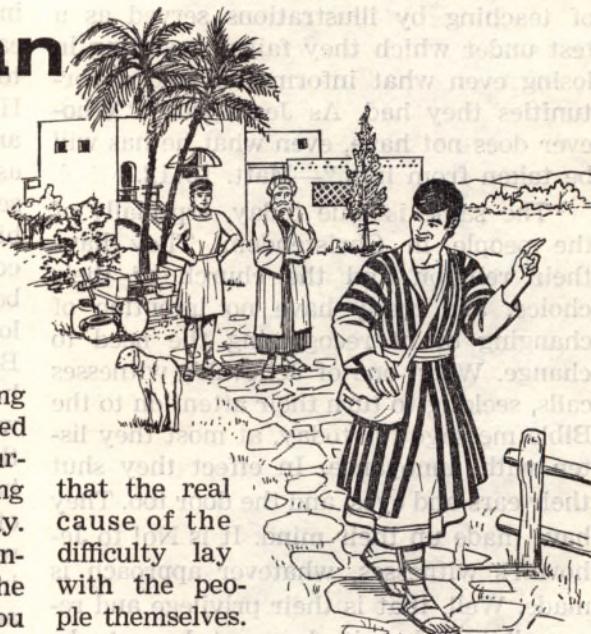
24, 25. (a) In what way is Jehovah revealing himself more fully today? (b) What encouragement is given to the individual, involving what? (c) From what source can we expect to find further enlightenment?

where I reside, also with the one crushed and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly ones and to revive the heart of the ones being crushed." Observe that in every case the heart must be involved; there must be a going much deeper than a mere mental recognition of one's need. Certainly it can be said of those sincerely seeking Jehovah and desiring to return to him, that he, on his part, will return to them. Recovery is still possible for such.

A Young Man GOES ASTRAY

JESUS gave many illustrations, causing us to wonder why he so frequently used that method of teaching. Usually the purpose of an illustration is to make a thing easily understood in an impressive way. But there can be exceptions to this general rule, as is evident in this case. The disciples asked Jesus: "Why is it you speak to them by the use of illustrations?" When we read his answer, we are at once struck by his reference to the very things we have been stressing, regarding the need to come to one's senses and the all-important heart attitude. He told his disciples: "To you it is granted to understand the sacred secrets of the kingdom of the heavens, but to those people it is not granted." This might seem an arbitrary decision on Jesus' part, but he went on to show

—Acts 17:26, 27; Jer. 29:12-14; Isa. 57:15.
²⁵ There are other interesting and important aspects to consider on this subject, and there is much we can learn for our guidance and encouragement from the Bible. We will therefore look into one of Jesus' parables. It is particularly appropriate to our theme and has its own distinctive appeal. We refer to the well-known parable, or illustration, of the prodigal son.



that the real cause of the difficulty lay with the people themselves.

Quoting from Isaiah's prophecy as having fulfillment in his day, he said: "For the heart of this people has grown thick, and with their ears they have heard with annoyance, and they have shut their eyes; that they might never see with their eyes and hear with their ears and get the sense of it with their hearts and turn back, and I heal them."

—Matt. 13:10, 11, 15, 34.

² Ah, yes! The majority of the people in

1. (a) Why did Jesus frequently use illustrations?
 (b) How did Jesus disclose the real cause of the difficulty?

2. How did Jesus' method of teaching serve as a test, with what result?

Jesus' day enjoyed listening to him as a wonderful storyteller, as he seemed to them. But they did not want to be disturbed in their view of things or way of life. They did not want the message to penetrate to that extent. Hence they shut their mental ears and eyes so as not to come to their senses and have to acknowledge the need to turn their hearts and their feet in a completely different direction. Mark says that Jesus was "thoroughly grieved at the insensibility of their hearts." (Mark 3:5) Thus Jesus' method of teaching by illustrations served as a test under which they failed, resulting in losing even what information and opportunities they had. As Jesus said: "Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him."—Matt. 13:12.

³ The same is true today, especially of the people in Christendom. They have their religion and the church of their choice, and many have no intention of changing or of recognizing the need to change. When one of Jehovah's witnesses calls, seeking to turn their attention to the Bible message for today, at most they listen with annoyance. In effect they shut their ears and eyes, and the door too. They have made up their mind. It is No! to Jehovah's witnesses, whatever approach is made. Well, that is their privilege and responsibility, but it does not *have* to be that way. As in Jesus' day, so now, the decision rests with the individual. As in Jesus' day, on the request of his disciples, he stopped to explain the meaning of certain of his illustrations. So today, we do well to pause and inquire as to the meaning and present application of these Bible passages. We know they were "written for our instruction," especially now, when the "**ends of the systems of things**" have ar-

rived."—Matt. 13:36; Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11.

⁴ The illustration of the prodigal son is fraught with meaning. So as to have the picture in mind we will briefly review the story, which is of a man who had two sons. The younger one asked his father for his share of the property. This was granted, and the young man then took all his belongings and went off to a far country, where he squandered all he had in a life of debauchery. Famine hit the country, and in desperate need he got a job herding swine, but was not allowed even to eat their fodder. In sore plight, he came to his senses and decided to return home. He would acknowledge his sinful course and ask to be taken on, not as a son, but as a hired servant. His father, however, seeing his son when far off, ran to meet him and gave him a heartwarming welcome. He was quickly fitted out with the best robe, sandals and a fine ring, followed by a feast with music and dancing. But the older son, on approaching the house and being told what was happening, was furious and would not join in. His father entreated him, but he only argued back. The father again explained his course of action in a most kindly and appealing way. There the story abruptly ends, leaving it open as to the older son's final reaction.—Luke 15:11-32.

⁵ There are certain aspects that stamp this illustration as unique. It is one of the longest that Jesus gave, allowing for a more detailed picture and a deeper impression. But the outstanding feature, making for a deeper impression, is the family relationship involved. Other illustrations involved the use of inanimate things, such as different kinds of seed or soil, or the relationship between a master and his slaves. (Matt. 13:18-30; 25:14-30;

3. What similar situation obtains today, and what is the wise course to pursue?

4. What outline is followed in the illustration of the prodigal son?

5. In what way is this illustration seen to be unique?

Luke 19:12-27) But here we have the close and intimate relationship between a father and his sons. True, it often happens that a father does not cultivate such a friendly or confidential relationship with his sons, who are brought up to fear and respect him, rather than to love him in a spontaneous way. But we only have to read this illustration to realize what a warmhearted love this father had for both his boys, and freely showed it to each of them, though undeserved as it happened. The story itself makes a warm appeal, as Jesus intended it should, and we therefore look forward with keen anticipation to considering in detail its present fulfillment.

THE SETTING OF THE ILLUSTRATION

⁶ First, we must look at the circumstances under which this illustration was given. The time was in the latter part of Jesus' ministry, while on his way to Jerusalem for the second last time. (Luke 13:22) That which immediately called forth the illustration, also two others, is clearly stated at the beginning of Luke chapter fifteen: "Now all the tax collectors and the sinners kept drawing near to him [Jesus] to hear him. Consequently both the Pharisees and the scribes kept muttering, saying: 'This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.'" (Luke 15:1, 2) As a result, Jesus gave three illustrations, each telling of the recovery of what had been lost, namely, a lost sheep, a lost coin and, most precious of all, a young son who "was lost but has been found." In each case, too, great emphasis is laid on the rejoicing by the owner when recovery had been made. —Luke 15:32.

⁷ This muttering and complaining attitude by the religious leaders and others was nothing new. It showed itself from the

commencement of John the Baptist's ministry. As Jesus told them, it was the "tax collectors and the harlots [sinners]" who believed and responded to John's message. To the religious leaders, so righteous in their own eyes, this class was in a lost condition and greatly despised and unworthy of any consideration. In the eyes of Jesus, however, those of this class, though gone astray and in a lost state, showed a readiness to listen to him and come to their senses, and 'many of them followed him.' In fact, as Jesus said, they were "going ahead of you [Pharisees] into the kingdom of God." And as he also said, when being entertained by Zacchaeus, a "chief tax collector," the "Son of man came to seek and to save what was lost." —Matt. 21:31, 32; Mark 2:15-17; Luke 19:10.

⁸ Hence we can appreciate the setting when Jesus gave the illustrations concerning the lost sheep and the lost drachma coin, emphasizing the intense search made by the loser for what was lost. The third one, however, the prodigal son, stresses a different aspect. It shows the course that must be taken by the one lost.

⁹ In all three illustrations, please note that, when recovery had been effected, not only the owner rejoiced, as was reasonable and right, but the entire household and friends and neighbors were invited to join in. Jesus explained this, saying: "Thus, I tell you, joy arises among the angels of God over one sinner that repents." (Luke 15:10) Thus Jesus showed he was following the course of heavenly wisdom in gladly receiving those who were sincerely repentant. He also showed up the religious leaders as being unwise and unjustified in their self-righteous and niggardly attitude toward their less fortunate brothers. Yes,

6. What circumstances called forth this illustration and two others?

7. How did Jesus' viewpoint and attitude contrast with those of the religious leaders?

8. What aspects are stressed in the foregoing illustrations?

9. Why was so much emphasis laid on the aspect of rejoicing?

as Jews, they were all brothers, God's people, belonging to the one Owner, and actually all in need of the services of the Physician, Christ Jesus, in being healed and returning to Jehovah.—Mark 2:17.

¹⁰ Keeping this background in mind will help us in our understanding of the modern fulfillment of the illustration of the prodigal son. As the message and work of John the Baptist and Christ Jesus resulted in different classes being made manifest, so today, when a similar message and work are being carried forward by the footstep followers of Jesus, we can look for similar classes being made manifest. These things will be a guide and a comfort to us, also a warning, as they were to Jesus' disciples, to whom the "sacred secrets of the kingdom of the heavens" were first propounded.—Matt. 13:11.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE CHARACTERS

¹¹ In his opening words of the illustration, Jesus mentioned the three main characters: "A certain man had two sons." (Luke 15:11) This discloses a family relationship existing between them. The "certain man," being the father of the two boys, pictures Jehovah as the heavenly Father. The question arises, Of whom is he the Father? The term "father" signifies life-giver, but that alone does not determine the answer. Christendom's clergy like to speak of the "Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man," but in this they greatly err. Jesus said to the Pharisees, the Jewish clergy of his day: "You are from your father the Devil," because they had his spirit of hatred, even to the point of murder. True, Adam was the "son of God," but, following his willful rebellion, that relationship was no longer recognized by God, either for

him or the human family following him. Hence the scripture says: "The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." In harmony with this, the Scriptures show that Jehovah acknowledges the relationship of Father only to the household of creatures who are in line for gaining life in his kingdom under Christ Jesus.—John 8:44; Luke 3:38; 1 John 5:19.

¹² It is important to recognize this in considering who are pictured by the two sons in the illustration. They do not include those who have never known or found the true God, Jehovah. When Paul spoke to the men of Athens he urged them "to seek God, if they might grope for him and really find him." (Acts 17:27) But, as previously noted, God did not appeal to the Israelites who had gone astray to grope for him. Rather, he said: "Return to me, and I will return to you," because they were still his people in covenant relationship with him, even though for long enough they had turned aside to their own crooked ways. (Mal. 3:7) Likewise, the two sons of the "certain man" picture those who have come to know sufficient of Jehovah and his purpose as to constitute a basis for entering into a relationship with him, though quite a number may not take advantage of it and may go astray for some time.

¹³ It was Jesus who first revealed Jehovah as Father to those who came into union with him. He taught them to pray: "Our Father in the heavens, . . ." He further said to them: "Have no fear, little flock, because your Father has approved of giving you the kingdom." This "little flock" takes in the 144,000 who comprise the Christian congregation. They are in line for gaining life in the Kingdom, shar-

10. In what way will the background of these illustrations help us?

11. (a) Who is pictured by the "certain man"? (b) What guidance is given respecting God in the relationship of Father?

12. Who only can properly be spoken of as *returning* to God, leading to what conclusion regarding the two sons?

13. To whom did Jesus reveal Jehovah as Father, and how can this class be identified today?

ing with Christ in his throne in heaven. These are the ones entitled to partake of the emblems at the annual Lord's evening meal or Memorial service, and the records show that there is still a remnant of this company right down to this day yet on earth. These are spoken of as "the congregation of the first-born who have been enrolled in the heavens." Thus, very fittingly, the "older son" in the illustration, the firstborn, represents today those claiming to be of the remnant of the true church or congregation, as just mentioned.

—Matt. 6:9; Luke 12:32; Rev. 3:21; 14:1; Heb. 12:23; see also *The Watchtower*, 1965, page 26.

^{on¹⁴} But what class is pictured by the "younger son"? Besides the "little flock" with the heavenly hope, Jesus mentioned "other sheep, which are not of this fold." These are identified with the sheep who are gathered to Christ's right hand in the illustration of the sheep and goats. Yes, these are in family relationship with God, for the King, Christ Jesus, says to them: "Come, you who have my Father's blessing . . ." The period in which they are gathered is shown to be following the time when the 'Son of man arrives in his glory, and . . . sits down on his glorious throne,' which event occurred in 1914. The king invites these sheeplike ones to "inherit the kingdom prepared for you," not by sharing the heavenly throne with him, but they enter as "righteous ones into everlasting life" on earth. As promised, "the righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it."—John 10:16; Matt. 25:31-34, 46; Ps. 37:29.

¹⁵ Hence there are two classes who gain everlasting life in God's kingdom, and who look to him and call upon him as their heavenly Father. Broadly speaking, these

are pictured by the two sons in Jesus' illustration. It would not be true, however, to say that all the "other sheep" of John 10:16 are pictured by the "younger son." Many of these, like the men of Athens, originally "had no hope and were without God in the world," and were not calling on him as their Father. (Eph. 2:12) Maybe they were groping for him and, being sincere and honest-hearted, they responded to the message of truth and "became believers," as some did at Athens after listening to Paul. (Acts 17:33, 34) From then on they have maintained a steadfast course, and hence would not be pictured by the "younger son." Who, then, are pictured by him?

THE COURSE OF ACTION THAT LEADS ASTRAY

¹⁶ As we follow the course taken by the younger boy we shall see the characteristics that enable us to identify the class pictured by him. At the opening of the story we hear him asking his father for "the part of the property that falls to my share." The father acquiesced and "divided his means of living to them." In other words, the younger one wanted then and there what was due to come to him out of his father's estate. He wanted this in cash, or in goods that he could easily convert into money. He then immediately took all he had and traveled to a far country and soon squandered it all in a wanton indulgence of the sensual appetites, or a life of debauchery. (Luke 15:12, 13) So we see here an impatient young man wanting all he could get in a tangible form for his immediate selfish enjoyment. Living at home under his father's eye and serving him had no appeal at that time, being far too restricted a life. He wanted to live his own life his own way.

14. Besides the "little flock," how did Jesus show that others would come into his favor?

15. Why does not the younger son picture all the "other sheep"?

16. What course did the younger son take, disclosing what attitude?

¹⁷ Have there been some in our day in a similar position and who have taken a similar course as just described? Yes. The modern movement of Jehovah's witnesses began to take shape about forty years before 1914, corresponding to the ministry of John the Baptist. Contrary to the general teaching in Christendom, it began to be seen and taught in those early days that the heavenly hope was not the only means of salvation. The hope of eternal life on earth under restored Edenic conditions for the human family in general, based on Christ's ransom sacrifice, was an intrinsic part of the message then proclaimed. This was first clearly seen in 1881 and set forth in the booklet *Tabernacle Shadows of the Better Sacrifices*. It was a prominent feature of the book *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, published in 1886, which book was widely distributed and studied during the next forty years. More pointed still, the booklet *Millions Now Living Will Never Die* and the worldwide public talks under that title, commencing early in 1918, gave Scriptural proof that a multitude of people would survive Armageddon and live forever on earth under God's kingdom.

¹⁸ Many not only heard the message, but came in close contact with the organization of God's people proclaiming it. They knew and believed in God's provision for the restoration of perfect life on earth, but, like the younger son, they did not want to wait to enjoy life in God's way and time in the "new earth," under the eye of the "new heaven." (Rev. 21:1) In other words, they wanted for their immediate enjoyment from the heavenly Father that 'part of the property that would fall to their share.' It was a premature request with an unworthy motive.

17. In our day, when and how was the earthly hope made manifest?

18. How did some respond to the message, similar to the younger son?

¹⁹ Notice in the illustration given by Jesus that request was not made for the part falling due to the older brother, the first-born. According to God's law, the "right of the first-born" was to inherit "two parts" of his father's estate, as against one part for the younger son. (Deut. 21:17) So, too, in our day. The younger son class did not entertain for themselves the heavenly hope, knowing that this involved treading the narrow way of self-sacrifice in a life of dedication. They held off from the step of dedication and entering into Jehovah's service. To appreciate their position, we must keep in mind that until about 1934 the step of dedication of oneself to God was thought to be only for those who would become God's spiritual children, with the heavenly hope set before them. In that year it was clearly shown in *The Watchtower* that it was entirely proper for the "other sheep" to dedicate themselves to do God's will, symbolized by water immersion.—*The Watchtower*, as of August 15, 1934, page 250.

²⁰ Until 1935, the gathering of the "other sheep" as something to be accomplished before Armageddon was not stressed. But from then on, Scriptural nourishment and help were supplied through the pages of *The Watchtower* to strengthen those whose hopes were earthly. All the same, it has continued to be true that many have gained a knowledge of Jehovah and his purpose, knowing it to be the truth, but have held off from making any further progress. They have seen what is entailed. Like the younger son, they have wanted something different, now.

²¹ The facts show that in many cases

19. How has the younger son class shown no desire for the firstborn's part?

20. How do some today take a course like that of the younger son?

21. (a) What questions often arise when young ones take such a course? (b) What should parents keep in mind in this regard? (c) How should dedication be rightly viewed?

these have been young people, or perhaps children of dedicated parents, hence well acquainted with the hope of life in a restored paradise. Sometimes these young ones, perhaps in their early teens, have been immersed, claiming to be dedicated. Then shortly they disappear from view as far as Jehovah's witnesses are concerned. They become wholly absorbed in worldly ways and pleasures, sometimes indulging in shameful conduct, bringing reproach on their parents. Then the parents, in great grief, raise the question as to whether their young son or daughter really understood the significance of dedication and baptism. But is that not a poor time to raise that question? Should they not have made sure about that at the time? It is so easy for young ones to take up something with great enthusiasm for a time, then take up something else with equal zest. They are just getting a taste of what life has to offer, including the attractions of this world with its dreams and vanities. (Eccl. 4:7) They are susceptible to suggestions. They see others of their age being immersed, so why not they? With their knowledge of the truth they feel they can say Yes to the two questions put to them at the time of immersion. But can it be said that at that stage they really appreciate what it means to take the step of dedication as a perpet-

ual "vow to God" to do his will for all time, involving their whole life? The scripture says: "Better is it that you vow not than that you vow and do not pay," pleading "it was a mistake." "Why should the true God become indignant on account of your voice and have to wreck the work of your hands?" That is just what happened to the prodigal son.—Eccl. 5:4-6.

²² Of course, individuals, including young ones, vary greatly. At a surprisingly early age some can take a serious view of things and hold to it. There are Bible examples of this, such as Samuel. We cannot lay down a general rule or age limit. Each one in the family must be dealt with individually. At the same time, we want to avoid a course that, in effect, tends to produce prodigal sons.

²³ Many questions arise concerning those who go astray. They are not willful enemies. Is recovery possible for them and, if so, how? How does the illustration of the prodigal son help to answer these questions? What light does it throw, not only on the prodigal son class, but on the attitude and course to be taken by those who stay close to God's organization? These and other questions will be discussed in a succeeding issue of *The Watchtower*.

22. What should be encouraged with individuals, but what should be avoided?

23. What questions arise regarding those who go astray?

VIGOROUS RETURN TO SPIRITUAL LIFE

"As a boy of fourteen," reports a Witness in Nebraska, "I was first associated with Jehovah's witnesses through my mother's interest in the Bible. I was baptized in 1946. But I'm sorry to say, as I look back over those years, that my reckless nature and immaturity caused me to make many mistakes, but I am thankful to Jehovah for his loving mercy. I was distracted by the anxieties of raising a family and by materialistic pursuits until I was almost spiritually dead. Then I was suddenly laid off work. What would I do? I decided it was high time to follow Jesus' advice to put Kingdom interests first. In time we went to serve where the need was great and I became a servant. When things became difficult and we considered leaving, I would sit at my desk and go over the Publisher's Record cards. I would see more than just names; I would see living souls who were beginning to take the steps to life. How could I abandon them after they had come so far and showed such a willing spirit? We stayed!"

BABYLON FALLS BUT HER RELIGION SURVIVES TO DOMINATE THE NATIONS

IN PREVIOUS issues we have covered the fall of Babylon into the hands of Cyrus the Persian in 539 B.C.E. From this time on, Babylon was no longer a political world power. But what about Babylon's religion? With the passing of Babylon's political power and the shift of world control from Semitic to Aryan hands, did Babylon's religion die with her? By no means. Why not?

First of all, the foundation for the practice of Babylon's religion by all nations except the faithful descendants of Shem was laid in their building of the Tower of Babel in Nimrod's day. The miraculous confusion of tongues scattered the families but they took their false religious ideas with them.* Babylon afterward was viewed by pagan nations as the center of religion. Secondly, after Babylon's fall in 539 B.C.E., her priesthood was driven out by the Persians. But they did not have in mind letting Babylonish religion's traditional authority and supremacy die out. Though Babylon lost her political supremacy, her Nimrod-initiated religion maintained itself as a world empire of religion over all except those who held to Jehovah's true worship at Jerusalem. Under the adroit

maneuvering of Satan the Devil it immediately set its eyes on western horizons to establish a new center for its priesthood and the successorship of Belshazzar. In fact, we shall see that its very essence infiltrated later into apostate Christianity, actually getting control over the section of the earth that came to be called Christendom.

BABYLONISH RELIGION SPREADS TO EUROPE

Long before Babylon fell, the ground had been broken to make it possible to accomplish this transplant of the head of Babylonish religion to Italy. Historian J. H. Breasted, in the book *Ancient Times—A History of the Early World*, tells us that a race of sea rovers called Etruscans, who probably came from Asia Minor, were settled in Italy by 1000 B.C.E. After 800 B.C.E. they stretched far across northern Italy, and Rome became a city kingdom under an Etruscan king, like the other Etruscan cities that stretched from Capua far north to the harbor of Genoa. These kings governed for two centuries and a half. This would make the line of kings of Rome from about 750 to 500 B.C.E. exclusively Etruscan. The traditional founding of Rome not long before 750 B.C.E. would then correspond to its capture and establishment as a strong kingdom by the Etruscans. Archaeological evidence bears this out, though written documents of Rome during this early period are missing. Although these Etruscan kings introduced improvements into Rome, their cruelty and tyranny finally caused a revolt, and about 500 B.C.E. the career of Rome under kings came to an end. But, says Dr. Breasted, the two and a half centuries of Etruscan rule left their mark on Rome, always discernible in architecture, religion, tribal organization, and some other things.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica corroborates

* For fuller details see *The Watchtower* of June 1 and 15, 1964, and the book "Babylon the Great Has Fallen!" God's Kingdom Rules! by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Brooklyn, New York.

rates, referring to the historian Herodotus, who recounts that in the reign of Atys, son of Manes, there was a great scarcity of food in all Lydia, which lasted eighteen years. Finally, by the king's arrangement, his son Tyrrenus took half of the people down to Smyrna and built ships wherein they set out to seek a livelihood and a country, and after sojourning with many nations they came to the Ombrici in Italy, where they founded cities. Of these people, who (according to Herodotus) no longer called themselves Lydians, but Tyrrhenians, the *Britannica* goes on to say: "From the character of their earlier remains the date of the first permanent settlement may be placed at the end of the 9th century." What was the religion of the Tyrrhenians? The *Britannica* relates:

That the Etruscans were orientals or semi-orientals is proved by the whole character of their earliest art, and by many details of their religion and worship. It is an art which shows close contact with Mesopotamia, Syria and Cyprus on the one side and with Egypt on the other. The deities and mythological figures on Etruscan gold-work and jewelry of the 7th century are evidently the heroes and deities of Asiatic mythology.

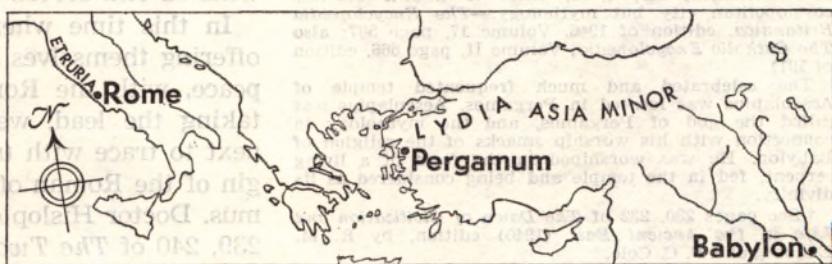
. . . In the sphere of ritual and religion there are many details which are taken direct from Mesopotamia, and the whole feeling and atmosphere are purely oriental. The most striking identities are in the practice of divination and augury; for the custom of divining from the livers of sheep or the flight of birds is purely Chaldean (see DIVINATION). There are models of clay livers from Mesopotamia inscribed in cuneiform which precisely resemble the bronze model of a liver found at Piacenza [in the Province of Emilia, Italy], divided into compartments each of which is labelled in Etruscan with the name of its presiding divinity.*

So archaeology clearly indicates that the Etruscans came from some part of Asia Mi-

nor, landing on the seacoast of Tuscany. Veii, in Etruria,† north of Rome, became one of their chief cities. Etruria was finally swallowed up by Rome. A confederacy of twelve cities existed in the sixth century that held its annual meetings at the shrine of Voltumma above Lacus Volsiniensis (Lake of Bolsena), and it seems likely that the confederation confined itself principally to affairs of religion.* All this took place before and up to the time of the fall of Babylon in the sixth century (539 B.C.E.).

So the religion of Babylon gained a strong foothold in Europe, not merely a remote relation from the time of Babel, but a direct-line inheritance. However, we are here mainly interested in the priesthood of Babylon. Just as Satan the Devil had instituted Babylonish religion through Nimrod to oppose true worship, so his spirit motivated the Babylonian priesthood to see to it that the priesthood and the religious successorship to Belshazzar himself should not die out when Babylon was lost as a capital. After Babylon's defeat, according to the work entitled "Lares and Penates of Cilicia," by Barker and Ainsworth, chapter 8, page 232, we read: "The defeated Chaldeans fled to Asia Minor and fixed their central college at Pergamos." This is the Pergamum or Pergamos mentioned in Revelation 2:12, 13 as the location of a Christian congregation much lat-

* Also, the Greek word for Etruria was used by Latin writers in the form *Tyrrenia*; also *Tusca*, from whence the modern Tuscany.—*The Encyclopædia Britannica*, 1959, Volume 8, page 783.



* Volume 8, edition of 1946, pages 785, 786.

er on, in the first century C.E. As to this shifting of the Chaldean headquarters, Dr. Alexander Hislop says:

Phrygia . . . formed part of the Kingdom of Pergamos. Mysia also was another, and the Mysians, in the *Paschal Chronicle*, are said to be descended from Nimrod. The words are, "Nebrod [Greek for Nimrod], the huntsman and giant—from whence came the Mysians." (See *Paschal Chronicle*, volume I, page 50.) Lydia, also, from which [the historian] Livy and Herodotus say the Etruscans [of Italy] came, formed part of the same kingdom. For the fact that Mysia, Lydia, and Phrygia were constituent parts of the kingdom of Pergamos, see SMITH'S *Classical Dictionary*, page 542.*

ROME AFFECTED RELIGIOUSLY

This proved to have profound effect on Rome. After the Etruscan cities were overthrown and Rome became a republic (509 B.C.E.), the Romans took over the Etruscan gods, Jupiter, Juno, Minerva and others, and each god was now, for the first time, given a human form and a residence in a temple or shrine. They were identified with the Greek gods. Jupiter, the "sky-father" of the Etruscans, became the Roman version of the Greek *Zeus-pater*. Mars, the god of war, was the favorite deity of the fighting Romans. The Saturnalia were later taken over by the Christians as their Christmas, and given a new significance. One modern historical work† links the Roman practices directly with the Chaldeans:

* That ancient Pergamos (Pergamum) was a city of considerable wealth and stature in the fifth century B.C.E. is seen in the fact that "it had been striking coins since 420 B.C. at latest." Before Xenophon (about 430-355 B.C.E.) mentions it in his *Anabasis*, VII, viii, 8, and *Hellenica*, III, i, 6, little is known of this cosmopolitan city but mythology.—*The Encyclopædia Britannica*, edition of 1946, Volume 17, page 507; also *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Volume II, page 666, edition of 1911.

The celebrated and much frequented temple of Aesculapius was located in Pergamos. Aesculapius was called the god of Pergamos, and the mythology in connection with his worship smacks of the religion of Babylon. He was worshiped in the form of a living serpent, fed in the temple and being considered as its divinity.

† See pages 230, 232 of *The Dawn of Civilization and Life in the Ancient East* (1940) edition, by R. M. Engberg and F. C. Cole.

The Chaldeans made great progress in the study of astronomy through an effort to discover the future in the stars. This art we call "astrology". Much information has been systematically collected by the Babylonians and from it we have here the beginning of astronomy. The groups of stars which now bear the name "Twelve Signs of the Zodiac" were mapped out for the first time, and the planets Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn were known. Since these planets were thought to have special powers over the lives of men, they were named for the five leading gods and goddesses. We refer to these planets by their Roman names, but the Romans had adopted the Babylonian terms and simply translated them into their equivalents in Rome. Thus the planet of Ishtar, the goddess of love, became Venus, and that of the god Marduk was changed to Jupiter.

In 133 B.C.E., King Attalus III, on his deathbed, bequeathed Pergamum and all its territory to the Romans, all of which later became a Roman province under the name of Asia. This King Attalus had been selected by the Chaldean Magi as the successor to Belshazzar, as Doctor Hislop goes on to say:

The kings of Pergamos, in whose dominions the Chaldean Magi found an asylum, were evidently by them [by the Magi], and by the general voice of Paganism that sympathised with them, put into the vacant place which Belshazzar and his predecessors had occupied. They were hailed as the representatives of the old Babylonian god. This is evident from the statements by Pausanius. . . . Attalus, in whose dominions the Magi had their chief seat, had been set up and recognized in the very character of Bacchus, the Head of the Magi. Thus the vacant seat of Belshazzar was filled, and the broken chain of the Chaldean succession renewed.—*The Two Babylons*, pages 240, 241.

WHENCE THE OFFICE OF PONTIFEX MAXIMUS?

In this time when world religions are offering themselves as the hope for world peace, with the Roman Catholic Church taking the lead, we owe it to ourselves next to trace with unbiased mind the origin of the Roman office of Pontifex Maximus. Doctor Hislop cites history on pages 239, 240 of *The Two Babylons*:

A colony of Etruscans, earnestly attached to the Chaldean idolatry, had migrated, some say from Asia Minor [where Pergamos was located], others from Greece, and settled in the immediate neighborhood of Rome. They were ultimately incorporated in the Roman state, but long before this political union took place they exercised the most powerful influence on the religion of the Romans. From the very first their skill in augury, soothsaying, and all science, real or pretended, that the augurs or soothsayers monopolized, made the Romans look up to them with respect. It is admitted on all hands that the Romans derived their knowledge of augury . . . chiefly from the Tuscan, that is, the people of Etruria, and at first none but natives of that country were permitted to exercise the office of Haruspex, which had respect to all the rites essentially involved in sacrifice. . . . the highest of the noble youths of Rome were sent to Etruria to be instructed in the sacred science which flourished there.

The college* of Pontiffs was founded by Numa Pompilius, second legendary king of Rome, and regarding Numa, Hislop says: "That god was called in Babylon Nebo, in Egypt Nub or Num, and among the Romans Numa, for Numa Pompilius, the great priest-king of the Romans, occupied precisely the position of the Babylonian Nebo."† The Sovereign Pontiff that presided over that college, and that controlled all the public and private religious rites of the Roman people in all essential respects, became in spirit and in practice an Etruscan Pontiff. As to this, Dr. Hislop says:

The true legitimate Babylonian Pontiff had his seat beyond the bounds of the Roman empire [which never overran southern Mesopotamia or Chaldea]. That seat, after the death of Belshazzar and the expulsion of the Chaldean priesthood from Babylon by the Medo-Persian kings, was at Pergamos, where afterwards was one of the seven churches of Asia.‡

* The word "college" as used here refers, not to an educational institution, but to a body of not fewer than three, legally constituted under Roman law to carry out a purpose. Our modern-day "corporation" corresponds somewhat to it.

† *The Two Babylons*, by Hislop, page 256.

‡ *Ibid.*, page 240.

It would be of greatest interest to us in this brief historical consideration to see how this religious connection between Pergamos and Rome, which became the Sixth World Power in the first century B.C.E., was manifested in the office of Pontifex Maximus. It clearly proves that Babylonish religion actually is the source of the office of Pontifex Maximus of the popes of Rome. *The Two Babylons* gives us an account:

At first the Roman Pontiff had no immediate connection with Pergamos and the hierarchy there; yet, in course of time, the Pontificate of Rome and the Pontificate of Pergamos came to be identified. Pergamos itself became part and parcel of the Roman empire, when Attalus III, the last of the kings, at his death, left by will all his dominions to the Roman people, B.C. 133. . . . When Julius Caesar, who had previously been elected Pontifex Maximus, became also, as Emperor, the supreme civil ruler of the Romans, then, as head of the Roman state, and head of the Roman religion, all the powers and functions of the true legitimate Babylonian Pontiff were supremely vested in him, and he found himself in a position to assert these powers. Then he seems to have laid claim to the divine dignity of Attalus, as well as the kingdom that Attalus had bequeathed to the Romans, as centring in himself; . . . Then, on certain occasions, in the exercise of his high pontifical office, he appeared of course in all the pomp of the Babylonian costume, as Belshazzar himself might have done, in robes of scarlet, with the crozier of Nimrod in his hand, wearing the mitre of Dagon [the fish god] and bearing the keys of Janus [the two-faced god] and Cybele [the "mother" goddess]. . . . until the reign of [Western Emperor] Gratian, who, as shown by [the historian] Gibbon, was the first that refused to be arrayed in the idolatrous pontifical attire, or to sit as Pontifex. . . .

. . . Within a few years after the Pagan title of Pontifex had been abolished, it was revived . . . and was bestowed, with all the Pagan associations clustering around it, upon the Bishop of Rome, who, from that time forward, became the grand agent in pouring over professing Christendom, . . . all the other doctrines of Paganism derived from ancient Babylon. . . .

... The circumstances in which that Pagan title was bestowed upon Pope Damasus, were such as might have been not a little trying to the faith and integrity of a much better man than he. Though Paganism was legally abolished in the Western Empire of Rome, yet in the city of the Seven Hills it was still rampant, insomuch that Jerome [translator of the Latin *Vulgata*], who knew it well, writing of Rome at this very period, calls it "the sink of all superstitions." The consequence was, that, while everywhere else throughout the empire the Imperial edict for the abolition of Paganism was respected, in Rome itself it was, to a large extent, a dead letter. . . .

... The man [Pope Damasus I] that came into the bishopric of Rome, as a thief and a robber, over the dead bodies of above a hundred of his opponents, could not hesitate as to the election he should make. The result shows that he had acted in character, that, in assuming the Pagan title of Pontifex, he had set himself at whatever sacrifice of truth to justify his claims to that title in the eyes of the Pagans, as the legitimate representative of their long line of pontiffs. . . .*

... The Pope, as he is now, was at the close of the fourth century, the only representative of Belshazzar, or Nimrod, on the earth, for the Pagans manifestly accepted him as such. . . . A.D. 606, when amid the convulsions and confusions of the nations, tossed like a tempestuous sea, the Pope of Rome was made Universal Bishop; and then the ten chief kingdoms of Europe recognized him as Christ's Vicar upon earth, the only centre of unity, the only source of stability to their thrones.†

* Under "Damasus I, pope," page 652b of Volume 2 of M'Clintock and Strong's *Cyclopaedia* says the following:

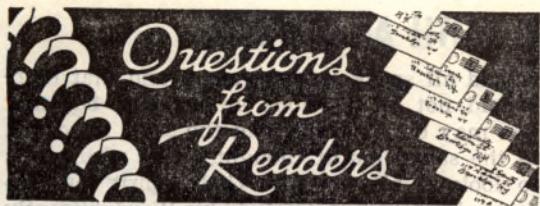
"Damasus I, pope, . . . succeeded Liberius as bishop of Rome A.D. 366. He was opposed by Ursicinus, who claimed the election, and in their disgraceful strife many people were murdered . . . The emperor Gratian conferred upon [Damasus], in 378, the right to pass judgment upon those clergymen of the other party who had been expelled from Rome, and, at the request of a Roman synod held in the same year, instructed the secular authorities to give to him the necessary support. . . ."

† *The Two Babylons*, pages 241, 242, 247, 250, 252, 255.

BABYLON'S RELIGION FINALLY TO PASS AWAY

In this manner Babylon accomplished her conquest of the Western world. Her worldwide religious empire is called in God's Word "Babylon the Great, the mother of the harlots and of the disgusting things of the earth." (Rev. 17:5) This religious empire ruled over Pergamos and even Rome, but of infinitely greater consequence has been her domination of Christendom. Her children, "daughters" or religious organizations, are like her, harlots, having illicit relations with the political element of this world. Her doctrines and the course in which she leads the world powers are as detrimental to humankind and as disgusting and death dealing as ancient Babylon herself. Ancient Babylon left a name of contempt to all generations since. Modern Babylon has led her followers to look to man-made efforts for world peace and has disgusted others with her hypocrisy and corruption, leading the world into a fight against God's kingdom. The Bible kindly reveals the true picture for our safety and sensible action, and the facts of history verify this picture to the last detail. Why should anyone hesitate to listen to what the Creator of mankind says for his safety? Babylon is exposed, through Jehovah's undeserved kindness to us. Then flee from modern-day Babylon the Great and learn the truth about her early destruction and the freedom that it brings to mankind through God's kingdom rule! (Rev. 18:4, 5, 20) How God made pictorial dramas to guide the escape of honest people, to help them to get out of Babylon, will be considered in issues to follow.





Questions from Readers

- Since Jude 7 shows that Sodom and Gomorrah became a "warning example by undergoing the judicial punishment of everlasting fire," does that not bar the inhabitants of those cities from a resurrection?—A.C., U.S.A.

Reading only that verse, without our taking into consideration what the rest of the Bible has to say on the matter, one might draw such a conclusion. But other scriptures present additional facts that cannot be ignored if we are going to arrive at a sound conclusion.

For example, at Matthew 11:23 it is written: "If the powerful works that took place in [Capernaum] had taken place in Sodom, it would have remained until this very day." Obviously, this does not mean that the same individuals who were living in Sodom at the time of its destruction would have remained alive for over 1900 years down to the time when Jesus spoke those words, but that the city would have remained as an inhabited place.

Then the next verse refers to the Judgment Day, saying: "Consequently I say to you people, It will be more endurable for the land of Sodom on Judgment Day than for you." (Matt. 11:24) Similarly, at Matthew 10:15 are recorded Jesus' words: "Truly I say to you, It will be more endurable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on Judgment Day than for that city" where the people would reject the message carried by Jesus' disciples. For it to be "more endurable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah" than for others, it would be necessary for former inhabitants of that land to be present on Judgment Day. It is not the literal land, the ground, that is to be judged. Revelation chapter 20 shows that it will be persons raised from the dead who will stand "before the throne." Nor will judgment be passed on them as groups, as former inhabitants of certain lands, but they will be "judged individually according to their deeds" during the time of judgment. So apparently individuals who used to live in that land will be resurrected.—Rev. 20:12, 13.

What is it, then, that underwent "the judicial punishment of everlasting fire"? While the inhabitants of the cities were certainly de-

stroyed, apparently it was not the people but the cities themselves that were everlasting destroyed. They have not been rebuilt down to this day. Notably, J. Penrose Harland wrote: "It has been shown that Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim were doubtless situated in the area now covered by the waters of the southern part of the Dead Sea."—*The Biblical Archaeologist Reader* (1961), page 59; see also Isaiah 13:19, 20.

What happened to the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah at the time that Jehovah rained fire and sulphur on them from heaven stands as a warning to all to avoid immoral conduct such as was carried on in those cities.

- On what animal did Jesus Christ make his triumphal ride into Jerusalem? Matthew 21:7 mentions both an ass and a colt.—M.E., U.S.A.

Jesus said to the disciples he sent into Jerusalem: "You will at once find an ass tied, and a colt with her." (Matt. 21:2) So there was a mother or she-ass and a colt that was yet with its mother. Then at Matthew 21:7 we read: "They brought the ass and its colt, and they put upon these their outer garments, and he seated himself upon them."

We will be aided to understand which animal Jesus actually used if we first read the prophecy that Jesus was thus fulfilling. Translated directly from Hebrew, Zechariah 9:9 reads: "Be very joyful, O daughter of Zion. Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem. Look! Your king himself comes to you. He is righteous, yes, saved; humble, and riding upon an ass, even upon a full-grown animal the son of a she-ass." Thus, the Messiah would use a "full-grown" male animal, "the son of a she-ass."

The accounts in Mark, Luke and John mention only that one animal, the one Jesus rode. They refer to it both as an "ass" and as a "colt." Obviously, that animal could be identified satisfactorily by either term. (Mark 11:2-7; Luke 19:30-35; John 12:14, 15) Interestingly, both Mark and Luke show that the "colt" was one "on which none of mankind [had] yet sat." While it was a mature male animal, it had not yet been separated from its mother and used as a mount. So the disciples brought both the she-ass and its colt to Jesus, but the one he rode was the male ass, the colt.

We are informed that the disciples "put upon these their outer garments, and [Jesus] seated himself upon them." Thus Jesus seated himself, not on both the she-ass and its colt, but on the outer garments placed on the colt. Then Christ rode into Jerusalem.

MAINTAINING UNITY IN FAITH AND WORK

LOOK where we will, friction and strife mark this wicked old system of things. In striking contrast thereto stand Jehovah and his heavenly organization, among whom harmony and unity prevail. It is therefore only fitting that all dedicated servants of Jehovah God upon earth should also be at unity with him and with one another. Their unity with one another is well described by the psalmist: "Look! How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!"—Ps. 133:1.*

Jehovah God has purposed this very thing, namely, "at the full limit of the appointed times . . . to gather all things together again in the Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth." This Jehovah has been doing by means of his holy spirit, his organization and his Word. As a result we see unity and cooperation between the "little flock" of anointed Kingdom heirs and the great crowd of "other sheep."—Eph. 1:10; Matt. 25:34-40; John 10:16.

As members of either one or the other of these two 'folds' of Jehovah's "sheep" we have the obligation individually to maintain, first of all, unity in faith, even as the apostle Paul counsels: "Now I exhort you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you

* For details see *The Watchtower*, July 1, 1964.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FIELD MINISTRY

True followers of Jesus Christ maintain unity of faith and work by cooperating closely with one another and with Jehovah's visible organization, which is directing the worldwide preaching of the good news of God's kingdom. During August this unity will be manifest as they call at the homes of people everywhere to share the faith-inspiring truths contained in God's Word. As an aid to interested persons, they will offer Bible-study publications, on a small contribution.

HOW PRACTICAL IS THE BIBLE?

What is practical and beneficial today is often overlooked in favor of what is expedient. For this reason some persons may be inclined

should all speak in agreement, and that there should not be divisions among you, but that you may be fitly united in the same mind and in the same line of thought." This requires us to look at all times to God's spirit for help and enlightenment, to study his Word diligently and to associate with his people regularly.—1 Cor. 1:10.

Such unity of faith, of mind and of heart is absolutely essential to carrying out our preaching commission as effectively and as quickly as possible. Ours is a work of planting and watering the word of God in the hearts of lovers of righteousness, and concerning this the apostle Paul further said: "He that plants and he that waters are one," both looking to God to make it grow. Telling of this same unity of work, God inspired one of his prophets to write: "I shall give to peoples the change to a pure language, in order for them all to call upon the name of Jehovah, in order to serve him shoulder to shoulder."—1 Cor. 3:8; Zeph. 3:9.

To serve in this way we must carefully guard against any spirit of independence creeping in, for the world is saturated with it. How can we do so? By cultivating lowliness of mind, submissiveness, love and all the rest of the fruits of the spirit. Doing so, we will be able not only to maintain our unity in faith and work but to do so with joy.—1 Pet. 5:5.

to view the Bible as impractical. Are you? Do you know someone who is? Prove to your satisfaction that the Bible is the most practical guide to modern living available. How? By obtaining and reading the book "*All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial*." Here you will learn of the Bible's thirty-nine writers, their backgrounds and qualifications and the value of their writings to their own generations and to us. Send today. This 352-page hard-bound book is only \$1.

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August 29: Recovery Still Possible. Page 461.
September 5: A Young Man Goes Astray. Page 467.