

The WATCHTOWER

JANUARY 15, 1958

Semimonthly

OVERSEERS IN
APOCALYPTIC TIMES

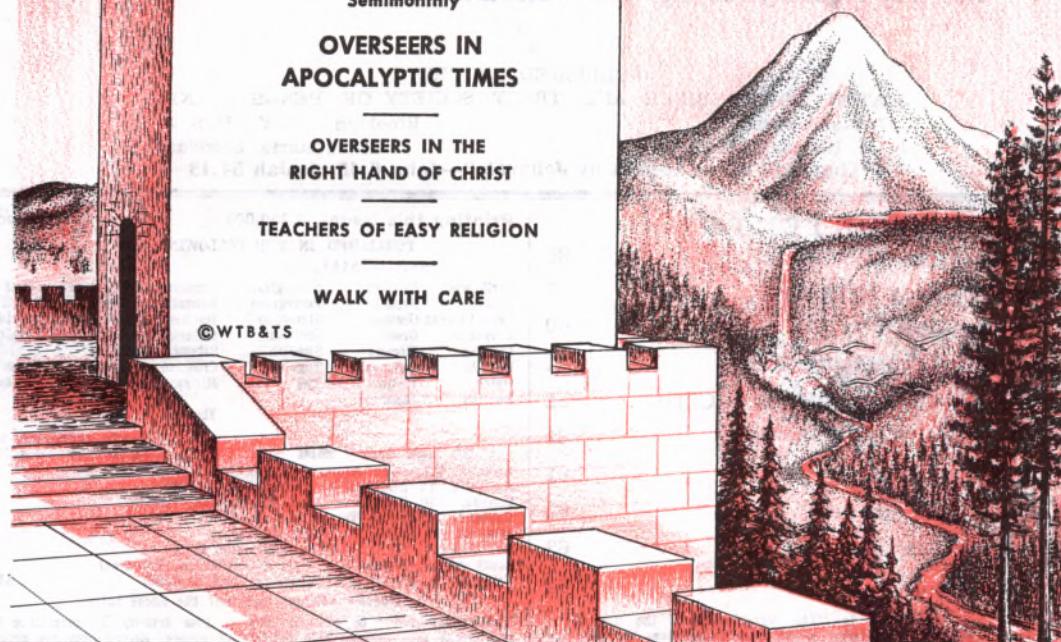
OVERSEERS IN THE
RIGHT HAND OF CHRIST

TEACHERS OF EASY RELIGION

WALK WITH CARE

©WTB&TS

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**



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

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

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

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

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

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

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

PUBLISHED BY THE
WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA
117 Adams Street Brooklyn 1, N. Y., U. S. A.
N. H. KNORR, President GRANT SUITER, Secretary
"They will all be taught by Jehovah."—John 6:45; Isaiah 54:13

C O N T E N T S

Walk with Care	35
Teachers of Easy Religion	37
Gunfire in Church	40
Overseers in Apocalyptic Times	41
Overseers in the Right Hand of Christ	51
How Dictators Regard the Bible	61
Aliens Please Notice	61
Questions from Readers	62
Secondhand Prayer	63
Announcements	64

The Bible translation used in "The Watchtower" is the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures. When other translations are used the following symbols will appear behind the citations:

AS - American Standard Version	JP - Jewish Publication Soc.
AT - An American Translation	Le - Isaac Leeser's version
AV - Authorized Version (1611)	Mo - James Moffatt's version
Da - J. N. Darby's version	Ro - J. B. Rotherham's version
Dy - Catholic Douay version	RS - Revised Standard Version
ED - The Emphatic Diaglott	Yg - Robert Young's version

Printing this issue: 3,350,000		Five cents a copy
PUBLISHED IN THE FOLLOWING LANGUAGES		Monthly
Semimonthly		
Afrikaans	Finnish	Norwegian
Arabic	French	Portuguese
Cebu-Visayan	German	Slovenian
Cinyanja	Greek	Spanish
Cishona	Ilocano	Swedish
Danish	Indonesian	Tagalog
Dutch	Italian	Twi
English	Japanese	
		Armenian
		Kanarese
		Siloxi
		Korean
		Tamil
		Bengali
		Burmese
		Malayalam
		Pangasinan
		Ukrainian
		Cibemba
		Polistir
		Urdu
		Croatian
		Russian
		Xhosa
		Sesotho
		Yoruba
		Visayan
		Siamese
		Zulu
		Ibo

Yearly subscription rates	
for semimonthly editions	
America, U.S., 117 Adams St., Brooklyn 1, N.Y.	\$1
Australia, 11 Beresford Rd., Strathfield, N.S.W.	8/-
Canada, 150 Bridgewater Ave., Toronto 19, Ontario	\$1
England, 34 Craven Terrace, London W. 2	7/-
Jamaica, 151 King St., Kingston	7/-
New Zealand, G.P.O. Box 30, Wellington C. 1	7/-
South Africa, Private Bag, P.O. Elandsfontein, Transvaal	7/-
Trinidad, 21 Taylor St., Woodbrook, Port of Spain	7/-

Monthly editions cost half the above rates.

Remittances should be sent to office in your country in compliance with regulations to guarantee safe delivery of money. Remittances are accepted at Brooklyn from countries where no office is located, by international money order only. Notice of expiration (with renewal blank) is sent at least two issues before subscription expires. Change of address when sent to our office may be expected effective within one month. Send your old as well as new address.

Entered as second-class matter at Brooklyn, N.Y.
Printed in U.S.A.

The WATCHTOWER

Announcing
JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM

Vol. LXXIX

January 15, 1958

Number 2



LIFE in this modern world is like walking through a swamp, a swamp of moral corruption. Pitfalls, entanglements and treacherous ground are a constant threat on every side. A false step can lead to being sucked down by the world's moral quicksand. Winding through this evil-smelling swamp is a narrow path that follows firm ground until it finally comes out into a clean world. That narrow path is the way of Christian integrity. It is the safe path, the only way out. Jesus spoke of it when he said: "Narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into life, and few are the ones finding it."—Matt. 7:14.

But how can a person stay on this path if he does not walk with care or have a guide to lead him and to light his way? A wise traveler in a literal swamp would not be without a good guide or a dependable light. Neither would he be heedless of the ground under his feet. He would walk carefully, making sure the ground is solid

and not a deceptive crust with only an appearance of soundness. But how many people in the world show the same care while walking their life's course? How many blunder along giving no heed to where they step or to what path is best to follow? How many give any thought or make any effort to finding and walking the narrow path of Christian integrity? The majority can well say: "We look for light, but, behold, darkness; for brightness, but we walk in obscurity. We grope for the wall like the blind; yea, we grope as they that have no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the twilight."—Isa. 59:9, 10, A.S.

A swamp is no place to be stumbling and groping along untested paths. It is no place to be walking without proper light. Yet how many in the world are doing just that? How many know where they are going or can be certain the path they follow is sound?

God well knew that man would need something to guide him. He knew that there would be many deceptive paths leading in different directions that would thoroughly confuse people. They would have to have something that would unerringly point out the right path and would be a dependable light for their feet. He provided it by giving mankind the Bible. "Your word is a lamp to my foot, and a light to my roadway."—Ps. 119:105.

By means of his written Word God speaks to us, saying: "This is the way,

walk ye in it." (Isa. 30:21, AS) But if no attention is paid to the Scriptures, how can a person find that way? And how can those who do find it stay on it if they do not follow the instructions and principles of God's Word? What will prevent them from wandering off on deceptive paths of human philosophy, false religion and political ideologies that only lead them deeper into the worldly swamp? What will safeguard them from the entanglements of materialism and worldly immorality?

The only way a person can stay on the right path is to follow the righteous principles and instructions of God's Word. He must walk carefully, permitting the Bible to expose false paths and to illuminate the right way. To ignore it is like stumbling through a swamp in total darkness. Is it any wonder, then, that so many people do not know where they are actually headed? Jesus truly said: "He that walks in the darkness does not know where he is going."

—John 12:35.

Do you know where you are going? Do you know what your life's course is leading to? Are you sure the path you are following is sound? Some may say Yes. But can they be any more certain they are right than the person who is groping about in total darkness can be certain that he is walking in the direction he imagines he is? Try walking out of an unfamiliar room in complete darkness and you will find it difficult to identify with certainty the many objects you bump into or be sure you are headed in the right direction for the right door.

No one can be sure he is on the right path by leaning upon his own understanding. What may seem right to him may actually be wrong, because it is contrary to the laws of the supreme Sovereign. That is why it is written: "There exists a way that is upright before a man, but the ways of death are the end of it afterward."

(Prov. 14:12) It is only by using the truths of the Scriptures that a person can be certain what path is right and what is wrong and deceptive.

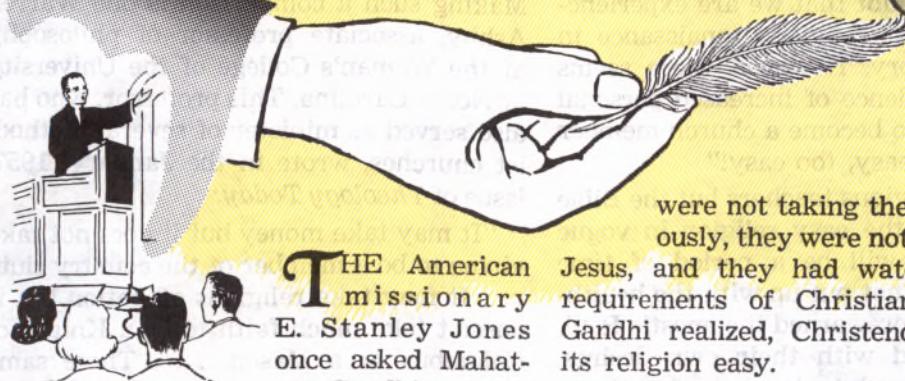
The need for the Bible's guiding light in this world can be better appreciated when it is realized that the world is in the very condition described by the prophet Isaiah: "For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples." —Isa. 60:2, AS.

Since the god of this world, its invisible ruler, is the prince of darkness, it is not strange that the world should be in gross spiritual darkness. It is not strange that it should be a swamp of moral corruption, and it is not strange that it should produce great crops of wicked fruits. Since Satan has no desire for anyone to walk the narrow way to life, is it not logical that he would use every deceptive means imaginable to get people on wrong paths and bogged down in the world's moral swamp? Will he not make wrong roads appear as the right road? Will he not popularize false religions, making them appear outwardly as the true religion? "And no wonder, for Satan himself keeps transforming himself into an angel of light. It is therefore nothing great if his ministers also keep transforming themselves into ministers of righteousness."—2 Cor. 11:14, 15.

This world and its moral swamp is due to be destroyed by God at the coming battle of Armageddon. The whole wicked system of things will be wiped from the earth as thoroughly as was the world before the Flood. The only way to survive its fate and to step out into a clean new world is to follow the narrow way of Christian integrity. The wise person will choose that way and will walk along it with care, keeping strict watch on how he walks. As long as he stays on it and follows the guidance of God's Word he will not become lost in the world's moral swamp.

TEACHERS OF Easy Religion

What is easy religion? Who are its teachers?
What has easy religion done for Christendom?
What decision affects your eternal destiny?



THE American missionary E. Stanley Jones once asked Mahatma Gandhi a question that evoked a most enlightening response. "I am very anxious to see Christianity nationalized in India," said the missionary to the Hindu nationalist leader, "so that it shall no longer be a foreign thing identified with a foreign people and a foreign government, but a part of the national life of India and contributing its power to India's uplift and redemption. What would you suggest that we do to make that possible?"

"I would suggest, first," replied the Hindu leader, "that all of you Christians must begin to live more like Jesus Christ. Second, I would suggest that you must practice your religion without adulterating or toning it down. Third, I would suggest that you put your emphasis upon love, for love is the center and soul of Christianity."

A non-Christian had struck at the core of Christendom's trouble. No, it was not that Christian principles as found in the Bible are at fault; indeed, for the sermon on the mount the Hindu leader professed admiration again and again! It was simply this: Professed Christians, he observed,

were not taking their religion seriously, they were not copying Christ Jesus, and they had watered down the requirements of Christianity. In short, Gandhi realized, Christendom had made its religion easy.

MORALS DECLINE, CHURCHES INCREASE

Can we really blame Mahatma Gandhi for not wanting Christendom's easy religion nationalized in India? When we look about Christendom and see its mounting crime and immorality, would we ourselves, if non-Christian, wish to adopt such a religion? J. Edgar Hoover recently said that America is in the midst of an "ever mounting wave of crime." A Chicago lie detector expert, who screened the employees of 1,454 companies for their embezzlement tendencies, said sharply: "Today everybody's working like mad and everybody's stealing like mad." Meanwhile church leaders tell us that church membership soars to new heights.

What is the answer to the riddle of a graph that would show a soaring line of crime and a soaring line of church membership side by side? Could it be that easy religion is the explanation? No small number of religious teachers themselves feel that it is. "There's an awful lot of people joining the church, but what it means, I don't know," said Episcopal preacher-

writer Bernard Iddings Bell. "I'm not sure it means anything. . . . It's too easy to be in the church."

It was evangelist Billy Graham who also pointed to teachers of easy religion: "There is no doubt that we are experiencing the greatest religious renaissance in American history. However, there seems to be little evidence of increased personal morality. . . . To become a church member in America is easy, too easy!"

Not only religious teachers but the Bible itself point to the easy religion in vogue today. "There will be a period of time when they will not put up with the healthful teaching," forewarned the apostle Paul, "but, in accord with their own desires, they will accumulate teachers for themselves to have their ears tickled."—2 Tim. 4:3.

Here the Bible foretold that the masses of professed Christians would accumulate teachers, teachers of easy religion. These teachers would tickle the people's fancies and say soothing things in their ears. They would adulterate God's Word so that their religion would require little exertion on the part of the people and allow them to remain in good standing even though they were not morally in line with Christian principles.

"There was a time when to step out of line morally meant expulsion from any Christian denomination," wrote chaplain George Birney in *The Christian Century* of January 11, 1956. "Today we are blind to the fact that our people do step out of line." Then, pointing to the blame for the gross immorality among men in the armed forces, the chaplain said: "I often say to my fellow chaplains that our churches have failed. . . . I am convinced that this immorality is our fault and that it is high time we admitted our guilt. . . . We have raised a generation which is biblically, theologically and morally illiterate. And that is the

fault of the churches. . . . Where have our churches failed? For one thing we have made church membership too easy."

This easy membership makes churches more like social clubs than anything else. Making such a comparison is one Warren Ashby, associate professor of philosophy at the Woman's College of the University of North Carolina. This professor, who has also served as minister of several Methodist churches, wrote in the January, 1957, issue of *Theology Today*:

"It may take money but it does not take virtue to be a member of the country club. . . . It may take religious affiliation but it doesn't take much faith to be a Knight of Columbus or a Mason. . . . These same characteristics are present within the local church. . . . The entrance requirements of the church, like those of a social club, are primarily external and they provide status. . . . The requirements are external in that one must profess a faith before men; but this does not necessarily mean that the profession has substance in fact as well as in words. And, again like the social club, once the entrance requirements for admission are passed, the requirements for remaining within the church are not difficult to meet. It is not hard to be a Rotarian. Nor is it difficult to be a member of a local church."

CAUSE OF CHRISTENDOM'S PLIGHT

When a family tries to run on this principle of personal ease instead of discipline, self-control, sacrificial co-operation and love, is it headed for a life of comfort? Or is it headed for the rocks? What, then, of Christendom's great family of professed Christians? It not only runs on the principle of personal ease but is like a family in which the children dictate to the parents as to how they should be trained and educated. Instead of taking the lead and teaching the pure, unadulterated Word of God,

religious teachers cater to the masses. Is it any wonder that Christendom's ship of easy religion has been wrecked twice on the rocks of two world wars?

Even before World War II, missionary-physician Dr. Albert Schweitzer wrote in his *Christianity and the Religions of the World*: "Bitter humiliation awaits all of us who preach the Gospel in distant lands. 'Where, indeed, is your ethical religion?' —that is the question we are asked, no matter whether we are among more primitive peoples in out-of-the-way places or among the educated classes in the large centers of Eastern and African civilization. What Christianity has accomplished as the religion of love is believed to have been blotted out by the fact that it failed to educate the Christian nations to peaceableness, and that in the War it associated itself with so much worldliness and hatred, from which to this day it has not yet broken away. It has been so terribly unfaithful to the spirit of Jesus.... And why have we fallen so low? Because we fancied it an easy thing to have the spirit of Jesus."

Since Christendom has admittedly fallen so low, why do religious teachers continue to teach an easy religion? The answer comes from the teachers themselves. "There are things we know we ought to do, but we fear to lose our jobs if we do them," said Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, president of Morehouse College, Atlanta, Georgia. "After all, a minister has to live. Perhaps it is the desire to have economic security, social approval and acceptability that weakens the church in its message." Undoubtedly for similar reasons Dr. Paul Calvin Payne, a Philadelphia Presbyterian minister, said: "We have not dared face our congregation with a hard gospel." And British prelate H. R. L. Sheppard once explained: "Our pride, our privileges, our dignity stand in the way."

EASY RELIGION VERSUS TRUE CHRISTIANITY

So the religious teachers know what would happen if they taught the unadulterated Word of God, if they insisted on obedience to Christ's commands. They know that the masses would find such a conception of worship, though one hundred percent Christlike, too narrow, too restrictive, too hard. The teachers know what would happen when the masses found that their religion cut right into their personal habits, demanded a morality completely in harmony with God's Word and even affected their ways of doing business, thus altering the whole aspect of their lives. No, they would not be enthusiastic about it; they would leave it for an easier one, just as Christ Jesus foretold, as recorded in Christendom's own popular translation of the Bible, the *Revised Standard Version*:

"Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy, that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few."—Matt. 7:13, 14.

Not many, in comparison with Christendom's millions of professed Christians, would stay with a religion that required entering "by the narrow gate." Knowing this, the religious leaders of Christendom lead the masses down the easy way. "If the churches tomorrow were to become out-and-out Christian," wrote Anglican prelate H. R. L. Sheppard in *The Impatience of a Parson*, "and if all their ministers were to prophesy—that is, to speak the flaming Word of God in the hearing of the people—it is more than likely that places of worship would be emptier than they are today, and it is certain that a goodly number of the prophets would be stoned. We do not like prophets until they are dead, and even then while we commemorate them in stone and stereotype

their message for all time in a form which they themselves would especially deprecate, we should be gravely disturbed if . . . they contemplated returning to continue their tiresome habit of saying uncomfortable things. I do not know . . . what response would ensue if Christianity were set out before men in all its original freshness."

But that response is known. It is known by hundreds of thousands of persons who, having come out of all nations, races and tongues, have themselves responded. They have responded to the "healthful teaching" from which the masses turn away. Yes, they have responded to the good news of God's kingdom being preached world-wide

by the New World society of Jehovah's witnesses.

And why have they responded? Because they see in the New World society the Christlike fruits of love, true Christian morality and teaching that is not watered down to please those who want their ears tickled. They see where Christendom's easy religion is leading the masses, and they know the Bible principle: "If, then, a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit." So they have made the decision that affects their eternal destiny.—Matt. 15:14.

Easy religion or original Christianity—which will it be for you?

Gunfire in Church

A STRANGE headline appeared in the June 17, 1957, issue of the Beirut *Daily Star*—"19 Killed in Zghorta Church Shooting." What had brought on this shocking episode? For the answer we must know something of a family feud in Zghorta, a mountain village in the northern part of Lebanon. It is composed of Maronite Catholics, a branch of the Roman Catholic religion. In this Maronite village live two large, powerful families called Dweihi and Franjeh. For some time there has been a feud between these two families. Gunfire often results. "When they are feuding," reports *Time* magazine, "they are careful to go to church and ask God's help in aiming their guns, and even when they are on the run, they seldom miss Sunday Mass." Recently a strange clash brought the feud to a climax.

E During the funeral of a one-time mayor and cousin of the Maronite bishop of Tripoli, a member of the Dweihi family made a speech. It was considered derogatory to the present deputy from the district, who is a Franjeh. This came about after a Catholic priest named Simaan Dweihi put himself in politics: he nominated himself as a candidate for parliament on the government ticket. This was not to the pleasing of Hamid Franjeh, a leading spokesman for the opposition. There were suspicions that priest Dweihi had en-

tered politics to discredit the Franjeh family and to thwart Hamid Franjeh's chances at the presidency.

E Family rivalries aggravated by the political campaign grew more tense. Maronite priest Simaan, said *Time* magazine, "usually totes a large pistol on his clerical rounds, and seldom travels without an escort of four or five gun-packing kinsmen." Shooting started in the churchyard, interrupting a solemn procession of six red-robed bishops and more than 100 bearded priests. Pistols barked. Machine guns erupted. Pandemonium broke out. Soon bullets started to fly in the heart of the church itself, where some 2,000 people were in attendance for the memorial service of a neighborhood sheik. Pistol-packing priest Dweihi fled to the sacristy for refuge but sustained a bullet wound in his hand. For fifteen minutes, according to newspapers, "thousands of bullets were fired." When the shooting ended, more than 100 persons had been wounded. Nineteen persons lay dead. Four days later the death toll reached thirty, with ten still in critical condition. Eleven persons had been killed within the church itself. At least one child and one woman died, and three priests were killed. Three other priests were wounded.

E A priest in politics had led to tragic results.

OVERSEERS *in* Apocalyptic Times

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him."
—Apocalypsis 1:1, Dy.

WE ARE in apocalyptic times. That is to say, we are living in times and under conditions that were pictured for us beforehand in the last of the sixty-six books of The Holy Bible called The Apocalypse or The Revelation.

² The opening of this apocalyptic book reads: "The revelation by Jesus Christ, which God gave him, to show his slaves the things that must shortly take place. And he sent forth his angel and presented it in signs through him to his slave John, who bore witness to the word God gave and to the witness Jesus Christ gave, even to all the things he saw. Happy is he who reads aloud and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and who observe the things written in it; for the appointed time is near." (Rev.

1:1-3) Does anyone want to be happy in these apocalyptic times? Then let him read to himself or read aloud to others the words of this prophecy. Or, if not himself doing the reading, let him listen to the read-

parade around the fact that he was a Christian slave in the office of one of the "twelve apostles of the Lamb." (Rev. 21:14)

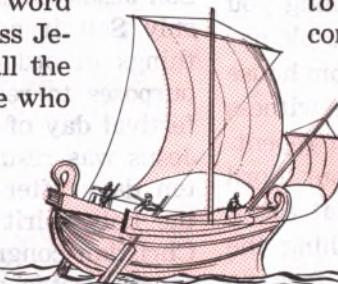
As a slave he was instructed to write to certain congregations in what is now Asiatic Turkey. So he introduces himself this way: "John to the seven congregations

that are in the province of Asia."—Rev. 1:4.

⁴ John was then on the prison island of Patmos, suffering at the hands of the Roman government of Caesar for being a faithful Christian. (Rev. 1:9) The island of Patmos was

less than a hundred and fifty miles from the seaport of Ephesus, and hence not far from the six other cities where there were congregations to which John was told to write. At that time Timothy the son of Eunice may have been an aged overseer of the congregation at Ephesus. John was told to write especially to the overseers.

1. In what way are we living in apocalyptic times?
2. According to this apocalyptic book, for what happiness is it now the time?
3. Who was the John here named, and to whom was he to write?
4. Where was John then, and to whom was he especially to write?



Pergamum
Thyatira
Sardis
Smyrna Philadelphia
Ephesus Laodicea

⁵ In his young days Timothy was a close companion of Paul the apostle. Paul associated Timothy with himself in a number of his letters written to different congregations, for example, one written to the congregation in Philippi, Greece: "Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus, to all the holy ones in union with Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, along with overseers and ministerial servants." (Phil. 1:1) So those overseers and ministerial servants of the congregation were acquainted with Timothy. On Paul's last voyage to Jerusalem in the Middle East his ship stopped at the seaport of Miletus, near Ephesus. From there Paul called for the overseers of Ephesus, not then including Timothy. They came, all of them older men of the congregation of Ephesus. Paul gave to them a solemn farewell address, just like one who was an overseer to them. To these overseers Paul said:

"I did not hold back from telling you any of the things that were profitable nor from teaching you publicly and from house to house. But I thoroughly bore witness both to Jews and to Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus. And now, . . . I know that all of you among whom I went preaching the kingdom [of God] will see my face no more. Hence I call you to witness this very day that I am clean from the blood of all men, for I have not held back from telling you all the counsel of God. Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own [Son]."—Acts 20:17-28; ED; Ro; Schonfield.

5. With which apostle was Timothy associated, and with which overseers did this apostle have a special farewell meeting?

6. According to Acts 20:17-28, what did he say to those overseers?

⁷ For over two years Paul had preached God's kingdom publicly and from house to house in Ephesus and had built up the Christian congregation there. However, Paul did not tell its overseers that he had made them such or that he had put them in this office of superintendent or supervisor of the affairs of the congregation. Paul disclaimed the power to put them over the flock of Christian sheep. He said that God's holy spirit had made them overseers that they might shepherd God's congregation or flock. How was that?

⁸ This did not mean that God's holy spirit is a spirit person, the third person in a so-called Holy Trinity made up of The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit, three persons in one God and all three equal in power and glory. None of such nonsense! The Bible plainly shows and illustrates that the holy spirit is an invisible active force. It issues forth from God and acts directly upon his Son Jesus Christ. Then through his heavenly Son it acts upon other persons or things in order to bring God's will and purposes to reality. For instance, on the festival day of Pentecost, fifty days after Jesus was resurrected from the dead and ten days after he went back to heaven, the holy spirit was poured out upon the Christian congregation in Jerusalem. The apostle Peter explained the miracle that took place by saying to the crowd of wondering Jews: "This Jesus God resurrected, of which fact we are all witnesses. Therefore because he was exalted to the right hand of God and received the promised holy spirit from the Father, he has poured out this which you see and hear." King David had not ascended to heaven to pour out that spirit, but Jesus, David's descendant and Lord, had done so. (Acts 2:32-36) So, then, in making the older men of Eph-

7. How long had Paul preached in Ephesus, and yet who did he say had appointed the overseers there?

8. What is this holy spirit, and what did Peter say about this spirit on the day of Pentecost?

sus overseers the holy spirit was not a spirit person acting on his own as the equal of God and his Son Jesus.

⁹ If the holy spirit is no heavenly person but is merely the unseen active force from God through Jesus Christ, how did it appoint those older men of Ephesus overseers of God's flock? The holy spirit is not a wild force running blindly. It is a directed force. In the appointing of the Ephesian overseers it was sent forth from Jehovah God as its fountain. The first agent or intermediary through which it operated from heaven was the Lord Jesus at God's right hand. On the day of Pentecost its operation was accompanied by a "noise just like that of a rushing stiff breeze" and by visible "tongues as if of fire" sitting on the heads of each of the 120 Christian disciples into whom it came, to fill them and make them talk with languages that they had never learned. (Acts 2:1-16) Like the wind or like radio beams, God's active force was unseen, but what it produced was seeable and hearable.

¹⁰ By filling Peter and the other apostles of Jesus Christ and making them teach fundamental things of Christian belief the holy spirit was, in effect, making those apostles "foundation stones" of the New Jerusalem and main overseers of the Christian congregation. (Rev. 21:14) Later on Saul of Tarsus was converted to Christianity, was baptized and was "filled with holy spirit," and he became the apostle Paul to take the place of unfaithful Judas Iscariot. As it is written, in Psalm 109:8, concerning this unfaithful apostolic overseer: "Let a different man take his office of overseer." (Acts 1:20; 9:17, 18) Very properly, the twelfth apostle of the Lamb wrote of himself as 'Paul, an apostle, nei-

ther from men nor through a man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him up from the dead."—Gal. 1:1.

HUMAN INTERMEDIARIES

¹¹ On the day of Pentecost and also at the conversion of the Italian centurion Cornelius over three years later there was no man as intermediary for the activity of the holy spirit. The Lord Jesus in heaven poured it out direct upon his apostles and upon Cornelius and his fellow believers. But in the case of other overseers human intermediaries have been used for the holy spirit.

¹² Note the action of God's holy spirit at the time of sending out Paul and Barnabas as missionaries from Antioch in Syria. Paul and Barnabas were among five prophets and teachers in the congregation there. Then by some undescribed means the holy spirit was made to transmit sound, human speech, just like the action of radio waves upon a radio receiving set. "As they were publicly ministering to Jehovah and fasting, the holy spirit said: 'Of all persons set Barnabas and Saul apart for me for the work to which I have called them.' Then they fasted and prayed and laid their hands upon them and let them go." Since the representative men of the Antioch congregation laid their hands upon those two, is it necessarily said that they were made missionaries by the men who laid their hands upon them? No; the action of those men was only incidental and to show that they acted for God's spirit in setting aside the two missionaries. The fact stands out that they were made missionaries by the holy spirit, for the Bible goes on to say about the two missionaries: "Accordingly

9. What kind of force is the holy spirit, and from what source does it go forth, and through whom, and with what results?

10. Through the spirit's operation at Pentecost, what were the apostles made, and how did Saul of Tarsus become an apostle with them?

11. Was there a human intermediary for the spirit toward the apostles and Cornelius, and how about other overseers?

12. By what means were Paul and Barnabas sent out as missionaries from Antioch, and how?

these men, sent out by the holy spirit [not by men in Antioch], went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed away to Cyprus. And when they got to be in Salamis they began publishing the word of God."—Acts 13:1-5.

¹³ On that missionary journey Paul and Barnabas started a number of Christian congregations. Men spiritually older were made overseers over such congregations. How? By the holy spirit, but through Paul and Barnabas as intermediaries. In proof of this we read of their action at Antioch in Pisidia: "Moreover, they appointed older men to office for them in the congregation and, offering prayer with fastings, they committed them to Jehovah in whom they had become believers." (Acts 14:23) Afterward Timothy became a traveling companion and co-worker with the apostle Paul. After he became full grown spiritually, Timothy was made an overseer with power to act in appointing other mature men as overseers and ministerial servants in the congregation at Ephesus and elsewhere. But what led up to Timothy's becoming such a special overseer, superintendent or supervisor? The action of God's spirit through Paul. In his two letters to Timothy Paul describes it in this way: "Do not be neglecting the gift in you which was given you through a prediction [which prediction would be by the spirit] and when the body of older men laid their hands upon you." (1 Tim. 4:14) Showing that Paul himself was an outstanding one of those older men, he further wrote to Timothy: "I remind you to stir up like a fire the gift of God which is in you through the laying of my hands upon you. For God gave us not a spirit of cowardice, but that of power and of love and of soundness of mind." (2 Tim. 1:6, 7) God's spirit was necessary to all these actions.

13. How was the appointment of overseers in Antioch in Pisidia made, and how was Timothy made an overseer with appointive power?

¹⁴ At a critical time Paul and Barnabas were chosen by a special conference of the governing body of the Christians at Jerusalem to read a special letter of instructions to congregations in Antioch, in Syria and in Cilicia, to advise them that circumcision was no part of Christianity. As good messengers and general overseers, Paul and Barnabas read this organizational letter to the congregations. Those appointed messengers took their assignment of service seriously, knowing they were appointed not merely by the men of the Christian governing body in Jerusalem but by the holy spirit. They had to view the matter this way because even in the letter that they read to the congregations the governing body wrote these noteworthy words: "The holy spirit and we ourselves have favored adding no further burden to you, except these necessary things."

¹⁵ Thus the governing body composed of men put the holy spirit ahead of themselves. This applied, too, with their appointment of Paul and Barnabas. What effect did this exercise of oversight of the congregations by the governing body at Jerusalem have? The record tells us of this in connection with Paul and his new companion Silas: "Now as they traveled on through the cities they would deliver to those there for observance the decrees that had been decided upon by the apostles and older men who were in Jerusalem. Therefore, indeed, the congregations continued to be made firm in the faith and to increase in number from day to day." (Acts 15:28; 16:4, 5) The congregations were no longer shaky on the matter.

¹⁶ Thus it is Scripturally true that hu-

14. After the special conference in Jerusalem, what were Paul and Barnabas sent out from there to do, and how did their appointment come about?

15. What effect did such exercise of oversight of the Christian congregations by the governing body at Jerusalem have on them?

16. Though human go-betweens have been used in making appointments, what must be true of the body of men or the individual used in the appointing?

man go-betweens have been used in appointing many overseers of the flock of God. But in the face of this fact no group of men may of their own accord form themselves into a religious body and take upon themselves the power and authority to make overseers, or "bishops," as they are called in many churches in Christendom. Without God's holy spirit they can do nothing that really counts with God or that plays a real part in his organization. As in the case of the Christian congregation in apostolic times, in the first century, for any body of men to be used in the appointment of overseers and their assistants, ministerial servants, they must have the holy spirit in them, yes, be "filled with holy spirit." (Acts 9:17; Eph. 5:18) This was true of the Christian governing body at Jerusalem in apostolic times. It was true also of such individuals as the apostle Paul and his companions Timothy and Titus, who were given instructions regarding men qualified to be overseers and their assistants. They were all filled with the spirit and were moved by it.

HOW ABOUT TODAY?

¹⁷ Today we are not living in apostolic times. Long before our time, when the apostolic days ended almost nineteen hundred years ago, the miraculous gifts and manifestations of the holy spirit passed away. Can it still be true that the holy spirit appoints overseers over the congregations of true Christians today? Since the spirit is God's invisible active force and is silent and unfeeling, how could we be sure that the appointing of overseers is by it today? The Holy Bible, God's Word, makes this certain.

17. Since the miraculous manifestations of the spirit passed away with the apostles, what questions arise over appointment of overseers, and what makes the answer certain?

¹⁸ The facts show that in the year 1914 God's kingdom in the hands of his Christ was brought to birth in the heavens. We are therefore in the "times of restoration of all things of which God spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets of old time." (Acts 3:21) Since 1919 God's organization has risen up to let the light of his glory shine amid the gross darkness of this world, and the time has come for the fulfillment of his promise: "I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness." Or, as the oldest translation of the Hebrew Scriptures renders it: "I will make thy chiefs peaceful and thine overseers righteous." (Isa. 60:1, 2, 17, AS; LXX; Thomson; Bagster) We are living also in the time of final fulfillment of the prophecy to which the apostle Peter referred on the day of Pentecost, namely: "It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit." (Joel 2:28, 29, AS; Acts 2:16-18) We should therefore expect the spirit's activity to include appointing overseers.

¹⁹ As in the days of the apostles, the Christian flock of Jehovah God has over it a visible governing body. It acts for and in expression of the "faithful and discreet slave" whom Jesus Christ has appointed since coming into his kingdom in the heavens in 1914. When warning his apostles about his coming for the judgment of his followers at an unknown hour in the time of the end of this old world, Jesus said: "Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his

18. In what times are we living since 1914, and particularly since 1919, and so what should we expect the spirit's activity to include?

19. For whom does the Christian governing body act today, and how has such been made equal to the responsibilities in these last days?

domestics to give them their food at the proper time? Happy is that slave if his master on arriving finds him doing so. Truly I say to you, He will appoint him over all his belongings." (Matt. 24:45-47) Since 1919 this "faithful and discreet slave," who is a composite person made up of all anointed Christian joint heirs of Jesus Christ, has been taking care of "all his belongings" on earth. The slave has been faithfully giving out the spiritual, Biblical food at the proper time, so that there is no spiritual famine among the Christian witnesses of Jehovah. To make this "faithful and discreet slave" class equal to their heavy responsibilities in these last days, God through Christ has poured out his spirit upon them in these last days, in complete fulfillment of Joel's prophecy.

²⁰ The governing body of the "faithful and discreet slave" class is taken from the members of this same anointed, spirit-filled class. By God's spirit it is functioning. So, then, when the appointment of overseers is made by this governing body in harmony with the requirements laid down for overseers, it is really by the spirit that such overseers are appointed, although through human intermediaries. As the modern history of Jehovah's witnesses shows, this is specially true since 1932, when the system of elective elders and deacons was done away with in their congregations.

²¹ The governing body of mature members of the "faithful and discreet slave" class always seeks the guidance of God's holy spirit in appointing responsible men in the congregations overseers, together with their assistants, the ministerial servants. They do not act according to any personal favoritism or any bias. The things

20. From whom are the members of the governing body taken, and so what is true regarding appointment of overseers, especially since 1932?

21. In appointing overseers, what does the governing body seek, and according to which requirements?

that make an individual worthy of being made an overseer or one of the ministerial servants are stated in God's Word, particularly in chapter three of Paul's first letter to Timothy and in chapter one of Paul's letter to Titus. All those requirements of overseers and ministerial servants were written down by inspiration of the holy spirit.

²² When, now, the governing body designates overseers that meet those plainly stated requirements, it is really the holy spirit that leads to the appointing of such overseers; it is really the holy spirit that makes such overseers. This fact becomes more evident when we note that it is also the fullness of the indwelling of the holy spirit in the candidate for the office of overseer that influences his appointment. The candidate must show that he is filled with the spirit by the way he conducts himself and his family (if he has one). He must prove that he has holy spirit by bringing forth the "fruitage of the spirit," which is "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control," and by impaling the flesh together with its passions and desires. He must show that he is moved, impelled by God's spirit to take oversight over his flock of sheep. In illustration of this, in apostolic times Stephen was selected for service because he was a "man full of faith and holy spirit."—Acts 6:5, 6.

²³ In consideration of the spirit's fruitage produced by the candidate and in harmony with the written requirements set out in the Holy Scriptures written by men under the operation of the holy spirit, the governing body acts, being itself moved by the holy spirit for which it prays to God that

22. In view of this, how is the appointing of overseers really made, and especially so in view of what on the part of the candidate that influences the appointment?
 23. (a) Why, then, may it be said that the holy spirit appoints overseers also today? (b) If despite this an overseer turns out bad, what must be done, and what should overseers read time and again?

it may guide the governing body. In every respect, then, the spirit of God comes to the fore in the matter of appointing overseers. So today as well as in Paul's day it may be said that the holy spirit appoints overseers over the flock of God that he purchased "with the blood of his own Son." (Acts 20:28, *Schonfield*) If in course of time any overseer turns out bad, we must remember that even Judas Iscariot, whom Jesus himself selected to be an apostolic overseer, turned out bad, betraying his own Overseer, the Chief Shepherd, to his enemies to be killed. This required Jesus, after his death and resurrection and after the outpouring of holy spirit on the day of Pentecost, to select a different man to "take his office of overseer." (Acts 1:16-20; 9:10-16) So today another man that has for some time shown the desirable qualities and the necessary good points must be put in office to replace the overseer that turns out bad. It would therefore do a great deal of good to overseers and the ministerial servants if they would time and again read over and meditate upon the requirements of their office as set out in Paul's first letter to Timothy, particularly chapter three, and Paul's letter to Titus, particularly chapter one.

²⁴ In view of all that is bound up with the matter of appointment no appointee should treat his office of overseer lightly. At every turn the overseer has to face the holy spirit, which made him what he is. For good reason, then, he should bear close to his heart the warning words of Jesus to his enemies. With their own eyes the enemies saw the operation of God's holy spirit through Jesus when he cured a demon-possessed, blind and dumb man, so that the dumb man spoke and saw, free of demon possession. To counteract the effect that this miracle would have on all other ob-

servers, the enemies of Jesus maliciously said it was the spirit of the Devil that had worked through Jesus to perform this cure. Jesus forcibly argued that it was God's spirit that had worked through him to expel the demon from the blind and dumb man. To his giving of the credit to God's spirit instead of to himself Jesus then added these words: "On this account I say to you, Every kind of sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the spirit will not be forgiven. For example, whoever speaks a word against the Son of man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the holy spirit, it will not be forgiven him, no, not in the present system of things nor in that to come."—Matt. 12:22-32.

²⁵ Even in heaven the exalted Jesus acts by God's spirit, this too in the matter of appointment of overseers. Seeing that the overseer is appointed by this spirit, the appointee will be anxious not to abuse his overseership for selfish reasons. As the apostle Peter said to his fellow overseers: "Shepherd the flock of God in your care, not under compulsion, . . . neither for love of dishonest gain, . . . neither as lording it over those who are God's inheritance." (1 Pet. 5:1-3) That wrong course would mean to act like Judas, like Balaam, like the "false apostles." (Acts 1:16-18, 25; 2 Pet. 2:15, 16; Jude 11; 2 Cor. 11:13-15) It is a betrayal of the sheep of the Right Shepherd, such as that committed by the greedy shepherds mentioned in Ezekiel 34: 1-10, 17-22. That would be a sinning against the spirit that made the man an overseer. It would be a perversion of the purpose of the spirit in appointing him. This would be sin, a serious sin. If persisted in and committed to the point of hardening the overseer in that condition of heart and course of conduct, it would become a sin

24. Because at every turn the overseer has to face the spirit that made him such, what warning words of Jesus should he bear close to his heart?

25. In view of his appointment by the spirit, what will the overseer be anxious not to do, lest he commit what kind of sin?

against the holy spirit by one whose maturity makes him more blamable and accountable. Hence it becomes a kind of sin that is neither forgivable in this world nor forgivable in the world to come.

²⁶ Because of the heightened responsibilities that are laid upon overseers today, because of the multiplicity of duties that are laid upon them, and because of the larger demands that are made of them, a man may because of age or sickness or other circumstances become unequal to the requirements of overseership. He may therefore be replaced through no willful sin of his own. Or a more capable person may present himself, and in the interest of greater growth and more effective effort it may be timely and advisable to transfer the duties and obligations from the less capable one to this better-qualified person. In such cases there is no sinning against the holy spirit involved, and there is no disgrace or reproach. But woe to the one who greedily, ambitiously, filthily and designedly sins because of the advantage he has as overseer! He is putting himself in a serious way toward the spirit that had to do with his appointment to overseership. Unless he strenuously recovers himself, he will not only lose his privileged office but be on the way to eternal death. His sin will become of an unforgivable type, over which he cannot repent. His disgrace will become great.

²⁷ In the spirit of Jehovah an overseer should use his office to gain life, for himself and for God's flock over which the holy spirit has placed him, thus vindicating or justifying his appointment. He will see the wisdom and feel the joy of carrying out Peter's words to overseers, at 1 Peter 5:1-4. "Do not be grieving God's holy spir-

it, with which you have been sealed," said Paul.—Eph. 4:30.

CONGREGATION STARS

²⁸ Today we may not be living in apostolic times, but we do live in apocalyptic times, for the visions given in the apocalyptic book, The Revelation, are being fulfilled before our very eyes. God's kingdom has been born in the heavens, the nations have become wrathful and God's own wrath has come against them, and his appointed time has come for the dead to be judged. The "temple sanctuary of God that is in heaven" has been opened to our spiritual vision and we see in it the "ark of his covenant" or the symbol of his presence there. (Rev. 11:18 to 12:5) His reigning King, Jesus Christ, as God's Messenger or Angel of the covenant, has come with Jehovah God to the spiritual temple for judgment proceedings. (Mal. 3:1) His invisible presence at the temple the apostle John on the island of Patmos saw in the visions of the "revelation by Jesus Christ." Since the birth of God's kingdom in the heavens in the year 1914 we are in the "Lord's day." What John saw carried him forward in vision to our own day, so that he wrote: "By inspiration I came to be in the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a strong voice like that of a trumpet, saying: 'What you see write in a scroll and send it to the seven congregations, in Ephesus and in Smyrna and in Pergamum and in Thyatira and in Sardis and in Philadelphia and in Laodicea.'" When John turned to see who spoke he "saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands someone like a son of man . . . And he had in his right hand seven stars." At beholding him John became deathly afraid.—Rev. 1:10-17.

²⁹ The speaker made himself known as

26. Why may some overseers today be replaced without sin against the spirit, but what about an overseer that should persist in willful sin?
27. To what end will an overseer use his office?

28. (a) In what kind of times do we live, and why?
(b) How was John carried forward in vision to our day, what did he see, hear and do?
29. What did the Speaker tell John to do, and what today did the seven lampstands picture?

the resurrected, glorified Jesus Christ, not by mentioning his own name but by telling known things about himself. Then he told John: "Write down the things you saw, and the things that are and the things that will take place after these. As for the sacred secret of the seven stars which you saw upon my right hand, and of the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars mean the angels of the seven congregations, and the seven lampstands mean seven congregations." (Rev. 1:19, 20) These congregations picture the entire congregation on earth today of the spirit-begotten, anointed followers of Jesus Christ, all joint heirs with him of the kingdom of the heavens. In the Revelation the promises made to them are incorruptibility and freedom from the "second death," a crown of rulership and authority over the nations to dash them to pieces at Armageddon, a position in the heavenly temple and in the New Jerusalem and a seat with Jesus Christ on his heavenly throne. (Rev. 2:7, 10, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 6, 11, 12, 21) Each of the seven lampstands pictures a congregation of these members of the "little flock" to whom the heavenly Father has approved of giving the kingdom.—Luke 12:32.

³⁰ As the number seven is used in the Bible to symbolize what is spiritually perfect, the seven lampstands would picture all the congregations of these Kingdom heirs, or all those Kingdom heirs yet on earth who are viewed as but one indivisible congregation, with Jesus Christ as their spiritual Head. So his walking in the midst of the seven candlesticks would signify how today he is invisibly present with his entire congregation on earth and walking among them, inspecting them and expressing his judgment. With this congregation

of his Kingdom heirs yet remaining on earth there is now associated a "great crowd" of other sheep, whom the Right Shepherd, Jesus Christ, has been gathering since the summer of 1931. This "great crowd" was pictured at Revelation 7:9-17.

³¹ But what is it that the glorified Jesus has in his right hand? Seven "stars." These have a relationship to the seven lampstands. As the seven lampstands picture the seven congregations of the anointed remnant of Kingdom heirs, so the seven stars stand for the "angels of the seven congregations." Who, then, are these angels of the seven congregations? Unseen spiritual angels in heaven, who accompany Jesus Christ when he, the glorified Son of man, comes in the glory of his heavenly kingdom? Not at all. We are not to understand that each earthly congregation of the anointed remnant has its own angel in heaven who shines down upon it. No; for were that the case, Jesus up in heaven could give his messages directly to them concerning the seven congregations. To the contrary of this, Jesus commands the apostle John to write to each angel of each congregation about its condition. John on earth could not write to unseen spirit angels in heaven. How would John know which one was the star of which congregation? How would he deliver or send the message from Jesus to each star and to the proper one?

³² It is reasonably clear, therefore, that all seven stars in Jesus' right hand picture the entire body or complete number of overseers of the entire congregation yet on earth of the remnant of anointed Kingdom heirs. Each star pictures the overseer or group of overseers placed in charge of each congregation of the anointed rem-

31. What does Jesus have in his right hand, what do these picture, and why could not spirit creatures be meant here?

32, 33. Whom, then, do the seven stars picture, and since what notice in *The Watchtower* have "other sheep" been made overseers?

30. What today would the Speaker's walking in the midst of the seven lampstands picture, and who today have been associated with the seven symbolic lampstands since 1931?

nant. No particular person of such and such a name is pictured in the case of any star, because the individual in the position of overseer may change in the course of time by reason of death or other circumstances. But the office of overseer, not vacant but actually filled by some individual who meets the requirements, is pictured by each star. The stars picture spirit-anointed overseers who, like their congregations, are joint heirs of the heavenly kingdom with Jesus. It was first some years after the Right Shepherd Jesus Christ began gathering his "other sheep" that some of these, according to the needs of the situation, were put in positions of overseer by the "faithful and discreet slave" class. It was first in the year 1937, in the May 1 issue of *The Watchtower* (page 130), that the following notice was published:

³³ "COMPANY SERVANT — Proclamation of the kingdom message is all-important now. It is the duty of the anointed to vote as to who shall be company servant; but 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' (Josh. 9:21-27) may serve. (Deut. 16:12-15; 29:11) When there are none in the company capable of filling the places of company servants or service committees and there are Jonadabs who have the ability and zeal, let the Jonadabs be placed on the service committee and give them opportunity to serve. The work should not drag because some of the company have lack of zeal. The gospel must now be proclaimed.—Matt. 24:14."

³⁴ A lampstand is filled with oil and lit for the purpose of shedding light to those in the house or in the temple. The sacred tabernacle erected by the prophet Moses in the wilderness of Sinai had one lampstand stationed in the first compartment or in the Holy. But in the Holy of the tem-

ple built by King Solomon there were ten golden lampstands, five on the north side and five on the south. (Ex. 25:31-40; 26:35; 40:24, 25; 2 Chron. 4:7, 20; 1 Ki. 7:49) A symbolic lampstand or congregation of anointed joint heirs of the Kingdom must serve its purpose, namely, to let the light shine; and Jesus Christ who walks in the midst of the seven symbolic lampstands will, as High Priest without need of a pope on earth, see to it that these congregations do shine.

³⁵ A star in the skies shines higher than does a lampstand on earth. In like manner, one who fills the office of overseer in charge of such a congregation should shine over and above those other members of the congregation. He should be outstanding like a star in letting the light of the good news of God's kingdom shine to the members of the congregation and to the "other sheep," those already gathered in or those yet to be gathered in to form "one flock" with the anointed remnant. (John 10:16) Of course, in a general sense, all members of the congregation must shine with spiritual light from heaven: "Be blameless and innocent, children of God without a blemish in among a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you are shining as illuminators in the world." (Phil. 2:15) Specifically concerning this "time of the end" of the world God's angel prophesied to Daniel: "They that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." (Dan. 12:3, AS) True to that prophecy, all wise members of the congregation should shine like stars, but their overseer especially so, just as starlight compares with lamplight. Lamplight does not carry very far; starlight does. Overseers must be examples of light-bearing.

34. What was the purpose of a sacred lampstand, and what now is the purpose of a symbolic lampstand?

35. How should an overseer shine like a star compared with a lampstand, and with what light should all members of the congregation shine?

OVERSEERS in the Right Hand of Christ



"**T**O THE angel of the congregation in Ephesus write: These are the things that he says who holds the seven stars in his right hand, he who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands." (Rev. 2:1) In obedience to this command from the glorified Christ, John doubtless did write to the overseer or group of overseers over the congregation in Ephesus. In John's day some of these older men may have met the apostle Paul years before, when he said these words of farewell: "Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own [Son]. I know that after my going away oppressive wolves will enter in among you and will not treat the flock with tenderness, and from among you yourselves men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore keep awake." (Acts 20:28-31) John was now on the penal island of Patmos, not so far from Ephesus, and he would see that the overseers in Ephesus, as well as the overseers of the other named congregations in Asia Minor, would get the entire Revelation with its specific message to each congregation.

² By his opening words of address Jesus Christ reminded those Ephesian overseers, as well as those of all the other congregations, that they were in his right hand, within his power and control and within his favor and protection. "No one will snatch them out of my hand," said he. (John 10:28) Likewise in these apocalyptic times the overseers, especially the spirit-anointed overseers, over the congregations of God's flock are reminded that they are in Christ's hand and they must be guided and used by his hand and not resist or fight against it. Today there is no congregation of Jehovah's witnesses at Ephesus near the coast of the Aegean Sea. But the condition in the congregation back there foreshadowed the condition that may be true in a congregation or in congregations of the Christian witnesses of Jehovah today. The conditions in all the seven congregations named in Asia Minor were used to picture the different conditions obtaining here and there today among the congregations of God's flock. It is therefore proper for the congregation "stars," the anointed overseers of all the congregations, to be notified of the conditions that correspond with those foreshadowed in Christ's messages to the seven congrega-

1. To which congregation was John instructed to write first, and what farewell words of the apostle Paul may some of its overseers have heard directly?

2. By his opening words, what did Jesus remind the Ephesian overseers of, and what today did the conditions in the congregations back there picture?

tions in Asia Minor. They must then follow Christ's instructions, as his right-hand men, in working to correct the improper conditions and to help all the members to overcome or conquer this old world now in its last days.

³ Back there, if sent a specific message from Christ through John, the congregation "star" would read the message to the congregation for whose benefit it was written. In like manner today, overseers of congregations read off communications to their respective congregations as received from the governing body of the "faithful and discreet slave" class.

THE LAMPSTAND IN EPHESUS

⁴ Like the congregation of ancient Ephesus, congregations today may have deeds and hard work and a record of endurance to their credit. They may not have put up with evil men. As for men who claim to be apostles or apostolic successors, they have tested such by the inspired Scriptures and found them to be liars in their claims. They have gone back to the apostolic teachings and ways of doing things by putting up a "hard fight for the faith that was once for all time delivered to the holy ones." (Jude 3) For years they have borne up for the sake of Christ's name and not grown tired. But the question is, Have they left the love they had at first? Because of the increasing of lawlessness in Christendom has their love grown cold? Has their love been alienated to some attraction of this materialistic old world? Have they tired of showing affection for Christ, which calls for feeding his



sheep and having the mental attitude that was in him? Christ holds it against them if they have left that heat, zeal and undividedness of the love that they had at first. If so, they need help to get back to where they were and to recover what they lost.

⁵ It is the responsibility of the overseer, the congregation "star," to light the way back for those against whom Christ holds this loss of their first love. They should take steps to stir up in these losers this original love. Their love of Christ's sheep will move overseers to go out and try to bring back those staying away from meetings or becoming careless. They will try to counteract the danger that Jesus foretold: "Because of the increasing of lawlessness the love of the greater number will cool off." (Matt. 24:12) They realize that no loser of one's first love can be a final member of the congregation of God. It is time, therefore, to remember what one has fallen from, and then sorrowfully change one's mind and get back to doing the former deeds. Otherwise one will not be acting as part of a lampstand, namely, letting one's light shine. He will be having no part in the service of a lampstand. If an overseer should let all his sheep grow loveless and fall away and cease to shine, Christ would, in effect, remove his lampstand. He would be as a star without a lampstand or congregation. So he must see to it that the lampstand congregation shines and lights up its part of the field, which is the world.

⁶ In his farewell to the Ephesian overseers Paul warned that sects would be formed by apostate teachers who would try to draw away disciples after themselves. Like the Ephesian congregation, the

3. Back there, what did the congregation "star" do with the message received through John, as an example of what action today?

4. Despite things to its credit, what did Jesus hold against the Ephesus congregation, and how may congregations today need help in this regard?

5. (a) As regards those who have lost their first love, what should the overseer do? (b) How could his lampstand be removed?

6. Like the Ephesus congregation once warned by Paul, what should overseer and congregation keep up a hatred of today, and why?

overseer and the congregation should keep up their intense hatred of sectarianism, like the "deeds of the sect of Nicolaus," because Jesus Christ, the Head of one indivisible body, also hates sectarianism, the following of this or that man on earth.

"We who are associated with a lampstand under an overseer "star" should keep our ears attuned to hear what the spirit of God says. We must listen to the utterance inspired by God. Said Jesus: "Let the one who has an ear hear what the spirit says to the congregations," the seven congregations of Asia that pictured all similar congregations today. Even Jesus in heaven speaks by God's spirit or active force, so that it is really God that is speaking by Jesus. Thus Jesus gives more value and authority to God's spirit than to himself, so as to warn us against sinning the mortal sin against the spirit of God. On earth Jesus spoke under the operation of God's spirit, and up in heaven he has not changed.—Isa. 61:1, AV; Luke 4:16-21; Heb. 13:8.

⁸ Those who have fallen away in certain respects and who need to make a recovery have much to overcome. (1 Pet. 4:17, 18) In fact, all members of the congregation have to do a great deal of overcoming. They must prove themselves conquerors; but for this there is a reward. The spirit of God encourages all onward to conquest over Satan's world with this promise: "To him that conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God." (Rev. 2:7) For the spirit-begotten congregation it is a case of either gaining that heavenly life with God or not gaining eternal life anywhere else. The conquest is possible. About that fact we need not be disturbed. Said Jesus: "I have said these things to you that by means of me you

may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation, but cheer up! I have conquered the world."—John 16:33.

THE LAMPSTAND IN SMYRNA

⁹ There are today those who are like the congregation of ancient Smyrna. For these an encouraging message is given through the overseer "star." One thing that is spoken of in their favor is that they are not materialistic like this world; their manner of life is free of the love of money and they are content with the material things on hand. Christ knows they are poor materially. On earth he too was poor, but he was then rich spiritually and he likewise knows that they are spiritually rich also. They do not imitate those who falsely claim to be Jews, but who blaspheme when making such a claim, for they are not true to the name; they are no praisers of Jehovah, as Leah the mother of Judah was. (Gen. 29:35) In place of being God's congregation, as the Jewish nation once was till it rejected and killed Christ the Messiah, they are a "synagogue of Satan." They are materialistic and go after the unspiritual things of Satan's world.

¹⁰ Christians like the Smyrna congregation do not copy those of the "synagogue of Satan" in their materialism, their sticking to traditions instead of to God's Word, their political Zionism of modern times, and their rejection of the established kingdom of God. Men who now claim to be spiritual Jews, or Jews inwardly, but who are not the true, spiritual "Israel of God," imitate those faithless natural Jews, and they also are the "synagogue of Satan." True Christians today who imitate the Smyrna congregation are the congregation of Jehovah and they bear and uphold his

7. Why should we today keep our ears attuned to hear what the spirit says to the congregations?

8. To what conquest does the spirit encourage the congregation members, and why is such conquest possible?

9. What is spoken of in favor of the congregation at Smyrna, and what is spoken against the "synagogue of Satan"?

10. How do true Christians today imitate the Smyrna congregation in not copying those of the "synagogue of Satan," and so what may a congregation overseer not be?

holy name. To transmit these words from Christ against materialism a "star" or congregation overseer cannot himself be a materialist, so setting a bad example contrary to Christ's words.

¹¹ Unable to take along everything with him into the grave, a materialist is afraid to die for principle. He cannot take joyfully the plundering of his goods for faithfully following in the footsteps of Christ. Christ was not afraid to die for holding firm and fast to Jehovah's universal sovereignty; he was no materialist. If he was not afraid to empty himself and lay aside his heavenly glory he would not be averse to parting with lesser things, the material earthly things. He tells us to do as he did, not be afraid of the sufferings that his followers are bound to suffer in this world's "time of the end," especially now that Satan the Devil has been cast out of heaven and makes war upon the faithful remnant of the seed of God's woman. We are facing the total attack of Gog of Magog upon the remnant and their companions shortly. The words of Jesus to the Smyrna congregation are therefore timely and good: not to be afraid of that furious attack, nor of the things we have to suffer before then—imprisonment, "tribulation ten days," or violent death. He himself once died but came to life again by God's almighty power and can die no more, being beyond harm by the "second death." He now has all power in heaven and in earth and can hold out the crown of life to his faithful followers. Like him, the only Potentate, "the one alone having immortality," his followers who conquer this doomed world will in the resurrection be put beyond harm by the second death. (Rev. 2:8-11) A "star" or congregation overseer should be a world conqueror as a right example.

11. (a) In this connection, why was Jesus on earth not afraid to suffer and die for principle? (b) What does he tell us not to be afraid of, and what reward does the spirit hold out for his conquering followers?

THE LAMPSTAND IN PERGAMUM

¹² Ancient Pergamum was a city sacred to heathen, a religious city of paganism. To the chief of its gods, named Zeus or Jupiter, it had a temple with an altar fifty feet high. This ancient capital of the Roman province of Asia became a noted center for worship of the Roman emperor and for other pagan cults. In the Roman period of its existence a temple was built on Pergamum's acropolis to Emperor Caesar Augustus, the "divine Augustus." The city was celebrated for its fidelity to Rome, the capital of the Caesars. A refusal to join in the pagan worship of Caesar the emperor might lead to one's death as a martyr to the universal sovereignty of Jehovah God. With such practice of Devil worship here in Pergamum, with the Devil-rule over men being intensified here, with the deifying of men and the worshiping of imperial power of men, it was not without good reason that the congregation in that city was said to be dwelling "where the throne of Satan is."

¹³ Today with nationalism being so rampant, with the images and symbols of nationalism being treated as sacred and idolized, with the image of the United Nations being adored by over eighty nations of this world, and with the expelled Satan the Devil now come down to earth's residents and having great anger, the remnant of Jehovah's congregation and their companions are like Pergamum in dwelling where Satan's throne is. Can Christ praise us too through the angel of the congregation for our holding fast his name and not denying our faith in him as Savior and King, even though thousands of our Christian brothers have been martyred, like Antipas, whom Christ calls "my witness, the faithful one, who was killed by your side, where

12. Why was the congregation in Pergamum said to be dwelling "where the throne of Satan is"?

13. How are we Christians today likewise dwelling where Satan's throne is, and how can we, in spite of this fact, be like the Pergamum congregation?

Satan is dwelling"? If he can do so, then we are like the congregation in Pergamum in this respect.

¹⁴ However, we must never forget there are those who are eager to do us spiritual harm, hence eternal harm. Who are these? Religious persons like Balaam and like the teachers of the sect of Nicolaus. Materialistically, Balaam tried to turn his office of prophet into a business for making material gain, even at the cost of cursing Jehovah's holy nation, Israel. When Jehovah God turned his intended curse into a blessing for Israel, then Balaam tried to work with the political power of this world as symbolized by King Balak. He tried luring Israel into idol worship, demon worship, by means of pagan girls whose bodies were dedicated to unclean handling by worshippers of the false god, Baal of Peor. This obliged Jehovah to curse, not the whole nation of Israel, but those who yielded to the machinations of the gain-greedy prophet Balaam.

¹⁵ Today the "star" overseer of a congregation should prove himself like Phinehas the son of Eleazar the son of Aaron the high priest. On that ancient occasion Phinehas rooted out such sly workings of religious leaders like Balaam. (Num. 22:1 to 25:15; 2 Pet. 2:15, 16; Jude 11) The overseer of today should lead the congregation in the march to the New World. He should not try to obstruct or permit any obstruction of our march successfully to our destination beyond the battle of Armageddon. He must examine himself constantly that he does not commercialize his prophetic position, his responsible and impressive office. He must guard against the infiltrating of sex worship from this world and the creeping in of religious sects.

14. Who was the Balaam whose teaching some in the Pergamum congregation were holding fast, and whom did Jehovah curse on Balaam's account?

15. How must the congregation overseer act like priest Phinehas, and so why must he examine himself, and against what must he guard?

¹⁶ Anyone guilty of such things needs to repent, yes, repent without delay, for quickly Christ is coming to execute divine judgment. In his mouth he has the power of the second death for any who let themselves be overcome by this world. We must be careful not to cause the executional sword of Christ's mouth to fight against us. It would mean our certain death, "second death," pictured by Gehenna. As stars under him, the overseers of congregations should keep in full agreement with Jehovah's Angel of the covenant, the Chief Overseer, who is now at the temple for judgment proceedings. This is no time to be conquered by a world that Christ himself has conquered. It is the time to conquer the world as he did and with his help. God's spirit speaking by him promises a grand reward, incorruptibility in the heavenly kingdom and a new relationship with Jehovah God, pictured by the incorruptible hidden manna and a white name-stone with a new name written on it, which only the conqueror will fully understand in due time. Overseers should be faithful to deliver this message.—Rev. 2:12-17.

THE LAMPSTAND IN THYATIRA

¹⁷ Conditions like those that existed with the ancient Thyatira congregation must receive attention by the "star" overseer, whose concern these come to be. Christ, who sees as with eyes like a fiery flame and who walks as with uncorruptible, enduring feet like fine copper, saw that the Thyatira congregation had an increase of works to its credit. But we must not think that just so a person makes a fine, showy record in the physical work of God's organization and time spent in it he can be careless about his morals. The fact that

16. What does one guilty of the above things need to do, and to avoid second death and gain eternal life what must we do?

17. What did the Thyatira congregation have to its credit, but what wrong thought must be pointed out to it?

he cannot do so needed to be pointed out to the Thyatira congregation; it needs to be pointed out today.

¹⁸ Jezebel, the daughter of the pagan king of Sidon, was given in political marriage to King Ahab. She used her position to do great religious damage to the kingdom of Israel. A Jezebel, a woman or a group of women with characteristics like queen Jezebel's, had got into the Thyatira congregation. But the congregation under its "star" overseer had not acted to overpower and uproot this woman influence to false teaching, false worship and religious and physical immorality. Christ gave the congregation time to act regarding the matter and thus gave the "woman Jezebel" class time to repent. But since the Thyatira congregation carelessly tolerated the operations of this unclean, unchristian class in among it, Christ himself warned of the action that he was going to take toward this unrepentant class. What? Kill it with great tribulation, for a spectacle to all the congregations that they might know that the Chief Overseer tolerates no such unrepentant class.

¹⁹ An overseer of a congregation dares not yield to the Jezebel teaching and influence today. Those who commit spiritual and physical fornication with her cannot escape the fiery eyes of the Chief Overseer but are in for execution if they do not repent. It is not needful for us to enter into such fornication to get to know what it is like by experience and thus "know the 'deep things of Satan.'" The Judge who knows by principle what it is warns us against it. His warning is sufficient. We should take it. Then Christ will not put upon us a burden of responsibility and we

will keep free from congregational responsibility for bad conditions inside it. The leaven of sin must not be left among us, to corrupt at last what good we have left. Christ advises: "Hold fast what you have until I come." That will require conquering the world.

²⁰ He who on earth conquers this world by resisting its lusts, its ungodly aims, its methods and its practices will be given heavenly authority over the nations. Those who finish their earthly career faithfully as world conquerors in imitation of Jesus will be resurrected to power with him in heaven and will join him when he smashes the enemy nations to pieces in the coming "war of the great day of God the Almighty." That will be a conquest over this world in another way. It will be a victory for God's new world. Now the Christian congregation is given the symbolic stars, the faithful overseers. But then in the resurrection to life in heaven the congregation will be given "the morning star," which is Jesus Christ the Bridegroom.—Rev. 2:18-29; 22:16.

²¹ Therefore let women see their proper position in the congregation. On proper occasions let them wear a head covering as a sign of submission, as a sign of not trying to usurp the position of the man, whether as a "star" overseer or as a ministerial servant. Let them not induce any brother to fornication spiritually or bodily. Let all the congregation jealously guard what it has, the Christian purity of doctrine and of conduct and the treasure of Kingdom witnessing. Then Christ's coming as Executioner of judgment will be, not with mortal punishment, but with New World rewards.

18. How had a Jezebel got into the Thyatira congregation, how had Christ given her time, and what action did he threaten to take?

19. Why does a congregation overseer not dare to yield to the Jezebel teaching and influence, and how may the congregation hold fast what it has until Christ comes to execute judgment?

20. What power over the nations will be given the world conquerors, and instead of congregation stars, what will they be given?

21. What course, therefore, should women in the congregation follow, and what that it has should the congregation hold fast?

THE LAMPSTAND IN SARDIS

²² Like a circuit servant or general overseer Christ inspects all sorts of conditions within the congregations under his charge, including such a spiritual condition as the ancient Sardis congregation had. Seeing such, he is certain to call notice to it: "These are the things that he says who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars." He has the full illuminating power of God's spirit, and he has the congregation servant of Sardis as well as the angels or stars of the six other congregations within his power and under his direction. The angel of the Sardis-type congregation does not have a very pleasant message from the great Archangel through the "faithful and discreet slave" class, the modern-day John of the Revelation. What is there to one's having a form of godly devotion when one denies its power? One may have the name of being alive religiously, but Jehovah's Judge knows that one is dead like the Sardis congregation. One is asleep to one's privileges and to the call of the hour for diligent, lively service. One fails to perform all the features of God's service. What features of worship and of service still remain are in danger of dying out. An alert overseer, and the Great Overseer above him, cannot let a spiritually moribund condition like that continue.

²³ The final judgment of persons who have been put in trust with the interests of the kingdom of God is getting closer. This drawing near of the final accounting ought to stir us to remember that we have received and heard the Kingdom message and hence should make us appreciate our responsibility. Then, with deepened appreciation, we should wake up and keep on

22. (a) As he addresses the Sardis-type congregation, what does Christ have in his possession? (b) What spiritually moribund condition does the congregation angel have to point out and not let go on?

23. What should the drawing near of the final judgment of the congregation cause us to remember and to do?

the watch, reactivate our service efforts that were about to die, and keep our knowledge of the truth and our opportunity to preach, which knowledge affords.

²⁴ The thing to do is to increase our knowledge. This means our doing private Bible study. It means attending the meetings of the congregation and helping to make these meetings alive; it means keeping up with the progressive truth; it means using that truth by telling it to others inside and outside the congregation. To aid each one to this end the congregation overseer together with his ministerial assistants will arrange to keep each member awake spiritually and not let the local organization die, having no good works to show that it has spiritual life. They will work to increase the attendance of members at meetings. They will bring the message up to date by incorporating fresh, live doctrines as these are revealed. They will strive to enlarge the activity of the congregation in all the needed forms of service. They will widen out the witness and drive it home more. They will not let the congregation become pleasure-alive but service-dead. One of these days each overseer will have to give a final account to someone higher than the governing body associated with the Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society. That hour will come as a thief. What need there is, then, for a refresher course and keeping all alive to witness works!

²⁵ Even in a situation like that in Sardis a few may be named who have undefiled garments, who are faultless in their Christian appearance. They are keeping clean, undefiled religion, which calls for keeping oneself without moral and religious spot

24. (a) How is the congregation's knowledge to be increased and its aliveness to be manifested? (b) What hour of accounting will the congregation overseer yet have to face?

25. (a) Who will walk with Christ in white and not be cast out of his company? (b) Whose name will not be blotted out of the book of life, but what acknowledgment will be made of such one?

from this world. Continuing to walk thus, they will be pronounced worthy to walk with Christ in white and not be cast out from his company. His bride class will be arrayed as in fine linen clean and bright, for such fine linen symbolizes the righteous acts of God's holy ones. What wondrous acts of service there will be to perform in his new world! How the thought of this spurs one to conquer this world! It makes one want to live in the new world. One has to keep alive spiritually now. If one dies spiritually, one gets one's name blotted out of the book of life. One will not live to get his name acknowledged before the heavenly Father nor before the angels who have faithfully ministered to the congregation.—Rev. 3:1-6.

THE LAMPSTAND IN PHILADELPHIA

²⁶ As the one having all the Kingdom interests, the Chief Overseer addresses himself to the Philadelphia congregation, for he has the "key of David." He did not give this key to Peter, but he himself now has it. As with the keeper of the key during David's kingship in Jerusalem, so Jesus Christ has had committed to his hand the government of the household of faith and he is as a spiritual father to the inhabitants of spiritual Israel. (Isa. 22:22; Luke 1:32) When he accompanied Jehovah God to the spiritual temple in 1918 he began judgment at God's household. He found the "faithful and discreet slave" class. Before it he has set an opened door since 1919, by putting this class in charge of all his spiritual belongings on earth. (Matt. 24:45-47) He opened before them the opportunity and the responsibility to fulfill Matthew 24:14 concerning giving the Kingdom witness earth-wide to all nations before the world ends at Armageddon. No man has been able to shut that

26. In what sense does Christ have the "key of David," and what door has he opened since 1919 unable to be shut by opposers?

door since then, neither the participants in World War II, nor Nazi Hitlerism, nor Mussolini Fascism, nor Catholic Action, nor Russian Communism with its cult of Stalin and other cults.

²⁷ This is not to our credit. It is to the credit of Christ, who has kept the door open and will keep it open till the witness work is done. (1 Cor. 16:9; Col. 4:3, 4) The door to those Kingdom-time privileges has been shut to Christendom and Jewry, to all those of the "synagogue of Satan." They have no works of Kingdom witnessing to show that they enjoyed this expression of love from Christ. Now they have to humble themselves before us and acknowledge that we have the works, we have the record and we are continuing the works. We are inviting all the "other sheep" yet to be found to come in through the opened door and join us in the work.

²⁸ God's kingdom message tells us that endurance in his worship and service is vital. Preaching that message calls for endurance, the kind that Christ displayed. In our endurance we must be Christlike. He did not quit, he did not give in to the enemy, he did not give up the service and the spiritual war. He kept on doing his Father's will. He held out to the bitter end. So he was resurrected to an hour triumphant, to an eternity of triumph. There is a benefit in conforming ourselves to the message about his endurance. We are kept from the hour of test now on the whole world. How?

²⁹ Just as in Jesus' case. When faced with a choice of all the kingdoms of this world he rejected the kingdom of Satan. He chose the kingdom of God by choosing to worship Jehovah God and not the "god of this world" to whom those man-made

27. To whom has this door been kept shut, and how are they obliged to confess that Christ has loved us? 28, 29. (a) What is the message about endurance that must be kept? (b) For keeping it, how are we kept from the hour of test now on the whole inhabited earth?

kingdoms belonged. By holding to that initial decision Jesus was upheld all through the test of his integrity and he was kept from collapsing under the test the way the Jewish world collapsed. We likewise have made our decision for God's kingdom. As long as we hold fast to our decision by preaching the Kingdom good news, we too will be kept from falling during this test. We shall never be attracted into Devil worship by choosing and serving the kingdoms of this world. Let Christendom go down under the test of this hour, stumble over God's chosen Stone and fall to her destruction. (1 Pet. 2:7, 8) We have chosen Theocracy under Christ. We are kept standing!

³⁰ The "seven stars," the anointed overseers, as well as the "other sheep" associated with them in overseership must help all of Christ's sheep through this hour of temptation by setting a proper example themselves and by giving them all aid. The time for assigning crowns permanently comes on quickly. The Holder of the "key of David" says: "Keep on holding fast what you have, that no one may take your crown." Yes, we will hold fast what we have from him, by striving to increase those Kingdom interests, by using our all as a precious instrument in Kingdom service. For the anointed ones to lose the Kingdom interests now before Armageddon means to lose the heavenly crown. For the "other sheep" to lose what they have means to lose New World life under the Kingdom.

³¹ Anointed overseers must prove to be pillars in God's temple organization, upholding the temple worship in which the other sheep now engage. They must stay in line for the New Jerusalem by preaching God's kingdom and keeping clean as the prospective bride of God's Lamb. This

is obligatory, if they want to be pillars in the glorified heavenly temple and bear the name of God's city as heavenly citizens of it and share the name of the highly exalted Christ by being his loving bride. The temple, the New Jerusalem, Christ's new name in his heavenly office—these also are things the other sheep must reckon with. Let them now work in harmony with these vital realities. Anyone not keeping holy, anyone who is spiritually disgusting, anyone carrying on a lie, will be barred from the New Jerusalem and from its realm on earth. So let all overseers, especially those in line for positions in the heavenly temple, lead the way in temple worship night and day. Then they will realize the benefit of Christ's promise at Revelation 3:12.

THE LAMPSTAND IN LAODICEA

³² In the apostle Paul's day there was a congregation at Laodicea. (Col. 4:15) By the time of the revelation to John it had gone bad. In addressing himself to it through the congregation angel Jesus speaks of himself as "the Amen," "the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation by God." This reference should have stung the Laodicean congregation, for it no longer wholeheartedly affirmed the truth like an amen. No longer was it a faithful and true witness. It gave no evidence of being part of the "new creation" of which Jesus Christ was and is the first and chief member. How does Jesus, as an exemplary Chief Overseer, handle the case of the congregation in Laodicea, then and now?

³³ Those of the Laodicean kind are neither stimulatingly hot nor refreshingly cold. They are lukewarm, ugh! So, like lukewarm water, out of the mouth they

30. What, therefore, must the congregation overseers do, and why must we hold fast what we have, and how?

31. How must anointed overseers prove to be pillars and stay in line for the New Jerusalem, and accordingly what should all overseers do?

32. How did Jesus address the congregation in Laodicea, and why should this address have stung the congregation?

33. Why did Jesus threaten to vomit them out of his mouth, and how were they like Ephraim?

must go. Christ wants them as no mouth-piece of his, no "ambassadors substituting for Christ," no message-bearers or witnesses belonging to and used by him. Their share in the fulfillment of Matthew 24:14 he will withdraw unless they repent. They are like the dominant tribe of ancient Israel, Ephraim. How so? In being like a flat cake half cooked, a griddle cake not turned onto its other side, hence half-baked, half and half, hence half-hearted, double-minded: "Ephraim is like a silly dove, without understanding: they call unto Egypt [not to Jehovah], they go to Assyria [not to God]."—Hos. 7:8, 11, AS.

³⁴ Why was that so then? Because the Laodiceans did not keep on seeking first God's kingdom and the righteousness that comes from him through Christ. (Matt. 6:33) Their talk shows they supposed that their having earthly material riches meant having God's prospering approval; they put a higher value on material wealth than upon spiritual, Kingdom values, particularly the "treasure" of ministering the Kingdom truth to others. What do Laodiceans now need to take away their spiritual poverty, blindness and nakedness? A good, honest effort to buy from Christ the gold of faith of a tested quality, the garments of righteousness such as will endure into the new world, and the spiritual seeing power, the faculty of spiritual sight, so as to see the all-importance of the Kingdom concerning which the witness must now be given world-wide.

³⁵ Here, then, is a work for overseers: To reawaken the Laodicean kind to feel their spiritual need and then help them become "rich in faith." (Jas. 2:5) Such faith is rich in Kingdom fruitage and alive to witnessing work. It takes away confi-

dence in one's own righteousness. It leads us to seek to be righteous in God's sight, with all worldliness and sinful nakedness put away. Overseers must also help the Laodiceans to apply the spiritual eyesalve; that is, to take Jesus' teaching on matters, his advice, his example and his mental attitude, and to act in harmony with such. This is a healing remedy against the "desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life." (1 John 2:15-17) Recovering spiritual sight, they can become eyes to others, and not be blind leaders of the blind.

³⁶ Christ as Chief Overseer reproves and disciplines, but does so out of affection for those who have undertaken to follow him. Overseers under him must do likewise. Laodiceans should appreciate this courageous, open display of affection and be zealous to repent or change their mind and then change their way of life.

³⁷ The hour is late. It is the time for the best meal of the day, that is, supper, the evening meal. Many an evening meal Jesus shared on earth, giving out spiritual instruction as he enjoyed the householder's hospitality. Now he invites us to have such a spiritually upbuilding meal with him. He stands at the door of the Laodicean kind of congregation now and knocks. You Laodiceans, will you listen to his knock, revive your affection for Christ, let him into your midst and let him teach you in a precious communion with him? If so, then you will receive his overseer over your congregation. Your overseer, the angel of the congregation, the "star" in Christ's right hand, is willing and eager to open the door. He has opened it for Christ to enter to feast with those who

34. Why were the Laodiceans in such a lukewarm condition, and what did they need to take away their spiritual wretchedness?

35. So what must the overseers do in behalf of the Laodiceans for their spiritual recovery?

36. What does Christ do to those for whom he has affection, and so what must overseers do and how should Laodiceans respond?

37. (a) What is it now time for, and what invitation is now directed to the Laodiceans? (b) How will modern Laodiceans show they were not vomited out of Christ's mouth?

repent. All you Laodiceans, show that you were not vomited out of his mouth but are still members of his congregation by coming to all meetings of the congregation for study and for service, for Jesus has promised to be present at a spiritual meal where as few as two or three are appreciatively met together in his name. The "other sheep" are letting Christ in, so that at the coming judgment he will say to them: "I was a stranger and you received me hospitably." (Matt. 25:35) This hospitable action means life!

³⁸ Let us all be warned by the reproof given to the Laodiceans. We must overcome the materialism of this world in this "time of the end." To each conquering one

38. What must we now overcome, and what reward will be given to conquerors?

Christ, speaking by the spirit of God, promises a high reward, to his anointed followers a throne, not of any kingdom of this world, but with him at his Father's right hand in heaven. To the conquering "other sheep" he promises a position before his throne, a position of loving favor in the "new earth" of God's new world of righteousness.

³⁹ Shine on, then, you overseers, as "stars" in Christ's right hand, acting as his angels to the congregations. Shine on, too, you congregations, as lampstands that he retains in their place. May he give you his careful attention and protection that you may ever shed forth light to enlighten all who will be saved forever.

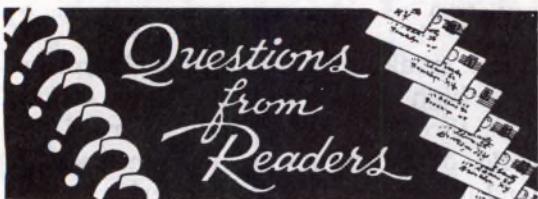
39. What, then, should congregations and their "stars" do, and what do we pray Christ to give them?

How Dictators Regard the Bible

Q In a statement quoted in *Treasury of the Christian World* Harold T. Barrow speaks of the many people who regard the Bible as old-fashioned. "They imagine it is finished, out-of-date, superseded," he writes. "The remarkable thing is that the Dictators of the world, whether in Germany, Italy or Japan, have not shared this view. Indeed they have dreaded all Bible teaching because they came to realize that the message and influence and precepts of the Word of God were in direct opposition to their program! Even the atheist and agnostic have to admit the ethical value of the Bible while they may deny the God it proclaims. A company of infidels, including Voltaire, were discussing their theories around the table one day when Voltaire said suddenly, 'Hush, gentlemen—till the servants are gone. If they believed as we do, none of our lives would be safe!' " And in the camp of Bible-discarding dictators, whose life has ever been safe?

ALIENS PLEASE NOTICE

Q The Department of Justice has once again announced that January is Alien Address Report month. We would like to remind our many readers who are not citizens that the law requires them to report their addresses during the month of January. The Immigration and Naturalization Service has provided a very simple method for all aliens to comply with the law. All an alien has to do is go to any post office or immigration office where he will obtain an address report card. The form number is I-53. You fill this card out, sign your name and the date and leave it with the clerk. That's really all there is to it and by so doing you will have complied with the law. Our readers who are citizens can help their government by reminding their friends and relatives who are aliens to report their addresses. Remember, January is the time, your local immigration or post office the place.



Questions from Readers

● In Matthew 19:23, 24 Jesus said to his disciples: "Truly I say to you that it will be a difficult thing for a rich man to get into the kingdom of the heavens. Again I say to you, It is easier for a camel to get through a needle's eye than for a rich man to get into the kingdom of God." Is this proved to be a poor translation in the light of the short article that appeared in *The American Mercury* magazine, entitled "The Way of the Translator," which article reads as follows:

"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. This scriptural saying has been repeated millions of times, but it is a mistranslation from the original Greek. The idea of a camel going through the eye of a needle was striking. The Greek original of the Gospel, however, merely spoke of the difficulty a rope would have in passing through the eye of a needle. The Greek equivalent of 'rope' is *ka'milos* but another Greek word, *ka'melos*, means camel. The man who translated the Gospel into Latin confounded the two words—and from the Latin translation his mistake has passed into all the other languages of the world."

This article is doubtless based upon the translation made by George M. Lamsa, entitled "The New Testament According to the Eastern Text Translated from Original Aramaic Sources," published in 1940. In Matthew 19:24 his translation reads: "Again I say to you, It is easier for a rope to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." There is a footnote on the word "rope," which reads: "The Aramaic word *gamla* means rope and camel." In the choice between rope and camel Lamsa chooses the meaning "rope." However, there are other translations into English from the Syriac language, which is closely related to Aramaic. How do these render Matthew 19:24? The translation by Charles Cutler Torrey, entitled "The Four Gospels," of 1933, reads: "Again I say, It is easier for a camel to go

through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

The translation by Dr. James Murdock, entitled "The New Testament—A Literal Translation from the Syriac Peshitto Version," of 1893, reads: "And again, I say to you: It is easier for a camel to enter the aperture of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Thus we have two modern translations that prefer the meaning "camel" to the meaning "rope." The article in *The American Mercury* would have us understand that there was a confusion between the Greek words *ka'milos* and *ka'melos*. So we turn to a Greek-English Lexicon by Liddell and Scott, the new edition by H. S. Jones and Roderick McKenzie of the year 1948. We consult it under the Greek word *ka'milos*. It defines *ka'milos* as rope, but it makes this comment, that the word *ka'milos* was "perhaps coined as an emendation of the phrase, 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.'—Matthew 19:24."

The oldest Greek manuscripts that we have of the Gospel of Matthew are the Sinaitic manuscript, the Vatican manuscript No. 1209 and the Alexandrine manuscript. These three manuscripts all have the Greek word *ka'melos*, meaning "camel," not *ka'milos*, meaning "rope." The apostle Matthew is understood to have written his account of the life of Jesus first in the Hebrew or the Aramaic, and then to have made his own translation of his account into the Greek. He knew, therefore, exactly what Jesus said and meant, and hence he knew the proper Greek word to use in this verse. He used the word *ka'melos*, as shown by the oldest of the Greek manuscripts that we have extant today.

There is good reason, therefore, for believing that the rendering in the *New World Translation* is the correct one. It is not easy for a camel with its long legs, its humped back and its long neck to go through the eye of a literal needle. People would scoff at the idea of a camel's trying to do so. Impossible! they would say. So by the use of this extravagant illustration Jesus was teaching us a lesson against materialism, warning us of its dangers. He was saying that just as it was not possible for a literal camel to go through the eye of a literal needle, it was even less possible for a rich man

to enter into the kingdom of God, retaining his riches.

● Why, after receiving from God the express command to multiply and fill the earth, did Adam and Eve refrain from carrying out this procreation mandate while they were perfect in the garden of Eden?

Asking this question concerning Adam and Eve is like trying to meddle in the private affairs of a Christian married couple today, and asking why they have had no children as yet. Jehovah God set no definite time for Adam and Eve to begin having perfect children to fill the earth. They being perfect, their intercourse together sexually would be for the purpose of reproducing the human kind. Evidently there was no intercourse between them for the begetting of children while they were in the garden of Eden. Evidently there was no begetting of a child before they were expelled from the garden of Eden; otherwise their first son, born after their expulsion and named Cain, would have been born perfect of his mother Eve, just as Jesus was born perfect from his imperfect mother Mary. Why? Because Cain would have had the perfect Adam as his father.

Jehovah God did not drive Adam and Eve out of the garden of Eden just because they

did not promptly begin to have children, according to the procreation mandate. The sin for which they were expelled from Eden was their partaking of the forbidden fruit of "the tree of the knowledge of good and bad." (Gen. 2:17) Their first act of intercourse that the Bible records was after their expulsion from Eden as sinners. Why they did not have intercourse and produce children during their stay in the garden of Eden is their own personal affair.

This proved to be very providential. It made it possible for all the offspring of Adam and Eve outside the garden of Eden to be redeemed by the one human sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. It left no child or children born perfect inside the garden of Eden who did not need to be redeemed by Christ's sacrifice, and the majority of mankind born imperfect outside the paradise of Eden who needed redemption by Jesus Christ. All Adam's descendants being begotten in sin outside the garden of Eden, all were born imperfect through inheritance from the one man. All were made subject to death through the one man Adam, and thus all those who were disposed to salvation could be recovered to everlasting life through the sacrifice of the one man, Jesus Christ.—Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:20-22.

SECONDHAND PRAYER

¶ A man who once lived in Tibet's forbidden city of Lhasa wrote of his experiences in the July, 1955, issue of *The National Geographic Magazine*. He mentioned the Tibetans' use of prayer flags and wheels. At the homes of the well-to-do, prayer wheels are huge. One Tibetan home, said the former Lhasa resident, had a massive eight-foot prayer drum; it was cranked day and night by men hired for the job of praying for the wealthy householder. A short item in a Philadelphia newspaper caused thinking persons to ponder that some professed Christians are not much different from the Tibetan who hires others to "say" his prayers. Said *The Sunday Bulletin* (June 26, 1955):

¶ "A church in Scarsdale, N.Y., has been experimenting with an innovation which gives a strangely mechanical touch to the most intimate of religious experiences. It is offering a morning and evening 'prayer of the day' by telephone. Anyone dialing SC 3-4567 hears a recorded one-minute prayer, much as he might receive the weather report by dialing another number. The response has been astounding. . . . Now the word has spread to other cities, and the New York Telephone Company is dismayed to find that the flood of calls has swamped its lines, and compels the installation of new equipment. . . . It seems hardly likely that so many hundreds have been dialing SC 3-4567 just to hear a recorded voice."

Like the pagan Tibetans many in Christendom practice secondhand prayer, substituting a mechanical device or a book for the human heart.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

February 23: Overseers in Apocalyptic Times,
¶1-25. Page 41.

March 2: Overseers in Apocalyptic Times, ¶26-35, and Overseers in the Right Hand of Christ, ¶1-11. Page 48.

March 9: Overseers in the Right Hand of Christ, ¶12-39. Page 54.

vv CHECK YOUR MEMORY vv

After reading this issue of "The Watchtower", do you remember—

- ✓ Why life in this world is like walking through a swamp? P. 35, ¶1.
 - ✓ What is the only way a person can walk a safe path? P. 36, ¶1.
 - ✓ How a non-Christian put his finger on the core of Christendom's trouble? P. 37, ¶2.
 - ✓ What similarity there is between a church and a social club? P. 38, ¶6.
 - ✓ Why religious leaders continue teaching an easy religion? P. 39, ¶2.
 - ✓ How thirty people died because of the political ambitions of a pistol-carrying priest? P. 40, ¶6.
 - ✓ Why no group of men can take upon themselves the authority to make overseers or "bishops"? P. 44, ¶16.
 - ✓ Whether the holy spirit appoints overseers over Christians today? P. 46, ¶20.
 - ✓ Why a Christian overseer should not treat his appointment lightly? P. 47, ¶24.
 - ✓ What makes the period we are living in "apocalyptic times"? P. 48, ¶28.
 - ✓ How a Christian overseer can be like a star? P. 50, ¶35.
 - ✓ How some Christians today are like the congregation of ancient Smyrna? P. 53, ¶9.
 - ✓ Why Jesus said that it would be "easier for a camel to get through a needle's eye than for a rich man to get into the kingdom of God"? P. 62, ¶7.