

The WATCHTOWER

JANUARY 15, 1966

Semimonthly

THE VALUE OF RIGHT
ASSOCIATION THROUGH
CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

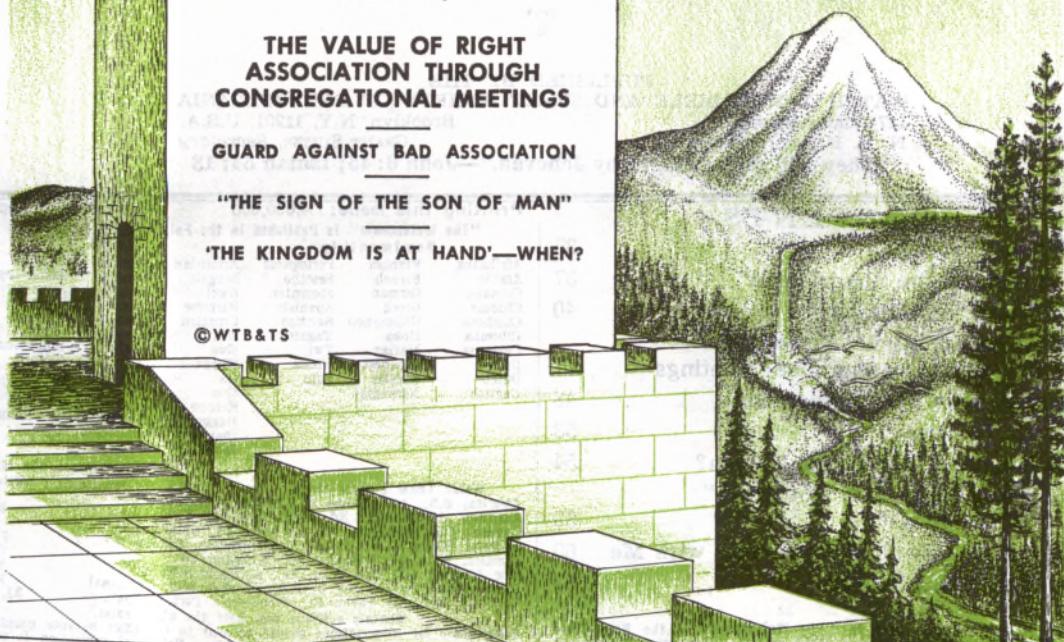
GUARD AGAINST BAD ASSOCIATION

"THE SIGN OF THE SON OF MAN"

'THE KINGDOM IS AT HAND'—WHEN?

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Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**



"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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N. H. KNORE, President GRANT SUITER, Secretary
"They will all be taught by Jehovah."—John 6:45; Isaiah 54:13

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

Le - Isaac Leeser's version
Mo - James Moffatt's version
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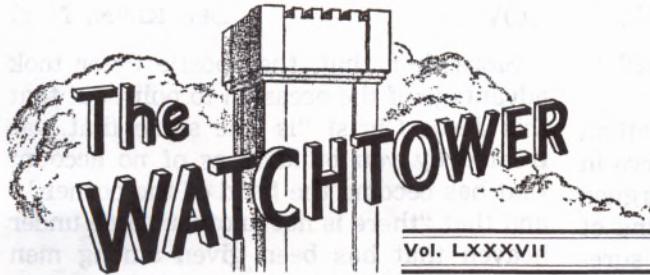
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Christian Courage

IT IS always inspiring to read examples of Christian courage. That is one of the benefits we derive from reading the Scriptures. No question about Jesus and his apostles giving us many examples of Christian courage. But examples of Christian courage are by no means limited to Bible times. For example:

The West Berlin daily newspaper *Der Telegraf* (*The Telegraph*), in its issue of July 18, 1965, contained the following account, as told by an eyewitness, regarding a German youth that had been taken to a concentration camp during the Nazi regime:

"It was in the fall of 1944 when I heard that young Jonathan Stark had been taken to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. He was taken to the prisoner's block No. 14, where he immediately received a special uniform. We knew exactly what this uniform meant; it was the death uniform. When I heard about this, even though it was forbidden to go see him I managed to get in touch with him and was able to talk with him for more than an hour. Because of his decisive action he was already noticed by the others and was very much liked by them. He was very calm although he knew his fate. He remained happy and at each hearing showed himself so firm

and determined that his bearing even won the admiration of the elite guard of the Nazis. At the time, he was the big sensation of the entire camp.

"His last hours were on Tuesday afternoon. From a distance we were able to see him standing in front of the gate, but we could not go to him. He stood calm and poised. A professional criminal had been appointed to hang him in the presence of the camp commander. The hangman placed the noose around the youth's neck. Then, strangely enough, the hangman, hardened criminal though he was, hesitated; even the camp commander forgot to shout his orders. At that the youth spoke up, asking: 'Why are you hesitating? Take your stand for Jehovah and Gideon!' Those were his last words."

Twenty-one years ago that took place, and yet the story of this youth's courage was featured this past summer in West Berlin's *Der Telegraf*. Why? To place his courageous example in contrast with certain current politicians in good standing who failed to manifest such courage in the dark days when Hitler ruled Germany. The report in *Der Telegraf* concluded by telling of the many thousands that were incarcerated in Nazi concentration camps because of a like faith in Jehovah and that,

of these, some two thousand perished in those camps.

Why did the Nazis execute Jonathan Stark? Because he had refused to serve in Hitler's armies. While it may be argued that it takes a certain amount or kind of courage to go into battle as a soldier, surely it takes a great deal more courage and of a far more noble kind to take a stand as Jonathan did and face certain death with such calm. He had the courage of his convictions. His example is one all dedicated Christians should want to imitate.

What gave him this courage? It was his faith in Jehovah. The same account told of his having been reared by parents who loved and feared Jehovah and who instilled in their son Jonathan right principles and who, without doubt, instructed him in the many examples of Christian courage found in the Word of God.—Eph. 6:4; 2 Tim. 3:15-17.

A striking example of Christian courage was furnished by the apostles Peter and John shortly after Pentecost. Thus when certain officials tried to intimidate them by asking regarding a certain miracle Peter had performed, as if they did not know: "By what power or in whose name did you do this?" those officials got the surprise of their lives. They no doubt expected those humble fishermen to be abashed in their presence. But not so. Just the opposite was the case. Note the boldness of the apostle Peter as, filled with holy spirit, he answered: "Rulers of the people and older men, if we are this day being examined, on the basis of a good deed to an ailing man, . . . let it be known to all of you . . . that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you impaled but whom God raised up from the dead, by this one does this man stand here sound in front of you." That was courage!—Acts 4:7-10.

More than that, the apostle Peter took advantage of the occasion to point out that this Jesus Christ "is 'the stone that was treated by you builders as of no account that has become the head of the corner,'" and that "there is not another name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must get saved." What plain language!—Acts 4:11, 12.

No wonder that the account goes on to say: "Now when they beheld the outspokenness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were men unlettered and ordinary, they got to wondering." Usually such plain folk as these fishermen, when before the rulers, were timid, abashed, and manifested an inferiority complex, but not these men. And so, the record goes on to say, "They began to recognize about them that they used to be with Jesus." There was the answer: They had learned fearlessness, courage, from Jesus Christ. Yes, such examples as these encouraged young Jonathan Stark to show the courage he did.

The world lauds the "determined courage" of a seventy-one-year-old mariner who all alone crossed the Pacific Ocean on a raft; it extols the bravery of the Italian who scaled the steep side of the Swiss Matterhorn to become "the greatest mountain climber of all time," but what lasting good do such exploits do? They may even do harm by fostering creature worship.

Christian courage, on the other hand, is displayed in the line of duty to God. Based on faith in God and loyalty to right principles, it inspires others who love God to do the same.—Heb. 12:1.

However, if we would have such courage in times of great danger, we must daily build up our faith by a consideration of God's Word, its promises and its examples of courage. More than that, we must apply Bible principles in the little issues that daily confront us. Doing so, we will have Christian courage in times of great stress.

'THE SIGN OF THE *Son of man*"

SIGNS surround us in our modern world. In cities and countryside, on streets and highways, in buildings and homes, they give us directions, advice, or warnings, and they publicize or identify the presence of persons, things, qualities or conditions that we usually do not immediately see. A simple nameplate on the front of a house is a sign to us that certain persons live there, even though we may not see them. A "skull-and-crossbones" sign on the front of a bottle tells us that the contents, which we see, possess a poisonous quality, which we do not see.

Signs can be most helpful, but only if we understand their meaning. If wrongly read, they could lead us into error, confusion, accident, or even disaster. Thus one definition for the word "sign" is: A word that means, stands for, designates, or denotes something *to an interpreter*.

There is one sign today that is of the highest importance to every person on earth. For us to see it, to understand it correctly and to act in accord with it

promptly will spell the difference between life and death for each of us. What is this sign? Where can it be seen? And how should it be read?

THE MOST VITAL SIGN

Christ Jesus referred to this sign when he said: "Then the sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in lamentation, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." (Matt. 24:30) Why not open your copy of the Bible to this chapter and read the preceding verses and see the setting for this state-

ment? On doing so, you will find that it forms part of Jesus' great prophecy on the "conclusion of the system of things" ("end of the world," AV) and the time for announcing "good news of the kingdom" and its establishment. This gives us the key to the understanding of "the sign of the Son of man."

As recorded in verse fifteen of this chapter Jesus had just referred to the prophet Daniel, and from the expressions he now used with reference to the "sign," there is no doubt that Jesus was referring back to the prophetic vision recorded at Daniel 7: 13, 14: "I kept on beholding in the visions of the night, and, see there! with the clouds of the heavens someone like a son of man happened to be coming; and to the Ancient of Days he gained access, and they brought him up close even before that One. And to him there were given rulership and dignity and kingdom, that the peoples, national groups and languages should all serve even him. His rulership is an indefinitely lasting rulership that will not pass away, and his kingdom one that will not be brought to ruin."

The "Ancient of Days" is the God of eternity, Jehovah. (Ps. 90:2) He is the Universal Sovereign, the source of all right to rule. The one "like a son of man" is Christ Jesus, as he himself indicated at John 3:13-15 and Luke 22:66-69. What is shown to be taking place here that Jesus could refer to as "the sign of the Son of man"? It is the act of God's Son in receiving authority from his Sovereign Father to rule in an everlasting kingdom. This event brought the establishment or "birth" of his kingly rule. (See also Revelation 12:1, 2, 5, 10.) Do not fail to note, please, that this event takes place, not in the skies of earth's atmosphere, but in the invisible heavens of Jehovah God's presence. At the due time, God's Son, who had been waiting at his Father's right hand, would enter into full regnal power and authority, obeying his Father's command: "Go subduing in the midst of your enemies." (Ps. 110:1, 2; Heb. 10:12, 13) Other Bible prophecies and the facts in fulfillment, considered frequently in the columns of this magazine, show this event to have taken place in the year 1914 C.E.

HOW THE SIGN IS SEEN

Why, then, you may ask, did Jesus say the sign would "appear" in heaven and that all the tribes of the earth would "see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory"? Why have we not seen Christ Jesus in a glorious return? Is that not to be expected in view of the statement at Revelation 1:7: "Look! He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, and those who pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in grief because of him"?

A helpful comment in this regard is found in *A Greek-English Lexicon* by Liddell and Scott. Concerning the Greek word for "see" used at Matthew 24:30 and Reve-

lation 1:7, their lexicon (Volume 2, page 1245a) lists this as one of the meanings: "Metaphorically, . . . of mental sight, to discern, perceive." Yes, the Bible speaks not only of seeing with our eyes but also of seeing with our mind and with our heart. Just think about the words at Romans 1:20, which tell us: "His invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world's creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship." Note that with the mind we can perceive or see things that are positively invisible to the human eyes, in this case God's *invisible* qualities.

So, with regard to "the sign of the Son of man," we ask, With what eyes did Daniel first see this prophetic sign? Was it not in "visions of his head" and thus with the mind's eye rather than the fleshly eye? (Dan. 7:1) It was in a similar vision that the apostle John was transported far into the future and could say: "I saw, and, look! a white cloud, and upon the cloud someone seated like a son of man, with a golden crown on his head and a sharp sickle in his hand." (Rev. 14:14) Inasmuch as "the sign of the Son of man" took place in the heavenly courts, it is only with the 'eyes of the heart of appreciation' that "every eye will see" this installed king, Christ Jesus.—Eph. 1:18.

But what about the use of "clouds" in all these texts? Would that not place the "sign" within earth's atmosphere, where literal clouds form and float and hence within the range of human eyesight? Take another look at the seventh chapter of Daniel, where the "sign" is first presented. Do you see Daniel's use of symbolisms by which world governments are represented as "beasts" that come up out of the "sea"? (Dan. 7:2, 3) So, too, in verse 13 he uses "clouds" in a figurative way to contrast with the symbolic "sea" and thus to show the heavenly situation where the authority

is given to the "Son of man" whereby he rules and crushes the beastly governments that the sea of humanity has spawned.—Compare Revelation 13:1-3 and 17:15.

In the Bible, clouds are the accompaniments of the "power and great glory" Jesus mentioned at Matthew 24:30, and also are symbolic of invisibility. (1 Ki. 8:10-12) At Mount Sinai it was in clouds and with thunder and lightning that Jehovah God "met" with Moses, and neither Moses nor the people below saw God with their fleshly eyes. (Ex. 20:21; 24:18; 33:20; Deut. 4:11, 12) Likewise, when God's Son, Christ Jesus, took leave of his apostles and began his ascension to the heavens of God's presence, the record at Acts 1:9 tells us:

"While they were looking on, he was lifted up and *a cloud caught him up from their vision.*" The cloud thus cut him off from their literal eyesight but, on the day of Pentecost, Jehovah God opened their understanding to perceive that Jesus had ascended even to God's right hand. (Acts 2: 33-35) Since the angels, standing by at the time Christ began his ascension, told the disciples that Jesus would "come thus in the same manner," we can be certain that his 'coming in the clouds' will be invisible to fleshly eyes and be perceived only with the 'eyes of the heart.' Like his Father, Jesus now "dwells in unapproachable light, whom not one of men has seen or can see."—Acts 1:11; 1 Tim. 6:15, 16.

READING THE SIGN WITH UNDERSTANDING

What does this "sign" mean for you, yes, for every person living today? The empowering of Christ Jesus, the "Son of man," with "rulership and dignity and kingdom" means that "peoples, national groups and

languages should all serve even him." (Dan. 7:14) Their doing so will mean life under a perfect government with all the grand benefits that will proceed from such a rule. The "sign" also points out the grave danger of failing to serve that kingdom willingly. Whereas the kingdom of the "Son of man" will be "everlasting" and 'never will be brought to ruin,' the kingdoms and governments of earth, which these persons of all national and linguistic groups have served, are faced with utter destruction.—See Daniel 2:44.

How providential it is for all of us, then, that this "sign" of the installed King in the invisible heavens, beyond the power of our human vision, has been made evident by yet another sign, one that is see-

able by human eyes. This *visible* sign follows after and results from the *invisible* "sign of the Son of man," since it is composed of the many events and conditions that the Bible foretold would follow and result from the establishment of Christ's Kingdom rule. It is, therefore, a composite sign, and the appearance of all these events and conditions would thus "spell out" that visible sign and open the eyes of their readers to perceive that the 'sign of the Son of man has appeared in heaven.' Yes, they would fairly shout out the announcement: *Christ Jesus is now ruling!*

Read for yourself the description of the multiple features and details of this composite sign as given by Jesus at Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21 and Revelation 6: 1-8, including global wars, widespread food shortages, pestilences, earthquakes in many places, increase of lawlessness, anxiety and fear of the future, and an earth-wide preaching of the "good news of the kingdom" by persons who would be perse-

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- "How Will They Hear?"
- Are You Bearing Thorough Witness?
- The Meaning of Christ's Return.
- What City Is Christianity's Center?

cuted in all nations. That composite sign is not only visible in this generation since 1914; it is inescapable. It faces you every time you pick up your daily paper, its sound rings through every news broadcast on your radio or television, it is all around you as you go through each day of your life no matter where you may live.

By means of this visible, composite sign, over a million persons in all parts of the globe today acknowledge that they have been enabled to "see" "the sign of the Son of man" and to recognize its meaning. They have witnessed the way in which the evidence has piled up year after year for more than half a century, which evidence testifies to the fact that as of the year 1914 "the sign of the Son of man" appeared in heaven. They are, therefore, different from the Pharisees and Sadducees of the first century to whom Jesus said: "You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but the signs of the times you cannot interpret." (Matt. 16:3) You can also be aided to see and read the meaning of the "signs of the times" by personal study of the Bible prophecies and by comparing these with the events of our day.

Realizing that Christ Jesus has received kingly authority and has begun his rule and that the end of the world systems of government draws ever closer, those who act in response to the import of "the sign of the Son of man" now submit to Christ's Kingdom rule and put that kingdom first in their lives. (Matt. 6:33) They rejoice to serve as witnesses for Jehovah God and to

draw attention to this "sign" in a grand publicity campaign that has reached into 197 lands and islands of the sea. Through them this magazine has come to you.

The day will come when "every eye" must see this "sign," as Revelation 1:7 indicates. Unfortunately for the majority, this will be at the time described at 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "At the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels in a flaming fire, as he brings vengeance upon those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus. These very ones will undergo the judicial punishment of everlasting destruction from before the Lord and from the glory of his strength." Such ones who now refuse to open their minds and hearts in order to "see" the "sign of the Son of man," or who insist on giving a wrong reason for the evidences pointing to it, will be forced to recognize the presence of Christ Jesus as reigning king when he acts to destroy all such in the war of Armageddon. Jesus said that, for such ones of "all the tribes of the earth," the sign will produce, not joy, but only 'lamentation' and a 'beating of themselves in grief.' To them it will spell only disaster. —Matt. 24:30; Rev. 1:7; 16:16.

For your own life's sake, allow your eyes of understanding to focus on this vital "sign." With the help of God's Word read it correctly, and let it lead you to "obey the good news about our Lord Jesus," the Son of man, and to "serve even him." Then the "sign" will spell life to you.

Pestilences and Famines

Have we seen an increase in "pestilences" and "food shortages" since 1914, as Jesus Christ foretold as part of the visible "sign" of his second presence? (Luke 21:11) Yes, we have. The "Spanish influenza," termed "one of the most devastating plagues of all time," took 20 million lives and, for a few short months, put 200 million in bed. Cancer and degenerative diseases continue to increase. As for food shortages, the Director General of the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization recently said that "up to half of the world's population, 1,500 millions, suffer from hunger or malnutrition or both."

The Value of RIGHT ASSOCIATION

TO ASSOCIATE means to gather together with another or with a group for some common purpose. People have drawn together in association for many purposes: Labor groups to improve working conditions and increase financial benefits, political leaders to plan party strategy, and religious heads to bring about greater solidarity within their own organization and with others. Worshipers of the one true God seek association with one another for yet a different purpose. Theirs is to show love for Jehovah God and neighbor, to build up their faith and to carry on pure worship in obedience to a divine command.

² Deuteronomy 31:12 says: "Congregate the people, the men and the women and the little ones and your alien resident who is within your gates, in order that they may listen and in order that they may learn, as they must fear Jehovah your God and take care to carry out all the words of this law." These words written by Moses were for God's people over 3,000 years ago. The purpose of this divine command was clearly twofold. First, it was to keep the commandments of Jehovah before the nation of Israel for their learning and remembering, that thus they would have proper fear and appreciation for their God. Secondly, it was to serve as a protection



"Congregate the people, the men and the women and the little ones and your alien resident who is within your gates, in order that they may listen and in order that they may learn, as they must fear Jehovah your God and take care to carry out all the words of this law."

—Deut. 31:12.

against the dangers of associating with those not interested in learning to fear and serve Jehovah, such as the heathen nations surrounding them. Because the command was given to congregate with those men, women, children and the alien resident "within your gates," this would certainly exclude any association with non-Israelites not wanting to learn about and serve Jehovah God.

³ The passing of centuries has not changed or weakened Jehovah's command to his people to learn of him and his commandments in company with proper associates. Paul, in speaking to the Hebrew Christians, said: "Let us consider one another to incite to love and fine works, not

1. Define association, and for what reasons do people associate?

2. The command given the Israelites at Deuteronomy 31:12 served what twofold purpose?

3. Why is it essential for Christians today to associate as a congregation, and how do they benefit?

forsaking the gathering of ourselves together, . . . but encouraging one another, and all the more so as you behold the day drawing near." (Heb. 10:24, 25) Obedience to this apostolic command results in praise to Jehovah's name through the songs, prayers and words of appreciation spoken in congregation association. It brings blessings from him upon his people because of the act of obedience itself. Today, Christians need right associations so as to give and receive Scriptural counsel, also to give and receive spiritual encouragement. This wholesome association contributes a measure of godly protection from seen and unseen dangers in this present wicked, God-dishonoring system of things.

PURPOSE OF RIGHT ASSOCIATION

⁴ When Paul was pointing out the value of fellowship to the Hebrews, with whom was he encouraging them to associate? With the bloodthirsty crowd at the Roman circus, or with a gang of delinquents on the street, or with a school of worldly-wise philosophers? Certainly not! When writing to Timothy and describing this twentieth-century counterpart of such a vicious, loveless type of people, Paul says: "And from these turn away." (2 Tim. 3:1-5) In disfellowshipping the lawless from the congregation, Paul warns that Christians cannot associate with one called a brother that is "a fornicator or a greedy person or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner." (1 Cor. 5:11) If this is true, how much more we should shun the company of those not brothers who are practicing these things.

⁵ In his second letter to the Corinthians Paul further emphasizes this point when he says: "Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers. For what sharing do

righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness? Further, what harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what portion does a faithful person have with an unbeliever? And what agreement does God's temple have with idols? For we are a temple of a living God; just as God said: 'I shall reside among them and walk among them, and I shall be their God, and they will be my people.' 'Therefore get out from among them, and separate yourselves,' says Jehovah, 'and quit touching the unclean thing'; 'and I will take you in.'" (2 Cor. 6:14-17) Just as right association helped to keep the Jewish nation and early Christians close to Jehovah, so it will serve the same purpose for God's people today in these few and all-important years before Armageddon.

⁶ The Bible clearly shows the detrimental effects wrong association can have on the life of a Christian. Paul writes: "Do not be misled. Bad associations spoil useful habits." (1 Cor. 15:33) Failing to heed this warning has caused some to lose their appreciation of Jehovah God and his righteous requirements. They have been led to commit acts of immorality, drunkenness and rebellion. Some have become engulfed in worldly materialism. Others have turned apostate. Any of these sins could result in spiritual disaster. On the other hand, good associations are so beneficial that they can safeguard our present life as well as ensure our future life. This is possible because through association with the Christian congregation one receives knowledge of Jehovah God and his wonderful purposes as well as instructions on how he can bring his life into harmony with such knowledge. (John 17:3) For any to survive the battle of Armageddon it is vital

4, 5. (a) Why should Christians be selective in their association? (b) How did Paul emphasize right association to the Corinthians?

6. What can result by not heeding 1 Corinthians 15:33, and what can be gained by obeying it?

to heed the command given to the Israelites, not only to listen and learn the law of Jehovah, but to carry out all the words of his law. The disciple James puts it this way: "However, become doers of the word, and not hearers only."—Jas. 1:22.

⁷ Then, too, persons newly interested in the worship of Jehovah God are introduced or come in contact with Jehovah's organization through the association with his faithful witnesses. All of these are united closely in a society having one purpose, and that is to incite to love and fine works, as Paul said. If there were no Christian congregation today, how could these seekers of God be shown the theocratic organization? When Paul advised the Corinthians about speaking in tongues and the advantage of prophesying, he showed that not only Christians congregated, but also other persons came to the meeting. "Therefore, if the whole congregation comes together to one place and they all speak in tongues, but ordinary people or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are mad? But if you are all prophesying and any unbeliever or ordinary person comes in . . . the secrets of his heart become manifest, so that he will fall upon his face and worship God, declaring: 'God is really among you.'" (1 Cor. 14:23-25) Thus the whole congregated group of dedicated persons of God, as well as undedicated persons, receive encouragement, help and counsel when they meet together to hear the Word of God discussed. "Therefore keep comforting one another and building one another up, just as you are in fact doing."—1 Thess. 5:11.

⁸ During congregation meetings there is placed before us the standard for the New World society, and the value of right associations is contrasted with the dangers of

wrong association. For example, we learn of the disobedience of King Saul, the greed of Achan at Jericho, the selfishness of the apostle Judas and the immorality of some dedicated Christians today resulting in disfellowshiping. We also hear of the faith of the patriarch Abraham, the meekness of the prophet Moses, the courage of his successor Joshua, the love of Christ Jesus, the zeal of Paul and the faithfulness and integrity of our Christian brothers today world wide. We are reminded to guard against adultery, lying, theft, gossip, fornication, slander, disbelief, rebellion and other God-dishonoring practices. We must remember that the Devil does not want Christians and interested persons to associate together so as to hear these Scriptural warnings. (Gal. 5:19-21) He realizes the importance of right association and the good effect it has upon Jehovah's servants. For that reason his organization outlaws the meetings of Jehovah's witnesses wherever it is in position to do so, as demonstrated in Spain, Angola, United Arab Republic, as well as in Russia and many other Communist lands.

JEHOVAH'S SPIRIT IN OPERATION ON ASSEMBLED CHRISTIANS

⁹ Christ Jesus had this to say about association with the Christian congregation: "Where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst." (Matt. 18:20) Where you find Christians congregated in accord with Jehovah's will, you will also find his directing spirit in operation. Luke writes of the association of the early Christians and how Jehovah God blessed them: "Day after day they were in constant attendance at the temple with one accord, . . . praising God and finding favor with all the people. At

7. How are newly interested persons benefited by associating with the Christian congregation?
8. (a) Where and how is the standard of the New World society kept before us? (b) How do we know the Devil recognizes the value of Christian association?

9. (a) What Scriptural assurance is there of Jehovah's spirit being upon congregational meetings? (b) How does Jehovah deal with his people, and why do you so answer?

the same time Jehovah continued to join to them daily those being saved." (Acts 2:46, 47) So we see how essential it is to recognize that today God is dealing with and through an organization as he has done in times past. This is further demonstrated to us by the way God dealt with the nation of Israel. He did not deal with any separate individual, but he dealt with those in association with his organization. Moses as his visible representative served as a channel of communication for the nation of Israel.—Ex. 3:10, 16.

¹⁰ Today the anointed spirit-begotten witnesses of Jehovah, comprising the "faithful and discreet slave," serve as an earthly channel of communication for the great crowd of people who will survive Armageddon. These anointed witnesses along with the "great crowd" of companions form the modern-day Christian organization through which God's spirit is in operation. (Matt. 24:45-51; Rev. 7:9-17) Never has God had more than one channel of communication at one time. Failure to recognize and associate with his anointed witnesses would certainly indicate that one is not in Jehovah God's organization and under his spirit. Unfortunately, the Israelites forgot the value of right association and congregated with those outside the gates of Israelite cities, as we read in the Psalms: "And they went mingling with the nations and took up learning their works. And they kept serving their idols, and these came to be a snare to them."—Ps. 106:35, 36.

OPPORTUNITIES TO ASSOCIATE WITH CHRISTIANS

¹¹ To help to protect his people today from the false course of mingling with the nations and learning their works, Jehovah

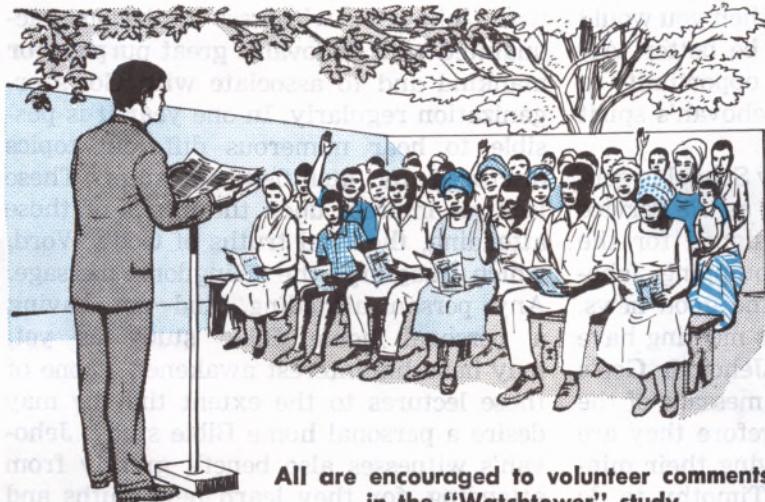
has made arrangements through his organization for his people to spend five hours each week at congregational meetings. These meetings are different from the religious services and meetings held in the church buildings of Christendom, because they are designed to meet the needs of Jehovah's witnesses for carrying on their public ministry and to strengthen them to safeguard their Christian integrity. For this reason an outline of these meetings and their purpose will be beneficial and profitable for those readers who are dedicated witnesses of Jehovah, as well as interesting and enlightening for those readers who have not as yet attended any of the meetings sponsored by Jehovah's witnesses.

¹² The principal meeting of Jehovah's witnesses each week is the congregation meeting where the *Watchtower* magazine is studied for one hour. If you will turn to the second page of this magazine you are now reading, you will see that 4,650,000 copies were printed of this issue in 70 languages. It is at the *Watchtower* study where doctrinal points are established and timely new spiritual truths are provided through the "faithful and discreet slave," keeping one abreast with the application and fulfillment of Bible prophecy. It is a meeting where all benefit, young as well as adults. A man can learn how to care for his responsibilities within the family circle. He can receive information on how to be a good and wise father, how to keep unity and peace among the members of his family and how to exercise his headship properly. A woman can learn her Christian place, not only in the home, but also in the theocratic organization, and how she can serve God and her family in a pleasing manner. Children are taught proper re-

10. Failure to associate at meetings with Jehovah's witnesses would indicate what?

11. What generous provision has Jehovah made through his organization for the spiritual protection of his people?

12. (a) What is the principal meeting of Jehovah's witnesses, and for whom is it beneficial? (b) How is the meeting conducted, and what Scriptural reason is there to participate?



All are encouraged to volunteer comments in the "Watchtower" study

spect for God and parents as well as receive instruction and discipline, which will contribute to their physical and spiritual growth. This *Watchtower* study meeting is conducted by a chairman who propounds the questions found at the bottom of the magazine page, and the answers are volunteered by those in the audience. When was the last time you volunteered an answer? How many weeks or months have gone by since you made a public declaration of your faith in Jehovah God and his salvation, as Paul encourages you to do? (Heb. 13:15; Rom. 10:10) Why not do it at the next *Watchtower* meeting and experience the truthfulness of Jesus' words when he said: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving"?—Acts 20:35.

¹³ Another weekly congregation meeting held at the Kingdom Hall for one hour is the Service Meeting. This is a meeting that has been time-tested since the days of Jesus and the apostles to give Jehovah's witnesses practical instructions that will help them to become better qualified ministers and more efficient in carrying on their

house-to-house ministry. (Luke 10:1-16; Acts 4:23-31) It was for this reason that Paul sent Timothy to the congregation at Corinth. He was to teach them to carry on their ministry the way Paul did: "and he will put you in mind of my methods in connection with Christ Jesus, just as I am teaching everywhere." (1 Cor. 4:17)

The program provides a variety of methods for instructing and teaching. There are talks, demonstrations, question-and-answer parts, interviews and discussions between two or more persons. Since all of Jehovah's witnesses are ministers, this meeting is for all who have a desire to serve God and Christ Jesus to share in—men, women and children. (1 Cor. 14:26) *Kingdom Ministry*, a monthly publication of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, outlines the material to be covered during the Service Meeting, and the overseer of the congregation has the responsibility to assign to qualified brothers the material to be presented. Every member of the congregation must assume his share of the responsibility for making the meeting interesting, lively and beneficial for all who attend. If you are not enthusiastic about attending the Service Meeting and do not look forward to it with anticipation and expectation, could it be because you attend for the purpose of just receiving and not contributing? If you feel the meeting could and should be better and it is lacking, it could be that it lacks your participation. When you are asked to take part in a demonstration or have the opportunity to make a comment, do not refuse because you think someone else is

13. (a) What is the purpose of the Service Meeting? (b) The success of the Service Meeting depends on what?

better qualified. If he were, then you would not feel the meeting could be better. Accept every assignment as an opportunity to serve others, and rely on Jehovah's spirit to help you.

¹⁴ The Theocratic Ministry School is generally held the same evening as the Service Meeting. This school is designed for the purpose of teaching and equipping Jehovah's witnesses to preach the good news. Most of those attending this meeting have made a dedication to do Jehovah God's will, which is to preach the message of the Kingdom publicly, and therefore they are always interested in improving their ministry, as Paul encouraged Timothy to do when he wrote: "Become an example to the faithful ones in speaking . . . continue applying yourself to public reading, to exhortation, to teaching. Ponder over these things; be absorbed in them, that your advancement may be manifest to all persons." (1 Tim. 4:12, 13, 15; 2 Tim. 2:15) Unlike with most schools, there are no graduates, for the course is a lifelong one for young and old, male and female. The principal textbook is the Bible, along with other Bible-study aids. In one hour's time you will hear short Bible talks, sermons and Bible discussions by the students. These receive commendation and instructive counsel from a qualified school instructor.

¹⁵ From the qualified students enrolled in the Theocratic Ministry School, speakers are selected to give one-hour public Bible talks on given subjects that are especially designed for newly interested people and for the refreshing of the mind of all of Jehovah's witnesses. These public talks are usually given on Sunday at the Kingdom Hall. These interesting Bible lectures are one of the best methods of helping those who are studying the Bible in their homes

with Jehovah's witnesses to become acquainted with Jehovah's great purpose for mankind and to associate with God's organization regularly. In one year it is possible to hear numerous different topics discussed by qualified ministers. These lectures impress upon the minds of those attending, the vital truths of God's Word, which magnify the Kingdom message. Any person attending, and not having a personal home Bible study as yet, may have his interest awakened at one of these lectures to the extent that he may desire a personal home Bible study. Jehovah's witnesses also benefit greatly from attending, for they learn new truths and new ways of expressing the good news of God's kingdom. These lectures also serve as a reminder of Bible principles, as Peter wrote: "I am arousing your clear thinking faculties by way of a reminder." (2 Pet. 3:1) All of Jehovah's witnesses will want to be at this meeting to welcome the visitors and to answer any questions that they may have on God's Word the Bible.

¹⁶ Finally, the fifth meeting, but certainly not the least important, is the Congregation Book Study. These small group studies are held in the homes of Jehovah's witnesses and at the Kingdom Hall, making it convenient for those in the neighborhood to attend. The textbook studied is usually one of the latest Bible-study aids provided by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, along with the Bible. These studies make clear the light on Bible prophecies and the prophetic patterns needed to be understood at this time more than ever before. Here again is evidence of Jehovah's loving-kindness and tender care for his people, because in these small groups it is easier to get acquainted, and, through his organization, for the study conductor to give special individual attention and loving

14. What benefits are to be gained from the Theocratic Ministry School, and what are some of its features?

15. How do the public Bible lectures benefit both the public and Jehovah's witnesses, and why should all of Jehovah's witnesses attend?

16. What are the advantages of the Congregation Book Studies?

care to those who attend. Truly here the proverb comes true: "By iron, iron itself is sharpened. So one man sharpens the face of another."—Prov. 27:17.

¹⁷ All persons who are interested in serving the Creator now and who want to enjoy the blessings from him in the future are invited, yes, urged to seek the association of Christian men, women and children who regularly attend these meetings. The value of this association is clearly seen and commented upon by many interested persons who attend the congregational meetings for the first time. They are often heard to say, "My, how friendly and happy the people are! The program was so interesting and instructive. Everything was so different from any other religious meeting I have ever attended." Yes, they notice the difference in the people and the things heard, and Jehovah's witnesses are happy they came. Jehovah's witnesses experience this happiness every time they meet with their Christian brothers. This happiness is the result of good association with the ones coming under Jehovah's spirit, which spirit is upon his assembled congregation. This is true, whether just a few are gathered in a private home, hundreds in a Kingdom Hall or thousands in a stadium or auditorium.

¹⁸ In view of what has been said concerning the benefits of good, wholesome association to be enjoyed at the congregation meetings, Jehovah's witnesses have an average attendance world wide of about 75 percent of all associated members, in contrast to the generally low meeting attendance complained about in most other churches. Still, this shows that about 25 percent of Jehovah's witnesses are failing to associate regularly at the *Watchtower*

study, Service Meeting, Theocratic Ministry School, Congregation Book Studies and public lectures. Is there not a danger of these following the same course as the unfaithful Israelites who lost sight of the value of right association and who mingled with the nations, took up their works and served their idols? There certainly is!

¹⁹ Are you one of these irregular attenders? Do you know of any who are succumbing to this danger? If so, it would be an evidence of love on your part to consider with them Jehovah's counsel and admonition on associating regularly at congregational meetings. Help them to regain the joy and the peace of mind that come from right association. Do so now. Paul says: "Hence straighten up the hands that hang down and the enfeebled knees, and keep making straight paths for your feet, that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather that it may be healed." (Heb. 12:12, 13) There is no question about our association after Armageddon, but, unless we are associating now with God's congregation, we will not be alive to enjoy association with him, his Son and his people after Armageddon.

²⁰ Jehovah God's purpose in admonishing right association for us now is that we may listen and learn to fear him and do his will. The Christian brothers with whom we associate at the congregation meetings are the best associations we can find in the world, and, furthermore, five of the most important hours each week are those spent in association with them at the congregation meetings. This association is pleasing to Jehovah, brings joy to us and is beneficial for our ministry and future life in the new order of things after Armageddon.

17. How are newly interested persons and Jehovah's witnesses affected by Christian association?

18. What percentage of Jehovah's witnesses attend the congregational meetings on a worldwide scale?

19. What can be done to assist those who do not regularly attend meetings?

20. What is the only way to make sure of our association now?



Bad Association

"Do not be misled. Bad associations

spoil useful habits." —1 Cor. 15:33.

FROM the information contained in Jehovah God's Word and from experience, Christians appreciate how vital it is for them to assemble together as a congregation. They also realize from studying the Scriptures that being a Christian requires more than just associating together at a place of worship once, twice or three times a week, as members of the Babylonian false religious organizations are doing, while at other times throughout the week forgetting about God and saying and doing just as they please, whether it is in harmony with God's Word or not. A Christian's thinking and conduct must always be in harmony with the Word of God, whether in congregational association, at home with members of one's family, at places of secular work or during gatherings with Christians for periods of relaxation.

² Not all the time of a Christian is spent at congregation meetings and in the field ministry preaching the good news of God's kingdom. If we were to total the hours spent in working, sleeping, eating and attending Bible educational meetings, along with preaching, there would be approximately a hundred remaining hours each month in which to care for everyday interests, reading, writing, talking and for enjoying periods of diversion and relaxation.

1. Where, besides at congregational meetings, should a Christian's thinking and conduct be in harmony with the Word of God?

2. Can Christians find time in their busy life for periods of relaxation, and why do you so answer?

³ It is during these periods of relaxation that a Christian must be selective and heed the admonition to choose, wisely, those with whom he associates. In a relaxed condition or state, there is a loosening or slackening of the mind and body from the stress and strain of problems and responsibilities, a tendency to adhere less strictly or severely to rules of discipline. Granted, a change of pace is good and that many give credence to the thought that all work and no play is not good for one, still, it would be better for one to spend all his time performing good works that would ensure his everlasting life than to spend any time playing with those who would, in any way, jeopardize the opportunity for life in Jehovah's righteous New Order. If, during or at the end of the time spent with others, we do not feel spiritually built up and strengthened, encouraged to greater zeal and faithfulness toward Jehovah's service, and appreciate the goodness and loving-kindness of Jehovah God toward us, then we have been associating with the wrong kind of persons. Remember Jehovah's warning: "Do not be misled. Bad associations spoil useful habits." (1 Cor. 15:33) Just the same as a slice of moldy bread can spoil a slice of fresh bread, causing it to mold faster by contact, so we can be affected by coming in contact with bad association.

3. (a) What happens to the mind and body in a relaxed state that should make us selective in choosing associates? (b) How can we tell if our associates are of the right kind?

**THOUGHTS, SPEECH, ACTIONS
INFLUENCED BY OTHERS**

⁴ It has often been said that you can tell the kind of person one is by the company one keeps, or, stated another way, "birds of a feather flock together." The wise King Solomon showed how our associates can exercise a powerful influence upon us when he said: "He that is walking with wise persons will become wise, but he that is having dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly." (Prov. 13:20) So, by our associates, our thoughts can be affected so they will be good or bad, our speech upbuilding or demoralizing and our actions beneficial or destructive. This is determined, to a large degree, by the company we keep.

⁵ Upbuilding friends are not as easily found as demoralizing persons, because we are living in a world that is not devoted to righteousness. This is understandable, in view of what the apostle John wrote: "The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (1 John 5:19) So, while at work, school or caring for the affairs of everyday living, Christians cannot escape rubbing shoulders and coming in contact with the kind of people Solomon calls "stupid ones." Jesus certainly recognized what Christians would be faced with, for in prayer he said to his heavenly Father: "I request you, not to take them out of the world, but to watch over them because of the wicked one. They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." (John 17:15, 16) This necessary association is of no real danger to Christians, because we can do our secular work, study and learn in school, shop at stores and places of business for food, clothing and other necessities and still not have to

think and act like the majority of the godless people in the world in which we live. This was proved to be true by Christ Jesus and is being proved true today by over a million Christian witnesses. However, when we seek the company of people outside the Christian congregation for recreation and relaxation, there is danger. Why voluntarily and willingly seek the association of those whose thoughts and actions are diametrically opposed to those of a dedicated Christian? This does not mean that a Christian could not or should not be friendly, kind and helpful toward all, whenever the opportunity affords. Paul told the Christians of his day: "As long as we have time favorable for it, let us work what is good toward all." (Gal. 6:10) It does mean, however, that a Christian would not spend time with unspiritually inclined people after work or school hours for pleasure and amusement.

⁶ The wisdom of Christians' associating with the right ones can be seen by asking a few simple questions. Would it make a difference to you if your best friends were persons like money-loving Ananias and Sapphira? or were faithful like Aquila and Priscilla? Would you be safer taking a walk through the fields with righteous Abel or with his ill-tempered brother Cain? Would you rather have as your friend Judas Iscariot or the beloved apostle John? Where would you be spiritually benefited the most—at Herod's palace watching Salome dance or enjoying a pleasant evening at the home of Lazarus, Martha and Mary? "Do not be misled"; your life will be affected by your associates.

⁷ When in company with a group of people, whether young or old, it is a natural

4. What effect will our associates have on us, as Solomon stated?

5. (a) Why is it not possible to avoid "stupid ones," and is there real danger in this necessary association? (b) What should be our attitude toward these, and when would we avoid them?

6. What questions could we ask that would help us to choose good associates?

7. 8. (a) The desire to be accepted can lead to what, and why? (b) What practice among students would be avoided by Christians? And why?

desire to want to be accepted as one of the group. Young persons are particularly sensitive in this regard, as they dread being different from their companions. This desire to be accepted can lead to trouble when one's associates are persons who do not love God and whose thoughts and actions go unrestrained because they have no respect for God's Word as a guide for proper conduct.

⁸ It is a popular practice among students today to skip classes or not go to school at all and meet at the home of one of their classmates whose parents are away at work, where they engage in loose and, many times, immoral conduct. A young Christian should not follow this practice. Not only is it wrong for him to play hooky from school, but it is also wrong to associate with those who do. Such a course is dishonest and deceitful to parents and displeasing to Jehovah. Because of fleshly desires and weaknesses, some have been tempted into doing what they know is bad. Paul spoke of such ones who are filled with wickedness and deceit and are disobedient to their parents, when he said: "Although these know full well the righteous decree of God, that those practicing such things are deserving of death, they not only keep on doing them but also approve those practicing them."—Rom. 1:32.

⁹ Young Christians who are in school and want to go to dances or parties with their classmates, who are not dedicated to Jehovah, may say to their parents, "What harm or danger could there be in going to a dance, movie or party with one or a group of schoolmates?" It is always dangerous and harmful for one to disregard Jehovah's commandment, "Get out from among them, and separate yourselves." (2 Cor. 6:17) Was it not to safeguard the

spirituality of the children that Jehovah commanded the Israelites not to associate with the heathens? "You must form no marriage alliance with them. Your daughter you must not give to his son, and his daughter you must not take for your son. For he will turn your son from following me, and they will certainly serve other gods." (Deut. 7:3, 4) Answer this question: "What sharing do righteousness and lawlessness have?"—2 Cor. 6:14.

¹⁰ The dangers and harm that could come to Christian youths do not end when the party or dancing ends. In many instances it increases, because, instead of returning home, there is a desire for more excitement and fun. This desire opens up many dangers and harmful situations. Parking in automobiles in dark and secluded places, which leads to toying with sexual immorality; visiting bars where, under the influence of alcoholic beverages, the thinking abilities are impaired, causing one to say and do things one would not do otherwise; spending part of the night or all of the night at a motel or hotel for the purpose of committing immoral acts, to mention only a few. These are the practices among the youth of the world today. This is the way they think and act. This is what they feel is popular and smart. Certainly sharing in such unrighteousness and lawlessness could result only in harm and heartache to both Christian children and parents, and should be avoided.

¹¹ These same situations and many others with their dangerous consequences daily confront older Christian men and women. In connection with their secular employment, there are bowling leagues, swimming teams, office parties and the like, which would throw one into company with

9. (a) What Scriptural commands are there against young Christians' socializing with their worldly schoolmates? (b) What was the reason for not permitting the Israelite youths to marry outsiders?

10. What unchristian practices are engaged in by worldly youths?
11. Why should Christians avoid the social activities in connection with secular work, as shown by the experience of one?

bad associates. These could be exciting, enjoyable and relaxing occasions, no doubt, but also dangerous to maintaining Christian integrity, as the following true-life experience of a young Christian office worker shows: An application was made out and accepted by the Society for vacation pioneering to begin the following month, but the joy and blessing of this wonderful privilege of service were never realized. The assignment was returned to the Society with a confession that fornication had been committed with a fellow employee before the date set to begin pioneering. While the disciplinary terms of the probation applied were only temporary, the scar left on the heart and mind of the offender is more permanent. So much to lose in the way of spiritual blessings and benefits for so little gained, in the way of selfish, sensual pleasure and enjoyment. It was all the result of failing to heed the divine warning that "bad associations spoil useful habits."

¹² We should not deceive ourselves into thinking we can disregard or break Jehovah's righteous requirements and not suffer the foretold consequences. Are any of us, young or old, as wise as King Solomon? Yet, look what happened to him when he began to associate with and marry heathen women. They drew him away from true worship. The extent of their persuasive power is found in these words: "It came about in the time of Solomon's growing old that his wives themselves had inclined his heart to follow other gods; and his heart did not prove to be complete with Jehovah his God like the heart of David his father. And Solomon began going after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom the disgusting thing of the Ammonites." (1 Ki. 11:4, 5) Jehovah's feelings toward Solomon are expressed in these words: "For the reason that this

12. What effect did bad association have on Solomon, and with what result?

has taken place with you and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I laid in command upon you, I shall without fail rip the kingdom away from off you, and I shall certainly give it to your servant." (1 Ki. 11:11) We will also lose God's favor and blessing if we put ourselves in the same position and situation as Solomon, by allowing wrong associations to turn us away from worshiping Jehovah God in spirit and truth.

UPBUILDING ASSOCIATION FOR RELAXATION

¹³ True, we need periods of relaxation, but it must be with our Christian brothers to have Jehovah's approval, and even then there are Scriptural rules and principles that must govern our conduct. If we are spending an evening with other Christians, we should follow the example of Christ Jesus, when he visited Martha and Mary in their home. Was his visit spent in foolish and idle talk, while overindulging in food and drink? Listen to part of the record of his visit: "Now as they were going their way he entered into a certain village. Here a certain woman named Martha received him as guest into the house. This woman also had a sister called Mary, who, however, sat down at the feet of the Lord and kept listening to his word. Martha, on the other hand, was distracted with attending to many duties." (Luke 10:38-40) Speaking of his visit with the two sisters, Jesus said: "For her part, Mary chose the good portion, and it will not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:42) Mary was not overly concerned with the work or food, nor was Jesus. He used the occasion to talk, and Mary used the time wisely to listen to one who could help her spiritually. Using this as an example, the mature ones should be alert to build up their brothers when together, by taking the lead in en-

13. (a) Times of relaxation should be only with whom?
 (b) How does Jesus' visit with Martha and Mary serve as a model for Christian association?

couraging Bible discussion and answering Bible questions.

¹⁴ We naturally like to be with our close friends, but we will be able to assist more in the congregation by not always associating with the same select few time and time again. Jesus laid down a principle that would be good to remember when we are getting together with our Christian brothers: "When you spread a dinner or evening meal, do not call your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors. Perhaps some time they might also invite you in return and it would become a repayment to you. But when you spread a feast, invite poor people, crippled, lame, blind; and you will be happy, because they have nothing with which to repay you." (Luke 14:12-14) It is true, to be in the company of mature brothers will benefit us spiritually, but by making an effort to associate with the backward, new or weak brothers, we will be able to encourage and strengthen them, even though they may not be able to give much in return. We should want to be with them for the same reason that Paul was anxious to visit with the Roman brothers, saying: "For I am longing to see you, that I may impart some spiritual gift to you in order for you to be made firm; or, rather, that there may be an interchange of encouragement among you, by each one through the other's faith, both yours and mine."—Rom. 1:11, 12.

KEEP ENTERTAINMENT ON THEOCRATIC LEVEL

¹⁵ There is no Christian holiday from wholesome talk and fine conduct. Therefore, there is a constant need to watch our conduct and speech when in social association with our Christian brothers. We

would not use the occasion for telling vulgar, off-color stories or jokes, but would be careful, as the psalmist admonished: "Safeguard your tongue against what is bad, and your lips against speaking deception." (Ps. 34:13) Nor would the friendly, relaxed atmosphere be used by any to take liberties with members of the opposite sex, under the pretense that a kiss or hug given was just a brotherly one. If the conduct of one is offensive, it would be an act of brotherly love to go to that one and tell him that his talk or actions were not appreciated and not in keeping with Christian conduct. Paul declares: "Keep on making sure of what is acceptable to the Lord; and quit sharing with them in the unfruitful works that belong to the darkness, but, rather, even be reproving them." (Eph. 5:10, 11) If the Scriptural counsel does not have the desired results, then we certainly do not have to associate in a social way with that one.

¹⁶ Christians will see to it that these periods of relaxation are occasions for spiritual stimulation and encouragement. Many times we can overcome prejudices, dislikes and introverted attitudes at such periods. When with our brothers, we want to keep our entertainment on a theocratic level, by keeping in mind Paul's admonition: "Therefore, whether you are eating or drinking or doing anything else, do all things for God's glory." (1 Cor. 10:31) So our time should never be wasted in idle or worthless talk. It is the responsibility of the host to set the tempo of the Christian gathering. Jehovah's witnesses are not one-sided; there is room for expressions of good humor and for enjoyable food and drink. There can be serious talk and lighter conversation, but never shameful conduct, obscene jesting or foolish speech.

—Prov. 10:14.

14. What Bible principle would be good to follow when inviting brothers for a relaxing evening, and why?
15. (a) What should be guarded against at social gatherings of Christians? (b) If the conduct of one is offensive, what could we do about it?

16. Periods of relaxation should be occasions for what, and who is to set the tempo for a Christian get-together?

CHOOSE RIGHT ASSOCIATION

¹⁷ It should not be necessary for Christians always to be in company with others. A king once said: "For everything there is an appointed time, even a time for every affair under the heavens." (Eccl. 3:1) So it is good to set aside some time to be by ourselves and seek the association of Jehovah God in study, meditation and prayer, as Christ Jesus did on occasion when he was on the earth.—Luke 4:42; Matt. 14:13.

¹⁸ Even though Christ Jesus is no longer walking about in the flesh on earth, as he did over 1900 years ago, it does not mean that we cannot walk with him. Regularly reading from the Scriptures his words of wisdom brings us into close association with him. By following the example of godly devotion that he set, we can walk with him as a follower. Peter said: "In fact, to this course you were called, because even Christ suffered for you, leaving you a model for you to follow his steps closely."

—1 Pet. 2:21.

¹⁹ There may be some Christians, young and old, who feel that Bible principles on association restrict them too much; so, for an excuse to associate with undedicated persons or marry them, they will say, "Our congregation is so small that there are no boys or girls with whom I can associate." Others will say, "In our congregation there is no marriage material available in my age-group." So they seek association outside the household of faith.

17, 18. How can one have association with Jehovah God and Christ Jesus?

19, 20. (a) What excuse may some use for an occasion to associate with those outside the truth? (b) What fine example did Noah and his family set in this regard?

²⁰ Did Noah and his family disperse among the wicked people because they were the only families in the truth then? Because their congregation was small, limited to eight persons, they may have felt restricted in their association, but how could they have broadened their association by including persons of that world who had nothing in common with them? It would have been dangerous for them to have social association with people who preferred wickedness to righteousness. Did not Jesus liken people not in the truth today to those who lived on earth at the time of Noah? "For just as the days of Noah were, so the presence of the Son of man will be. For as they were in those days before the flood, eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and they took no note until the flood came and swept them all away, so the presence of the Son of man will be."

—Matt. 24:37-39.

²¹ It is far better to have only a few social associates that love Jehovah than to associate with many who may turn you away from God. Be contented with your Christian brothers' company, whether large or small in number, rich or poor, because you are a good influence on one another, making your times of association a praise, honor and glory to Jehovah God, as well as a blessing and protection for your everlasting welfare.

21. What makes the social association with our brothers so valuable?

A LITTLE LEAVEN

Illustrating the apostle Paul's words about the power of "a little leaven" to ferment the whole lump, is the way of preparing bread in villages of Cyprus. From time immemorial the method has been to mix the flour with water and then to knead it well. When the kneading is considered satisfactory, a piece of leaven is added. There are several kinds of leaven, but the one mostly used comes from old dough. Usually, when kneading is over, a piece of dough is put aside in a warm place. This small piece, after thirty-six to forty-eight hours, is ready leaven and can be used to ferment the whole lump.—1 Cor. 5:6.



'THE KINGDOM IS AT HAND'

When?

THE kingdom of God has always been of primary importance to Christians. The pre-Christian servants of God also looked forward to the Kingdom. In fact, the Kingdom is the theme of the entire Bible, for it is the kingdom of God that will sanctify Jehovah's name and bring peace and blessings to humankind. Jesus spoke often of the Kingdom; he put it to the fore and set forth many parables concerning the Kingdom. In the four Gospels the word "kingdom" appears more than a hundred and ten times. The coming of the Kingdom is therefore of transcendent importance. It brings to prominence the questions: When is the Kingdom at hand? and, What would the announcement 'The Kingdom is at hand' mean to us?

The first time this proclamation was heard was by a crowd of Jews near the Jordan River in 29 C.E. Many had come out to hear the powerful preacher of this news. He was John, the son of priest Zechariah, who came in fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 40:3: "Listen! Someone is calling out in the wilderness: 'Clear up the way of Jehovah, you people! Make the highway for our God through the desert plain straight.'" The theme of John's message was: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."—Matt. 3:2,

AV; Luke 1:5, 13.

WHAT IT MEANT IN THE FIRST CENTURY

Was this proclamation to be limited to the ministry of John and his disciples? No, for about six months after John's ministry began, look! approaching

him to be baptized was a kingly person, of whom it had been said by the angel Gabriel before his birth:

"This one will be great and will be called Son of the Most High; and Jehovah God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule as king over the house of Jacob forever, and there will be no end of his kingdom." (Luke 1:32, 33)

Something marvelous took place at his baptism by John. The record reads: "The holy spirit in bodily shape like a dove came down upon him, and a voice came out of heaven: 'You are my Son, the beloved; I have approved you.'" (Luke 3: 22) Earthly priests of flesh and blood had anointed his previous fellow kings of the line of David with a specially compounded oil, but it was Jehovah himself from the heavens who anointed this One who bore the earthly name Jesus. (Heb. 1:9) And it was with something that gave infinitely greater power and authority—God's holy spirit. Here Jesus became the long-awaited Messiah or Christ, the Anointed One of God. He became king-designate of the kingdom of God. He was Jehovah's king, among them. He as King was present, the kingdom of heaven in their midst! The Son of God in his royal majesty as Jehovah's king and representative had full right to the title Immanuel, meaning "With Us

Is God." Men could actually converse with God's king and see and learn the kingdom's principles and requirements.

CHIEF OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

Jesus was anointed not only to be King but also to preach. Since the primary purpose of the Kingdom is to sanctify Jehovah's name, its king must be a witness to Jehovah. As king-designate Jesus must undergo the test of integrity to prove qualified for heavenly kingship. Jesus had been born into the nation of Israel or Jacob, of which the prophet Isaiah had said: "This is what Jehovah has said, your Creator, O Jacob, and your Former, O Israel: . . . 'You are my witnesses,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'even my servant whom I have chosen, . . . So you are my witnesses,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'and I am God.'" (Isa. 43:1, 10-12) Jesus knew he was born under the obligation to be a witness and also that he had been anointed with God's spirit to proclaim the year of goodwill on the part of Jehovah and the day of vengeance on the part of our God.—Isa. 61:1, 2; Luke 4:19.

Jesus proved to be Jehovah's greatest witness and qualified eminently as king. Before Pontius Pilate he made the fine public declaration: "For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth." (John 18:37; 1 Tim. 6:13) The apostle John, who stood near Jesus at his death on the stake, writes of him as "Jesus Christ, 'the Faithful Witness,' 'The first-born from the dead,' and 'The Ruler of the kings of the earth.'" In every way he was an example for his followers, Jehovah's witnesses of today.—Rev. 1:5; 3:14.

After undergoing a searching test of integrity in the wilderness, Jesus returned to Capernaum and opened up his ministry with the same words that John had opened his, namely: "Repent, for the kingdom of

the heavens has drawn near." (Or, "is at hand," AV; Matt. 4:17) As a reward for the faithful course of being a witness even to death, Jehovah had promised Jesus Christ a reward. This reward was to be a bride, not an earthly woman as a wife, but a spiritual bride, a choice group of followers, who, like him, would be faithful witnesses right down to a sacrificial death, Jesus' kind of death. (John 3:29; Rom. 6:3) Out of all those who came to him and followed him to be prospective members of the bride, Jesus chose twelve to be apostles. These he thoroughly trained and sent forth to preach: "The kingdom of the heavens has drawn near." (Matt. 10: 1-7; Mark 3:14-19; Luke 6:13-16) So along with Jesus' witnessing to Jehovah's name he also was doing Kingdom work, the work of Kingdom development, for he was teaching and training those who would be associates with him in his kingdom. His twelve apostles corresponded with the sons of the patriarch Jacob, from whom the twelve tribes of Israel descended. (Gen. 49:28) In like manner the new Christian congregation, known as spiritual Israel, which would eventually be the Kingdom organization, was to rest upon the twelve apostles of the Lamb as foundation stones, but all twelve apostolic foundation stones rested on the Chief Foundation Stone, the Messiah, Jesus Christ.—Eph. 2:20; Rev. 21:2, 9, 10, 14.

ZION'S KING PRESENTED TO HER

Besides being a Kingdom witness, Jesus Christ must be presented officially to Zion as her King. The prophecy at Zechariah 9:9 had to be fulfilled, which said: "Be very joyful, O daughter of Zion. Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem. Look! Your king himself comes to you. He is righteous, yes, saved; humble, and riding upon an ass, even upon a full-grown animal the son of a she-ass." Jesus served as

Jehovah's greatest witness on earth for three and a half years, and, as the end of his ministry neared, the middle of the seventieth week of years approached, as foretold at Daniel 9:26, 27. This prophecy had foretold that he would be cut off as a human sacrifice to God, causing the animal sacrifices and gift offerings at the temple at Jerusalem to cease to be of real value. Jesus would become, as designated by John, "the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world," a sacrifice not on the altar at Jerusalem but on God's great altar arrangement.—Heb. 13:10; 1 Pet. 1:19.

The middle of the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy arrived at Passover time, 33 C.E. Jesus as a faithful Jewish man had to attend the Passover celebration in Jerusalem. Jesus had been in Jerusalem many times before. When he was forty days old he was taken to the temple at the time of the ceremonial purification of his mother Mary, according to the Law. (Luke 2:21-38; Lev. 12:1-4) Since then he had made many visits to Jerusalem. One notable visit was in 32 C.E. to observe the festival of tabernacles, not openly, but as in secret, for even then the Jews were seeking to kill him when his time for dying had not yet come. (John 7:1-13) This time could not come until he had offered himself as King. This Passover, Nisan 14, 33 C.E., was the time for his sacrifice to be made.

A thousand years before, when King Solomon was presented to Zion as her king, he rode on a she-mule of his father, King David, and was welcomed by the people with great gladness. The apostle Matthew and his fellow apostle John describe the presentation of Jesus Christ, the Greater Solomon, as Zion's king:

"When they got close to Jerusalem and arrived at Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent forth two disciples, saying to them: 'Be on your way into the village

that is within sight of you, and you will at once find an ass tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. And if someone says anything to you, you must say, 'The Lord needs them.' At that he will immediately send them forth.' This actually took place that there might be fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet, saying: 'Tell the daughter of Zion, "Look! Your King is coming to you, mild-tempered, and mounted upon an ass, yes, upon a colt, the offspring of a beast of burden.'" So the disciples got on their way and did just as Jesus ordered them. And they brought the ass and its colt, and they put upon these their outer garments, and he seated himself upon them.

"Most of the crowd spread their outer garments on the road, while others began cutting down branches from the trees and spreading them on the road. As for the crowds, those going ahead of him and those following kept crying out: 'Save, we pray, the Son of David! Blessed is he that comes in Jehovah's name! Save him, we pray, in the heights above!' Now when he entered into Jerusalem, the whole city was set in commotion, saying: 'Who is this?' The crowds kept telling: 'This is the prophet Jesus, from Nazareth of Galilee!'"—Matt. 21:1-11.

"The great crowd that had come to the festival, on hearing that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took the branches of palm trees and went out to meet him. And they began to shout: 'Save, we pray you! Blessed is he that comes in Jehovah's name, even the king of Israel!' But when Jesus had found a young ass, he sat on it, just as it is written: 'Have no fear, daughter of Zion. Look! Your king is coming, seated upon an ass's colt.' These things his disciples took no note of at first, but when Jesus became glorified, then they called to mind that these things were written respecting him and that they did these things to him."—John 12: 12-16.

Mark 11:11 adds: "And he entered into Jerusalem, into the temple; and he looked around upon all things, and, as the hour was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve." Here Zion had official notice that the Kingdom was at hand, but she refused to recognize the King

and rejected him because of the influence of her religious leaders, who were Babylonish and against God's kingdom. Matthew 21:15, 16 informs us: "When the chief priests and the scribes saw the marvelous things he did and the boys that were crying out in the temple and saying: 'Save, we pray, the Son of David!' [therefore the heir to the throne of David] they became indignant and said to him: 'Do you hear what these are saying?' Jesus said to them: 'Yes. Did you never read this, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings you have furnished praise"?' " (Ps. 8:2) The religious leaders had, however, already decided to kill Jesus for fear that, as they said, "the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

—John 11:47-57.

EARTHLY ZION REJECTS HER KING

Here was Zion's king, the One to sit on "Jehovah's throne," in their midst. The kingdom of the heavens had indeed drawn near, but the people under the influence of their leaders would not accept him as King. The next day he returned to Jerusalem. "There he entered into the temple and started to throw out those selling and buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the benches of those selling doves; and he would not let anyone carry a utensil through the temple, but he kept teaching and saying: 'Is it not written, "My house will be called a house of prayer for all the nations"? But you have made it a cave of robbers.' And the chief priests and the scribes heard it, and they began to seek how to destroy him; for they were in fear of him, for all the crowd was continually being astounded at his teaching." (Mark 11:15-18) Thus with power and authority he cleansed the temple of the religious commercialism practiced there. What a foreboding for Babylonish religious com-

mercialists of our day, when he returns in Kingdom power!

On Passover night Judas Iscariot led the enemies of Jesus and betrayed him in the garden of Gethsemane. Then Jesus was sentenced to death in a night session of the Jewish Sanhedrin or Supreme Court in Jerusalem. In the morning, because the Jews themselves, due to Roman domination, could not execute the death penalty, the Sanhedrin turned him over to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor.—Matt. 26:47-27:14.

Upon examining Jesus, Pilate found no cause for death in him and offered to release him, as it was the custom for one person to be released from the death sentence at Passover time. Insistently the Jewish religious authorities cried out for the release, not of Jesus, but of a murderer and robber, Barabbas. (Acts 3:13-15; 13:28) They demanded that Jesus be hung on a stake and, differently from Pilate, who wanted to be free of innocent blood, they cried: "His blood come upon us and upon our children." (Matt. 27:15-26) They made the charge against Jesus that he was seditious against the Roman emperor Tiberius Caesar. Pilate in a last attempt to save Jesus said, "See! Your king!" and, "Shall I impale your king?" thinking to appeal to their Jewish nationalism. "The chief priests answered: 'We have no king but Caesar.'" —John 19:14, 15.

In taking this course of action these religious leaders of the Jews were certainly reprehensible. First, they deliberately refused to acknowledge the king Jehovah had sent and to help the Jewish people to see that their King was indeed at hand. Moreover, though they themselves claimed to be priests of God, they were seditious against God and degraded their priestly office by accepting as king the Pontifex Maximus of pagan religion. Even in Jesus'

death they did not want him to be acknowledged as King, for they objected to the sign that Governor Pilate insisted on posting over Jesus' head on the torture stake, which read: "Jesus the Nazarene the King of the Jews."—John 19:12-22.

Even though the Jewish leaders took their puny precautions by having Pilate seal the door of the memorial tomb, which may have made them feel more at ease to enjoy their formal Passover festival, they did not do away with the King of Israel, for on the third day, Nisan 16, which is the day of offering barley-harvest firstfruits to Jehovah at his temple, God himself brought forth a far finer firstfruits by raising his Son Jesus Christ from the dead.

These chief priests and other religious leaders overlooked the fact that King David himself had written at Psalm 16:10: "You will not leave my soul in Sheol. You will not allow your loyal one to see the pit." On this sixteenth day of Nisan Jesus was raised up, but no longer in a fleshly body that can be harmed and put to death by men. During the time of his fleshly presence among the Jews, which presence meant that the kingdom of the heavens had drawn near to Zion, Jesus proved his faithfulness and his qualifications to be raised up an immortal glorious spirit person. This is why the watchmen whom Pilate allowed the chief priests and Pharisees to station at the tomb could not see Jesus resurrected, for they could not see a spirit person. They did, however, behold the materialized angel who broke the sealed tomb. As the apostle Peter later wrote: "Christ died once for all time concerning sins, a righteous person for unrighteous ones, that he might lead you to God, he being put to death in the flesh, but being made alive in the spirit."—1 Pet. 3:18; Matt. 27:57-28:4, 11-15.

WHEN 'KINGDOM AT HAND' NOT PREACHED

Jesus gave ample proof of his resurrection to his faithful disciples by appearing in many instances through the miraculous materialization of a human body. Then he went to the heavens to sit at the right hand of his Father, expecting or waiting till the time that he was to take over his power as the heavenly king. (Ps. 110:1, 2; Heb. 10:12, 13) On the festival day of Pentecost, the fiftieth day after Jesus' resurrection, the apostle Peter stood up and quoted Psalm 16:10 and then said: "[David] saw beforehand and spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he forsaken in Hades [Greek translation for the Hebrew *Sheol*] nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God resurrected, of which fact we are all witnesses."—Acts 2:29-33.

After Jesus' ascension to heaven the King was no longer at hand and therefore the kingdom of the heavens was no longer at hand. In fact, Jesus was not now exercising kingly authority except over those who were members of the Christian congregation. For this reason Jesus' disciples did not announce "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" after his death. Jesus had told them that he would go away and he would come back in glorious kingdom power and he gave the disciples parables to this effect while he was on earth. (John 14:3; Matt. 25:31; Luke 19:11-27) The King would not again appear in the flesh in earthly Zion. The Kingdom was now something in the future. It was to administer the affairs of the entire earth from heaven, heavenly Zion, in due time. There was now no king upon "Jehovah's throne" and there would not be until the seven "times of the Gentiles" had expired, which time would come in 1914 C.E. (Dan. 4:25; Ps. 2:6, 8; 110:2; Rev. 12:5, 10) That the Kingdom was not ruling and that Jesus' disciples could not consider themselves

kings even though they were in line for the heavenly kingdom to rule ultimately as kings was definitely shown by the apostle Paul when he reprimanded the Corinthian Christians, saying: "You men already have your fill, do you? You are rich already, are you? You have begun ruling as kings without us, have you? And I wish indeed that you had begun ruling as kings, that we also might rule with you as kings."—1 Cor. 4:8; 2:2.

'KINGDOM AT HAND' NOW

However, all evidences now show that the King has taken his power in heaven and has begun his reign and therefore we again hear proclaimed world wide the message, "The kingdom of the heavens has drawn near." Just as with the preaching of Jesus when the kingdom of heaven was at hand in the days of earthly Zion or Jerusalem, so in these days the proclamation "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" is accompanied by the declaration of judgment on the Babylonish religious leaders. Particularly does it expose those who claim to believe in God's kingdom and to preach it, but who do not want its rule and who try to block the news of the

'Kingdom established' from reaching the people, thereby hindering others from recognizing the Kingdom.—Isa. 61:2.

Just as Jesus did many miraculous works of healing and other powerful works of cleansing the temple and saving the people when he was at hand then, so in a complete and earth-wide sense he will do so during his Kingdom reign. Before this healing can come, however, those who have opposed the Kingdom must be cleared out; first of all, Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion, after which the proclamation can be made, "Praise Jah, you people, because Jehovah our God, the Almighty, has begun to rule as king." (Rev. 19:6) Yes, he will rule in an even wider way than at present, for then there will be no religious rival to true worship. Next, he will reign in the fullest extent when even the political governments of the world which now oppose his kingdom will be wiped out and the glorious thousand-year reign of Christ begins, in which those 144,000 whom he has chosen will reign with him and will be able to administer to all families of the earth the blessings promised by the Abrahamic covenant.—Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:29.



You Who Preach "Do Not Steal," Do You Steal?

✓ How effective do you think a sermon on the wrongness of stealing would be if, on the very next day, the church sanctioned the stealing of property and goods in order to sell them again to their owners in an effort to obtain "unwilling contributions"? This is the method one Catholic church in a suburb of Managua, Nicaragua, has contrived in order to force all the people in its neighborhood, regardless of what religion they may profess, to contribute to the church during "Holy Week." Anything that the "holy thieves" can lay their hands on is carried off to the church to be redeemed only after a contribution is given for it. This, of course, has given opportunity to many "not so holy thieves" to carry off personal belongings too.

No wonder the Catholic Church has not proved to be a force against thievery, for, as the apostle Paul said, "The name of God is being blasphemed on account of you people among the nations."—Rom. 2:21-24.

JEHOVATH

Has Dealt Rewardingly With Me

AS TOLD
BY MABELLE ILETT

I AM eighty-seven years old now and often lean on the arms of others, so it is not easy for me to get about. But I was at the recent "Word of Truth" Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses at Yankee Stadium, New York City. There one of the nurses from the Watch Tower Society's headquarters wheeled me in a chair around the entire circumference of the ball field so I could get a good view of the crowd. How my heart rejoiced to look up into the stands and see tens of thousands of witnesses of Jehovah! Yes, for many reasons my physical feebleness is more than offset by the robust joy in my heart, which cries out like the psalmist David of old: "I will sing to Jehovah, for he has dealt rewardingly with me."—Ps. 13:6.

It was a printed invitation to a public Bible talk that helped me take my first step toward a life of spiritual rewards. In the spring of 1922 a leaflet was left at my home, inviting people to hear a talk entitled "Where Are the Dead?" I wanted very much to hear this discourse and wondered if my husband Ambrose would consent to taking me to hear it.

When Ambrose came home to lunch one

day, I showed him the tract. He told me that he had been reading a book entitled "The Divine Plan of the Ages," published by the organization sponsoring the public lecture. How wonderful! I thought. Could this book contain the truth that I had been looking for so long? Would this lecture aid me in my search for accurate knowledge? The answers came soon.

We both attended the lecture. How refreshing that first meeting was! It delighted me to hear Scriptural evidence disproving such doctrines as hellfire and purgatory. When we arrived home, I exclaimed: "Did you ever hear anything so wonderful, dear? I'm so happy to know that there's no burning hell or purgatory!" He agreed. Now my thoughts were: Where could I find more of this wonderful information? Just exactly what is God's purpose? What must I do to please God fully? Would God show me the way? He did.

It happened that a patient of my husband (he was a medical doctor) saw us at that public lecture. She called me on the telephone the next day to tell me that there was a Bible study in the neighborhood. They were studying the Bible with the aid of the book *The Harp of God*. I told my husband about this, and we started attending the neighborhood Bible study.

I delighted in this book, *The Harp of God!* The preface to the book said: "The reader should consider each point herein made with his Bible before him, proving each proposition, that he may be thoroughly convinced in his own mind." I did that, looking up over seven hundred Scripture citations. Clearly and quickly I learned about the creation of the earth and man, the Abrahamic promise, the birth of Jesus Christ, the ransom, the return of Christ and the glorification of "the church."

BEGINNING IN THE FIELD MINISTRY

Because of studying and meeting regularly with Jehovah's people, it was not

long before I realized that I, too, should be a proclaimer of these glad tidings. I felt like Jeremiah of old. If I held the message within me, it would be like a fire in my bones. So I just had to tell others what I learned about God's purposes, and Jehovah blessed me for so doing.

Though I was still a beginner in Bible knowledge, I would approach the house-holders and tell them the truth from the Bible, as I knew it. I will always remember with appreciation how a certain brother would watch me as I worked from house to house in rural territories. If he sensed that I was at a loss for words, he would quickly leave his car, come to stand by my side and fill in with the knowledge I lacked. This was a loving provision and a fine support for me until I knew more about Jehovah's Word of truth and could defend his truth more maturely.

Our field ministry in northern New York State reminded me of the way Jesus Christ preached. As Jesus did, so we went from village to village, town to town and city to city. Those days from 1923 to 1929 were filled with rewards for me, and I shall never forget them. Jehovah indeed dealt rewardingly with me, and now more rewards were in store.

In 1929 my husband and I made a far-reaching decision with regard to our future in Jehovah's service. The choice was whether to continue in our secular work or to expand our Kingdom ministry to other fields. What would we do? Our decision was to sell our home in Watertown, New York, with its many comforts, and expand our privileges of preaching the good news of God's kingdom. Though we felt some sadness at leaving behind dear friends and the patients of my husband, serving Jehovah was more important to us. After all, had we not dedicated our lives to him? Desiring to build our lives around that dedication vow, we wanted to go to oth-

er places to serve our wonderful God, Jehovah.

So we entered the full-time preaching work in 1929. Our ministry took us to Maine, Vermont and New Hampshire in the summer, and Florida in the winter. We witnessed to people, offering them such Bible-study aids as the books *Deliverance!*, *Creation* and *The Harp of God*. What wonderful instruments they were both in feeding our minds with the precious truths of our God, Jehovah, and in aiding others to seek Him! When we found any persons very much interested, we would always call back and see how they were getting along. Our ministry in this field continued until the end of the year 1931. Then Jehovah rewarded us with more privileges of service.

MISSIONARY WORK IN CUBA

We had heard that there was a need for Kingdom proclaimers in Cuba; so we offered to go. With a missionary spirit like that of the apostle Paul, four of us went to serve as missionaries in Cuba. We felt the same excitement that graduates of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead do today, at the prospect of going as missionaries to foreign lands. How well I remember packing the car with belongings for the trip! We traveled by car to Florida and took a ship from there to Cuba.

One outstanding point of our work in Cuba I fondly remember; this was a convention that we had on November 9, 1932. Brother Rutherford gave the public talk to a peak attendance of ten persons! The assembly was held in a private home in Havana, and we had a fine time together, rejoicing in Jehovah and in his goodness. I remember how forcefully Brother Rutherford spoke on Bible truths. At this time he instructed us to spread the good news to all parts of Cuba, to cover the whole island. He also instructed us that in giving a witness to the Kingdom we should not

pass up the influential people in Cuba.

We were obedient to these instructions and witnessed to politicians, doctors, lawyers, businessmen, priests and nuns, as well as to the preachers of Protestantism. Some were kind, others were not; but we still preached the good news whether they heard with pleasure or annoyance. I remember one preacher telling me that I was very presumptuous in coming to the doors with this message. I replied: "The message of the Kingdom is for everyone, and I do not feel presumptuous in coming to your door." Such rejections did not discourage me.

Jehovah continued to bless our work in Cuba, and, in our car, we covered virtually all the island, offering Bible study-aids such as the Spanish edition of *The Harp of God*. I thank the Lord for such wonderful foreign experience! But now Jehovah had more for us to do in His service. He dealt rewardingly with us by enabling us to enter into a new field of service.

BETHEL SERVICE

On October 23, 1933, my husband and I were visiting the Van Amburghs at Brooklyn Bethel, the headquarters of the Watch Tower Society. After breakfast, the Society's president invited Brothers Van Ambburgh and Ilett to his office. Two hours passed. What could they be talking about? I wondered. Finally, Brother Rutherford came to the Van Amburghs' room, where I was, and he looked me in the eye (as he always did when talking with a person) and asked directly: "How would you like to come to Bethel and serve here with Brother Ilett? Occasionally members of our dear family get sick and we need a doctor here." I was surprised. I never expected anything like that! I answered: "If it is Jehovah's will, yes, I will come to Bethel." Thus we both entered into the rewards of Bethel service.

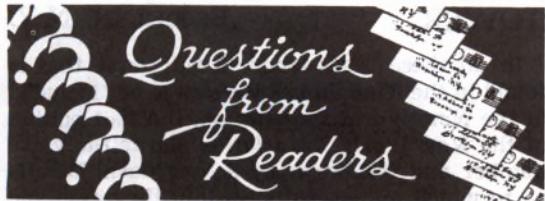
My years at Bethel have proved to be delightful ones, bringing me a variety of privileges. I served at the Bethel reception desk, from time to time, for many years. What a pleasure it was to greet Jehovah's dear people as they visited the Society's headquarters! What joy and satisfaction I had in answering their questions and directing them to various places in the Bethel home!

My husband Ambrose served at Bethel faithfully until his death in 1957. Although I miss him, I am not alone. Jehovah has dealt rewardingly with me, and full-time service helps make up for any personal losses that we may encounter in life. I live with almost 800 other witnesses of Jehovah, and I rejoice to see among them the students of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, busily moving about, studying God's Word to make themselves effective missionaries of the good news.

Though I have grown feeble, I would not think of giving up the work of witnessing to God's kingdom. I write letters, sending out Bible literature, trying to cultivate interest in those who are favorably disposed.

I have fond memories of yesteryear when Jehovah's visible modern-day organization was younger, but I live joyfully in the present, thankful for all of Jehovah's present-day goodness, looking confidently and with faith to the future.

How glad I am that my decisions in life have been built around my dedication vow to Jehovah! Those right decisions have led me to one reward after another in Jehovah's service. Jehovah has dealt so rewardingly with me that I can ask and declare, as did David: "What shall I repay to Jehovah for all his benefits to me? The cup of grand salvation I shall take up, and on the name of Jehovah I shall call. My vows I shall pay to Jehovah, yes, in front of all his people."—Ps. 116:12-14.



Questions from Readers

- In what way were the evildoers who were impaled alongside Jesus Christ fastened to the torture stake? Were they nailed or tied?
—R. P., England.

It is possible that they were tied to the stake. Regarding Roman methods of impalement, *The Imperial Bible Dictionary* (Vol. I, page 377) states: "When the place of doom was reached, the criminal was stripped nearly naked, and either bound or nailed to the cross, which was then hoisted and set up." If Jewish impalement procedures had been followed in the case of Christ and the evildoers, they would first have been killed and then their corpses would have been placed on the stake. (Deut. 21:22, 23; Josh. 10:26) However, they were impaled while alive. (Luke 23:32-46) Hence, their impalements were performed according to Roman methods, which included either tying or nailing.

We know that Jesus Christ was nailed to the torture stake. On occasions following his death and resurrection, Jesus materialized fleshly bodies bearing the marks of such impalement. In one instance, he invited Thomas to inspect the wounds inflicted in his hands by means of the nails. (John 20:19-29) Yet, while the Scriptures show that Jesus was nailed to his torture stake, they do not specifically say whether the evildoers impaled beside him were nailed or tied to their stakes. So, on page 141 of its book *From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained*, for example, the Watch Tower Society has shown regard for Biblical indications as well as acknowledgment of the fact that Roman impalement methods included both nailing and tying. There Jesus is depicted as nailed to his torture stake, whereas the illustration shows the evildoers fastened by the simplest method, by tying.

- Why is Matthew 17:21 omitted from the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*?
—L. F., U.S.A.

This and some other texts, or portions thereof, in the Christian Greek Scriptures are not included in the *New World Translation* because

they are not found in the Greek text prepared by Cambridge University scholars B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort. This master text was the one principally used by the New World Bible Translation Committee in rendering the Greek Scriptures into English in the 1950 and 1961 editions of the *New World Translation*.

Consideration of Matthew 17:21 will prove to be enlightening. While this text is not included in the *New World Translation*, there is a helpful footnote on it in the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures*, 1950 edition. There one finds a translation of the reading of this text according to the Codex Ephraemi rescriptus of the fifth century C.E. and the Cambridge Manuscript (Cantabrigensis) of the sixth century C.E. It reads as follows: "However, this kind does not come out except by prayer and fasting." This is given as part of Jesus' answer to his disciples when they asked why they had been unable to expel a demon in a certain case. It is noteworthy, though, that various important manuscripts omit these words. Among them are the Sinaitic Manuscript and the Vatican Manuscript No. 1209, both of the fourth century C.E., and hence older than the sources just quoted. Therefore, verse 21 of Matthew, chapter 17, lacks adequate ancient textual support.

It might be observed in passing, however, that some authorities have viewed it as an interpolation from Mark 9:29. This chapter of Mark contains a parallel account of the same incident and includes this detail omitted by Matthew.

The *New World Translation* is not alone in omitting Matthew 17:21, or in showing its questionable nature in an explanatory footnote. Among other translations doing so are the *American Standard Version*, *An American Translation*, *Revised Standard Version* and *The New English Bible*.

Evidently, then, copyists made some additions to the Greek text of the Bible at times, being more prone to do this than to omit material. However, careful Biblical research has resulted in uncovering such scribal elaborations. Consequently, the most dependable Greek texts are found to be the most condensed.

From this we should not take the view that the text of the Christian Greek Scriptures has suffered measurably in transmission. Scholar Jack Finegan has stated: "The total number of New Testament manuscripts is very impressive. . . . No other Greek book has anything

like this amount of testimony to its text. It is true that there are numerous textual variations among these different New Testament manuscripts, but the majority of them are of a relatively minor character . . . As a matter of fact, it has been estimated by careful students that there are substantial variations in hardly more than a thousandth part of the entire text."—*Light from the Ancient Past*, page 352.

"Keep my commandments and continue living, and my law like the pupil of your eyes. Tie them upon your fingers, and write them upon the tablet of your heart. Say to wisdom: 'You are my sister'; and may you call understanding itself 'Kinswoman.'"

—Prov. 7:2-4.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

"YOU WILL RECEIVE THE UNFADABLE CROWN"

Those who read the October 1, 1960, issue of this magazine will recall the life story there published of Giovanni DeCecca. Brother DeCecca died on the morning of November 26, 1965, at the age of 85. Before immigrating to the United States in the year 1900, he had been a shepherd boy in Italy from the age of five. In 1906 he dedicated his life to Jehovah God and shortly thereafter began spending his full time in feeding sheeplike persons with Bible truths, particularly in Italian-speaking areas. He was called to the Watch Tower Society's Brooklyn headquarters in 1909, where he continued to serve until his death. In 1918, he was among a group of eight principal members of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society who were unjustly sentenced to imprisonment in the United States penitentiary in Atlanta, Georgia. Along with the others, he was exonerated and released the following year. Thus for nearly sixty years Brother DeCecca faithfully served as a true shepherd of God's sheep, as one of the anointed remnant of Christ's followers. He trusted in the Scriptural promise that "when the chief shepherd has been made manifest, you will receive the unfadable crown of glory." (1 Pet. 5:4) We rejoice with him in the fulfillment of this promise.

In all these cases where a full verse that is found in the *King James Version* is not included in the *New World Translation*, the 1961 edition of the *New World Translation* shows the verse number and follows it by a long dash. Details as to which manuscripts contain the verse and which ancient ones do not can be found in the footnotes of the large-print edition of the *New World Translation*.—See also *The Watchtower* of February 1, 1962, pages 88-92.

FIELD MINISTRY

One who has come to know Jehovah God through study of his Word, the Bible, knows that the worship of God ought to come first in his life. (Matt. 4:10; 6:33) To aid other sincere persons to appreciate the importance of wholehearted worship of the true God, throughout January Jehovah's witnesses will be offering to all persons a year's subscription for *The Watchtower*, with three Bible-study booklets, for \$1.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS
 February 13: The Value of Right Association Through Congregational Meetings. Page 41.
 February 20: Guard Against Bad Association.