



# The WATCHTOWER

AUGUST 15, 1958

Semimonthly

"BE VIGILANT WITH A  
VIEW TO PRAYERS"

PRAYER, A PRECIOUS  
LOVING PROVISION

THE WATCH TOWER SOCIETY IN  
GOD'S PURPOSE

IS IT SAFE TO BE DIFFERENT?

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*Announcing*  
**JEHOVAH'S  
KINGDOM**

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

## THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## *Is it safe to be* **DIFFERENT?**

**D**URING recent decades totalitarian powers have regimented vast numbers of earth's population. Under their harsh rule freedom to speak what one thinks and to worship in the way one wants has been forbidden. These governments have sought to control their people as completely as an operator of a machine controls what that machine does. Everyone has to think as the State wants him to think, to talk as the State wants him to talk and to act as the State wants him to act. To be different is tantamount to treason. It can land a person in prison or in some remote concentration camp.

People in democratic lands express abhorrence of such regimentation, yet they practice it to an extent themselves. They are not pleased with people who differ with popular political and religious beliefs. Some would like to see such unorthodox persons shipped away somewhere. When criticism is not welcomed and when everyone is expected to conform to what is popular, can there be real freedom?

Justice William O. Douglas of the United States Supreme Court commented on this dangerous trend. Here is how the *New York Times* reported what he said:

"Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas said last night that the country had tended to become insensitive to intrusions against basic liberties. He said there was a demand for conformity to general patterns of thought. Justice Douglas said that the inclination now was 'to look for a teacher who is so-called "safe," a minister who is "safe."' The Justice defined as a 'safe' person one who did not have unorthodox ideas and was 'not a contentious character.' . . . He said that after World War II it became the practice to have 'public trials' ferreting out subversives. As a result, he said, 'people became more and more frightened and, to get a job or to keep a job, wanted to be safe.' Consequently, he declared, there has been 'a general contraction of the feeling of ability to speak freely and a general lowering of the standards of free expression that we have enjoyed in early days.' . . . The

great abuses in history, he said, occurred when the Government intruded into the privacy of a man's thinking, 'when a Government lays its hand on his shoulder and says you shall not worship this way, you shall not think this thought, you shall not read this book.'"

This is a trend toward suppression of individual freedom, the very thing democratic peoples say they hate most about totalitarian states. While they rightly condemn the totalitarians for regimenting thought, many of them turn right around and make it unsafe for anyone among them to be a nonconformist. From bitter experience Jehovah's witnesses have found this to be so.

Because Jehovah's witnesses do not conform to orthodox methods of worship and beliefs and do not act as the majority do they have been discriminated against, cursed, mobbed and imprisoned. In the United States alone they have had to fight hundreds of court cases in order to exercise constitutionally guaranteed freedoms of worship and speech.

A surprisingly large number of people in democratic lands seem to think that freedom should be only for those who go along with popular thought and action. But how is this view any different from the totalitarian view?

Because the Witnesses refuse to violate their Scripturally trained conscience by conforming to the thought, speech and form of worship approved by political states they are persecuted throughout the world, and in totalitarian lands are imprisoned and often severely beaten. They have found that it is not safe to be differ-

ent, but that does not mean they will submit to the world-wide trend toward regimentation.

When a person dedicates his life to the service of God he can neither think as the world does nor act as it does. He has to be different because the world rejects Jehovah God's sovereignty and his laws. It is impossible to serve God and at the same time conform to the world. This was forcefully pointed out by the Bible writer James. "Do you not know that the friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever, therefore, wants to be a friend of the world is constituting himself an enemy of God."—Jas. 4:4.

A person cannot serve two masters who have different objectives and different principles. He must serve either God or the world. If he wants to serve God he cannot think like the world or act like it, no matter how unsafe such nonconformity may be for him.

For the remaining time that this world or system of things exists it will continue to have no love for anyone who serves Jehovah God as his master. It loves only those who are its own, those who conform to it. It will act toward Christ's followers as he foretold: "Because you are no part of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, on this account the world hates you."—John 15:19.

A truly free world where tyranny and intolerance will not exist will be realized when God's kingdom will exert its authority over the earth in the near future. Under its righteous rule obedient mankind will have freedom in the fullest sense of the word.

### Alter Ego

**C**"You have a right to be proud of your town," a visitor observed to the hotel clerk. "I was especially impressed with the number of churches you have. Surely the folks here must love the Lord." "Well," replied the hotel clerk, hesitantly, "they may love the Lord, but they sure hate each other."—*The Wall Street Journal*.



# The WATCH TOWER Society in God's purpose

**The recent international convention of Jehovah's witnesses has attracted much attention to the Watch Tower Society. What is the origin, nature and purpose of this Society?**

**T**HE magazine you are reading is the official journal of the Watch Tower Society. The policy of this Society rests on four basic premises: (1) that there is a Supreme Being, the Creator of heaven and earth, whose name is Jehovah God; (2) that the Bible is his inspired and infallible Word; (3) that God has ever had a channel or means of communicating between himself and man; (4) that today the Watch Tower Society is being used as a legal servant by God's channel. As indicated by the title of this article, a discussion of the last two of these basic premises follows.

That God has ever had on earth a man, society or organization to serve as a means of communication or channel the Bible clearly shows. Thus in the very beginning God informed Adam regarding his will for him, and Adam in turn instructed Eve, telling her, for instance, about God's command not to eat of the fruit of a certain tree. Of course, after Adam rebelled God no longer used him in this capacity.—Genesis, chapters 2 and 3.

Abel doubtless informed those about him of the right way to worship God, at least by example if not also by word of mouth.

After him came Enoch, who prophesied of a coming judgment, even as Jesus' disciple Jude tells us at verse 14. Then there was Noah, who not only built a huge ark or chest but also served as "a preacher of righteousness," warning the delinquent generation of his day of the coming flood. Years later Jehovah God used Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as his mouthpieces. For many centuries the nation of Israel, and certain prophets in particular, served God's purpose by communicating to men knowledge of God and of his will for them. As Moses told his people: "What great nation is there that has righteous regulations and judicial decisions like all this law that I am putting before you today?"—2 Pet. 2:5; Deut. 4:8.

Upon his being baptized at the Jordan Jesus, the Son of God, began to serve as his Father's channel of communication to men. Said he: "Just as the Father taught me I speak these things." "For this purpose I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth."—John 8:28; 18:37.

After Jesus completed his work as a human channel of communication he ascended to heaven and at Pentecost poured out God's holy spirit upon his waiting followers. From then on his apostles and certain older men of the Christian congregation at Jerusalem served as a channel of communication, as well as a governing

body, for Christ's followers. Thus, when certain questions arose, such as regarding Gentiles being circumcised and about eating meat offered to idols, Paul and others consulted with this governing body at Jerusalem. Upon ascertaining God's will on these matters this body informed the various congregations by means of letters carried by Paul and others. Clearly here was a body of Christians that served as a channel of communication to humankind and especially to the Christian congregations, not taking the place of God's Word but helping them to understand and apply it.—Acts 15:1-35.

In passing let it be noted that all these in representing Jehovah God were witnesses for him, even as Paul so clearly shows at Hebrews 11:1 to 12:2. The Scriptures further show that at no time did God use more than one channel or mouthpiece (either one man or a group serving harmoniously as one) to communicate to men.—Ex. 19:5, 6; Ps. 147:20; Amos 3:2, AS; John 14:6.

#### WHAT ABOUT TODAY?

It is but reasonable to expect that God would also have a channel of communication today, especially since his Word shows that the time is near for settling the great universal issue between Jehovah God and Satan, Who is supreme? which issue Satan raised by his rebellion in Eden. While Jehovah God could have settled that issue at once by destroying Satan and his dupes, yet because the issue of man's being able to keep integrity was also involved, and for the sake of his own name, He has delayed settling that issue, even as he told Pharaoh in Moses' day. In his due time, however, Jehovah is bound to act to remove all doubt as to his being the supreme Sovereign, almighty and perfect in love. That due time will be Armageddon, "the war of the great day of God the Almighty."—Rev. 16:14, 16; Ex. 9:16.

The purpose of Jehovah God therefore calls for a channel of communication now that will serve notice upon all his enemies that Armageddon is impending; otherwise when it strikes they will not know the reason why. This channel is also needed so as to warn all men of good will toward God so that they might take a life-preserving course, even as did Noah and his family. To such the call now goes forth: "Seek ye Jehovah, all ye meek of the earth, that have kept his ordinances; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye will be hid in the day of Jehovah's anger."—Zeph. 2:3, AS.

In fact, Jesus, in his great prophecy about the end of this wicked old world, indicated that God would have a channel of communication at this time, which he would use to sound this warning: "Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics to give them their food at the proper time? Happy is that slave if his master on arriving finds him doing so. Truly I say to you, He will appoint him over all his belongings."—Matt. 24:45-47.

Is the Watch Tower Society this "faithful and discreet slave"? No, it is merely a corporate body, a legal instrument used by this "slave." Who, then, is this "slave"? Not just one individual, but the composite body of dedicated, anointed footstep followers of Jesus Christ, described as "the remaining ones of her seed, who observe the commandments of God and have the work of bearing witness to Jesus."—Rev. 12:17.

#### HISTORY AND NATURE OF SOCIETY

"O Lord, I stand continually upon the watch-tower in the day-time, and am set in my ward whole nights." (Isa. 21:8, AS) Here we have the Scriptural basis for the name of the Society. And the name is indeed well taken, for it does serve as a

"watchman" upon a watchtower, announcing to all Jehovah's purposes. (Isa. 21:11; see front cover of *The Watch Tower* down to issue of December 15, 1938.) Among other things, the original charter of the Society stated its purpose to be: "The dissemination of Bible truths in various languages by means of the publication of tracts, pamphlets, . . . and by the use of all other lawful means which its Board of Directors . . . shall deem expedient."

This Society got its start back in 1872 when a mere handful of sincere Christians met in a suburb of Pittsburgh for Bible study. Wanting to be free from all man-made creeds and to have the Bible alone as their guide, they found it necessary to separate from their respective religious denominations. As they kept studying they increased in knowledge and understanding of God's Word, and as they kept telling others about what they learned their numbers grew. In the interest of efficiency they organized a Bible society in 1881, which was incorporated in 1884. In 1909 this Society moved to Brooklyn, New York, so as to care better for its interests in other lands. Today this Society is supervising the preaching activity in 164 lands, having branches in eighty-four countries.

The 164 lands are divided into zones and, depending upon its size and number of ministers, each country having a branch is divided into districts, which, in turn, are divided into circuits. Usually some twenty congregations comprise a circuit; in turn, each congregation, depending upon its size, has a number of home Bible study groups known as service centers. Each congregation has an overseer and a number of assistants who look after the various details, including the service centers. All these are appointed by the Society, even as are those who are servants of zones, branches, districts and circuits. Circuit servants visit each congregation in their

circuit twice a year to instruct and encourage its ministers, to report to the Society as to its spiritual condition and to make recommendations.

Each congregation has five weekly meetings for Bible instruction and ministerial training. Ministers also meet several times each week to engage in the field ministry. All activity is supported by voluntary contributions; no contribution plates are passed.

#### HOW IT IS SERVING GOD'S PURPOSE TODAY

The facts show that Jehovah God is using the Watch Tower Society to make known the facts about the vindication of his name, regarding Armageddon and concerning his established kingdom for which all Christians have been praying. Each congregation of his witnesses is given an assignment of territory for which it is responsible. Those able to do so arrange their affairs to serve full time as pioneer ministers or as foreign missionaries. For the training of such missionaries the Society has the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead.

To aid all these ministers the Society publishes Bibles, textbooks, magazines, booklets and tracts. Different from other Bible societies, however, it places the emphasis on Bible-study aids, as most persons have Bibles, and so what they most need is not another Bible but an aid to understanding the Bible they already have. One of these textbooks, "*Let God Be True*", has been published and distributed to the extent of sixteen million copies in forty-eight languages. As noted on the inside of the front cover of this magazine, *The Watchtower* has a circulation of 3.5 million copies in fifty languages. Its companion magazine *Awake!* enjoys a circulation of 2.8 million copies in nineteen languages.

These Christian ministers and witnesses of Jehovah follow the example set by the

apostles and go "from house to house," looking for those who are "conscious of their spiritual need." Finding such ones, they make return visits, endeavoring to start a weekly home Bible study. If successful, they continue this study, not only until the student dedicates himself to do God's will, but until he no longer needs such aid. All ministers are either being trained or training others. There is no clergy-laity distinction, nor are honorary titles bestowed upon any. All keep progressing from students to ministers who can assist others.—Acts 20:20; Matt. 5:3; 23:8.

Under the direction of the Watch Tower Society these ministers also "preach the word" on busy street corners and at shopping centers. They give Bible lectures at their Kingdom Halls, in auditoriums, in parks and other public places. The Society also encourages the use of all other lawful and effective means that are available, such as the public press, radio and television. And in particular does it sponsor assemblies: circuit, district, national and international. The latest and largest of these was just held July 27 to August 3 in New York city, to which Christian ministers came from more than a hundred different lands.

In all such ways the Watch Tower Society is serving God's purpose as an efficient legal instrument of his dedicated and anointed servants who are the true channel of communication of Jehovah God today. As a result of such activity great numbers of sheeplike men and women have taken their stand for Jehovah God and for his King and kingdom. Proof of this is seen in the 1958 *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, which showed that during 1957 a peak of 716,901 Christian ministers and witnesses of Jehovah had shared in preaching the good news of the Kingdom and that, all told, more than 100 million hours were devoted to such activity.

Where the Watch Tower Society is banned the witnesses of Jehovah carry on underground. Even such, however, the Society manages to provide with spiritual food and instruction in most remarkable ways. But whether above ground or underground, these Christian ministers fulfill their commission to preach. It is being done, "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah." With the help of that spirit they will continue until their preaching work is completed, "until cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without man."—Zech. 4:6; Isa. 6:11, AS.

### No Explosion

 In the book *Like a Mighty Army* Halford E. Luccock writes of Christendom's churches: "Did you happen to notice in the public prints not long ago that there was a violent explosion in a church in New York state—unfortunately not in the pulpit but in the boiler room? . . . The New Testament explodes all over the place. Here are a few . . . words which the Apostle Paul used to people who were blocking the path of the gospel: 'You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, you whitewashed wall.' Definitely not the language recommended by Robert's *Rules of Order*. Perhaps that is what is the matter with us. Could it be that we are taking our cue from the wrong textbook? It would be a shock in many places to displace Robert's *Rules of Order* by the New Testament, but it might be exciting . . . Think of explosion in pew and pulpit over muddled thinking, over mouselike trepidation before Caesar and Mammon, over festoons of ecclesiastical red tape."

# WORKS OF FAITH AND

# Love



**T**HERE remain faith, hope, love, these three, but the greatest of these is love." (1 Cor. 13:13) Why is love the greatest? "Love prompts to faithfulness now," says the sacred song, and it is particularly important that it should do so now because we are living in those "critical times hard to deal with" that the apostle Paul warns us of in his second letter to Timothy. We are living in the "later periods of time" when "some

will fall away from the faith, paying attention to misleading inspired utterances and teachings of demons, by the hypocrisy of men who speak lies."—2 Tim. 3:1; 1 Tim. 4:1, 2.

It means that unless a person's faith is based upon a solid foundation and is firmly established, he will be in danger of being swept off his feet in the whirlpool of doubt and uncertainty by reason of the flood of these "misleading inspired utterances." This plainly emphasizes the vital importance of taking in accurate knowledge of Bible truth, which is the very basis of faith. To the sincere Christian it also indicates the importance of being teachers of the truth, capable of instructing others in the way of life. Paul's words to young Timothy apply forcefully today: "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."—1 Tim. 4:16.

How often we meet people and perhaps study the Bible with them, and after some months of study with little apparent progress we say, 'He knows it is the truth, but



he will not take a stand for it. He has gone all the way through "Let God Be True" and seems to like it and has some knowledge of the hope of life in the new world, but will not progress beyond that point. He still needs spoon feeding with the milk of the Word.' What is the duty of Jehovah's witnesses in such cases?

There is also the problem of those who attend congregational study meetings but never make comments or discuss Bible truths with others; yet they like to associate with Jehovah's witnesses and report some time in field service. What is their position?

The apostle Paul sounds a very stern warning to such. When one receives some basic understanding of Bible truth and then remains stagnant, or falls back, he is in a dangerous position. It is something that cannot be treated lightly. It is an expression of love on the part of a mature Christian to try to assist that one to see the seriousness of his position and to help him make progress toward maturity. Failing to do this may end in loss of life for both in

the judgment of Armageddon; the one for failing to do his duty as one of Jehovah's 'watchmen,' and the other for not having "sought Jehovah, nor inquired after him." (Ezek. 33:7; Zeph. 1:6, AS) The apostle Paul warns that those who have received some enlightenment, "who have tasted the right word of God and powers of the coming system of things, but who have fallen away," are "near to being cursed," and, like unfruitful ground, end up with "being burned." (Heb. 6:4-8) There are many today who may not have gone to the point where they merit God's curse, but they are in danger. They are in a position of being rescued, and those who are in a position to do so have an obligation to give them all the assistance possible to 'snatch them out of the fire.' Maybe they have been the objects of ridicule by religionists or members of their family, and that is keeping them back. Perhaps they have been sidetracked by those "misleading inspired utterances and teachings of demons." They may have been ensnared by those "hurtful desires which plunge men into destruction and ruin," and by reaching out for more material wealth "have been led astray from the faith." (1 Tim. 6:9, 10) What should those who are mature in the faith do for such persons? Jude tells us what to do:

"In the last time there will be ridiculers, proceeding according to their own desires for ungodly things.' These are the ones that make separations, . . . But you, beloved ones, by building up yourselves on your most holy faith, and praying with holy spirit, keep yourselves in God's love, while you are waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ with everlasting life in view. Also continue showing mercy to some that have doubts; save them by snatching them out of the fire."—Jude 18-23.

We may ourselves have complete faith, based upon accurate knowledge of God's Word, but is that sufficient? The Scriptures

are plain in showing us that faith is essential to salvation, but is it sufficient for salvation? "Without faith it is impossible to win [God's] good pleasure." (Heb. 11:6) But faith is valueless by itself. It is valueless without works, and the works must be of the right kind to make it valuable. "Faith, if it does not have works, is dead in itself." (Jas. 2:17) And again Paul warns: "If I have all the faith so as to transplant mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing." (1 Cor. 13:2) It is quite apparent from these scriptures that faith is merely a foundation. Something else must be built on that foundation; there must be a superstructure, and that superstructure must be crowned by love. Or, to refer again to the words of Jude just quoted, there must be a building up of our faith, and that with the aid of prayer, in order to keep ourselves in God's love. This is done by being obedient to the "kingly law," namely, "You must love your neighbor as yourself." (Jas. 2:8) We can do this by 'continuing to show mercy to some that have doubts, saving them by snatching them out of the fire.'

In order to keep ourselves in God's love we must be "doers of the word, and not hearers only." (Jas. 1:22) One who is merely a hearer and not a doer is likened to a man who builds a house upon sand and which, when the storm comes, just crumbles to pieces. (Matt. 7:26, 27) We have plenty of warning from the Scriptures that the greatest of all storms, the most frightening of all whirlwinds, is soon to sweep every vestige of this old world's systems into destruction at Armageddon. And it is now, just prior to that execution of divine judgment, that the demons are especially active in inspiring men who have no faith to make "misleading inspired utterances" for the purpose of causing immature ones, and "some that have doubts," to fall away from the faith.

We may sow seeds of truth, but unless they are watered and cultivated God will not make them grow, no more than he makes literal seeds grow if they are not nourished with water and sunshine. But Jehovah has raised up a body of people to do this seed-sowing and watering work, and he promises to make these seeds of truth grow into mature plants to his praise. "We are God's fellow workers. You people are God's field under cultivation." (1 Cor. 3:9) "Working together with him, we also entreat you not to accept the undeserved kindness of God and miss its purpose." (2 Cor. 6:1) In other words, everyone should be a teacher of God's Word. Unless he is capable of teaching others he is not mature. He is like a babe needing to be fed. Christian maturity requires that one be capable of making "a defense before everyone that demands of you a reason for the hope in you." (1 Pet. 3:15) Jehovah's people on earth today are a teaching body. Jehovah has provided "missionaries, some as shepherds and teachers, with a view to the training of the holy ones for ministerial work, . . . until we all attain to the oneness in the faith and in the accurate knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown man," and it is the duty and obligation of these mature ones to aid others so that they "may be thoroughly able to grasp mentally with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and height and depth" of God's purposes. (Eph. 4:11-15; 3:18) They teach, not the wisdom of this world, but that wisdom which is from above, which Jehovah taught to Jesus Christ. Jehovah is the great Teacher. Jesus received all his instruction on what to do and say from Jehovah his Father. (John 5:19, 20; 7:16; 8:28, 38) Jesus then, in turn, taught his disciples what to do and say, and they passed on to us that accurate knowledge of Jehovah's will, which Jehovah's witnesses are obligated to pass on to

others. "By giving these advices to the brothers" we become the "right kind of ministers of Jesus Christ, one nourished with the words of the faith and of the right teaching."—1 Tim. 4:6.

In exhorting one to press on to maturity, notice that Paul specifies the need of "not laying a foundation again, namely, repentance from dead works, and faith toward God." (Heb. 6:1) In speaking of "repentance from dead works" Paul was, of course, referring primarily to those Jewish converts to Christianity in his day who had learned that works for one's own self-justification could never give them life. They were "dead" in that they could not provide salvation for anyone and had now been superseded by works of faith. But it was necessary to teach those early Christians that not just any kind of work would do. They had to be "right works." (Matt. 5:16) Some of those early Christians were puzzled as to what constituted right works, and asked Jesus: "What shall we do to work the works of God?" In reply Jesus said to them: "This is the work of God, that you exercise faith in him whom that One sent forth." (John 6:28, 29) On the basis of this text some will argue that all one has to do to gain eternal life is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, as though works did not matter very much. But James, under inspiration, tells us: "You see that a man is to be declared righteous by works, and not by faith alone." (Jas. 2:24) Others will claim that their mighty works in the shape of hospitals, orphanages, social centers, etc., constitute works of faith and love, but Jesus plainly foretells that "many will say to me in that day: 'Master, Master, did we not prophesy in your name, and expel demons in your name, and perform many powerful works in your name?' " and he will not recognize them, but actually will dismiss them as "workers of lawlessness."—Matt. 7:22, 23.

Jesus set the example as to what constituted right works. When sending out his twelve apostles and the seventy preachers Jesus instructed them what to say and what to do. He said: "Go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of the heavens has drawn near.' But some will say to this, 'Yes, and he also told them to cure the sick, and Jehovah's witnesses do not do that.' True, at least not in a physical sense, but neither do these so-called faith healers do the other things that Jesus instructed his disciples to do, namely, "raise up dead persons, make lepers clean, expel demons." (Matt. 10:1, 7, 8) Why? Because those miraculous gifts of God's spirit by which those early disciples performed miraculous cures were only temporary and Paul plainly said they would pass away as the congregation matured. He emphasized the fact that it was the basic gifts of faith, hope and love that would never pass away. (1 Cor. 13:8, 13) Today the preaching of 'this good news of the Kingdom in all the inhabited earth for the purpose of a witness to all the nations' is the work of faith and love that all dedicated Christians are obligated to perform.—Matt. 24:14.

Note now this important truth: these works of faith must be prompted by love. First, love for Jehovah God, the Life-giver; and secondly, love for one's neighbor. This is the "kingly law," obedience to which is imperative in order to receive Jehovah's blessing. (Jas. 2:8) Sincerity and enthusiasm in preaching error will never excuse the error and make it right. "Do your utmost to present yourself approved to God, a workman with nothing to be ashamed of, handling the word of the truth aright. But shun empty speeches that violate what is holy." "Avoid all that profane jargon, for it leads people still further into [ungodliness], and their doctrine spreads like a gangrene." (Mo) Love for God and neigh-

bor obligates us to see that our teaching is accurate.—2 Tim. 2:15-17.

One needs to be "stabilized in the faith" or else "perhaps there may be some man that will carry you off as his prey through the philosophy and empty deception according to the tradition of men, . . . and not according to Christ." (Col. 2:7, 8) It is most important that every Christian "be filled with the accurate knowledge of [God's] will in all wisdom and spiritual discernment, in order to walk worthily of Jehovah to the end of fully pleasing him as you go on bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the accurate knowledge of God."—Col. 1:9-12.

As a slave of Jehovah, every Christian "needs to be tactful toward all, qualified to teach, keeping himself restrained under evil, instructing with mildness those not favorably disposed, as perhaps God may give them repentance leading to an accurate knowledge of truth, and they may come back to their proper senses out from the snare of the Devil."—2 Tim. 2:24-26.

So keep watching how you are building this fine superstructure of works of faith and love. Be careful to watch that your works of faith are like the imperishable materials of gold, silver and precious stones, and not like the wood materials, hay and stubble, which will be consumed in the fire. If your works have been of this latter nature, then get rid of them; let the fire of Jehovah's righteous judgment burn them up, even if it means some loss to you, and learn to build the enduring things of right works so that you may be saved. (1 Cor. 3:10-15) Jehovah knows the heart condition. He knows the motive that prompts one's work. Happy is the man who keeps clear of the "profane jargon" and who prepares himself as a vessel for an honorable purpose, useful to his owner, prepared for every good work. (2 Tim. 2:20-22) "Love builds up."—1 Cor. 8:1.

# **KNOW THE FACTS BEHIND THE WORDS**

"**R**ETURN evil for evil to no one," Paul said, and added: "Keep conquering the evil with the good." In support of this he quoted: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by doing this you will heap fiery coals upon his head." Paul was quoting an inspired proverb: "If the one hating you is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. For coals are what you are raking together upon his head." But just how good is it to heap coals of fire on someone's head? Would not such charitable conduct smack of hypocrisy, having

an evil motive calculated to bring suffering rather than good? So the words would seem to say.—Rom. 12:17, 21, 20; Prov. 25:21, 22.

But there are facts behind the words that make them say something very different. To "heap fiery coals upon his head" is a metaphor or figurative expression drawn from the method of smelting metals in ancient furnaces. The ore was put in the furnace and then not only was a bed of coals put underneath but a layer was heaped on top, over the head of the ore. This increased the heat so that the hard metal melted and separated from the impurities in the ore. The heaping of coals on its head softened and purified the metal in the ore. So the doing of kindness to an enemy, the returning of good for evil, will make him feel shame and remorse, will soften him and melt his hardness, will separate evil impurities from him and bring out the goodness in him.

Today if one's speech is said to be salty it is understood that it is highly seasoned with risqué indecencies and improprieties. But that could hardly be the meaning when Christians are advised: "Let your utterance be always with graciousness, seasoned with salt, so as to know how you ought to give an answer to each one." A background knowledge of salt as it was used in symbol in ancient times clarifies the meaning. Salt was offered with the



Mosaic sacrifices, since it is a preservative and prevented fermentation. Preventing change by decay, it was used in connection with covenants to indicate the permanence of the agreement. Among ancient peoples it was a sign of friendship to eat salt together. It symbolized perpetual fidelity and loyalty. Hence when the Christian was told to season his answers with salt it meant to use



truthful words that would preserve from destruction, that would be loyal and faithful, that would make the answers tasty and appetizing for the listener and work toward his preservation.—Col. 4:6.

#### NAILED TO THE STAKE

When speaking of the ending of the Mosaic law covenant at the time of Jesus' death and resurrection and ascension into heaven, why did Jehovah say that "He has taken it out of the way by nailing it to the torture stake"? No copy of the law was nailed to the torture stake of Christ Jesus in the first place, and if it had been what good would that do? How would that act take the law out of the way or terminate it? Since the law was not literally nailed to the stake, the meaning must be symbolical. What is that meaning? Again, it is the background facts that illuminate the words. The claim is made that in the time of Christ in Asia bills or deeds were canceled by driving a nail through them and fixing them to a post in a public place. Some say that outmoded laws were abrogated by nailing copies of them up in public places. While specific proof of this custom is lacking today, there are indications that it existed and was followed and that the allusion is to this custom where Colossians 2:14 speaks of the law as being canceled out by nailing it to the torture stake on which Jesus was impaled.

First Timothy 1:3, 4 records Paul's warning to "certain ones not to teach different doctrine, nor to pay attention to false stories and to genealogies which end up in nothing, but which furnish questions for research rather than a dispensing of anything by God in connection with faith." The force of this warning is more appreciated when we know of the scrupulous accuracy with which the Jews kept the genealogies, and how minutely they inves-

tigated any possible discrepancy. "How prolific these Biblical books [of Chronicles] were in provoking genealogical conceits is shown by the statement that 900 camel-loads of commentary existed on 1 Chron. viii. 37 to ix. 44," says *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, and it continues to deplore the mischief and pride involved in these genealogical tables. But when Paul wrote First Timothy such controversies were pointless. It was no longer vital to have the genealogical records maintained, since God no longer recognized in the "body of Christ" Jew or Gentile anyway, and the genealogical records already established the descent of Christ through the line of David. So the genealogies were of no importance to Christian teaching, and Christians should not be sidetracked into such quarrels that contributed nothing to Christian faith.

#### WASHING HANDS BEFORE EATING

When the Pharisees complained to Jesus that his disciples did "not wash their hands when about to eat a meal," Jesus rebuked the Pharisees. Does this mean Jesus favored eating with dirty hands? No, for it was not on the grounds of sanitation that the Pharisees commanded hand-washing. It was their oral tradition. It was a religious ritual, their hand-washing. Hands had to be washed before and after the meal and sometimes during the meal, with special water, and in different ways with different foods. Knowing all the intricate nonsense the Pharisees in those days commanded concerning the washing of hands immediately gives understanding. It shows a religious ritual was involved, that it was a part of the oral tradition of the Jews that Jesus said made void the Word of God, and it eliminates any erroneous thought that Jesus favored eating food with dirty hands.—Matt. 15:1-6.

How could anyone believe that the day of death is better than the day of birth? Or that it is better to mourn than to rejoice? Yet the Bible says so, at Ecclesiastes 7:1-4. Understanding comes when the historical background of the words is known. "A name is better than good oil, and the day of death than the day of one's being born. Better is it to go to the house of mourning than to go to the banquet house, because that is the end of all mankind; and the one alive should take [it] to his heart. Better is vexation than laughter, for by the crossness of the face the heart becomes better. The heart of the wise ones is in the house of mourning, but the heart of the stupid ones is in the house of rejoicing." Just as a good name with God is better than precious oil or any other material possession, so death after a life that has built up a good name with God is better than birth when one has no name with God at all and it is unknown whether the name one builds during life will be good or bad. Death with a good name insures that one of a resurrection to life, but at birth one has no assurance at all of attaining the new world of everlasting life. And when it speaks of the house of mourning it refers to a home in which a person has died, and the practice of friends going there to comfort the survivors. It is better to show this kindness than to callously ignore those in grief and rush off to banquets to laugh and revel and rejoice. Ordinarily it is better to begin life than end it, and to rejoice than to mourn; but when we understand what is behind these words we see that they are exceptional, that in their setting they are true.

#### PUNISHMENT IN HELL-FIRE

One last example from many Biblical accounts to show how the facts behind the words bring clarity. The Bible speaks of the incorrigibly wicked being everlasting punished in "hell fire" or a lake of fire. Not only does this seem fiendish, but it contradicts the statements that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die" and that "the wages sin pays is death." (Ezek. 18:4, AS; Rom. 6:23) When the King James Bible speaks of "hell fire," as at Matthew 5:22, the original Greek is *gēhenna tou pyrós* ["gehenna of the fire," Yg]. It has no reference to any lake of fire inside the earth, but means the valley of Hinnom to the west and south of ancient Jerusalem. In Jesus' time it was the dumping place and incinerator for the filth of the city. Fires, to which sulphur or brimstone was added to assist the burning, consumed the refuse. Here the bodies of not only dead animals but occasionally the bodies of executed criminals were thrown. When a human body was thrown there it indicated a person too wicked to deserve a resurrection; hence no memorial tomb was used for him. Hence the place became a symbol of a destruction or punishment that was complete and everlasting. The Jews of Jesus' day understood this symbol, so Jesus used it to indicate the everlasting punishment in death for the willfully wicked.

Just as there are modern expressions that would be meaningless to persons living in ancient times because they would not know the background of our age, so there are words from Bible times that are meaningless to us unless we learn the facts behind them.

#### RELIGION WITHOUT POWER

¶ "Those cities with the worst political corruption have no dearth of church buildings," observes Professor Elton Trueblood. "It is sobering to be reminded that Rome, when the city fell into such moral and political decay, had more than four hundred shrines."—*Your Other Vocation*.

## 'Over \$2,000—but Well Spent!'

OD'S Word, and the book of Proverbs in particular, stresses the superlative value of the knowledge, wisdom and fear of Jehovah. Illustrating that fact is the following experience as related by a Christian witness of Jehovah in Canada. Incidentally, it also serves to underscore the value of incidental witnessing.

“My next-door neighbor had invited his parents to sell their belongings in England and come to spend the rest of their lives with him here in Canada. Shortly after they arrived the man, upon seeing me working outside, came over and asked me if I could tell him where the nearest Anglican Church or meeting place was, as he wanted to take part in the communion.

“After I had told him he asked me if I was a Christian, and when I told him that all in my home were Christians and zealous students of the Bible his face lit up in a pleasant smile. At the time he was not able to accept an invitation to come in but did so a few weeks later. We had a long discussion on the Bible and when he left we agreed to get together again to continue our discussion.

“Due to activity in connection with a district assembly here, several weeks passed before we were able to have him and his wife in for another discussion, and in the meantime they had decided to return to England. Before he left that evening we realized that here was a sincere, humble, loving person who no longer was certain about his religion and was beginning to search for the truth.

“We gave him copies of all the various tracts we had as well as several booklets and asked him to read them with his Bible. He did and the very next day returned, asking if we had some literature on the Lord's Evening Meal. I gave him the previous year's issue of *The Watchtower* dealing with the subject. He came back that same evening and said that he had read it all and that it was so different from what he had believed for so many years that he would have to give it some real prayerful thought.

“When they came the next day to take leave I gave him three Bible-study aids to read on the boat, ‘Let God Be True’, ‘This Means Everlasting Life’ and ‘New Heavens and a New Earth’, along with certain back

issues of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* that had articles I thought would particularly interest him. He accepted them with tears in his eyes, saying that the saddest part about his leaving Canada was to leave us who appeared to love God's Word as much as he did. He promised to write and tell us what he thought of the books. I got my first letter last Tuesday and it reads as follows:

“Dear Olaf, . . . After reading *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* and much of the other matter that you so kindly gave me before I left Canada, you will, I am sure, be pleased to learn that I can no longer continue to worship God in accordance with the teachings of the Church of England—the church that I have served and worshiped in so long. Coming to Canada, returning and having to buy another home will cost well over \$2,000, but I shall look upon it as money well spent, for has it not put me in touch with the truth? The truth, which I may have never heard but for my visit to Richvale, and the loving words of you, dear brother, and the loving help of your very dear wife.

“I see now that I have been worshiping God mistakenly. However, I have served Him in accord with my knowledge, and since God is love, I feel that He will forgive my ignorance. I am thankful that it has pleased our heavenly Father—through you—to bring the truth to me; although it has come—as it were—at the eleventh hour of my life—for I think you know that I am 92. May Jehovah grant me the very great honor of serving in the ranks of His witnesses before calling me from this present life.

“I trust that He will, for by His help I feel that I can still do something for the advancement of truth in the Bible as taught by the faithful Jew—His witnesses. I am contacting the Society here . . . I shall be most pleased to hear from you at any time, if you have time to write; anyway I shall not forget you nor all you have done for me, for you have made me very happy. I pray that God will be pleased to bless you and yours more and more, and that we may all meet again in Jehovah's good time, if not before, then in Christ's kingdom here upon earth. My love to you all with the very best wishes, Yours, sincerely in The Truth, [signed].”

# "Be Vigilant WITH A VIEW TO PRAYERS"

"But the complete end of all things has drawn close. Be sound in mind, therefore, and be vigilant with a view to prayers."—1 Pet. 4:7.

**I**t was 11:40 of the night of April 14, 1912. The world's largest ocean liner with 2,207 souls aboard was sailing full speed ahead on the North Atlantic. She was hailed as "man's proudest engineering achievement." Indicative of the confidence her owners had in her was her name, the "Titanic," meaning "of enormous magnitude, force and power." This liner, reputed to be unsinkable, was on the fifth day of her maiden voyage. Then out of the darkness there loomed an iceberg and before her course could be sufficiently changed she received a large gash in her side. In less than three hours the "unsinkable" Titanic sank, taking down with her 1,502 men, women and children to a watery grave.

<sup>2</sup> What caused that terrible tragedy? Lack of vigilance due to overconfidence! Six warnings had been received by her wireless operator, one of these even giving the exact location of the very iceberg the Titanic struck! Why did her captain keep sailing full speed ahead in spite of such warnings? Because



of his great trust in his ship's unsinkability. Truly a forceful illustration of the folly of overconfidence!

#### THE NEED OF CONFIDENCE

<sup>3</sup> As dedicated Christians we are in the world but are no part of it. We are, as it were, ship captains, sailing from this old world or system of things to the post-Armageddon new world. Right now many of us seem to have smooth sailing and so there may be a tendency to relax our vigilance. But we dare not do so, for our sea also is strewn with icebergs, obstacles put there by the Devil and his demons, the world and the flesh, which can easily cause us shipwreck, loss of integrity toward God.

<sup>4</sup> What does it mean to be vigilant? The term "vigilant" comes from a root meaning "a watching." To be vigilant, we are told, means to be alertly watchful, to be circumspect, cautious, "attentive to discover and avoid danger, or to provide for safety." "Vigilance implies keen, courageous, often wary, watchfulness, especially in the cause of right." (Webster) To be

1-3. (a) What terrible tragedy forcefully illustrates the folly of overconfidence? (b) What analogy can be drawn from this for Christians?

4. What does it mean to be vigilant?

vigilant, therefore, is just the opposite of being careless, thoughtless, heedless, indifferent or sleepy. Impressing upon our hearts and minds the importance of vigilance are the warning examples and explicit commands of God's Word.

<sup>5</sup> Due to overconfidence and lack of vigilance, even such faithful servants of Jehovah as Noah, Moses and David at times 'took a false step before they were aware of it.' And especially in the apostle Peter do we have a warning example. Surely Peter was wholly devoted to Jehovah God and to his Master. Had he not left his fishing business and all else to follow Jesus as a fisher of men? Yet how he stumbled, denying his Master three times, all because of his lack of vigilance due to overconfidence!—Matt. 26:31-35, 75.

<sup>6</sup> And then we have the explicit commands: "Be vigilant with a view to prayers." "Keep your senses, be watchful." "Keep on the watch and praying." "Let us stay awake and keep our senses." "Let him that thinks he has a firm position beware that he does not fall."—1 Pet. 4:7; 5:8; Matt. 26:41; 1 Thess. 5:6; 1 Cor. 10:12.

#### WHY GREATER NEED FOR VIGILANCE NOW

<sup>7</sup> While Christians have ever had to take these warnings to heart, today we have an even greater need for doing so. Thus it has always been true that 'the Devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone.' But in view of our living in the time when "the nations became wrathful," in two world wars, we know that Satan has greater anger now, "knowing he has a short period of time," and that therefore he is waging war with increased fury against all those "who observe the commandments of God and have

5, 6. (a) What Scriptural examples do we have of lack of vigilance due to overconfidence? (b) And what Scriptural warnings?

7-10. (a) Why is increased vigilance now needed regarding opposition from Satan? (b) From the world? (c) From our own flesh?

the work of bearing witness to Jesus." This stepped-up attack on the part of Satan requires increased vigilance on our part.—1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 11:18; 12:12, 17.

<sup>8</sup> The same is true of our enemy the world. With the "increasing of lawlessness" comes the greater danger that our love will cool off. And do not the facts show that we are living in the "critical times hard to deal with," when selfishness has gone to seed? So while the world has ever tempted the Christian because of its selfishness, its increased materialism and wickedness demand greater vigilance on our part.—Matt. 24:12; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 1 John 2:16.

<sup>9</sup> Today there is even greater need for vigilance as regards our own flesh. How could that be? Again note that, while it has ever been true, as Paul confessed, "the good that I wish I do not do, but the bad that I do not wish is what I practice," today the flesh has increased inducements to assert itself. Just as "fulness of bread, and prosperous ease," contributed to the delinquency of ancient Sodom, so today the material prosperity and increased leisure time that many of us enjoy furnish added opportunities for the fallen tendencies of our flesh to assert themselves, making self-control more difficult. How serious a threat this can be is seen from the fact that certain Christian witnesses of Jehovah who had faithfully endured brutality in Nazi concentration camps or, more recently, Communist prisons for years, afterward had to be excommunicated or disfellowshiped because of immoral conduct!—Rom. 7:19; Ezek. 16:49, AS.

<sup>10</sup> Since our three enemies, the Devil, the world and the flesh, are placing more and more obstacles in our way, truly today, as never before, we have need to be alert, watchful, vigilant. We dare not become overconfident because of the lack of persecution in most parts of the world and

because of the great expansion in pure worship. On the contrary, since "the complete end of all things has drawn close," we have increased need to take to heart all the warning examples and explicit commands regarding vigilance.

#### CONSCIOUS OF OUR SPIRITUAL NEED

<sup>11</sup> How can we keep vigilant? How can we avoid the snare of overconfidence? How? By being ever conscious of our spiritual need. As Jesus said: "Happy are those who are conscious of their spiritual need." And why does being conscious of our spiritual need keep us vigilant and protect us from the snare of overconfidence? Because, first of all, it will make us diligent to study God's Word together with the aids he has provided for understanding it, knowing that "man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah's mouth." That Word, as we have seen, contains much warning admonition that will help us to keep vigilant.—Matt. 5:3; 4:4.

<sup>12</sup> Secondly, if we are conscious of our spiritual need we will be eager to associate with like-minded Christians at every opportunity, appreciating that none can say to another, "I have no need of you." We may not think of saying that in so many words, but if we willingly neglect to assemble with our brothers we are saying just that by our actions and in our hearts. If all dedicated Christians were fully aware of their spiritual need to associate with each other, it would not be necessary to remind them continually not to forsake "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." Associating

with one another is stimulating and helps us keep vigilant.—1 Cor. 12:21; Heb. 10:25.

<sup>13</sup> Further, if we are conscious of our spiritual need we will realize that it is true of each one of us as it was of Jesus: "My food is for me to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work." Having received into good hearts the good news about Jehovah and his kingdom and the warning of the impending destruction at Armageddon, we find that we have a real need to tell these truths out to others. Yes, then like Elihu and Jeremiah we will be unable to keep silent. Keeping busy preaching the truth is one of the best ways to keep vigilant.—John 4:34; Job 32:18-20; Jer. 20:9, AS.

<sup>14</sup> And, finally, being conscious of our spiritual need will make us appreciate the value of prayer, of talking with our heavenly Father, Jehovah God. By prayer we show that we are keenly aware of our need of his help, that we appreciate our need to keep in touch with him, the Source of true wisdom and all strength. There seems to be a tendency among some today to overlook the importance of prayer, yes, of frequent and earnest prayer. It is very easy to neglect prayer or to let it deteriorate into a routine, formal thing. Such is a great mistake! Earnest and frequent prayer will help us avoid the snare of overconfidence. No wonder God's Word repeatedly links prayer with vigilance.

#### JESUS WAS CONSCIOUS OF HIS SPIRITUAL NEED

<sup>15</sup> In regard to prayer, as with everything else, Jesus set for us the perfect example. His appreciation of this precious privilege stands out prominently in the record of his earthly ministry. In fact, it might be said that no other earthling ever appreciated prayer as much as he did. Even though perfect in mind and body and

11-14. (a) Being conscious of our spiritual need will have what effect on our study of God's Word? Why? (b) On our attending meetings? (c) On our preaching activity? (d) On our praying?

15. What shows that Jesus was conscious of his spiritual need?

having supernatural powers at his disposal, he was not overconfident but always conscious of his spiritual need. He continually looked to his heavenly Father for wisdom and strength, as well as voicing praise and thanksgiving in prayer.

<sup>16</sup> Thus regarding the very beginning of his earthly ministry we read that "Jesus also was baptized and, as he was praying, the heaven was opened up." Fully conscious of his spiritual need, he communed with his Father, seeking His help. He was in dead earnest; no frivolity and light-heartedness marked his conduct. Nor can we conclude other than that Jesus spent much time in prayer during the forty days he was in the wilderness. So when Satan came with his sly and subtle temptations Jesus was not caught off guard. He was vigilant.—Luke 3:21; Matt. 4:1-10.

<sup>17</sup> And likewise throughout his ministry. Repeatedly we read of his retiring to pray in private: "Later, while he was praying alone, the disciples came together to him." And again: "Having sent the crowds away, he went up into the mountain by himself to pray," continuing therein until early morning, when he hastened to his disciples who were being threatened by a storm. And at another time, "early in the morning, while it was still dark, he rose up and went outside and left for a lonely place, and there he began praying."—Luke 9:18; Matt. 14:23; Mark 1:35.

<sup>18</sup> Before choosing the twelve apostles from among his disciples Jesus "went out into the mountain to pray, and he continued the whole night in prayer to God." What an example for us to supplicate God earnestly when faced with making a weighty decision! Then again, it was when Jesus "took Peter and John and James along and climbed up into a mountain to pray" that the marvelous transfiguration

scene took place. In answer to Jesus' prayer? Undoubtedly! And instrumental in our receiving the model prayer was Jesus' own example of praying, even as we read: "Now on the occasion of his being in a certain place praying, when he stopped, a certain one of his disciples said to him: 'Master, teach us how to pray, just as John also taught his disciples.'"—Luke 6:12; 9:28-30; 11:1.

<sup>19</sup> And especially on the last day of his earthly ministry as a man did Jesus resort to prayer. Knowing he would soon leave his followers, he earnestly prayed for them at length, as recorded at John, chapter 17. And foreknowing the immediate future he especially prayed for Peter that his "faith may not give out." Then, just before the mob came to take him, Jesus prayed three times regarding his Father's will for him: "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass away from me. Yet, not as I will, but as you will." No doubt the apostle Paul had this particular occasion in mind when he wrote that "in the days of his flesh Christ offered up supplications and also petitions to the one who was able to save him out of death," his heavenly Father. (Luke 22:31, 32; Matt. 26:39; Heb. 5:7) Not that we are to think that Jesus shrank back from death, or from the kind of death that awaited him. Had he not told his disciples that he would be put to death as well as the manner of it? (Matt. 16:21; John 12:33) Rather, we must conclude that his great concern was because of the reproach that the death of the Son of God upon a torture stake would bring to his heavenly Father, Jehovah God.

<sup>20</sup> Jesus continued in prayer while suffering the agonies of impalement. Its shame and pain did not turn him from his God but all the more to him. In his prayers he quoted from two prophetic psalms that

16-18. (a) What was Jesus' mental attitude at the time of his baptism? (b) What record do we have of Jesus resorting to prayer throughout his ministry?

19, 20. (a) What prayers did Jesus utter on the last day of his earthly ministry? (b) Why did he pray the way he did?

God had recorded for that very purpose long centuries before: "My God, my God, to what end have you forsaken me?" And: "Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit." And then we have his final report to his Father: "It has been accomplished!" All of which, it may be noted in passing, proves that while on earth Jesus was not both human and divine, was not an incarnation, was not a member of a trinity, but was wholly an earthling, a human creature, perfect, however, because his Father was Jehovah God.—Matt. 27:46; Luke 23:46; John 19:30; Ps. 22:1; 31:5.

<sup>21</sup> No question about Jesus' being ever conscious of his spiritual need. And if he, the perfect, sinless, miracle-working Son of God, continually felt the need to pray, how much more so should we, imperfect, sinful and weak sons and daughters of Adam. That his apostles had the same mental attitude is apparent from their letters, which abound both with commands to pray and with references to their praying for their brothers.—Rom. 15:30; 1 Thess. 1:2; 1 Pet. 4:7.

#### PRAISE, THANKSGIVING AND PETITION

<sup>22</sup> Also urging prayer upon us are the many Scriptural injunctions and expressions that imply prayer. Only by prayer can we keep "calling upon the Father." Only by prayer can we 'throw our burden upon Jehovah, letting him sustain us.' And for us to 'trust in Jehovah with all our hearts' and for us to 'take notice of him in all our ways' we must come to him in prayer as well as search in his Word. Nor can we 'walk humbly with our God' without prayer; for who does not engage in conversation with one with whom he is walking; and what is prayer but talking with God? And when we in the first place come to God in dedication, is it not in

prayer that we say to him, 'I am come to do your will, O God?'—1 Pet. 1:17; Ps. 55:22; Prov. 3:5, 6; Mic. 6:8, AS; Heb. 10:9.

<sup>23</sup> However, let us not overlook the fact that prayer is not limited to asking God for something. No, it also includes praise and thanksgiving. Thus Jesus not only repeatedly petitioned God but also time and again praised and thanked him in prayer. (Matt. 11:25; Mark 8:6; Luke 22:17, 19; John 6:11, 23; 11:41) So let us always remember that it is always fitting that in our prayers we praise Jehovah for who and what he is, and that we always include expressions of thanksgiving for all he continually keeps doing for us. By cultivating the mental attitude of praise and thanksgiving we shall be rewarded with self-sufficiency or contentment, which, along with godly devotion, is a means of great gain.—1 Tim. 6:6.

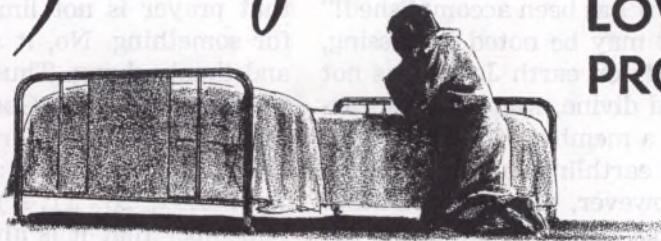
<sup>24</sup> A fine example of a prayer including praise, thanksgiving and petition is the one that David offered at the time he and his nation made contributions for the building of Jehovah's temple. With fitting eloquence he praises Jehovah for his qualities and then thanks Him that he and his people were able to contribute so generously, for it all came from God in the first place. And then David petitions Jehovah that he ever keep his people so generously inclined, with their hearts always directed toward Him. Also for the typical kingdom David prayed, saying: "And to Solomon my son give a complete heart to keep your commandments." Let us imitate David by having our prayers give evidence not only that we are conscious of our spiritual need but also that we appreciate the kind of God Jehovah is and what he is continually doing for us.—1 Chron. 29:10-20.

21. What lesson can we draw from Jesus' example?  
22. What are some Scriptural injunctions that imply prayer?

23, 24. (a) What are the three forms or aspects of prayer, and what occasions them? (b) What fine example of these did David give?

# Prayer

## A PRECIOUS LOVING PROVISION



**I**F WE but reflect on this provision of prayer we cannot help wondering at the miracle of it all. Man was highly elated when on January 10, 1946, after extensive preparations, he first made contact with the moon by radar signals, their extremely faint echo returning to him "after an interval of between 2.38 and 2.72 sec., corresponding to the moon's distance of 221,000 to 253,000 mi." Man's radar beams may reach the moon with the speed of light, but what is that compared to our prayers reaching all the way to the throne of Jehovah, which, being far above the material universe, must be countless light-years away, and that in but an instant of time! And how easily we can get in touch with Jehovah in prayer!

<sup>2</sup> However, for this miracle to take place we must pray to the one true and living God, Jehovah. (Ex. 6:3; Isa. 46:9) Prayers offered to gods that exist only in the minds of men will never be heard, as the priests of Baal in the time of Elijah found to their chagrin. (1 Ki. 18:26-29; Ps. 115:4-8) The very first requirement for prayer, therefore, is faith. "Without faith it is impossible to win his good pleasure, for he that approaches God must believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those

earnestly seeking him." Note, we must have faith not only that God exists but also that he will reward those earnestly seeking him, that he will answer our prayers. As James emphasizes: "But let him keep on asking in faith, not doubting at all, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and blown about. In fact, let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from Jehovah." And as Jesus said: "If you have faith the size of a mustard grain, . . . nothing will be impossible for you."—Heb. 11:6; Jas. 1:6, 7; Matt. 17:20.

<sup>3</sup> And do we not have sound basis for such faith? Is not God able to "do more than superabundantly beyond all the things we ask or conceive"? And since he loves us, we may rest assured that he is as willing as he is able—so different from imperfect man, who so often is either willing but unable or able but unwilling. Yes, "if you, although being wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more so will your Father who is in the heavens give good things to those asking him?" Did not God answer Elijah's

1. What facts highlight the miraculous nature of prayer?  
2. What is the first condition of prayer, and in what two respects?

3. (a) What examples does God's Word give that he answers prayer? (b) What modern example do we have?

prayer when he faced the 450 prophets of Baal? Hezekiah's prayer when Sennacherib's army threatened Jerusalem? the prayers on behalf of Peter when he was taken prisoner by Herod Agrippa? And the prosperity of the New World society of Jehovah's witnesses, and that in spite of all obstacles, is proof that Jehovah God is as able and as willing to answer prayer today as he ever was in times past. True, we may not always understand by what particular means God answers prayer today, but we do know that he uses his organization, consisting of both invisible and visible creatures, his Word and his holy spirit or active force.—Eph. 3:20; Matt. 7:11; 1 Ki. 18:36-38; 2 Ki. 19:19, 35; Acts 12:5, 7.

#### RECOGNIZING GOD'S CHANNEL

<sup>4</sup> Further, if our prayers are to reach God we must recognize his appointed way, for Jehovah is a God of order. As the great Sovereign of the universe he is not one to permit his subjects to indiscriminately intrude upon him, and especially not such as are his enemies because of sin. He has a channel which we must recognize if we would have an audience with him, as it were. Since the spring of A.D. 33 that channel is Jesus Christ, even as he said: "No one comes to the Father except through me." While many may profess to reach God through Mary or other so-called saints, in this they sadly err; for, look where we will in God's Word, not once do we read of any petitions being directed through these or of any commands for us to do so. "There is one God, and [only] one mediator between God and men, a man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a corresponding ransom for all." Since this is so, it might be asked, Why did not Jesus include this requirement in the model prayer

4. Through whom must we come in prayer, and apparently why was this condition not mentioned in Jesus' model prayer?

he gave his disciples? Doubtless because when he gave that prayer he had not fully proved himself. But by the last day of his ministry he had 'finished the work his Father had given him to do,' and so he could say: "If you ask the Father for anything he will give it to you in my name. Until this present time you have not asked a single thing in my name. Ask and you will receive, that your joy may be made full."—John 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6; John 17:4; 16:23, 24.

<sup>5</sup> For our prayers to reach God they must also be uttered in all sincerity. Those who pray merely "to be visible to men" pray in vain, for God hates hypocrites. He hears only those who pray "with spirit and truth." Only "the prayer of the upright ones is a pleasure to him," for they "are the ones that will behold his face." Likewise, we must come to God in humility. In view of his greatness and our insignificance, pride would be most unseemly. Besides, in coming to God with petitions we come as beggars, not as customers. We cannot bargain with God, for we have nothing to offer. Most fitting, therefore, is God's opposition to haughty ones and his granting of undeserved kindness to humble ones.—Matt. 6:5; John 4:24; Prov. 15:8; Ps. 11:7; 1 Pet. 5:5.

<sup>6</sup> Incidentally, there is no Scriptural support whatever for the practice of folding one's hands and assuming a sanctimonious pose in prayer. As God's Word shows, our physical position is not important. However, kneeling when offering private prayer is to be recommended as an aid to our having the right mental attitude of humility before our Maker. (Ps. 95:6; Dan. 6:10; Luke 22:41; Eph. 3:14) Also, kneeling aids concentration. It is so easy to let our minds wander or to doze off if we pray

5. What should be our mental attitude in prayer, and why?

6. What about our physical position in prayer, and yet what may be said in favor of kneeling?

while lying in bed. No doubt that is why Paul counseled us not only to be "persevering in prayer" but also to keep "remaining awake in it with thanksgiving."—Col. 4:2.

#### IN HARMONY WITH GOD'S WILL

<sup>7</sup> Further, if we would have God hear our prayers they must be in harmony with his will. Jesus both taught us to pray, "Let your will come to pass, as in heaven, also upon earth," and he himself prayed, "Not as I will, but as you will." The same condition is noted by the apostle John: "No matter what it is that we ask according to his will, he hears us." That condition is so logical and obvious that it seems strange that most persons praying overlook it—yet, perhaps not so strange when we note how selfish and ill-advised most prayers are. Do not God's purposes take precedence? Are they not far more important than any interests we personally may have? Besides, do not the prayers of men often conflict, as in time of war when both sides pray for victory? Regardless of his omniscience and omnipotence, God could not answer conflicting prayers.—Matt. 6:10; 26:39; 1 John 5:14.

<sup>8</sup> Note how this principle worked in the life of Moses. When he called upon Jehovah at the time Pharaoh and his armies had hemmed in the Israelites, God performed a miracle and opened up the Red Sea, for that prayer was in harmony with Jehovah's purpose to make a name for himself and to deliver his people from Egyptian bondage. Likewise, when the nation of Israel deserved to be destroyed because of their having made the golden calf and later again because of their rebelling upon hearing the report of the faithless spies, Jehovah nevertheless spared the Israelites because Moses pleaded with Him

on the basis of His name and His covenant with their forefathers. Jehovah also heard and answered the prayers of Moses on behalf of his people on other occasions.—Ex. 14:15-28; 32:7-14; Num. 11:1, 2; 12:1-15; 14:11-20; 21:5-9.

<sup>9</sup> But not so when Moses prayed to be permitted to enter the Land of Promise. Moses had forfeited his right because he allowed the 'grumbling Israelites to so embitter him that he spoke and acted rashly at Meribah,' and Jehovah was not changing his mind. And so although Moses praised Jehovah and thanked him for his goodness and kept begging: "Let me pass over, please, and see the good land that is across the Jordan, this good mountainous region and Lebanon," Moses prayed in vain. Instead of getting his wish he was rebuked with, "That is enough of you! Never speak to me further on this matter." Obviously Moses had reached the end of Jehovah's long-suffering. Moses' reasons were purely sentimental, for his presence in the Promised Land was not at all essential to the carrying out of Jehovah's purposes. Had not Joshua been appointed to lead the people? Yes, he had.—Ps. 106:32, 33; Deut. 3:24-28.

<sup>10</sup> There are some sobering lessons in Moses' experiences for us. For one thing, our petitions are more likely to be answered if they involve Jehovah's name. And, further, a sobering thought is that Jehovah is not at all swayed by sentimentality but is motivated and guided by wisdom, justice and love. Helping to wean us away from all such self-centered sentimentality is the model prayer that Jesus gave us, for it puts first things first. And what comes first? "Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified. Let your kingdom come. Let your will come to pass, as in heaven, also upon earth." Letting the universal triumph of righteousness in the vindication of Jehovah's

7-10. (a) To be answered, our prayers must be in line with what? (b) What Scriptural examples illustrate this? (c) What lesson is there in this for us?

name and sovereignty be of prime concern in our prayers will help us to make these also of prime concern in our everyday lives.

—Matt. 6:9, 10.

#### PERSONAL CONCERNS

<sup>11</sup> That personal concerns, spiritual and material, while secondary, are also fit subjects for prayer the Scriptures indicate, for they tell us: "Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God." And again: "Cast all your anxiety upon him, because he cares for you." Whatever we are interested in, or whatever affects us or weighs heavily on our minds, is a fit subject for prayer, be it of a spiritual or a physical nature. "Tell Father about it!" And having unburdened ourselves we should stop worrying but have faith that "God makes all his works cooperate together for the good of those who love God."—Phil. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:7; Rom. 8:28.

<sup>12</sup> In this regard it might well be said that what we pray for indicates the degree of our spiritual maturity. If we are giving Jehovah "exclusive devotion" and are "seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness," the personal things we pray for will primarily be of a spiritual nature and therefore also most likely will be in line with God's will. Among such things that we may and should pray for ourselves is an ever greater portion of God's holy spirit or active force, which God is glad to give us, even as Jesus shows at Luke 11:13. Wisdom is another gift that God generously gives to all asking and for which we should pray. (Jas. 1:5) And, like David, we should always pray: "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God." We may pray in vain to have a trial re-

moved, but we will not pray in vain if we ask for wisdom to cope with it and strength to endure under it. That was Paul's experience, for, after three times vainly petitioning God regarding a painful "thorn in the flesh," God comforted him with, "My undeserved kindness is sufficient for you; for my power is being made perfect in weakness."—Ps. 143:10; 2 Cor. 12:7-10.

<sup>13</sup> And since 'in sin our mothers conceived us' we continually need to pray, "Forgive us our sins," pleading on the basis of Christ's sacrifice, as already noted. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous so as to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This being so, how foolish it is to bear the burden of sin's guilt when we can be relieved from it through prayer, resolving to do better in the future!—Ps. 51:5; Luke 11:4; 1 John 1:9.

<sup>14</sup> It also is in line with God's will for us to pray "concerning all kinds of men, concerning kings and all those who are in high station, in order that we may go on leading a calm and quiet life with full godly devotion and seriousness." Not that we are to pray that these might convert to Jehovah's pure worship in spite of their inclinations, but merely that they should not oppose our ministry. Such prayers therefore are not selfish. Included would be requests that God's will might be done in legal cases being tried or pending.

—1 Tim. 2:1, 2.\*

<sup>15</sup> That for material things we also may pray Jesus showed by including in his model prayer the request, "Give us today our bread for this day." Not luxuries, not more than we need, but contenting ourselves with "sustenance and covering." As we read elsewhere: "Two things I have asked of you. Do not withhold them from me

11. What scriptures show that personal concerns are fit subjects for prayer?  
 12, 13. For what may we make request, as shown by the Scriptures?

\* See *The Watchtower*, June 15, 1952, pp. 377-380.

14. As shown in 1 Timothy 2:1, 2, concerning whom should we pray and for what reason?  
 15. For what material things may we make request?

before I die. Untruth and the lying word put far away from me. Give me neither poverty nor riches. Let me devour the food prescribed for me, that I may not be too full and I actually deny [you] and say: 'Who is Jehovah?' and that I may not come to poverty and I actually steal and assail the name of my God." Incidentally, note that here again the material is made incidental to the spiritual!—Matt. 6:11; 1 Tim. 6:8; Prov. 30:7-9.

#### PRAYING GOD'S BLESSING AND ACTING CONSISTENTLY

<sup>16</sup> Further, we ever need to ask Jehovah to bless our efforts, for unless Jehovah builds the house and guards the city we build and watch in vain. (Ps. 127:1) Among the servants of Jehovah who appreciated this truth was Nehemiah. When King Artaxerxes asked him what he wanted, Nehemiah first of all did what? "At once I prayed to the God of the heavens." And Jehovah immediately answered his prayer. In a twinkling of an eye it had reached Jehovah's throne and was acted upon, for the king granted his every request and Nehemiah realized his heart's chief desire: the walls of Jerusalem being rebuilt in spite of violent opposition, and that in but fifty-two days.—Neh. 2:1-8; 6:15.

<sup>17</sup> The apostle Paul also appreciated this truth. He repeatedly stresses prayer in his letters, mentioning it scores of times. He did not depend upon his natural abilities or upon his supernatural powers for results. He knew that it was God's blessing, not Paul's planting nor the watering of Apollos, that made things grow. He closes every one of his fourteen letters with what is in effect a prayer that undeserved kindness may be with the ones to whom he is writing. (1 Thess. 5:28) This is also seen

from his time and again asking the various congregations to pray for him and his work, as when he wrote: "Finally, brothers, carry on prayer for us, that the word of Jehovah may keep moving speedily and being glorified just as it is in fact with you." If the gifted apostle Paul recognized the need of God's blessing upon his ministry, even more so should we!—2 Thess. 3:1; Eph. 6:18-20.

<sup>18</sup> Of course, praying for Jehovah's blessing upon our efforts implies that we ourselves are doing all we can, putting forth our best efforts. For us to pray without acting in line with our prayers would amount to hypocrisy. God does not do for us what we can do for ourselves. We can hope to reap only 'if we do not give out in doing what is right.' While it is "God who makes it grow," we must not forget that there would be nothing for God to make grow had Paul not first planted and Apollos watered. Nor may we expect God to answer our prayers when we act the opposite from the way we pray. How can God answer our prayer, "Do not bring us into temptation," if we get careless about 'making straight paths for our feet' or, worse yet, walk deliberately into temptation? Whatever may be the exact import of those words of Jesus, one thing is certain: they commit us to a course of avoiding temptations. So, ask for what we will, wisdom, holy spirit, peace, spiritual prosperity, our bread for the day, by our very asking we obligate ourselves to do our part. —Gal. 6:9; 1 Cor. 3:7; Matt. 6:13; Heb. 12:13.

<sup>19</sup> Another aspect of this principle of consistency is the obligation for us to act, to the extent that it lies within our power, as we ask God to act. We must deal with others the way we want God to deal with us. Do we want mercy shown? Then we

16, 17. (a) What does Nehemiah's experience show that we should pray for? (b) How does Paul show he appreciated the same?

18, 19. What obligations do we assume by our very prayers?

must show mercy. (Matt. 5:7) Only if we show mercy to others can we sincerely plead for mercy. That is why Jesus worded his model prayer the way he did (*New World Translation*): "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." Note the past tense—not merely as we intend to forgive others when pleading forgiveness for ourselves, only to forget all about forgiving them after we have received forgiveness, but as we practice forgiving!—Matt. 6:12.

#### PRAYER AND LOVE

<sup>20</sup> Nor would we overlook how closely related to each other prayer and love are. Does not the precious provision of prayer reveal God's love for us? That the great Sovereign of the universe should provide for weak, imperfect and sinful creatures of dust to come into his presence whenever they wish and with whatever is on their hearts and minds surely is another proof that "God is love." And, conversely, is not prayer an expression of love on our part, love for Jehovah, for our brothers, yes, and love for ourselves, because of being conscious of our spiritual need?

<sup>21</sup> As has previously been well noted in this magazine, in making a dedication we do not dedicate ourselves to an impersonal cause, but to a person, our loving heavenly Father, Jehovah God. Our prayers might therefore be likened to long-distance telephone calls that a child, while away at school, makes to his father back home. Our heavenly Father has made all the provisions, he has taken care of all the expenses—and do not think that it did not cost him something. It did, the life of his only-begotten Son—and it makes his heart glad for us to call on him in prayer,

for he truly loves us. We like to visit with those we love, do we not? If we love our heavenly Father we will visit with him often. Do we as much as we might, or are we lacking in appreciation?

<sup>22</sup> Love causes us to appreciate what God is continually doing for us and will make us want to go to him frequently in the spirit of praise and thanksgiving and to linger in his presence. As the minds of lovers keep reverting to the object of their love, so, as lovers of Jehovah, our minds should keep reverting to him and his goodness whenever not occupied with things that require attention and application. And especially, when deeply stirred because of some blessing received, will love cause our hearts to overflow in spontaneous expressions of praise. So let us "in connection with everything give thanks. For this is the will of God . . . respecting you." As Job expresses it: 'If in the Almighty we find exquisite delight, we will call to God at all times.' Then we will be continually praising Jehovah, 'seven times a day.'

—1 Thess. 5:18; Job 27:10; Ps. 119:164.

<sup>23</sup> Do we love our brothers? One way in which we can show this is by praying for them. In addition to the fine example of this given by Jesus, as already noted, we have that of Paul. He not only ministered to his brothers publicly and in their homes and wrote loving letters of instruction and encouragement when unable to personally be with them, but also kept praying for them. To mention but two examples: "I . . . do not cease giving thanks for you. I continue mentioning you in my prayers." "I continue praying, that your love may abound yet more and more with accurate knowledge and full discernment." In this

22. How will love for God further affect our prayers?

23, 24. (a) What is another way in which we can show love by our prayers, as seen by what Scriptural examples? (b) What particular privileges do we have in this respect today?

20, 21. (a) In what ways is prayer an expression of love? (b) How may this be illustrated?

respect also let us imitate Paul as he imitated Christ.—Eph. 1:15, 16; Phil. 1:9; 1 Cor. 11:1.

<sup>24</sup> Especially should we remember to pray for our brothers who have the greater responsibilities, and for those who may be suffering persecution. Let us persevere in such prayers, even as Jesus urged upon us in his illustration of the importunate widow: "Certainly, then, shall not God cause justice to be done to his chosen ones who cry aloud to him day and night, even though he is longsuffering toward them? I tell you, He will cause justice to be done to them speedily." If our hearts truly go out to these brothers, we will "keep on asking" in behalf of them.—Luke 18:7, 8; Matt. 7:7.

<sup>25</sup> Likewise a proper love of ourselves means being conscious of our spiritual need; and that will make us want to go to God in prayer, as we have previously noted. It will make us want to visit with God regularly, each morning upon arising, and each evening before retiring, and at meal-times. Then we shall also be mindful to pray before and while engaging in the ministry and especially if we have the privilege of preaching the Word from the public platform. Then we shall also listen carefully to and enter into the spirit of the prayers that others offer in our hearing, as at the congregational meetings, instead of letting our minds wander. And should it be our privilege to offer public prayer it will prompt us to speak clearly, coherently and earnestly, so that all who hear can from the heart say, "Amen!"

<sup>26</sup> And, finally, let us note that not only is prayer an expression of love but prayer causes us to grow in love. Audible prayer sincerely uttered in the presence of our brothers binds us together in love; the

heart sentiments we hear expressed are our sentiments; we think and feel alike. What a privilege the apostles had to hear Jesus utter the prayer recorded at John 17! The same might be said regarding those who heard the prayers recorded at 1 Kings 8:15-54; Ezra 9:6-15; Nehemiah 9:5-38; Isaiah 37:14-20. Prayer in the family binds the family closer together, and prayer at the various congregational meetings binds the members of the congregation closer together. In rubbing elbows with our fellow in our family or congregation we may at times have our feelings hurt and because thereof cherish a little resentment. But when we hear him humbly, earnestly and in childlike simplicity represent us in prayer to God, all resentment melts away.

<sup>27</sup> Prayer is indeed an amazing miracle, a precious loving provision. We cannot keep integrity toward God without its help. Wicked men may take away our Bibles, our opportunities of associating with our brothers and of engaging in the field ministry, but they can never take away from us the precious provision of prayer. And we know what to pray for, first of all for the triumph of righteousness in the universe and then whatever is in line with Jehovah's will for us, his spirit, wisdom, forgiveness of sins, his blessing upon our efforts and our daily necessities. And that Jehovah answers prayer today we can see by the expansion of pure worship, by the happiness of his people, as well as by his servants keeping integrity in spite of bitterest opposition and persecution.

<sup>28</sup> Because we are living in critical times hard to deal with we have more need than ever to be vigilant, to avoid the snare of overconfidence, to be conscious of our spiritual need, calling for increased study of his Word, meditation, association with our

25. What effect will a proper love of self have on our prayers?

26. Why and how does prayer cause love to grow?

27, 28. What indicates that prayer is a precious loving provision of Jehovah for us?

brothers, field ministry and especially prayer. And in view of the spiritual prosperity of the New World society and the increased light shining upon our pathway, do we not have more reason than ever be-

fore to offer praise and thanksgiving to our heavenly Father? Truly the precious privilege of prayer is proof that God is love, and by means of it we give proof that we love him and our neighbor.

## Bishop Tickles Ears, but Avoids Truth

By Watch Tower missionary in Finland

**R**ECENTLY in Finland prominent bishop Elis Gulin was asked by the students of a business college whether man was a product of evolution or a creation of God. Obviously not wanting to displease the evolutionists, nor desiring to appear overly modern to those who contend for creation, and certainly not willing to jeopardize his own popularity over this issue, Bishop Gulin framed his reply so as to tickle the ears of his hearers with his own opinion, completely rejecting Jehovah's Word, the Bible, on this matter. Here is what he said:

¶ "The creation story is a part of God's Holy Word and as for me, I respect it as truth. However, if a devout Christian makes an effort to take the account literally, he must deny the discoveries of true science and make himself an object of ridicule, whereas the right interpretation must be in harmony with human research and deserves therefore regard of all honest people. Now, when the Bible says that God formed Adam 'out of dust from the ground' it does not mean literal soil but refers to primeval man who was used by God as raw material in forming *homo sapiens*. When this primitive man could understand and listen to God and was able to make response, then 'the man came to be a living soul,' in other words 'the dust of the ground' became modern man. Science fully supports this explanation which allows for millions of years for slow evolution guided by God. A similar

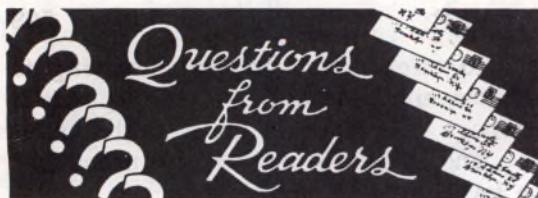
allegoric exegesis of the creation of Eve (Genesis 2:20-23) makes even this passage reasonable to the modern reader. I guess there is nobody present who honestly believes that God actually took one of Adam's ribs in order to build it into a woman. Not so. What the symbolic story here tells is that the man, Adam, feels pain in his ribs before discovering his lovely companion. Not till he presses Eve to his breast has he a feeling of being complete, fully satisfied."

¶ Now to those who might disagree with his interpretation of the Bible's account of creation, the bishop found it necessary to add a few words. "It is not a matter of regret," he said, "if we have various views as to this sacred story. The Bible is most tolerant in this respect and proclaims freedom of the Spirit."

¶ But it is a matter of regret that a bishop, who professes to be a representative of God, should deny what God so plainly says in his Word about Adam and Eve: "Male and female he created them." When the couple sinned, the Bible says, they returned "to the ground," not to "primeval" state, but to dust. "For dust you are and to dust you will return." The bishop is obviously an "ear tickler." The apostle says that people would accumulate "teachers for themselves to have their ears tickled, and they will turn their ears away from the truth, whereas they will be turned aside to false stories," while faithless "people love to have it so."—Gen. 1:27; 3:19; 2 Tim. 4:3, 4; Jer. 5:31, AS.

## Relaxed Atmosphere

¶ At Richardson, Texas, pastor Mark B. Herberner of the Messiah Lutheran Church has announced that the adult Sunday-school class has increased its attendance 100 percent. He explained that coffee and cigarettes are now being served. "We find nothing in the Bible," said the pastor, "that forbids a homey, relaxed atmosphere."



## Questions from Readers

- Where other Bible translations use "cross" the *New World Translation* usually uses "stake," but in some places it uses "tree," as at Acts 5:30 in the margin. Why is this?—W. M., United States.

In the Bibles of Christendom in general the Greek word that is translated "cross" is the word *staurós*. Originally this was used to mean simply a stake or a pole, that is, one without a crossbeam. That this is the proper meaning of the word when referring to the instrument that Jesus was hung upon is shown by the fact that the apostles Peter and Paul sometimes referred to it as a tree, namely, in Acts 5:30, Acts 10:39, Acts 13:29, Galatians 3:13 and 1 Peter 2:24. The Greek word here translated "tree" is the word *xylon*, from which we get the word "xylophone," an instrument of music made of wooden pieces. However, this Greek word *xylon* does not refer to a live tree growing in the ground and producing fruits. For a live, growing fruit-bearing tree the Greeks used another word, namely, *dendron*, from which we get the English word "dendrology," meaning the science of trees. *Dendron* is the Greek word used in such verses as Matthew 3:10; 7:17, 18, 19; 12:33; 13:32; 21:8. Also Mark 8:24; 11:8; Luke 3:9; Jude 12; Revelation 7:1, 3; 8:7; 9:4.

So the Greek-speaking people of old did not refer to the torture stake of Jesus as a live tree or *dendron*, but as a *xylon*. So this *xylon* corresponds with a log or a staff. In fact, the word is translated "staff" or "staves" in Matthew 26:47, 55; Mark 14:43, 48; Luke 22:52. (AV) Certainly the *xylon* that the mob which came to take Jesus under arrest used was not a cross, nor was it a live tree rooted in the ground. Sometimes because of the wood of which a tree is composed, or which is taken from a tree, even a live tree may be called a *xylon*. In this case the reading matter around the word would indicate whether it is a dead tree or a live one, as for instance at Luke 23:31; Revelation 2:7; 22:2, 14.

As you can see, therefore, the above discussion bears out the fact that the torture stake or tree upon which Jesus was impaled was not

a cross, or a log with a crossbeam, as Christendom teaches, but was a straight, erect pole or log or stick and did not correspond with the phallic symbol of the cross.

- I have been told that the *New World Translation* breaks rules of grammar when it translates Philippians 2:5, 6: "Keep this mental attitude in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although he was existing in God's form, gave no consideration to a seizure, namely, that he should be equal to God." A clergyman in Alaska told me this is mistranslated to hide the teaching of trinity. Does the *New World Translation* break rules of grammar in order to render these verses in this way, which indicates that, as a spirit creature in heaven, before coming to earth and living as a man, Christ Jesus was not equal to Jehovah God?—J. F., United States.

The rendering of Philippians 2:5, 6 found in the *New World Translation* does not violate any rules of grammar, and furthermore the rendering is in harmony with the teaching of the rest of the Scriptures that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and not God himself, not God Almighty. That Jesus Christ before his coming to earth did not possess equality with God we can prove by other translations of the Scriptures.

For instance, the *Revised Standard Version* published in 1952 reads: "Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped."

*The Emphatic Diaglott* by Benjamin Wilson published about a hundred years ago reads: "Let this disposition be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, though being in God's form, yet did not meditate a usurpation to be like God."

*An American Translation* published by Smith and Goodspeed reads: "Have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he possessed the nature of God, he did not grasp at equality with God."

*The New Testament in an Improved Version* upon the basis of Archbishop Newcome's new translation published in 1808 reads: "For let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus also: who, being in the form of God, did not eagerly grasp at the resemblance to God."

*The Emphasised Bible* by J. Rotherham reads: "The same thing esteem in yourselves

which also in Christ Jesus ye esteem, who in form of God subsisting, not a thing to be seized accounted the being equal with God."

*The Riverside New Testament* translated by William G. Ballantine, D.D., reads: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not think that equality with God was something to be grasped."

Note that none of these translations that are here quoted says that Jesus possessed equality with God in heaven before becoming a man. He did not imitate the Devil's example, who

tried to make himself like God, to be equal with God. Other modern translations can be found to support the foregoing presentation. The trouble with those translations that try to make it appear that Jesus possessed equality with God in heaven before becoming a man is that they insert the small pronoun "it" into their English translations, such as the *King James Version*: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." The pronoun "it" is not in the original Greek.

## Dilemma of the Confessional

**S**UPPOSE you had a dear friend who was soon to be hanged for a murder he was innocent of, convicted upon perjured and circumstantial evidence. Then suppose the murderer came to you and confessed his guilt. Would you not immediately notify the police so that your innocent friend would not need to die? Of course you would! But if you were a Roman Catholic priest, and this man had confessed to you, you would have to stand helplessly by as your dear friend died for a murder he did not commit. Fantastic? Not according to Catholic theologians.

¶ Thus the *Catholic Herald*, London, England, May 9, 1952, in its question column published the following: "Can the seal of confession be broken by a priest in the interests of justice, e.g., in such a grave matter as murder? No. Nothing whatever, except the consent of the penitent (which he can never be obliged to give), can release a priest from the seal. . . . even if the circumstances were such that the priest thought it the criminal's *duty* to give himself up—even to save an innocent life—the priest himself could never make use of knowledge which does not belong to him at all, but only to God."

¶ Two actual incidents illustrate the foregoing: "Returns Bank Loot, Won't Bare Thief. Priest's Lips Sealed. . . . part of the money taken by a repentant bank robber has been

returned by a Denver priest to whom he confessed, but authorities still don't know his identity. The Roman Catholic priest, with a 'sacred obligation' to reveal nothing heard in the confessional, yesterday returned to authorities \$6,850 in bills he said was part of \$7,780 taken in a daylight robbery here Feb. 17. . . . The United States attorney said the priest promised to relay a message that partial return of the money would not absolve the robber of 'criminal responsibility.' I hope now that he will decide to clear his conscience entirely by coming to the proper authorities,' said [attorney] Kelley."—*Los Angeles Herald & Express*, April 13, 1955.

¶ The second incident was reported by *The Inland Register*, a Spokane, Washington, Roman Catholic weekly, August 14, 1953. It told of an item that appeared in the *London Times* regarding a priest to whom a certain convict, thinking he was dying, confessed as having committed the crime for which another man was serving a sentence. The convict recovered, but upon his death, a year later, the priest revealed his confession, causing the innocent man to be set free. It was pointed out that even death does not free a priest from his seal, and that if true, this was perhaps the first time in history in which a priest broke his seal and revealed what had been told him in a confession.

*Look out: perhaps there may be some man that will carry you off as his prey through the philosophy and empty deception according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary things of the world and not according to Christ.—Col. 2:8.*



# ANNOUNCEMENTS



September 15. Each member should complete and return his proxy promptly whether he is going to be at the meeting personally or not.

## **THE ANNUAL MEETING IN PITTSBURGH**

At ten o'clock in the forenoon of Wednesday, October 1, 1958, the annual meeting of the members of Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania will be held at the Society's office located at 4100 Bigelow Boulevard, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. All members should be certain that the secretary's office has their present addresses so that the letters of notice will reach them shortly after September 1.

Along with the notice of the annual meeting, which will be mailed to all the members of the corporation, proxies will be sent. The proxies are to be returned so as to reach the office of the secretary of the Society not later than

## "WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

September 14: "Be Vigilant with a View to Prayers, ¶1-24, and Prayer, a Precious Loving Provision. ¶1-3. Page 497.

September 21: Prayer, a Precious Loving Provision, ¶4-28. Page 503.



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

- ✓ Why the American people are becoming frightened to speak freely? P. 483, ¶4.
  - ✓ Whom God is using to make known his purposes for the earth? P. 487, ¶4.
  - ✓ Why good should be done to an enemy? P. 493, ¶1.
  - ✓ How an ocean liner illustrated the folly of overconfidence? P. 497, ¶2.
  - ✓ Who considered as food the doing of God's will? P. 499, ¶13.
  - ✓ How to pray to God without asking for something? P. 501, ¶23.
  - ✓ What means of communication is faster than the speed of light? P. 502, ¶1.
  - ✓ How to pray to be heard by God? P. 504, ¶7.
  - ✓ What proper self-love will move a person to desire? P. 508, ¶25.
  - ✓ How a bishop discredited God's Word? P. 509, ¶2.
  - ✓ Why the cross is unrelated to Jesus' death? P. 510, ¶2.