

# The **WATCHTOWER**

DECEMBER 15, 1965

Semimonthly

NEGLECTING THE HOUSE  
OF THE CREATOR  
OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

"WE SHOULD NOT NEGLECT  
THE HOUSE OF OUR GOD"

*Announcing*  
**JEHOVAH'S  
KINGDOM**



**SPECIAL:**  
**Seven Years in Red China's Prisons**  
**—Yet Firm in Faith!**



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

## THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## The OTHER SIDE of the COIN

EVERY coin has two sides, a top and a bottom. Fittingly, they are also called a "head" and a "tail," for they complete each other. In fact, "head" often implies the existence of the "tail," as when the Bible says, "The aged and highly respected one is the head, and the prophet giving false instruction is the tail." (Isa. 9:15) Thus also, "top" implies the existence of "bottom"; an "inside," an "outside"; an "east," a "west," and so forth.

A similar principle might be said to hold true in finance. All assets imply liabilities, depending upon how you view them. For example, in its annual statement a bank must have its assets balance its liabilities. Among its assets might be listed deposits amounting to many thousands of dollars; but these at the same time represent liabilities, since the patrons of the bank can ask back their deposits, and the money actually belongs to them, the bank paying interest for the privilege of using it.

This principle of there being the other side of the coin might be said to apply also to ever so many of the commands that

we find in the Word of God—and elsewhere too, for that matter—and this especially as regards those that place certain obligations on persons in their relationship with others. Every command placed on one group of persons that benefits another group might be said to represent an asset to the ones benefited. But inherent in such benefits almost invariably lies an implied obligation or liability on the part of the ones so benefited. This is primarily because of the rule that we are to do to others as we would have them do to us.—Luke 6:31.

For example, according to God's Word the husband is the head of the family, and his wife is likened to his body. Accordingly, wives are told to be in subjection to their husbands in everything. (Eph. 5:23, 24) But let no husband gloat over this. Why not? Because implicit in it is an obligation, a liability, as it were. It obligates him to treat his wife as his own body, to love her as himself, to care for her, cherish her, feed and clothe her, provide a roof over her head and protect her from harm. So the asset that accrues to the husband by reason of his headship and his wife's subjection to him implies no small obligation, a balancing liability, the other side of the coin. This should serve to make him a modest, humble head!

The same, of course, is true as regards the command to husbands to love their

wives as their own bodies, as Jesus "Christ also loved the congregation and delivered up himself for it." (Eph. 5:25) Does a wife complain that her husband does not love her as he does his own body? Then she might ask herself, Am I giving my husband the cooperation that I should? Am I in subjection to him as is his own body? Certainly his own body does not complain continually or nag him about things. The Bible says: "Better is it to dwell upon a corner of a roof than with a contentious wife, although in a house in common." (Prov. 21:9) So with the asset or advantage that accrues to the wife by reason of the Biblical command for her husband to love her as his own body, there is implied the obligation of the wife to cooperate as fully as possible with her head. This, of course, will make it all the easier for her husband to love his wife as he does himself!

However, let no one think that negligence on the part of one justifies negligence on the part of the other. It does not! The obligations remain regardless of what the other one may or may not do, but justice and love of neighbor indicate that each should do his part.

The principle of the other side of the coin also applies to the commands that the Bible gives as to the proper conduct between the sexes. The Word of God gives exceedingly wise, sound counsel in such matters, for it was inspired by the One who understands human nature better than anyone else in the universe. For example, it tells men in the Christian congregation to treat the "younger women as sisters with all chasteness." It also warns that for a man to keep looking at a woman so as to have a passion for her is to commit adultery in his heart.—1 Tim. 5:2; Matt. 5:28.

Such commands as these might be said to represent an asset or advantage for the younger women, all women in fact, as it

gives them a sense of security and freedom, especially within the Christian congregation. But with this advantage also comes an obligation, a liability for them. What is it? That they conduct and dress themselves as sisters of the men, not as sirens. As the apostle Paul counseled Christian women: "I desire the women to adorn themselves in well-arranged dress, with modesty and soundness of mind."—1 Tim. 2:9.

The principle of the other side of the coin might be said to apply in particular to all relations involving authority and subjection. Thus with the direct obligation of students to pay attention goes the implied obligation on the part of the teacher to teach with skill and enthusiasm so as to hold the attention of the students. But regardless of what either does, as has already been observed, each has his obligation: the teacher, to give his best regardless of whether the students pay close attention or not; the students, to pay close attention even though the teacher is lacking in skill and enthusiasm.

So also in the Christian congregation. Its members are commanded to "be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive." But with this command goes the implied obligation to take the lead in such a way as to make obedience not unduly onerous, for those taking the lead have to render an account as to those in their charge.—Heb. 13:17.

Appreciating that there is the other side of the coin, that there is an implied obligation for us in ever so many commandments that seem to be in our individual favor, will help us to show empathy. It will make for better understanding, better co-operation, more harmony and efficiency. It is a way in which we can help the other person to meet his obligations; thus we will be obeying the rule to do to others as we would have them do to us.

# NEGLECTING

**T**HIS "house" has to do with the biggest reality in all existence. What is that? The great Creator of all created things, visible and invisible to us. Even the known universe, which has been brought within our range of vision by telescope and microscope, not to speak of radio, is too big for us to leave out of account its Creator.

As regards bigness, do you know what a "quasar" is? Recently astronomers have discovered what they have called Quasi-stellar Radio Sources, or, quasars, for short. These are astronomical objects that emit an enormous amount of energy in the form of light and in radio waves. Looking like a star, a quasar "is apparently millions of times larger and billions of times brighter. Some quasars pulse rhythmically." There are about forty known quasars, the discovery of the most distant one of which was announced on May 17, 1965, and which is known as 3C-9.\* It is stated that this celestial object is so far away that it seems to be close to the beginning of universal time. "The light is so far away that the light from it began to journey to earth



# The House OF THE **CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH**

soon after the postulated birth of the universe." The life of those quasars probably ended during the billions of years that were required for their light to reach our earth. Says the report: "The observed rate at which the universe is expanding suggests that it was born in a single point some thirteen billion years ago—roughly three times the age of the earth."—New York Times, May 18, 1965, pages one and two.

From the above discovery, what do we reasonably conclude? This: That God the Creator of such tremendously large things is too big to occupy a house here on earth. To speak of such a God as occupying a man-made house on our tiny earth sounds ridiculous, and rightly so to twentieth-century scientists. How could such a God make himself so small? And yet the clergy of Christendom speak of God as making himself so tiny as to occupy the minute egg cell in the womb of a virgin Jewish girl, Mary. The Holy Bible itself does not

\* The symbol 3C-9 refers to radio source No. 9 in the third Cambridge University Catalogue of Radio Sources.

1. With what reality does this "house" have to do?  
2. (a) How does a recently discovered "quasar" compare with a star? (b) To astronomers, what does the expansion of the universe suggest as to how it got here?

3, 4. (a) From this, what do we conclude as to God's occupying a house on earth? (b) What does Christendom teach as to God's making himself small, but what did Paul tell the pagan Athenians?

teach such a thing. What it does teach is that God the Creator transferred the life of his only-begotten Son from heaven to the womb of this Jewish virgin to become the man Jesus, who later came to be called Christ. According to what the angel Gabriel announced to the virgin Jewess Mary, her firstborn son was, not God himself, but the Son of God. She was, not the Mother of God, but the mother of the Son of God. (See Luke 1:26-33.) But as regards God the Creator himself, the Christian apostle Paul said to pagan Greeks:

<sup>4</sup> "Men of Athens, I behold that in all things you seem to be more given to the fear of the deities than others are. . . . The God that made the world and all the things in it, being, as this One is, Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in handmade temples, neither is he attended to by human hands as if he needed anything, because he himself gives to all persons life and breath and all things. And he made out of one man every nation of men, to dwell upon the entire surface of the earth . . . Seeing, therefore, that we are the progeny of God, we ought not to imagine that the Divine Being is like gold or silver or stone, like something sculptured by the art and contrivance of man."—Acts 17:22-29.

<sup>5</sup> So the God about whom the Holy Bible teaches does not occupy an earthly material building in the way that some gold, silver or stone statue occupies a temple, pagoda or wat of one of the idolatrous religions of this world. However, the true God of heaven and earth can sanctify a tabernacle or temple that has been built in obedience to his commands. He can also put his name on such a building that he has thus sanctified or made holy. Such a temple can therefore be spoken of as "the house of God," not a home in which he

5. (a) Does God occupy a building as an idol occupies a temple? (b) What can God do with a building where his worship is carried on, as in the case of Solomon's temple?

dwells literally in person, but a house where his pure worship can be carried on. This was true of the temple that King Solomon completed in Jerusalem in the year 1027 before our Common Era. In answer to King Solomon's prayer, God said to him: "I have heard your prayer and your request for favor with which you requested favor before me. I have sanctified this house that you have built by putting my name there to time indefinite; and my eyes and my heart will certainly prove to be there always."—1 Ki. 9:3.

<sup>6</sup> When King Solomon, the temple builder, was dedicating this magnificent religious building on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem, he plainly said that he did not expect the mighty Creator of heaven and earth to occupy this temple in a literal way. In his prayer of dedication King Solomon said: "But will God truly dwell upon the earth? Look! The heavens, yes, the heaven of the heavens, themselves cannot contain you; how much less, then, this house that I have built! And you must turn toward the prayer of your servant and to his request for favor, O Jehovah my God, to listen to the entreating cry and to the prayer with which your servant is praying before you today; that your eyes may prove to be opened toward this house night and day, toward the place of which you said, 'My name will prove to be there,' to listen to the prayer with which your servant prays toward this place."—1 Ki. 8:27-29.

<sup>7</sup> King Solomon was reasonable. We too must be reasonable, just as the Holy Bible is, in the way that we think about God's house. The temple that King Solomon built housed no man-made statue to represent God. The presence of Jehovah God at this

6. What did Solomon pray for God to do regarding the temple that Solomon had built?

7, 8. (a) How was God's presence represented in Solomon's temple? (b) How does this agree with the Ten Commandments and God's bigness?

temple was symbolized by what has been called the Shekinah light, a light that miraculously illuminated the innermost compartment of the temple, the Most Holy. When the high priest went in there each year on the Atonement Day to sprinkle the sacrificial blood of atonement before the sacred ark of the covenant, the high priest was privileged to behold this miraculous light.—Lev. 16:11-17.

<sup>8</sup> Aside from that, there was no statue or image in the temple of Jehovah to represent him. In fact, the first and second of his Ten Commandments absolutely forbade the making and idolizing of handmade images or statues. (Ex. 20:1-6) This agrees with the fact that the living and true God wants worship by his creatures direct and he is too big to be housed by any man-made temple.

<sup>9</sup> After the first temple was dedicated in Jerusalem, God said in warning to King Solomon its builder and to his royal successors: "If you yourselves and your sons should definitely turn back from following me and not keep my commandments and my statutes that I have put before you men, and you actually go and serve other gods and bow down to them, I will also cut Israel off from upon the surface of the ground that I have given to them; and the house that I have sanctified to my name I shall throw away from before me, and Israel will indeed become a proverbial saying and a taunt among all the peoples. And this house itself will become heaps of ruins. Everyone passing by it will stare in amazement and will certainly whistle and say, 'For what reason did Jehovah do like that to this land and this house?'" —1 Ki. 9:6-8.

<sup>10</sup> The thing here warned of actually happened to the temple built by King Solomon.

9. What did God say in warning to Solomon regarding the temple?

10, 11. (a) What shows whether this warning of God was an idle threat? (b) Can we lightly brush this historical fact aside, and what does Paul have to say regarding this?

This was because the kings of Israel, with few exceptions, defiled and profaned Jehovah's house or temple. In the summer of the year 607 B.C.E. it was laid in ruins by the Babylonian armies under King Nebuchadnezzar. Had Israel treated God's house with due respect, this would not have taken place. But the Israelites did not respect the house on which God had put his name Jehovah, and so his warning proved to be no mere idle threat. For seventy years, from 607 to 537 B.C.E., it lay in ruins while the deported Israelites were exiles in the distant land of Babylonia. Can we of today lightly brush this historical fact aside as if having no meaning for us now? No; for the analytical commentator on Israelite history, the Christian apostle Paul, warns us:

<sup>11</sup> "Now these things became our examples, for us not to be persons desiring injurious things, even as they desired them. Neither become idolaters, as some of them did; . . . Neither let us practice fornication, as some of them committed fornication, . . . Neither let us put Jehovah to the test, as some of them put him to the test, . . . Neither be murmurers, just as some of them murmured, only to perish by the destroyer. Now these things went on befalling them as examples, and they were written for a warning to us upon whom the ends of the systems of things have arrived. Consequently let him that thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall." —1 Cor. 10:6-12.

#### NEGLECTING THE REBUILT HOUSE

<sup>12</sup> Future generations are apt to repeat the mistakes of previous generations, unless they take to heart the lessons taught by past history, especially Bible history. So, like people of the past, they suffer the same or similar bad consequences for the

12. Like what generation of Jews do we not want to be, but why do we want to be like Governor Nehemiah of Judah?

same bad conduct toward God's house. We of the present generation should desire to be like Nehemiah, a governor of the province of Judah in the fifth century B.C.E. He took vigorous steps to halt the abandoning or neglecting of God's house among His chosen people. This was not Solomon's temple, which had been destroyed in the seventh century B.C.E., but was the temple that had been rebuilt in the sixth century B.C.E. after the remnant of worshipful Jews returned from the land of Babylon to Jerusalem. After mighty Babylon fell to the Medes and Persians in 539 B.C.E., the land of Judah became a Persian province under Cyrus the Great. In 455 B.C.E. King Artaxerxes of Persia appointed Nehemiah to govern the province of Judah and Jerusalem. Nehemiah did not ignore Jewish history up till then. He did not want the restored Jews of his generation to suffer calamity for mistakes like those of their ancestors. To that end he used the power of his governorship.

<sup>13</sup> It was not Nehemiah's fault that this rebuilt temple in Jerusalem suffered destruction by the Roman legions under General Titus in the year 70 of our Common Era. The temple of Jehovah that was then destroyed has never been rebuilt, and today we find on its former location a different structure known as the Dome of the Rock, dedicated to the Allah of the Moslems or Mohammedans. An investigation of the causes for this uncovers that it resulted from a misuse or abuse of the rebuilt temple of Jehovah. Truly Nehemiah had been concerned aright and he had not taken matters any too seriously. We do well to examine what measures he took.

<sup>14</sup> First, Nehemiah enlisted the efforts of the restored Jews to rebuild the pro-

tective walls of Jerusalem, in fifty-two days. Then he turned his attention more to the things of the temple and to the spiritual condition of the people of Judah. (Neh. 6:15 to 7:5; 8:1-9) In the lunar month following the completion of the walls of Jerusalem, namely, on the twenty-fourth day of the month Tishri, the people who had just finished celebrating the festival of booths at Jerusalem gathered together in a more serious mood, "with fasting and with sackcloth and dirt upon themselves."—Neh. 9:1.

<sup>15</sup> By that time the writing of all the inspired Hebrew Scriptures (39 books) had been completed, with the exception of the books of Nehemiah and Malachi. However, on this solemn occasion there was a reading from only the "book of the law" (the five books of Moses) for a fourth part of the daylight period (three hours), after which they made confession of the sins of both themselves and their forefathers, and also bowed down in worship before Jehovah their God. Then prayer was offered up for the whole people by some ministerial Levites who stood upon a raised platform. The prayer closed with this statement, as recorded in Nehemiah 9:36-38:

<sup>16</sup> "Look! We are today slaves; and as for the land that you gave to our forefathers to eat its fruitage and its good things, look! we are slaves upon it, and its produce is abounding for the kings that you have put over us because of our sins, and over our bodies they are ruling and over our domestic animals, according to their liking, and we are in great distress. So in view of all this we are contracting a trustworthy arrangement, both in writing and attested by the seal of our princes, our Levites and our priests."

13. What happened to God's temple in 70 C.E., and what shows whether Nehemiah was at fault?

14. What building work did Nehemiah first take care of, and on Tishri 24 thereafter how did the Israelite celebrators deport themselves?

15, 16. (a) On this occasion what was read, and there was a confession of what? (b) The prayer then offered closed with what reference to slavery and to a "trustworthy arrangement"?

<sup>17</sup> Nehemiah himself was one of the princes or heads of the people to attest by seal to the binding power of this trustworthy arrangement in writing. All the rest of the people, clad as they were in sackcloth and with dirt upon themselves, backed up their princes, their priests and representative Levites, and put themselves under oath and the liability to a curse with regard to this trustworthy arrangement, all being determined to bring themselves into harmony with God's laws and requirements.—Neh. 10:1-29.

<sup>18</sup> In this way they acknowledged again that they were obligated to avoid all mixed marriages with the pagan neighbors inside the land and roundabout. They would also insist on observing the weekly sabbath day and the sabbath year every seventh year with its cancellation of all debts owed by their Israelite brothers. And as for the "house of our God," the sixty-one-year-old rebuilt temple of Jerusalem, they imposed upon themselves a head tax of a third of a shekel (about 20c in silver) each year toward the expenses of the temple, to maintain the services rendered there. Also, much wood needed to be provided for the fire of the altar on which the many sacrifices were offered each day; and the providing of the amounts needed regularly was distributed among the people.

17. Who joined in sealing this written arrangement, and how did the people back up those sealing it?  
 18. What was determined upon with reference to marriage, the sabbaths, financial support of God's house, and wood for the altar?

<sup>19</sup> Besides that, there were the firstfruits that the law of God commanded to be presented by the Israelites, the firstfruits of their fields and of their orchards, and the firstfruits of their flocks and herds and also of the human womb, their first-born sons.

<sup>20</sup> These offerings were in addition to the tenth part or tithe of their increase each year, to support the priests and the ministerial Levites who regularly served at the "house of our God." Even the Levites who served at the temple were under law to offer up a tithe or tenth part of what they received, this to go to the priests, so that thus the temple Levites shared in the tithing arrangement and made their proper contribution in support of God's house. (Num. 18:26-32)

At the temple was where the "utensils of the sanctuary" were and also the priests to use such, besides the gatekeepers and the singers. All these needed material support, in payment for their spiritual services.

<sup>21</sup> A neglect in rendering all these necessary things to support the temple servants and to maintain the temple operations would be a neglecting of the house or temple of Jehovah God. Especially now, in the face of the attested "trustworthy arrangement" in writing and the oath and the liability to a curse from God as now undertaken by the Israelites, they

- 19, 20. (a) What other presentations were to be made according to God's law in addition to the tithe? (b) All such material support was rendered in payment for what services?  
 21. What would a neglect in rendering all those things mean, and why would the Israelites not want to be guilty of such neglect now?



Bringing material support for the temple servants

should not again become guilty of such neglect. Nehemiah the governor of Judah included himself under the obligation when he said: "We [not, you] should not neglect the house of our God."—Neh. 10: 30-39.

#### WORTH REMEMBERING AND OBSERVING

<sup>22</sup> What a powerful statement worth remembering and observing is Nehemiah's statement to Jews who were dedicated as a nation to Jehovah God and who were professing to be his worshipers! How prone the fallen human flesh is to give in to materialism and to overlook the spiritual interests and benefits and thus to fall into a neglecting of God's house! Governor Nehemiah found that out. After serving as governor for twelve years he returned to the royal palace of the Persian king, namely, "in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes the king of [conquered] Babylon." (Neh. 13:6) Then after an absence from Jerusalem, the length of which he does not tell, he returned to Judah and Jerusalem with permission of the Persian king. He himself had not lost interest in God's house, but sadly he found out that the people in Judah had lost interest.

<sup>23</sup> Eliashib the high priest had admitted an enemy Ammonite, Tobiah, who had opposed the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, into the temple. He had also become a relative of Tobiah and had assigned to his personal use one of the dining halls in the temple courtyard, where formerly supplies for the support of the temple servants used to be stored. This was contrary to God's command in Deuteronomy 23:3-6. What seemed all right to the temple high priest was tolerated by the people. But not by Nehemiah! He tells us: "It seemed very

bad to me. So I threw all the furniture of Tobiah's house outside the dining hall. After that I said the word and they cleansed the dining halls; and I proceeded to put back there the utensils of the house of the true God, with the grain offering and the frankincense."—Neh. 13:4-9.

<sup>24</sup> Not only had high priest Eliashib admitted to the temple dining hall an undesirable enemy Ammonite, but he took no steps to keep the legitimate Levites at their God-given posts of duty at the temple. He let the contributions of the tenth parts or tithes of the Israelites drop off, so that the ministerial Levites did not receive the necessary material support. Many of these felt obliged to leave the temple work and go home to their Levite cities and work their garden lands roundabout for food supplies for themselves and their families. So what did Nehemiah do?

<sup>25</sup> He reports: "I got to find out that the very portions of the Levites had not been given them, so that the Levites and the singers doing the work went running off, each one to his own field. And I began to find fault with the deputy rulers and say: 'Why has the house of the true God been neglected?' Consequently I collected them together and stationed them at their standing place." He did not wait any longer for action by the deputy rulers but arranged that all the inhabitants of Judah bring in the tenth parts to the temple storehouses.—Neh. 13:10-12; Num. 35:1-8.

<sup>26</sup> Besides this, Nehemiah did not wait upon the delinquent high priest Eliashib, but, as he says: "I put Shelemiah the priest and Zadok the copyist and Pedaiah of the Levites in charge of the stores; and under their control there was Hanan the son of Zaccur the son of Mattaniah, for

22. What interest did Nehemiah's revisit to Jerusalem show, but what proneness of fallen flesh did he find on the part of the Jews?

23. Whom had high priest Eliashib admitted to occupancy in the temple, and what did Nehemiah do about this?

24. What had high priest Eliashib failed to do in behalf of the temple Levites, and with what results?

25. What did Nehemiah report doing about this?

26. In this connection what appointments to service did Nehemiah make in behalf of the temple servants?

they were considered faithful; and upon them it devolved to do the distributing to their brothers." (Neh. 13:13) So now the ministerial Levites had no reason to run home!

<sup>27</sup> Afterward, when Nehemiah prayed to Jehovah God to remember him for good, to what did Nehemiah refer as a basis for such a plea? Did he mention that he had left his position as cupbearer of the king of Persia and had made the long journey to Jerusalem and had rebuilt its wall in fifty-two days despite enemy threats? No! But he spoke of what he had done in behalf of the house of God. He prayed: "Do remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my acts of loving-kindness that I have performed in connection with the house of my God and the guardianship of it." He insisted on clean servants ministering at God's house; but not so the high priest Eliashib, for he had let a grandson of his enter a mixed marriage and marry the daughter of the Samaritan enemy, Sanballat the Horonite. As regards this, Nehemiah says:

<sup>28</sup> "And one of the sons of Joiada the son of Eliashib the high priest was a son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite. So I chased him away from me."—Neh. 13:14, 28.

<sup>29</sup> The report of this action for the benefit of God's house Nehemiah follows up by saying at the close of the book that bears his name: "Do remember them, O my God, on account of the defilement of the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood and of the Levites. And I purified them from everything foreign and proceeded to assign duties to the priests and to the Levites, each one in his own work, even for the supply of the wood at appointed times

27, 28. (a) On the basis of what deeds did Nehemiah pray to be remembered for good? (b) Why did he take action against a grandson of the high priest, and how?

29. According to his concluding words, what did Nehemiah do with regard to the defilement of the priesthood and the covenant of the temple servants?

and for the first ripe fruits. Do remember me, O my God, for good."—Neh. 13:29-31.

#### REMEMBERED FOR NOT NEGLECTING

<sup>30</sup> Will Jehovah God answer that prayer of Nehemiah's of twenty-four centuries ago? Yes; for Nehemiah's everlasting good. Jehovah God is not unrighteous so that he has forgot and will leave unrewarded all the good that Governor Nehemiah did for the house of God in Jerusalem. He has kept Nehemiah's prayer for remembrance on permanent record by having it made a part of the inspired Holy Scriptures. To the Hebrew followers of Jesus Christ, who has done even greater service in behalf of the true "house of our God," it is written: "God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name, in that you have ministered to the holy ones and continue ministering." (Heb. 6:10) So too with Nehemiah. He truly feared Jehovah God; and in the writings of Malachi, who was evidently a contemporary of Nehemiah in the rebuilt city of Jerusalem, we find these appropriate words included:

<sup>31</sup> "At that time those in fear of Jehovah spoke with one another, each one with his companion, and Jehovah kept paying attention and listening. And a book of remembrance began to be written up before him for those in fear of Jehovah and for those thinking upon his name."—Mal. 3:16.

<sup>32</sup> Nehemiah yet sleeps in death in Sheol or Ha'des, the common grave of dead mankind. But during the thousand-year reign of "Messiah the Leader," Nehemiah will be rewarded with a resurrection from the dead. (Dan. 9:24-27) He will then find no longer a material temple of Jehovah

30, 31. (a) Will God answer Nehemiah's prayer, and what rule as given in Hebrews 6:10 applies in this respect? (b) What appropriate words did the prophet Malachi write regarding fearers of Jehovah?

32. (a) How will Nehemiah be rewarded, and what will he then learn? (b) Of what will he be an outstanding example?

God standing on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem. He will learn what happened to the last one of the Jewish temples there in the year 70 of our Common Era, as foretold by Jesus Christ the Son of God. (Matt. 23:37 to 24:2; Luke 19:36-44; 21:5, 6) He will learn about the spiritual temple of God, the one that was prefigured by that material temple on Mount Moriah in Jeru-

salem. He will learn how the spiritual temple was kept from being neglected by the followers of the great High Priest of this temple. Nehemiah himself will join other faithful ones on earth in worshiping Jehovah God through this exalted spiritual temple. He will be an outstanding example of how persons who do not neglect God's house are fully rewarded without fail.

# "We Should Not Neglect

**J**UST as foretold by the prophet Daniel (9:24-27), "Messiah the Leader" appeared in the year 29 of our Common Era, for then Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth, was baptized in the Jordan River and was then anointed with God's holy spirit. (Matt. 3:13-17) As the Messiah or Christ he foretold the destruction of Jerusalem's temple that occurred in the year 70 C.E. He did not try to preserve that typical "house of our God," which was made up of "fine stones" and other costly materials. (Luke 21:5, 6) Yet, as long as God permitted this temple to stand in Jerusalem, Jesus Christ respected it and worshiped at it. On two occasions he cleansed it of commercialism.—John 2:13-22; Matt. 21:10-14.

<sup>2</sup> However, Jesus Christ was more interested in the real, everlasting temple of his heavenly Father, Jehovah God. So, before he made his final trip to Jerusalem to foretell the destruction of that city and its temple, he said, in the hearing of his twelve apostles: "On this rock-mass I will

THE  
HOUSE  
OF  
OUR GOD"

build my congregation, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it."—Matt. 16:18.

<sup>3</sup> By speaking of building his congregation (or church) and building it on a rock, this former carpenter was likening his congregation to a temple. He was speaking of it as a living "house of God." When Jesus first cleansed the temple in the spring of 30 C.E., he used the term "temple" to re-

1. What was the attitude of Jesus Christ toward the temple in Jerusalem, and how was this shown?  
2. However, in what building was Jesus more interested?

3, 4. (a) In Matthew 16:18 Jesus was speaking of his congregation as what? (b) When writing to the Christians in Ephesus, to what did Paul liken the congregation, and how?

fer to something different from that material temple in Jerusalem. (John 2:13-22) So now, in Matthew 16:18, he likens his congregation of faithful followers to a temple built upon himself as the Foundation Stone. In harmony with this fact the Christian apostle Paul, when writing to the congregation in Ephesus, Asia Minor, where the world-famous temple of the goddess Artemis (Diana) was still standing, spoke of the entire Christian congregation as a living temple. Paul said:

<sup>4</sup> "Through him [Jesus Christ] we, both peoples [Jews and Gentiles], have the approach to the Father by one spirit. Certainly, therefore, you are no longer strangers and alien residents, but you are fellow citizens of the holy ones and are members of the household of God, and you have been built up upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, while Christ Jesus himself is the foundation cornerstone. In union with him the whole building, being harmoniously joined together, is growing into a holy temple for Jehovah. In union with him you, too, are being built up together into a place for God to inhabit by spirit."—Eph. 2:18-22.

<sup>5</sup> Again pointing out that the true "house of our God" is now a temple made up of living persons, the apostle Paul wrote to the Christian congregation in ancient Corinth, Greece: "Do you not know that you people are God's temple, and that the spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him; for the temple of God is holy, which temple you people are."—1 Cor. 3:16, 17.

<sup>6</sup> The members of this symbolic temple are therefore comparable with the stones of a material temple. That is why the Christian apostle Peter calls them "living stones," when he writes to the Christians

scattered throughout Asia Minor, saying: "Coming to him [Jesus Christ] as to a living stone, rejected, it is true, by men, but chosen, precious, with God, you yourselves also as living stones are being built up a spiritual house for the purpose of a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it is contained in Scripture: 'Look! I am laying in Zion a stone, chosen, a foundation cornerstone, precious; and no one exercising faith in it will by any means come to disappointment.' "—1 Pet. 2:4-6; Eph. 2:20.

<sup>7</sup> Making very clear that God's dwelling in his living temple is by means of his spirit, and not by any carved statue or idol image, the apostle Paul again writes to the Christian congregation in idolatrous Corinth: "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.' "—2 Cor. 6:16.

<sup>8</sup> All those things were written by the apostles Paul and Peter not later than five years before the Jewish temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman legions in the year 70 C.E. It is thus very plain that by that time Jehovah God had rejected the material temple in Jerusalem, where his Son Jesus Christ had been condemned to death; just as Jesus had said, on Nisan 11, three days before the religious leaders had him put to death: "You people did not want it. Look! Your house is abandoned to you."—Matt. 23:37, 38.

<sup>9</sup> On the third day after Jesus' death, Almighty God raised him from the dead and had him return to heaven, to the heavenly Mount Zion. There God laid Jesus

7. How does God dwell in his living temple?
8. Those words of Paul and Peter indicate what regarding the temple then standing in Jerusalem?
9. When was Jesus Christ laid as the "foundation cornerstone" in Zion, and when was building on him begun?

5. What is the true "house of our God" according to Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17?

6. The members of the symbolic temple are comparable with what, and how does Peter make this comparison?

Christ as the symbolic "foundation cornerstone," on which a new, living temple was to be built. (1 Pet. 2:6; Isa. 28:16; Matt. 16:18) Since this living temple is a "spiritual house" in which God resides by his holy spirit, it began to be built on the day of Pentecost, 33 C.E., when God's holy spirit was poured out upon the believing Jews who exercised faith in the heavenly "foundation cornerstone."—Acts 2:1-42.

#### **NEGLECT POSSIBLE, AND HOW**

<sup>10</sup> As the true "house of our God" is a living temple made up of the faithful congregation of Christ's followers, it is easy for us to see how this symbolic house could be neglected by those who are "living stones" in it. And let us remember that "living stones" of that kind are being selected and prepared for this spiritual temple down till this day, so that the liability of such a neglect is still with us. The apostle Paul warned the Christian overseer Timothy against just such a thing, saying:

<sup>11</sup> "I am writing you these things, . . . that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in God's household, which is the congregation of the living God, a pillar and support of the truth. Indeed, the sacred secret of this godly devotion is admittedly great: 'He was made manifest in flesh, was declared righteous in spirit, appeared to angels, was preached about among nations, was believed upon in the world, was received up in glory.' However, the inspired utterance says definitely that in later periods of time some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to misleading inspired utterances and teachings of demons."—1 Tim. 3:14 to 4:1.

<sup>12</sup> Certainly, after he received Paul's first letter, supplemented by Paul's second

10, 11. (a) Why is liability to neglect of God's true house still with us? (b) With what words did Paul warn Timothy against such a thing?

12, 13. (a) What would Timothy, therefore, be alert not to do? (b) What would Timothy do, as told in 1 Timothy 4:14-16; 6:2, 20, 21?

letter to him, the first-century Christian overseer Timothy understood more fully, as Paul wrote, "how you ought to conduct yourself in God's household." He would be alert not to neglect any of his responsibilities toward God's house or congregation. He would do just as the apostolic member of God's house had told him to do, saying, in 1 Timothy 4:14-16; 6:2, 20, 21:

<sup>13</sup> "Do not be neglecting the gift in you that was given you through a prediction and when the body of older men laid their hands upon you. Ponder over these things; be absorbed in them, that your advancement may be manifest to all persons. Pay constant attention to yourself and to your teaching. Stay by these things, for by doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you." "Keep on teaching these things and giving these exhortations. . . . O Timothy, guard what is laid up in trust with you, turning away from the empty speeches that violate what is holy and from the contradictions of the falsely called 'knowledge.' For making a show of such knowledge some have deviated from the faith."

#### **A NEGLECT WITH SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES**

<sup>14</sup> Being an overseer of the congregation, Timothy would attend the meetings of the congregation regularly, either to direct what was going on there or to perform his part in the meeting, just as Paul told him, writing: "Continue applying yourself to public reading, to exhortation, to teaching." (1 Tim. 4:13) He would not miss meetings. His missing would be cutting himself off from "God's household, which is the congregation of the living God, a pillar and support of the truth." By missing meetings he could not discharge his responsibilities. Attending meetings is not a thing for just old folks who are approach-

14. (a) What would Timothy regularly attend, and why would he not do otherwise? (b) For persons in what age brackets is such attendance?

ing death, but is a thing for young folks, for persons in the prime of life as well as for those nearing the end of life's present span. Timothy was young. That was why Paul told him: "Let no man ever look down on your youth. . . . Do not severely criticize an older man. To the contrary, entreat him as a father, younger men as brothers."—1 Tim. 4:12; 5:1.

<sup>15</sup> Not attending the meetings of the congregation is one of the most obvious ways of forsaking and neglecting the "house of our God." If a member of God's dedicated, baptized household willfully fails to attend, he is virtually disfellowshipping the congregation from himself. Disfellowshipping means the casting of a member out of God's household; and if one should remain in this disfellowshiped condition till he died, it would mean his everlasting destruction as a person who is rejected by God. Staying away from meetings leads in that very direction. So Hebrews 10:23-31 says:

<sup>16</sup> "Let us hold fast the public declaration of our hope without wavering, for he is faithful that promised. And let us consider one another [not avoid one another] to incite to love and fine works, not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another, and all the more so as you behold the day drawing near. For if we practice sin willfully after having received the accurate knowledge of the truth, there is no longer any sacrifice for sins left, but there is a certain fearful expectation of judgment and there is a fiery jealousy that is going to consume those in opposition. . . . For we know him that said: 'Vengeance is mine; I will recompense'; and again: 'Jehovah will judge his people.' It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of

the living God."—See Deuteronomy 32:35, 36.

<sup>17</sup> To attend meetings in the churches of Christendom costs money, either because of having the collection plate, bag or bucket passed before an attender one or more times during a religious meeting, or because of having to pay for admission into the religious building. Many persons find themselves too poor materially to make these forced contributions. But with the true household of God there is no such financial barrier to bar them from coming to congregation meetings regularly. At all meetings of Jehovah's Christian witnesses the rule is applied: "Seats free, no collection." One needs only to make the effort to attend meetings.

<sup>18</sup> Of course, where meetings are not held in private homes as in Bible times in our first century, there are expenses that a congregation will have to bear in order to meet together regularly in a meeting hall. (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15; Philem. 2) In that case free-will contributions can be made by members of the congregation as they are able to contribute. For this purpose a contribution box can be placed at a convenient spot for persons to drop in money contributions without showy display. We do not care to be like the religious hypocrites of our first century who did charitable works or alms-giving "in order to be observed by [men]; . . . that they may be glorified by men." (Matt. 6:1-4) So, today, in the meeting places of Jehovah's Christian witnesses there are contribution boxes in which to drop contributions as one chooses.

<sup>19</sup> The money contribution is not the main thing, although a congregation as a

17. In Christendom, what is quite a barrier to attending meetings regularly, but how about God's true house?

18. How can necessary expenses of a congregation be met, and how do Jehovah's Christian witnesses take care of this?

19. Is the money contribution the main thing here, or what is?

15, 16. (a) By willfully failing to attend, what is a member virtually doing, and in what direction does this lead? (b) How is this indicated in Hebrews 10:23-31?

whole would not want to neglect the "house of our God" by failing to provide a general meeting place even at such financial expense as the congregation can afford. The main thing is to get to the meetings, and that with regularity.

<sup>20</sup> At such meetings, by being present, one can always make contributions in other ways than in a financial way. One can join one's voice in with the congregation in singing songs of praise to God. If a general Bible study is being held, one can take part by offering a Biblical comment in answer to the questions asked; and to this end one can go over the study material beforehand. One can encourage the public speaker of the occasion by being present and showing good attention, interest and appreciation. Also, before and after meetings one can mix in with the congregation members and encourage, exhort and up-build those whom one meets. This is a way in which one can "hold fast the public declaration of our hope without wavering" and also "consider one another to incite to love and fine works."—Heb. 10:23-25.

#### SELF-PREPAREDNESS AND PRAYER

<sup>21</sup> By self-preparation in advance of such meetings, one can make it very evident that one does not desire to neglect the "house of our God." One thus reveals that one goes to meetings, not just as a matter of routine, indifferently, but with a purpose, the purpose of being spiritually built up oneself and of building up the other members of God's household. One can thus aid in keeping the congregation strong in faith, hope and courage, yes, aid in growing stronger in these vital things. One can watch to keep the purity of the congregation, not alone the purity of the faith as

20. At meetings, in what ways can we make contributions other than in a financial way?

21. (a) By self-preparation in advance, what does an attender reveal? (b) One can thus help to keep the congregation in what condition?

it was "once for all time delivered to the holy ones," but also the purity of the personal life in a moral sense. This calls for a person to put up a hard fight in a spiritual way, making full use of the "complete suit of armor from God" and "fighting side by side for the faith of the good news." (Jude 3; Eph. 6:11-17; Phil. 1:27) This helps to keep God's house in good repair spiritually.

<sup>22</sup> Besides this, a faithful member of God's household would not neglect God's spiritual house by neglecting to pray for it, praying for it regularly at home and praying with the congregation when he is at meetings. Paul was part of the apostolic foundation of the "holy temple for Jehovah," and yet in his letter to the congregation in Ephesus he asked them to make supplication not only "in behalf of all the holy ones" but "also for me, that ability to speak may be given me with the opening of my mouth, with all freeness of speech to make known the sacred secret of the good news." (Eph. 2:20-22; 6:18, 19) By sincere prayer one shows that one is really concerned about the welfare and prosperity of God's house.

<sup>23</sup> Prayer is really powerful, as it is heard and answered by God when in accord with his will and purpose. "A righteous man's supplication, when it is at work, has much force." (Jas. 5:16) The prophet Daniel prayed for God's temple to be rebuilt in Jerusalem; but we today can pray for God's house of "living stones" to be kept in good spiritual condition and be preserved.—Dan. 9:1-19.

<sup>24</sup> David, who as king of Jerusalem desired to build a glorious temple to Jehovah God, said in grateful song: "I rejoiced

22. In what other way would one not neglect the "house of our God," as requested by Paul in Ephesians 6:18, 19?

23. Why is prayer really powerful, and how can we be like Daniel in prayer?

24. According to Psalm 122:1, 2, 8, 9, in what way was King David a good example for us?

when they were saying to me: 'To the house of Jehovah let us go.' Our feet proved to be standing within your gates, O Jerusalem. For the sake of my brothers and my companions I will now speak: 'May there be peace within you.' For the sake of the house of Jehovah our God I will keep seeking good for you." (Ps. 122:1, 2, 8, 9) King David was a good example for us in appreciating God's house and in rejoicing at the invitation to go with others to God's house.

#### A HOUSE OF ACTIVITY

<sup>25</sup> However, let us not forget that God's true house is a living one. It is therefore an organization of activity. Divine worship is carried on by and through God's spiritual house not just by our going to meetings of the congregation. The apostle Peter makes it very clear that the purpose of God's "spiritual house" is the offering up of "spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ"; and that the "holy nation," the "people for special possession," should "declare abroad the excellencies" of the One that called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." (1 Pet. 2:5, 9) All this calls for activity; and if we do not want to neglect God's house, we will not fail to share in its activity.

<sup>26</sup> These "spiritual sacrifices" at God's house by his worshipers are not animal victims. Hebrews 13:15, 16 says: "Through him [Jesus Christ] let us always offer to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips which make public declaration to his name. Moreover, do not forget the doing of good and the sharing of things with others, for with such sacrifices God is well

pleased." Public declaration to God's name must be given and the doing of good must be done outside the congregation as well as within it. God's name and his excellencies must be declared throughout all the earth, among all nations, that people of all the nations may call upon His name and be saved. This is only reasonable, for the apostle Paul quotes Joel 2:32 and bases questions on it, saying:

<sup>27</sup> "Everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved." However, how will they call on him in whom they have not put faith? How, in turn, will they put faith in him of whom they have not heard? How, in turn, will they hear without someone to preach? How, in turn, will they preach unless they have been sent forth?" —Rom. 10:13-15.

<sup>28</sup> The members of God's household take seriously their being sent forth to preach, to make known God's name and his Messianic kingdom for the blessing of all mankind. Little wonder, then, that they zealously take part in the activities of God's house. Loyally and unselfishly they support all the appointed members of God's house who take the lead in all these activities. They are like the first-century Philippian congregation in its generous support of the missionary activities of the apostle Paul. (Phil. 4:14-16) They are very careful not to neglect the "house of our God" in this important respect by neglecting to share in its activities.

<sup>29</sup> As a result of the expanding activities of the "holy priesthood" at God's house since the close of World War I in 1918, a great crowd of people, the final number of which is not now known, have flocked to God's spiritual house from all parts of

25. In what other way do we not want to neglect God's house, as is indicated for us in 1 Peter 2:5, 9?

26, 27. (a) What kind of sacrifices are these "spiritual sacrifices" as offered by worshipers at God's house? (b) Why must such sacrificial expressions be done also outside the congregation, in harmony with Paul's reasoning in Romans 10:13-15?

28. How do members of the household show they take seriously their being sent forth to preach?

29, 30. What has resulted from the expanding activities of the "holy priesthood," as foretold in Revelation, chapter seven?

the earth. Revelation 7:9-15 prophetically describes them, saying:

<sup>30</sup> "Look! a great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes; and there were palm branches in their hands. And they keep on crying with a loud voice, saying: 'Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb.' . . .

"These are the ones that come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. That is why they are before the throne of God; and they are rendering him sacred service day and night in his temple; and the one seated on the throne will spread his tent over them."

<sup>31</sup> Do you, our reader, see yourself in that "great crowd"? If so, then you know that the "great tribulation" mentioned above began with the "beginning of pangs of distress" during the years 1914-1918, as foretold by Jesus Christ, the "Lamb" who shed his blood in sacrifice to God for cleansing away the "sin of the world." (Matt. 24:8; John 1:29) The end of the "pangs of distress" upon the nations has not yet come, for that end means the total annihilation of this system of things. But this "great crowd" has not waited for the end of the "great tribulation" to come before they think of taking up the service of God. They have come out since the "beginning of pangs of distress," seeking salvation from the enthroned God of heaven and earth and through the once-sacrificed "Lamb," Jesus Christ. They acknowledge Jehovah God as the rightful Ruler of heav-

enly angels and earthly men. They do not accept any longer the moral and religious standards of this worldly system of things. Instead, as pictured in Revelation 7:9-15, they confess that they are sinners, and they seek to get rid of their dirty appearance.

<sup>32</sup> So they wash their robes in the shed blood of the "Lamb," to take away the unsightly stain of sin. This they do by accepting Jesus Christ as God's High Priest and exercising faith in the sacrifice for sins that this High Priest offered, and then by making a full dedication of themselves to God, as no longer belonging to themselves or to the world or to Satan the Devil, but as belonging to Jehovah God by reason of his purchase of them.

<sup>33</sup> No wonder that they now have an accepted standing before God, whom they joyfully hail as with palm branches. No wonder that they flock to God's spiritual house, of which Jesus Christ is the "foundation cornerstone," in order that there they may render sacred service to Jehovah God day and night. They say to the "spiritual priesthood" at God's house: "O bless Jehovah, all you servants of Jehovah, you who are standing in the house of Jehovah during the nights. Raise your hands in holiness and bless Jehovah." And the spiritual priesthood respond to them and say: "May Jehovah bless you out of Zion, he the Maker of heaven and earth."—Ps. 134:1-3.

<sup>34</sup> So the "great crowd" that keeps flocking to God's house does more than just go to meetings at His temple. They also take an active part in service that is sacred to

#### COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE

- "According to His Custom."
- What Is Your Religious Custom?
- What Has Christendom Done for You?
- Christ's Return, Will You See It?
- A New Priesthood Begins.

31. (a) During what period has this "great crowd" come out? (b) How do they acknowledge Jehovah God, and what standards of life do they no longer accept?

32. How do they wash their robes white in the "Lamb's" blood?

33. Why do they flock to God's spiritual house, and what is their attitude toward service at night?

34. What do they keep vigilant to do at God's temple, and at what time of the twenty-four-hour day?

God. By night as well as by day they co-operate with the remaining number of "living stones" of God's spiritual temple who are still on this earth. They do not want to be like the Jews in the days of Governor Nehemiah who neglected the "house of our God" by failing to make contributions to God's worship and thus obliging Levite temple servants to leave the temple and go back home in order to work their gardens for something to live on. (Neh. 13:10, 11) So, realizing that they are everlastingly indebted to God for salvation through his "Lamb" Jesus, they keep vigilant to serve God at his temple night and day.

35 Not in vain was the prophetic picture

35. (a) How do we see that the prophetic picture of Revelation 7:9-15 was not recorded in vain? (b) What resolve do the "great crowd" and remnant of the spiritual priesthood carry out, with what result?

recorded in Revelation 7:9-15. The reality of this prophetic picture is before us today. It sets the pattern for the present "great crowd" of earthly saved ones to follow today. They do follow it now before the end of the "pangs of distress" of the "great tribulation" brings destruction to all false religions and their man-made temples. Together the "great crowd" and the remnant of the spiritual priesthood render sacred service to the one living and true God at his spiritual temple. Day and night they carry out their unchangeable resolve that "we should not neglect the house of our God." The happy result is that the worship of Jehovah God remains vigorous and keeps on surviving, with increasing praise to Him who is the source of everlasting life and blessing to all obedient men.

## "Why Do Present-Day Youths Not Go to Church?"

Exploring this question, the Athens, Greece, daily morning newspaper *To Vima* of January 13, 1965, said: "We found out at the end of a search made among the students of four colleges in Athens." The replies from more than 200 students are no doubt typical of young persons in many countries. The newspaper classified the replies into four categories. One group (15 percent) said that they did not go to church for personal reasons, such as "I am too young yet to seek to save my life" and "I don't agree to worship God in temples with luxurious chandeliers and carpets, which are commercial houses for me." Another group (20 percent) said they did not go to church because of the bad example set by adults. For instance: "I was attending church mass just because it was imposed on me as an indispensable requisite for letting me go to movies in the evening."

A larger number (30 percent) gave as their reason for not going to church answers that

were classified under "prevailing conditions of living": "My friends are modern-minded and will mock at me if they see me go to church. I can no longer listen to preachings from people not practicing themselves what they say. The church has become a place of worldly movement. We read and see many things which have shaken our faith."

The largest number (35 percent) gave replies classified as "ecclesiastical reasons," such as, "I do not understand the language of the church; I lose my time listening to unintelligible things." "I dislike preaching; it is done in a way as though insulting us." "I acquire much more instruction through the movies." "On getting out of the church I feel a larger gap within me. I resent many clergymen's scandalous living."

In its conclusion, the newspaper said of the survey: "This is the answer to the question. It is a miniature of a big matter. No comments are necessary."

# **Seven Years IN Red China's Prisons**

## **-YET FIRM IN FAITH!**

**S**EVEN years is a long time to spend in solitary confinement. Is there anything in life that you believe in deeply enough that you would be willing to face such an ordeal for it, when, by compromise, you might be set free? Surely a man who would be willing to face years in prison rather than to renounce his religion is one who is strong in faith. But what could he do to occupy his mind and to keep firm in faith during those long and lonely years of confinement in his concrete cell?

Keen interest in the experiences of one who had lived through it drew 34,708 persons to New York's Yankee Stadium at 10 a.m. on October 30. They had learned of the meeting, at most, four days before, yet they were on hand from all over the northeastern part of the United States, some even from Canada, California and Florida.

They came to listen to a man few of them knew except by his name, Stanley Ernest Jones. They came because he was their Christian brother, and he had just been released from prison in Communist

China. They believed that the things he would tell them would be a source of spiritual strength, strength that they themselves would need to maintain their integrity to God in difficult times ahead. They also came because it gave them the opportunity to show the warm love they felt for one of Jehovah's servants who had endured such a long trial.

The morning of Saturday, October 30, had dawned clear and cold, the temperature just six degrees above freezing. The audience filling the entire lower and mezzanine levels of Yankee Stadium came equipped with blankets and thermos bottles as defense against the cold. They were a very quiet and earnest audience as they listened to the speaker. His first words reached their hearts:

"Brothers, after not being able to talk to any of Jehovah's witnesses and being in solitary confinement for seven years, it just a little overwhelms me to be here among so many of you and talking to you this morning. The last time that I was among so many brothers, that is, in convention, was in 1946, when I attended the Cleveland convention."

### **MISSIONARY WORK IN SHANGHAI**

Then, by his description, Brother Jones took his audience with him over to Shanghai, China, where he and his partner, Harold King, were sent as missionaries in 1947, after graduating from the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. The Chinese people were friendly and responded well to their ministry. But China was a country in the throes of civil war, and by the close of 1949 the Communist forces had reached the coastal city of Shanghai. One night, while in bed, the two missionaries heard the shooting come nearer and then grad-

ually die down. When they looked out the next morning they saw Communist soldiers in the streets. They were behind the "Bamboo Curtain"!

Missionaries of other religions were leaving China by the hundreds. What would these witnesses of Jehovah do? 'Yes, what would we do in such a situation?' the audience thought as they listened to Brother Jones' next words.

"Well, we had to decide what we were going to do. Would we stay and help the brothers, or should we run away as many other foreigners were doing? We didn't hesitate in making a decision. We were going to *stay*, because we had come to love those brothers. We knew that many were immature, and we felt that if we went away we would be just like shepherds running away from the flock at the first sign of danger."

"Our work continued to prosper and we had freedom for about twelve months. Then in 1951 we were called to the police station and told: 'You must not go from house to house to preach.' We could still

preach in the Kingdom Hall and have Bible studies with people, but 'no house-to-house work.' We told our Chinese brothers of this and we were very pleased to see that their response was: 'This order applies to you who are foreigners; it doesn't apply to us. We will keep on in the preaching work, and perhaps if we can find some who are interested, then you will be able to teach them in a Bible study.' And that is exactly what we did. So, instead of the work diminishing, due to the zeal of the brothers our work continued to increase, very much to the surprise of the authorities."

#### DIFFICULTIES INCREASE

By 1955, Brother Jones said, their small hall was too crowded and a larger building was booked for their meetings. But the first Sunday they tried to use it, the police blocked them, saying: "You have a hall; you stay in that." The government was clearly determined to stop further growth.

Everywhere Communist indoctrination was being pushed, in factories, offices, schools, hospitals, and in apartment blocks and streets. Political committees organized weekly meetings to teach Communist doctrine. The "Rectification Movement" was begun, designed to rectify wrong thinking and ways. This meant not merely getting the people to think progressively and improve their work methods, but, more particularly, to clear out their old political views, adopting instead the ideas of the Communist system. The workers were told they should criticize one another as well as themselves. Any previous comments not favorable to the Communist regime should be openly confessed. Pressure was put on the workers to expose others, and such ones were then badgered continually until they finally admitted having said wrong things, and professed repentance.



Jones addresses 34,708 at Yankee Stadium

But what about those persons who claimed to be Christians? Many churches were ordered to sever their connections with foreign countries. As for the clergy, some were cleared out of the churches, and others were ordered to attend special classes where they learned Communist politics. So they developed a "patriotic" church movement and church organization.

"But we witnesses of Jehovah, although we lived in the midst of all this, could not take part in it. Our brothers knew that and kept separate. As Jesus Christ told us, we are 'no part of the world,' just as he was no part of the world. If we became a 'friend of the world,' we would be the 'enemy of God.'—John 17:16; Jas. 4:4.

"So our difficulties in preaching increased, and brothers going from house to house were often taken by these political committee members to the police station. At first they would be released after an hour or two, but then the time came when three of our Christian sisters were detained for four days. We were anxious to see how our Chinese brothers would react to this, and were delighted when they came out rejoicing that they had been 'counted worthy to be dishonored for His name.' (Acts 5:41) They were determined to go on and preach just the same. We counseled them to take care to avoid any difficulties if possible, but they felt confident that they could face anything that might happen.

"Then Sister Nancy Yuan was taken from the house-to-house work to the police station and detained. She had four children, one of them only one year old. I approached a lawyer for assistance, and he said: 'We cannot do a thing. If the matter is in the hands of the police, we cannot interfere.' Her mother sent in a Bible for her, but it was returned. Now, that sister was detained for a period of *four years* before she was finally taken to court and

sentenced. Just what her sentence was, I do not know. Another sister, a school-teacher, likewise a mother of four children, was also arrested."

A sigh of fellow feeling swept around the stadium on hearing of these incidents.

Brother Jones told of his efforts to attend the international assembly of Jehovah's witnesses at New York in 1958; but his request for an exit permit was denied by the Chinese government, with no explanation. After that assembly a brother traveled from Hong Kong to Shanghai to see them, but was refused permission to go ashore. The brothers could only pass near his boat in a small ferry, wave to him and shout a greeting, nothing more. He was the last brother from outside they were to see for many years.

#### MISSIONARIES ARRESTED

"One morning as we were getting breakfast," he continued, "Brother King looked out of the window and saw some policemen running into the lane. He said: 'I wonder where they're going?' Well, we didn't have long to find out, because they were hammering on our door in just a moment. And when we opened the door they were standing there with drawn guns, in real 'gangster' fashion, told us to put up our hands and handcuffed us. Then they searched all our premises, put the Watch Tower Society's literature into bags and took us off in private cars to the detention house. There I was placed in a cell where I was kept alone all the time."

Now began a period of interrogation for Brother Jones who, along with Harold King, was accused of 'engaging in reactionary activities against the people's government of China.' This included two particular points. First: their doctrines and preaching activities. Second: their personal statements, things said in conversation with people over the previous nine years.

The police had evidently been building up a file against them. Brother Jones told about their methods:

"They objected to the preaching of God's kingdom as the only hope. They said they had cleared out of China the old imperialists and that now the country was in the hands of the people. The people should unite now to build up a new China and a 'new world.' And so they insisted that everyone must take part and that 'if you are teaching neutrality, then you are opposed to the government.' They said that to preach the Kingdom would be subversive. I don't know whether they thought that by arresting us they could stop this Kingdom message from going out and defeat God's purpose to establish this Kingdom rule over all the earth, but we know that no government, no matter what action they take against God's servants, can prevent God's kingdom from spreading to embrace all the earth and to consume all its enemies. We know that the day when it will do that is now at hand. How ridiculous it seems that a great nation of 650 million people should feel that fifty witnesses of Jehovah were a threat, and so call for this action!"

The foolishness of such attitude by the Communist Chinese government caused laughter to ripple through the audience. Brother Jones went on to describe the efforts made to win a confession from him by offers of a lighter sentence.

"Their method was to demand a confession. Well, I told them that I was not conscious of any offense. But they said: 'You think of your past crimes.' The idea was to make me begin to think: 'Did I really do something bad? Have I broken the law?' They think that perhaps the prisoner will feel guilty on some point and talk about it and then they will learn something they didn't know. Therefore they give him time to think. If he doesn't come up

with something, then they may say something. In my case they said: 'You slandered the Chinese newspapers.' But when? how? They do not say. They want *me* to think of something. Then, after a time, they have to come out with it. They said that I slandered the Chinese newspapers when they reported that American troops were using germ warfare in Korea.

"Now, I can recall that years ago it was reported one time that a rat had been found in North Korea, infected with germs. It was stated then that this was evidence that the Americans had dropped this rat in North Korea to spread germs among the people. When someone told me this, I probably had said: 'Well, that sounds like propaganda to me.' But now they wanted me to acknowledge that what I said was a slander and a crime.

"Also, I had a Bible study with a woman, and at one time, just before the study, the woman asked if I had ever been to Hong Kong. I told her I had not. She said: 'I hear it's a very beautiful place. Perhaps sometime I will go there for a holiday.' Because of those few innocent words now the police want to say that this person is dissatisfied with life on the mainland, dissatisfied with the government, wants to get away, and therefore is opposed to the government. Certainly in a free country one couldn't be imprisoned for such matters that we would term merely 'freedom of speech.'

"But they had to have a reason for arresting our Chinese brothers and shutting down our organization. So they made charges against the Society. They said the Watch Tower Society is not a religious organization; it's an 'agency of the United States government'; that the Society's president is an 'imperial agent'; that I was sent to China, not to preach, but to oppose communism. They wrote these things out in the form of a question-and-answer sheet,

putting in some of my answers and some they wanted me to make, and then they read it to me. Of course, I was not prepared to sign it. They told me: 'Go back to your room and think it over.' About a week later I was awakened at night and taken back to the interrogation room, and they began to read this paper again. But I made it quite plain that the Watch Tower Society is a religious organization preaching the good news of God's kingdom. They sent me back to my room to think again and gave me a sheet of paper and asked me to write out these things myself. Instead, I wrote out a statement in defense of the Society and of our own work in Shanghai and handed this to them. They were extremely angry, but they never again asked me to sign that paper."

After four months Brother Jones was told he would be taken to a "pleasant home" in a "beautiful garden" for six months so he would be able to think. But there, every morning at five o'clock, a loudspeaker in the neighboring fields began to blare forth music, speeches and instructions to the farmers in their homes and fields. This kept up till nine o'clock at night. After six months his health was becoming affected and he was glad to return to the rather forbidding detention house in Shanghai. Now began a year of intense "political education" as his "instructor" cleverly stressed the wrongs and evils of the capitalist nations and presented communism as the solution to man's problems. What were Brother Jones' thoughts during all this?

"When I would listen to this I used to think: Well, you see the faults and failings, the need for a change; but you do not have the solution. I can see that you have your faults too. You commit crimes of your own particular kind, and man needs deliverance from you just as he does from anyone else. And so, while he was talking, I used

to think about the Kingdom as the real hope. So such indoctrination never penetrated my mind at all. Being fortified with a knowledge of God's kingdom, being sure of it, never doubting it for a moment, I couldn't be moved, and I'm sure you wouldn't have been either, although worldly people are.

"There were times in the midst of this that I tried to preach. There was always the urge to do so. But whenever I tried to talk about the Bible they would immediately stop me. One man said he was an authority on religion and the Bible. I thought I could explain better to him and he would have some goodness in his heart. But immediately he changed and said: 'Don't you preach to me!' and became quite fierce. Well, I couldn't preach in those places to those Communists, but I tried. And I did always have the satisfaction that: 'Well, I'm still a Witness, I'm still preaching or trying to,' and in this I used to feel good afterward. I know that, perhaps when you go in the house-to-house work and you preach and nobody listens, you feel the same way afterward: You have tried; you are still a Witness, regardless."

#### A COMMUNIST TRIAL

"After two years in prison and just before I was taken into the court I was told: 'You can have a lawyer to assist you; but he's not permitted to defend you.' They said: 'He can ask the court for leniency, and the court will listen to him.' First I was taken to a preliminary hearing of the case. There was no audience present and my lawyer was not in the court. The next morning we were taken to court and there were about eighty people sitting there. I was not asked to plead guilty or not guilty. I was just questioned by the judge. He asked me questions like this: 'Were you sent to China by imperialist element Na-

than Knorr? Did you organize groups to carry on underground activities if your church was stopped? Did you send a list of names of people to Hong Kong that they might receive the magazine *The Watchtower?*

"I answered, stating just facts. I was prepared to take any sentence they gave. I knew the matter rested entirely in the hands of Jehovah God; so I did not worry. I felt free; I felt that Jehovah God was in control and the results would be according to his will.

"The following morning we were taken back to the court and the judge read out the sentence. Harold King was to receive five years' imprisonment, after which he was to be deported from the country. I was to receive seven years and then be deported as well."

#### LONG YEARS IN PRISON

"The Shanghai City Prison is a huge place. There are nine big prison blocks, each capable of holding at least a thousand prisoners. I was struck by the utter drabness of the whole thing. The prisoners were not in prison uniform; they wore their own clothes, and over the years they patched them so that with many prisoners the original garment had disappeared. They were walking around in patches. This was a very miserable, depressing sight, especially when the weather was warm and the prisoners marched around to exercise, or, rather, shuffled around—they appeared to be just ribs and veins sticking out.

"There was a corridor down the prison, and out from the corridor were a lot of gates, iron bars, to the cells. The cells were just like large cupboards. There was no window or opening, just the gate in front. The cell was eight feet long, four and a half feet wide and about eight feet high. There was a wooden platform taking up most of the floor, just leaving a place

to open the gate. At nighttime I would have to unroll my bedding on this platform and sleep on the floor. Although it was disagreeable in the beginning, I couldn't help, after living in a cell for a time, to get a little accustomed to it. I got to know every crack in the wall and every bump on the floor. I began to feel at home, so that later on when they moved me to another cell I began to feel a little displaced and had to get myself accustomed to a new home.

"In the summertime the place was very, very hot, and in the first four years in the prison I was pestered with bugs so that sleeping was very difficult. There were times when, due to loss of sleep and the trial, I began to feel dizzy and had to have medical treatment. But I got over it. In the wintertime it was bitterly cold. There was no heating, and I had to put plenty of clothing on—just as you have had to do this morning. I used to put my heavy woolen underwear on. I would put on four woolen sweaters, a padded waistcoat, a padded jacket, and then still I would be cold at times."

#### THE MAIN PROBLEM: TIME

"I had so much *time* on my hands. I asked the man in charge for a Bible. He got embarrassed; he wouldn't say Yes, he wouldn't say No. Just about that time I had a visit from a British government representative, and I asked him if he would send me a copy of the Bible. This he did, but I never received it.

"Many Scripture texts began to come to my mind and I would write them down. I remember I used to think of 1 Peter 4:12, 13: 'Do not be puzzled at the burning among you, which is happening to you for a trial, as though a strange thing were befalling you. . . . go on rejoicing forasmuch as you are sharers in the sufferings of the Christ.' This scripture gave me pleasure

because, sometimes, a person *could* think it strange that he got into so much difficulty and was being charged with things concerning the good news and some things concerning himself. All these accusations could undermine him. But the Scriptures gave me assurance and told me: Don't consider it something unusual, just rejoice in it.

"And another scripture, in Revelation 2:10: 'Do not be afraid of the things you are about to suffer. . . . The Devil will keep on throwing some of you into prison . . . that you may have tribulation ten days. Prove yourself faithful even to death, and I will give you the crown of life.' This scripture gave me courage. First, it assured me that it's not God who is displeased with us; rather, it's the Devil. He is the one that casts the Lord's people into prison, and we shouldn't be afraid of any of the things that he can do. After all, we're only going to have tribulation 'ten days.' In other words, there's going to be an end to it. *Everything comes to an end in its own time.* Therefore we just endure; God will bring us through.

"I used to think also of 1 Peter 1:7, which talks about the trial of your faith being more precious than gold. And there in prison it is the trial of our *faith*. Will God always be with us? Will we come out right in the end? Well, in view of these scriptures, I thought that I would. And I know anyone in this condition would find comfort and assurance from these texts."

#### DAILY TEXT, PRAYER, READING

"When I had written out enough scriptures I would select one for a daily text, copy it and keep it somewhere prominent so that I could consider it throughout the day.

"At this time I was able to receive copies of the Chinese newspaper, and in this they report the lunar calendar, so I was able to learn the time of the new moon. From this

I could estimate the time of the Memorial of Christ's death. When I thought the Memorial would be beginning among the congregations, I used to sit in the cell, pray to God, and then review in my mind all these scriptures connected with the Memorial. I used to think of how our brothers would now be assembling, and I would think how all through the next twenty-four hours congregations would be observing the Memorial. All this used to help me keep my mind on the Kingdom and on the brothers, make me feel I was part of them; because one of the things I missed most was a brother—someone to talk to and to give me a little fresh stimulus on the Word of God.

"Also, I received some newspapers from my sister in England, and these newspapers would sometimes carry a text from the Bible. One of them used to carry a sermon written by a clergyman. I always read this sermon through in the hope of finding some scriptures. But it's just amazing how this man could often write a whole sermon and never quote a scripture.

"One scripture that I did find in a newspaper gave me a lot of comfort for the many, many months ahead. This was Romans 12:12. The translation read this way: 'Rejoice in the hope ahead. In trouble stand firm. Persevere in prayer.' I thought that was very appropriate. Even though my situation might seem hopeless at times—with many, many years to go—yet there was a hope ahead, the hope of the Kingdom. If I died, there was the hope of a resurrection. So there was no need to be sad. This scripture was telling me: Rejoice in the hope ahead. The more I thought about the hope, the happier I felt. I felt stronger and the troubles would disappear. And so, in this way, I could do as it said: Stand firm in trouble.

"I could have got out earlier if I had tried to please, made a compromise here and there. They always said they would reduce the sentence if I made concessions. But these concessions, I saw, could not be made. Make one small concession and then they want another one, until finally you're speaking against your own brothers. But we cannot go that way, and so it's best not to start. Let them be displeased. I must stand firm and wait for Jehovah's deliverance. This I could do if I took the further advice and 'persevered in prayer.'

"When I was first in prison I could fervently pray to Jehovah God. But when there is no stimulus from other brothers, as time goes by there is a tendency, I found, to feel that prayer was repetitious and therefore not so effective. The tendency may be to neglect it. This can happen over a period of many years. But here was a scripture saying: 'Persevere in prayer; keep on, your prayers are effective and they can strengthen you.' And they did. They kept me going when I felt down.

"Still I had a big problem as to how to fill in my time. When I rose at half past five in the morning, I had the whole day ahead of me. They would give me some magazines to read, but these were full of politics; these I didn't read. So I decided to get, if possible, some textbooks that I could study. I got some on mathematics and on electricity and began to busy myself with these. The Bible tells us to think on the things that are good, wholesome, upbuilding and righteous. (Phil. 4:8) These are, of course, spiritual things. But in principle I could find the study of these books also good and profitable. They would not make me think of something that was not healthy, not upbuilding. And if, in later years, I didn't use the knowledge I gained, at least I could keep my mind occupied. So I would busy myself in study, struggling to understand it, and I found that it gave my

mind a lot of exercise. I enjoyed it thoroughly. In fact, I became so absorbed in it, struggling with problems of mathematics and electricity, that I began to realize that I must not neglect my Bible study. So I had to go back to my scriptures. Sometimes I would try translating the scriptures into Chinese just to give myself exercise and never neglect the Word of God.

"I was able to receive letters from my home once a month. I used to tell them what I had received and they would tell me what they had sent, and in this way we would know that everything was coming through; or if it was being withheld, I knew that too."

#### CHINESE WITNESSES OF JEHOVAH

All over the world Jehovah's witnesses were wondering what had happened to their Chinese brothers and sisters after the arrest of the missionaries. Brother Jones now conveyed to the assembly what information he had.

"I knew that there were some brothers arrested. I was always on the watch to see them, and once when I was having my photograph taken, there I saw three of our sisters, including the one sister who had been arrested four years before. The sister had been kept four years in detention and, instead of releasing her then as you might expect, they sent her to the court, sentenced her, and she was still in prison. It was good to see these sisters. We could not talk, but we could at least smile. I felt encouraged that they were together and that they could talk to one another. I was also able to hear in diverse ways that there were five others of our brothers all together and that they were still standing firm in faith and still full of hope and joy and that they were very, very concerned to know about myself and Brother King. I am sure that right down to this day those

brothers are still firmly in the truth and keeping integrity."

Strong applause by the audience accompanied this cheering news, and report of another event brought further applause. Brother Jones told them:

"From my cell I was able to look out through a corridor window into a court-yard below. When prisoners entered the prison or left, I often was able to see them. One day I just by chance happened to look through this window and I saw a prisoner walking out with a huge case on his shoulders. Then followed another one and another, and I thought to myself, 'I've seen those cases before; I know them; they belong to Harold King.' And there following behind the cases was Harold King going to freedom.

"I was very pleased. Of course, I began to think, 'What is going to happen to me? Are they going to let me free early?'"

#### THE FINAL TWO YEARS

The Chinese officials again began to use psychological pressure. First, Brother Jones was moved into the cell that Harold King had been in, in another cell block. They began to show him attention, even arranging for him to talk with one of the guards. But soon they began to inject politics into the conversation, and when Brother Jones refused to go along with the discussion, they stopped talking. But they encouraged him to believe that he would soon be free. As his sentence reached its sixth year they gave him every indication he would get a release. Then they ignored him again, and he knew he would stay at least another year. He said:

"I know what had happened. The prison authorities had written a letter to the court saying they were satisfied with my conduct and recommended my release, but the court was not willing to grant it. You see, in my letters to my people I had never

talked communism. Many Chinese prisoners, when they wrote, tried to please the authorities. They would start off a letter this way:

"You will be glad to know that I am now reforming. I am now following the works and teachings of our great Leader Mao Tse-tung. I'm supporting the Communist government and I want to be a worker in the interest of the people."

"They would write all of this before they would say anything about the family. Of course, this is what they were taught in their meetings. In fact, the prisoners knew the Communist teachings well, but it wasn't having any effect in their hearts; their conduct didn't change. I knew that, because I could observe it daily; so could the warders. Although the warders liked them to write this way, sometimes it got to be too much, and I heard the warders say to them: 'When you write your letters, quit writing like that, because you don't mean it!' But I never wrote anything like that. I always said that I was thankful for what I got; I was respectful, but I didn't try to kowtow and please them. So I had to stay right to the end."

Finally, about three weeks before the end of his seven years, the officials took Brother Jones out for five tours of a factory, a commune, an exhibition of industrial goods, an art center, and a worker's village. He commented:

"I saw there was nothing unusual about it at all. They are building a lot, but they have done nothing that other countries are not doing."

"Then came October 13, 1965, the day of my release. I thought I was to be released in the morning, but they kept me in until half past eight at night. That means they made me serve my sentence of seven years almost to the hour, just giving me ten and a half hours off."

After leaving the prison, Brother Jones was taken to a hotel by a policeman, and then on a two-day train trip to Canton, where he was put in another hotel—all of this at his own expense. The next morning he was escorted to the border between China and Hong Kong. He told what happened there:

"I was close to the white line. The British police were on the other side. I also saw an Englishman coming up to the line and looking at me. He hesitantly began to wave. I somewhat hesitantly waved back. I didn't recognize him. He went away and then came back, this time with Brother Charles, whom I recognized right away. The British authorities told those brothers: 'Come up and receive Mr. Jones. But *don't put your foot over that white line.*' And they didn't."

#### ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE "BAMBOO CURTAIN"

"I was taken over the border and was overjoyed to be among the brothers once again. It was an overwhelming experience after being in solitary confinement so long. I was soon rather apprehensive, though, because they told me there were newsmen waiting to see me. In all the seven years in prison I never for a moment thought that there would be any special interest in my case. Of course, I knew our brothers were interested, and I am very glad that you did have an interest because I know your prayers have helped me.

"But you can imagine how I felt now, having to face the press. You see, seven years' confinement, where you have to be so careful what you say, and innocent words are taken as an offense, has the effect of making you shut the doors on yourself, to close in and keep quiet. Now I was among free people, but it wasn't easy to open the doors immediately and enjoy that freedom. The brothers in Hong Kong

helped me immensely. I even had the opportunity to join them in house-to-house work. This was the first time I had been from house to house in fourteen years."

The more than 34,000 Witnesses in Yankee Stadium relived with Brother Jones the days following his release, feeling his joy and frequently expressing their happiness for him in enthusiastic applause. He told of a grand time had in Japan, where he spoke to 230 in the city of Nagoya and later to about a thousand in Tokyo. His first stop in the United States was at Honolulu, Hawaii, where another thousand brothers turned out to hear him. As he put it:

"They had never met me before; I had never seen them before; yet they opened their hearts and welcomed me and I felt that I had come out of China to a large family of brothers and sisters. What a joy and blessing it is to be in the New World society!"

After a two-hour stop in San Francisco, where two hundred came out to greet him, Brother Jones arrived in New York City. He was deeply impressed with the changes from twenty years ago when he had worked for four months as a full-time minister in Manhattan, as well as working in the Watch Tower Society's printing plant for a few months. But the audience in Yankee Stadium was hardly prepared to receive the humble expression that Brother Jones now made as to his reaction to all he had seen.

"It impresses me," he said, "because I had seven years doing nothing. In those seven years I was hardly able to preach at all. Here I come out and I see that in those seven years you've all been busy. You've been going ahead day by day preaching. The Lord has blessed you and increased you. As I come out and see all this, it's a wonderful inspiration to me and it gives

me that urge now that I must quickly get busy.

"Of course, first I have a lot of studying to do. I have all the books to read right back to the book *Paradise*. I know that I can't read much as I travel around, but I'm going back to England and after I have met my parents for the first time in nineteen and a half years, I shall then get busy studying."

#### FINE COUNSEL FOR ALL

"I hope that what I have said has not in any way filled you with apprehension, feeling that, if these things came upon you, you would not be able to survive. When I was in Hong Kong a newspaper reporter said: 'Why, I could never endure to be alone. If I had to be alone for seven years I would be climbing up the walls.' But Jehovah's witnesses are not that way, because we have something to think about. We have some spiritual food inside us that feeds us, and we can stand firm in faith. Of course, we have to study first. We have no inner strength if we don't study. So the best thing is to keep studying your Bible, attending your meetings and building yourself up. And then when trouble comes, if it does come on you, you will be able to 'stand firm.'

"You know my case as I have explained it to you. There is nothing spectacular, nothing heroic. It was just a case of 'endure; keep faith in God.' And that, I'm sure, is what you would do.

"In Honolulu a sister came up to me quietly and said: 'Don't be offended by my question, but there is something I feel that I want to ask you. Were you ever depressed and sad during those seven years?' I told her: 'Yes, I was!' There were times when I felt the boredom, the utter uselessness of the situation, the waste of time. The mind will work and study and a person can enjoy study for a long time; he can think on

things with profit. But after a time the mind wants a rest. Then there is the problem of how to occupy the mind. A person can become depressed by the situation.

"But under such conditions I never felt that I wanted to find a different way out. I never felt that I wanted to change my course of action and compromise. I knew there would be relief. And so it is, after a time, that the mind suddenly finds that it can feed on something else. I got happy again and busy once again. If I did become a little tired and stale in my mind, I knew that I would overcome it and feel better and revive again.

"So I would say: We are human. We have human feelings, human weaknesses. It's no fault if we feel down sometimes, because even when we feel down it does not affect our feeling for the truth. We still have the same hopes. We just simply endure it, and God revives us and we feel good again.

"Some brothers have asked me about my impressions since I have been free. What do I think about the changes in this Western world? What about the contrast with the life in China?

"There is a tremendous contrast. In China today people are asked to make sacrifices in order that the new China may be built; so life is rather austere, drab, and very much controlled. Now I come into a freer world, find people nicely dressed, full of color. There is life, energy, free action, with every indication of prosperity. It is like going from one world into another. I begin to think to myself: These beautiful motorcars—wouldn't it be nice to have one? Lovely homes—they also would be nice—and the good clothes, fine television, fine fidelity music from radio and suchlike. So I notice all this material prosperity and I can see that these things could be a snare.

"I notice plainly that worldly people get their happiness from these possessions, all

these material things they have. If these things were suddenly swept away, their happiness would go with them, and they just couldn't live on.

"But, of course, we must not be like that. It's not wrong to have a nice car and those good things of life. They can be had and enjoyed and be perfectly harmless, provided that we never make them the main source of our happiness and pleasure. And I know we will not do that if we put the spiritual things in their right place, that is, in the front.

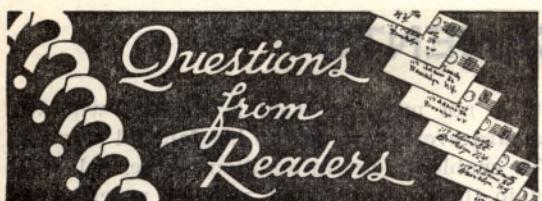
"So that's my impression on my coming into a different world, to see that there is prosperity, but there is also the need for care that that prosperity does not become a stumbling stone and cause us to fall."

Hearty applause from the tens of thousands present showed that they appreciated this timely advice and agreed with it. They

were also happy to receive the expressions of warm love and greetings that Brother Jones brought them from the brothers in Hong Kong, Japan and Honolulu, but they were especially moved by his concluding words as he said:

"Finally, I feel this, that if those few brothers still there in China knew that I was here talking to you today, they too would want me to express their love and good wishes to you all."

The two-hour meeting drew to its close as sustained applause swept through the stadium. Following a song and prayer the crowd began to disperse and head for their homes in many places. They had learned much, and surely prayers would go up from thousands of lips and hearts on behalf of their brothers and sisters still in Communist China who are endeavoring to remain firm in faith.



- What did the apostle Peter mean when he said that "no prophecy of Scripture springs from any private interpretation"?—E. M., U.S.A.

The apostle Peter wrote in reference to prophecy: "You know this first, that no prophecy of Scripture springs from any private interpretation. For prophecy was at no time brought by man's will, but men spoke from God as they were borne along by holy spirit."—2 Pet. 1:20, 21.

The writer was not considering the application, meaning or interpretation of previously written prophecies. The context shows that he

was discussing the surety of the prophetic word, why Christians can depend upon it. (2 Pet. 1: 16-19) He then pointed out that they can have confidence in the prophecies recorded in the Scriptures because their source was not men's imagination but Jehovah God himself.

For example, humans could of themselves observe the political or social conditions in some country and, on the basis of their own interpretation of the data, make some prediction for the future. Such a private interpretation and the subsequent prophecy would not be inspired of God. This occurred with four hundred false prophets during the reign of King Ahab of Israel. When asked whether Ahab and Jehoshaphat should fight against Ramoth-gilead, the professional prophets prophesied success for the two kings. (2 Chron. 18:4-11) That prophecy was the result of their personal interpretation of the situation.

In contrast, Jehovah's prophet Micaiah foretold that Ahab would not return in peace. Was that a prophecy springing from his per-

sonal interpretation? No; before speaking with Ahab, Micaiah said: "What my God will say, that is what I shall speak." (2 Chron. 18:13-27) The death of Ahab in battle proved undeniably that the prediction of the false prophets was based only on their own imperfect human reasoning. On the other hand, Jehovah's prophet Micaiah did not make any private interpretation of events, but Jehovah was the one who made the decision regarding matters; consequently the prophecy he gave through Micaiah was accurate and came true.

So, as explained at 2 Peter 1:20, 21, we can have confidence in the prophecies recorded in the Scriptures, because they are not based on a human interpretation of matters but originate with God. He is the One who, by means of holy spirit, moved his servants to speak and record them.

**● I work for a large company that annually gives a Christmas bonus to all its employees as a gift. Should we as witnesses of Jehovah accept such gifts?—R.K., U.S.A.**

It would not be Scripturally wrong for a Christian to accept a present or bonus given to him by his employer during the Christmas season. Some business firms give a yearly

bonus to all their employees (not to outsiders in general) and they simply choose this time of year to do it. So acceptance would not mean the recipient was celebrating Christmas, for a bonus is what is paid to an employee above his regular pay. It is a recognition of his having been employed by his employer over a period of time, and that with profit to the employer. Of course, if a person's conscience disturbs him at the thought of accepting the bonus, he can kindly and tactfully decline and thus maintain an untroubled conscience.—1 Pet. 3:16.

Christians are Scripturally required to commemorate, not the birth of the babe Jesus, but only the death of Christ. (Luke 22:19, 20) Since the Lord's Evening Meal is the only annual observance Biblically binding upon them, those who adhere closely to the Bible do not celebrate Christmas or other holidays. (Gal. 4:9-11) They do not attend holiday parties or send cards or gifts on worldly holidays. Hence, if one of Jehovah's witnesses accepts a bonus or gift during such a season, he would undoubtedly want to disassociate any expression of thanks from the holiday itself. Also, when it is appropriate to do so, he may be able to clarify tactfully his Biblical position respecting Christmas or other holidays for the benefit of his employer.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### DAILY REFRESHMENT

The year 1965 is closing and a new year is beginning. Will it bring the joys you anticipate, fulfill the hopes of which you dream? Begin each day with the heartwarming experience of instructive and inspiring Bible reading. Do this by considering the Daily Texts and Comments found in the back of the 1966 *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*. Send 50c. Another daily reminder and companion to the *Yearbook* is the 1966 calendar, which displays the year's Bible text and additional Scriptural themes. It is only 25c. Send today.

### FIELD MINISTRY

One who obeys the commandments of Jesus Christ fears, not men, but God. He knows

that, not men, but God is the one who will award everlasting life to his faithful servants. To enable others, in addition to themselves, to gain that blessing, they publicly proclaim the truths of the Bible, and that in spite of any opposition they encounter. During December, as Jehovah's witnesses talk to people about the Bible, they will also be offering them the modern-English *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, along with the new book "*Things in Which It Is Impossible for God to Lie*," on a contribution of \$1.50.

**"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS**  
**January 9:** "Neglecting the House of the Creator of Heaven and Earth." Page 741.  
**January 16:** "We Should Not Neglect the House of Our God." Page 748.