

The WATCHTOWER

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**

OCTOBER 1, 1968

Semimonthly

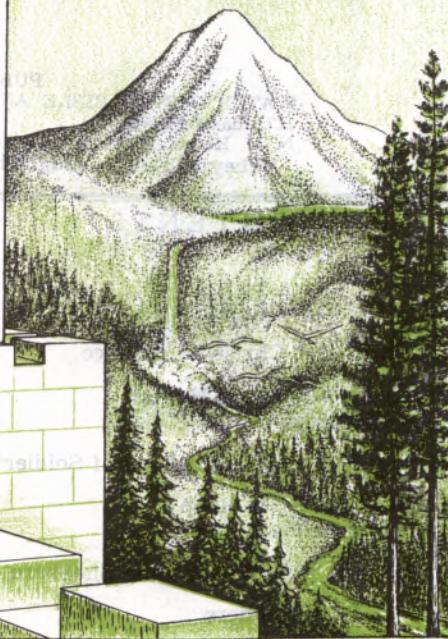
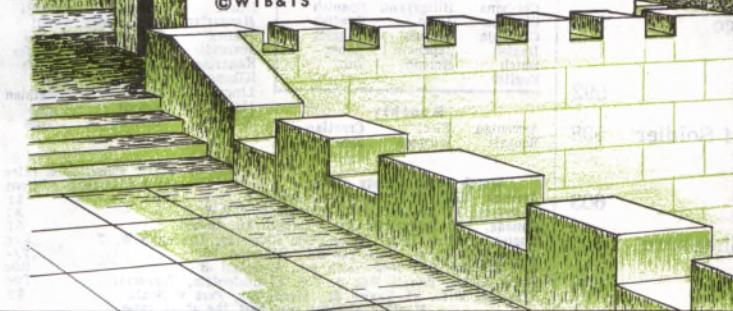
MAINTAIN PROPER
CHRISTIAN BALANCE

MAINTAINING BALANCE
IN HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

WHO IS GOD?

ARE YOU OBLIGATED TO KEEP
A WEEKLY SABBATH DAY?

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

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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The Bible translation used in "The Watchtower" is the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures, 1961 edition. When other translations are used the following symbols will appear behind the citations:

AS - American Standard Version
AT - An American Translation
AV - Authorized Version (1611)
Dy - Catholic Douay version
JP - Jewish Publication Soc.

Le - Isaac Leeser's version
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RS - Revised Standard Version
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The WATCHTOWER

Announcing
JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM

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MAN'S need for God and his help has never been greater than now. Our lives depend upon knowing him. But, strangely enough, there

is much confusion as to who he is, for today, as in the past, there are many gods worshiped in different lands. Yet the Bible makes clear that there is only one true God. Thus the apostle Paul says: "Even though there are those who are called 'gods,' whether in heaven or on earth, just as there are many 'gods' and many 'lords,' there is actually to us one God the Father, out of whom all things are." —1 Cor. 8:5, 6.

To distinguish himself from the many false gods, the true God has given himself a personal name. This sets him apart from all others. "Is not 'God' his name?" some may ask. No, for "God" is merely a title, just as "President," "King" and "Judge" are titles. God's personal name is made known to us through his Word, the Bible, and that name is JEHOVAH. In many translations of the Bible this name is found at Psalm 83:18, where we read (AV): "That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH,

art the most high over all the earth."

Also, in almost all translations the name is found at Revelation 19:1-6 as part of the expression "Alleluia" or "Hallelujah." This means "praise Jah" (a shortened form of Jehovah). *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (1910, Vol. VIII, p. 329) says of this Divine Name: "Jehovah, the proper name of God in the Old Testament." However, *The Jerusalem Bible*, a recent Catholic translation, regularly uses the name "Yahweh," as do a number of other translations. Why is that?

God's name is represented thousands of times in Hebrew, mostly the language in which the first thirty-nine books of our modern Bibles were written, by the four Hebrew letters YHWH. In ancient times the Hebrew language was written without vowels, the reader supplying the vowels as he read the words. So, the problem is that today we have no way of knowing exactly which vowels the Hebrews used along with the consonants YHWH. Many scholars think the name was pronounced "Yahweh," but the form "Jehovah" has been in use for many centuries and is most widely known.

Who Is God?

Because there is uncertainty as to the exact pronunciation of God's personal name, some clergymen say you should not use it at all, but instead simply say "God" or "the Lord." However, they do not insist that you should not use the names "Jesus" and "Jeremiah." And yet these commonly used pronunciations are quite different from the Hebrew pronunciations "Yesh'ua" and "Yirm'iah." The vital point is not what pronunciation you use for the Divine Name, whether "Yahweh," "Jehovah," or some other, as long as the pronunciation is common in your language. What is wrong is to fail to use that name. Why?

This is because those who do not use it could not be identified with the ones whom God takes out to be "a people for his name." (Acts 15:14) We should not only know God's name but honor it and praise it before others, as God's Son did when on earth. He taught his followers to pray: "Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified." And in prayer to his Father he said: "I have made your name manifest to the men you gave me out of the world."—Matt. 6:9; John 17:6, 26.

GOD'S QUALITIES AND WHY WE SHOULD WORSHIP HIM ALONE

What does the Bible itself tell us about God? It tells us that "God is a Spirit." (John 4:24) A spirit is not composed of flesh and blood, nor of other material substances that can be seen or felt by human senses. (1 Cor. 15:44, 50) So, human eyes have never seen God, as the Bible testifies: "No man has seen God at any time." (John 1:18) He is far superior to anything our eyes behold. The majesty of the mountains, the brilliance of the sun, and even the glory of the starry heavens are nothing as compared to him. These are all just 'the works of his fingers,' speak-

ing in a figurative way.—Ps. 8:1, 3, 4; Isa. 40:25, 26.

No wonder that in the heavens the song is sung: "Great and wonderful are your works, Jehovah God, the Almighty. Righteous and true are your ways, King of eternity. Who will not really fear you, Jehovah, and glorify your name, because you alone are loyal?" (Rev. 15:3, 4) As the Creator of all things, Jehovah God, the "King of eternity," existed before all others. He is "from everlasting to everlasting," meaning that he had no beginning and will never have an end.—1 Tim. 1:17; Ps. 90:2, AV.

How right, then, that our worship should go only to him! As we consider his creative works, we too can say: "You are worthy, Jehovah, even our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because you created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created." (Rev. 4:11) He accomplished the creation, not with tools such as men use, but by means of his holy spirit, which is his invisible active force.—Gen. 1:2; Ps. 104:30.

It is that same holy spirit by which he later caused the Bible to be written so that we might know his will and purposes for men on earth. "Men spoke from God," the Bible explains, "as they were borne along by holy spirit." (2 Pet. 1:21) Even we can have the guidance and help of that spirit or active force if we seek God's help. Jesus Christ showed this when he said: If you "know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more so will the Father in heaven give holy spirit to those asking him!"—Luke 11:13.

Since all things were created 'because of his will,' they all must serve God's purpose. Jehovah informed the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, of his purpose for them, and he held them accountable to act in harmony with it. Are we, too, account-

able to God? Yes, because God is the Source of our life. This is true, not only because we have descended from that first human pair to whom God gave life, but also because our continued life each day depends on the sun, rain, air and food from which Jehovah continues to let us benefit. (Ps. 36:9; Matt. 5:45) To what extent, then, do we live our lives in harmony with God's purpose for us? We ought to think seriously about this, because our opportunity for eternal life is at stake.

Are we really to fear God? Yes, but with a healthy fear of rebelling against his will, because his will is *right*. In even ordinary things, do we not fear to take risks that could cause injury or loss of life? How much more so should we fear to displease "Jehovah God, the Almighty"? Yet we can be glad that he is almighty, for, "as regards Jehovah, his eyes are roving about through all the earth to show his strength in behalf of those whose heart is complete toward him." (2 Chron. 16:9; see also Isaiah 40:29-31.) And we may be sure that always Jehovah uses his power with a right purpose and for the good of those loving what is right. For "God is love."—1 John 4:8.

Jehovah, therefore, is not an oppressive God. "All his ways are justice." (Deut. 32:4) True, he is "a God exacting exclusive devotion," but he is also "a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth." (Ex. 20:5; 34:6) "He himself well knows the formation of us, remembering that we are dust." (Ps. 103:14) We can be happy indeed to have such a just yet compassionate God as our Supreme Judge, Lawgiver and King.—Isa. 33:22.

With Jehovah there are "wisdom and mightiness; he has counsel and understanding." (Job 12:13) Evidence of his wisdom is seen in all his creative works,

in both heaven and earth. We may well ask, then: "Why should anyone ever doubt God's wisdom?" The Bible shows that his requirements are for our good, with our everlasting welfare in view. It is true that there may be times when we, as humans having limited knowledge and experience, do not fully appreciate why a certain law stated by God is so important, or how it really works for our good. Yet our firm belief that God obviously knows far more than we do, that his experience is so much greater than ours, and that what he does is for our everlasting good, will move us to obey him with a willing heart.—Ps. 19:7-11; Mic. 6:8.

IS GOD A "TRINITY"?

Many religions of Christendom teach that God is a "Trinity," although the word "Trinity" does not appear in the Bible. The World Council of Churches recently said that all religions that are part of that Council should advocate the belief that there is "one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit," that is, three persons in one God. Those teaching this doctrine admit that it is "a mystery." The Athanasian Creed, of about the eighth century of the Common Era, says that the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost (Spirit) are all three of the same substance, all three are eternal (and hence had no beginning), and all three are almighty. So the creed reads that in the "Trinity none is afore or after other; none is greater or less than another."^{*} Is that reasonable? More importantly, is it in agreement with the Bible?

This doctrine was unknown to the Hebrew prophets and Christian apostles. The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (1967 edition, Vol. XIV, pp. 306, 304) admits that "the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is not taught in the OT [Old Testament]," and further

^{*} *Cyclopædia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, by J. M'Clintock and J. Strong, Vol. II, p. 561

says: "It is not, as already seen, directly and immediately the word of God." It also admits (on page 299): "The formulation 'one God in three persons' was not solidly established, certainly not fully assimilated into Christian life and its profession of faith, prior to the end of the 4th century. But it is precisely this formulation that has first claim to the title *the Trinitarian dogma*. Among the Apostolic Fathers, there had been nothing even remotely approaching such a mentality or perspective." So the early Christians who were taught directly by Jesus Christ did not believe that God is a "Trinity."

When Jesus was on earth he certainly was *not* equal to his Father, for he said there were some things that neither he nor the angels knew but that only God knew. (Mark 13:32) Furthermore, he prayed to his Father for help when undergoing trial, saying, "Let, not my will, but yours take place." (Luke 22:41, 42) Also, he himself said: "The Father is greater than I am." (John 14:28) Because of this, Jesus spoke of his Father as "my God" and as "the only true God."—John 20:17; 17:3.

After Jesus' death, God raised him to life again and gave him glory greater than he had before. However, he was still not equal to his Father. How do we know? Because later the inspired Scriptures state that God is still "the head of the Christ." (1 Cor. 11:3) The Bible also says that Jesus is to reign as God's appointed king until he has put all enemies under his feet, and that then shall "the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." (1 Cor. 15:28, AV) Clearly, even since his resurrection Jesus Christ is not equal with his Father.

But did not Jesus say on one occasion, "I and the Father are one"? (John 10:30) Yes, he did. However, that statement does

not even suggest a "Trinity," since he spoke of only two as being one, not three. Jesus was surely not contradicting the scriptures we have already read. What he meant by this expression he himself made clear later when he prayed regarding his followers that "they may be one just as we are one." (John 17:22) Jesus and his Father are "one" in that Jesus is in full harmony with his Father. And he prayed that all his followers might likewise be in harmony with his Father, with Jesus and with one another.—1 Cor. 1:10.

What about the statement at John 1:1 (AV), which refers to Jesus as "the Word," saying: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"? Does that not prove the "Trinity"? No. Notice, first of all, that only two persons are mentioned, not three. Also, in this same chapter, verse 2 says that the Word was "in the beginning with God," and verse 18 says that "no man hath seen God at any time," yet men have seen Jesus Christ. For these reasons, and in full harmony with the Greek text, some translations of verse 1 read: "The Word was with God, and the Word was divine," or was "a god," that is, the Word was a powerful godlike one. (AT; NW) So this portion of the Bible is in agreement with all the rest; it does not teach a "Trinity."*

As for the "Holy Spirit," the so-called "third Person of the Trinity," we have already seen that it is, not a person, but God's active force. (Judg. 14:6) John the Baptist said that Jesus would baptize with holy spirit even as John had been baptizing with water. Water is not a person nor is holy spirit a person. (Matt. 3:11) What

* Trinitarians have practically ceased to cite the words "the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one" that appear in some Bible versions at 1 John 5:7. Textual scholars agree that these words are a later spurious addition to the inspired text.

John foretold was fulfilled when God caused his Son Christ Jesus to pour out holy spirit on the apostles and disciples during the day of Pentecost 33 C.E., so that "they all became filled with holy spirit." Were they "filled" with a person? No, but they were filled with God's active force.—Acts 2:4, 33.

What, then, do the facts show as to the "Trinity"? Neither the word nor the idea is in God's Word, the Bible. The doctrine did not originate with God. But, you will be interested to know that, according to the book *Babylonian Life and History* (by Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, 1925 edition, pp. 146, 147), in ancient Babylon, the pagans did believe in such a thing; in fact, they worshiped more than one trinity of gods.

WORSHIPING GOD "WITH SPIRIT AND TRUTH"

To love and respect a person, one needs to know him as he really is. To give God the exclusive devotion that he deserves, you need to study his Word and 'prove to yourself the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.' (Rom. 12:2) The important thing is not how humans want to worship God, but how God wants to be worshiped.

Religious ceremonies and "aids to devotion" may seem beautiful in the eyes of those who use them, but how does God view them? Surely you want to know, because you want to have God's approval. God's own Son tells us that "the true worshipers will worship the Father with spirit and truth, for, indeed, the Father is looking for suchlike ones to worship him." (John 4:23, 24) Is the use of images, for example, worship "with spirit and truth"? Does it please God?

At Exodus 20:4, 5, in one of the Ten Commandments, God himself says: "You shall not make yourself a carved image

or any likeness of anything . . . you shall not bow down to them or serve them." (The Catholic *Jerusalem Bible*) Some people regard a religious image simply as an "aid" to worshiping God because they can see and touch the image. But God inspired the apostle Paul to write: "We are walking by faith, not by sight." (2 Cor. 5:7) God is very frank about the matter. He tells us that the use of images is no part of true worship, but that such images are "a falsehood."—Isa. 44:14-20; Ps. 115:4-8.

Even though one may say that the honor given to a religious image is less than that given to God, God himself shows that he will not share any of his glory and praise with such images, declaring: "I am Jehovah. That is my name; and to no one else shall I give my own glory, neither my praise to graven images." (Isa. 42:8) We should be glad that he makes this matter so clear in his Word, because we want our worship to be acceptable to him.

Lovingly, the apostle John warns us: "Guard yourselves from idols." (1 John 5:21) Also the Bible admonishes: "Flee from idolatry." (1 Cor. 10:14) Why not look around your home and ask yourself whether you are doing this? By bringing your life and way of worship into harmony with Jehovah's loving will you may gain his everlasting blessings.—Deut. 7:25.

Continue to learn of Jehovah's majesty and his loving purposes, and you will grow in love for him. Never let a day go by without thanking him for the good things that you enjoy because of his loving-kindness. As you learn more about him, impress upon your heart the importance of loyalty to him as the great God of the universe. By loving obedience to him, you will put yourself in the way that leads to eternal life.—Eph. 4:23, 24; Ps. 104:33-35.

Finding the Right Religion

THE following account of his search after the religion of Jesus Christ was given by a student at the Kingdom Ministry School at the Watch Tower Society's headquarters:

"At thirteen I decided I wanted to become a minister. I planned to get a scholarship to college. However, in my junior year in high school my mother had a stroke and was hospitalized—the left side of her body completely paralyzed. The family broke up, my brothers and sisters scattered here and there in foster homes. But I was still bent on getting to college and entering the ministry.

"At sixteen I was still giving much thought to the vocation I had chosen. But at times I would think to myself, Why become a Methodist minister? Why not a Catholic priest, or a rabbi, or a Hindu or Moslem minister? The main thing was to aid the poor, knocked-about people, to comfort them and teach them. Then I began to ask myself, Who was the best minister ever in the whole wide world? Why, it was Jesus Christ, of course! Then the religion that follows his example is the one I want to serve with as a minister.

"So I started to study the life of Jesus in the Bible. I noted that he loved the people and taught them so well from God's Word that they, in turn, were able to teach others. I liked that. So, I would look for this feature in the right religion. I would check on how much Bible study there was among members of my own church. I did, and found that there was little of real understanding. Most people seemed to think that religion was only for Sundays.

"I questioned my minister about why he took up the ministry in the first place, and asked if he thought he had made a success of it. He told me that when he first started he thought he was going to set the world on fire, but finally realized that a man can only do so much. I asked him to explain from the Bible his favorite sermon theme, the Trinity or three persons in one God. He said that if I went to the seminary I would be taught about it there, that it was impossible for him to explain it to me from the Bible.

"I then asked him if a minister should set the right example in morals for the rest of the church members, in view of the fact that Jesus said to his flock: 'Follow me.' He replied: 'I am only human, and not Jesus; so just do as I say and not as I do.'

"After this interview I knew that the right religion must be elsewhere. So I began a search from church to church, reading about various religions, always using Jesus' ministry as the model. After about two years without success, I got to wondering how God could expect persons to worship him if he did not have a religion that imitated Jesus, to give them the right example.

"One day a friend of mine asked me to pick up some soiled clothing from one of his dry-cleaning customers. I did, and the customer handed me a *Watchtower* magazine, asking me to read it and let her know later what I thought about it. When I returned her clean garments I told her I had never read a magazine with so many quotations and citations from the Bible. She invited me to attend a lecture at the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's witnesses. I accepted, thinking to myself, Why not to a Kingdom Hall? since I have been to so many other churches.

"It was on the top floor, and as I ascended the stairs I recall thinking with a smile, This church is going to bring me closer to heaven than any of the others I have tried. But when I stepped into the hall I was amazed—no crosses, no pictures of bleeding hearts, nor of Jesus carrying a lamb, no altar, but just people of different races quietly sitting side by side. And during the sermon I heard more Scripture texts quoted and explained than I ever heard from all other clergymen I had listened to in the past.

"After the lecture I asked a Witness sitting near me about the Trinity. In but a few moments he gave me ample proof from the Bible itself to show that this was no Bible doctrine. Then I asked more about the significance of the year 1914, mentioned by the speaker that day. He explained to me by Bible chronology the importance of that vital date, backing up his Scriptural argument with a chart of dates that he drew for me freehand.

"My long search for the right religion ended that day. This was exactly what I had been looking for, the religion that followed the pattern of Jesus' ministry, and extended to all Christians the privilege of training for the ministry. It was a happy moment in my life. I thanked God that he had drawn me to his people."

MAINTAIN PROPER CHRISTIAN BALANCE

JEHOVAH God has made provision for humans to obtain everlasting life in a righteous new system of things. With this end in view, "he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) But to obtain this grand reward of life, we must maintain proper Christian balance. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, did; and, in doing so, he set a perfect example or model. Therefore, all who would walk steadily before God must "follow his steps closely." (1 Pet. 2:21) But, admittedly, maintaining proper Christian balance is not easy.

² To appreciate better just what is involved in balance, observe the comments of *Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms*: "Balance implies a state in which no one part, element, factor, or influence overweights another or is out of due proportion to the others. It therefore suggests a steadiness or well-being that is usually not outwardly evident until a disturbance occurs . . . thus, a man loses his *balance* and falls when by slipping on the ice his weight is shifted and his legs no longer support him." Such a loss of balance and subsequent fall can be damaging. Similarly, to lose balance when riding a bicycle

"Christ suffered for you, leaving you a model for you to follow his steps closely."—1 Pet. 2:21.

or motorcycle can mean a painful or even fatal accident. The value of physical balance is obvious.

LEARNING CHRISTIAN BALANCE

³ However, proper spiritual balance is of even greater importance, for it is an absolute necessity in order to receive God's blessing and everlasting life. The first human pair, Adam and Eve, lost spiritual balance; they went away off course in disobedience to God. It meant their death, and an unbalanced start in life for all their offspring, including us today. Yes, all of us were conceived in sin and brought forth in error, with a natural bent toward wrongdoing.—Ps. 51:5; Rom. 5:12.

⁴ Therefore, since none of us were born with Christian balance, we have to learn it. Just as a baby starting to walk learns physical balance by diligent effort, so we must exercise initiative and perseverance to master Christian balance. Many have got onto their feet, so to speak, and have walked as Christians in the footsteps of the Master, Jesus Christ. They have accepted the ransom sacrifice, separated themselves from this wicked world and its bad practices, and have even dedicated their lives to serve Jehovah God. (Matt.

1. What provision has God made, and what is required in order to benefit from it?
2. What is involved in maintaining balance?

3. Why is spiritual balance so vital? Is it something we inherit at birth?

4. How is spiritual balance achieved, and once it is acquired can it be lost?

20:28; John 17:16; Heb. 10:7) But then they have failed to maintain Christian balance. Something has unbalanced them and caused them to leave off following in the footsteps of Christ.

⁵ The question, therefore, is: After learning Christian balance, can we faithfully, despite the circumstances that arise in our lives, maintain this balance? Can we continue walking closely in the footsteps of Christ? Everlasting life in God's righteous new system of things is dependent upon our doing so!—2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:3, 4.

BALANCE IN OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

⁶ The first essential to proper Christian balance is to maintain a correct relationship with our Creator, Jehovah God. But what is a proper relationship with God? Consider the perfect model Christ. Willingly he presented himself to do his Father's will. At all times Christ kept the worship of God as the focal point to which all other activities were related. Pleasing his Father was always his chief concern. Similarly, we, too, must appreciate the importance of serving our Creator, and our indebtedness to Him. Indeed, Jehovah provides all the things necessary to sustain life, including the sun, the rain, the air we breathe, and the food we eat, as well as essential spiritual provisions. (Matt. 5:45; Acts 14:15-17) With the Bible psalmist we should readily acknowledge: "For with you is the source of life." —Ps. 36:9.

⁷ But since God owns everything, what can we give Him in reciprocation for His goodness? We are free moral agents, so we can choose to worship Jehovah God; we can love Him with our whole heart,

mind, soul and strength. (Matt. 22:37, 38) Such whole-souled devotion is not something unbalanced; rather, it is what is involved in keeping a proper relationship with God. Jesus Christ himself said: "It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service." (Matt. 4:10) Giving God exclusive devotion is vital to maintaining our Christian balance.

⁸ However, it is much easier to talk about loving God and to write to others about following Christ's example of giving to God exclusive devotion under all circumstances than actually to do it. For example, King Solomon, when faithfully serving Jehovah, wrote: "Fear the true God and keep his commandments." (Eccl. 12:13) But, later, Solomon was enticed to disregard God's commandments and failed to practice what he wrote. Why? What makes it so difficult to maintain proper Christian balance?

⁹ It is not only man's sinful inclination toward wrongdoing that makes it difficult. (Rom. 7:20, 21) But another prominent factor is the wicked influence of the invisible spirit creature Satan the Devil, whom the Bible calls "the god of this system of things." (2 Cor. 4:4) Satan's efforts are designed to destroy one's proper relationship with God, to create situations or circumstances to unbalance Christians. Jesus Christ indicated this when, on the last night before his death, he turned to his apostle Simon Peter and said: "Simon, Simon, look! Satan has demanded to have you men to sift you as wheat." (Luke 22:31) A close look at Satan's efforts to shake Peter from God's favor can be of real benefit in helping us today to maintain proper Christian balance.

5. What questions might each Christian ask himself?
6. What is the first essential to achieving Christian balance? What example did Christ set in his attitude toward God?
7. What is a balanced view as to what we owe God?

8. What example illustrates the difficulty of giving God exclusive devotion?
9. Why is it difficult to maintain proper Christian balance?

FEAR UNBALANCES

¹⁰ First, consider the setting for the momentous events that occurred. It was early spring of the year 33 C.E. and time for the annual Passover festival celebrated during the month of Nisan. Jesus and his twelve apostles met for the occasion in an upper room somewhere in Jerusalem after 6 p.m., at which time the Jewish day began. God's instructions were that the Passover lamb must be kept until the fourteenth day of Nisan "between the two evenings," which is interpreted by some authorities to be between sunset and deep twilight. During this time it was to be killed and afterward roasted whole. (Ex. 12:6-10) Roasting such an animal whole would perhaps take four to five hours. Thus, it was likely close to midnight when the Passover meal was finished and Christ instituted the memorial of his death. After this, Jesus and his disciples went out to the garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus was arrested and taken into custody.

—Mark 14:17-46.

¹¹ During the chill and darkness of those early morning hours, the Bible account says, "they now led Jesus away to the high priest, and all the chief priests and the older men and the scribes assembled. But Peter, from a good distance, followed him as far as in the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting together with the house attendants and warming himself before a bright fire. Meantime the chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death, but they were not finding any. Many, indeed, were giving false witness against him."—Mark 14:53-56.

¹² Jesus was being evilly misrepresented

10. (a) What religious occasion did Jesus and his disciples meet to celebrate Nisan 14, 33 C.E.? (b) What basis is there for believing it was perhaps close to midnight when they departed for the garden of Gethsemane?

11. What did Peter do when Jesus was taken into custody?

12. How was Jesus treated at this time?

by those false witnesses. Not only that, but the inspired record says: "Some started to spit on him and some to cover his whole face and hit him with their fists and say to him: 'Prophesy!' And, slapping him in the face, the court attendants took him." (Mark 14:65) What injustice! That mob was Devil-inspired! Satan was responsible for stirring up those men, and causing them physically to abuse Jesus and to insult him. How would all this affect Peter? Would he, in imitation of his Master, maintain proper balance under these trying circumstances?

¹³ We are not left in doubt, for the Bible narrative continues: "Now while Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came, and, seeing Peter warming himself, she looked straight at him and said: 'You, too, were with the Nazarene, this Jesus.' But he denied it, saying: 'Neither do I know him nor do I understand what you are saying,' and he went outside to the vestibule. There the servant girl, at the sight of him, started again to say to those standing by: 'This is one of them.' Again he was denying it. And once more after a little while those standing by began saying to Peter: 'Certainly you are one of them, for, in fact, you are a Galilean.' But he commenced to curse and swear: 'I do not know this man of whom you speak.'"

—Mark 14:66-71.

¹⁴ But this was not the truth. Peter definitely did know Jesus. In fact, a few short hours before, while with Jesus, he had asserted: "Lord, I am ready to go with you both into prison and into death." "Although all the others are stumbled in connection with you, never will I be stumbled!" (Luke 22:33; Matt. 26:33) What caused this sudden change in Peter's attitude? It resulted because of fear. The

13. What effect did this treatment of Jesus have upon Peter?

14. What caused Peter to deny Christ?

circumstances caught Peter unawares. Jesus was depicted as a vile criminal. The truth was being distorted. What was right was made to appear wrong, and the innocent one as guilty. Because of the pressures of the occasion Peter was thrown off balance. Suddenly his proper sense of loyalty was upset, to his own sorrow. "He broke down and gave way to weeping," the Bible says.—Mark 14:72.

IT CAN HAPPEN TODAY

¹⁵ Similar circumstances can arise today. Satan the Devil is still active, endeavoring to unbalance Christians and ruin their relationship with God. And we can be certain that tactics that proved so successful against Peter will be employed against modern Christians. It is true that Peter quickly regained spiritual balance. He was deeply repentant and obtained the forgiveness he so earnestly sought. He became one of the most fearless ministers of the unpopular Jesus Christ, and died faithful to Jehovah God. But what a miserable

experience when he denied his Master Jesus three times! How much better that an experience such as this be avoided! Are you prepared to meet circumstances similar to the one faced by Peter? They can arise, and, indeed, likely will.

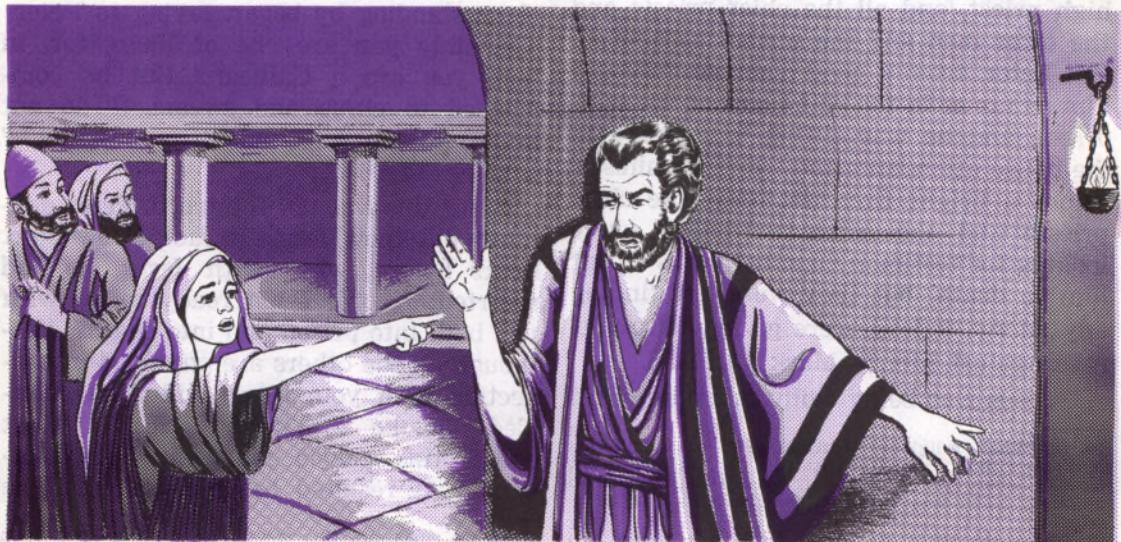
¹⁶ There are ever so many situations in which improper fear can unbalance a dedicated Christian and cause him to forget his proper relationship with Jehovah God. It may be fear of what the neighbors might think if they should see him going from house to house with the Kingdom message. Yes, what if one should be seen by his own employer! What a terrifying thought this can be to one who has forgotten that it is what God thinks of him that truly matters! Children in their adolescent years are especially prone to be afraid of what people think of them.

¹⁷ Perhaps you are a young Christian, and the setting is a school classroom where you are a student. There the Bible beliefs of Jehovah's witnesses may enter

16. What may be responsible for unbalancing some Christians today?

17, 18. What discussion could develop in a school classroom to create circumstances similar to the one faced by Peter?

15. (a) Why might we expect to meet circumstances similar to that faced by Peter? (b) Was Peter permanently unbalanced by this experience?



Peter, thrown off balance, denied the Lord

into a class discussion. Prejudice and a spirit of patriotism may be strong. "Jehovah's witnesses are subversive. They are against the government," one youngster asserts. This is a charge similar to the one hurled against Jesus on the day of his execution. (Luke 23:2) "Jehovah's witnesses won't vote or fight for their country," another youngster joins in. Yet, strict neutrality relative to the political affairs of the nations was the course pursued by Jesus Christ and early Christians. (John 6:15; 15:17-19; Jas. 4:4) One modern textbook observes: "Zealous Christians did not serve in the armed forces or accept political offices."¹⁸ But the students and teacher are unfamiliar with the teachings of the Bible on the matter, or the beliefs and practices of early Christians. The discussion grows more intense.

¹⁸ "Jehovah's witnesses are anti-Christian," one girl claims. "For they don't even celebrate Christmas!" The feelings against Jehovah's witnesses mount. Those present do not realize that Christmas is a pagan celebration, that it is without Bible support and was not observed by early Christians. They are unfamiliar with the testimony of standard reference works to this effect. Then another youngster makes the accusation: "Jehovah's witnesses do not love their own children. They will let them die before they will give them a lifesaving blood transfusion!" How awful Jehovah's witnesses must be! That is the feeling that pervades. The youngsters are not aware that the Bible strictly forbids eating blood, and that early Christians abstained completely from both animal and human blood.—Lev. 17:10; Acts 15:20, 29.

* *World History, The Story of Man's Achievements*, 1962, Habberton, Roth and Spears, p. 117.

† *M'Clintock and Strong's Cyclopædia*, Vol. 1, p. 834, observes relative to the position of early Christians in connection with blood: "So far were they from drinking human blood, it was unlawful for them to drink the blood even of irrational animals. Numerous testimonies to the same effect are found in after ages."

¹⁹ At about this point someone in the classroom may turn to you and ask: "You are one of Jehovah's witnesses, aren't you?" Then you will be in a situation similar to that faced by the apostle Peter. What will you say? How will you meet the situation? Will you maintain your proper Christian balance? Will you serve as a faithful Witness of Jehovah God, even as Jesus Christ did? (John 17:6; Rev. 1:5) Now is the time to prepare to meet such circumstances that may arise. It is now that you should make the firm resolve to imitate the fearless example of Jesus Christ in such situations. This will help you to avoid being thrown off balance.

ADVANCE PREPARATION

²⁰ We need prayer and regular consideration of God's Word in order to keep a proper relationship with Jehovah God, and thus maintain our Christian balance. Jesus recognized this need. During those momentous final hours of his earthly life he was especially aware of it. Therefore, while with his disciples in the upper room that last night he spoke encouragingly regarding faith-strengthening spiritual matters, concluding his discussion: "In the world you will have tribulation, but take courage! I have conquered the world." Then he prayed at length with his disciples, after which they departed for the garden of Gethsemane.—John 16:33-18:1.

²¹ Out in the garden Jesus continued to pray to his heavenly Father, seeking His guidance and direction. Before leaving them so as to pray privately, Jesus told Peter and two other of his disciples: "Stay here and keep on the watch." But did they? Did they heed Jesus' instructions?

19. (a) What questions would face a Christian youth in that situation? (b) When should preparation be made for such a possibility?

20. What is required to maintain proper Christian balance, and how did Jesus show that he recognized that need?

21, 22. In what way did the disciples in the garden of Gethsemane fail to copy Christ's example?

The Bible record says: "He came and found them sleeping." How disappointing! This was no way to prepare themselves for what lay ahead. Jesus then turned to Peter and said: "Simon, are you sleeping? Did you not have strength to keep on the watch one hour? Men, keep on the watch and praying, in order that you do not come into temptation. The spirit, of course, is eager, but the flesh is weak." (Mark 14: 32-38) True, it was late, probably well past midnight by this time. The flesh was tired. Nevertheless, they should have imitated Jesus' example. This was a time to pay more than the usual attention to spiritual matters. The promised seed of God's woman was about to be bruised! What a momentous occasion!—Gen. 3:15; Gal. 3:16.

²² Did Peter and the other disciples therefore take seriously Jesus' urgent encouragement this second time? Mark's account says: "And he went away again and prayed, saying the same word. And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were weighed down, and so they did not know what to answer him." (Mark 14:39, 40) Peter and his associates did not listen! They neglected to pay attention to Jesus' instructions. Before departing to pray for a third time, Jesus no doubt urged his disciples again to keep awake and to pray. But yet once more his admonition went unheeded! For Jesus "came the third time and said to them: 'At such a time as this you are sleeping and taking your rest! It is enough! The hour has come! Look! The Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.'" —Mark 14:41.

²³ Is it not likely that this lethargic, sleepy condition was a factor in causing the disciples a few moments later to aban-

don Jesus and flee, just as the prophecy foretold they would? (Mark 14:50; Matt. 26:31; Zech. 13:7) It cannot be overemphasized: Advance preparation and spiritual strengthening are vital if a Christian is to meet trials of his faith successfully. This is as true now as it was then. For, if anything, we are living in times when Satan is even more active. Bible prophecy clearly shows that recently, during this generation, he and his demons have been cast from heaven, with the consequences announced by the heavenly voice: "Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time." (Rev. 12:12) We are in that short period of woe right now! Satan is doing all within his power to unbalance Christians and shake them from God's favor.

²⁴ This, therefore, is no time to allow ourselves to become spiritually lethargic. We need to bestir ourselves spiritually, and prepare for the trials of faith that lie immediately ahead. Do not assume the attitude that, because you have been an active Christian for so many years, there is no danger of jeopardizing your relationship with Jehovah God and losing his favor. Do not feel that you can afford to miss congregation meetings, or be unattentive when spiritual matters are discussed. (Heb. 2:1; 10:24, 25) We all need to keep spiritually watchful, regularly studying God's Word privately and with fellow Christians, if we are to maintain proper Christian balance. Nor can we neglect prayer. A close relationship with God nurtured by regular communication with him is an absolute necessity for balance. Imitate Christ's example! Although he was spiritually the strongest person to walk the earth, he persevered in prayer, and particularly so during that final night

23. (a) What undoubtedly was a factor in the disciples' abandoning Jesus, and what, therefore, cannot be overemphasized? (b) What basis is there for believing Satan is even more active today?

24. What must all Christians do to maintain balance?

of his human life. If we are to keep spiritual balance, we must do the same.

KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE PRIZE

²⁵ What assisted Jesus to maintain spiritual balance was his keeping foremost in mind the joy of pleasing his heavenly Father and of receiving His gift of eternal life. Therefore we are urged: "Look intently at the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith, Jesus. For the joy that was set before him he endured a torture stake, despising shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb. 12:2) So to maintain balance, follow Jesus' example! Keep your eyes set on the privilege of honoring your Creator and of receiving His prize of life!

²⁶ However, it may not always be easy to keep the interests of Jehovah God, who is invisible, first in our life. This is especially true when there are so many visible attractions in this world. For example, money and the many enticing things it can buy. Many Christians have been thrown off balance by an uncontrolled desire for material things. (2 Tim. 4:10) They have failed to imitate Jesus Christ, who always kept the interests of his Father foremost. In fact, Jesus so completely assigned his personal comforts to a secondary place that he once said: "Foxes have dens and birds of heaven have roosts, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay down his head."

—Luke 9:58.

25. What assisted Jesus to maintain balance?

26. Why is it not always easy to put God's interests first in our life?

²⁷ The patriarch Moses also set a fine example in keeping God's worship first in his life. He was raised as a son of the daughter of Pharaoh, no doubt enjoying the magnificence of the royal palace of that powerful ancient ruler. Yet, Moses chose reproach as a servant of Jehovah God in preference to all the treasures of Egypt. Why? The Bible record says: "For he continued steadfast as seeing the One who is invisible." (Heb. 11:23-27) Yes, his attention was fixed on his unseen God, Jehovah. Maintaining his proper relationship with Jehovah was responsible for Moses' exemplary spiritual balance. He appreciated that everything belongs to Jehovah, and that humans can only give worship and devotion to Him in return. Later, the psalmist David had the same balanced view, and wrote: "I have placed Jehovah in front of me constantly." —Ps. 16:8.

²⁸ In order to maintain proper Christian balance, we, too, must have this view. This is especially true now when there are so many material attractions at every turn. The attaching of too great a value to any of them can be unbalancing. So, keep your eyes fixed on the things above, on your invisible God, and do not have as your chief interest selfish material pursuits. (Col. 3:2) Yes, to maintain Christian balance and to gain the prize of everlasting life, imitate the example of Jesus Christ, who left you "a model for you to follow his steps closely." —1 Pet. 2:21.

27. What fine example was set by Moses and David?

28. What concluding admonition should we be diligent to heed?

Brace up your minds for activity, keep completely balanced and set your hope upon the undeserved kindness that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, quit being fashioned according to the desires you formerly had in your ignorance, but, in accord with the holy one who called you, do you also become holy yourselves in all your conduct, because it is written: "You must be holy, because I am holy." —1 Pet. 1:13-16, NW, 1950 edition.

MAINTAINING BALANCE in HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

ALTHOUGH rendering exclusive worship to our heavenly Father, Jehovah God, is essential to Christian balance, inseparably linked with such devotion to God is love for our fellow humans, and especially those related to us in the Christian faith. (Gal. 6:10) This means that a proper relationship with our Christian brothers is also necessary to maintain Christian balance. The apostle John pointedly indicated this when he wrote: "If anyone makes the statement: 'I love God,' and yet is hating his brother, he is a liar. For he who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot be loving God, whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from him, that the one who loves God should be loving his brother also." —1 John 4:20, 21.

What, though, is involved in loving fellow Christians? What is a proper relationship with them? How should we view our association with one another in the Christian congregation? The worldly view often is to seek friends or associates on the basis of what they can do to enhance one's prestige and image. It is common for worldly persons to consider themselves superior or more important than others. Many times their attitude is to use others, to cheat or tread on them before others can do the same to them. But how different is the balanced Christian

"The one who loves God should be loving his brother also."
—1 John 4:21.

view! Note the inspired admonition of God's Word: Do "nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with lowliness of mind considering that the others are superior to you, keeping an eye, not in personal interest upon just your own matters, but also in personal interest upon those of the others. Keep this mental attitude in you that was also in Christ Jesus, who, although he was existing in God's form, . . . emptied himself and took a slave's form." —Phil. 2:2-7.

³ Consider how pleasant life would be if everyone lived in harmony with this Scriptural counsel and imitated the example of Jesus Christ! There would be no selfishly coveting the possessions or abilities of others; there would be no trying to outshine others, to prove that you are better than they are. Nor would there be efforts to show others up, to embarrass them. It is the selfish worldly attitude of thinking too much of oneself, seeking prominence and preeminence, that unbalances and creates unpleasant relations. How vital, therefore, for Christians to heed the apostolic counsel:

⁴ "Quit being fashioned after this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over . . . I tell everyone there among you not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think . . . In brotherly love have tender affection for one another. In showing honor to one

1. What besides love of God is essential to Christian balance, and how does the apostle John indicate this?
2. What is often the worldly view toward human relationships, but what should be the Christian's attitude toward his fellows?

3. What would life be like if everyone exercised the attitude Christ did?
4, 5. What Bible counsel is it vital that we follow, but is it always easy to do so?

another take the lead. Be minded the same way toward others as to yourselves; do not be minding lofty things, but be led along with the lowly things. Do not become discreet in your own eyes."—Rom. 12:2, 3, 10, 16.

⁵ However, it is admittedly much easier to talk about loving our brothers, about being lowly in mind, about doing nothing out of contentiousness or egotism, about considering that others are superior than it is to conduct ourselves in harmony with these inspired instructions. Even the apostles of Jesus Christ were for a while badly unbalanced by an improper view. It was again manifested during the last Passover meal, which they celebrated with Jesus in an upper room in Jerusalem on the night of Nisan 14, 33 C.E.

DISPUTE OVER WHO IS THE GREATEST

⁶ After the Lord's supper was over, a disturbing controversy developed among the apostles over the question of position or rank, "over which one of them seemed to be greatest." (Luke 22:24) Just a few days before, as they were about to come to Jerusalem for the eventful final week of Jesus' earthly ministry, this same matter had come up. On that occasion the mother of the apostles James and John came to Jesus and requested a preeminent position for her sons in his kingdom. "When the ten others heard of this," the Bible record says, "they became indignant at the two brothers." However, Jesus stepped in to calm down their irate feelings by pointing out that the arrangement within God's organization was altogether different from that with which they were acquainted in the world. The persons in positions of responsibility among them,

6. (a) What disturbing dispute developed among Jesus' apostles on the Passover night of 33 C.E., and what prompted a similar controversy some days before? (b) What did Jesus say regarding his followers' proper relationship to one another?

Jesus said, should be servants of their fellows. Yes, "whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave. Just as the Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many." —Matt. 20:17, 20-28.

⁷ Apparently, however, the apostles could not comprehend what Jesus meant by this. What he said was evidently so new and different from what they were used to seeing practiced that it did not eradicate the worldly idea from their mind. They maintained an unbalanced view of their relationship with one another. They thought back perhaps to when Israelite kings of the Davidic line ruled, and assumed that the Messianic king Jesus Christ, too, would have an earthly government with men of high position and rank. They may have had personal ambitions to serve in such high official capacities. So, after the institution of the Lord's supper, the disciple Luke records, "there also arose a heated dispute among them over which one of them seemed to be greatest."—Luke 22:24.

⁸ Notice that this was not merely a minor controversy; rather, it was a "heated dispute." The matter was evidently something the apostles had been thinking about, and now it erupted into a full-scale argument. How this must have grieved Jesus! After all the months that he had been with them and set them an example of lowliness and humility! And now, at such a time as this, to be having such contentions! Here it was the last night of Jesus' earthly life when he intended to give the apostles parting words of instruction and encouragement. Jesus' references to God's kingdom that night doubtless laid the basis for this argument among

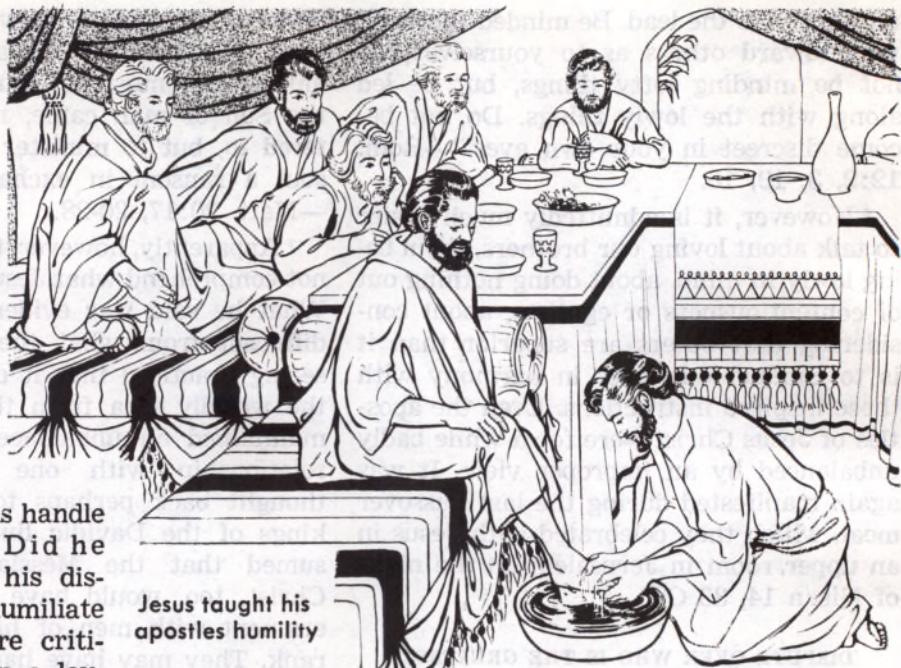
7. What made it difficult for the apostles to comprehend the import of Jesus' counsel?
8. (a) How must this dispute have affected Jesus? (b) What does it illustrate?

the apostles. It simply illustrates how deep-seated within imperfect men can be the desire for distinction, to have prominent positions and prestige.

JESUS' LOVING COUNSEL AND EXAMPLE

⁹ How did Jesus handle this dispute? Did he harshly correct his disciples? Did he humiliate them with severe criticism? No, but in a loving way, and no doubt with an appealing tone to his voice, he again patiently pointed out to them that the Christian arrangement was altogether different from that of the world. He said: "The kings of the nations lord it over them, and those having authority over them are called Benefactors. You, though, are not to be that way. But let him that is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the one acting as chief as the one ministering." Then Jesus asked them: "For which one is greater, the one reclining at the table or the one ministering?" Obviously it is the one that reclines at the table and who is ministered to that is considered the greatest. However, Jesus pointed out: "But I am in your midst as the one ministering." —Luke 22:25-27.

¹⁰ Would they comprehend what Jesus was teaching them this time? Would they



Jesus taught his apostles humility

be able to appreciate fully that all Christians are brothers, and that the one given heavier responsibilities in the Christian organization should be as the "youngest," being lowly of mind and considering that the others are superior to him? (Matt. 23:8-12) Would they appreciate that within the Christian organization there was to be a complete reversal of procedure from what is generally followed in the world? The disciples accepted the fact that Jesus was their teacher and leader, really the greatest among them; there was no dispute about that. But earlier on that night Jesus had washed the feet of his disciples. (John 13:1-12) Jesus was there actually ministering to them!

¹¹ When Jesus pointed out, "I am in your midst as the one ministering," he apparently was not referring simply to the fact that he ministered to them *in a spiritual way*, as their teacher. No, but Jesus actually waited upon and served them in

9. How did Jesus handle this dispute?

10. What questions are raised as to the apostles' comprehension of Jesus' words?

11. In what way did Jesus minister to his followers?

a physical way also, sharing in activity ordinarily reserved for persons of lesser importance. But on that final day with them in the flesh, Jesus sent Peter and John ahead to Jerusalem, "and they got things ready for the passover."—Matt. 26: 17-19; Luke 22:7-16; Mark 14:12-18.

¹² The apostle John, who was an eyewitness to events of the night, describes what there occurred: Jesus "got up from the evening meal and laid aside his outer garments. And, taking a towel, he girded himself. After that he put water into a basin and started to wash the feet of the disciples and to dry them off with the towel with which he was girded." (John 13:2-5) Can you imagine that? Jesus actually went around to each of his apostles, knelt before them, washed their feet and dried them off! Even those of Judas Iscariot!

SIGNIFICANCE OF HIS ACT

¹³ To wash the feet of another in those times was not an unusual thing in itself. In Eastern lands roads were frequently dusty, and since people generally wore sandals or went barefooted, their feet became dirty. So when entering a house, it was an act of hospitality on the part of the host to have the feet of his visitor washed. Both Abraham and Lot extended this hospitality to strangers, who turned out to be materialized angels. (Gen. 18: 4; 19:2; Heb. 13:2) But a Pharisee that entertained Jesus neglected this gesture. (Luke 7:44) The task was considered one of the most menial, and was generally assigned to the lowest servant of the household. Thus, the young woman Abigail showed true humility when she addressed the servants of David: "Here is your slave

girl as a maid-servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord."—1 Sam. 25:41; 1 Tim. 5:10.

¹⁴ To impress the point of his instruction Jesus chose to perform this most menial and yet needful service. He began washing the feet of his apostles. The apostle Peter did not understand why Jesus was doing this, and so objected to his Master's acting as such a lowly slave in ministering to him. But Jesus told Peter: "What I am doing you do not understand at present, but you will understand after these things." Then, when he had finished with the washing and had put his outer garments back on and laid himself down at the table, he explained to them:

¹⁵ "Do you know what I have done to you? You address me, 'Teacher,' and, 'Lord,' and you speak rightly, for I am such. Therefore, if I, although Lord and Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash the feet of one another. For I set the pattern for you, that, just as I did to you, you should do also. Most truly I say to you, A slave is not greater than his master, nor is one that is sent forth greater than the one that sent him. If you know these things, happy you are if you do them."—John 13:6-17.

¹⁶ In what a remarkable way Jesus inculcated within his apostles the need to be lowly in mind! How effectively he showed them that they should not aspire to positions of honor and prestige but should be willing to perform the humblest of services for one another! Jesus was not here instituting a ritual of foot washing, which has been practiced with much hypocrisy in certain religions of Christendom. No, but he was teaching them an attitude of mind—one of humility, one of

12. Before this dispute and his words of counsel, in what significant way did Jesus minister to the twelve apostles?

13. What Bible examples illustrate the ancient custom of washing another's feet, and to whom was this task usually assigned?

14. Why, at this time, did Jesus wash his apostles' feet? But how did Peter at first react?

15. How did Jesus explain the reason for washing his followers' feet?

16. What lesson was Jesus teaching by this act?

concern for the interests of others and of willingness to perform the lowliest of tasks in behalf of their brothers. This is the balanced attitude that Christians should maintain toward one another.

¹⁷ Peter and the other apostles got the point. (1 Pet. 3:8) It was a lesson that the faithful ones learned well, for the Bible record reveals that they maintained this balanced view and worked together in unity to build up the Christian congregation. None of them ambitiously sought prominence or prestige. In fact, some years later when the controversial question of circumcision was raised, "the apostles and the older men gathered together" in Jerusalem and discussed it in an orderly manner. And apparently it was not one of the apostles who presided, but the disciple James, half-brother of Jesus.—Acts 15:6-29; 12:1, 2.

A NEW COMMANDMENT

¹⁸ Later, after washing his apostles' feet and dismissing Judas Iscariot, Jesus again drew attention to the example that he had set, saying to the eleven remaining ones: "I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:34, 35) As circumcised Jews under the Law covenant, the apostles were already under the command to love their neighbors as themselves. (Matt. 22:39; Lev. 19:18) But now Jesus said that his true followers would be recognized by their demonstrating a more extensive, superior love—in imitation of his example.

¹⁹ Jesus did indeed set a unique example in showing love. Tirelessly he expend-

ed himself in ministering to others, considering their interests before his own. Due to his complete absorption in helping people in the way to life he often sacrificed the normal comforts to which humans are accustomed. (Luke 9:58) This was demonstrating love to a greater extent than the neighbor love that was required by the Law covenant. You will recall that, on the occasion that the two apostles persuaded their mother to ask in their behalf for chief positions in the Kingdom, Jesus said: "For even the Son of man came, not to be ministered to [to be served], but to minister [to be a servant of others] and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many." (Mark 10:35-45; Matt. 20:20-28) Jesus never sought self-glorification, but humbly ministered to his followers, until finally he humbled himself to the point of giving his life in their behalf. What superior, exemplary love!—Phil. 2:8; John 15:12, 13.

²⁰ As Christians, we are under obligation to copy this example of Jesus. We must, not only love Jehovah God as he did, but also imitate the unselfish love he showed for his followers. (1 John 4:20, 21) Do you have the kind of love that he demonstrated? Would you surrender your life for your Christian companions? True, we may not be called upon literally to sacrifice our life in their behalf, but our love must be of such quality that we would willingly do so if the need arose. "We are under obligation to surrender our souls for our brothers," the apostle John explained. (1 John 3:16; Rom. 16:3, 4) Think now: If we have that degree of love, should we not be willing to serve humbly the interests of our brothers? Should we not be tender, kind and considerate toward those for whom we would willingly surrender our souls? Was this not a lesson that Jesus

17. What evidence is there that the apostles got the point of Jesus' instruction?

18. How did Jesus later again draw attention to the example he had set for his followers?

19. What unique example of demonstrating love did Jesus set?

20. How will imitating Jesus' example of showing love affect our relationship with our Christian brothers?

endeavored to inculcate within his followers?

MAKING OVER THE MIND

²¹ How clear it is that to maintain a proper relationship with your Christian brothers you must "quit being fashioned after this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over"! (Rom. 12:2) The Christian attitude of mind is so different from that of worldly people. How common it is for persons with special education, such as the clergy, medical doctors, scientists or lawyers, to have a superior attitude, thinking that they are better than others! The same is true of persons with special talents, such as sport or movie personalities, or those possessing attributes of striking physical beauty or exceptional intelligence. The admiration that these receive often causes them to have a superior frame of mind. But remember that the balanced Christian attitude is one of "lowliness of mind considering that the others are superior to you."—Phil. 2:3.

²² What, though, does it mean to be lowly of mind and to consider that others are superior to you? It does not mean, for example, that an expert violin player should think that a companion who has never touched that instrument can play it better than he. This obviously is not the case. Many people have training or talents that cause them to excel above others who have not had similar training or possess comparable talents. But this does not make them superior persons. Nor should it cause them to be high-minded, considering that others are inferior to them. The Bible is here referring to one's attitude of mind, and the sincere mental attitude of a Christian should be that oth-

ers are superior to him. He should never think that somehow he is a superior person, and therefore should be waited upon and served by others. Undoubtedly there was not one activity to which Jesus' apostles set their hand or mind that Jesus could not have done many times better. Yet, Jesus humbly ministered to them, even getting down and washing their feet!

²³ How refreshing and pleasant are ones who truly demonstrate this humble attitude of mind! What a fine, balanced view these have toward their relationship with their Christian brothers! They are altogether different from persons of this system of things. Just because some may have more money or material possessions this does not cause them to think that they should receive special consideration over persons of lesser means. They appreciate that money does not make them superior persons, and they act accordingly. (1 Tim. 6:17) Similarly, persons belonging to a particular race or nationality realize that this does not in any way make them superior to others. Therefore, they remain lowly in mind, sincerely considering that even persons of a less popular race or nationality are superior to them.—Rom. 10:12.

²⁴ This same humble frame of mind should especially be exercised by the appointed overseers, ministerial servants and others who enjoy special privileges of service within the Christian organization. True, others in the congregation are urged to cooperate with and imitate the faith of such ones, but none of these taking the lead should ever think that they are superior because they preside at meetings, perhaps have greater speaking or organizational abilities, or are able to devote more time to Jehovah's service. (Heb. 13:

21. Why must Christians be transformed by making their minds over?

22. What does it mean to be lowly of mind and to consider that others are superior to you?

23. In what way are Christians who have a balanced view different from many people of the world?

24, 25. Who especially should take the lead in exercising love and demonstrating lowliness of mind?

7, 17) Note that after urging the younger men to be in subjection to the older men who are responsible for shepherding God's flock, the apostle Peter instructed: "All of you gird yourselves with lowliness of mind toward one another, because God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones." (1 Pet. 5:5) None are omitted. Everyone, including the one taking the lead, is to gird himself with lowliness of mind. "Be in subjection to one another in fear of Christ," the Bible commands.—Eph. 5:21.

²⁵ The overseer should, in fact, be the one setting the example in being humble and lowly of mind. This is what the Right Shepherd Jesus Christ did. He went to great lengths to impress by example the need for his followers to have love and humility. So, then, should the overseer. He is not a boss, but a servant of his brothers. (Matt. 20:25-27) This is some-

thing vital for him to remember. Yes, it is a matter that every Christian should learn well, for in order to maintain balance in our relationship with one another, we must be loving our brothers and never think that we are superior to them. —1 John 4:21; Phil. 2:2-4.

²⁶ Think ahead to the time when everyone who lives on earth will have this same refreshing attitude of mind! What a pleasant place this will be to live! Then everyone alive will be perfectly clothed with the "tender affections of compassion, kindness, lowliness of mind, mildness," and especially love. (Col. 3:12-14) Yes, all will love Jehovah God with their whole heart, mind, soul and strength; and they will have a Christlike love for their brothers. What a grand incentive to maintain balance now, so as to live then!

²⁶ What is a real incentive to maintaining Christian balance now?

'SUFFERING EVIL AS A RIGHT KIND OF SOLDIER'

As told by Gerhard Oltmanns

AT ALL costs we will obey the laws of God even if it means losing our lives and we will continue to assemble for worship. If your government oppresses us it will have to render an account to God Almighty.' These were the concluding thoughts of a resolution received at the Chancellery of the Third Reich on October 7, 1934. Hundreds of copies of the same message came from congregations of the banned "earnest Bible students," known in other countries as Jehovah's witnesses.

I shall never forget that day, for at ten o'clock that morning we had assembled for prayer, and then, after discussion, we resolved unanimously to send this message to Hitler's government. We could never follow Hitler as leader, or recognize him as such, for we had already undertaken to be 'fine soldiers of Jesus Christ,' the genuine God-given "leader and commander to the national groups." (2 Tim. 2:3; Isa. 55:4) To me especially it was a thrilling occasion.

You see, I had first contacted the Bible students in May 1924. It happened when I was helping one of my workmates to move to another house. I came across an old mandolin, and for no reason at all I strummed off in low bass the old hymn, "Praise the Lord, the Mighty King of Glory." That did it. We were soon in earnest Bible discussion, for the workmate turned out to be a Bible student. I was raised a Lutheran, but I could not help being impressed by his Bible knowledge. On the surface, however, I showed no agreement with his ideas.

Then books came through the mails—one after the other—the seven volumes of a work entitled "Studies in the Scriptures," written by Charles T. Russell. I started reading at odd moments. Then I set aside more time for studying them. Eventually I would keep on reading well into the night. At times I was really riled at the exposure of Lutheranism. At other times I found myself in complete agreement with the writer.

About this time I consented to go and hear a noted speaker, a Catholic priest, who was to speak to a group of World War I veterans, many of whom were still young men. He boasted about his work of saving souls in the trenches. But what he said about one young man who, in his dying hour, refused to receive the priestly ministrations really shocked me. The dying man turned his back on the priest. "So," the speaker declared, "I yelled in his ear, May the Devil take your sinful soul to hell!" My revulsion at such unchristian behavior moved me to write to the offices of the Watch Tower Society and order fifty booklets on the topic "Hell: What Is It? Who Are There? Can They Get Out?" Without realizing it I was on the way to becoming an active witness of Jehovah.

In 1925 my secular work took me to the vicinity of Oldenburg. I located the congregation of Jehovah's witnesses there and was amazed when the presiding minister welcomed me as if he knew I would be coming. When I asked how he came to know about me, he said: "The Society's office has written us about you. We have been expecting you. We are glad that you have come." Soon after, I found the opportunity to symbolize my dedication to Jehovah God by baptism in water.

In 1928 came marriage. I married a zealous Bible student who has continued with me to the present day, my life companion and fellow soldier. Meantime, we were in no doubt that there was a spiritual warfare to be waged, for much of the territory in which we were preaching was peopled by Catholics. Peaceful activity was not guaranteed. Newspaper propaganda began to spread lies against us. Nevertheless, we kept on spreading the Kingdom message in towns, villages and countryside.

THE FIGHT INTENSIFIES

How happy we were that we had worked so thoroughly and so conscientiously up until spring of 1933! For now the advent of Hitler's government loomed like the warning of black storm clouds. Would we persevere under evil conditions? Now that our work was threatened and disturbed by the brown-booted supporters of Hitler's "thousand-year rule of peace," would we still follow the direction of our Leader in heaven, Christ Jesus?

Pressure was brought to bear on us. Our family of four was driven from our accommodations, and we were often without food. I still have the official document from the president of the government, from which I quote: "As long as you continue with these sentiments you must care for your family's welfare yourself." We

prayed that we might be able to endure uncompromisingly. We resisted the adversary. And, just when it appeared that there was no way out, Jehovah time and again sent us help.

The conditions forced me to move about and accept even the most laborious type of work. For example, in 1934 I was working as a hotel porter, as a dishwasher and later as an assistant at the buffet on the North Sea island of Heligoland, 200 kilometers from home. But even this late we still managed to get the *Watchtower* magazines. What a boon they were! And we learned why Jehovah's people must endure, even though being tested to the limit. Jehovah's name and sovereignty were at issue. We had the privilege of proving Satan a liar in his defiant claim that God could not put a man on earth who would remain faithful under persecution.—Job 1:9-11.

'PRISONERS FOR THE LORD'

On June 4, 1938, I fell into the clutches of the Gestapo. I was sentenced by a special court in Hanover and served time in six different prisons. For almost twenty months I was cut off from all association with fellow Witnesses, at times even in solitary confinement. I had to draw upon my store of Bible knowledge to sustain myself spiritually. One day a friendly warden slipped a Bible into my cell. It reminded me of the angel that brought sustenance to Elijah—so unexpected was it. (1 Ki. 19:5-8) And it was comforting to reflect on why I was suffering—because I had not been intimidated and silenced, refusing to hide the sayings of Jehovah, the Holy One.—Job 6:10.

Most dangerous were those worldlings who tried to offer advice in those days. One former inmate of a concentration camp, a political prisoner, to whom I had witnessed about the Kingdom, described

his own experiences and said: "Be smart and sign. Of 400 Witnesses in our camp, each day fifteen who had refused to sign were given 'hell.'" But I well knew which course would honor Jehovah.

In January 1940 I ended up in the Sachsenhausen camp, near Berlin. Here I found 400 other Witnesses. Since March 1938 they had been isolated and denied the rights enjoyed by other prisoners. No newspapers, no books and, at first, no mail. Later, one letter of five lines per month was permitted. Mockers scoffed: "Where is your Jehovah now?" There were casualties too. One old man died in my arms, faithful to the death. His last words were to encourage us to hold firm.

And there were still opportunities to witness about the Kingdom. For example, thirty of us Witnesses were detailed to help build a new SS headquarters in Berlin. As I concluded a discussion I had with an SS leader, I happened to say: "Sir, you are a soldier. I also am a soldier." I had in mind 2 Timothy 2:2-4. After that in difficult times he would help me by saying to his men: "Leave Oltmanns in peace. Oltmanns is a soldier!"

In the spring of 1941 what is now song number eleven in the songbook "*Singing and Accompanying Yourselves with Music in Your Hearts*" was composed. Jehovah was truly strengthening us to continue undaunted. With the apostle Paul we could confidently declare: "We are pressed in every way, . . . perplexed, . . . persecuted, . . . thrown down, but not destroyed."—2 Cor. 4:8, 9.

A little relief came to us in September 1941. At midday we heard over the camp loudspeakers: "Jehovah's witnesses, Bible students, attention! Just five minutes to eat, and then move at once!" We were allowed to leave the punishment area where we had been isolated from others. Now we were to be treated like other in-

mates of the camp. We came to be wanted as reliable workers. "They should be won over by flatteries, since they only get the more determined under pressure"—thus it was said in a letter of the SS. "We need them also after the war to settle in the east where they can preach the gospel of peace to the Slavic peoples."

We kept up, then, our congregational studies. In fact, some of the guards in the towers looked forward to this, for they would hear us sing folk songs, then a song of Zion, which was followed by prayer and our study. But one day there came a new block overseer. Could we have our study as usual? Why not? We prayed about it, and then proceeded. Suddenly, in the midst of our study of Daniel, chapter 11, the door of the dayroom opened and there stood our new block leader. I believe he was more shocked than we were. He stood silent for a minute or so and then gestured that we could carry on. How enthusiastically we sang our closing song!

In August 1942 we were betrayed by a member of one of Christendom's sects. One morning everything was searched, including the sacks of straw on which we slept. A great deal of literature was found. Then punishment was meted out—fifteen of our number receiving twenty-five lashes each. One quiet worthy one, who tried to take the blame in order to protect others, received fifty lashes. Then we all had to carry heavy stones on the double.

In March 1943 we were loaded into cattle cars, the windows of which were equipped with barbed wire, and taken by rail through Belgium and Paris to picturesque Saint-Malo. Here we saw our first palm trees. We were ferried to the British island of Alderney, at that time occupied by the German army. It did not hurt us to have a refreshing sea voyage after all those months of detention. On this stony island someone gave me an

English Bible, a German-English dictionary, and the books *Government* and *Reconciliation*. The SS men thought I was studying the language, but in reality our group was once again being built up spiritually.

A TURNING POINT

Then came the Allied invasion in 1944. The death struggle of the "thousand-year Reich" was under way, and even we could sense that. Three weeks later one of the last German ships to leave Cherbourg took us aboard and transported us to the sunny island of Guernsey. It had been planned to sink the ship with all of its cargo of helpless prisoners, but the captain would not agree. Eventually we got to Jersey, and a few days later a good helmsman took us through the Allied blockade and landed us once again at Saint-Malo.

Then a train race across Europe began. Allied pilots tried to put the locomotive out of action, but refrained from bombing the cars, for they carried partisan prisoners and American prisoners, as well as our group. On the way through France the people showed much kindness, often giving us fine wine when we asked for water. Sadly, though, some of our number died on this journey. In one place three Witnesses were interred in one grave. Their fleshly bodies were no longer able to bear up, though spiritually they were strong.

Weeks passed. Through Flanders, Holland and Germany we rolled. Nor did we stop there. Our captors took us here and there through Czechoslovakia, and finally to the Munnigholz camp at Steyr. How grateful we were when the month of May came and we could see the white flag flying! We wept for joy. We longed to see our families again. Were they still alive? And then we wanted to get back into the Christian fight again, the spiritual warfare for

which we had enrolled as soldiers. But traffic had been brought to a standstill. The country had been devastated.

Happily we found an old army truck and repaired it. We also made a banner with the words, "Jehovah's Witnesses Home from the Concentration Camps." With this banner and with birch branches, and still in our striped prison clothes, we fifty Witnesses traveled joyfully through Bavaria and Saxony to Leipzig. There we parted, and, as previously promised, I returned home punctually in the evening. It was the 4th of June—exactly seven years after I had been taken away by the Gestapo!

BACK HOME—BUT NO FURLOUGH

The children were also safely home when I arrived. It was thrilling to read the judge's report on them, when they were only twelve and nine years of age. "We will not say *Heil Hitler*," they had said. "We will not salute the Hitler flag. We will not join the B.D.M. even though we know we will not be allowed to stay with mother. Our father is in concentration camp because he believes in God. The pastors say they also believe in God, but they are not in concentration camp, because they are compromising." Surely they had been blessed with a loving mother who bravely studied God's Word with them daily.

But this was not the time for a furlough. Through his organization Jehovah was calling all soldiers of Christ to remain awake and busy. I was privileged to receive appointment as a special traveling representative of the Watch Tower Society in northwest Germany. Could I carry on? A weak heart was no encouragement to me. However, Jehovah answered our prayers, and the brothers everywhere

were most encouraging. In fact, congregations of Jehovah's witnesses were springing up like mushrooms after a warm summer rain.

And how our cup has kept running over since then! Service work reestablished in 1947; our first postwar convention at Kassel in 1948; the grand, unspeakable joy of flying across the ocean in 1950 for the huge "Theocracy's Increase" convention at New York City's Yankee Stadium, where seventy of us from Germany were present. We had come through a fiery ordeal. Now our cup of blessing was overflowing.

Unforgettable, too, the Nuremberg assemblies, conducted on the grounds of the Reich party. The 144 pillars became symbols of the victory of God's triumphant kingdom under the scepter and crown of his appointed King, Christ Jesus. In 1955 over 107,000 loyal subjects of that "Leader and Commander" filled these grounds and sang songs of praise to Jehovah of armies. From the tower I looked over this vast concourse and tears of joy welled up in my eyes. Under Christ the King multitudes were learning to do what no worldly religious or political organization had been able to do—unite people of all nations in peace and loving cooperation.

You young people who stand at the threshold of full-time service unencumbered, do not say, "I am not qualified to serve," or, "It is too much for me." Press on in Jehovah's strength. He will support and strengthen you just as he did a "cloud of witnesses," both in ancient and modern times. Keep in mind that God's true worshipers are warriors, for we live amidst an alien, enemy world. Until Jehovah's final victory forever ends Satan's whole organization, it is your privilege as well as ours to be 'fine soldiers of Jesus Christ,' ready to fight theocratically and to endure.

ARE YOU OBLIGATED TO KEEP A WEEKLY SABBATH DAY?

IT MAY be that you have been taught from childhood by your church that God requires Christians to observe a weekly sabbath day. But did you know that the Holy Bible nowhere commands Christians to do so?

Perhaps you may point to the fourth of the Ten Commandments as your reason for keeping it, but the command there about holding the sabbath sacred and not doing any work on that day was not given to Christians. (Ex. 20:8-11) It was given to Israelites who were gathered at the foot of Mt. Sinai in the sixteenth century before our Common Era. God told them that sabbath observance was a "sign between me and you during your generations." (Ex. 31:13) He did not say this to any other nation.

What did sabbath observance mean for these people? It meant that they could do no form of work on that day. They were not to carry a load, gather sticks, cook a meal or even light a fire. It was to be a day of complete rest from labor, and anyone who violated that law by doing any kind of work was to be put to death. —Ex. 16:23-25; 31:15; 35:3; Num. 15:32-35.

Any person today who believes he is obligated to observe this sabbath law, to be consistent, likewise ought to refrain from all forms of labor. But how do most people spend the day of the week that they regard as a sabbath? They rest from their weekly labors but usually engage in other forms of work such as mowing the lawn, putting around the garden, playing golf, cleaning the house, cooking a special meal, taking a drive, and so forth. If they really were under the divine sabbath law any of

these activities would make them violators of it. So they are not actually keeping it.

But since the sabbath law was given only to the nation of Israel, how can people who were never part of that nation be expected to obey it? When a law in one country requires merchants to close their stores on a certain day, must the people in other countries also close their stores because of that law? Of course not! It applies only in the one country. So too with the sabbath law. Only the people within the borders of the ancient Israelite nation were required by God to obey it. Other nations were not under that obligation.

Nevertheless, some persons might argue that Christians are supposed to observe a weekly sabbath day, and they may point to Genesis 2:2, 3 as proof. There the Bible states that God proceeded to rest on the seventh day and "proceeded to bless the seventh day and make it sacred." This is a historical statement of what God did. But where is there anything in it that commands man to cease every manner of work on the seventh day of every week as a religious observance? There is certainly nothing wrong with resting from work one day a week, but when churches claim that God requires it of all Christians as a religious observance, they are misrepresenting the facts.

In the more than 2,500 years from Adam down to the giving of the sabbath law to the Israelites at Mt. Sinai, the Bible makes no mention of any command from God to observe a weekly sabbath day. Furthermore, there is no record of any man of faith during this period ever keep-

ing such an observance. Thus evidence is lacking that God requires weekly sabbath observance of all mankind because he rested on the "seventh day."

JESUS CHRIST OBSERVED THE SABBATH

Although there is no specific command for Christians to observe the weekly sabbath-day law, can it not be said that God expects them to keep it because Jesus Christ did? The answer is No! Jesus Christ belonged to the nation to whom the sabbath law was given and therefore was required to keep it. Like the other Israelites, he was required to show obedience to God by obeying the requirements of the law that was given at Mt. Sinai.—Gal. 4:4.

But after Jesus' death the law given to those people no longer applied to the Jewish followers of Jesus Christ, for he had brought the Law covenant to an end by fulfilling its purpose. At Romans 7:4 the Bible states: "So, my brothers, you also were made dead to the Law through the body of the Christ." And in verse six, it expands this thought by saying: "But now we have been discharged from the Law." Since Christ fulfilled the purpose of the Law covenant, the Bible says: "Christ is the end of the Law." (Rom. 10:4) God replaced it with a new covenant, and that new covenant does not require weekly sabbath observance for God's approval.—Heb. 12:24.

Many of the fine commands in the Law covenant were repeated to Christians, and they became part of that new covenant. The commands against immorality and idolatry, for example, are shown to apply to Christians, at 1 Corinthians 5:11-13 and Acts 15:28, 29, but no mention is

made of weekly sabbath-day observance. That was not given to Christians.

That Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ did not regard weekly sabbath-day observance as a Christian requirement is evident from what he wrote about the observing of days. In his letter to certain Christians who were persuaded to keep observances of the Law covenant he wrote: "You are scrupulously observing days and months and seasons and years. I fear for you, that somehow I have toiled to no purpose respecting you."—Gal. 4:10, 11.

WHAT THE SABBATH-DAY OBSERVANCE MEANS TO CHRISTIANS

The sabbath observance that was required of the nation of Israel prophetically pointed forward to the peaceful and restful reign of Jesus Christ, who is called the "Lord even of the sabbath." (Mark 2:27, 28) His thousand-year reign will be like the weekly sabbath in that it will be

devoted to the worship of Jehovah God and will be a time of real refreshment for man, physically and spiritually. The sabbath day was one of the many things in the Law covenant that were "a shadow of the things to come."—Col. 2:17.

There is no need for Christians to think they are obligated to observe the weekly sabbath law given to the Israelites. God does not require it of them, as the Bible shows, but he does require them to worship, obey and serve him. This they are expected to do every day of the week. They are also required to assemble together for worship and instruction. (Heb. 10:25) Since it is the custom in most countries for people to be off from work

NEXT ISSUE! SPECIAL!

*Man's Rule About to Give Way
to God's Rule*

once a week, that day would be a convenient one to do it. Talking about God's purposes with one's neighbors is another fine way to use this day.—Rom. 10:10.

In view of these Scriptural facts, if you have been taught by your church that the Almighty God requires you to observe a

weekly sabbath day to gain his approval, you have not been told the truth. Instead of leading you in the way of the truth, it is misleading you and binding you to religious falsehood. Would it not be better to follow the truth that Jesus said would "set you free"?—John 8:32.

Keep Free to Follow Our Fine Shepherd

IHE Lord Jesus promised his disciples: "If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." All true followers of his have been made free by the truth of God's Word. This freedom, however, is not an unlimited freedom. Only Jehovah God can and does enjoy that. But all of God's faithful servants can enjoy a relative freedom, a freedom to do what is right and freedom from false religion, from the fear of man and, among other things, freedom from enslavement to sinful practices.—John 8:31, 32.

Christian freedom also needs to be relative because Christians are members of God's organization. Every organization has certain requirements that must be met by those belonging to it. Otherwise, instead of a common harmonious effort to realize the purpose of the organization, there would be confusion and a frustrating of purposes. Most fittingly, the Bible is an organizational book. Its Hebrew Scriptures were entrusted to an organization, the nation of Israel, and its Christian Greek Scriptures were directly written either to the Christian congregation or to individual Christians.

The Christian congregation itself is an organization, in which certain ones take the lead, such as overseers and ministerial assistants. Concerning these, Christians are counseled: "Remember those who are taking the lead among you . . . and as you contemplate how their conduct turns out imitate their faith. Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will render an account."—Heb. 13:7, 17.

These might be said to be substituting for the "fine shepherd," Jesus Christ (John 10:11), and were foretold by Jehovah's prophet: "I

will raise up over them shepherds who will actually shepherd them; and they will be afraid no more."—Jer. 23:4.*

Having gained this freedom, all of Christ's followers must be diligent to keep free to follow our Fine Shepherd. In particular does this mean to be on guard lest they become ensnared because of the imperfect and selfish and weak inclinations of the flesh. Among these is love of ease, or laziness. Unless Christians put forth a real effort to combat this tendency it can easily become a bondage that will keep them from doing all they could and should in the way of personal study, meeting attendance and field ministry. They must exert themselves vigorously if they would keep zealously free.—Luke 13:24.

And then there is the snare of materialism, the love of money or of the fine things that money can buy. A fine home luxuriously furnished, or a high-priced motorcar, can give one pleasure and pride of possession. But if the acquiring of such fine things interferes with our keeping free to follow our Fine Shepherd, then are they not the fruits of materialism?

The apostle Paul gives good counsel in this regard, which is ever so much more pertinent in our day than it was in his: "Moreover, this I say, brothers, the time left is reduced. Henceforth let those . . . making use of the world [be] as those not using it to the full; for the scene of this world is changing." (1 Cor. 7:29, 31) Just as a runner must strip off all unnecessary clothing if he would win the race, so Christians today must keep free from the burdens of the materialistic world as far as possible if they would follow the Fine Shepherd into the new order of things.

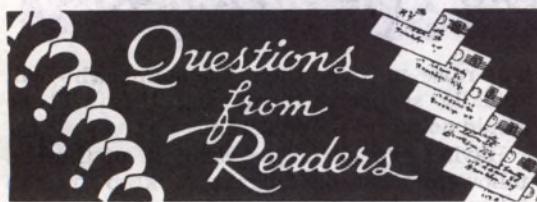
—1 Cor. 9:24-27; 2 Pet. 3:13.

* For details see *The Watchtower*, October 1, 1967.

Love for Jehovah, as well as for our neighbor, requires that we "put off every weight" in order to keep free to follow the example set by Jesus Christ. Look how full-time pioneer ministers, missionaries, those having gone to serve where the need for Christian ministers is greater and those serving at Bethel homes often have left behind many fine material things in order to imitate the apostles, who,

as Peter said, left all to follow Jesus. And what blessings, what joys are theirs as they thus serve!—Heb. 12:1; Mark 10:28-30.

So let each dedicated Christian ask himself: "Am I keeping myself free to follow the Fine Shepherd?" And, "Can I make myself available for increased privileges of service, such as those of the pioneer ministry or Bethel service?"



- Is it proper for a Christian who is engaged to be married to break off that engagement?

—A. H., U.S.A.

Marriage is a gift from God that can bring happiness and fulfillment to an individual; yet it also brings serious responsibilities, so it should not be taken lightly. While in some places parents still arrange the betrothal of their offspring, in many societies a single adult is allowed the freedom to select a mate. If two Christians in this latter situation agree or promise to marry, they can be expected, under normal circumstances, to keep their word.

Before a person agrees to a thing, he should give it the forethought the matter demands. Then when he gives his word, he can follow Jesus' advice to "let your word Yes mean Yes, your No, No." (Matt. 5:37) Special solemn oaths are not needed by Christians in order to make their words believable. When one says something, he should mean it.

So when two Christians have reached an agreement that they are going to marry, their word should stand. No special public statement or act is usually needed, though often such is made. In discussing "Breach of Promise of Marriage," *American Jurisprudence*, Volume 8, pages 849 and 850, said: "No particular form of words is necessary to give rise to the [betrothal]; it is sufficient that the minds of the parties have met and that the engagement is mutually agreed upon."

Of course, it is not an engagement when a proposal only has been made, but not accepted. The same legal book said: "The promise by

one party without a corresponding promise to him is only an offer of marriage and not a contract [engagement]." (Page 849) Thus when we speak of an engagement, we mean a mutual agreement involving the honest word of both parties.

Engagement was considered so serious among the Hebrews that a betrothed woman was spoken of as the man's wife, though, of course, he could not have relations with her until they actually were married. (Gen. 29:21; Matt. 1:18, 19) The engaged woman had a legal standing different from an unengaged virgin. (Ex. 22:16, 17; Deut. 22:23-29) This highlights the importance of the engaged state.

Are there, though, any things that would justify the one-sided breaking of an engagement? It would be a very rare situation that would justify a mature Christian's one-sidedly doing so. Fraud or concealment of vital facts might justify ending an engagement. Let us give two examples: A woman deliberately concealed the fact that she was not Scripturally free to marry, and she accepted the proposal of a man who had made limited inquiry about her marital state. If later he learned that she was not yet in position to marry, he would be justified in canceling the engagement. In fact, he would be Scripturally obliged to do so. (Matt. 5:32) Or if a man willfully lied to cover facts so that a woman would accept his proposal, her learning of the facts and of his lying might lead her to end the engagement. (Col. 3:9) In these cases, the spiritually older men responsible to guard the moral purity of the Christian congregation would want to know of such dishonesty so steps could be taken to protect other Christians.

In other cases, where a valid reason does not exist, the one-sided breaking of an engagement would indicate instability and immaturity. Obviously, that sort of person could not be put before the congregation as an example of

Christian maturity. If a male in the Christian congregation did this, he would not qualify for responsibilities in the congregation. Overseers and ministerial servants are to be "free from accusation," and this one would hardly be that. (1 Tim. 3:10) If he does not know his own mind and cannot honor his word in regard to marriage, will he be able to do so in other matters? He needs to grow to maturity.

However, a word of caution is in order relative to those not personally involved in courtships. While it is fine to be interested in the happiness of two Christians who are courting, the details of their courtship are quite personal, involving those two and their families. Others, men and women, need not pry as to what progress their courtship is making. (1 Pet. 4:15) If the couple has some announcement to make, inviting others to share their happiness, that is time enough to learn about it. Or, if the brothers responsible for directing the congregation think that the course of an engaged male is calling into question his spiritual maturity, they can look into the matter. It is not something that has to come up for public discussion and comment.

All of this should emphasize the importance of recognizing a proposal to marry, engagement and marriage itself as serious matters. By demonstrating spiritual maturity and wisdom concerning these things, Christians can do what is proper, in accord with the Scriptures and in their best interests.

● My husband and I both do secular work. Since I earn some of the money, would it not be proper for me to say how it will be used?
—U.S.A.

The question of who will decide how and when money that a wife earns will be used is a difficult one. This can be seen in that laws covering this matter vary greatly from place to place. In some areas all that a wife earns is, in actuality, her husband's, to be used as he sees fit. In other places this extreme position is moderated, and the law recognizes that the wife is an adult with certain rights, just as the husband has legal rights. Thus there is diversity of laws on this matter.

We must say that it would be a sad thing if two persons united in wedlock and who probably vowed to love and cherish each other had to start considering each other as opponents at law. According to God's Word, a man and wife

"are no longer two, but one flesh." (Matt. 19:6) They are to be working together, unitedly striving to have a happy and successful marriage through their cooperative efforts. Jehovah has outlined in his Word principles that, if followed by the husband and wife, each in that one's respective place in the marriage arrangement, can lessen or eliminate marriage problems such as this one. And good results can often be obtained even when only one mate is a believer or Christian.

The Scriptures counsel: "A husband is head of his wife as the Christ also is head of the congregation . . . Husbands, continue loving your wives, just as the Christ also loved the congregation." (Eph. 5:23, 25) But what does this mean when applied to family finances?

First, it means that the husband bears the principal responsibility for making decisions about how the family's money will be used. The loving husband would probably want to discuss such matters with his wife to get her feelings and suggestions, but, especially on major matters, he is the one to make the final decisions. Depending on the time, abilities and preferences of those involved, he may delegate certain everyday decisions to his wife, such as the purchase of food and some clothing as well as the caring for some bills and regular expenses. Of course, if he expects this, he will have to provide her with funds to do so. Also, in some places the law recognizes the wife's right to certain "pin money," or money for personal articles and other uses, such as in connection with her worship. Wise husbands will not be unnecessarily strict with their wives in such matters, but will "continue dwelling in like manner with them according to knowledge, assigning them honor as to a weaker vessel, the feminine one." (1 Pet. 3:7) So each couple can reach a personal understanding on such things.

But continuing on this matter of headship: The husband's position does not give him oversight of the family's finances without a corresponding obligation. Rather, he also bears the principal responsibility to provide for the family's support. Under normal circumstances, it is not his wife who is expected to hold a job and earn a living for the family—he is! He should feel the primary weight of the Biblical principle: "If anyone does not provide for those who are his own, and especially for those who are members of his household, he has disowned

the faith and is worse than a person without faith."—1 Tim. 5:8.

What, though, if the wife does hold a secular job and so earns money? Does this affect things? Well, let us examine just why a Christian wife would be in such a position.

Surely a mature Christian wife would not be holding a secular job because of the glamour of it, or out of independence and so as to compete with her husband, or to escape her primary responsibilities, or because of a desire for excessive possessions. Women in the world who do not really need to hold a secular job, but who do so because of such reasons, have often wound up with emotional problems and severe difficulties in their marriages. How wise, then, is the Bible's counsel that a married woman concentrate on the vital role of caring for the home and family. (Proverbs chap. 31; 1 Tim. 5:14) Also, this will probably allow the wife more time to devote to spiritual interests. So in many ways she will be able to make a valuable contribution to the happiness of the entire family.—Prov. 6:20-22.

Possibly, though, the husband, because of some adversity, is not able to earn enough to

cover the family's basic needs (not desires) in life. After discussing the matter, it might be decided that the wife will take on secular employment for a time. Does the fact that she will be earning money change the husband's position in regard to family finances? No! In fact, if both husband and wife needed to hold secular jobs, it should be obvious what the money they earn is for—food, clothing and shelter. As a submissive Christian wife she should recognize her husband's Scriptural obligation to direct the family in regard to such things, even though she might be contributing some of the money.

It is unnecessary for us to try to establish rules in regard to the handling of family finances. We can encourage husbands and wives to strive to shoulder their respective responsibilities relative to the family and its support. Marriage calls for loving cooperation on the part of husband and wife. So when a couple strive to cooperate on this financial aspect of life also, it will allow them to keep it in its proper place and will prevent it from overshadowing the more important spiritual aspects of their marriage.

FIELD MINISTRY

Millions of persons are in bondage to superstition and false religion. Shackled by doctrines that are contrary to the Bible, they are in fear of mortal men and religious systems. But the truth that Jesus Christ taught can free them. All who would be free today and who would stay free spiritually need to follow that Fine Shepherd and walk in the paths of divine truth. First, however, people must wake up to their bondage to religious superstition and falsehood. To help people wake up and break free and stay free by means of God's truth, Jehovah's witnesses are offering in their ministry during the month of October a year's subscription for the *Awake!* magazine, with three Bible-study-aid booklets, on a contribution of \$1.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

October 27: Maintain Proper Christian Balance. Page 585. Songs to Be Used: 14, 119.

November 3: Maintaining Balance in Human Relationships. Page 592. Songs to Be Used: 52, 56.